



Connections

Newsletter

Bison calves are known as "red dogs" because of their reddish fur.
Photo: Neal Herbert/National Park Service

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.

Coexisting with bears today will keep them around tomorrow.

You can champion bear safety in all seasons!

4 tips to practice & share when in bear habitat:

Safety first! Rain or snow, bears are around.

Carry bear spray within reach year-round.

The more the merrier.

Travel in groups of four or more people.

Make some noise!

Call out regularly so bears know you're there.

Help us to help bears & other wildlife.

Spread the word on supporting Y2Y.



LOOKING AHEAD

*Today you are sowing hope for
nature in the future*

Do you ever take a moment to slow down and notice nature's magnificence?

The sound of birds chirping as they flit by. The fragrant smell of trees after rainfall. Watching a herd of elk foraging in the distance. The feeling of fresh mountain water on your skin.

Rooting ourselves in these special nature moments can remind us of the preciousness of, and our interconnectedness with, the natural world. This is also a reminder of how our actions today can shape nature's future — and its ability to support wildlife and people for generations to come.

In the face of big challenges including the climate crisis, social injustices, and the loss of biodiversity, the stakes have never been higher.

By planning for new wildlife crossings or protected areas and doing our part to share space with other animals, we are "futureproofing" our planet — and making sound science, diverse knowledge systems and Indigenous leadership part of each process helps ensure sustainable solutions.

Through your generous involvement in the Yellowstone to Yukon mission, you support the kinds of solutions that can help secure a bright future for all. From bears to buffalo, to human beings, those who will roam the planet years from now depend on our actions today.

See your impact shine in the stories that follow.



Mountains in the rear view.
Photo: Lukas Kloeppel

Safer roads are closer than they appear

More wildlife crossings in Montana on the horizon

There's a spring in our step, and that's not only due to the arrival of a fresh, warmer season. It's because you have helped create a new pathway for wildlife crossing projects in Montana.

In March, the Montana Wildlife and Transportation Partnership announced two groundbreaking solutions to help wildlife safely cross busy roads and protect people from devastating collisions with animals. This news came after many years of hard work from a range of partners, including Y2Y.

One key piece is an interactive map with wildlife data showing where transportation solutions are needed most on Montana's highways. The other is a new process for the state to review and accept proposals for new wildlife crossings and fencing. Before, this process was only part of long-term transportation planning and could take up to ten years or more. Now, it could happen much quicker.

Adding to the momentum is the recent increase in funding for wildlife and transportation projects through the U.S. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and a new federal pilot program dedicating \$350M for wildlife crossings over five years — the first round of which just launched.

These planning improvements and funding will help drive forward the most impactful decisions. But most importantly, more lives of humans and animals will be saved.

In Montana, drivers face one of the nation's highest wildlife-vehicle collisions per capita. And each year statewide, more than 6,000 wildlife animal carcasses are collected.

Doug G., a Y2Y monthly donor who lives in Montana, is familiar with these impacts. Having grown up in Utah, Doug and his father would see countless injuries to and death of wildlife during their highway travels.

"The wildlife mortality on these roads is so unnecessary. Back in the 1960s, when we'd see what was happening to wildlife, I thought 'why aren't we doing something to prevent this?,' he said.

"Why aren't we doing something to prevent this?"

*— Doug G.,
Y2Y supporter and
long-time advocate
for nature*



A grizzly bear contemplates crossing a road.
Photo: Shutterstock

Years later during a visit to Canada with his wife in the 1990s, Doug saw a wildlife overpass for the first time arching over Alberta's Highway 1 through Banff National Park. He felt good knowing that wildlife could be roaming safely overhead.

Doug's experiences also motivate him to support Y2Y's work on wildlife corridors.

"I'm very supportive of wildlife structures spanning Montana's highways, particularly to link grizzly bears between Greater Yellowstone and the Bitterroot," said

Doug. "These kinds of accommodations for wildlife in this world today are necessary if we want a viable world for them in the future. To keep them around, we need to keep them connected."

