



Connections

Newsletter

A bear cub sits in a fireweed patch.
Photo: Lisa Hupp, USGS

Connecting and protecting habitat from
Yellowstone to Yukon
so people and nature can thrive.

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The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative is a trans-border, non-profit organization that connects and protects 3,400 kilometers (2,100 miles) of landscape, to support the health of people and wildlife. It's no simple task, but together with our supporters and more than 460 partners over our history, we're making it happen.

4 Tips to be Wildlife Wise

Follow the signs

Check for closures and obey posted signs.



Stay alert and safe

Look and listen for wildlife and make noise to reduce chances of an encounter.



Spot, stop and share

If you spot wildlife in the distance, stop and safely head to another area — don't approach. Let others on the trail know so they can also avoid and stay safe, too.

Stay prepared

Have and know how to use bear spray. Leash your pets. Pack out trash and leave no trace.



SHARING SPACE IN, AND FOR, NATURE:

Welcome, spring

It's that time of year when the sun shines for longer, birds sing a bit louder and warm weather feels like a hug, welcoming us to a new season.

It's an important time for wildlife across this vast Rocky Mountain corridor known as the Yellowstone to Yukon region.

Bears have emerged and wildlife has brought, or will soon bring, their babies in to the world. With food to be eaten, mates to meet and places to go, wildlife is on the move — and just as many people are excited to get out in nature.

As people's presence in wild spaces grows, so do our opportunities to reflect on our responsibilities to other animals and each other.

How can we break down barriers for wildlife and humans? What's needed to make the outdoors more inclusive? What can I do to keep wildlife safe?

When you recreate responsibly, advocate to protect culturally significant lands, or learn about accessibility in the outdoors, your actions matter and make a difference.

This newsletter highlights some of the collaborative work you make possible to help us all share space in and for nature — but also, opportunities to make improvements and decisions now for a better future.

As one of Y2Y's supporters you show that you value safeguarding wild places so that all of us can benefit and thrive.

Thank you.



Starr Gauthier, caribou guardian for Saulteau First Nations, checks an electric fence at a caribou maternity pen, designed to keep calves safe. Photo: David Moskowitz

Reconciling relationships with the land

Amplifying Indigenous knowledge to protect habitat with your support

We can't save wild places and species without Indigenous knowledge, protected habitats and your support. Here are two recent updates on this important work:

A new future for caribou and people

Through a comprehensive program that includes maternal penning, habitat protection restoration, and more; the Klinse-Za caribou herd in the northern Rockies of British Columbia now has a chance at recovery.

Your gifts, voices, letters and other support have helped bolster the Indigenous-led efforts of West Moberly First Nations and Saulteau First Nations to enable this healing and reverse the local extinction of this caribou herd.

In 2020, key habitat protections helped with this recovery. This advancement was thanks to a partnership agreement signed between the two Nations, and the provincial and federal governments.

These protections add to work by Indigenous guardians, scientists and others at a caribou maternal pen. This is a short-term, emergency response designed to provide refuge for female caribou to raise calves until they're released into the (soon to be fully protected) mountains.

The 2022 count of the Klinse-Za herd is 114 caribou. These collaborative efforts have tripled the abundance of this nearly lost group of caribou in less than a decade — setting a path to recover caribou, protect large landscapes and restore Treaty Rights.

'Always Will Be There'

Imagine a pristine wilderness, rich with animals. A place where you can walk ancient Indigenous trails for weeks without meeting another soul. A safe space in nature for all.

This vision is encompassed in the Kaska Dene Peoples' work to restore Kaska values to their lands through Dene K'éh Kusān. This is a proposed Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) spanning huge, intact lands over the Yukon, Northwest Territories and B.C.

Dene K'éh Kusān is Kaska for 'Always Will Be There.' You are helping Y2Y advocate to move this IPCA forward so this meaning can hold true for generations.

Gillian Stavelly, who is Kaska Dene, directs land stewardship and culture initiatives with the Dena Kayeh Institute. In a recent Y2Y Ethical Space workshop, a series that convenes Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in a shared learning space, Gillian spoke to the significance of these lands for her community.

"Kaska peoples have a very strong land ethic. Our values are rooted in that ethic, and community members are finding a way to manage our lands according to those values. Many feel that IPCAs are the answer to that call-to-action," said Gillian.

You can help bring this proposed IPCA to reality by signing the statement of support, at denakayeh.com/statement-of-support.



