JANUARY 2025

Chilkat Valley Lynx Project

Learning about Chilkat Lynx / Gaak
on Jilkáat and Jilkoot Aaní, land of Chilkat & Chilkoot people

Liz Hofer and the Chilkat Lynx Team

Lynx are badass, biodiverse and like “tide pools”

a community-based science project is getting science done!

by Kevin White

Lynx are an iconic species of northern forests. Their tufted ears are distinctive but it’s their oversized paws that are key. They allow them to float atop snowpacks into which other species wallow, offering an edge when hunting. Lynx are specialists and require deep, soft snow to hone their craft. Long winters and abundant snow is, of course, widespread throughout the northern boreal forests of interior Alaska and Canada – areas that are the heartland of North American lynx populations. Closer to home in the Chilkat Valley winter snow is more of a fickle beast, with variable conditions, and sometimes rain, being the norm. The status and fate of lynx appears to likewise vary – though knowledge is mostly lacking and questions abound.

The nearby Yukon Territory, in areas such as Dezadeash Lake, is classic lynx territory. Long, cold winters, consistent snow cover and excellent habitat for prey such as snowshoe hares, ptarmigan and small mammals. Lynx and hares have a tight bond, with populations of lynx closely tracking the abundance of hares. Snowshoe hare populations cycle with roughly ten years between peaks in abundance. Following the peak and ensuing hare population decline, lynx populations fall on hard times leading many animals to disperse far and wide – sometimes very long distances. The wave of lynx dispersing from source populations has been likened to a tide. It’s during the high tide that lynx from the Yukon may wash over the Chilkat Valley leading to increases in observations and trapping reports (such as during 2019-2021). During this high tide event, some lynx may find and settle in pockets of suitable habitat in colder, snow-prone local microclimates – others may continue to wander, never finding suitable conditions in the remaining landscape matrix. In time, the tide of dispersing lynx subsides, and lynx only remain in the “tide pools” of localized optimal habitat and snow climate conditions. This way of conceptualizing how lynx colonize and persist in the extremities of their range has, of course, been termed the “tide pool hypothesis”. It has been important for understanding historical and current distribution of small, isolated populations of lynx in the southern extent of their range – in the lower 48 states of Washington, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Minnesota and Maine. Does the Chilkat Valley have lynx “tide pools”? If so, where do they exist? And, how are they maintained? Are coastal lynx populations similar to those of interior forest and mountain systems? Do they eat salmon?! The questions are legion – and fascinating. Answering such questions may be challenging but hold potential to advance our understanding of the species and the biodiverse environment they inhabit.

To increase our understanding about lynx in the Chilkat Valley a dedicated group of local biologists and community members have initiated a project designed to unravel some of these mysteries. Using multiple approaches for gathering information such as camera traps, community outreach, hair sampling and stable isotope analysis important initial progress has been made. Yet, the project is still in the early stages and much works remains to be done. In this newsletter, we are excited to share about the progress of our ground-based field efforts, the important role of the community in making this project happen and our plans for the future.

First Tracks

How this project got started

by Elizabeth Hofer

The Eyes have it – lynx are visual hunters. By tracking lynx step-by-step in snow over many years, I somehow acquired a sense for seeing the boreal forest habitat as they do. Humans tend to hunt in a similar style. So, the lynx way of watching, waiting, stalking, or ambushing from a quiet hide comes rather intuitively. A few years ago, I drove over the Haines Pass on the day that I was tasked with writing an article about lynx for the Greater Chilkat Watershed Atlas project. I became aware I was seeing the familiar Chilkat watershed in a new light – through lynx eyes. I realized there were plenty of alternative prey, at least some snowshoe hares, and recent signs of lynx.

It seems I am not the only one to overlook the role of lynx in the coastal ecosystem. It's different, yet with familiar aspects, when compared to the traditional boreal forest of the Yukon and areas beyond. No previous research or monitoring of lynx has previously been conducted in the coastal watersheds of the Pacific. The only resources to compose the lynx article came from observations shared over the years by many traditional and local knowledge keepers, from trapping records kept since 1970 by ADFG, and, by great luck, from the bycatch data Anthony Crupi collected over 5 years of his ADFG brown bear research project in the Chilkat watershed. The camera array and data from the ADFG bear study area showed where lynx and snowshoe hares are present, indicating they use many parts of the vast Chilkat watershed.

Questions naturally started to flow when a bunch of biologists and a small group of seasoned naturalists discussed the status of Chilkat lynx: Was this a self-sustaining resident population? Did the recent wave from the cyclical populations to the north bring in higher numbers of females than usual? How do these lynx adapt ecologically and, specifically, what do they eat? Do they reproduce? At the same time, we know there are snowshoe hares present on this and other coastal watersheds, but do they too cycle as in the Interior? So, with much interest, mighty and generous energy, and small grants from supporters in Haines and beyond, we began the Chilkat Valley Lynx Project.

One intriguing aspect revolves around the unique food sources available here for hungry lynx: late season salmon runs and overwintering waterfowl provide, from a mesopredator POV, rich protein. Anecdotally these have been used by lynx in the Chilkat based on trappers' observations, a few photos, and observations of some kills found of these and other alternative prey like deer and swans, where lynx at least fed (although they may not have made the kills).

