



# Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee

## CHARTER – 11/07/23-12/31/2025

This Charter is made and entered into by and between the US Department of the Interior (DOI), National Park Service, Intermountain Region; US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region; Bureau of Land Management, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho State Offices; the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern, Rocky Mountain, and Intermountain Regions; and the State Wildlife Departments of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming; hereinafter referred to as “the Cooperators.”

### BACKGROUND

The National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Forest Service have previously affirmed their relationship in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA), and as members of the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC), through 1964, 1986, 2003, 2008, 2012, and 2017 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), previous Interagency Agreements, and through a history of coordinated working relationships. These three agencies welcomed the Bureau of Land Management in the 2012 MOU as a full partner in the GYCC in order to more effectively coordinate federal land management in the GYA, and previously affirmed their relationship in the 2017 MOU. In 2020, these four agencies welcomed the State Wildlife Departments of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming as full partners in the GYCC.

In May 2023, the Executive Committee agreed to create this Charter to document the objectives, organization, and governance processes to be used by the GYCC going forward. This Charter replaces and supersedes prior Memoranda of Understanding related to the GYCC.

Since 1964, the GYCC has evolved to its current structure with an Executive Committee, Subcommittees, and Executive Coordinator. In the 1990s, teams began to form to coordinate on issues. (Although referred to as “subcommittees,” these groups do not consist of subsets of Executive Committee members; rather, the GYCC Subcommittees consist of subordinate staff of Executive Committee member agencies.) In 2000, an Executive Coordinator was hired to provide program and administrative support, and agencies began annually contributing funds to selected projects that support GYCC priorities.

The purpose of this Charter is to document the collaborative framework for providing public services and responsible land management in a cooperative and coordinated manner, as the GYCC, to the extent permissible by law and agency-specific missions, throughout the GYA.

## **PURPOSE**

The GYCC allows the GYA federal land and state wildlife managers to pursue opportunities for voluntary communication, cooperation, and coordination at the landscape scale.

## **ORGANIZATION & GOVERNANCE**

The GYCC is a cooperative effort of its members. GYCC members recognize and mutually respect the authorities and mandates of all Cooperators under federal and state law. Participation in the GYCC has no effect on the sovereignty or jurisdiction of any of its members.

The GYCC is not a governing body or legal entity. The GYCC is not a federal or state agency taking agency actions subject to the National Environmental Policy Act or Administrative Procedure Act, or their state equivalents, or ESA §7 consultation requirements for federal agencies. The GYCC is not a federal advisory committee subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

GYCC member agencies retain their authority to enter into other agreements and participate in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.

The GYCC consists of an Executive Committee, Subcommittees established by the Executive Committee, and an Executive Coordinator. Membership, roles, and responsibilities are as follows:

### **GYCC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

#### **Membership**

The GYCC Executive Committee consists of the following members. These members may delegate responsibility to a designee, provided that the designee has the knowledge, information, and full authority to act on behalf of the member:

- Park Superintendents: Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks;
- Refuge Managers: National Elk Refuge and Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge;
- Forest Supervisors: Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, Custer Gallatin, and Shoshone National Forests;
- Bureau of Land Management State Office District Managers: Idaho Falls, ID; Western Montana, MT, and Wind River/Big Horn Basin, WY;
- State Wildlife Department Directors: Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the desire of all Cooperators to cooperate fully in matters relating to responsible land management throughout the GYA. These cooperative efforts include, but are not limited to:

- Providing leadership in making coordinated decisions that serve the public and help sustain resources in the GYA.

- Ensuring coordination of planning, strategies, and practices across national park, national forest, national wildlife refuge, and Bureau of Land Management administered lands in the GYA in coordination with GYA State Wildlife Departments.
- Setting GYCC level priorities and assigning resources to achieve goals.
- Fostering a climate that encourages interaction, coordination, and cooperation with federal, state, and local agencies, private organizations, and the public.
- Identifying and facilitating resolution of emerging issues within the GYA.
- Minimizing duplicated effort; seeking opportunities to share information, resources, and data.
- To the extent permissible by law and agency missions, making rules and regulations consistent across the GYA.

In consideration of the above premises, the Cooperators agree as follows:

**The National Park Service Shall:**

1. Yellowstone National Park shall supervise and support the GYCC Executive Coordinator’s position.
2. Subject to funding and available resources, support the accomplishment of GYCC priorities through implementing the purpose and objectives of the Charter and GYCC projects and programs.

**The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service Shall:**

1. Subject to funding and available resources, support the accomplishment of GYCC priorities through implementing the purpose and objectives of the Charter and GYCC projects and programs.