Looking out on the Bow Valley from Waskahigan Watchi (Mount Rundle).
Photo: Adam Linnard

Smart planning for wildlife and people

People advocating for linked landscapes and the animals reliant on them

Your actions and support of Y2Y enable science-based decisions, plans and policies to uphold healthy ecosystems, one project at a time:

Respite for mountain headwaters in Alberta

The mountains and foothills of Alberta's Eastern Slopes provide wildlife habitat and freshwater for millions of people and animals. This place has always been sacred to Indigenous Peoples.

When these precious landscapes were threatened by coal mining in 2020, you and thousands of others let the government know there was no way you would let this happen. From the Alberta government's removal of the protective coal policy, to its reinstatement and the halting of coal exploration, to a lengthy public engagement process, you have been along for a wild ride.

In March 2022, Alberta restricted coal mining in the Eastern Slopes until land-use planning is done — significant reprieve for this important place. Now we must ensure planning leads to permanent protection.

Thanks to your actions, we, and others who rely on these lands and waters, can be cautiously optimistic. Thank you!

Press pause, make a plan in B.C.

The proposed Zincton All Season resort in southeast British Columbia threatens a critical movement corridor for grizzly bears, wolverine, mountain goats and toads. If severed, this link in the Y2Y region may never recover. In addition to impacts on wildlife, the proposal

restricts access to lands that local Indigenous Peoples, recreationists, hunters and others use regularly.

From submitting formal comments, to signing petitions and attending open houses, thousands of people have shared their concern and strong opposition to this proposal. Among them are scientists, residents, Indigenous leaders, mayors and councilors, and Y2Y supporters like you.

Your voice on this issue means planning for what's right for the most, not the few. Indigenous Nations and rural communities need to be at the forefront of land-use planning before any new commercial applications are considered. Take action at y2y.net/zincton.

Policies to protect wolverine

You show your love for wolverines through your generous gifts — which have helped support new global research on how to save them. Among other needs, protected areas and better management of connected landscapes are crucial for wolverine survival.

"This research underscores the need for conservation strategies that protect wildlife and ecosystems from poorly planned development and human activities," says Dr. Aerin Jacob, Y2Y conservation scientist and study co-author. "To help species at risk, including wolverine, we need big protected areas, to retain and restore existing habitat connectivity, and to stop climate change, as soon as possible."



Alexis paddles down the North Saskatchewan River.
Photo: Stump Kitchen. Inset: Natalee Faith Photography

Moving through the world

The need for nature to be a safe space for all

People and wildlife face different barriers in their lifetimes. For wildlife, this may be roads or railways cutting across their habitat. For people, unique lived experiences, and physical, financial, societal and mental barriers impact how we share space in the world.



In 2021, Y2Y partnered with Alberta-based content creator Alexis Hillyard of Stump Kitchen. Alexis was born with a limb difference, which she calls her "stump." On her platforms she celebrates diversity, shares cooking tutorials, and raises awareness on accessibility.

For Alexis, "building bridges" for human accessibility and connection is akin to wildlife crossings. Improving inclusivity can mean celebrating that, like other animals, we all move through the world in our own unique ways. As our supporters, you play a role in building these connections. In an interview with Y2Y, Alexis shares some thoughts on what it means to create safe spaces for all:

Y2Y: *Why did you partner with Y2Y?*

Alexis: I have a deep respect for animals and love being in nature. Y2Y helps protect landscapes in a part of the world that is very dear to my heart — the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River, also

Edmonton's source of drinking water and for many others downstream.

Y2Y: *Why is "celebrating all the beautiful ways people move through the world" important?*

A: We can forget that many people have bodies that break the boundaries of what is 'considered normal.' Disabled bodies, for example, are often overlooked in plans, policies and media. By recognizing and celebrating uniqueness, we can create 'space' in the world for us to all live the best life possible.

Y2Y: *What do you hope others consider to improve accessibility for folks with limb differences?*

A: I believe we need to start changing the narrative of 'disability is bad' to 'disability is another beautiful way of existing.' This can mean not assuming that someone can't do something because of a disability; but instead, wondering how someone might do it.

Y2Y: *Why does connectivity matter for humans and wildlife?*

A: We all come from nature. We are interconnected beings, and when we can be in a community, more connected with each other and nature, we can thrive — animals, plants, and humans!

Read more about Alexis and our partnership together at y2y.net/StumpKitchen. Subscribe to Alexis' channel at youtube.com/StumpKitchen.

Montana is seeing greater pressure related to a growing number of people relocating to the state. Photo: Kerry/Pexels

Safeguarding spaces between parks

Creating connectivity in an increasingly busy landscape

A research tracking collar was recently recovered in northwest Montana. It once belonged to wolf 57, revealing the wolf traveled hundreds of miles from Banff to Montana two decades ago.

