



Yellowstone to Yukon
Conservation Initiative

Impact Report

2021



Photo: David Moskowitz

We believe in the power of a big, bold idea.

Y2Y’s ambitious but achievable mission is connecting and protecting habitat from Yellowstone to Yukon so people and nature can thrive.

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Why connectivity?

The Yellowstone to Yukon region is one of the world’s last strongholds for nature, but science tells us that protected “islands” of habitat are not big enough to ensure the survival of iconic species such as grizzly bears and wolverines. They need large-scale protected areas connected through viable “corridors” to avoid genetic isolation, so that they can survive and thrive.



Photo: National Park Service



The magic of pulling together

Reflections from Y2Y Chief Scientist and President, Dr. Jodi Hilty

In late 2021, a newly published paper asked, “Can a large-landscape conservation vision contribute to achieving biodiversity targets?” Reviewing 25 years of conservation progress in the Yellowstone to Yukon region, the paper’s answer was a resounding “yes!” There has been an 80.5 percent increase in overall protection since the Y2Y vision was first shared in 1993. Read more at y2y.net/25years.

This is thanks to people like you who support, share and help realize the Y2Y vision, and advance these collaborative efforts. Together, we are implementing local, regional and global solutions — at a time when a time when society most needs to unite and heal.

This reflection underscores several lessons that have come more sharply into focus for me over the past year:

Transboundary connectivity requires a transboundary effort.

Just as wildlife and ecosystems rely on connectivity, so must our efforts transcend political borders and silos. As a joint U.S.-Canada non-profit it is not enough for us to simply work on both sides of the border — we gain far more when we mobilize collectively and leverage our shared experience, funding and expertise to support nature and address mutual challenges. It is a unique approach, and an essential part of our contribution. That is why it is so exciting now to be supporting cross-border efforts on issues such as climate change, protected areas, Indigenous leadership in conservation, and wildlife overpasses (see p.7-9). There is a special kind of magic when we pull together and stand up for nature despite our perceived differences.

Connectivity isn’t just critical for wildlife.

Connectivity for wildlife and ecosystems is at the very heart of our work — but so are connections with and between human communities. *People* must mobilize and act together to conserve and connect nature, and to do so they must both be able to sustain themselves, and feel respected and included. Part of our work to help people thrive is ensuring that our organization, and every project we undertake, seeks to uphold diversity, equity and inclusion principles — both internally, and with partners and communities.

Making connections in people’s minds.

People must know and care about special places like the Yellowstone to Yukon region in order to protect them. That’s why raising awareness of this precious landscape and the wildlife that live in it, and the challenges that our ecosystems and animals — from bees to bears to mountain caribou — face, is such a key part of our work.

It’s also essential that people make the connection between nature and what happens in their daily lives. There are benefits we all gain from nature — from ‘ecosystem services’ like flood and drought control, to better mental health. As well, ‘keeping wildlife wild’ also keeps humans safe — whether that’s bear-proofing garbage in mountain communities, or ensuring

that diseases from animals aren’t introduced into human communities. Making this connection also includes the realization that reducing individual and collective carbon footprints will never be enough unless we also protect areas of high carbon, as noted in ground-breaking research Y2Y published in 2021 (read more on p.10).

We must not allow crises to become the norm.

These are extraordinary times. Whether we face climate change, species loss, a global pandemic, or environmental, social and economic injustice, we must continue to be outraged, and to harness that energy as we take action. These issues and our *reactions* must not become normalized — we must not become more accepting of loss and injustice — but the *actions* taken to address them must be. This is why Y2Y doesn’t just advocate for wildlife crossings, we strive for them to be incorporated *as standard* into road and rail planning; and why we don’t just support Indigenous-led conservation areas, but are working to ensure that Indigenous-led conservation and partnership becomes the norm, and a respected and supported tenet of environmental action moving forwards.

Warmly,

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative champions connectivity in conservation and implements and inspires solutions that benefit both people and nature. It is a joint Canada-U.S. not-for-profit organization that connects and protects wildlife habitat across the 3,400 kilometers (2,100 miles) from Yellowstone to Yukon. It’s the only organization dedicated to securing the long-term ecological health of this entire region.

All of this is only possible thanks to a community dedicated to creating enduring conservation progress. Every project we outline in this report is only made possible by support from donors and funders, collaboration with partners, and the advocacy and action of community members.

Thank you for your support! We can only do this with your help.

2021 highlights at a glance

Celebrating conservation success

Staff at Y2Y prioritize project areas and activities based on threats and barriers to connectivity, timely opportunities, and understanding where our niche expertise and capacity can truly make a difference.

In 2021, thanks to our generous donors and funders, we spent US\$3.36 million bringing our large landscape vision steps closer to being realized. And because we believe in deep collaboration and authentic partnership, that included distributing \$799,383 to partners furthering the Yellowstone to Yukon vision on the ground.

