



# Connections

## Newsletter

Padding down Alberta's Bow River.  
Photo: K Zenkewich

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

### In this issue

- P2 — Communities for conservation
- P3 — Taking a stand (for good)
- P5 — Species to know about: Grizzly bears
- P6 — From global to local

*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 460 partners over our history, we're making it happen.*

### Ecosystems give back to us

When we take care of nature, nature can take care of us; which is why it's important to know some of the key ways people benefit from ecosystems:

1. Carbon storage
2. Freshwater
3. Nature-based recreation

By mapping where these benefits occur and human access and demand for them, researchers (including Y2Y's Dr. Aerin Jacob) found that just 0.6% of Canada are "hotspots" for providing high amounts of all three benefits to people. Two of those places are in the Y2Y region: parts of British Columbia's inland temperate rainforest in the southeast of the province, and the Eastern Slopes of Alberta's Rockies.

Thanks to this research and advocacy, governments can act on protecting the places we need most. Learn more: [y2y.net/EcosystemResearch](https://y2y.net/EcosystemResearch).

## EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED:

*You do a world of good for all*

In a way ecosystems are a model of interconnection — each part relies on the others around it to function.

The same goes for humans. Fundamentally, we are connected to nature. People are part of nature, not apart from nature.

This valuable lesson that many Indigenous cultures have long embraced: the interconnection of humans, plants and animals from the tiniest insect to the big burly bison, to living landscapes and life-giving waters, is one we must weave into Western science and culture.

Time and again, we see that our individual actions matter; but to really make a difference, we must work together, as in an ecosystem, to "save" nature, and therefore, ourselves.

That's why connection of wildlife habitat, of people with nature, and with partners and others across this diverse region, has always been at the core of Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative's work.

Your efforts, whether on the ground demanding action, online writing letters to government, or sending in a donation via mail, can set off a wave of positive change.

In this newsletter, we hope to illuminate how your support of Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative does a world of good for all.

Thank you!



A remote camera captures a visitor to a Wolverine Watch research station..  
Photo: Mirjam Barrueto

# Communities for conservation

## Combining communities, science and knowledge for good

The first one is unforgettable. “I remember the first time I saw a wolverine (in southern interior B.C.) They’re so elusive. They’re hard to see...they’re kind of the last wild creature out there,” described Adrian, a trail-builder in Salmon Arm, British Columbia, during an interview with Y2Y staff.

That first sighting was in 2004. As an avid backcountry skier, Adrian often saw wolverine tracks imprinted in the snow in that same area. It wasn’t until he attended Y2Y’s Wildlife Wise wolverine workshop in 2020 that he thought to pass this information on to Wolverine Watch, one of Y2Y’s partners on wolverine research.

In the end, these reported sightings contributed to critical research on the elusive wolverine, which could lead to greater protection for their habitat. More than 300 sightings of wolverines, tracks, and possible den sites have been sent to the Wolverine Watch website by recreationist “citizen scientists” — including Adrian.

“We’ve combined habitat modelling and our former work with genetics with the citizen science contribution to decide where we’re going to fly our drone and look specifically for dens or reproductive areas. All of the reproductive areas we’ve found have been informed by citizen science,” said Doris Hausleitner, Wolverine Watch researcher, in a 2020 interview with East Kootenay News Online Weekly.

Citizen science, also known as community science\*, has done a world of good for research of all kinds. At Y2Y, we have seen many success stories just like this one! Another example where community scientists have made an impact is the RoadWatch B.C. program

with partners Wildsight, the Miistakis Institute and the Western Transportation Institute.

Between 2016 and 2019, people traveling down Highway 3 in the Elk Valley reported their wildlife sightings on a smartphone app. These sightings also included unfortunate wildlife-vehicle collision incidents. Ultimately, the data showed researchers where animals try to cross the highways, whether or not they succeed.

Results were shared with road planners to help determine the best locations for wildlife crossing structures, including the overpasses you may already have seen in Banff or Montana. Now, there’s an entire network of wildlife underpasses, overpasses and fencing in planning, completed or under construction on this highway! Thanks to community scientists safely sharing their sightings, people and wildlife can have safer travels into the future.

Like the overpasses or wolverine sightings, there are many ways to lend a helping hand to research and conservation, and create meaningful impact on the ground. Your efforts and contributions are bringing communities and science together. You are helping conserve wild places and wildlife one project at a time.

