



We stand for wildlife



Planning for a better future in Yukon

Precedent-setting plan an opportunity to address climate and human impacts on a vast wild landscape

Yukon's Dawson Regional Land Use Plan is an important chance to shape the future of an almost 40,000 sq. km. area -- one of the largest intact wild areas left on Earth. But it is also a landscape with an expanding human footprint, particularly mining. The Dawson planning commission recently released a draft plan and our WCS Canada Yukon team has [a number of thoughts on how it can be improved](#). The draft plan is headed in the right direction but needs to go much further on legally protecting irreplaceable wild areas and wildlife. It is also particularly important that it more deeply consider [how climate change is reshaping Yukon's landscapes](#) and plan for how to maintain wildlife populations and a healthy environment under these rapidly changing conditions. Overlooking climate change will leave us with a plan that fails to protect nature and the benefits it provides to local communities.



The confluence of the Indian River in Yukon's Dawson Region. Photo: Malkolm Boothroyd

It's also important that the draft plan

recognize that some land uses are not sustainable. The impacts of things like the mining of stream beds and toxic tailing ponds cannot be undone even in seven generations. They represent a permanent loss of ecosystems and deeper consideration needs to be given to how much of this kind of loss we can sustain. Finally, Indigenous knowledge needs a more central role in proposed adaptive stewardship efforts. This knowledge can help us better understand historic conditions, the needs of wildlife and ecosystems, and how to sustain them.



Gold mining in creek beds can destroy habitat and lead to ecosystem changes that are almost impossible to reverse. Photo: Chrystal Mantyka-Pringle/WCS Canada

That's just part of what our team [had to say about a plan](#) that will precedent setting in many ways for one of the planet's wildest corners.

Ontario's Greenbelt under pressure

Ontario's Greenbelt represents an enlightened effort to limit the negative impacts of development in a wide belt of farmlands and natural areas around Canada's largest urban area (as well as along the Niagara Escarpment). It is meant to protect headwaters, endangered species, and food production, while ensuring that urban development is pushed toward already built-up areas rather than expanding ever outward. But the Greenbelt is being undermined by a number of provincial government policy changes, including [the gutting of the Endangered Species Act](#) (more on this below), which is particularly critical in Southern Ontario where natural habitat has been reduced to small, disconnected patches. WCS President Justina Ray is [taking part in a panel presented by the Narwhal tomorrow](#) to discuss what is happening to this beloved area and how we can keep it healthy. [Register for this free event here.](#)



What makes us tick and why sturgeon are cool

Why did you want to be a biologist? What does a water guardian do? What's the favourite part of your job? A young audience of [Earth Rangers](#) got to hear the answers to these and other questions [in a recent event](#) in which WCS Canada Scientist Claire Farrell and Moose Cree community member Rachel Corston talked about [sturgeon](#), clean water and their shared connection to nature. WCS Canada and Moose Cree First Nation have been [working on a joint project to study lake sturgeon](#) in the North French and Mattagami Rivers in the Moose Cree homeland in the far north in Ontario. The project also includes efforts to involve community youth like Rachel in learning about and stewarding these important waters. It was a lively discussion of everything from favourite animals to what makes this area so special and [why sturgeon are such unique fish](#).

[A great listen for kids of all ages.](#)



Moose Cree youth and Waterkeeper Rachel Corston addresses the Earth Rangers

We can't separate people's health from nature's health

In our modern world we've largely separated environmental health and human health. Unfortunately, in our efforts to separate the wellbeing of people from wellbeing off the natural world, we've also created cracks in our ecosystems that both nature and people fall through. That has led to growing recognition that reuniting the health of nature, wildlife and people benefits everyone. Through a new [One Health](#) approach we can help nature and people to thrive. Our National Conservation Director Dan Kraus talks about how to do that [in a new Muddy Boots blog](#) and the role of Conservation Authorities in building healthy environments is featured in this [article in Rural Voice](#).