The work we have done do and continue to do, with the goal of establishing long-term monitoring and citizen science, depends on the continued input and interest of the broad community – that is the aspect which is both rewarding and inspiring.

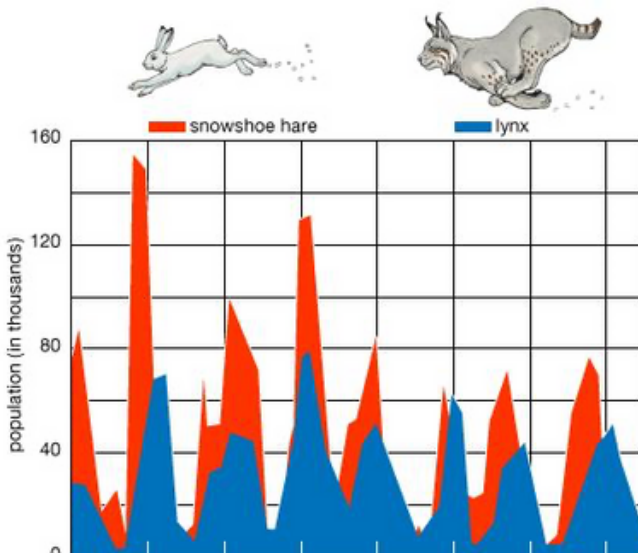
Lynx paw, showing furry "snowshoe" underside

Lynx Natural History

by Yasaman Shakeri

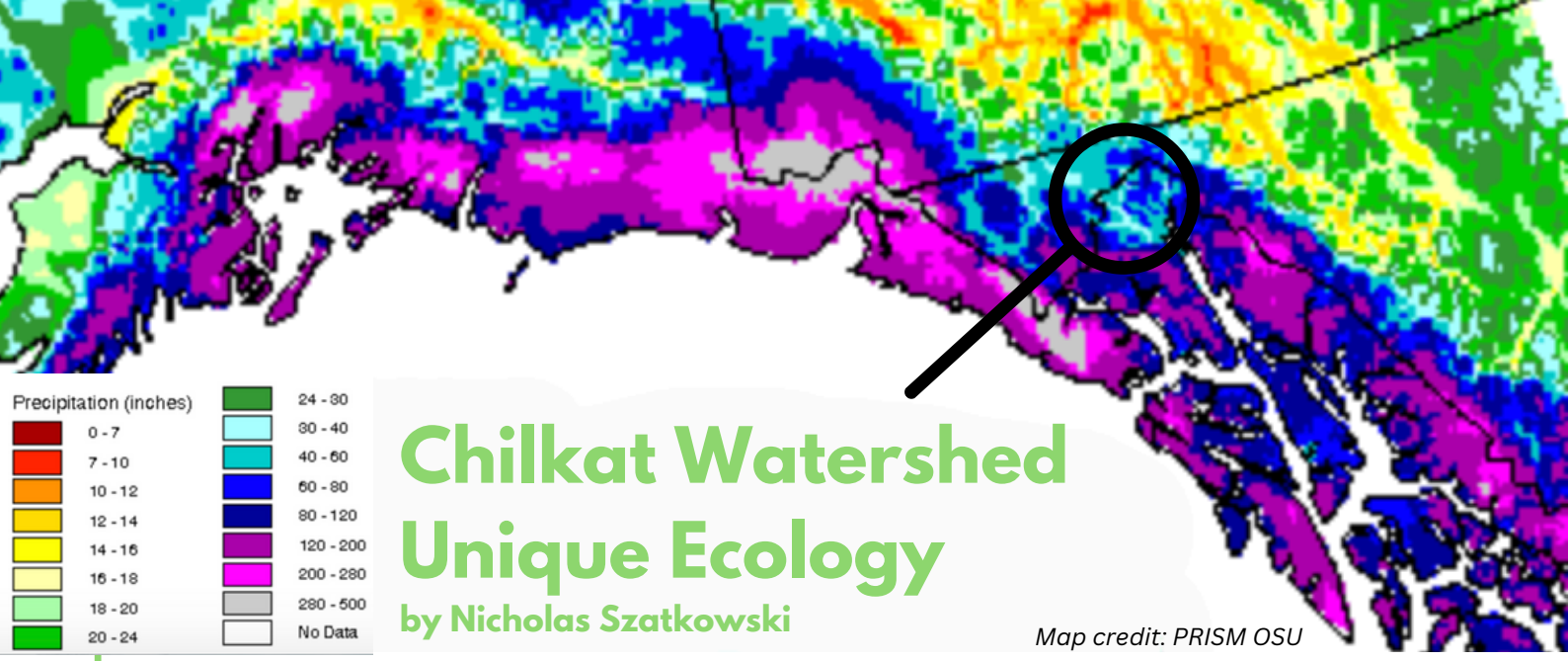
young lynx--note short ear tufts

The Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) is a medium sized forest dwelling cat that can be found throughout Alaska and Canada and into the northern regions of the United States. Its closest relatives are the Eurasian lynx and the bobcat. With its thick gray fur coat and large furry feet, the Canada lynx has evolved to survive harsh winter climates and travel through deep snow. The main prey of these predators is another winter adapted mammal, the snowshoe hare. These nimble herbivores are so important to Canada lynx, their populations rise and drop with the hare population.