---

*\*Why “community science” instead of “citizen science”? Scientists and others are starting to use this term more because it recognizes that an individual doesn’t have to have citizenship within a country, province or state to participate in these collaborative projects. It’s important to us to be inclusive of all who appreciate and want to contribute to research in this way!*



*“From grizzly bears, to the salmon and the rivers — it’s all connected.”*

*— Vicky Husband, Y2Y supporter and long-time advocate for nature*

Connecting with the ancient giants of interior British Columbia’s inland temperate rainforest. Photo: K. Bellefeuille

## Take a stand (for good)

### People advocating for ancient forests and the animals reliant on them

*“The air we breathe, water we drink and land we live on...we have to protect it. We have to take a stand.”*

That’s according to Vicky Husband — one of B.C.’s best-known environmentalists, and a member of the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia.

“Years ago, I realized the importance of our old growth and the critical habitat it provides for so many wildlife. From grizzly bears, to the salmon and the rivers — it’s all connected,” she explains.

As a donor and advocate, Vicky has long supported Y2Y’s work to protect caribou habitat, oppose the Site C Dam, advocate for Indigenous-led conservation, and ensure that the magnificent inland temperate rainforest of southeastern B.C. stays standing. Like you, she knows protecting old growth benefits all species, including people.

Old-growth forests provide food, water, medicines, recreation and tourism opportunities, among other resources. They also store carbon and produce clean air to fill our lungs. These forests and the life within them fulfill cultural and spiritual needs for communities,

including Indigenous Peoples.

Species such as the iconic mountain caribou also depend on these spectacular ecosystems as habitat and for seasonal food sources such as lichen. Caribou have been crucial for many First Nations since time immemorial, for cultural reasons as well as those related to health and food security.



Vicky Husband. Photo: Carla Funk

But today, irreplaceable old-growth forests are being logged all over British Columbia. Inaction is no longer an option. Does hope for these forests, for people and wildlife still exist? Our answer is yes.

This hope comes from the good that people, including you, are doing by taking a stand for nature.



Lichen growing on old-growth trees sustains mountain caribou over winter.  
Photo: David Moskowitz

This past year, hundreds of people have been part of ongoing Indigenous-led protests on the logging of rare old growth in southern Vancouver Island. With more than 1,000 people having been arrested at the Fairy Creek protests, this is now the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history (856 were arrested at Clayoquot Sound in 1993.)

During this time, the inland temperate rainforest in the Yellowstone to Yukon region — and the communities of people and animals who depend on it — have also needed voices of support.

This summer, Y2Y joined local community members, including First Nations leaders and representatives, in calling on the provincial government and timber companies to stop logging high-risk old growth and caribou habitat. Groups, such as Old Growth Revylution near Revelstoke, have also been a strong presence in the region.

People protect the places they love. For Vicky Husband, this fight to protect old-growth forests has endured for more than 40 years.

“The inland temperate rainforest is one of the jewels of the world,” says Vicky. “Old-growth forests are critical for so many reasons and absolutely have to be protected. That’s the best way forward right now.”

You have been a big part of demanding protections for old growth and caribou habitat. We’ve seen thousands of petition signatures and letters come in from people telling decision-makers why this issue matters. You have also shown unwavering support through your gifts.

While there’s a work still to be done, the impassioned reaction to these issues shows we can make a difference — together.

Thank you for taking a stand.

### Take your stand



Touching an old-growth tree: K. Bellefeuille  
Fern: Lynn Trinh

Speak up for these fantastic forests.  
Continue this fight for the forests that do a world of good:  
Write [y2y.net/caribou](http://y2y.net/caribou)  
Sign: [y2y.net/OldGrowth](http://y2y.net/OldGrowth)  
Support: [y2y.net/donate](http://y2y.net/donate)

### Visit ancient forests



You can "travel" to the spectacular inland temperate rainforests of the Upper Columbia.  
Videographer Lynn Trinh created a beautiful series of films about this important region including one on our irreplaceable old-growth forests.  
Watch them at [y2y.net/UCFilms](http://y2y.net/UCFilms).

# Species to know about: Grizzly bears

Y2Y's Jessie Grossman shares how your support keeps this mammal moving

## What makes them so special?

For me, grizzly bears represent the interconnection of nature and people. As an “umbrella” species, the health and connection of grizzly bear populations reveals the bigger picture well-being of the world they — and we — live in.