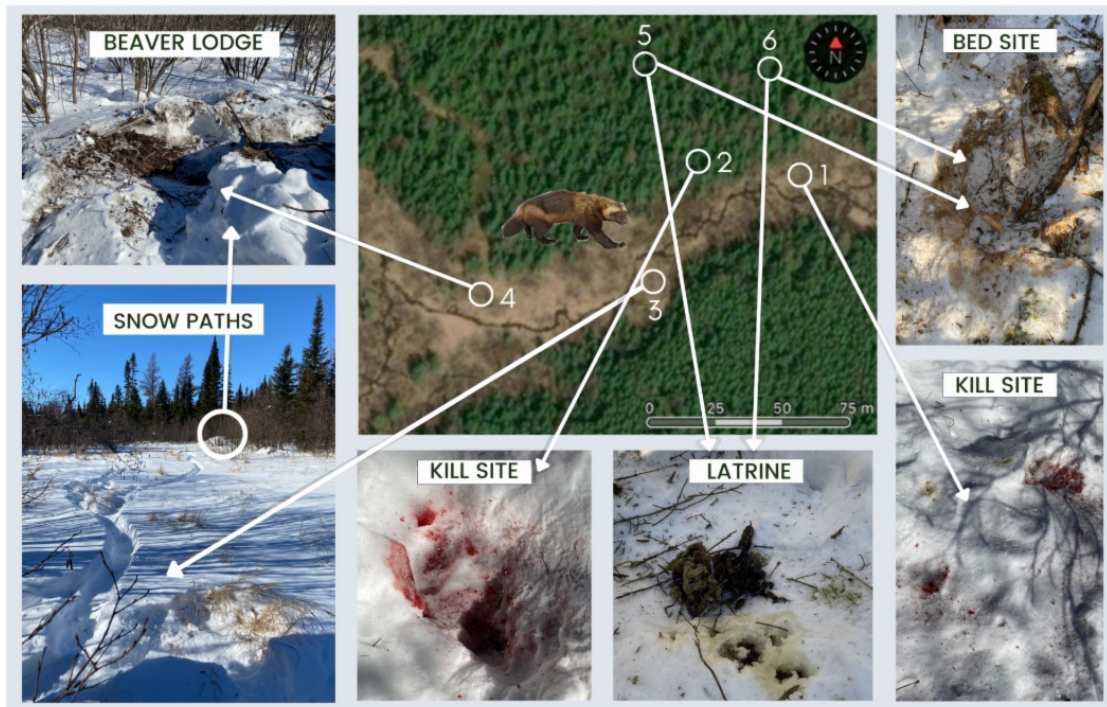
Human health is deeply tied to the health of nature.

Tracking a trickster

Agatha Christie move over. When it comes to teasing out clues to solve a mystery, our wolverine crew are well-trained sleuths. Wolverines are notoriously elusive, so sometimes it takes some true detective work to understand where they have been and what they are up to in dense forest area. Our crew put together this graphic that illustrates their examination of some wolverine movements last winter. Based on GPS collar tracking, the crew knew a male wolverine, M16, had been active in the same area for weeks. Hiking into the forest, the crew first found site #1, a suspected beaver kill site with blood on the snow (beavers are a wolverine favourite). They then found site #2, another suspected beaver kill site. Continuing on, the crew came across [numerous beaver tracks in snow](#) (#3) leading to a nearby beaver lodge that had been excavated (#4). The discovery of a number of latrine (#5) and bed sites (#6) confirmed that M16 had rested under the cover of the nearby forest between feedings. This

discovery also allowed our crew to collect scat samples for hormone and prey analysis.

ON THE SEARCH FOR WOLVERINES

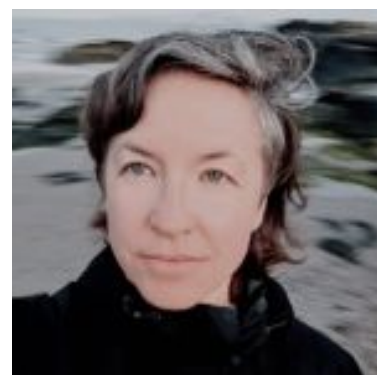


Knowing where wolverines are and how they are using the landscape is vital to [understand how this at-risk species is faring](#) in an area that contains a combination of intact forest and logged areas. Our crew is now getting ready for another long, cold winter of tracking wolverines in their study area around Red Lake, Ontario. We will bring you further updates on their adventures in the months ahead and how WCS Canada is helping solve the mysteries of this most elusive animal.

Getting nature-based solutions right

WCS Canada's Ciara Raudsepp-Hearne, who leads our [Key Biodiversity Areas program](#), has been appointed to the federal government's Nature Based Climate Solutions Advisory Committee. This committee has an important job to do in helping the federal government make the best use of funding to expand forest cover and to safeguard and restore wetlands, peatlands and grasslands that are [critical carbon storehouses and can also be key areas for biodiversity](#).

Nature-based solutions to climate can also help us address the biodiversity crisis that is deeply linked to climate change, meaning smart programs can deliver a huge bang for federal bucks.



Ciara Raudsepp-Hearne

Support our work to save wildlife!

At WCS Canada, we stand for wildlife and are in the field every day working to save wildlife and wild places. You can support our work by [making a secure donation](#) right now!

Top banner image of wolverine: Susan Morse

DONATE
NOW