**The State Wildlife Departments Shall:**

1. Subject to available resources, support the accomplishment of GYCC priorities through implementing the purpose and objectives of the Charter and GYCC projects and programs.

**Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Chair of the Executive Committee shall serve a two-year term (based on a calendar year) and will alternate between representatives of the GYCC agencies. The Chair shall be responsible for calling meetings of the Executive Committee, establishing the agendas, and running the meetings of the committee with the assistance of the Executive Coordinator.

A Vice-Chair will be selected at the beginning of the Chair’s term by a consensus of the members or majority vote, if necessary. They shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chair when requested to do so or when the Chair is unavailable. The Vice-Chair will assume the Chair position upon completion of the Chair’s term.

## **Executive Committee Staff**

The GYCC Executive Committee will be supported by an Executive Coordinator, supervised by Yellowstone National Park and reporting to the Chair.

## **Meetings**

The Executive Committee will hold two meetings annually, one in spring and one in fall. They will be 1–2-day meetings rotated between Bozeman, MT, and Cody and Jackson, WY. Every 2-3 years a strategic retreat will be held in place of one of the in-person meetings.

In addition, the Executive Committee will hold regular conference calls.

Special meetings and conference calls may be held as needed in response to a call of the Chair and agreed to by the Executive Committee.

GYCC meetings will generally include an executive session and a public session. Public notification of the meetings will be made by the Chair or the Executive Coordinator.

## **Executive Committee Decision-making**

The power of the GYCC rests in the combined, collaborative efforts of its members. To that end, decision-making by the GYCC is based on consensus among the members to the greatest extent possible. The Executive Committee may make decisions using a simple majority vote of the members present (members or their designee must be present in person or by phone to participate in a vote; no proxies will be considered) at any meeting for matters that affect all GYCC member agencies equally (e.g., selection of the Vice-Chair, general policies). However, no vote may be taken to compel or preclude an action by any GYCC member agency without its concurrence.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

The Executive Committee has established Subcommittees made up of a diversity of participants working toward the health and sustainability of the GYA. These Subcommittees are chartered by and report to the GYCC Executive Committee, which recognizes and values the extra effort and time required by the individuals who Chair them.

As with the Executive Committee, Subcommittee members may designate an alternate representative, provided that the designee has the knowledge, information, and full authority to act on behalf of the member.

## **Membership**

Subcommittees should strive to include members from each of the Executive Committee agencies, as relevant to the issues. County and local government and tribal representatives are welcome. Others who hold special expertise are welcome, at the discretion of the Subcommittee Chair.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of each Subcommittee is to coordinate implementation of the Strategic Priorities established by the Executive Committee. Responsibilities of the Subcommittees include:

- Develop a Charter, Standard Operating Procedures, and work plans to implement Executive Committee direction for review and approval by the Executive Committee;
- Coordinate implementation of the approved work plan by member agencies;
- Establish necessary teams to implement approved actions;
- Recommend revisions to the Strategic Priorities based on the best available science and management actions;
- Identify funding or other resource needs to carry out the tasks assigned and request support from the Executive Committee to meet resource needs;
- Develop, rank, implement, and support annual projects funded by the GYCC;
- Report to the Executive Committee as requested on the progress of action items;
- Identify issues that cannot be resolved at the Subcommittee level and elevate them to the Executive Committee for resolution.
- Foster a community for cross-boundary information sharing and coordination among specialists.
- Subcommittee Charters / Strategies should incorporate language to the effect: “The GYCC is comprised of the federal GYA Land Management Agency Administrators and State Wildlife Department Directors. The GYCC does not have line authority over individual Agency Administrators or units within the GYA. Decisions and agreements made by the GYCC managers, or recommended to the GYCC by Subcommittees, are implemented through normal preset lines of authority within each agency.”

## **Chair, Co-Chair, and/or Vice Chair**

The Executive Committee welcomes Subcommittee Chairs from representatives of federal, state, county, and local government agencies which are geographically tied to the GYA. In order to maintain a level of continuity between the Executive Committee and Subcommittee Chairs, an individual from a GYCC agency should follow a Chair from a non-GYCC agency. Language should be added to Subcommittee Charters/Standard Operating Procedures allowing the Subcommittee to change Chairs during a term if the Chair is not meeting the outlined expectations.

The Chairs, Co-Chairs, and/or Vice-Chairs of the Subcommittees will be selected and serve according to each Subcommittee’s Charter.

