



# Connections

## Newsletter

A black bear cub follows its mother during spring green-up.  
Photo: Shutterstock

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 some 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometers) of landscape, to support the health of people and wildlife. It's no simple task, but together with our supporters and more than 450 partners we're making it happen.*

### Take the pledge

Bear spray is one of our bare necessities out in the wild. Take the no-excuses pledge to carry bear spray this season. Encourage friends and family to sign, too!

**Sign the pledge at**  
[y2y.net/bearsafe](http://y2y.net/bearsafe).



## BE BRAVE —

*It takes guts to be a mama bear*

Recent times have reminded us of the resilience and power of nature — and its role in our own resilience! For nature to support us, we must also support it.

With spring in the air, many new animal mothers are counting on us to give them the space they need to welcome their babies into the wild world.

This newsletter honors the amazing efforts of people to live better with wildlife. Most of all, it's dedicated to YOU: a strong voice for nature and someone who embraces the courage it takes to connect and protect habitat across this region.

Together in 2019, we helped people and wildlife coexist. With partners we promoted bear safety to 700 rural Montanans in 15 communities, collaborated on wolverine reproduction research in B.C. and added 10 food storage lockers to U.S. campgrounds.

That's a sampling of impactful, on-the-ground actions we took, and will continue to take, with your help, more of which you'll read about in this issue. Inherently, you are creating safe spaces for animal mothers and all wildlife.

With gratitude for your mama figure leading up to Mother's Day, consider a gift in their name to Y2Y, to help all the "mama bears" out there!

# Courage for mountain caribou

Your support helped initiate an important hopeful moment for these animals

While hiking with friends in northern British Columbia's Peace Region in 2017, Tim Burkhart approached an alpine lakeshore and was stunned by what he saw: an antler that once belonged to a caribou from the Burnt Pine herd.

This herd had been extirpated in 2013, one of several herds in B.C. to fall victim to rampant human disturbance.

"Something called me to borrow this antler from the land. It had a story to tell about how mountain caribou are fighting for survival," says Tim Burkhart, Y2Y program manager.

The antler accompanied Tim through B.C. as he worked with Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners to communicate the urgent need to protect caribou habitat in the Peace.

"This antler was once part of an animal that is now a ghost, but their story remains important," Tim would say in his presentations to audiences across the province.

Now a new protected area brings hope for caribou in the Peace. In February 2020, West Moberly and Sauleau First Nations, B.C. and Canada signed a historic partnership agreement, protecting vital caribou habitat and enacting a new Indigenous protected area.

This is the third Indigenous protected area announced in the Yellowstone to Yukon region in the last six months — joining Yukon's Peel watershed and Qat'muk in southeast B.C. — and the first new park in the Peace since 2001.

In the year leading up to the announcement, the First Nations endured harsh opposition and racism, prompting the inclusion in the final agreement of a commitment from B.C. to review and report on the matter.



During this same period, Y2Y and allies helped organize thousands of letters of support to various governments and thanks to the Chiefs.

Your support was paramount in advancing this agreement and uplifting our partners when it was needed most. Your gift of courage is helping save a species on the brink of extinction.

"Throughout these adversities, numerous people including West Moberly's Chief Willson and Sauleau's Chief Cameron have echoed that encouragement from Y2Y and its supporters helped boost morale when the going got tough," says Tim.



Creating the conditions that allow people to share space with wildlife isn't always easy, but it's vital. In Chief Willson's words: "The caribou were there for us, now we need to be here for them." The antler, held aloft by Chief Willson at the agreement signing, has become a symbol of perseverance and bravery. Now, it will be returned to the land ceremoniously.

