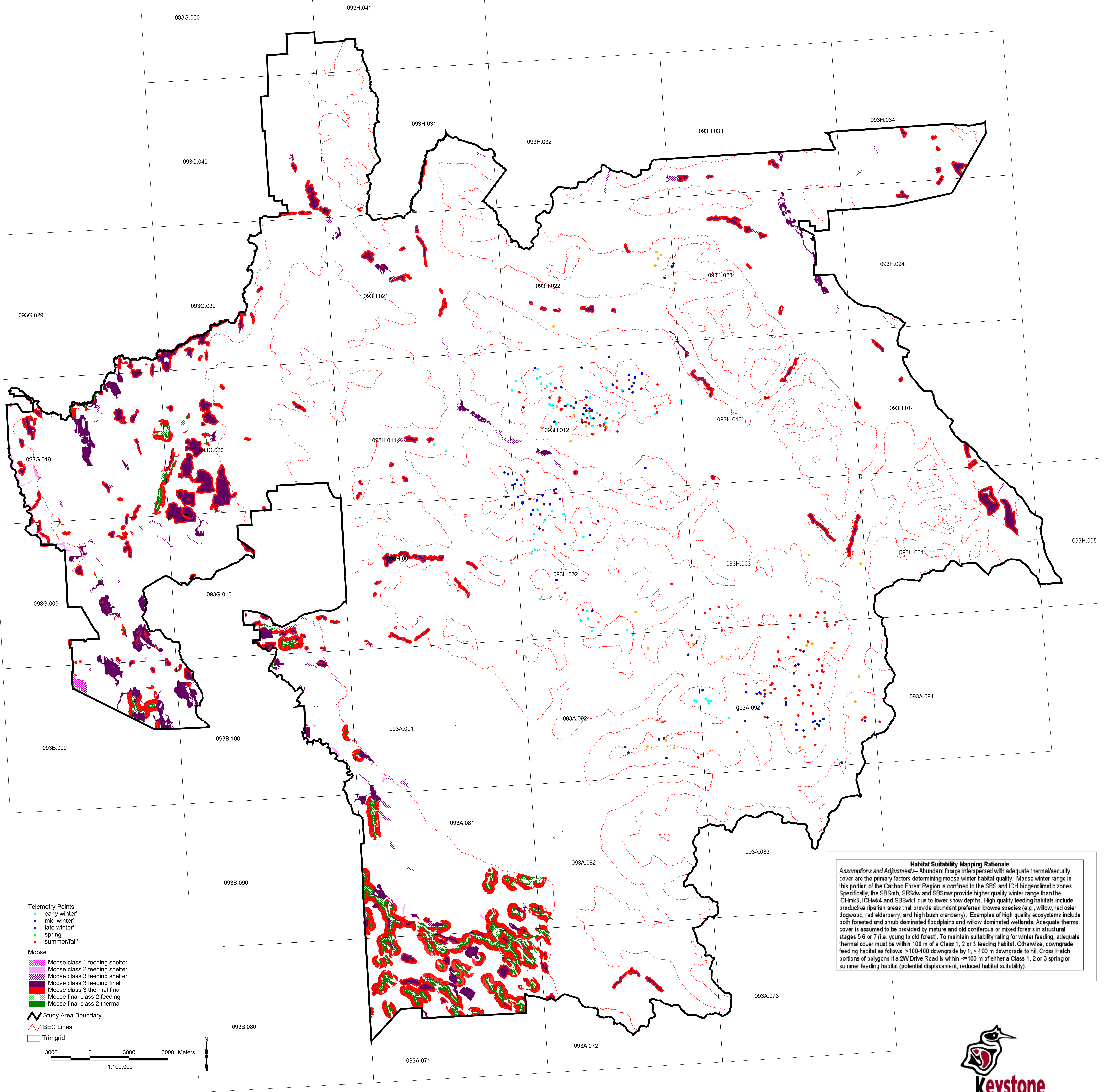


# Moose Habitat Suitability Winter Feeding and Shelter (Thermal Cover)



**Habitat Suitability Mapping Rationale**

*Assumptions and Adjustments*— Abundant forage interspersed with adequate thermal/security cover are the primary factors determining moose winter habitat quality. Moose winter range in this portion of the Cariboo Forest Region is confined to the SBS and ICH biogeoclimatic zones. Specifically, the SBSmh, SBSsw and SBSmw provide higher quality winter range than the ICHmk3, ICHwk4 and SBSwk1 due to lower snow depths. High quality feeding habitats include productive riparian areas that provide abundant preferred browse species (e.g. willow, red osier dogwood, red elderberry, and high bush cranberry). Examples of high quality ecosystems include both forested and shrub dominated floodplains and willow dominated wetlands. Adequate thermal cover is assumed to be provided by mature and old coniferous or mixed forests in structural stages 5, 6 or 7 (i.e. young to old forest). To maintain suitability rating for winter feeding, adequate thermal cover must be within 100 m of a Class 1, 2 or 3 feeding habitat. Otherwise, downgrade feeding habitat as follows: >100-400 m downgrade by 1, > 400 m downgrade to nil. Cross Hatch portions of polygons if a 2W Drive Road is within <=100 m of either a Class 1, 2 or 3 spring or summer feeding habitat (potential displacement, reduced habitat suitability).

