Yellowstone to Yukon
Conservation Initiative

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
PO BOX 9391 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9M3

Subject: Wildlife Management & Habitat

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) appreciates the opportunity to comment directly on the new wildlife and habitat conservation strategy for B.C. Y2Y's mission is to connect and protect habitat from Yellowstone to Yukon so that people and nature can thrive. We take a scientific and collaborative approach to conservation, and highlight and focus on local issues that affect the region. We have worked with more than 300 partners, including scientists, conservation groups, landowners, businesses, government agencies as well as First Nations and Native American communities on conservation solutions. Today, Y2Y is recognized as one of the planet's leading mountain conservation initiatives. Approximately 1/3 of the Y2Y corridor is in British Columbia.

We applaud the priority of enhancing collaboration on wildlife management and habitat conservation with First Nations communities, and urge the government to engage in meaningful and good-faith negotiations that ensure traditional and treaty rights are enshrined in provincial policy.

With regard to B.C.'s declining wildlife populations, Y2Y recommends that MFLNRORD embrace policy recognizing that the protection of sufficient habitat is the most effective path forward for the recovery of wildlife populations.

We also recognize the importance of connectivity between habitats and wild areas, and this includes providing safe passage for wildlife to move across barriers such as roads. Along the way, these roads cut across the habitat of many native wildlife species. When these paths cross, wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVCs) occur, and are a real danger to human safety as well as wildlife survival. WVCs have significant impacts on drivers and wildlife. For motorists, WVCs present a safety danger and can result in significant costs from vehicle damage. For animals, WVCs often kill the individual animals and can even pose a threat to the very survival of certain species.

In order to improve wildlife management in BC, reduce unnecessary wildlife deaths on roads, and improve habitat connectivity across the landscape, Y2Y recommends that the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development work together with First Nations, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, road safety managers, researchers, and stakeholders such as Y2Y to :

- Identify and prioritize high risk highway locations where wildlife vehicle collisions are common,
- Implement strategic wildlife vehicle collision countermeasures,
- Increase highway brushing,
- Decrease winter night time driving speeds in moose collision prone areas,
- Review and update wildlife signage,
- Carry out long term monitoring of WVC mitigation measures,
- Identify critical wildlife movement corridors and provide safe passage for wildlife where these corridors intersect highways, and
- Foster interagency cooperation with MOTI and other road safety agencies.

We look forward to continued engagement from the Ministry on these important issues.

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Conservation Initiative

Sincerely,

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