

GREATER YELLOWSTONE
COORDINATING COMMITTEE



2011 Annual Report



CONTENTS



American Pika

INTRODUCTION.....	1
ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	2
Protect GYA Landscape Integrity.....	2
Sustainable Operations.....	3
Ecosystem Health – Climate Change.....	4
Ecosystem Health - Air Quality.....	4
Ecosystem Health – Invasive Species.....	4
Ecosystem Health – Species on the Brink.....	5
Native Fish.....	5
Wildlife.....	5
Whitebark Pine.....	6
Connect People to the Land.....	6
APPENDIX A. GYCC 2011 PROJECTS.....	A

Virginia Kelly

Executive Coordinator

Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee

2012

On the cover: Daisy Pass Wildflowers, near Cooke City, Montana (Christine Romero)

For additional information contact Virginia Kelly at vkelly@fs.fed.us. 406-587-6704 or visit the GYCC Website at <http://www.fedgycc.org/>

Photos and maps are from GYCC files or as indicated.

INTRODUCTION

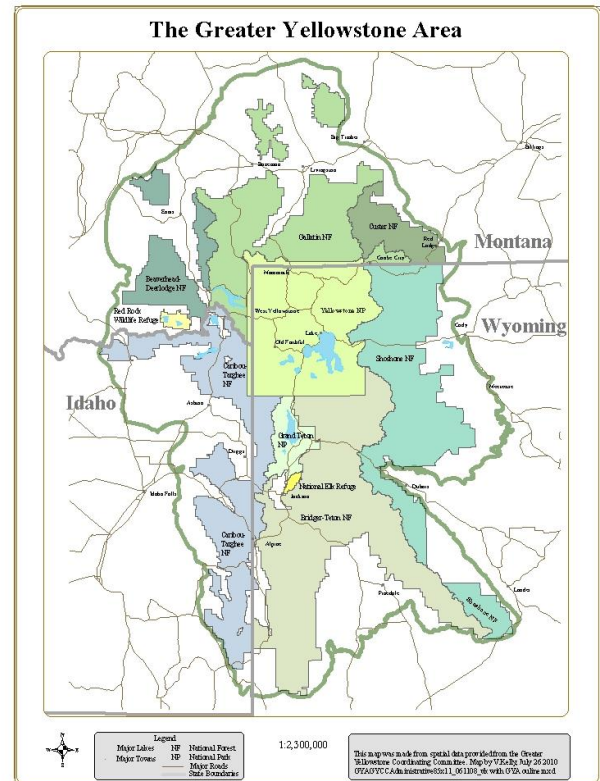
The Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) is a unique and special place. Home to the world's first National Park and to our nation's first National Forest, the GYA is widely viewed as the largest intact ecosystem in the lower 48 United States. Federal lands managed by six National Forests, two National Parks and two National Wildlife Refuges are geographically contiguous, ecologically interdependent, and unalterably linked.

The Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) formed in 1964 between the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service joined the committee in 2000. The GYCC fosters communication, coordination and cooperation in GYA federal land management.

The GYCC consists of the top leaders of ten federal management units, which together comprise nearly 14 million acres.

- Park Superintendents of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.
- Forest Supervisors of six National Forests: Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, Custer, Gallatin, and Shoshone National Forests.
- Refuge Managers of Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and the National Elk Refuge.

In 2011, the Bureau of Land Management began participating with the GYCC managers in a 'transition year.' While BLM staff have participated for years on subcommittees and have attended GYCC meetings, the transition year was intended as mutual exploration for the GYCC and for BLM in formal GYCC membership. The Cody Field Office Manager served as the BLM representative.



