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Mission

Providing lifelong sanctuary to non-releasable Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem wildlife while sharing a message of education and conservation.

**YWS seeks to be:**

- A respected, accredited wildlife sanctuary, providing lifelong care to wildlife from the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem unable to survive in the wild.
- A valued source of education about Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem wildlife and conservation.
- A welcoming, accessible, and safe place for visitors and groups.
- A well-governed, well-run, and financially stable and sustainable nonprofit organization.
Letter to the Friends of YWS

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2022 annual report. Your interest and support make our important work possible, and we are pleased to report the high points and share the challenges from last year.

After Covid-19 and the 2021 Robertson Draw fire, we asked, “what next?” and the answer came in June, with massive flooding in south central Montana and Rock Creek barreling down the main street of Red Lodge. Although our campus was not flooded, we shared the pain of our town as the flood disrupted people's lives, ruined homes, and business properties, and brought tourism to a standstill.

Yet, as we watched neighbor helping neighbor in the hard days that followed, we felt fortunate to be part of such a cohesive, generous place. We were pleased to open the Sanctuary with free admission to people who needed respite from flood relief and recovery work.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who makes it possible for YWS to live our 2023 theme: Wild of Wonder. We offer a close-up experience of Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem wildlife, with safety for people and animals. Our resident animals tell their survivor stories to our visitors, sparking wonder, curiosity, and the lasting desire to protect wildlife and wilderness, young and old alike.

It all happens because our board of directors is engaged, and our animal care team ensures that our residents receive care and life enrichment. It happens because our facilities team tends our grounds every day of every season, and our education team makes the best of our campus to bring the “wild of wonder” to students.

None of this is possible - or even dream-able - without the direct help of people like you, who care enough to find out what we are about and lend your support. Thanks again for taking the time to share 2022 in review.

Samantha Thomas

Board Chair
2022 Highlights

Gary Robson, YWS Executive Director since 2018, resigned to pursue other professional interests. Gary benefited the Sanctuary by growing our staff and bringing public attention to our work. He remains a good friend.

Barb Beck, a respected consultant, kept us on track as Interim Executive Director.

BR Walker, the YWS Development Director, added the Executive Director title to her role in September. She brings professional experience in education, communication, and management skills to lead the Sanctuary. She is a Montanan at-heart, visiting the state as a landscape and wildlife artist for many years.
Marketing Focus: BR Walker, Executive Director, touts a diverse marketing career with over 30 years’ experience developing strategic marketing plans, conducting marketing research, grant writing, staff management, and destination marketing. The depth of her experience marketing to consumers nationwide is an asset to YWS as we build awareness for our mission across the US and beyond.

Loss: With life comes loss, and in 2022 we endured the passing of Thor, our beloved lynx; Sacajawea, our majestic mountain lion; and our brother-sister wolves, Dakota and Ginny. Please see the Animal Care section of this report for more details on their lives and introductions to the wonderful new animals we welcomed during the year.

Education: We expanded our education program to include winter camps as well as more summer camps, school activities, and private tours. We encourage you to read the Education section of this report for exciting details on the growth of our outreach, where we shape future generations of wildlife protectors.

Fun Run: When the 2022 Fun Run for Charities awards were announced in October, we were overwhelmed to receive the largest award: $32,081.91. We are so grateful to the Red Lodge Area Community Foundation for organizing this outstanding event to benefit all nonprofits doing splendid work in our area.
New Residents of the Sanctuary

Roxanne
American Badger
The Sanctuary’s very first American badger, Roxanne was rehabilitated by the state wildlife authorities after her mother was shot for burrowing in a horse pasture. Because she was so small when found, with ears and eyes still shut, we know she was born in the second week of April 2022.

MacKenzie
Bobcat
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks rehabilitated MacKenzie after she was found emaciated and abandoned by her mother. Due to her poor condition when found, she is likely to stay on the smaller side and is often mistaken for a kitten.

Since coming to YWS, MacKenzie became a companion for our ten-year-old bobcat, Bob.
New Residents of the Sanctuary (continued)

M&M
Tiger Salamander

M&M was hiding in the root ball of a tree donated to the Sanctuary when she was found. Localized salamander populations often carry common parasites. Introducing M&M to a group of unknown salamanders could put that population at risk if she carried something too unlike their parasites. Following her 30-day quarantine, she officially joined the education department.

