

Monitoring Mountain Goat Use of Mineral Licks in Response to Alternative Forest Harvesting Scenarios in Northern British Columbia

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Abstract: Mountain goats (*Oreamnos americanus*) show strong fidelity to mineral licks. Traditional use by successive generations of goats result in well-used trail systems through forested habitat between alpine summer ranges and valley bottom mineral licks. Adaptive management is used to develop recommendations for effective operational guidelines for logging activities adjacent to valley-bottom mineral licks used by mountain goats. The Ospika Goat Adaptive Management Trial will assess the effects of 2 logging treatments on the use of mineral licks by mountain goats in the Ospika River drainage in northcentral British Columbia. “Buffered” treatment, completed in winter 2002/2003, involved retention of 150 m of forest adjacent to a mineral lick and along both sides of the access trail while the remaining area was clearcut. “Clearcut” treatment was completed at the same site 3 yr later, and involved complete removal of the buffer strip adjacent to the lick and trail. Remote radio-telemetry data-loggers are used to determine timing, frequency, and duration of lick visits by radio-collared goats. Remote cameras are used to determine total numbers, group sizes, age/sex composition, and timing of visits of all goats using the licks. Monitoring occurs at control and treatment sites, as well as 1 yr before (2002) and 3 yr after (2003-2005) the “buffered” treatment. Monitoring will occur at control and treatment sites for 2 yr after the recently completed “clearcut” treatment (2006 and 2007).

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