



CUB REPORTER



By Kasha MacDonald

Kasha is a grade 6 student who lives in Calgary. She loves running, skiing, camping and anything in the outdoors. When she is not climbing mountains or swimming in lakes, you may find her curled up with a good book. Kasha hopes that the world continues to become more environmentally friendly to ensure these wild spaces remain beautiful for everyone to enjoy.

Sleeping under the Stars

Escaping to wild places is one of my favourite things to do. Lucky for me, I live close to the Rocky Mountains with endless adventure opportunities. In the summertime, I love to hike and backcountry camp in Kananaskis. Heart Mountain is a fun day trip with a scrambly route where you need your hands and feet to get up the rocks. Another favourite spot is hiking up to Rawson Lake and around Upper Kananaskis Lake. Spending time in nature, away from the busy city, helps me feel connected to my family. As we hike up to new camping spots to explore, I breathe in the crisp air and keep my eyes peeled for signs of wildlife.

To spot wildlife, you may want to look near water and remember to listen. Marshes are a great place to hear the songs of birds and possibly the sloshing of a moose. When crossing a meadow lush with berries, remember to keep up a conversation and make noise to not surprise a munching bear. As we climb higher above the treeline towards our camp, the rocky terrain provides an excellent habitat for pikas, marmots, chipmunks and if we are lucky we might spot a mountain goat.

Once we arrive at our destination, it's time to set up camp and ensure we are camping responsibly. This means setting up our tent in a designated spot to not disrupt the flora.

In many backcountry camping sites, there are wild animal storage lockers. These are special animal proof containers to store food and

all cooking supplies when they are not in use. It is important to keep your campsite clean to keep the wildlife alive and thriving.

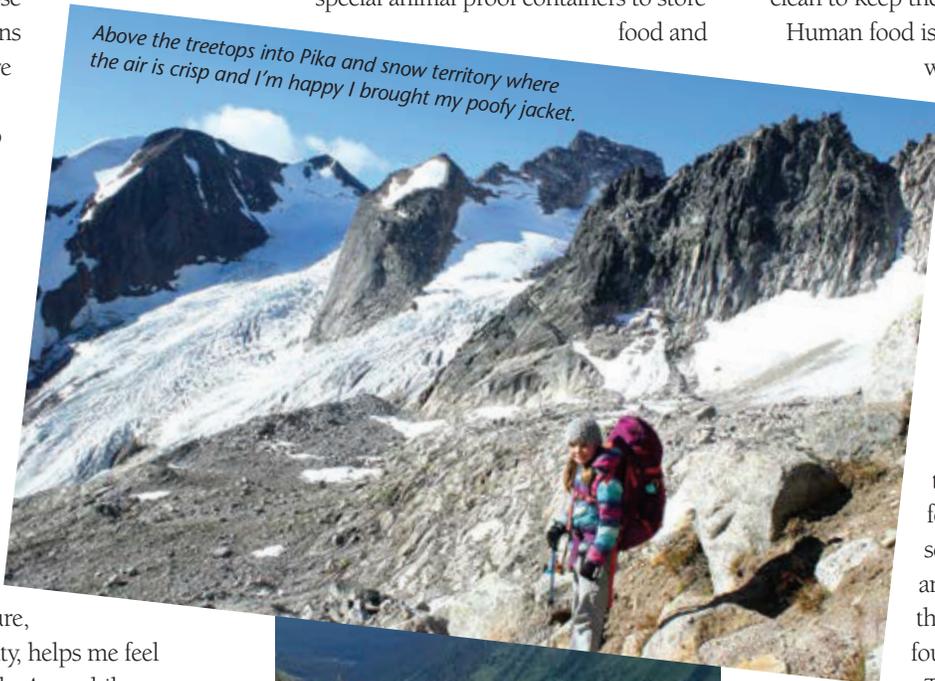
Human food is extremely dangerous for wildlife and can kill them.

When I see people leaving food out for animals, it makes me feel heavy hearted. If animals rely on human food scraps to survive it causes two problems. Firstly, their bodies weren't meant for human food and it can make them very sick. Secondly, if they get used to having easily accessible food, they forget how to source out their own food and will eventually die when there is no human food to be found.

The parks do an amazing job having signage to remind all visitors to respect this. "Pack it in; Pack it out" and "Leave no trace" are important mottos to follow when enjoying these beautiful environments. If I see garbage on the trail, I do my part and pick it up and carry it out with my own waste so that we can continue to enjoy the pristine wilderness. I encourage others to do the same.

Falling asleep, under the stars, listening to the wind blow gently through the tent, snuggled up with my family, my heart is happy and I feel so peaceful. I hope one day you too can explore the Rocky Mountains and experience this beauty for yourself. 

Above the treetops into Pika and snow territory where the air is crisp and I'm happy I brought my poofy jacket.



Thankful for a well-maintained trail, complete with ladders to help us get up high with the valley opening up in all its beauty below.