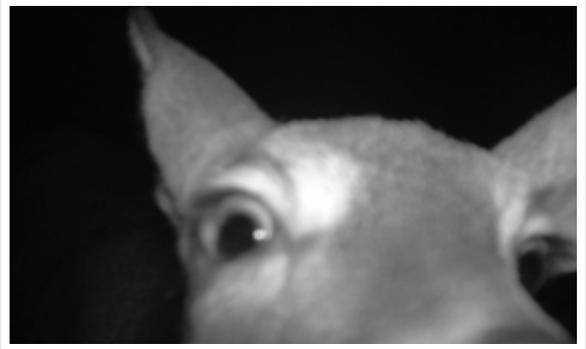
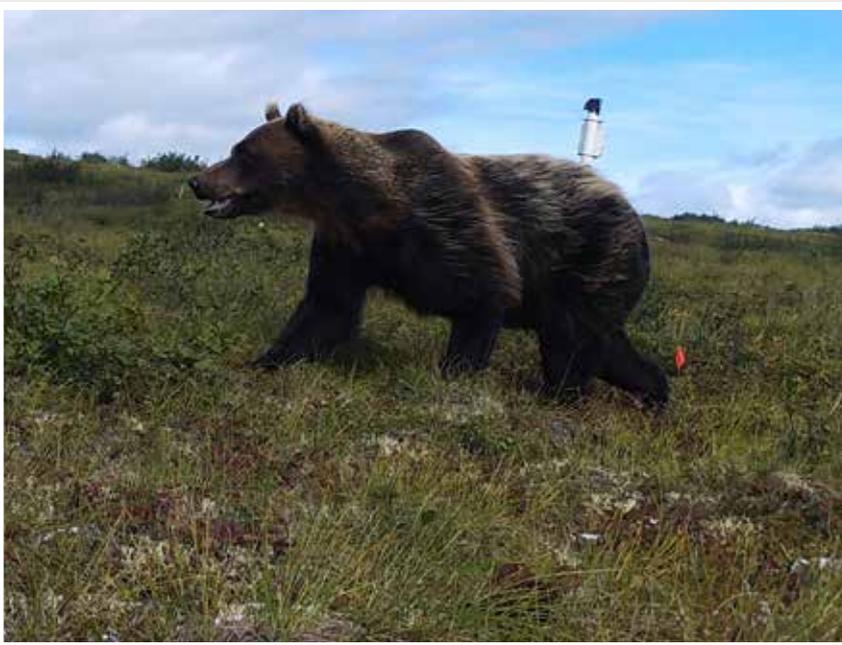
"It's time the antler reintegrates into the ecosystem where one day caribou may return. We must move forward with courage for the caribou that are still here," says Tim.



We asked you to stand up for caribou, and you have stood strong. Please thank West Moberly and Sauleau First Nations, B.C. and Canada for taking this massive step to save the endangered southern mountain caribou as we continue our support for advancing from agreement to action.

**Send your letter of support now at [y2y.net/caribourecovery](https://y2y.net/caribourecovery).**

Photos from top: Mountain caribou, Shutterstock; Chief Roland Willson, Tim Burkhart and Chief Ken Cameron in Vancouver at the agreement signing in February 2020, Candace Batycki; The caribou antler Tim found, Tim Burkhart.



Photos clockwise from top left: A grizzly bear passes by a camera set up to record caribou herd movement in northern Yukon Territory (Kirsten Reid); Deer and elk pass by a camera set up near Idaho's U.S. 20 highway, one designed to record wildlife movement and attempted crossings of the road (Kim Trotter); A lynx passes by a camera trap in north Idaho (David Moskowitz); A wolverine inspects a camera and hair-snagging station in southeastern British Columbia's mountain ranges. (Mirjam Barrueto/Wolverine Watch).

# Eyes in the field

## Remote trail cameras provide perspective on wildlife movement and shared space in the Yellowstone to Yukon region

Ever been in the forest and felt like something was watching you? It probably was! Wildlife surrounds us, listening and watching — even if you don't see it.

Trail cameras, game cameras, camera traps, and remote wildlife cameras are an important part of seeing what seems invisible.

These motion-activated cameras are used widely in research to find out more about wildlife and the spaces people share with them. They are a safe and non-intrusive way to monitor and track the movements of animals of all sizes.

This information helps Y2Y and partners make important decisions such as where wildlife are trying to cross roads, or how to reduce harmful human-wildlife interactions.

One example is wolverines. Because these loners travel such large distances, it can be hard to spot them.

Knowing where they live is a part of helping them, so we've teamed up with researchers at Wolverine Watch as well as University of Calgary on two projects that use camera traps. This knowledge will help better understand where wolverines are and how we can support their habitat needs better.

Thanks to your support, we're learning how to best live and recreate near wildlife.

Your gifts allow us to conduct research that uses camera traps and collect data that benefits people and wildlife. Thank you!

# Coexistence catch-up

## Home on the range

In many parts of the Yellowstone to Yukon region, people, cattle and carnivores use the same lands.

The Carnivore Co-existence Lab (CCL) at University of Wisconsin is one of Y2Y's 2019 partner grantees for their work in Alberta's beautiful southern foothills, supporting ranchers in coexisting with wolves, bears and cougars. Range rider Sherrine was hired for their pilot project that explores a simple question: does range riding deter carnivores from preying on livestock?

Your generosity enables us to support coexistence projects like this. With Y2Y's funding, CCL researchers executed a successful pilot season, tested their study design, and identified challenges and successes to build off.



Photo: Shutterstock



Photo: Shutterstock

## Looking at moose management

For Y2Y's 2019 Sarah Baker grant recipient Mateen Hessami, a deeper understanding of the value of healthy landscapes was ingrained through camping, hunting and fishing with his uncle at a young age.

