

Recreation, Conservation + You

THE COLUMBIA HEADWATERS



We need your help!

Take part in a research mapping project
in southeastern B.C.



Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

The Columbia Headwaters are in southeastern B.C.

Located in the globally unique inland temperate rainforest, the headwaters of the Columbia River are an increasingly popular place for outdoor sports and recreation. It's the natural beauty and the opportunity to be in wild places that draws residents and visitors to the mountains here.



Why does this research **matter?**

People are recreating in more places, more often, and going farther and faster than ever before. This can be commercial or recreational mountain biking, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, and other off-highway vehicle recreation. Without careful planning, this growth can unintentionally add pressure to wild places and species, increase tensions across users, and affect the quality of our outdoor experiences. Recreation and tourism are important economic factors in this region so it is important to maintain quality experiences.

Groups including local governments, First Nations, adventure tourism businesses, recreationists, and conservationists, have identified concerns about the places that they work, live, and play — including a need for better recreation management. These needs have been stated at meetings, in letters and in a 2019 emerging economies report from Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative. However, there is little quality data on recreational trail use, so a research project is now under way to understand more.

The goal of this collaborative research project is to understand when, where, and how people are recreating in the Columbia Headwaters. This will allow people recreating to continue to access the places they love, ensures wildlife are able to thrive, and make space for everyone to enjoy the outdoors.



The Columbia Headwaters region of British Columbia is one of the two pilot study areas for a new recreation research project. The other is in Alberta's Kananaskis-Ghost area.

What does this mean for you, recreation & wildlife?

The results of this project can help ensure recreationists have access to the backcountry places they love while reducing impacts to wildlife, now and into the future.



Research will run through 2021, with **three main steps:**

1 SEE WHERE, HOW, AND HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE OUTDOORS

Open source data including trail counters, social media and smartphone apps collected on trails and from recreation hotspots will provide information for the project such as how many people recreate in different areas, when and what they like to do.

2 ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE AND NATURE

Find the spots where better planning can improve recreation experiences, improve relations among groups, and help manage the needs of sensitive animals.

3 KEEP PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE SAFE

Looking into how grizzly bears, cougars, wolverines, bighorn sheep, goats, and native trout use habitat shared with people will identify places and times of year where recreation might affect these species. This will help create solutions and recommendations to keep all of us safer.





Who is involved in this research?

This is a multi-partner project led by Dr. Karine Pigeon, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Working in western Canada for more than 15 years to understand how animals interact with their environments to improve human-wildlife coexistence, she has experience with industry, government, and communities. Her diverse background includes research on grizzly bears, wolves, and caribou, extensive field work and mapping expertise.

This project will work with recreationists, all levels of government, conservation groups, and other communities and stakeholders to study recreation and wildlife better in this region.

How you can help

- Let us know what backcountry areas are most important to you.
- Share your GPS tracks (KMZ or other format.)
- Interested in field work? There may be opportunities to help set up counters and other data collection tools.

OTHER PARTNERS WORKING CLOSELY ON THIS PROJECT:

BC Parks

Recreation Sites and Trails BC

UNBC UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dr. Pamela Wright,
Associate Professor of Ecosystem Science and Management at UNBC

 **Yellowstone to Yukon**
Conservation Initiative

Dr. Aerin Jacob,
Conservation Scientist at Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y)

A Y2Y and Mitacs partnership funds this research to help people continue to access and enjoy the places they love while ensuring wildlife can thrive.

Questions? Please reach out:

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Visit columbiaheadwaters.org for details.