If you've ever taken a biology or ecology class, you might remember the classic Canada lynx and snowshoe hare cycle graph, where the lynx population closely follows the hare population. As the hare population rises, the lynx population follows because more lynx kits are born and survive to adulthood. This cycle results in booms and busts in both the hare and lynx population, because of how closely knitted these two species are. When snowshoe hares are rare, Canada lynx will wander the landscape in search of food and their populations will decline in response to the lack of snowshoe hares. Canada lynx will switch to hunting red squirrels and other prey, a behavior known as prey switching.

Canada lynx are mainly solitary animals unless a female is raising kits. Kits are born during the Spring and are raised by the female only. A female lynx can have 1-7 kits and will care for them until they reach maturity at 9-10 months.



Chilkat Watershed Unique Ecology

by Nicholas Szatkowski

Map credit: PRISM OSU

The Chilkat Valley occupies a geographic position between the temperate, coastal rainforest, and the dry boreal interior. For reasons including rainshadowing, cold-air damming, multiple low passes to the interior, and other factors, the climate of the Northern Lynn Canal (and especially of the central Chilkat Valley) is also mid-way between the climate of the two neighboring regions. As shown in the above map, annual precipitation in much of the Chilkat Valley is 40 inches or less, a level more similar to the upper Tatshenshini Valley than to the rest of Southeast Alaska (commonly receiving 2-3 times as much). This is significantly drier than actual temperate rainforest regions.

The temperatures in the Chilkat are also much more "continental" than what is typical in the strongly maritime climate of Southeast Alaska. This means that there is stronger seasonal variation, with hotter summer temperatures, and colder winter temperatures. Because of these climatic conditions, less precipitation falls in the central Chilkat Valley than along the actual coastal areas, but much more of the precipitation that does fall arrives as snow rather than rain. And, because of the colder winter temperatures, that snow tends to persist on the ground in the Chilkat Valley when it's being melted away by rain or warm air along the coastal areas. So, the climate in the Chilkat Valley can be described as primarily a sub-boreal snow forest zone, rather than a temperate rainforest. However, it should be noted that because of topographic complexities, there is great climatic diversity within the Chilkat Valley, with some (shadier, N-facing) areas being similar to temperate rainforest conditions, while other (drier, S-facing) areas support pine/birch parklands with a variety of arid-adapted plants that are rare or absent elsewhere in Alaska. In fact, the Chilkat Valley contains the majority of Alaska's "Lodgepole Pine/Reindeer Lichen" plant community (ranked as "Imperiled" by the Alaska Center for Conservation Science).

And those low-elevation passes...the Chilkat Pass (the actual watershed divide between the Kelsall/Chilkat and the Tashenshini/Alsek) is the lowest pass between the interior and the Upper Lynn Canal, at about 2900 feet elevation. This watershed divide actually occurs in the midst of a broad valley, rather than the "notch between mountains" often evoked by the term "Pass". This is because the Chilkat Valley, the Chilkat Pass, and the upper Tatsheshini Valley occupy the trough of the largest, NW-trending, tectonic fault in this part of the continent (The Denali Fault system). Many of us have some familiarity with the Chilkat Pass, which is currently traversed by the Haines Highway. The topographic conditions that make the location suitable for a highway also make the area a viable corridor for migrating plants and animals. Tlingit people recognized this travel route long ago, and the trade route, or "Grease Trail" through the Chilkat Pass was--and is--an important part of the Chilkat territory, or Jilkaat Aaní. A variety of wildlife species are understood to have arrived in coastal Southeast Alaska via this very pass and corridor (including moose that arrived from the Yukon in the 1920's). The relatively low elevation of the Chilkat Pass supports a subalpine spruce parkland, offering potential habitat to snowshoe hares, lynx, moose, and other species. The continuous, through-valley

