



Connections Newsletter

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

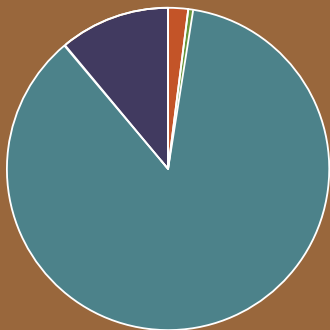
Bighorn Sheep. Credit: Shutterstock. Inset: Marmot. Credit: Shutterstock.

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This newsletter is for special people like you who donate, thoughtfully and generously, to protect and conserve wildlife and wilderness throughout the Y2Y region. Thank you for all you do to help people and nature thrive.

YOU are part of Y2Y's community of support. Our conservation work thrives because of donors who give in diverse ways — whether it's \$5 or thousands, every dollar counts.



% OF THE NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS

87%	Individuals	2%	Granting Foundations
11%	Monthly Individuals	.08%	Legacy Individuals

“What really worries me is the increasing division in the world. I feel like we've lost our sense of unity and connection.”

That's what Alison, one of our monthly donors, shared with us recently. And she's not alone. Many people are feeling disconnected — from one another and from nature.

But here at Y2Y, we're seeing something different.

People from all walks of life are coming together to protect what they love: nature and wildlife.

We see conservationists sitting down with industry leaders, old-timers sharing stories with students, and people of all political stripes working side by side — all united by a shared love of the land.

And just like the diverse species we work to protect, our donors are incredibly diverse, too.

They're hikers and hunters. Boomers and millennials. Oil and gas CEOs and environmentalists. Ranchers, Indigenous Elders, photographers — even NHL hockey players!

Every single one believes in something bigger than themselves: a connected, thriving landscape that supports people and nature.

In this special issue, we're celebrating how connection is at the heart of everything we do.

We're also honoring our monthly donors, who quietly power the steady, behind-the-scenes work that keeps this mission moving forward.

Thank you for giving and for believing in protecting a large, connected landscape that supports a diversity of activities, wildlife and people.

From backcountry trails to boardroom tables, we believe there is space for all.

And we're so grateful you're part of our community.



Restoring the buffalo way of life

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
BISON REMATRIATION PROJECTS



Bison in a meadow. Credit: Kent Nelson.

Can you imagine how breathtaking it would be to see free-ranging bison migrating across the prairies and rangelands?

For the First Nations and Tribes in the Yellowstone to Yukon region, it's not just a vision, it's a return to the 'buffalo way of life.'

For thousands of years, bison roamed from the Arctic tundra to the grasslands of Mexico, even to the eastern states, shaping and creating their habitat. Their hooves aerated the soil. Their thick fur carried seeds to regenerate native grasses. Their wallows filled with water to support entire ecosystems. And they provided food, tools and hides that sustained Indigenous peoples for millennia.

Then, in the span of a century, bison were nearly wiped from the continent, erasing thousands of years of identity, culture and ecology.

Today, most bison live on ranches or isolated pockets scattered across parks, reserves, and Tribal lands within the Yellowstone to Yukon region. It's a far cry from the wide-roaming populations of the past.

Bison are now slowly returning to the landscape. Over 43 Nations and Tribes spanning 10 provinces and states have signed the Buffalo Treaty, with a goal to bring bison back to the landscape, and restore vital relationships between wildlife, people and the land.

From the Blackfeet Tribe in Montana, to the Piikani and Kainai Nations along the Waterton-Glacier border, and the Stony Nakoda Nations near Banff National Park, Indigenous-led bison rematriation programs are reviving the species, along with cultural traditions and ecological relationships.

Each Indigenous-led project requires hundreds of thousands of dollars to acquire land, raise and transport buffalo, improve fencing, or provide ongoing monitoring. Thanks to your donations, we're able to partner with and partially fund the Indigenous groups leading these efforts.