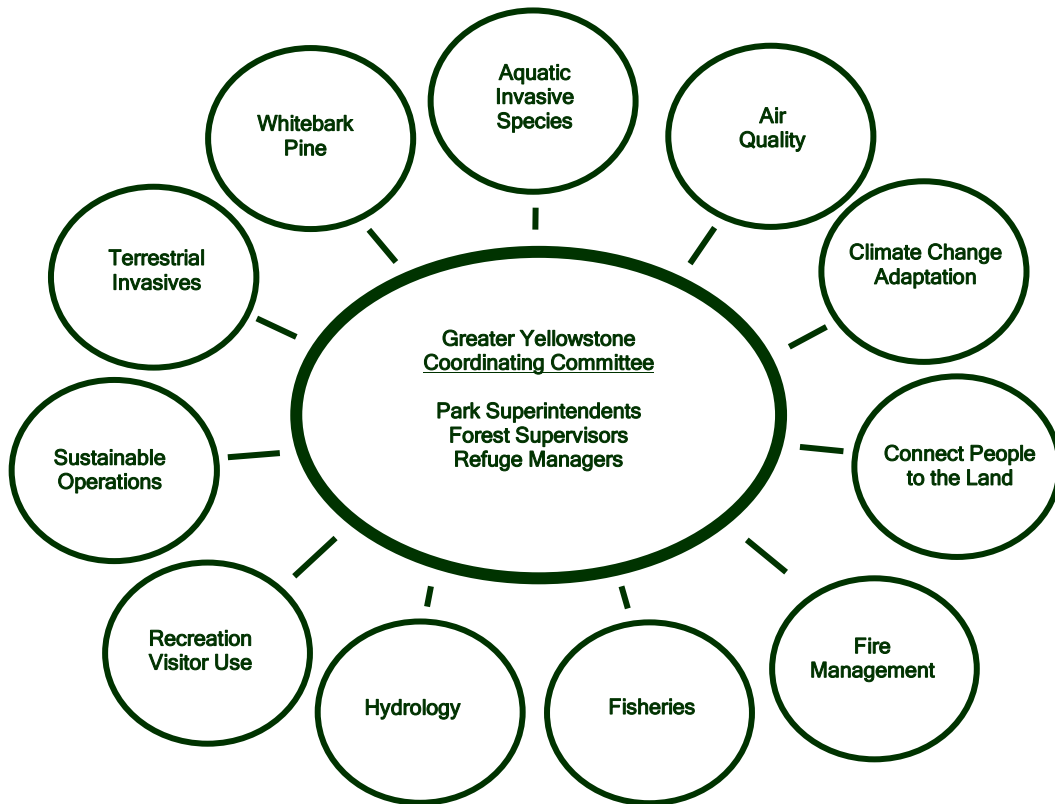
GYCC managers set regional level priorities for coordination, and assign financial and staff resources to achieve those priorities. The GYCC units pool funds for coordinated work addressing these resource priorities.

In 2011, the GYCC affirmed its priorities as:

- Sustainable operations.
- Protect greater Yellowstone landscape integrity.
- Ecosystem health, in particular climate change, air quality, invasive species and disease, species on the brink, and water quality and flow.
- Connect people to the land.

This report summarizes 2011 accomplishments of the GYCC, their staff and many GYA-wide subcommittees. The GYCC allocated \$275,000 to projects advancing their priorities. Appendix A describes 2011 GYCC projects.

GYCC Subcommittees



The GYCC subcommittees displayed above carry out the on-going coordination of GYA management activities. Subcommittees include agency staff and partners. More subcommittee detail can be found at: http://www.fedgycc.org/gycc_subcommittees.htm

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Protect Landscape Integrity

Development patterns on private lands near public lands can affect wildlife migration, water resources, public access and fire fighting on federal lands. In the context of rapid land development over the past decade, the landscape integrity priority looks at land ownership patterns with attention to ecological integrity, retention of public access, and management efficiencies.

In 2011, the Gallatin and Custer National Forests finalized the purchase of 1,469 acres of the Reeb Estate near Cooke City, MT.

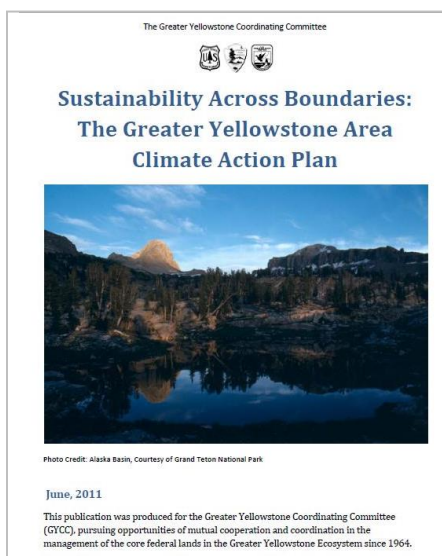


Reeb Estate – Goose Lake

Sustainable Operations

The Sustainable Operations Subcommittee (SOS) facilitates coordination of water and energy conservation, waste prevention and recycling throughout GYA public lands.

In 2009, the GYCC completed the first regional interagency greenhouse gas emission inventory in the nation. In 2011, the agencies finalized a “*Climate Action Plan*” to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



GYCC Climate Action Plan, 2011

GYCC managers pledged to achieve a minimum goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 21-36 percent below the 2007 baseline on each of their units. This equates to removing 1,856 cars from the road each year, or saving 51.5 rail cars worth of coal from being burned.

Initial emission reduction projects will include a regional xeriscaping guide, idle reduction and an employee video encouraging behavior changes.

For the second year, architectural graduate student interns from Georgia Institute of Technology evaluated federal buildings for potential energy savings. Structures were reviewed at the historic Wapiti Ranger District of the Shoshone NF.

The Wapiti Ranger Station is the first U.S Forest Service ranger station built with federal funds. The historic structures have been continually in use since 1903, were designated a National Historic Landmark in 1963 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.