When grizzly bear populations are healthy, their habitat supports the health and vitality of nearly 80 percent of other species living in the same region. Doing right by grizzly bears also does a whole world of good for the plants, animals, lands and waters people rely on.

That's why we focus on reconnecting grizzly bear populations in the Yellowstone to Yukon region, including from the U.S.-Canada border into the Yellowstone and Bitterroot Ecosystems. As a potential connector between western Montana, northern Idaho and Greater Yellowstone, the Bitterroot is key to the goal of a thriving, interconnected grizzly population across the Northern Rockies, whose habitat has long been fragmented, resulting in isolated and disconnected populations.

Over the past few years, news of grizzly bear sightings in this important area shows we're doing something right. When I first heard of a bear that traveled all the way from northwest Montana into the Bitterroot, and back north again, I thought of the incredible strength, persistence and skill this took, much of which is unknown to us.

I'm in awe of the animal's ability to travel hundreds of miles from home and return again. Even bears translocated from their home ground often make a beeline back to where they were picked up. This bear's travels represent a hopeful future for bears to move across the landscape, and naturally reconnect to their former range.

As U.S. program manager for Y2Y, I see first-hand how your contributions keep these mammals moving. Whether through bear safety programs or private lands conservation, these projects don't happen without your help.

I'm optimistic for the future of grizzly bears and our evolving relationship with them. With your help, we can keep grizzly bears going down the path of least resistance for the greater good of all creatures.



Photo: NPS/Adams

## Fast facts:

- Female and male grizzly bears move differently; males move farther, while females have “stepping stones” of habitat, expanding their range through generations.
- We share 80% of our DNA with grizzly bears! Douglas Chadwick reminds us of this unexpected connection in his new book, *Four-Fifths a Grizzly*, and how Y2Y's big-picture work facilitates interconnection.
- Grizzly bears are one of the slowest reproducing land mammals. Cubs stay with their moms for 2-3 years, and female grizzly bears don't begin reproducing until they are 4-5 years old.

## Partners in habitat protection:

- Vital Ground, Y2Y, and a landowner worked to conserve 80 acres (32 ha.) of land in northwestern Montana. The project helps maintain a critical connection for wildlife like grizzly bears between the Cabinet Mountains to the north and the Bitterroot Mountains to the south.

## Help bears year round:

- From winter slumber, to spring awakening, and seasonal “fattening up,” your monthly gifts can help keep bears safe. See the donation slip on the back page or go to [y2y.net/lynx](http://y2y.net/lynx).

# From global to local

## Your generosity goes a long way

You help lay the groundwork for one of the largest wildlife connectivity projects in the world.

The Yellowstone to Yukon region is one of the world's last and best strongholds for nature. Y2Y is the only organization dedicated to securing the long-term ecological health of this entire region.

Nature doesn't know borders, meaning our regional work is also part of a bigger picture as the world grapples with the biodiversity and climate crises. We know that habitat loss and fragmentation are the leading causes of enormous loss of plant and animal species; but we also know that as a collective humanity, we have a chance to make drastic and positive change.

Here's a start: In 2021, the Biden Administration pledged to protect 30 percent of America's lands and waters by 2030, a goal shared with Canada. In September at the International Union for Conservation of Nature's World

Congress, Y2Y co-sponsored Motion 101, passed with overwhelming support to protect and conserve at least 30 percent of land and ocean globally by 2030 with full Indigenous participation.

Science, traditional knowledge and experience have shown us that collaborative large-landscape conservation, like Y2Y's, is critical to reach these ambitious, but necessary, goals.

Does the world have plenty of work to do? Yes, and we can't get there without you.

Thank you for literally doing a world of good with your generous gifts.



Photo: Shutterstock

## Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative



Phone 403.609.2666  
Toll-free 1.800.966.7920



200-1350 Railway Avenue  
Canmore, AB T1W 1P6  
Canada



P.O. Box 157  
Bozeman, MT 59771-0157  
USA



y2y.net  
info@y2y.net



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

## Monthly donors are the cornerstone of our work.

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

### Contact information

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Prov: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### I support Y2Y

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

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

### Payment method

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

Charge my  Visa  MasterCard  AMEX

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_ (MM/YY)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_