Because of your generosity, our partnerships support:

- Education and awareness activities, like documentaries and events
- Fencing and corralling to keep bison safe and protect neighbouring ranchers' property and livestock
- Research and monitoring costs to track changes in ecological health as bison return to the land
- Ceremonial activities to help Indigenous people reconnect to the land and traditional ways of life

Restoring bison to their lands, and reconnecting Indigenous peoples to their ancestral ways of life is meaningful work. The bison's return makes landscapes more biodiverse, drought-tolerant, and climate-resilient, so expanding bison populations across the Y2Y landscape restore core habitat and ecological corridors. Bison also can provide food sovereignty, cultural reconnection, and economic opportunities for Indigenous people.

Your donations are funding meaningful acts of reconciliation. **Thank you for joining a powerful movement to bring bison back to the landscape, and help restore a deep connection between land, culture, and community.**

"It's meaningful to see Y2Y contributing to the restoration of culture and ways of living connected to the buffalo. It's empowering to walk the land, hear stories, and see how these animals affect the well-being and spirituality of people," says Nicole Olivier, Y2Y's manager of landscape protection and a member of the Ojibway First Nation of Fort William outside Thunder Bay, Ontario. *"When you look at the world and interact with your community from a buffalo way of life, your perspective changes. We observe and see how the bison care for the land. They avoid overgrazing. They move on and let the land rest. That shapes your culture, your language, how you eat at certain times of year, and how you share. It's a beautiful synergy. Those are good ways of being."*

The quiet crusade to save public lands

THANK YOU FOR FUNDING THIS CRITICAL WORK

You won't see it splashed across headlines. There are no dramatic media events or noisy political campaigns.

But thanks to you, a collaborative movement is quietly protecting and connecting public lands across the Yellowstone to Yukon region.

Public lands are critical for core habitats as well as ensuring animals have adequate room to roam across the Y2Y region. **Public or Crown lands account for 59 percent of this wild landscape**, while 17 percent are already designated protected. Without public land conservation work, the Yellowstone to Yukon mission would be impossible.

But what even are public or Crown lands?

In Canada, Crown lands are owned and managed by Canada's federal or provincial governments. In the United States, public lands are managed by agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service or the Bureau of Land Management.

For thousands of years, Indigenous Nations and Tribes throughout the Yellowstone to Yukon region were deeply connected to these lands — and they still are. Yet much of the public land managed by government agencies today was not legitimately ceded by Indigenous Peoples.

One thing is certain: These lands are beloved throughout North America. From backcountry hiking and camping, to hunting, fishing, and grazing ranch lands, people use and love public lands in many ways.

However, these lands are under growing pressure. Mining, logging, oil and gas drilling, and unchecked development threaten the integrity of our public lands.

On the U.S. side, the U.S. administration has a proposal to roll back and rescind the Roadless Rule. This 2001 policy restricts road construction and development activities that protects 58 million acres of forest across the west (about the size of the entire state of Wyoming!) These federal lands are now at risk of being mined, logged, and developed, putting ecological connectivity at risk.

On the Canadian side, coal mining proposals in Alberta and B.C. pose a dangerous

threat to the headwaters and wildlife habitat. Increased public use and tourism developments further threaten the connectivity and health of these wild spaces.

But here's the good news: thanks to your support, Y2Y is responding with something powerful...and surprisingly quiet.

Behind the scenes, we're bringing unlikely allies together: conservationists and hunters, ranchers and scientists, and different levels of government. We're supporting the efforts of several Indigenous Nations and Tribes. We're connecting people with diverse backgrounds, interests, cultures and political views.

We're finding common ground through our deep respect and shared love of the land and water. It turns out that public lands are a non-partisan issue many people are passionate about.

With your help, Y2Y is convening respectful, solutions-focused conversations.

As Laurel Angell, director of government relations and policy says:

"The Y2Y vision itself is a powerful tool that brings people of all political stripes together. When they see the Y2Y map, and hear how close the Greater Yellowstone grizzly bears are to reconnecting with the Northern Continental Divide population, people get it. They want to work together to make it happen."

Because of your support, we're able to spark conversations around kitchen tables or while out walking the land, and use science, maps, and strategies to protect these lands before irreversible damage occurs. So when changes to policies like the Roadless Rule or activities like coal mining threaten the long-term health of these wild ecosystems, we quietly mobilize our partners to take action.

These efforts require trust. And trust takes time to build.

