

**YELLOWSTONE TO YUKON**

CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

**ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

*making connections, naturally*

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

In the summer of 2008, I travelled the entire length of the Yellowstone to Yukon region, from the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks in Wyoming, north along the Rocky Mountain Cordillera, across Canada's Northwest Territories, all the way to the shores of the Arctic Ocean. I saw a 2,000-mile-long (3,200 km) untamed landscape, strung with glaciated mountain peaks and sprawling swaths of roadless wilderness. I witnessed a land sustaining elk, antelope, caribou, and grizzly bears. I fished rivers chock full of bull and cutthroat trout, and spied golden eagles and peregrine falcons wheeling overhead. And it reminded me how big the Yellowstone to Yukon region really is. If laid on its side, the region would stretch from Calgary, Alberta to Montreal, Quebec or from Washington, D.C., to Seattle, Washington. This is one very big and wild north-south landscape; big enough and healthy enough to serve as a continental refuge for wildlife needing to adapt to our climate that is changing rapidly.

At every stop I met people who are fully and absolutely committed to preserving the integrity of this incredible landscape for the wildlife and the planet—but also, importantly, for their own communities and the generations to follow. The Yellowstone to Yukon ecosystem is huge, without a doubt, but so is our collective ambition to see it protected and connected in the face of threats that can arise from global climate change, resource development, urbanization, and road building.

In 2008, a huge chunk of the Y2Y “protect and connect” vision fell into place through groundwork laid for the successful 2009 expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories. This extraordinary accomplishment was enabled by the vision and determination of the Deh Cho First Nations and a seven year public campaign led by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, with support from Yellowstone to Yukon region funders such as the Wilburforce and Kendall Foundations, as well as the Canadian Boreal Initiative and Mountain Equipment Co-op. Nahanni is now six times its previous size, making it by far the largest core protected wildlife habitat in the entire Y2Y system—bigger than Yellowstone, Banff, and Jasper National Parks combined. It is wonderful to reflect on the fact that, 137 years after the unique wildlands of Yellowstone become the world's first National Park, Nahanni has

become one of the world's largest National Parks. With the hard-fought expansion of Nahanni, the dream of a protected and connected Yellowstone to Yukon landscape has taken a giant step forward.

There were certainly challenges in 2008, but the year also brought opportunities to move forward with energy, focus, and even optimism. We are pleased to share with you, in these pages, some of the accomplishments that have occurred over the past year and some reminders of why this vast, irreplaceable landscape is so important and worthy of our efforts. As always, we greatly appreciate your support and couldn't do the work without it. Thank you!



Rob Buffler, Executive Director

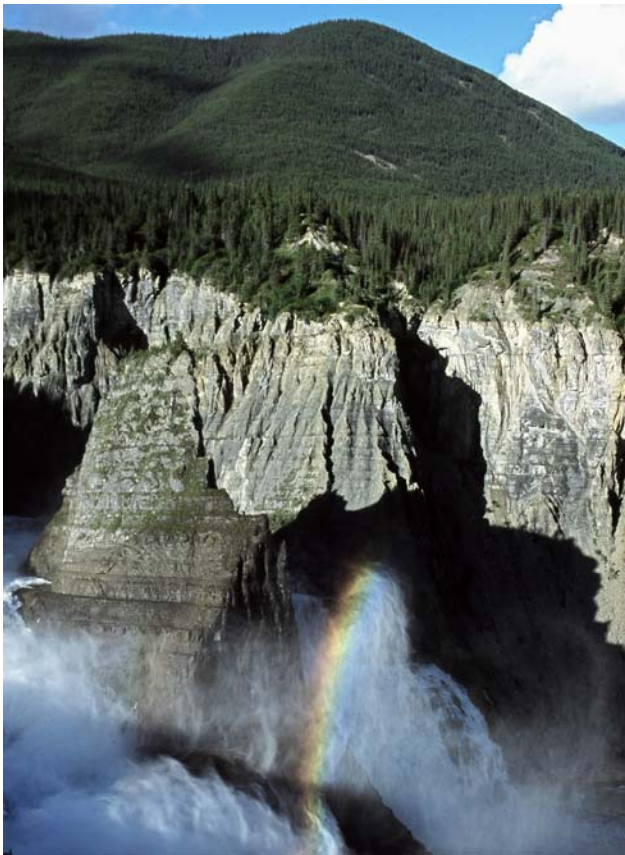


Photo credit: Harvey Locke.

