

Restoring caribou habitat in northern Alberta

3:08 minutes

[Text screen]

In 2012, Cenovus Energy launched a precedent-setting project to restore wildlife habitat in northern Alberta, including that of the Woodland Caribou.

[Susan Patey-LeDrew, Senior Environmental Advisor, Cenovus]

This project is called LIDEA, which is an abbreviation of Linear Deactivation. It started with a realization that the caribou are declining throughout northeastern Alberta.

This is quite complex actually, and it's a combination of several factors. We have expansion of agriculture. We've got expansion of industrial activities, both forestry and oil and gas. We have a lot of old seismic lines – 20 to 30 years old. They're not regenerating on their own. So, when you have these open cut lines, it's like mini highways for wolves and other ungulates to move up and down and wolves will predate upon caribou calves. So, the challenge is, how will we take this off the landscape?

This project is precedent setting because it's a merge of several different techniques.

[Brent Doornenbal, Field Earthworks Supervisor, Cenovus]

Around us here you're in a very wet area – swamp. It's typically got a very high water table, which if we planted trees, uh, straight-planted trees into the ground, they wouldn't survive.

Mounding is a silviculture technique that's been used in the forestry world for quite a while. What it does, is it creates a raised microsite for trees to grow in. You can see it's a lot of nice black organics, lots of nutrients for baby trees to grow, or seedlings to grow in.

[Susan Patey-LeDrew, Senior Environmental Advisor, Cenovus]

The other thing we're doing for an immediate, short-term keeping wolves from going up and down the line is the tree and the stem bending.

[Brent Doornenbal, Field Earthworks Supervisor, Cenovus]

In behind us you can see that we've got stand modification, which involves bending the trees across the line to kind of close the canopy. The trees then could have seeds and organic materials fall on the line, creating a better site for the seedlings. As well, trees are breaking across the line, which is being used as a line block, again as a deterrent.

[Kevin Morozowski, Equipment Operator, Dechen Corp.]

I think it should be done, and they're trying to put it back to natural, and yeah, I think it's good for the future for sure.

[Fred Scanie, Equipment Operator, Dechen Corp.]

The thing, I'm glad to be a part of it. My Dad, my Grandfather and them, all lived and trapped through this country. My Grandchildren, my Great-grandchildren, will see and reap the benefit from

what we're doing here.

[Text screen]

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