Some of the important conservation wins your support made possible in 2021 include:

53,000 sq km (20,463 sq miles) of Alberta’s Eastern Slopes given a reprieve from coal mining, with the possibility of permanent protections

Work to protect **>56,000 sq km (21,000 sq mi)** of First Nations’ territories underway: Y2Y is supporting several partners to realize their conservation visions

21,000 of you standing up for nature – protecting Alberta and B.C.’s headwater landscapes and wildlife corridors against threats from coal mining to inappropriate development, and supporting new protections for caribou through an expansion for the Klin-se-za Protected Area in B.C.’s Peace region

165,000 people learning about the large-landscape needs of species from wolverines to mountain caribou, through a series of 5 short films on the Upper Columbia region, and the feature-length Caribou Homeland

13 wildlife crossings and fencing projects in progress across the region to help wide-roaming wildlife cross busy roads

3 grizzly bear movement areas in Montana strengthened through conservation easements and land acquisition, including the first land parcel near Noxon, MT, to help grizzly bears move between the Cabinet, Selkirk and Purcell mountains

Logging deferred across **70 sq km (27 sq mi)** of B.C.’s rare old-growth forest in the Yellowstone to Yukon region

Visits to Washington State’s Colville National Forest made safer through the installation of **37 bear-proof food lockers** (17 in 2021) in camping areas, to keep bears away from human food and out of conflicts that may prove fatal

Knowledge of wolverines deepened through analysis of data collected from 170 sites across 50,000 sq km (19,305 sq mi), including 1.4M remote camera photos and 2,200 hair snags partnered with Universities of Calgary and Montana, and Parks Canada

Why transboundary work matters

Building beyond borders through a unique conservation model

In the 1990s, when a radio-collared grey wolf that researchers named Pluie roamed more than 100,000 square kilometres (40,000 square miles) and crossed at least 30 political jurisdictions, she taught us that conservation needs a large-landscape approach, and a broadly collaborative one. Her journey, and others, inspired a nascent Y2Y movement — and since 1993, together we have been inspiring others, driving forwards real conservation change on local, regional and global levels.

This multi-level approach is key to our impact. We carry out and support grassroots and agency partners with tangible on-the-ground projects, and we help bring together the right people at the right time to highlight and share effective tools and models to catalyze large-scale conservation through higher-level policy, science and partnerships.

One example of our work succeeding at multiple levels in 2021 is our highways program.

After years of campaigning, data collection and building of strategic partnerships by Y2Y and community activists, there was a breakthrough. In November 2021, Alberta Transportation formally put the bid for construction of the first wildlife overpass outside of a national park out for tender, with construction starting at the “Bow Valley Gap” in 2022. The new crossing structure is in a critical east-west ‘pinch-point’ and helps to connect grizzly bears and other animals with large nearby protected areas such as Banff National Park. With an average of 69 wildlife-vehicle collisions annually on this stretch of highway 1, this is an important advancement.

That same month, Canadian Geographic featured the collaborative work Y2Y is an integral part of



Photo: iStock



in constructing a whole series of wildlife crossings on B.C.'s Highway 3. This major road runs through the scenic Elk Valley, another critical pinch-point a little west of the Alberta border. It's a great example of starting to take things to scale — not a single intervention, but an interconnected network of overpasses and underpasses that will be tied into continuous fencing that steers animals into the passageways — and potentially a model for others.

However, because Y2Y's ultimate vision includes normalizing the inclusion of wildlife crossings within transportation planning to support wildlife movement across every major highway in the Yellowstone to Yukon region, we have to think even bigger — at the scale of the most wide-roaming wildlife, in fact. Since wolves like Pluie, and other large carnivores such as grizzlies and wolverines, must move freely regardless of borders or boundaries to forage, find mates and adapt to changing seasons and climate, Y2Y's work to effect connectivity must also necessarily be transboundary.

In November, with the U.S. about to pass an historic infrastructure spending bill setting \$350 million aside over five years for wildlife crossings, a Y2Y webinar brought together more than 200 people from federal, state and provincial agencies, Tribes and First Nations, scientists and non-governmental organizations, from both the U.S. and Canada, to envision how work in the transboundary region can keep the world's most intact mountain landscape connected. (See photo above.)

The webinar provided a forum to share expertise around wildlife crossings, and related data collection and management practices. It was also a place to learn about the needs and successes of states/provinces, Indigenous communities and state of the science. Centred on the four busiest roads in the transboundary Yellowstone to Yukon region that are the biggest barriers for wildlife — highways 1 and 3 in Canada, and highway 93 and I-90 in the US — the meeting both captured and leveraged the energy and optimism of a pivotal time for both countries.

The 3,400-kilometer-long (2,100-mile-long) Yellowstone to Yukon region already has more highway wildlife crossings than any other region in the world — well over 100 — but many more are needed to ensure that the integrity or 'intactness' of this extraordinary mountain landscape is secure. This unprecedented international webinar was a promising launch-point for transformative cooperation.

Fostering such dialogues to advance action between countries, territories and organizations is an essential part of our work. Y2Y frequently plays a role as both a convenor and a catalyst — and as an external partner our staff are sometimes better positioned to break down the silos that can exist within and between agencies, for example. Of course, this is not just relevant to our collaborative work on highways, but to other shared priorities such as climate change, and species and habitat protection.

Globally, Y2Y is also taking a leading role in setting connectivity and protected area standards, with Y2Y co-founder Harvey Locke chairing the Beyond the Aichi Targets' Taskforce, and our President and Chief Scientist Dr. Jodi Hilty and other staff and board are engaging across various International Union for Conservation of Nature workgroups.

This provides an opportunity to inform and strengthen commitments at the very highest level — and to then bring those commitments back to the Y2Y region and to work with our Indigenous and other partners to leverage and realize them at the local level.

We saw this in action in British Columbia's Peace Region in 2021, as we continued to support our partners, West Moberly and Sauteau First Nations, in the Indigenous-led effort to legally designate and implement northeast B.C.'s first new protected area in 20 years — an expansion to Klin-se-za Provincial Park. A commitment of 30 percent of lands and water protected by 2030, known as 30x30, from the Canadian government and other countries globally, helps to act as further leverage for on-the-ground efforts like these.