## THE YELLOWSTONE TO YUKON REGION AS A BUFFER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Together with our partners, we're betting the future that the vast Yellowstone to Yukon region can accommodate wildlife and plant species needing to adapt to the world's changing climate. Y2Y's vast mountain landscape is well suited to helping species adapt to climate change for several reasons. Most obviously, it offers space and geographic span. At 463,000 square miles (1.2 million square km) and spanning 15 degrees of latitude (the equivalent of 2,000 miles or 3,200 km), the Yellowstone to Yukon region allows species to follow shifting habitats and food sources or make other climate-related adjustments. Further, the abundance of high mountains allows species and even ecosystems to survive by migrating to higher elevations or cooler aspects, perhaps only a short distance from their current locations.

And ultimately, large and ecologically healthy ecosystems have a better chance of weathering climate change than do small, degraded ones. The Yellowstone to Yukon region is still ecologically intact; sadly, this is a rarity in the major ecosystems of the world today. Recent research in the US showed that about half of 1,600 wildlife species studied are already changing their behavior and locations in response to shifting climatic conditions. Protecting and connecting core wildlife habitat is now seen as the most important strategy to help pressured species adapt.

In 2008, the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative continued to build its reputation as the world's leading large landscape conservation initiative to protect core wildlife habitat and ensure that wildlife corridors connect these cores. Y2Y's collaborative conservation approach, with partner organizations, provides the support and capacity needed to achieve long-term success.



Cover photo credit: Dave Simons.

Photo credit: Wayne Sawchuk.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS IN Y2Y'S GRIZZLY BEAR PRIORITY AREAS

The Y2Y Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy is not just about protecting grizzly bears. By protecting an “umbrella species” like the grizzly bear, we also protect a whole array of other animals and plants with less extensive needs. This premise was integral to the development of our Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy and lies at the heart of our work to conserve the biodiversity of the entire Yellowstone to Yukon region.

Nine grizzly bear Priority Areas, identified by more than a decade of grizzly bear habitat modeling and research, remain the primary target of our organizational efforts. Within each area, Y2Y leads or collaborates on projects that are advancing conservation on the ground.

- The two areas of most activity continue to be the Crown of the Continent and Cabinet-Purcells Priority Areas. Both provide critical and tenuous bridges between US and Canadian grizzly populations. Much of the work in the Crown of the Continent Priority Area is focused on wildlife mortalities and habitat fragmentation associated with Canada’s Highway 3 (see story on Page 5). Linkage between habitats is critical, but avoiding conflict with humans is also a key part of safe passage for bears. Y2Y supports a multitude of important actions that are reducing human-bear conflicts and increasing the survival of bears in the Crown. For example, a remote camera caught one surprised grizzly trying unsuccessfully to get into a trapper’s meat cache, which was stored in an UnBearable Bin supplied by the Karelian Bear Shepherding Society, funded in part by Y2Y. As such bear-proofing practices spread, conflicts between bears and people will decline, sparing bears from an unhappy fate.
- Within the Cabinet-Purcells Mountain Corridor, Y2Y’s long-running collaboration with dozens of agencies, organizations, land trusts, Native American tribes, and scientists is delivering a multitude of partner-led projects to support grizzly bear presence in, and movement through, the landscape. Many of these activities aim to reduce human-bear conflicts by better managing bear attractants like garbage, fruit trees, beehives, and livestock feed.