Thanks to you, a future where wildlife stays connected, and people can travel roads with fewer worries is already becoming a reality.

With your support, we can continue to push for policies that ensure wildlife crossings are built in the places they are needed most.

Connecting Bow Valley wildlife

The newest wildlife crossing in the Yellowstone to Yukon region on Alberta's Highway 1 east of Banff National Park is taking shape. This addition to the network of safe animal crossings in the Bow Valley has entered a new phase of construction. The first rings of the overpass are being raised, set to become the Stoney Nakoda Exshaw Wildlife Arch.

After years of research and people like you making the case, this project broke ground in April 2022 and is on track to be finished by 2024. Three cheers for safe crossings!





Allan Baker's passion for nature and the Y2Y vision live on.
Photo courtesy The Baker Family

Creating a legacy for our shared future

A reflection on the Sarah Baker Memorial Fund

I'm always heartened by our donors' commitment to Y2Y. Your support often goes well beyond funding our work: You ask about our team's well-being, connect us with friends to advance conservation, form groups to build support for critical issues, and more. You are Y2Y.

The Baker family exemplifies these shared values. They are part of the fabric of Y2Y's mission. In 2009, they created the Sarah Baker Memorial Fund to honor the life of their family member, Sarah Baker. The fund reflects her appreciation for the natural world and her ability to find solutions.

Through Y2Y, this fund is offered to post-secondary students and postdoctoral fellows conducting conservation-related research in the Yellowstone to Yukon region. It has supported more than 20 researchers powering critical science and knowledge, leading to a stronger understanding of how to help nature and people thrive.

One grant recipient, Rachel Singleton-Polster, explained, "Hope for a better world reassures me that we can still do good. The support from the Sarah Baker Memorial Fund and the Y2Y team has been tremendously helpful in progressing this work." Rachel's research identified solutions for improving accountability and transparency of mine reclamation in caribou habitat.

Another is Mateen Hessami, whose work in 2019 added to knowledge on the links between moose harvest, caribou conservation and Indigenous culture. "I am humbled and honored to have been chosen

for the Sarah Baker Memorial Fund award. I am keen to continue working with Y2Y to advance science and policy that safeguard wildlife and ecosystems for future generations."

Sarah's father, Allan Baker, passed away in February 2021 at the age of 96 years. Along with being the reason the fund exists, Allan believed in education and championed wilderness, wildlife and conservation in Alberta's Bow Valley and beyond.

The Sarah Baker Memorial Fund was one part of Allan's legacy. Allan expressed a vision of connecting people and creating the conditions for enduring change. From supporting research to mentoring early Y2Y directors, recruiting valuable board members, and being a voice for nature, Allan has done just that. Through his legacy he continues to keep this region 'forever wild.' Allan was a dear friend — his smile, kind heart and passion will live on.

As a Y2Y donor, your commitment to nature also shows you believe in keeping landscapes across the Yellowstone to Yukon region wild, forever. If, like Allan, you are inspired to create a trust, legacy or endowment gift, why not contact me for a chat?

Renée Krysko, Director, Donor Relations

Learn how to make a legacy gift at y2y.net/ForeverWild or email Renée at legacies@y2y.net.

Explore past projects supported through the Memorial Fund at y2y.net/SarahBaker.

Saving wild spaces — and species

Learning from nature fosters a thriving future for all

Indigenous-led conservation is the way forward

Many global plans for combatting climate change and protecting biodiversity are increasingly focused on Indigenous-led conservation — and for a good reason. Indigenous Peoples have stewarded their lands successfully since time immemorial.

Elevating Indigenous leadership and rights is both the right thing to do and how we will help ensure healthy ecosystems can support all beings for many generations to come.