Conservation is a large undertaking in all senses. But, just as Pluie's epic journey started with a single step, so does each journey of ours. We are gradually addressing the fragmentation and challenges of this precious landscape, piece by piece and road by road. But in years such as 2021, sometimes we see the pace picking up and know that we are getting closer to our ultimate goal of making a conservation lens the rule rather than the exception.

Highway 3: Reconnecting the Rockies

Four of eight top roadkill hotspots in B.C. on a 20-km (13-mi) stretch of road are now being tackled by the Reconnecting the Rockies project. In this part of the Elk Valley, 25% of elk deaths and 30% of grizzly deaths are due to vehicles. Research shows grizzly bears are especially sensitive to roads and struggle with genetic isolation.

Now a multi-agency initiative, Reconnecting the Rockies includes a decade of work by Y2Y and partners to bring the vision of connectivity to fruition. While a significant part of the funding is still to be identified, the first two underpasses have been completed.

More at y2y.net/ReconnectHwy3.





Many voices with one goal: Stop the coal

Progressing protection of headwaters in Alberta

In 2021, Y2Y's collaborative efforts to protect sensitive lands and waters in Alberta from open-pit coal mining gained huge momentum — and not without your unwavering support.

Let's go back to where it all began: In March 2020, the Alberta government rescinded the 1976 Coal Policy, opening more than 53,000 square kilometers (20,463 square miles) of Alberta's Rocky Mountains and foothills to coal mining and exploration. This sparked outcry from people across the province, many of whom have connections to these places, also known as the Eastern Slopes.

Indigenous communities have long stewarded these lands, waters and wildlife; generations of ranchers have relied on healthy soil and clean water to make a living; anglers have spent hours fishing, hoping to catch a healthy trout; others hold dear memories of hiking the Rockies.

With these and many other unique ties to and appreciation for places in nature often comes a drive to protect them, especially when faced with their loss.

That's why in 2021, tens of thousands of people like you took a stand and pulled together to voice their concerns. As a result, the government temporarily reinstated the coal policy in 2021, and formed the independent Coal Policy Committee to lead a public engagement process with Albertans.

It has been quite the journey — one that you have been with us on, fighting for the protection of the Eastern Slopes, all along.

The lands and waters of the Eastern Slopes are crucial habitats for a diverse range of native fish, large mammals, birds and other wildlife, some of which are considered threatened. The headwaters found here are also the source of 90 percent of Alberta's drinking water.

Groundbreaking research from 2021, co-authored by Y2Y's Dr. Aerin Jacob, identified the main benefits people get from nature: carbon storage, fresh water and nature-based recreation. They found that the Eastern Slopes are a 'hotspot' for all three ecosystem services. This research has been integral in further emphasizing the importance of preserving the Eastern Slopes.

During the public engagement process after the Coal Policy was temporarily reinstated, Y2Y collaborated with award-winning singer k.d. lang and conservationist Brian Keating to spread awareness on the impacts of coal mining, reaching thousands of folks globally who may not have heard about this issue otherwise. They created videos expressing concerns, and encouraged people to complete a survey for a 'new' coal policy. The coal policy survey received more than 25,000 responses, most of which ranked environmental impact as a top issue.

With your support, we continue to work closely with partners, and amplify others speaking out to protect this special place.

The Niitsitapi Water Protectors, an Indigenous-led initiative started by Kainai First Nation member Latasha Calf Robe, has been heavily involved in advocating for waters, lands and wildlife in Blackfoot Territory. They led awareness campaigns, initiated a federal petition with 18,333 signatures (read in the House of Commons), and hosted and participated in numerous webinars.

Many months of passionate response from tens of thousands of people like you sent a clear message to decision-makers: More than 90 percent of Albertans are opposed to open-pit coal mining in the Eastern Slopes.

As a result, the Grassy Mountain coal mine project proposed for southwest Alberta was also rejected due to adverse environmental impacts, and physical and cultural impacts to Indigenous Peoples. And finally, coal mine exploration was halted by the provincial government in early 2022 when the coal policy was fully reinstated.

These hopeful outcomes show that a shared love for nature brings many together and there is power in our collective voice. The diverse stories embedded in the Eastern Slopes have all been an important part of keeping them protected. Thank you for supporting Y2Y and our partners' efforts to help safeguard this special place for wildlife and people in 2021 and beyond.

"Water ties very strongly to land. Without water, life on land would cease to exist. This beauty and land is shared by many, not just by the Niitsitapi. It is all of our responsibility to care and uphold this land." LATASHA CALF ROBE

Bears bouncing back

Creating crucial connections for grizzly bears — and communities

The past few summers, an increase in the number of grizzly bear sightings in southern parts of the Yellowstone to Yukon region has been cause for celebration.

Research has shown that important bear habitat in the northern U.S., like Yellowstone National Park, is becoming 'island-like', resulting in isolated and disconnected populations.

Keeping grizzly bear populations connected matters — they need to mingle and mate so that their genes merge and make the species stronger and more resilient. Y2Y and partners have been working together for years to re-establish a thriving, interconnected grizzly bear population across the Northern Rockies.

Our approach is three-fold: we are working to address issues in key linkages scientifically identified as the most critical to continental-scale connectivity, by conserving key private land parcels; integrating safe wildlife passage measures across roads; and supporting communities to safely coexist with grizzly bears and other wildlife.