For example, in northern Idaho, the National Wildlife Federation is fencing waste sites and installing bear-proof garbage containers in Forest Service camp-

grounds. On the Canadian side, community Bear Aware programs are increasing support for the existence of bears by educating citizens in ways to manage homes and farms so bears will not be tempted to approach. Other programs, such as Wildlands CPR’s road removal and restoration activities in Idaho, increase available habitat for bears and reduce the threats caused by motorized vehicles in the backcountry. A critical land acquisition in the Cabinet-Purcells was also completed in 2008. Read more on page 5.

- Canada’s Rocky Mountain national and provincial parks constitute one of the largest blocks of protected wilderness within the entire Yellowstone to Yukon region. Recognizing the importance of communication among groups working here, we launched an initiative to develop a collective vision for this landscape and strategies for its accomplishment.
- Y2Y advanced the collaborative process in the critical Peace River Break area of northeastern British Columbia by convening a workshop of scientists and activists to share the latest research on key species, notably grizzly bears, caribou, and bull trout, and threats to their well-being.
- And, finally, during 2008, in partnership with CPAWS BC, Y2Y helped launch a new campaign to draw attention to the threats and opportunities within the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area, a 16-million acre complex of protected landscapes and special management zones in northern British Columbia.

[CLICK HERE:](#) GRIZZLY BEAR PRIORITY AREAS MAP



Photo credit: Dave Simons.

## PROTECTING AND CONNECTING IN THE CABINET-PURCELLS

A key piece of the “connect” part of the “protect and connect” vision fell into place in the Yellowstone to Yukon region at the Canadian/ US border in 2008.

Y2Y’s fundraising efforts helped a collaboration of more than 30 organizations purchase a key parcel of private land within a grizzly bear movement corridor spanning Canadian Highway 3 through British Columbia; these included the Trans-Border Grizzly Project, Nature Trust of BC, Vital Ground, and The Nature Conservancy-Montana. The parcel, known as Kid Creek, protects one of only three remaining wildlife movement corridors across this problematic highway (see story below).

These three corridors are critical to the long term viability of the Yellowstone to Yukon ecosystem because they are the only linkages left that can connect robust wildlife populations in British Columbia with the largest protected core of wilderness in the Lower 48—a complex of Wilderness Areas in central Idaho, from which grizzly bears were extirpated decades ago.

The Kid Creek land deal contributes to a larger strategy to ensure that private lands in several key corridors are secured for conservation management. We saw evidence in 2008 that the collaborative conservation strategy is working when the first known grizzly bear in nearly 90 years moved south through one of those three corridors from Canada into the Bitterroot Mountains along the Idaho/Montana border.

## MAKING HIGHWAYS SAFER FOR WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE IN THE CROWN OF THE CONTINENT

Wending its way through the Crowsnest Pass that connects Alberta with British Columbia, Highway 3 is a busy, two-lane roadway that serves tourists, commercial truck traffic, and local residents. For the many wildlife species trying to cross the highway to and from supportive habitats, the road is a death trap. Collisions with wildlife also cause great damage to vehicles and injuries to people.

For the past several years, Y2Y has partnered with Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, Miistakis Institute for the Rockies, Western Transportation Institute, and Crowsnest Conservation Society to find and implement ways to significantly reduce or eliminate these deaths and injuries. Y2Y has supported several scientific studies to pinpoint the exact locations animals most frequently use to cross the road. This work is supplemented by the Miistakis Institute’s innovative “Roadwatch in the Pass” program, which encourages local citizens to report sightings of animals on or near the road. Through these efforts, 32 crossing spots for multiple species have been identified for Highway 3. Y2Y will continue to work with our partners to promote the creation of over- and underpasses to provide animals safe passage across this busy highway.



Photo credit: Florian Schulz.

