

Annual Report

2022 - 2023



 **CPAWS**

CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY
YUKON CHAPTER



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UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF OUR BOARD

I would like to open by acknowledging that we live and work on the Traditional Territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and that as an organization that promotes the health of the ecosystem, we recognize that Yukon First Nations and Inuvialuit have stewarded their traditional lands and waters since time immemorial, and to the present.

I can't say enough good things about what this organization does and more importantly how they do it. "In a good way" is a slogan I hear often at CPAWS meetings. Working with First Nations is central to our work. To do this in a good way is what we strive for. In the spirit of reconciliation, we hope to promote conservation and the health of the wilderness in ways that support First Nations worldviews. We show our commitment to reconciliation through our statement and our actions.

This year has been a year of change with our dedicated Executive Director Chris Rider moving on. Fortunately, he's still with us only at the National office. Hiring the new Chris was a big process but we did it collaboratively involving staff and board. We are very pleased with Chris Pinkerton as our new Executive Director. Chris is an excellent leader for CPAWS and will continue to grow as we work to preserve the health of Yukon's wild places.

2023-24 will once again provide us the resources to continue doing our work. In April 2023, I had one of the most powerful experiences while attending our Land and Water Relationship Planning Gathering. From the morning prayer in front of the lake with a harrier hawk flying overhead, to the stories and accomplishments of some amazingly intelligent and impactful Indigenous leaders, the tears of joy just kept on rolling. It was such a powerful and uplifting day, and is only a glimpse of all the great projects our staff have planned for the upcoming year.



Heather Swystun
Chair, CPAWS Yukon Board of Directors





UPDATE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome! My name is Chris Pinkerton and in January I was honoured to step into the role of Executive Director, taking over from Chris Rider. The past 6 months have been an awesome ride. I've been working hard to get up to speed on our campaigns, and getting to know all of our amazing staff, board, and dedicated supporters. Your energy and support towards doing conservation in a better way has truly inspired me. You've shown me that I've found a place where I can share my own passion about the amazing territory that we all call home. This was especially clear when I participated in the Land and Water Relationship Planning Gathering earlier this year. The conversations and the positive energy in the room brought people together in such a good way that I've come to feel that many of you are like family already.

It's been a busy year for the team at CPAWS Yukon, with both challenges, and successes across many of our campaign areas. We were thrilled with the strong public response during consultations on the recommended land use plan for the Dawson region. We are looking forward to the "What We Heard" report to be released later this year to see how many of the written responses supported our shared vision with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and called for strong protection of the region's lands and waters. Additionally, we saw success in our efforts to preserve McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà in Whitehorse. Yukon Government and the City of Whitehorse have not only removed a proposed road altogether from the Official Community Plan, but after hearing all your strong support for protection, they have also committed to designating the area as a protected park, and to expand the boundaries of the prohibited area for quartz mining around the city.

There were also a few changes to our CPAWS team this year. We said goodbye to some of our board members, Bobbi Rose Koe, Ceileigh Marshall, Erik Val, and Charlotte Rentmeister. We thank them all for their dedication and wish them well on their respective journeys. While we said goodbye to some, we also welcomed Wendy Morrison back to our board of directors.

I'd like to close by saying thank you, and acknowledging each of you. With your generous contributions, tireless advocacy, and unwavering belief in our shared future, you have inspired change, and sparked awareness. We are privileged to have you by our side as we fight to protect and conserve the effortless beauty of the Yukon.

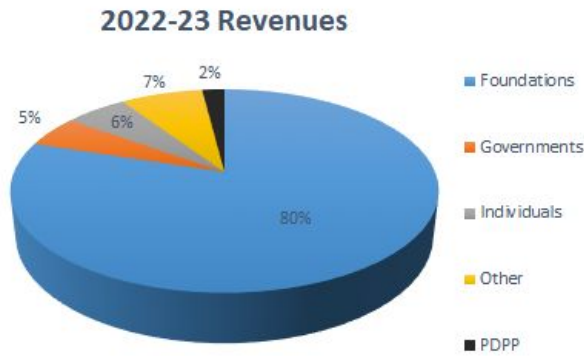
Until next year,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Pinkerton".