In 2021, Y2Y and partner Vital Ground Foundation worked with willing landowners to conserve private lands in two valleys of northwest Montana. Acquiring parcels at Wild River Estates near Troy, and Bull River near Noxon, restores 1.13 sq km (0.44 sq mi) of habitat to grizzly bears, but more importantly maintains movement pathways between the Cabinet Mountains to the north and the Bitterroot Mountains to the south. The parcels also have the potential to support safe passage across Highway 2 (Wild River Estates) and Highway 200 (Bull River) respectively.

As they cross Montana and Idaho, grizzly bears must also be able to navigate their way around some of the fastest growing human communities in the West. Equipping people living in bear country with the tools and knowledge they need to avoid encounters with these large carnivores is therefore also a key part of our work.

Y2Y has also teamed up with the Bureau of Land Management to install bear-proof food lockers in busy campgrounds in the southwest part of the state along the Big Hole River, adding 17 in 2021. With a total of 37 bear-proof lockers now available in this recreation hotspot, thousands of campers each year will be able to keep bears away from the human sources of food that can lead to human-bear conflicts. (See photo below.)

In east Idaho, our work with Idaho Fish and Game has included bear-aware education for people living

near Island Park, a community near Yellowstone National Park. Over the year, around 2,800 people received Y2Y-supported education from Fish and Game staff, which also resulted in the installation of bear-proof trash cans.

Our collaborative, systematic approach to conserving linkage areas is slowly restoring hope for grizzly bears and other wide-ranging species.

GPS data from collars and DNA from hair samples show that some male grizzly bears are travelling long distances across the western United States, and starting to expand their range.

One young male bear traveled south from northwest Montana into the Bitterroot, and back again. The Bitterroot is key to connecting western Montana, northern Idaho and Greater Yellowstone. This was one of the first grizzly bears to show up since 1932, when the last known resident grizzly bear was shot in the Selway-Bitterroot Ecosystem.

This is no small feat — and a clear sign that our work is paying off. And when grizzly bear populations are healthy, so are many of the other species that share the landscape as well.

Bear by bear, these are the kinds of stories that show us that connectivity is working — and that, with your continuing support, reconnecting Yellowstone's isolated grizzly bears with more robust populations from the Canada border area is within reach.



Innovative partnerships

Spreading the word, and amplifying conservation needs and projects

Our ambitious goals are supported by our diverse partnerships, which help us to engage with different audiences and to amplify their voices as they share their own views on and efforts around conservation. 2021 held many exciting opportunities to work with some new partners on conservation issues and to encourage equitable access to nature:



Creativity in conservation

Saulteau First Nations member Brandon Cameron painted a bull caribou of the Klinse-za herd in front of the Twin Sisters mountains in Treaty 8 territory. A talented tattoo artist and painter, his work was commissioned by Y2Y by Y2Y to celebrate the recent caribou partnership agreement expanding Klin-se-za Provincial Park. This collaboration happened when Y2Y's B.C. program manager Tim Burkhardt asked for Treaty 8 members who could use their creative talents to commemorate the important occasion. Brandon's piece artfully weaves wildlife and landscapes together, bringing a sense of hope after much heartbreak for this caribou herd. This is yet another example of the role art plays at Y2Y and in conservation more broadly for bringing attention and appreciation to protecting nature.

Camas to Condors

In the U.S., Y2Y is working with the Nez Perce people, or Nimiipuu, on projects with a shared focus on connectivity for wildlife, habitats that support traditionally harvested plant foods, and landscape-level planning efforts, such as the Camas to Condors Project which is in early stages. Centering Indigenous priorities, knowledge, and practices in conservation and climate adaptation work allows us to work towards a shared vision, to advance environmental equity, and build a deeper partnership based on trust. For time immemorial, the Nez Perce have lived on their lands in the interior northwest, which is today known as Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Working together to create crucial connections is vital to ensure our partnerships respect the legacy of the Tribe's past and present, as well as future generations.

Award-winning animation

A partnership with Stoney Nakoda AV Club, an Indigenous youth-led club on Treaty 7 land east of Alberta's Banff National Park, resulted in an animated award-winning film raising awareness of the importance of wildlife crossings through the eyes of bears, wolves, bison and other animals. The video demonstrates the need to create more wildlife crossings — especially outside parks — and has been viewed widely online and in international film festivals. In 2022, ground is being broken on the first wildlife crossing outside of a national park on Highway 1 (see p.7), just a few kilometres from the AV Club's home base.

Stump Kitchen

Another video initiative saw Y2Y partnering with Alexis Hillyard of Stump Kitchen, a popular YouTube channel that celebrates diverse bodies, and vegan and gluten-free cooking, and raises awareness on accessibility. Born with a limb difference — that she refers to as her “stump” — Alexis inspires others to try new things and find the connections with each other.

Working with Y2Y communications staff, Alexis created videos on the importance of protecting headwaters — something dear to her heart, as she and her partner live along the North Saskatchewan River in Edmonton, Alberta. Y2Y's summer outreach intern, Karambir Singh, also joined Alexis for a bird watching day in her neighborhood. The video shared their individual experiences of access to and being in nature.



“By highlighting and celebrating every body, we can create ‘space’ in the world for us to all live the best life possible.”