The displaced tiger salamander quickly became a favorite of Michelle Mann’s 3rd grade class from Red Lodge Elementary. The class raised money to adopt the new resident at YWS and visited M&M monthly for lessons about salamanders. They earned the opportunity to name the salamander and chose “M&M” after the name they call themselves in honor of their teacher. The class calculated the cost of upkeep for the amphibian (biweekly earthworms and distilled water) and brought funds to take care of M&M through the school year.
Sacajawea
Mountain Lion

Sacajawea (“Sac”), mountain lion, came to us in 2007. She was found in a window well outside of Bozeman at age 4 months and would not have survived in the wild. Never one to spare a hiss or a growl to let people know who was in charge, she enjoyed “chatting” with her neighbor, Bob, the bobcat, basking in the sun, and slyly watching (sometimes stalking!) Sanctuary visitors. Sac was declawed in her youth, and in her later years the resulting arthritis progressed to severe neurological issues and great pain that was evident. In July, our animal care team determined the best course was to let her rest in peace. Her reign was over, but her legacy secure.
Dakota & Ginny
Gray Wolves

The siblings arrived together in 2019 as senior wolves in need of a home after the closing of the facility where they lived after their former owner was experiencing health issues and could not continue to care for them. They loved watching the town of Red Lodge from the top of their hill and rolling in different smells for enrichment. Together their entire lives, both struggled whenever they had to be separated for medical care. When Ginny’s health quickly deteriorated and she passed on, Dakota once again followed her, as he often did in life.
Thor

Canadian Lynx

Thor came to YWS in 2010. Thor was mostly blind and enjoyed sitting on the porch of his house and smelling the world around him. Thor could safely amble about the habitat designed for him.

Early in 2022, he developed nasal congestion symptoms that grew to great severity, with no viable treatment. His chances of improving from this greatly decreased and the vet deemed euthanasia as the only humane option.
Financials

In the past two years, YWS was significantly affected financially by two natural disasters: a large forest fire south of Red Lodge in 2021 and a devastating flood through the middle of town in 2022. These catastrophic events hit tourism hard, as potential visitors changed their plans to avoid severely damaged areas.

In 2022, the drop in visitor numbers resulted in a revenue decrease of approximately 4% from 2021 revenue, at the same time that we experienced a 5.5% increase in expenses. The expense increase was largely the cost of food for our animals and vehicle fuel. While there was little we could do to increase the number of visitors, our Executive Director and staff made concerted efforts to reduce expenses, which has resulted in savings throughout all of our Sanctuary operations. We re-established and strengthened our relationships with donors and focused on grants and other revenue sources. Also, we started work on a fresh marketing campaign and revamped website.

Through generous grants and gifts, we were able to make a number of habitat improvements during 2022, notably strengthening our bobcat habitat for winter. We began development of a construction plan for improved facilities that will make life better for our resident animals and improve our visitor experience. Our board of directors and staff team kept a positive focus and moved toward planning for 2023, the 40th anniversary year of our founding incorporation. Anniversary events, donor outreach, and other efforts show promise for a much-improved financial picture in 2023.
Financials - Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>$77,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Shop</td>
<td>$43,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>$163,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$137,675</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memberships</td>
<td>$12,794</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
<td>$3,260</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>$19,140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted donations</td>
<td>$8,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted grants</td>
<td>$72,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of good sold</td>
<td>-$19,870</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>$517,877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Financials - Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$11,641</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Care</td>
<td>$34,468</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Costs</td>
<td>$2,957</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment/Vehicles</td>
<td>$8,752</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>$24,589</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>$23,103</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted: Garden</td>
<td>$5,005</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted: Bison</td>
<td>$7,779</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted: Education</td>
<td>$45,160</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted: Habitat - Special (EW)</td>
<td>$11,739</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising expenses</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Shop Expenses</td>
<td>$855</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>$899</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td><strong>$483,406</strong></td>
<td><strong>56.3%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress was the theme for the education department in 2022. There was an increase in the demand to add on-site student camps and other education events, provide more off-campus outreach programs, strengthen partnerships with other organizations, and establish meaningful connections with local schools.

The team introduced winter camps, “little keeper” camps, and private campus tours. At the end of the year, it was clear that we needed and could support a second educator, and plans were made to add this position in 2023.

A beautiful herpetology wall was installed in the Education Building to enhance the visibility, accessibility, and safety of enclosures for our ambassador animals. Those animals include Piglet, the hog-nosed snake, and Scherbatsky and M&M, the salamanders.
Department Updates: Gift Shop

The Sanctuary depends on visitor admissions, donations, and grants, but another important source of income is Gift Shop sales. Every item purchased by an eager child or doting grandparent helps us provide food and care for our resident animals.

In 2022, the shop introduced new lines of T-shirts in vibrant colors and specialty T-shirts for event days, with a bison design for Speedy’s birthday and a raccoon design for International Raccoon Appreciation Day. For our new Dark Skies evening events, we stocked information kits, and brought in sun/moon earrings. Some items available in the gift shop are the result of customer suggestions.

We appreciate our friendly and knowledgeable Gift Shop attendants, who offer visitors a warm welcome and help them choose just the right memento for their “Wild of Wonder” visit to YWS.