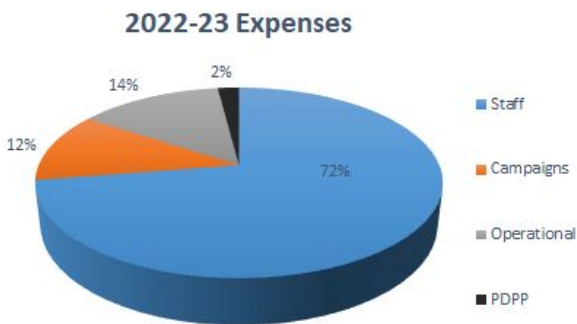
Chris Pinkerton
Executive Director, CPAWS Yukon



FINANCIAL UPDATES



As in past years, the majority of our revenue comes from foundation grants. The percentage of our revenues from individual donations and other income increased in 2023-24, which is partly due to a new partnership. The PDPP revenue was for a special project that was hosted by a third party — we separated it from our own revenues and expenses for this presentation.



Staff salaries & benefits remains the largest expense. Operational expenses increased slightly compared to 2021-22 which is due to the large amortization expense in 2022-23.



CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Dawson Regional Land Use Plan

After much anticipation, the Planning Commission for the Dawson Regional Land Use Plan released their recommended plan, based on feedback they received on the draft in 2021. The new plan initially had us very optimistic about the future of the region. It strengthened the protections for conservation areas and added tools for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to co-manage their traditional land and water.

However, areas such as the Indian River wetlands and Antimony Creek could be better stewarded by the recommended plan due to their important cultural and environmental values.

In the fall, we called on Yukoners to submit comments to applaud the parts of the plan that were strong, and improve the parts of the plan that would ensure that the values we hold dear are preserved for future generations. We hosted letter writing events and a webinar to walk you through our comments and how to submit your own. Stay tuned for a What We Heard report coming later this year.

The Yukon's Climate Blind Spot

There is peat beneath our feet that is thousands of years old. These special soils accumulate huge amounts of carbon over time, and disturbing them could transform these soils from carbon stores into carbon emitters.

In our report, *The Yukon's Climate Blind Spot*, we investigated how much carbon could be released from placer mining in the Indian River Watershed located south of Dawson City. Our relatively conservative estimates show that nearly 600 kilotonnes of CO₂ are at risk of being released into the atmosphere — the equivalent of running Whitehorse's LNG plant around the clock for a decade.

That's a huge amount of carbon emissions coming from a single industry in just one watershed. The Yukon's climate change strategy does not address emissions from disturbance to peatlands across the territory, nor does it include an inventory of where they are and how much carbon they store.

The Yukon's Climate Blind Spot goes over the current data and includes crucial recommendations to the Yukon government, Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB), land use planners, and the mining industry.



CAMPAIGN UPDATES

New Mining Legislation

The Yukon's wild spaces are threatened by the legacy of the Klondike Gold Rush that lives on in the territory's mining laws. This year we embarked on a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rewrite the outdated Placer and Quartz Mining Acts.

In early 2023 the Yukon government began a public consultation period for feedback on new approaches to mining legislation, and so many of you came out to share your vision for a better future.

Randi Newton represented CPAWS Yukon by being part of a steering committee, along with other organizations and industry, as Yukon government worked on addressing key aspects of mining legislation to change.

We want to see new legislation that reduces risks, includes more equitable sharing of profits, and aligns with Aboriginal treaty and rights to better protect lands, waters, and people.

Stay tuned as we await a summary of what the Yukon government heard, and the next steps in calling for stronger mining laws.

McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà

Show your love for McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà! That's the message we shared this year, and we're proud to see it echoed across community members and organizations. So many of you came out to support protecting this crucial wildlife corridor, recreational space, and culturally significant area in Whitehorse.

The City of Whitehorse underwent public consultations on their Official Community Plan, which included the option of building a busy road cutting through the creek. Over the summer, our collective voices surged in opposing the road, and after much discussion, the City agreed to scrap the idea.

From writing letters to city council, packing city hall, and even submitting letters to the editor in local newspapers - you highlighted the significance of the creek at personal, community, and ecological levels. Your unwavering dedication and active participation provided city council with the direction they needed to ensure McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà will thrive as a safe haven for years to come.



CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Protecting 30% by 2030

As the world continues to experience biodiversity and habitat loss at unprecedented scales, Canada has an incredible opportunity to conserve our iconic and crucial wild spaces. Not only will this allow future generations to continue enjoying the values and culture that we have today, but help in the global effort to mitigate and reduce the impacts of climate change.