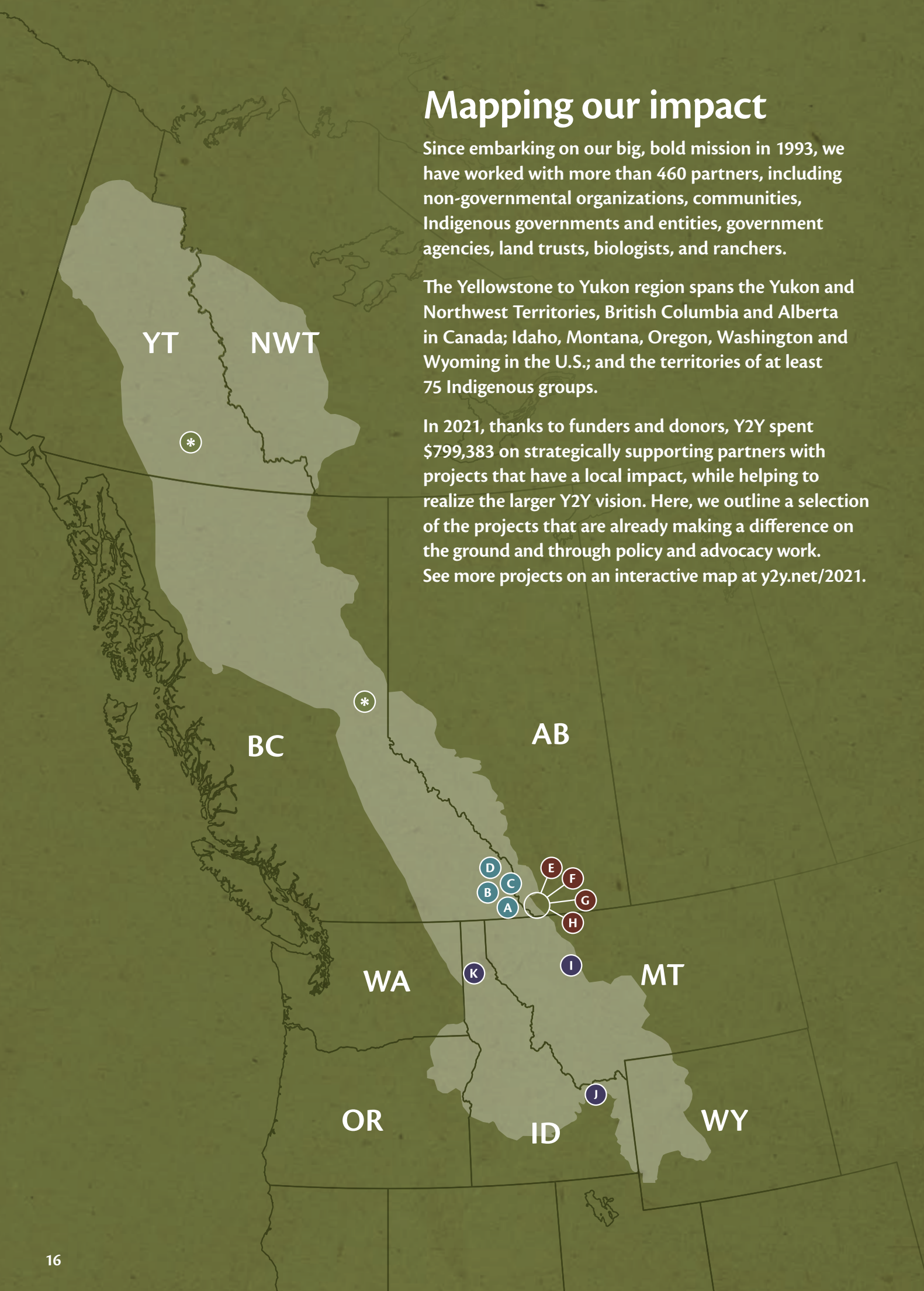
ALEXIS HILLYARD

Mapping our impact

Since embarking on our big, bold mission in 1993, we have worked with more than 460 partners, including non-governmental organizations, communities, Indigenous governments and entities, government agencies, land trusts, biologists, and ranchers.

The Yellowstone to Yukon region spans the Yukon and Northwest Territories, British Columbia and Alberta in Canada; Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming in the U.S.; and the territories of at least 75 Indigenous groups.

In 2021, thanks to funders and donors, Y2Y spent \$799,383 on strategically supporting partners with projects that have a local impact, while helping to realize the larger Y2Y vision. Here, we outline a selection of the projects that are already making a difference on the ground and through policy and advocacy work. See more projects on an interactive map at y2y.net/2021.



British Columbia

- A Lamb Ecological Research**
Removed fruit-bearing trees known to attract bears, which reduced potential human-bear conflicts. This community work driven by local champions also provided education on coexistence and supported local solutions.
- B Protect Our Winters Canada**
Helped 10,000 outdoor recreationists to advocate for old-growth forests in B.C.'s Upper Columbia region. These folks were inspired after watching a visually stunning and compelling film promoting conserving old-growth forests in this area as a climate solution.
- C The Wild Connection**
Engaged more than 2,600 people living near the proposed all-season Zincton Resort in asking the government for modernized land-use planning. The resort proposal threatens a critical north-south connectivity corridor for grizzly bears and other wildlife.
- D Wildsight Golden**
Collected data to better understand recreation activity and potential cumulative impacts on wildlife habitat, and to inform a recreation access plan for the ecologically sensitive Dogtooth Range — a key corridor for grizzly bear and mountain goat movement between Yoho and Glacier National Parks.