Your ongoing monthly giving helps our team have the flexibility to respond quickly, fund emerging partnerships, and build long-term relationships that make conservation possible.

So thank you for believing in the steady, behind-the-scenes work of connection and collaboration. It's not sexy. It's not provocative. But it is an effective way to stitch our public and Crown lands together and complete the Y2Y vision.

A black bear is seen through a dense thicket of green leaves and branches. The bear's head and shoulders are visible, looking directly at the camera with a cautious expression. The background is a soft-focus forest scene.

Community-led conservation

CONSERVATION: IT TAKES A VILLAGE — AND YOU'RE PART OF IT

A black bear watches cautiously. Credit: Shutterstock.

There's a saying that works just as well for conservation as it does for raising kids: *it takes a village*.

Because when grizzly bears start showing up in their natural habitat for the first time in decades, it's not just a conservation milestone, it's a turning point for local communities.

And thanks to you, that turning point is being met with leadership and shared learning.

The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative vision is working. Wildlife corridors are being restored and core habitat is being reconnected. This means grizzly bear and wolf populations are recovering and expanding into regions where they haven't been seen for generations.

The tension of that success is very real in the Creston Valley, a small town nestled between the Selkirk and Purcell mountain ranges in British Columbia (B.C.). When more grizzly bears began showing up in farmland, orchards, backcountry trails, and near homes it was exciting to see the population increasing, but it could also be unnerving!

The Creston Valley residents and community leaders saw the need for action, and they reached out to Y2Y for help.

That's where you came in. With your help, we hosted and facilitated a community gathering in March 2025. Ranchers, farmers, First Nations, biologists, town staff, and residents came together to craft a community game plan to help people and wildlife safely coexist.

The community brainstormed and agreed on several priorities and needs. They wanted more bear safety and awareness information. They wanted inspiring community events. And along with these great ideas the community needed someone to coordinate and lead the activities.

With support from Y2Y donors, the Creston Valley Society hosted the Creston Bear Fair on June 28. The Bear Fair drew more than 200 valley residents, who enjoyed bear spray demos, wildlife awareness and education displays, and information on reducing wildlife attractants. We've also partially funded a new

wildlife coexistence coordinator, who's planning and managing the community's ongoing Wildsmart initiatives.

There's no one-size-fits-all solution to community-led conservation. As communities reach out to Y2Y for help, we listen and respond to their needs.

Your donations are equipping communities with resources to safely enjoy and coexist with wildlife. From the Elk Valley to the Bitterroot Valley your support helps cover the costs of:

- Community-led educational events
- Bear-resistant bins
- Fruit tree management and replacement programs
- Attractant awareness and removal
- Conflict-reduction initiatives in rural areas

As Nadine Raynolds, Y2Y's director of communities and conservation shares:

"If we want grizzly bears on the landscape, it's everyone's responsibility to coexist. We're all in this together. It's wonderful that our donors are supporting this critical community-led work. And it's amazing what these communities can do with very modest amounts of money."

You make it possible for Y2Y to show up, listen, share knowledge between communities, and invest in grassroots solutions.

You're not just expanding wildlife ranges — you're expanding the essential knowledge communities need to coexist with wildlife.

Becoming a monthly donor means that communities across the region aren't left to figure out coexistence on their own. You'll help communities adapt, respond, and lead in the face of change. Thank you for being a vital part of the village making coexistence possible.

Small gifts, big impact

HOW MONTHLY DONORS POWER LARGE-SCALE CONSERVATION

Why I Give: Two monthly donors share what inspires them

Can you remember what first inspired you to support Y2Y?

We love that our donors are as diverse as the wild landscape we protect. And your reasons to give are just as varied.

Lenore Hodgson, who's been donating monthly since 2005, was inspired to start giving when she saw a presentation from Y2Y about Karsten Heuer's epic hike from Yellowstone to Yukon. From childhood, nature and wildlife have been an important part of her life, and supporting conservation was a natural step.

"When Karsten shared his story and explained that animals don't know boundaries — I got it," she recalls. "I believed in and supported the values and principles of Y2Y immediately. I started donating a little more than the cost of a lunch every month, and I've been giving ever since!"