According to the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, around 90 percent of protected areas established in Canada in the last two decades were because of Indigenous partnerships or leadership; and, when Indigenous Nations in Canada “hold the pen” on land-use decisions, they protect more than 60 percent of their territories, on average.

Your donations boost these efforts. Right now, Y2Y is a partner on Indigenous-led initiatives throughout the Yellowstone to Yukon region. This includes advocating for Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) that are co-governed by Indigenous nations and centered on Indigenous laws and knowledge.

One example is a proposed IPCA in B.C., Dene K’eh Kusān, or Always Will Be There in Kaska language.

The Dena Kayeh Institute leads this effort. In their new film, Gillian Staveley, Kaska Dena member and director with the Institute, explains the Kaska people’s plan for protecting this intact wilderness so Kaska people and their lands will always thrive.

“We want to see these landscapes managed in the right way. As long as our land is here, our language is here, our people are here, our ways of knowing will always be here.”

Y2Y is an ally in achieving this vision through growing a network of support for the plan. Indigenous Peoples are leading the way on saving nature. You are part of that movement! Join us in supporting this leadership by learning and sharing, getting involved, and through your continued generosity.

Show your support for Dene K’eh Kusān at denakayeh.com.



Image: Dene K’eh Kusān logo

Learning from the landscapes we love

As a friend to nature, you likely seek ways to reduce your environmental footprint.

This impact includes how, where, and how often we recreate in nature. By learning about the effects of recreation on the environment, we can improve safety for people and wildlife in shared spaces and lessen our footprint on the future.

Your donations have advanced cutting-edge research that improved such learnings in Alberta’s Kananaskis-Ghost and the Upper Columbia region of British Columbia, which make up a huge part of the Yellowstone to Yukon region.

Researchers from Y2Y and the University of Northern B.C. gathered data from trail apps, social

media, remote cameras, and more to show where wildlife habitat and trails overlap and how many trails are undocumented. Now, we can make evidence-based recommendations to land managers to help focus conservation efforts.

This is one of the few big-picture recreation studies in North America because most are limited to parks and protected areas — not the all-important areas that connect them. Nature needs us to think big, and that’s what this study does. Thank you for taking big strides for nature with your support.

Explore more: y2y.net/RecEcology.



Photo: Annie Loosen

Your love for nature is lasting

One Lynx member shares her family's reasons for giving

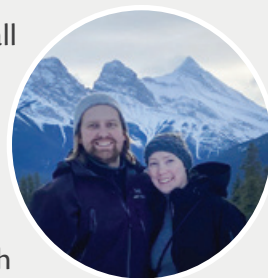
There are many reasons why people protect nature. A common theme we hear from our donors, including you, is the value of keeping nature healthy for generations to come.

As a monthly donor to Y2Y, Megan Pavelich is one of those people. She and her husband live in Edmonton, Alberta, a few hundred kilometers from the Yellowstone to Yukon region; but Megan's connection to the mountains is close at heart. With their first baby expected to arrive this spring, Megan reflects on nature's special role in her life from generation to generation, and why Y2Y is part of that.

"My husband and I have always connected through recreation in the mountains together. We love to cross-country ski, hike and go skating. Having visited for only short periods of time, we weren't aware of the efforts to protect these places and the wildlife we love. After finding out about Y2Y, we knew we wanted to support in some way. We love that Y2Y's work covers such a

huge landscape — not just small regions, but the whole corridor to help animals thrive.

"We know nature and the mountains will be a big part of raising our family. We are so excited to share our experiences with another little person and continue that legacy. To know that by keeping nature healthy these spaces will be there for our family is one big reason why we donate to and support the programs Y2Y advocates for."



Because people like Megan (and you!) share our vision for an interconnected system of wild lands and waters stretching from Yellowstone to Yukon, harmonizing the needs of people with those of nature, we know for certain that nature will be better off in the long run.

Become a Lynx member at y2y.net/Lynx.

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 gift 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

Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX

Card Number: _____

Expiry: _____ (MM/YY)

Signature: _____