## SHARING THE VISION

Good communication is as critical as accurate science to the success of ambitious conservation efforts. Y2Y has been engaged in a number of efforts to communicate more effectively, raise awareness of the global importance of the Yellowstone to Yukon region, and build support for the work to keep it intact.

Several projects in 2008 advanced our communications program:

- Y2Y's sponsorship of the Banff Mountain Film Festival and North American Tour continued through its third year, with the 2008 festival attracting more than 180,000 outdoor enthusiasts to 320 screenings in Canada and the US. Y2Y was promoted as a sponsor at the beginning of each screening, and the festival program promoted Y2Y. This sponsorship was made possible by the Wilburforce Foundation.
- In March 2008, Y2Y hosted four events in and around Bozeman, Montana, featuring photographer Florian Schulz. Florian's slide presentations, based on his book, *Yellowstone to Yukon: Freedom to Roam* (Mountaineers Books, 2005), were a compelling tribute to, and plea for, the region. The presentations at the Museum of the Rockies, Big Sky Institute, Yellowstone Club, and the Club at Spanish Peaks raised both awareness and funds, and strengthened ties at the museum as they consider development of a Yellowstone Hall.
- During 2008, Y2Y worked with the Field Museum in Chicago to plan and prepare an exhibit based on Florian Schultz's photographic exhibit. It is anticipated that during 2009, more than 100,000 people will view the exhibit discovering the Y2Y landscape and wildlife, and learning about issues. Support from the Legacy Fund of Chicago made this installation possible.
- A grant from the Woodcock Foundation funded a communications audit to help us identify our audiences and focus our messaging. Based on one high-priority recommendation from the audit, we redesigned the Y2Y website to be more informative, more easily updated with current news, and simpler to navigate. Since the new website's launch in March 2008, visits to the website per month have more than doubled.



Photo credit: Dave Simons.

## INCREASING AWARENESS, AFFECTING POLICY

In 2008, Y2Y launched a new strategy to identify and influence key policy barriers and opportunities essential to the Y2Y vision. Policy initiatives in which Y2Y has participated include:

- The Freedom to Roam steering committee – a major effort to raise awareness among Americans of the need for wildlife connectivity.
- The Alberta grizzly bear recovery campaign.
- Alberta's innovative Land Use Framework.
- Montana Fish Wildlife and Park's Connectivity Working Group, which is identifying critical linkages for focal species and guidelines for managing them.



Photo credit: Dave Simons.

## Y2Y PARTNERS

The following organizations, agencies, First Nations, and Native American tribes worked with Y2Y in 2008:

Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Canmore Office  
Alberta Wilderness Association  
American Bird Conservancy  
American Wildlands  
Anatum Ecological Consulting Ltd.  
Aspen Wildlife Research  
Aquila Applied Ecologists  
Banff Park Radio  
BC Ministry of Environment, Environmental Stewardship Division  
BC Ministry of Forests and Range, Northern Interior Forest Region  
BC Ministry of Forests and Range, Integrated Land Management Bureau, Fort St. John  
Bear Aware British Columbia (Kaslo, Kimberley, Nelson, & Selkirk/Purcell)  
Birchdale Ecological  
Calgary Zoo  
Canadian Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission  
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (National Office, BC, Yukon, NWT, Northern Alberta & Southern Alberta)  
Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition  
Center for Large Landscape Conservation  
Chillborne Environmental Ltd.  
Chinook Institute for Community Stewardship  
Citizens United to Save the Peace  
Coeur d'Alene Tribe  
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes  
Crown Network, University of Montana  
Crown Managers Partnership  
Crowsnest Conservation Society  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Defenders of Wildlife, Canada  
Diversified Environmental  
Ecological Strategies  
Flathead Wild  
Fraser Headwater Alliance  
Freedom to Roam Campaign  
Freshwater Research Limited  
Friends of Banff National Park  
Friends of Lardeau River  
Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness  
Great Burn Study Group  
Great Northern Environmental Stewardship Area  
Greater Yellowstone Coalition  
Hawkins Creek Stewardship Committee  
Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce  
Jumbo Wild Coalition  
Karelian Bear Shepherding Institute of Canada  
Keystone Conservation  
Ktunaxa Intertribal Fisheries Commission  
Ktunaxa First Nation  
Ktuxaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council  
Kutenai River Network  
Lafarge  
LGL Limited  
Lincoln County Sanitation Working Group  
Maa Press  
Mark Creek Recovery Program  
Miistakis Institute for the Rockies  
Mineral County Resource Advisory Committee  
Montana Department of Transportation  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Montana State University, Ecology Department  
Mountain Caribou Science Team  
Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre  
Mountain Equipment Co-op  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nature Conservancy of Canada, Alberta Region  
Nez Perce Tribe  
Ninemile Wildlife Movement Areas Citizens' Working Group  
Parks Canada, Banff National Park  
Parsnip Grizzly Bear Project  
Patagonia  
Peace Habitat and Conservation Endowment Trust  
Peace Williston Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program  
Pearce & Associates Ecological Research  
PensInk Information Technologies Ltd.  
Pro Bono Students Canada  
Selkirk/Purcell Bear Aware  
Selkirk Conservation Alliance  
Shell Canada  
Sierra Club of Canada, Alberta WILD  
Sierra Club of BC  
Sierra Club of BC Foundation  
Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS)  
Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project  
Spine of the Continent Campaign  
Swan Ecosystem Center  
The Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture  
The Land Conservancy  
The Lands Council  
The Montana Challenge  
The Mountaineers Books  
The Nature Conservancy, Montana Field Office  
The Nature Trust of British Columbia  
The Wilderness Society  
Transboundary Grizzly Bear Recovery Team  
Treaty 8 Tribal Association  
Trout Unlimited, Bow Headwaters Chapter  
University of Alberta, Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Montana, Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Northern BC, Department of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management  
Upper Bow Fly Fishing  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
UTSB Research  
Valley Advocates for Responsible Development  
Vital Ground Foundation  
Water Matters  
West Kootenay EcoSociety  
West Moberly First Nations  
Western Transportation Institute  
Wildlands CPR  
Wildlands Network  
Wildlife Conservation Society  
Wildlife Conservation Society Canada  
Wildsight (including Creston Valley, Elk Valley, Golden, Invermere, and Kimberley/Cranbrook Chapters)  
Yaak Valley Forest Council  
Yukon Department of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Branch

## RAISING FUNDS

Much of the hands-on conservation work to advance the Y2Y vision is undertaken by our many partners. We are proud of and honored by the way our organization continues to attract new funding to support their critical on-the-ground efforts. In 2008, Y2Y supported partner work through grants and contracts or fiscal sponsorships totaling US \$496,887.

## FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Anonymous (3); Alberta Lottery Fund-Community Initiative Program; Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation; Bunting Family Foundation; Calgary Zoological Society; Chapman Foundation; Clara Louelle Day Jeffery Residuary Trust; Donner Canadian Foundation; Dunlop Family Fund at The Calgary Foundation; Eaton Foundation; Fanwood Foundation; Fisheries and Oceans Canada-Stewardship-in-Action Initiative; Henry P. Kendall Foundation; Hunter Family Foundation; Kayak Foundation at The Calgary Foundation; Legacy Fund; F. K. Morrow Foundation; Marisla Foundation; Mountain Equipment Co-op; Northern Environmental Support Trust; Patagonia, Inc.; TD Friends of the Environment Foundation; The Banff Community Foundation; The McLean Foundation; The Minneapolis Foundation, The New York Community Trust; Turner Foundation; Uplands Foundation; V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation; Vancouver Foundation; Weeden Foundation; Western Transportation Institute; Wilburforce Foundation; Woodcock Foundation