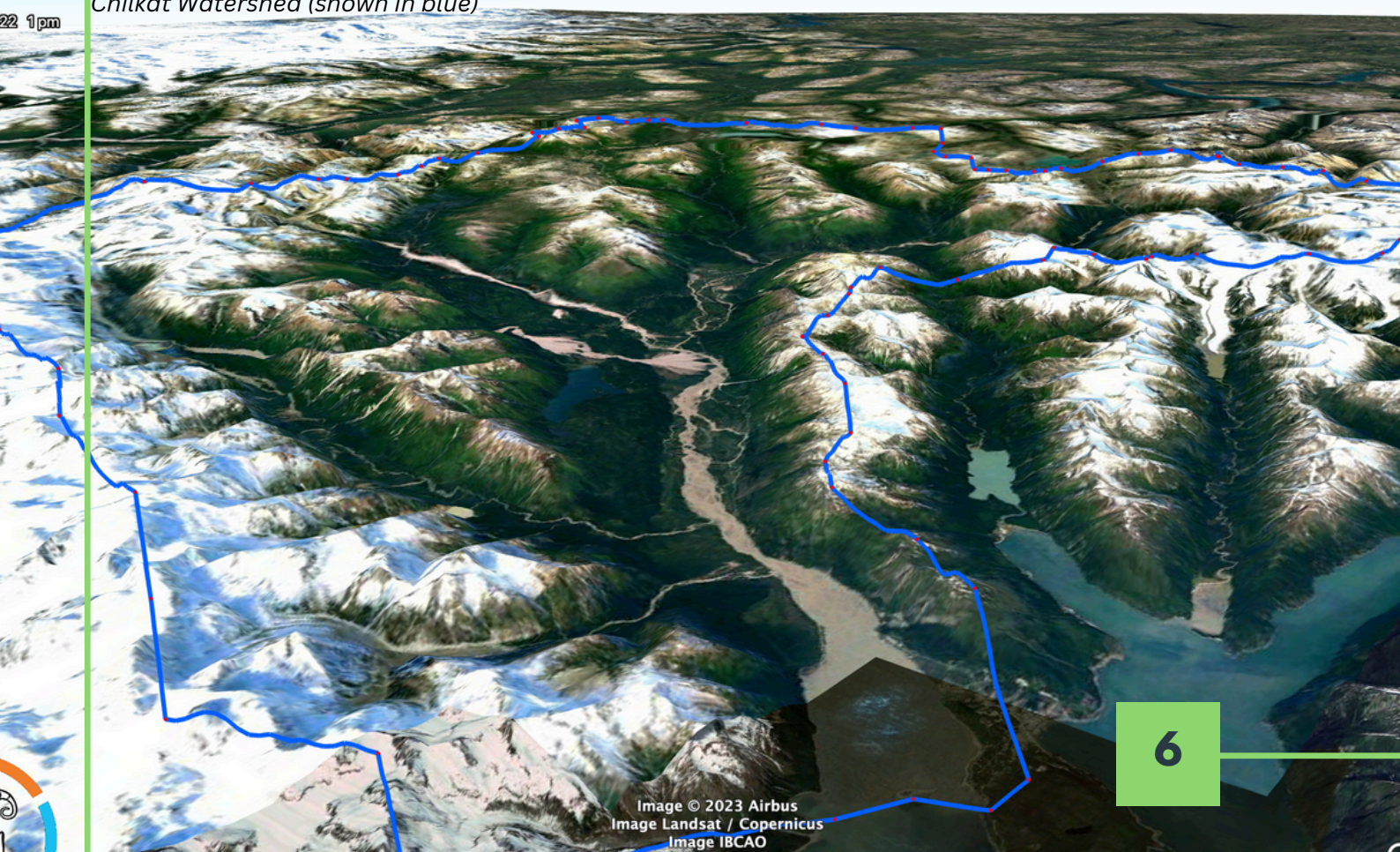
Ecology and Biodiversity...continued

system is also an important route for many migrating birds, providing an alternate, "bypass route" between the Interior flyway and the coastal Pacific flyway. Important stopover feeding locations for migrating birds can be found along this corridor.

The transitional and varied climate of the Chilkat watershed, combined with a complex topography, results in a diverse mosaic of vegetation communities. The area has been recognized to have the greatest richness of vascular plant species in Alaska, and is described in Pojar & Mackinnon's classic guide to plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast as "the greatest centre for plant diversity in Alaska". This diversity of plants and plant communities in turn provides a variety of habitats that support a more diverse array of animal species. The Chilkat area has also been found to have the largest number of mammal species in Alaska. This broad mix of habitats, with a transitional climate, allows species associated with arctic, boreal, and temperate zones to overlap here. For example, 10 species of owls inhabit the Chilkat Valley, including temperate species such as the Saw-whet, and Western Screech Owls, as well as the boreally-distributed Northern Hawk-Owl and Great Gray Owl.

This great diversity of climate and habitats means that a species like the Canada lynx might feel comfortable here because of deep, long-lasting snow, and the presence of its favorite prey, the snowshoe hare. But in this valley, that same lynx might have opportunity to sample alternate prey species, like late-run salmon, or abundant waterfowl benefitting from persistently open water in the midst of the snow-covered landscape. Or perhaps one of the several resident species of grouse, or maybe even an overwintering Trumpeter Swan cygnet. This is an example of how a more diverse ecosystem can provide species with more potential opportunities for survival. In the true boreal forest, when snowshoe hares are in short supply, lynx have fewer options, and often have to disperse great distances to search out food. Sometimes their journeys are successful, but sometimes not. Could the Chilkat be an ecological refuge for lynx, where the more diverse array of species provide at least some extra resources to help these magnificent cats survive a little better here? We don't yet have the answer to that question, but we are on the trail.