Alison Wines, a lifelong nature lover and avid backpacker, often travels with her young family from Toronto, Ontario to the Rockies where she's seen the impact of wildlife crossings. But it was the heartbreaking news of two female grizzly bears being killed by trains in Banff National Park this past May that motivated her to start a monthly gift this spring.

"Y2Y is doing active work on the ground, making a huge impact with wildlife crossings and education. I love animals and nature, so donating monthly to Y2Y was an obvious fit for me."

You might assume large-scale conservation is powered by wealthy philanthropists, big foundations or government grants. While those do play a role, **the steady, reliable support from monthly donors like Alison and Lenore keeps us nimble and effective.**

Your monthly gift provides Y2Y with consistent funding that supports the day-to-day operations and long-range planning.

Alison understands this first-hand. As a former nonprofit executive director, she knows just how critical monthly donors are to the financial health of any charity.

*"While one-off donations are fantastic, executive directors are always looking ahead and asking: can I afford to pay my staff salaries for the next 12 months? Can we afford to do the programming we've mapped out? **Monthly donations keep consistent funding coming in to support long-term planning.**"*

Lenore, now a retired grandmother, loves that monthly giving is set it and forget it.

"It's such an easy way to support one of my favorite charities. I would find it pretty hard to try and give a larger lump sum at tax time. But this way, I don't even notice it coming out of my budget each month, and I'm still doing something meaningful to help protect wildlife."

Though their backgrounds and reasons to give are different, both women share a desire to be part of something bigger than themselves.

As Alison says, *"When I drive by those overpasses, I feel a sense of ownership. I know they were built long before I started giving, but I feel connected to them."*

Your support connects landscapes, wildlife and people. Whether you give \$20 a month or \$200, your contribution makes long-term conservation work possible. **Thank you for being an important member of our generous community of supporters.**



Lenore Hodgson, Monthly Donor



Alison Wines, Monthly Donor



If you'd like to start or increase your monthly donation, fill out the donation form on the back page, or contact our donor relations manager, Robin Forsyth: robin@y2y.net.

How one wolf sparked a conservation movement

YOU'RE PART OF PLUIE'S 30-YEAR LEGACY

It all began in a downpour.

In June of 1991, under heavy rain in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park near Banff, Alberta, a young female wolf was captured by researchers. They named her Pluie, the French word for rain. She became the first wolf to be fitted with a satellite collar, which could track her movements from anywhere.

At the time, it was believed that national parks were large enough to protect wide-ranging animals like wolves and bears. But Pluie proved otherwise.

Over the next two years, Pluie crossed more than 24 million acres, or an area roughly the size of Kentucky. She travelled through two countries, three states, two provinces, and more than 30 different jurisdictions. She survived busy highways, towns, ranch lands, industry and development along the way. Researchers were stunned. Pluie's journey revealed that isolated parks and protected areas weren't large enough. **To save wildlife, we had to think much bigger.**

And so the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative was founded, with a vision to connect a corridor of public and

private lands across the Rockies so wildlife can move freely and communities can thrive.

This vision is a reality today because people like you decided to act.

Donors and partners came together to build wildlife crossings, secure private land easements, advance Indigenous-protected areas, and foster partnerships across borders and jurisdictions. All because of a very special wolf, named Pluie. What began as one wolf's journey is now a continent-wide effort to give wildlife room to roam.

As we mark three decades since Pluie's journey, we're also marking three decades of your impact.

You've shown that when people combine their efforts, they can achieve what no single park or organization can do alone. Pluie's spirit lives on through your generosity. Every donation you give keeps her legacy alive. *Thank you for walking this path with Pluie and Y2Y.*



Inset: Grey wolf in Yellowstone National Park. Credit: Jacob W. Frank.

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative



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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.

Yes! I want to bridge the gap and give wildlife room to roam safely!

Your generous monthly donation connects and protects critical wildlife habitat and supports on-the-ground projects to keep our wild places wild, our communities healthy, and our water and air clear and pure. To make a gift, fill out and mail the form below, call us toll free at 1-800-966-7920 or make a secure donation online at y2y.net/donate.

Contact information

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Prov: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please renew and upgrade my support to protect nature

☐ 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: _____