## Y2Y's FOUNDING STEWARDS

Anonymous (8); Linda and Rick Allen; Peter Bachman and Janet Rice; Dotty Ballantyne; Beartooth Capital and Robert and Marisa Keith; Paul Beaudet and David Wertheimer; Liane Bolland; Sean Britt and Nicole St Arnaud; Nell Buell; Patricia and Richard Buffler; Rob Buffler and Sally Caudill; Canmore Leader / Banff Crag & Canyon; Clint Cawsey; Prudence Caudill; Lael and Charles Chester; Ann and Doug Christensen; Sandy and Michael Code; Fitz Coker; Tim Crawford; Pard Cummings; Page Dabney and Cyndi Fonda Dabney; Neil Darlow and Alex MacNeil; Peter and Camilla Dalglish; Mr and Mrs Robert Davenport; Michael and Honor de Pencier; Dokken Family Foundation Charitable Trust; Steve Duerr; Amy and Philip Duff; Shawn and Kate Fitzgibbons; Norman and Susie Fleet; Karen Fossum; Albert Foster; Wendy Francis; Dr Melvin I Freeman and Nanette D Freeman, Jacqueline D Freeman, and Joseph D Freeman; The Fudgery; Charles Godchaux; Elizabeth and Charles Goodyear; Linda and Charles Goodyear; Molly! Goodyear and Mike Wolter; Gough, Shanahan, Johnson & Waterman; Randy and Nora Gray; Jeremy Guth; Linda Hackler; Dave Hadden; Skip and Meg Herman; Peter Heymann and Nicole Piasecki; Dianne and David Hoaglin; The Hoenigman Family Foundation; Larry and Carolyn Hursh; David Johns; Sonia and Paul Jones; Paul and Jaqueline Kalra; Nannette and Mark Kehke; Robert and Michele Keith; James Klos and Jane Leibbrandt-Klos; Caleb Kramer and Ryan Allen; Ernest LaBelle and Frances Pollak; Lafarge; Harvey Locke; Josephine and William Lowe; David Luff; Dustin and Julia Lynx; John McAlpine; Bernie McHugh; Stephen and Denise Meador; Heidi Nitze; Gilman Ordway; Robert Page; Phil Peabody; Bob Peart; Lorne Perry and Dale Lamont; Virginia P Montgomery; Sarah Palmer; Penelope and Ben Pierce; Heather and Eric Redman; David M Richards; Kurt and Elizabeth Rieke; John Quentin Sineath III; Farwell Smith and Linda McMullen; Stuart and Sally Platinum Properties; Allan Ross Taylor; Paul The; Christine Torggrimson; Amy and Steve Unfried; Upper Bow Fly Fishing Co; Peter, Catherine, Chris and Candice Ward; Albert and Susan Wells; Lucille Werlinich; Susan White; Dr Thomas W Williams and Candace G Merrill-Williams; William J Winger, Jr; Heidi Wyle and David Gifford; Cynthia Zullo de Bethizy

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## ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

*A complete set of audited financial statements  
is available on request.*

### Balance Sheet, December 31, 2008

<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash in bank	459,434
Investments	848,034
Total	1,307,468
Accounts Receivable and prepaids	81,433
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,388,901</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts payable	180,198
Deferred revenue	29,804
Net Assets	1,178,899
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>1,388,901</b>

### Statement of Operations

#### January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008

<b>REVENUE</b>	
Foundations	1,662,454
Released from restriction	419,227
Individuals	281,557
Individuals for land acquisition	250,000
Corporate Sponsorship	32,353
Other	48,784
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,694,375</b>

### EXPENSES

Programs	1,661,616
Administration	146,039
Fundraising	180,680
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,998,335</b>
Restricted Funds	772,733
Addition to Operating Reserve	-66,693
<b>Net</b>	<b>0</b>
Programs	84 percent
Administration	7 percent
Fundraising	9 percent

## Y2Y OFFICES:

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