Subcommittee Chair Roles and Responsibilities:

- Schedule, develop agendas for, and facilitate meetings;
- Facilitate and track annual accomplishments;
- Take the lead on advancing Subcommittee objectives;
- Serve as liaison between Subcommittee and GYCC;
- Coordinate correspondence and communication on behalf of the Subcommittee;
- Maintain an updated mailing list for communicating with Subcommittee members;
- Serve as spokesperson on behalf of the Subcommittee;
- Submit Subcommittee GYCC project proposals to GYCC Coordinator;

- Track projects and document progress, even if the Chair is not the project’s Principal Investigator;
- Lead the Subcommittee per its own Charter or Standard Operating Procedures;
- Refer to her/himself as Chair of a Subcommittee, so as not to be confused with speaking for the Executive Committee;
- Ensure that neither a Chair nor a Subcommittee commits resources on behalf of the Executive Committee;
- Ensure that neither a Chair nor a Subcommittee makes decisions which must be implemented through normal preset lines of authority within each agency;
- Ensure that Subcommittee products are clearly identified as such. (For example, the *Aquatic Invasive Species Pocket Guide* is clearly identified as a product of the “GYCC Aquatic Invasive Species Subcommittee.”)

## **Meetings**

Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their responsibilities according to their Charter and Standard Operating Procedures.

## **Subcommittee Decision-making**

The Subcommittees’ primary role is to implement the Strategic Priorities and other project direction established by the Executive Committee. Accordingly, most decision-making by Subcommittees will involve establishing responsibility for tasks and allocation of resources in the field.

Given the autonomy each GYCC member agency retains, these decisions must be made by consensus. In other words, the members of a Subcommittee cannot vote to require one or more of their members to take an action or to prevent a member from taking an independent action.

GYCC Subcommittees may also be called upon to make recommendations to the Executive Committee on a variety of matters. A Subcommittee may be tasked with development of a proposed strategy for approval by the appropriate signatory agencies. In such cases, although consensus should be sought, if the Subcommittee members cannot reach agreement, the members may use a simple majority vote of the members present at a meeting to express the view of the Subcommittee with respect to the recommendation. Minority views should also be provided to the Executive Committee for their consideration. However, no vote taken at the Subcommittee level will be binding on any member of the Subcommittee or the Executive Committee.

## **EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Support the Executive Committee
  - Manage two GYCC Executive meetings per year: logistics, agenda, speakers, briefing materials, notes.
  - Manage regular conference calls: agenda, logistics, briefings, notes.
  - Share important information with GYCC as issues arise.

- Produce annual and other reports as requested.
- Support GYCC Subcommittees
  - Foster leadership among Subcommittee Chairs.
  - Support Subcommittee work and keep in contact with Chairs.
  - Share success stories among committees.
  - Look for efficiencies and collaboration opportunities among Subcommittees.
  - Manage project selection, budget allocation, and reporting.
  - Attend all Subcommittee meetings, as schedule allows.
- Foster GYCC Relationships and Communications
  - Promote interagency and interdisciplinary communication, coordination, and integration.
  - Maintain and enhance GYCC website. Work with Subcommittee Chairs to ensure information on Subcommittee pages is up to date and useful to Subcommittee members and the public.
  - Develop strategic communication plan.

## **NONBINDING AGREEMENT**

This Charter creates no right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity. The Cooperators shall manage their respective resources and activities in a separate, coordinated and mutually beneficial manner to meet the purpose(s) of this Charter. Nothing in this Charter authorizes any of the Cooperators to obligate or transfer anything of value.

Specific, prospective projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, property, and/or anything of value to a party requires the execution of separate agreements and are contingent upon numerous factors, including, as applicable, but not limited to: availability of appropriated funds and other resources; administrative and legal requirements (including agency authorization by statute); etc. This Charter neither provides, nor meets these criteria. If the Cooperators elect to enter into an obligation agreement that involves the transfer of funds, services, property, and/or anything of value to a party, then the applicable criteria must be met. Additionally, under a prospective agreement, each party operates under its own laws, regulations, and/or policies, and any obligation is subject to the availability of appropriated funds and other resources. The negotiation, execution, and administration of these prospective agreements must comply with all applicable law. Nothing in this Charter is intended to alter, limit, or expand the agencies' statutory and regulatory authority.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, USE OF INSIGNIA, AND ENDORSEMENT**

The Cooperators shall acknowledge each other's support in any publications, audiovisuals, and electronic media developed as a result of this Charter.

In order for the Cooperators to use each other's insignia on any published media, such as a web page, printed publication, or audiovisual production, permission must be granted.

Any of the Cooperators' contributions made under this Charter do not by direct reference or