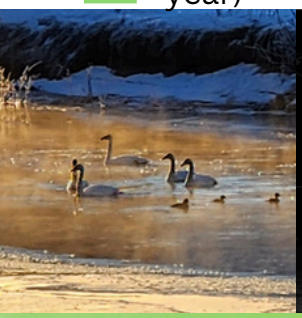
Chilkat Watershed (shown in blue)



Alternate Prey for Chilkat Lynx

potential “alternate prey” - based on studies from the northern boreal forest, and cross-referenced with species that occur in the Chilkat Valley (see pictures below)

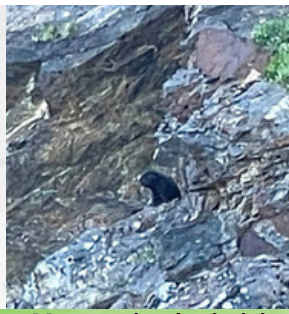
Red Squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)
Flying Squirrels (*Glaucomys sabrinus*)
Small mammal species (voles, mice, lemmings, common muskrats, and shrews which they spit out!)
Grouse (spruce and sooty; *Canachites canadensis* and *Dendragapus fuliginosus*)
Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*)
Waterfowl (swans and ducks many species, some overwintering)
Songbirds (many possible species)
Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)
Marmot (*Marmota caligata*)
Porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*)
Salmon (five species)
Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)
Domestic animals (chickens and others)
Deer (Odocoileus *hemionus sitkensis*)
Moose (*Alces alces*) (Most likely scavenged carcasses, or young of the year)
Mountain goat (*Oreamnos americanus*) (Most likely scavenged, or young of the year)


Trumpeter swan


Flying squirrel


Porcupine


Red fox


Marmot (melanistic)