Alberta

- E Livingstone Landowners Group**
Through a short film, shared messages with over 5,000 viewers on the need for restoration and protection of the landscapes and waters of the Rockies' Eastern Slopes, and why they matter for communities and ecological needs.
- F Nature Conservancy of Canada**
Launched a multi-year, volunteer-driven wildlife monitoring project in a southern Alberta wildlife corridor. This long-term project will increase understanding of how to maintain a movement corridor for wildlife through B.C. and Alberta.

Alberta cont'd

- G Outdoor Recreation Coalition of Alberta**
Provided input on land-use planning and policy decisions regarding recreation in Alberta, to avoid negative impacts on sensitive species.
- H Blood Tribe Land Management and KEPA**
Shared knowledge about prairie plants integral to Blackfoot culture and health in a video series. Recording traditional Blackfoot ecological knowledge helps revitalize and preserve it, and to sustain the Blackfoot peoples' relationships to the land and culture, key to community food systems and healthy ecosystems for Kainai Nation. This outreach project plays a role in Blackfoot language revitalization and Indigenous knowledge-based conservation of grassland and montane areas.

US

- I People and Carnivores**
Shared conflict prevention tools and techniques with people sharing landscapes with grizzly bears. Helping grizzly bears who live and move in and across tribal lands avoid conflict with people is an important aspect of management and conservation as well as connectivity.
- J Henry's Fork Wildlife Alliance**
Built a robust network of volunteers and advocates for protecting wildlife in east Idaho. 35 volunteers spent 170 hours removing fencing and restoring habitat to enhance wildlife connectivity, among other projects.
- K Idaho Department of Fish and Game**
Installed 20 bear-resistant trash bins for homeowners. This is an important step in keeping both people and wildlife safe by making sure bears cannot easily access garbage, food and other attractants, which can lead to human-bear conflicts.



Projects supported by partner grants in northern B.C. and Yukon in 2021 were delayed due to COVID-19 and will be reported when complete.

Planning for conservation success

Donors like you ensure we can support the Rockies for generations to come

Conservation progress is often made intermittently. As some of the stories from 2021 show, successes can be years and even decades in the making. They may require political, social or economic shifts, rely on gradually rising tides of awareness and concern, and need painstaking efforts to build relationships and trust, and to gather reliable data and evidence over time.

For a conservation charity, this means ensuring that we have sustainable sources of revenue that will both support long-term efforts and enable us to respond to emerging — and sometimes emergency — conservation issues at any time.

Here are some of the initiatives through which you can engage and be part of keeping the Yellowstone to Yukon vision and impact alive into the future.

For more information on our Nimble Fund or Forever Wild, please contact Renee Krysko at renee@y2y.net or 1-800-966-7920 x 105.

To become a monthly donor, please reach out to Robin Forsyth at robin@y2y.net or visit y2y.net/lynx.

Details of all giving opportunities are at y2y.net/donate.

Being 'nimble' to protect bears

Since 2008, Y2Y has been working with land trust partners to ensure grizzly bears will still be able to move safely across the valley bottoms between the Cabinet, Purcell and Selkirk mountain range, despite encroaching rural sprawl. This means working with land trust partners to buy, or set conservation easements on, key private land parcels with the help of willing landowners, and making sure that the bears are able to move across those parcels, through and around local communities, and over busy highways, without incident. We focus on priority linkages that have been identified by wildlife biologists as bottle-necks.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic created a real estate buying spree in many rural idylls. Parts of north Idaho, northwest Montana and south-east B.C., critical to continental-scale bear connectivity, are among North America's hottest real estate markets. This resulted in a flurry of sight-unseen sales and unprecedented prices well beyond market value. But we have seen this pattern before. To make sure we can be responsive to conservation-minded landowners, Y2Y started a "nimble" private lands action fund. By investing in this fund, you help ensure Y2Y can act more readily, be competitive and save critical lands.

Forever wild

Working at the scale of the Yellowstone to Yukon region naturally means we must plan far ahead and work strategically.

Fortunately, you are doing the same! To honour and support those of you who have included us in their estate planning and wills, we have established Forever Wild, a legacy giving program. The program uses the beautiful, nearly indestructible, aspen tree as a symbol — reflecting the extraordinary strength we have when joined together to provide a safety net for nature. Your legacy will look after the wildlife and landscapes that we all love, for ourselves and for future generations.

Inspired by the lynx

Another popular image symbol that we have adopted from nature at Y2Y is the lynx. Admiring this stunning feline's wide paws that provide a stable base as it moves over the snow, we named our monthly giving program Lynx in its honour.

As a monthly donor, you are able to support Y2Y at whatever level you choose. In doing so, you provide a stable source of income that helps Y2Y to plan ahead too.

Connecting and protecting the Y2Y region relies on the efforts of a great network of partners, and an important part of our role is also supporting and amplifying their work. For Giving Tuesday in November, Y2Y highlighted the work of two partners focused on Indigenous-led conservation. In response, many Y2Y supporters expanded their giving.

Your gifts to RAVEN Trust helped Y2Y partner, West Moberly First Nations, in their legal challenge against the Site C dam in B.C. to protect the rights of Indigenous Nations.

Your investments in the Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland supported conservation projects within the Nez Perce ancestral homelands of Oregon and Idaho, including Camas to Condors — a landscape-scale climate resilience initiative.