You may be reminded of Pluie the wolf, who in the 1990s covered an area 10 times the size of Yellowstone National Park.

Wolves aren't the only species that wander far; nor are they alone in facing danger when leaving park boundaries. Grizzly bears are also returning to places where they haven't been for a long time, such as central Idaho and the High Divide region of Montana. This is a hopeful sign, but also a reminder of our responsibility to keep wildlife safe.

"These animals' movements show that the Yellowstone to Yukon region is still connected. Yet they face many challenges when they leave parks, which is human-caused deaths," says Dr. Jodi Hilty, Y2Y's president and chief scientist.

Roads, fences, human activity and development also affect wildlife's ability to survive and thrive. Rapid changes happening in the western U.S. have brought about such challenges. For example, Montana has seen high housing prices and a huge influx of people, especially from larger cities, moving to rural areas due to remote work possibilities and seeking better quality of life.

It's no surprise people want to be closer to nature. But this means busier roads, more development and intensified recreation. That's where Y2Y's collaborative work comes in.

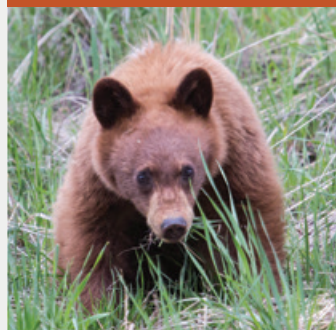
"As more people come to these areas it is key for them to have the tools and resources they need to share the landscape safely with wide-ranging wildlife," says Nick Clarke, Y2Y's senior U.S. program coordinator. "Working together with partners on these issues is more important than ever."

From advocating for more wildlife crossings across highways, to conserving private land, and critical coexistence measures, you help us make a tangible difference in protecting the spaces between protected areas, so wildlife can stay connected and live out their lives, safely.

"These connections, the corridors that wildlife such as grizzly bears rely on, are not unlimited," adds Clarke. "We have an increasingly small window of time to preserve those safe connections before they disappear forever."

Your donations help us take action to absorb increasing pressures on nature. We cannot continue to preserve wildlife and wild places without you. Flip to the back of this newsletter to see how you can help.

Project update



The past three years we worked with the Bureau of Land Management to purchase and set up bear-proof food storage lockers in busy Montana campgrounds. In 2022, 27 lockers will be installed, bringing the project's total to 37.

You're helping people and wildlife share space safely!

Photo: NPS/Neal Herbert

Connection and protection, forever

Leave a legacy that lasts for generations

Aspens were chosen as a symbol of our planned giving program, *Forever Wild*, because they are trees that nurture wildlife year-round. Additionally, their interconnectedness through an underground root system makes them virtually indestructible — that sort of resiliency is aspirational!

Pledging a bequest gift gives Y2Y the stability to connect and protect landscapes so they can support the well-being of wildlife and people, always. This is one reason John M. joined *Forever Wild*.

"I like that Y2Y focuses on conserving wildlife corridors — that accessibility for wildlife, especially large carnivores, is a big part of this work," he explains. "We need to preserve wild places and the spaces between them today. I hope the legacy for the world will be to have protected areas, that kids in the future still have an opportunity to see and experience these places and their wildlife. It's important for people today and in future generations to

experience being in nature to recognize the importance of protecting it."

People like John share hope for a better future for all and express this through their decision to include Y2Y in their wills. If this also resonates with you, please email us at legacies@y2y.net.

Make a bequest



One of the simplest ways to make a contribution to conservation — while maintaining your current lifestyle — is a bequest gift, made as part of a will or trust.

Learn more at y2y.net/ForeverWild or email legacies@y2y.net.

Photo: Neal Herbert/NPS

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative



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To make a donation call us toll-free at (800) 966-7920 or make a secure donation online at y2y.net/donate. The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative is a 501(c) 3 public charity in the United States, IRS #81-0535303. In Canada, the Initiative is a Registered Canada Revenue 149(1)(f) Charity, Business Number 86430 1841 RR0001. Y2Y holds a four-star rating with Charity Navigator.

Monthly donors are the cornerstone of our work.

Your consistent and dependable support ensures we can continue to connect and protect essential habitat, and supports on-the-ground projects that keep our wild places wild, communities healthy and our water and air clean and pure.

Contact information

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Prov: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I support Y2Y

☐ Yes, I would like to donate \$_____ / month, applied to my credit card on the first (1st) of each month.

☐ Yes, I would like to make a one-time donation of \$_____

Payment method

☐ My check is enclosed, made payable to the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative
OR

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Photo: Peng Chen