

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

YSL Beauty adds Bahamas, Colombia to rewilding project scope

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The brand is establishing new rewilding projects in two emerging luxury markets: the Caribbean and Latin America. Image courtesy of YSL Beauty

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

France's YSL Beauty is expanding its sustainability program Rewild Our Earth, which seeks to protect and restore nearly 250,000 acres of wilderness by 2030.

The maison is introducing new rewilding projects in Colombia and the Bahamas in partnership with Re:wild, a public charity based in Austin. The move comes as luxury surges in Latin America and the Caribbean, where five-star hotels continue to pop up and brands are increasingly turning for design inspiration and campaign settings.

"At the source of all YSL Beauty creations there is nature," said Caroline Negre, international sustainability and scientific director at [YSL Beauty](#), Paris.

"Alongside our own in-depth transformation process to reduce our impact on natural resources, it is essential to protect and restore the wild where biodiversity and ecosystems are at threat, in places and ecosystems that inspire us."

Going green

Announcing the update during Earth Month, Rewild Our Earth supports YSL Beauty's standing commitment to environmentalism. Over the past few months, the company has highlighted its work in Morocco.

A decade into service, the country's sustainable harvesting grounds bring together a local female cooperative and produce exclusive ingredients for YSL Beauty's skincare and makeup lines, additionally supplying fragrance come 2025 ([see story](#)).

Now, the house once again asserts its mission-driven status.



In the Atlas Mountains, YSL Beauty has been supporting intersectional environmentalism for a decade. Image courtesy of YSL Beauty

“Re:wild prioritizes places and species that have the richest biodiversity in the world; areas that, if destroyed, would be the greatest losses to our planet,” said Carrie Hutchison, director of marketing and brand at [Re:wild](#), Washington D.C.

“We work with YSL Beauty to identify projects that can make a real difference in protecting and restoring the wild and also offer rich storytelling opportunities for the brand to share with its audience to get them excited about conservation.”

As studies show that forging connections with ecoconscious consumers can result in boosted profits ([see story](#)) and enhance customer loyalty ([see story](#)), revamping the rewilding program could benefit both the planet and the company. YSL Beauty operator L’Oral Groupe already seems clued in to this reality.

Earlier in 2024, the conglomerate joined with 14 other companies to form the [T](#)Raceability Alliance for Sustainable CosmEtics (TRASCE). Inclusive of luxury peers such as Chanel, Dior, Shiseido and Este Lauder, the consortium aims to enhance visibility across supply chains and encourage transparent ingredient usage ([see story](#)).

“Luxury brands have a platform; influencers, creatives, media and other brands look to them for the latest trends,” said Ms. Hutchison.

“Brands like YSL Beauty are putting biodiversity in the spotlight,” she said. “If we’re going to reverse global warming, stop extinctions and prevent future pandemics, it’s going to take all of us: political leaders, the public, and companies too.”

Rewild Our Earth addresses biodiversity loss, overlapping with TRASCE in this area healthy habitats mean optimum raw materials, which bodes well for labels that rely on natural resources for the production of its products.



The brand often centers nature in advertising even outside of its beauty business, as was the case with its first fine jewelry campaign, debuted last year. Image credit: Saint Laurent

According to YSL Beauty, due to climate change and further harms exacerbated by humans, 75 percent of all wild places have been damaged and more than 1 million wildlife species are at risk of extinction. Predictions state that more than 50 percent of the remaining wild will vanish over the course of the next decades unless urgent actions are taken.

It is this crisis that sits at the heart of the brand's program.

"Companies know that their customers are concerned about climate change and want to see action from them," said Ms. Hutchison.

"YSL Beauty has a goal to protect and restore the biodiversity of 100,000 hectares by 2030 and take steps to make their business more sustainable and better for the environment," she said. "Working with us as partners allows them to do that in a science-based way, and for them to share this commitment with their customer base, hopefully inspiring their customers to take action as well."

Rewild Our Earth carries a land conservation goal equivalent to 10 times the surface area of Paris.

"This feels different than other sustainability programs," said Katherine C. Sredl, marketing lecturer at [Loyola University Chicago Quinlan School of Business](#), Chicago.

"The company is taking the responsibility to care for the environment rather than passing it on to consumers in the form of asking them to make a donation when they buy, or asking them to recycle or to add their old YSL to the circular economy (which wouldn't be good for a luxury brand that works on exclusivity)."

Ms. Sredl is not affiliated with YSL Beauty, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Rewilding luxury

On top of Morocco, Haiti, Madagascar, Indonesia and Canada, Rewild Our Earth now includes the Bahamas and Colombia.

"I think YSL picked Colombia and Bahamas because they are not overplayed by other businesses doing corporate social responsibility (CSR) there, compared to other places on the globe that are negatively impacted due to climate change," said Ms. Sredl.

"The positioning on climate-related CSR is not crowded there."



YSL Beauty is funding the habitat restoration work of a rewilding team in the Bahamas, where rare reptiles are at risk of extinction. Image courtesy of YSL Beauty

Considered biodiversity hot spots, these nations' natural zones are among the most threatened in the world. YSL Beauty is funding the habitat restoration work of a rewilding team in the Bahamas, focusing on the territory of the White Cay Iguanas.

Only 150 of the area's reptiles are left, making them among the most endangered lizards on earth, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.

"In the Bahamas, we are working to bolster the population of the White Cay Iguana, which is one of the most threatened lizards on Earth," said Ms. Hutchison.

"Support from YSL Beauty will help stop poachers, educate the public and involve communities in protecting the iguana, promote sustainable tourism, and support local conservation efforts."

Collaborating with local partners and communities, species conservation action plans are being drawn up to heal the White Cay Iguanas' native wetlands. Methods will be tailored to the capacity and context of the region monitoring and evaluation will ensure that learnings are shared with neighboring islands to spread knowledge and aid in similar endeavors.

The Caribbean Community has secured the attention of prestige marketers, just this year setting the scene for fashion campaigns ([see story](#)) and hospitality advertisements ([see story](#)).



The effort in Colombia will protect some of the most biodiverse places on earth. Image courtesy of YSL Beauty

Meanwhile, in Colombia, YSL Beauty is helping rewild the Chiribiquete and La Paya National Parks. These delicate grounds in the Amazon are critical in keeping natural corridors connected to one another.

The parks also act as carbon sinks, which makes them major players in climate change mitigation. Just as the brand is doing in the Bahamas, locals and environmental education are getting involved.

"In Colombia, we are working to protect critical areas of the Amazon, which faces threats from development, animal agriculture, climate change-induced wildfires, and more," said Ms. Hutchison.

"Chiribiquete and La Paya play a vital role in the conservation of critical ecosystems, including tropical rainforests and the Amazon Basin," she said. "Protecting these areas is essential for safeguarding the planet's biodiversity and mitigating climate change."

YSL Beauty's philanthropic pursuits are supported by its parent company's strong sales. In Q4 of 2023, Latin America represented the market that saw the highest increases.

Like-for-like, sales grew 23.4 percent in the region year-over-year. For the full year, they spiked 24.4 percent on the same basis, the biggest leap of any region.

L'Oréal's satellite offices throughout the area also appear to be thriving: it took to social media just this week to highlight a base in Bogotá. In the Santa Barbara neighborhood, 350 professionals from Colombia and nearby nations work to uplift the company's brands in South America.

“Colombia is in a post-conflict era with growing tourism, millennial digital nomads, and retirees from North America,” said Ms. Sredl.

“This campaign might be more about the growth of these economies rather than YSL,” she said. “However, if we want to look at the YSL perspective, this could be a long-term strategy of establishing the brand as a local partner.”

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