Donors and funders*

Alberta Ecotrust Foundation	Government of Canada, Canada Summer Jobs
The Alpine Club of Canada	The Grainger Foundation
Anonymous Donor Advised Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation	Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation
Anonymous Fund at Calgary Foundation	Harvey Locke Conservation Inc.
Banff Canmore Community Foundation	Head and Heart Foundation
Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund	House Family Foundation
BearVault	The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee
Bergmann and Filakosky Donor Advised Fund	J. Griesdale Foundation
Bunting Family Foundation	Jeff and Jacqueline Miller
The Calgary Foundation	Joe Albright and Marcia Kunstel Charitable Fund of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole
Cameron Development Corporation	John A. Mills and Susan K. Mills Charitable Fund
The Chawkers Foundation	Josephine K. Lowe
The Cinnabar Foundation	Ken Murray Professional Corp.
Consecon Foundation	The Kendeda Fund
The Conservation Alliance	Mactaggart Third Fund
Cross Charitable Foundation	Maine Beer Company
Don and Joan Stanley Family Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation	Mary and Charles Sethness Charitable Foundation
The Donner Canadian Foundation	Mastercard Foundation
Eleanor and Fred Winston – The Longview Foundation	Merrill Chester Gregg and Josh Gregg
Enterprise Holdings Foundation	Michael Oshavsky
Environmental Careers Organization of Canada (ECO Canada)	Missy Mayfield, Spotted Mutt Fund
Ernest J. Abele Fund of the Columbus Foundation	The Mitsubishi Corporation Foundation for the Americas
Experience Journeys, Ltd.	Nana Environment Fund at Calgary Foundation
Fanwood Foundation	National Forest Foundation
Franklin Philanthropic Foundation	The New York Community Trust
Fredrick Prah and Karen Skjei	Onwardup Sales and Marketing, Ltd.
Gencon Foundation	The Otis Booth Foundation
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	Palmer Family Foundation
Government of Alberta Community Initiatives Program	Patagonia.com
	Patagonia Banff (Elements)

Peter H. Bachman and Janet Rice Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation
Pumpkin Hill Foundation
Ralph and Gay Young Family Capital Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
RBC Foundation
Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia
Rebecca Patton and Tom Goodrich
Robert and Michele Keith
Robert S. Hunter Charitable Fund at Schwab Charitable
Ruby Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation
Sanders County Resource Advisory Committee
Shugar Magic Foundation
The Sitka Foundation
Stephanie and Andrew Towell
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
The Alben F. Bates and Clara G. Bates Foundation
The Heymann Foundation
The Laura L. Tiberti Charitable Foundation
The Maja Foundation at Calgary Foundation
Turner Foundation, Inc.
Vancouver Foundation
The Volgenau Foundation
Walton Family Foundation
Weeden Foundation
Wilburforce Foundation
Winkler Family Foundation
Woodcock Foundation
*We hugely appreciate all our supporters! Only Donor-Advised Funds, Family Foundations, Corporate and Grant Funders (>\$1k) are listed here.

Y2Y Board and Council

A Message from Y2Y Board Chairs, Pat Smith and Colleen Brennan

Y2Y’s Board of Directors oversee governance and the overall direction of the organization. Because of our international scope, there are actually two Y2Y boards: one American and one Canadian. Currently, there are 21 directors who live in either the U.S. or Canada. They bring local knowledge and expertise — ranging from conservation science, law, accounting, to non-profit management — to bear on Y2Y’s transboundary efforts to protect the ecological health of one of the last remaining intact mountain landscapes on Earth.

The transboundary nature of our mission defines its uniqueness. While international borders are to be respected, nature does not adhere to political boundaries. Far-roaming wildlife, such as wolves, wolverines, and grizzlies know little of borders or boundaries, nor do rivers like the Columbia and Okanagan that flow south from Canada into the U.S., or the Kootenai that flows north into Canada. So, it makes sense that our efforts to protect large landscapes and improve wildlife connectivity are also transboundary.

For thousands of years, long before the “Medicine Line” was surveyed separating our two nations, Native peoples, and their various bands, were transboundary peoples. Cross-border connections remain real and vibrant today, including the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, one of the world’s great landscapes, wildlife sanctuaries, and tourist destinations. Right now, the impacts and pressures on resources in this area are at historic highs, as parks on both sides of the border witness record visitors, forcing Glacier Park to recently implement quotas and permits on visitors during the peak season.

All of this requires that transboundary work be better coordinated so that benefits to the ecosystem, to wildlife, and to people flow equitably

across the border in both directions. As board members, we are committed to this principle and hope to amplify models of collaborative working at various scales. At the highest level, this includes Y2Y playing a role in providing global ecological corridor guidelines, and setting the ambitious but necessary biodiversity targets that will support and steer nations worldwide to protect the nature we cherish and depend on.

At the local level, for example, this requires that we better coordinate our collective efforts to improve wildlife passage across our major highways near the border, especially Canada’s Highway 3, and U.S. Highways 93 and I-90. These passage systems protect wildlife and save lives. Recently, U.S. Congress funded the largest infrastructure package in American history, which includes funding to improve wildlife passage. This presents a historic opportunity to better coordinate and collaborate on how best to maximize benefits on wildlife passage infrastructure which, in turn, relies on the best scientific data regarding wildlife species movement patterns and passage technology.

Together, the board is working to leverage our limited assets on improving cross-border coordination and maximizing related benefits, through partnerships and science-based solutions. As a transboundary organization ourselves, we bring an important perspective to the table. We are respectful and supportive of Indigenous-led efforts to protect their aboriginal homelands and the fish and wildlife that move upon and through various jurisdictions.