At CPAWS we believe that a big step towards achieving these goals is protecting 30% of the land and water by 2030. This is an attainable goal here in the Yukon, and one that will position us well to generate momentum for future conservation too.

Through land use planning, Indigenous-led protected and conserved areas, Land Guardian programs and more, we continued advocating for this important short-term goal.

We were happy to see that this is something that both the territorial and federal governments were also onboard with by signing the Canada-Yukon Nature Agreement in late 2022.

This agreement ensures \$20.6 million will be invested in the Yukon to implement strategies that protect nature. This includes Indigenous leadership, increased protection of sensitive habitats, recovery actions for species at risk, and protection of new land in the territory.

The Yukon government will have numerous opportunities to fulfill these goals. Earlier this year, Ross River Dena'ina proposed an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) on their traditional territory. CPAWS Yukon helped organize a canoe training for Ross River earlier this year in an effort to help build their capacity and knowledge as they continue to be stewards of their traditional territory.

This is a critical step, and we are hopeful that this investment will help us safeguard the land, water, and wildlife for future generations.

COP15

The world came together in late December to listen and learn in Kanien'keha:ka territory, Montréal at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15). Our Outreach Manager, Joti, attended on our behalf and spent the next week sharing some of her experiences. CPAWS National hosted panels on Indigenous-led conservation and as part of the CPAWS Yukon contingent, we recruited Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom and Jewel Davies, two very inspiring young First Nation women in the Yukon First Nation Climate Fellowship.

Throughout the conference, Joti sought out opportunities for how CPAWS Yukon could learn from the multitude of speakers, attendees, and leaders present. One realization that shone brightly is the interconnectedness between so many of the different challenges we face— climate change, biodiversity crisis, and the well-being of our mental and physical health. While these all seemingly have different associated names, action plans, or groups, we must find ways to work together if we are to truly find a way to do this work in a just and equitable way.



CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Projects and Events

This past year CPAWS Yukon branched out into some new territory with more collaborative and engaging local events.

We started with our first ever artist residency. Corridors: A Community Engaged Art Series was presented by Nicole Schafenacker as a way to engage with nature through a creative lens. She hosted workshops and walks on the sensory connections and inspiration that everyone can find in McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà.

As summer began, we hosted a Plants of the Boreal walk and talk series that highlighted the rich forests and wetlands of the McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà in Whitehorse. With support from the Yukon Conservation Society and Yukon Invasive Species Council, we brought in guides to help us all learn about the stories and traits of plants in these landscapes.

This also led directly to our first Winter Medicine Making Workshop, hosted by Candace Dow, where participants harvested ingredients in McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà and then transformed them into traditional medicines at the CPAWS office.

From our work in McIntyre Creek/Chasàn Chùà came an opportunity to collaborate with Kwanlin Dun First Nation (KDFN) on an exciting calendar project. Paula and Candace teamed up with Kate from KDFN to create On The Land 2023, a free calendar with amazing images and stories on harvesting and connecting with the land. The feedback from this project was so positive that we hope to continue the project again for 2024, so stay tuned!

Mayo to Moosehide

CPAWS Yukon teamed up with the Yukon First Nation Education Directorate (YFNED) on a canoe culture camp that took youth along the Stewart and Yukon rivers from Mayo to Moosehide.

Malkolm and Adil, our Campaigns Coordinator and Communications Manager, joined the 9 day camp hoping to continue building strong connections with youth and facilitating meaningful relationships with these important wild spaces.

The Mayo to Moosehide trip provided youth from Mayo an opportunity to be out on the land, learning some important life skills and even seeing some wildlife. These kinds of trips not only give youth life changing skills and experiences, but also the agency and confidence to speak up for the land, water, and wildlife.

STAFF



Chris Pinkerton, Executive Director



Judith van Gulick, Operations Manager



Joti Overduin, Outreach Manager



Randi Newton, Conservation Manager



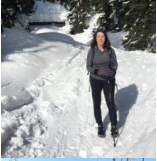
Adil Darvesh, Communications Manager



Malkolm Boothroyd, Campaigns Coordinator



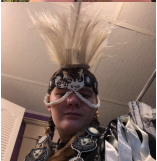
Maegan Elliott, Conservation Coordinator



Paula Gomez Villalba, Communications Coordinator



Stephanie Woods, Conservation Coordinator



Aiden Duncan, Conservation Intern

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT THIS YEAR!