**Gift Shop Revenue**

8.2%  
of total revenue

**Visitors**

12,053
In 2022, the Animal Care department focused on improving the quality of care for our resident wildlife; from the largest animals, our bison Speedy and Luna, to our tiny hog-nosed snake, Piglet. The year was packed with veterinary checkups, vaccinations, blood testing, and physical therapy, along with regular care and feeding of our large variety of animals, reptiles, and birds.

Leadership of the department changed during the year, with animal care staff member, Izzy Sommerdorf, stepping up to the Animal Care Manager role. Mason Williams continued as animal care assistant (and education assistant). Under new leadership, the team conducted research on nutrition and enrichment (an example of enrichment is introducing wildlife smells into the animal enclosures to stimulate interest and activity). As a result, we have made improvements in our animal diets and enrichment programs such as making bear diets more natural to what they would be eating in the wild. Because of staffing changes, the department ended the year with a vacancy for an animal keeper, which will be filled in 2023.
Department Updates: Facilities

The Facilities team is responsible for all of the grounds and maintenance of the Sanctuary. The team ensures all animal enclosures can be accessed in the winter by clearing paths for the animal care team. The snow removal on the paths and parking lot enabled us to offer private tours during the winter months. In the summer months, the team maintains the several gardens that are interspersed throughout the grounds.

The team has repaired frozen water lines, sandbagged enclosures during flooding, repaired habitats, painted, mowed, cleaned, and organized.

During 2022, YWS was able to purchase a Ford Transit Cargo van through the generosity of our donors. Our refrigeration issues were solved by a grant from T.S. Glide Foundation to repair our walk-in freezer. Needed repairs were made by volunteers to prepare our bobcat habitat for the winter snow load.
Donors

Top 100 Donors

Foundations
Brosovich Family Foundation
Cloud L. and Sarah J. Cray Foundation
Dorothy and Eugene Hull Foundation
Hillman Family Foundation as Justin Brooks Fisher Foundation
Montana Community Foundation
Ladd M. and Karen Seaberg Family Foundation
O. P. & W. E. Edwards Foundation
Red Lodge Area Community Foundation
Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation
Treacy Foundation
T.S. and K. D. Glide Foundation and Trust
Wings Up Foundation

Businesses
Kings Cupboard (in-kind)
Marbled Enterprises (in kind)
Second Nature Consulting (in-kind)
Sibanye-Stillwater
Tito’s Handmade Vodka
Phillips 66 Refinery
Walmart/Cody, WY (in-kind)
Donors

Individuals
Chris Ballentine
Sue Bury and Dave Stauffer
Cheeny Law, PLLC (Bill Pfeffer)
Kathy Davidson
Terence Doran
JoAnn and Bert Eder
Kimberly and Mark Eder
Jim and Sharon Fagan
MKC Family
Joan Guralnick
Sheri Henderson
Bruce Jacobson
Kathy Kenyon
Stephen Langlas
Jenny and Josie McPhail
Alyson Mike
Bruce Nelson
Janice Polzin
Victoria Porter
Bobbi Roberts
Susan Robbins
Betsy Scanlin
Karen Simmons
Darryl Smette
Nancy Sommerdorf
Samantha Thomas
Clare Witcomb
Diane Zook
Volunteers

During 2022, over 4,800 volunteers hours were recorded for YWS volunteers in all areas. Among those hours, 90% of them were hours donated by members of the Board of Directors. Volunteers assisted in all areas of the Sanctuary, contributing labor as a means of supporting YWS operations.

Education
Josie McPhail
Coral Eder
Stacy Herman
Ava Fagan

Facilities and Habitats
Joan Guralnick
John Peters
Tony Walker
Ross Sondoy
John Sondoy
Damien Brockel
Robert Atkinson
Dusty LaCombe
Jack Boyer

Gardens
Sue Peters
Tony Walker
Clare Witcomb

Events
Julie Krohmer
Tony Walker
BR Walker

Board of Directors
Sue Bury
Sue Cross
Kathy Kenyon
Russell Lord
Dave Pauli
Alyson Mike
Victoria Porter
Susan Robbins
Samantha Thomas
Board of Directors
December 2022

Samantha Thomas: Chair
Victoria Porter: Vice-Chair, Secretary
Sue Cross: Treasurer
Sue Bury
Alyson Mike
Dave Pauli
Susan Robbins
Aimee Romeijn
Staff
December 2022

BR Walker: Executive Director

Trish Lacombe: Finance & Administrative Lead

Izzy Sommerdorf: Animal Care Manager

Mason Williams: Animal Keeper | Education Associate

Eden Wondra: Education Manager

Charles Skinner: Facilities Manager

Corrinna Baumbauer: Landscape & Garden Lead

Tanya Norberg: Gift Shop Representative
ASA
The Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary is accredited by the American Sanctuary Association.

CANDID
Our organization has earned a 2022 Platinum Seal of Transparency with Guidestar/Candid!

CHARITY NAVIGATOR
The Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary has a 4-Star rating with Charity Navigator.

Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary
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