These are extraordinary times of shared global challenges, with extraordinary opportunities. We thank all our partners for their commitment to this shared vision and mission.

PAT SMITH
Y2Y U.S. Board Chair

COLLEEN BRENNAN
Y2Y Canada Board Chair



Y2Y Board members

- Steve Baker

Colleen Brennan,
Chair, Canadian Board

Elizabeth Domenech

Jonah Greenberg

Merrill Chester Gregg

Craig Groves

Jeremy Guth

Bill Guza

Richard Harrison,
Vice-Chair, Canadian Board

Bryan Hurlbutt,
Vice-Chair, U.S. Board
- Robert Lapper

Cameron Naqvi

Scott Niedermayer

Jonathan Oppenheimer

Nancy Rourke

Lynn Scarlett

Pat Smith,
Chair, U.S. Board

Amy Vedder

Annie Whetzel

Alison Woodley

Pam Wright

Thanks to support from donors and funders, the Y2Y vision is possible! For yet another year, your gifts and grants kept us strong and able to stand up for nature throughout 2021. Together, we continued to connect largely online instead of in-person, rallied to defend our wildlife, wild lands and waters, and committed to ensuring greater environmental and social justice.

Y2Y Council

The Y2Y Council brings together individuals who bring specialized assistance to the Y2Y Board and President.

Charles C. Chester,
Chair

Joe Loughheed

Coral Lukaniuk

Jill Pangman

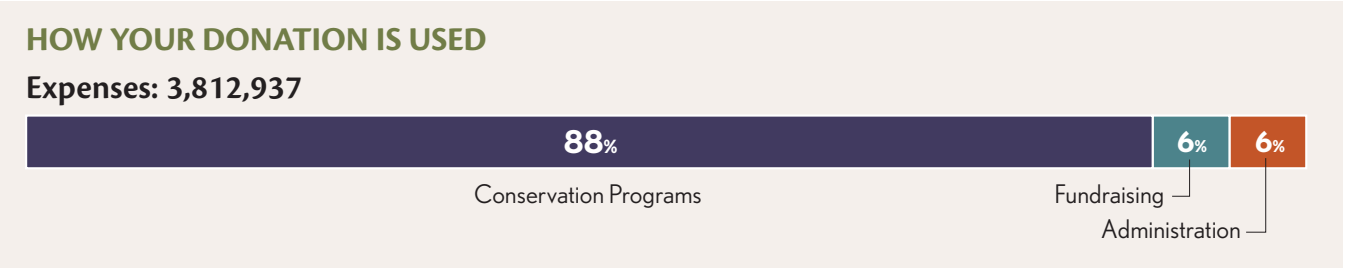
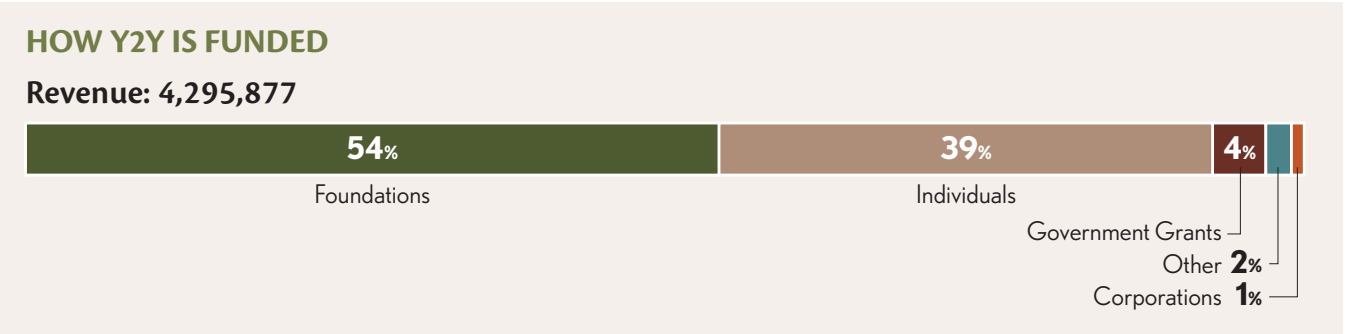
2021 Financial Highlights

The Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) group is comprised of three organizations: Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative Society, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative and Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative Foundation. Each organization is governed by an independent Board of Directors, who share our passion for and commitment to our mission. You can read more about our board members and their roles at y2y.net/board.

All three organizations strive to work seamlessly to fund, facilitate, and operate programs and activities to fulfill the Y2Y mission. The accompanying financial highlights combine information across all three Y2Y organizations. We are supported by a broad network of foundations, government agencies, businesses and individuals from around the world. Thanks to their generosity, we completed the year in a strong financial position. In 2021, 88 percent of Y2Y’s expenses directly supported conservation projects and campaigns across the region.

Balance Sheet – December 31, 2021 (USD)

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,929,065	Accounts Payable	128,424
Investments	1,492,234	Deferred Revenue	2,707,246
Accounts Receivable and Prepays	159,359	Net Assets	3,795,207
Property and Equipment	50,219	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	6,630,877
Total Assets	6,630,877		



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Cover photo: Black bear cub in Grant Teton National Park by National Park Service/Adams

“Water, my specialty, is perhaps the best index of what is happening, the canary in Earth’s coal mine. It will be up to your generation to enhance this knowledge and use what you learn to protect the planet on which we and other species depend.”

DR. DAVID SCHINDLER, *ecologist celebrated for his efforts to protect fresh water resources in Canada and beyond*