Salmon


Beaver


Deer

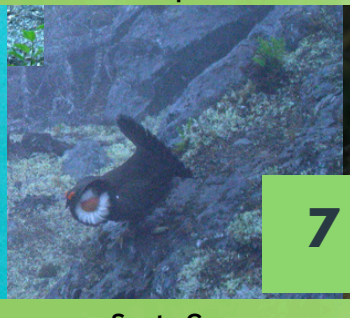

Red squirrel


Ptarmigan


Domestic animals


Vole

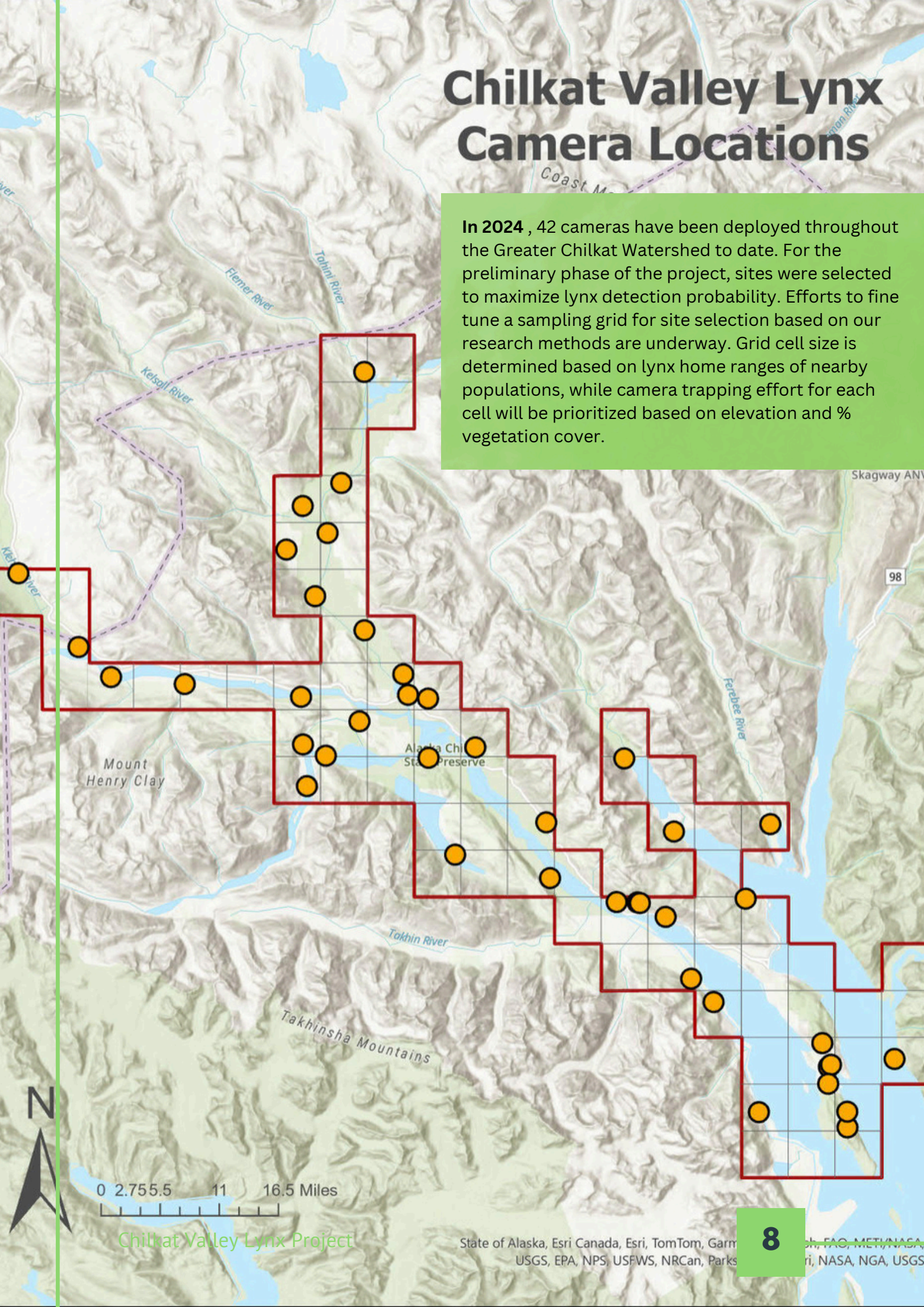

Snowshoe hare


Sooty Grouse


Spruce Grouse

Chilkat Valley Lynx Camera Locations

In 2024 , 42 cameras have been deployed throughout the Greater Chilkat Watershed to date. For the preliminary phase of the project, sites were selected to maximize lynx detection probability. Efforts to fine tune a sampling grid for site selection based on our research methods are underway. Grid cell size is determined based on lynx home ranges of nearby populations, while camera trapping effort for each cell will be prioritized based on elevation and % vegetation cover.



Study Approach and Design

by Stacie Evans and Elizabeth Hofer

1. Camera Traps: The Chilkat Lynx Research Project study design is modeled after the well-established Wild Cam Network camera trapping methodology. Remote cameras are deployed throughout the Chilkat Valley to detect the presence of lynx (see map caption on the previous page for more information about site selection). Data from other projects and community trail cams are also used.

2. Hair Samples: Hair is collected from lynx pelts supplied by trappers, both locally and from comparable coastal watersheds (Yakutat, Cordova, Gustavus) as well as from noninvasive snagging devices. These are analyzed for diet, and eventually, DNA. The diet results indicate what the individual mostly consumed in the period six months prior to collection. The results from a subsample we sent off to test the methodology so far indicate voles, songbirds, grouse, and probably snowshoe hares were eaten. In the future, we are interested in employing more targeted sampling along streams to understand the importance of salmon in lynx diet.

3. Community Observations: The project solicits observations submitted by the community including sightings and fresh tracks. Team members then visit the site and collect additional information like scats, kills, attempted kills, use of habitat, and travel routes by following lynx tracks in the snow. These confirmed places where lynx have been give a data point for presence and are invaluable starting points to find good settings for additional cameras and/or hair snagging sites.

4. Snow Tracking techniques developed during the classic Yukon 10-year Ecosystems Dynamics of the Boreal Forest study are being adapted to understand lynx ecology at the coastal edge of its range during the wintertime. The snow conditions of the Chilkat prove challenging in comparison but snow-tracking can be done when the tracks are fresh.

Still in the early stages, the project is still fine tuning methods while lynx numbers are low and before the expected increase in abundance (lynx are already starting their cyclical increase in the Yukon). Now, with some preliminary field experience and data in hand, solidifying methodology will be easier to accomplish.

It Takes a Village

by Elizabeth Hofer

Since the moment I left university and headed north to live, I've enjoyed the privilege of working at jobs that keep me in the field and connected to the surrounding land and wildlife. Because of my special interest in wild cats, their ecology, and winter(!), I've had the opportunity to work in some far-off settings. This suited my lifestyle. I relished being able to live in some 'exotic' country long enough to know and feel all seasons from the perspective of the study animal, and also, to live and work with the local people long enough that we were no longer exotic to each other.

The study of lynx became a common thread. I went from the forests around Kluane Lake to the mountains of Switzerland to learn about the Eurasian lynx, (*Lynx lynx),* a cat about the same general size as a large Canada lynx, but twice the weight and hunters of deer and alpine ungulates rather than hares. I was then able to work with lynx, following in their footsteps so to speak, across their range to Mongolia and parts of central Asia. There, they overlap with the more sexy and charismatic snow leopard (a species I also had opportunity to work with). A few shorter term stints with leopard projects in Yemen and other countries reinforced in me the concept that scientific study of an interesting species of wildlife starts with involving local people.

In the Chilkat watershed, the quest to understand lynx in, what is for them maybe an exotic habitat, started with a realization of how important, intriguing and unknown they are to the community. Our approach began with science but naturally evolved to include a complementary community-based citizen science focus. The level of interest in Chilkat lynx in the local community is unique in my experience and has become essential to the ongoing study. We know a lot about lynx in the boreal forest (of the Yukon, interior Alaska and beyond). We also know they appear in coastal watersheds periodically. But, from a science point of view, not much else is known or recorded.