Now a master's student at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan, Mateen studies moose harvest and conservation in B.C.'s Lake Revelstoke Valley. His research will seek how to best manage moose while conserving the Columbia North herd of endangered southern mountain caribou, and how that affects people.

Your support underpins the work undertaken by early-career researchers like Mateen in the Yellowstone to Yukon region as they embark on their conservation careers. Thank you!

## Playing in and protecting nature

It's not always easy, but finding common ground with others mobilizes change; and nature is one of those innate connections.

Dr. Karine Pigeon is leading a research project with the University of Northern British Columbia and Y2Y on the relationships between recreation and ecological impacts, including those in the Yellowstone to Yukon region.

"People protect what they love," says Karine. "Those who recreate in nature can become advocates for wild places. Understanding how to foster those connections while conserving biodiversity is at the core of my research."

We're passionate about playing in and protecting nature and know many of you are, too! Thanks for encouraging others to do the same.



Photo courtesy Karine Pigeon



Bird tracks along Montana's Flathead River. Photo credit: National Park Service

# Small steps lead to big change

## Ways you can help make a difference no matter where you are

There's plenty happening in the world that demands our attention daily, often asking us to act. We understand, sometimes it feels overwhelming. Where to start? What to do? Will it even make a difference?

Guess what? Everything you already do, or have done, to support Y2Y — donating, attending events and webinars, sharing messages — makes a huge impact for wildlife and nature every single day. Thank you.

We strongly believe that every step forward can bring change. Sometimes, that change happens quickly, and sometimes it takes longer. Sometimes you do the work on-the-ground, and sometimes it's from the comfort of your living room couch. We also know that when digging up the courage (and hope) for wildlife, for nature, and for the environment, it can help knowing that you aren't alone.

Here's what the Y2Y team shared when asked about small steps people can take to protect wildlife and places in the Yellowstone to Yukon region. **You can read more at [y2y.net/inspiringchange](https://y2y.net/inspiringchange).**

*"First, let your voice be heard and then, bring others into the conversation and listen."  
—Merrill Chester Gregg, board member*

*"Solving all the world's problems is overwhelming. Pick a small set of challenges to which you can bring knowledge and passion; then act, learn, adapt, and build on that foundation."  
—Dr. Bill Weber, vice-chair, U.S. board of directors*

*"People act on an optimistic vision. It may be surprising but a can-do energy spreads quickly and others get excited to join in whatever the effort and help proliferate positivity."  
—Dr. Jodi Hilty, president and chief scientist*

*"Find your voice! Write to your local representatives, attend community events that support conservation, and share important messages with friends, family and even strangers."  
—Catherine Pao, H.R. and finance director*

*"We obviously face some big challenges in trying to keep our planet healthy. During my hockey career, I found that the best way to face big challenges was summoned up by the hockey cliché 'one shift at a time.' As the Chinese proverb says, 'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.' By taking it one step, one shift at a time, we will make a difference."  
—Scott Niedermayer, board member*

# A gift that is "Forever Wild"

Leaving your legacy can make a huge difference in our shared future

Nature is a legacy for all to enjoy, now and into the future. There are many ways to contribute including making a Forever Wild legacy or planned gift to Y2Y. Long time board member Jeremy Guth shares some of the reasons he is part of this program:

"I have always been fascinated by nature. I remember staring into ponds as a boy, looking at toads and newts and wondering about their lives. I used to go camping every weekend and loved fishing.

"As a Y2Y board member, I hope to inspire others to consider a gift to the legacy program. We as individuals don't live forever, but with our help, nature can continue to thrive far beyond our lifetimes. I see a clear parallel between the large landscape scale that Y2Y works at and the span of time that it takes to look after nature. It will take many generations to ensure that we as a species are living in a way that honors and

integrates with nature.

"As we nurture our children and loved ones and invest in their lives, we must do the same for nature.

"That's the way my wife, Nina-Marie, and I explain our legacy plans to our family: nature is like another

significant member of the family; giving to Y2Y through a legacy gift is about giving both to nature and our kids. I want Y2Y to carry on thriving and doing amazing things — and I like to think that through legacy giving, I'll be a part of that."

**Find out more about Forever Wild, our legacy and planned giving program, at [y2y.net/foreverwild](http://y2y.net/foreverwild).**



## 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](http://y2y.net). 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.

### Every gift makes a difference now and into the future.

Your consistent and dependable support ensures we can continue to connect and protect essential habitat, and supports on-the-ground coexistence 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, please send me information on the Forever Wild legacy donation program.

#### 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: \_\_\_\_\_