

November 20th, 2020

Dear Friend of the Yukon Conservation Society,

Thank you for your support during the past year, we could not do the work we do without the help of our donors, partners, members, volunteers and our Board of Directors. In particular, we wanted to take a moment this year to acknowledge all of the support that has continued and sustained us through this year of uncertainty.

The following includes some highlights of the work YCS conducted over the past year:

Land Use Planning

Land Use Planning in the territory included:

- YCS presented to the Dawson Regional Land Use Planning Commission, laying out our interests and priorities for the region. We have continued to engage at every opportunity and look forward to reviewing a Draft Plan in the New Year.
- We have met with the Beaver River sub-regional land use planning committee, articulating our concern with how the process is outside of the planning process laid out in the Final Agreements and how knowledge gathered since the planning process began demonstrates that the Beaver River watershed would make an ideal Protected Area in an official Regional Land Use Plan.
- YCS has been deeply involved in development of a Yukon Wetlands Policy, most recently we provided detailed comments on a sixth draft of a policy.
- Yukon South Beringia Priority Place Initiative: Several information gathering projects have been approved for this initiative that will identify places and species for protection in the oldest landscape in Canada. YCS hopes to play a lead role in outreach for the projects as they get underway in 2021.



Wildlife

We raised awareness about ...

- YCS has developed a position on **Grizzly bears** where we advocate for additional population knowledge and an end to trophy hunting of Grizzlies.
- We have publicized the plight of Yukon River **salmon** in this most disastrous of years, where the Chinook and Chum runs have collapsed to barely 10% of their former numbers.
- YCS has supported First Nations and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Board in efforts to rebuild the 40 Mile **Caribou** herd to its former glories.



Mining

Our contributions helped shape mining decisions in the territory:



- Presented to the Yukon Mineral Development Strategy panel so that the Yukon's mining legislation and regulations will be drastically rewritten to reduce and minimize the harm mining does.
- Submitted comments on over 25 hard-rock exploration projects in the Yukon. This raises awareness of and ensures that the environmental impact of mine exploration is mitigated.
- Participated in technical briefings and discussions to do with the Faro Mine remediation project. This long overdue mine site cleanup will eventually cost over a billion dollars but protect the land.
- Provided input to both the Yukon Government and the Yukon Water Board on how to deal with mining and its impacts on sensitive wetlands.
- YCS was the 'watchdog' in regards to mine contamination issues throughout the territory, raising public awareness of mining related water spills such as at the Eagle Gold mine site.

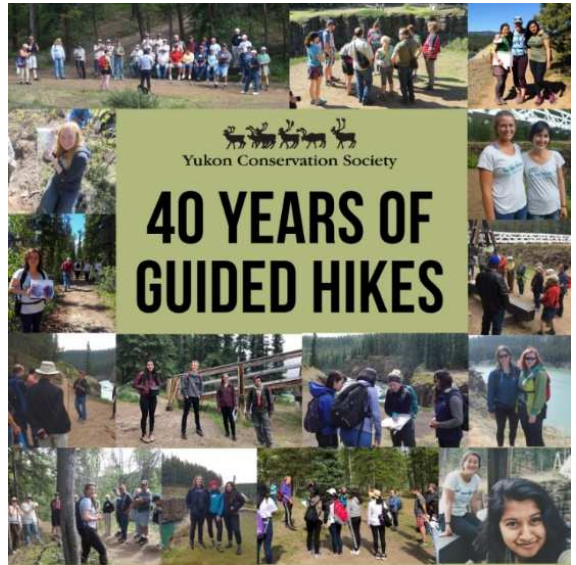
Outreach & Communications

We connected people with nature:

- This was the 40th Anniversary of the YCS Free Trail Guiding Program and we celebrated that with a special hike at McIntyre Creek and our End of Summer Barbeque. New this year, we created online educational content through seven videos. Despite COVID-19 restrictions we still had more than 500 people attend our Summer Interpretive Programming, including *Created at the Canyon*. You can follow our work on our website, via our bi-weekly eNewsletter *Tread Lightly* and our quarterly publication *Walk Softly*, as well as our various social media accounts.

We honoured people doing great work:

- The 2019 Gerry Couture Stewardship Award (\$1000) was awarded to Gerry Whitley. The 2020 award will be announced at our holiday open house on Friday, December 11 at 5 pm.
- The 2020 Ted Parnell Memorial Scholarship (\$500) was awarded to Preet Dhillon, a Yukoner who is a student at Queen's University, majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Geography.



Electric Thermal Storage (ETS)



In order to displace the need for fossil fuels, we advocate for improved policies and renewable energy options for the Yukon. We have...

- Signed up our first participants, whose ETS systems will heat their homes with low-carbon off-peak electricity.
- Developed outreach material to get the word out that we're still looking for participants!
- Coordinated with organizations coast to coast to maximize the benefits of this project for all participants, while ensuring the project's focus remains on Yukon.
- Authored an article published in the IEEE Canadian Review, communicating about our exciting project across the country.
- Began our energy literacy efforts, informing Yukoners on where their electricity comes from and what role storage plays in

keeping the lights on, and increasing the amount of our electricity that is generated from renewable sources like wind, solar, and hydro.

- Engaged with the Yukon Government and other project partners to leverage the project's federal funding with territorial funding.

We hope that you will continue to value the work that we are doing, and will consider renewing your membership and/or making a donation for the coming year.

A Note from our Executive Director

What a year 2020 has been, long and challenging for most of us but it has also been filled with moments of inspiration and appreciation. These include continuing engagement with land-use planning committees as well as presentations and comments on planning and policy; the finalization of a position paper on Grizzly bears; presenting to the Yukon Mineral Development Strategy panel and submitting comments on over 25 hard-rock exploration projects; celebrating the 40th anniversary of our trail guiding program; and the funding announcement for the ETS.

As the new Executive Director, I wish to first extend my gratitude to the directors who came before me, and all of their incredible work. I also want to acknowledge the efforts of Lewis Rifkind and Deborah Donnelly who acted as interim Executive Directors, during the COVID lockdown and while continuing to undertake the normal demands of their own positions, I am so grateful for their efforts. All of the incredible developments and triumphs listed above were attained through the ceaseless efforts of my colleagues, and for that, I offer my thanks and admiration. I also want to thank the Board, volunteers and members who have weathered a challenging year along with YCS. Finally, I would like to wish the best to everyone affected by or who have suffered losses during the ongoing challenges of 2020.

I wish everyone well for the coming holiday season and the brightest, healthiest New Year!

Coral Voss
Executive Director