We have a basis for filling some gaps with the observations, photos, and trapping accounts of local residents. We also have the collective thoughts and stories that form the traditional and local ecological knowledge base of the community. The cross section of people willing to share with the project remains unusually broad. It is obvious when there are lynx in the valley, as people pay attention, are interested and willing to talk, and are keen to learn more. Elders, trappers, biologists, naturalists, skiers, and photographers were logical starting points when we inquired about lynx information. The Chilkat "bonus" comes from grandmothers out walking, a kid in grade 4, a highway maintenance driver, a winter tourist with a camera who hangs out near fish congregations, or a young mother sitting in front of her window in a remote cabin - a "bonus" because the structured interview that results when these people are contacted provide an essential tool to translate citizen science information into scientific data. These are the essential beginnings of the path to increasing our knowledge about our elusive and charismatic neighbor - the Chilkat lynx.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD -

Intrepid Adventurers: Grunt

by Eric Holle

Let's start at the top, with the boss (Liz Hofer). The Director. She's been working with lynx and other wild cats forever, everywhere. She comes up with the plan - money, equipment, how, what, where, etc. Then you have some assorted biologists - they've been looking at birds, mammals, fish forever. They consult and consort with the boss, and turn the plan into maps and charts and graphs. Then come the grunts - who just like cruising around and looking at stuff and they are happy to put up a camera or two, which now number about 43 or so. Ideally you want grunts who know the Valley well and can handle skiffs, jet boats, canoes, kayaks, snowshoes, skis. They look for game trails, especially near meadows where there are willows and brush that snowshoe hares like. That's a place where there's a good chance a lynx will show up and get its picture taken. In actual fact, everybody on the team has some of these traits. But some true grunts avoid those plush office chairs like the plague. Don't fence us in.

Here's a good day for grunts: Head up a ridge to a trail used by bears, wolves, mountain goats, porcupines and reportedly lynx. You put a camera on a stout tree a few feet above the trail, high enough that it won't get buried by snow, and positioned where you won't get a zillion pix of branches blowing in the wind. It's a beautiful warm day and you get lucky, mountain goat billies are chasing nannies around on nearly vertical cliffs.

Here's a less good day: Four moderately stalwart lads - we'll call them Four Who Dared! - set off for a camera site across the Tsirku, which is open water even on the coldest day of the year. About minus 4 degrees F. It's sunny everywhere except where they are. Water too deep and swift to wade. They decide to use a packraft and shuttle all Four Who Dared! across, back and forth, using ropes. Which freeze instantly. The second crossing is a deep slough ending in a nasty snarl of veg, above an undercut bank with a small logjam. Somehow One Who Dared! ends up on a tiny gravel bar with the raft but no paddle. Literally "up a creek without a paddle." A desperate toss of the paddle is not successful and it gets sucked under the log jam and does not emerge. Somehow - it's all a blur - The Fab Four Who Dared! make it across, place the camera, remember they actually brought a second paddle (always do that!) and return half-frozen but alive. Call it good. Or maybe just okay. But in hindsight, it was way better than sitting in an office staring at a computer, and they're already excited to see the photos next year from all 43 cameras.

Note #1. Don't muck about with packrafts at minus 4 degrees F., especially if you suffer from Raynaud's Syndrome.
Note # 2. Avoid placing or retrieving cameras in popular hunting areas during hunting season (That's a story for next time.)

Chilkat Valley Lynx Project

Kip Kermoian and Eric Holle

POV- through the lens

by Kip Kermoian

Chilkat lynx, 2022

A “click”, a burst of light, I’m on. A biologist approaches…lifting a paper inches from my face; “#43”, my designated number. I comply, and record the image on to the SD card they’ve pushed into my belly; it will stay with me for up to a year with the expectation that “#43" will be only the first of many images I’ll record.

Before lashing me to this tree, with great care they adjusted all of my settings: still images or video? Perhaps both? How often and for how long, do they want me to record? They choose to take an image every day at a specific time as well as record 3 still images whenever triggered by an animal. Unlimited recording is possible when triggered, but the cost in batteries and time commitment required to change them, would present financial and logistical challenges. As it is, if movement such as blowing vegetation triggers an image capture not only will the battery life suffer, but so will the individual tasked with screening all of the images for our target species, lynx. Thus, care must be given in selecting a suitable site free of false triggering potential.

In the “old days”, in the early-80's, the first attempts at passively documenting wildlife activity recorded the time an animal tripped a string stretched across a trail. Next came an infrared beam directed at a receiver that recorded the time when the beam was broken followed by the same, attached to a 35mm camera that triggered the shutter. Nowadays, digital advances have improved image quality, increased trigger distances, speed, Bluetooth and cellular capabilities - efficiencies never dreamed of.

I sleep pretty well, but like a firefighter, can be called into service at anytime. And two nights after the biologists walked away, the Passive Infra-Red sensor detects energy given off in the form of heat. It immediately wakes me into action when a porcupine enters my field of view. I rest once it departs.
My last location drove me crazy, bears, moose, coyotes…If you think I’ve got it easy, try having someone lash you to a tree for a year, and remain poised as a bear approaches, 8…4…2 meters… before a shroud of fog envelops my view; the scraping of teeth against my case, tugging… the strap holds, but a tooth punctures my Fresnel lens, compromising my detection ability, a wound that will require repair when the biologists next visit.

This current location looks most promising, and within 5 months I’m abruptly awakened at 7 am as a lynx, ghost-like, winds its way slowly down a game trail through a mossy, pine forest. The lynx has discovered the accumulating abundance of snowshoe hares that I have been recording for the past two months. The picture is stunning, and the wait - definitely worth it!

Science Advisory Board

MARK O'DONOGHUE
As a biologist who spent 8 winters of my life following around lynx tracks in the forests of the southwest Yukon, I developed a fascination and great respect for these beautiful animals. There have been dozens of studies of lynx in the contiguous boreal forest but none in coastal rain forests. The Chilkat Valley Lynx Project aims to fill this hole in our understanding of lynx and I will be fascinated to see the results as they begin to roll in. It's a great example of what dedicated naturalists can accomplish through combined volunteer time and community.

YASAMAN SHAKERI
I am a PhD student at the University of Wyoming studying predator prey dynamics. My research is focused on mountain lion ecology and predation on endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep. I'm excited to learn more about Canada lynx in our coastal systems.

KEVIN WHITE
I am a university-based mountain goat researcher by day, and a lynx field biologist by night (actually on weekends). My role on the project mostly entails exploring the Chilkat Valley by as many (mostly human-powered) means possible to deploy and check field cameras. Sometimes leading to ill-advised river crossings in subfreezing weather or discussions about advective waves of lynx distribution, local biogeography and sampling design. I am excited to be involved in this remarkable community-based science collaboration, and about its enormous potential for unraveling the mysteries of the elusive coastal lynx.

Chilkat lynx track in snow

Grateful Nods

The donors and supporters who have made the lynx project possible

Walter and Silvia Streit *-- whose unwavering support in the beginning got the project launched and the first round of cameras out..*

Taal Levi (and an anonymous donor)*-- whose funding enabled purchase of the second round of cameras and the set-up and maintenance of the photo management database (88,000 pictures and counting!).*

Kate James and Natalie Dawson*-- whose support is bringing the lynx project into the future.*

Persia Khan from the ACS Lab at Univ of Victoria-- *for advice about study design.*

Lucinda Boyce, Tom Cosgrove, and Julia Heinz*-- for sharing your lynx photos.*

Haines Trappers*, too many to count-- for sharing your stories from the field and lynx hair samples.*

CVN and KHNS*-- for covering the project and getting the word out.*

ADFG*: Anthony Crupi, Roy Churchwell, Carl Koch and Charlotte Westing-- for your guidance and lynx hair samples.*

Regional Trappers*: Yakutat and Cordova--for keeping a look out for other coastal lynx.*

Merav Ben David*-- professor at Univ of Wyoming, for analyzing lynx hair samples.*

Chilkat Indian Village *- - for supporting the project and allowing it to operate on tribal lands, and within Jilkaat Aani.*

Klukwan School*--especially the kids, for helping track lynx with Nicholas Szatkowski.*

Field Volunteers *- Mark Battion, Katey Palmer, Ben Kirkpatrick, Shawna Franklin, Leon Somme, and Cliff Nietvelt*

Blair White*-- for sharing your home and internet with traveling lynx bios.*

Takshanuk Watershed Council and Lynn Canal Conservation *for administrative and logistical support*

Our Next Steps:

While we are open and enthusiastic about future collaboration, at this stage, we are not directly affiliated with a government agency or academic institution. Instead we opt to employ a community-based, low-budget (but big data: 88,000 pics so far!) non-invasive camera trapping approach. In addition to cameras, we also use other noninvasive tools, like tracking and hair snagging. Long-term goals are to enhance our knowledge of biodiversity and provide a meaningful index of change over time in our watershed - one of few in the Pacific region, for example, that has all five species of Pacific salmon. In time, we hope our results generate interest and engagement among researchers and communities in both the Chilkat and the Canadian side of the border (the lynx source populations), including the Yukon, BC and First Nations governments and other US and Canadian communities and institutions.

1 Monitor Cameras

Maintain cameras, swap out SD cards and batteries every 6 months.

2 Community Outreach

Keep the community informed and involved, cultivate volunteers.

3 Hair Samples

Continue to collect hair samples for diet and genetic analysis. Univ of Wyoming professor, Merav Ben David, and her students volunteered this service so far (thank you!). As we get more samples, the project hopes to cover this cost.

4 Analyze Data

Manage photo database, catalogue pictures, and summarize findings. Collaborate with similar projects in western B.C. (WildCAM Network).

Let's stay in touch!

contact the Chilkat Lynx Project at:
chilkatlynx@gmail.com

See lynx? tracks?

Call or text right away!
907-766-2606

If you would like to support or participate in the Chilkat Valley Lynx Project, contact us! Special prize for anyone who sees a lynx kit! Stay tuned for our next in-person presentations and tracking workshops!

Reaching Out: Ongoing Connections and Future Outreach Activities

*CVN articles - a series
*Klukwan School - Outdoor Program (Nicholas)
*Public presentation
*Classroom presentation
*Tracking workshops in Haines (more this winter!)
*Tracking workshop in the Yukon
*KHNS interviews
*Informational posters (with photos!)
*Trapper interviews and visits
*Conversations around town
*Informal presentations
*Annual report

Chilkat Valley Lynx Project

shared from community game cameras

"Carlos" 1986