*Historic Structure at Wapiti Ranger Station
Shoshone National Forest*

The Georgia Tech interns also evaluated structures and micro-hydro feasibility at the historic Buffalo Ranch in the Lamar Valley of Yellowstone NP.

Several partners and SOS committee members cooperatively developed a new method to recycle bear spray canisters. Find collection sites around the GYA at: <http://www.bearsprayrecycling.info/collection-sites>.



Bear Spray Recycling System (YPF photo)

See more SOS information at: <http://www.fedgycc.org/SOSOverview.htm>

Ecosystem Health

The Ecosystem Health priority includes the air, water, soil, plant, fish and wildlife resources of the Greater Yellowstone Area. The GYCC focused this priority on climate change, air quality, invasive species and disease, water quality and flow, and species on the brink (native fish, wildlife and whitebark pine).

Climate Change

The GYCC seeks to understand the effects of climate change on GYA lands and resources, and how to manage these resources in light of the potential effects.

A GYCC Climate Change Adaptation Subcommittee formed late in 2010. It initially emphasized inventory of GYA related climate change projects and publications. The GYCC supported development of a climate change watershed sensitivity analysis process with projected completion in 2012.

Air Quality

The Greater Yellowstone Area Clean Air Partnership (GYACAP) includes federal and state air resource program managers and specialists. The GYACAP advises the GYCC on air quality issues, shares air quality information and regulatory issues, and coordinates air quality monitoring between state and federal agencies in the GYA.

In 2011, the GYACAP sponsored a workshop with scientists and multi-agency staff to begin to understand the effects of air pollution on GYA ecosystems, determine if change is occurring, establish whether thresholds have been exceeded, and identify information gaps in establishing critical loads of air pollution deposition in the GYA.

Invasive Species and Disease

Invasive species and disease pose a serious threat to the GYA. Two GYCC subcommittees address terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

Terrestrial Invasive Plant Species

The Terrestrial Invasive Species Committee brings together a broad base of cooperators in the fight against invasive terrestrial plant species. See the subcommittee's webpage at: <http://www.fedgycc.org/WeedOverview.htm>

The GYCC supported the "Holding the Line" project for a second year. This multi-partner effort aims to hold the line against the spread of leafy spurge into the western part of Yellowstone NP.



Netting flea beetles, a biocontrol for Leafy Spurge

The GYCC continues to support the GYA-wide weed database and GIS map.

Aquatic Invasive Species

The GYA Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Cooperative includes federal, state and county agencies, local outfitters, organizations, and businesses. With GYCC and partner assistance, the AIS Cooperative in 2011 continued area wide outreach and stream and lake inventory/monitoring surveys. The team's own website is found at <http://www.cleaninspectdry.com/>

Curly leaf pondweed was found in Hebgen and Ennis Lakes and the Gallatin and East Gallatin Rivers. While not yet reported in the GYA, Eurasian water milfoil is found ever closer; in the Jefferson River 10 miles upstream from the Missouri confluence.

Species on the Brink

Native Fish

GYCC funding supported fish surveys and restoration actions on streams around the GYA. Surveys demonstrate across the GYA that non-native fish species invasions are advancing and threaten persistence of native fishes. Restoration projects have been successful, but are expensive and labor intensive.



Leverich Creek, Gallatin NF. Barrier construction to benefit westslope cutthroat trout.

Wildlife

A two-year GYA wide survey of American Pika was completed in 2011. One of the few mammals residing at high GYA elevations, pikas are considered an indicator for detecting ecological effects of climate change. The survey sought to learn more about their distribution, habitat requirements, and historic presence and signs of pika were found on all federal units surveyed. Data analysis and report are expected in 2012.

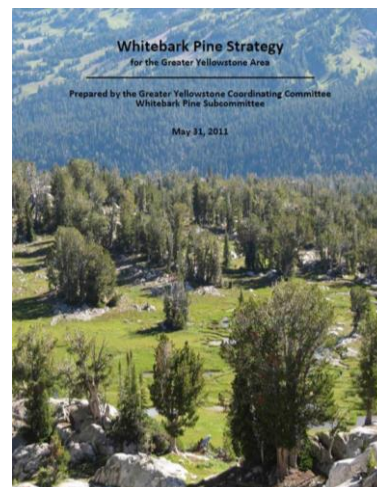
An assessment of carnivore linkages within the GYA and to adjacent ecosystems is underway.

Whitebark Pine

Whitebark pine is a GYA “keystone” species. Its seeds feed wildlife, including grizzly bears and Clark’s nutcracker. Mountain pine beetles and the introduced white pine blister rust reduce whitebark pine stands throughout its range.

The Whitebark Pine Committee involves GYCC agency staff, university and agency researchers, and works to ensure the long-term viability and function of whitebark pine in the GYA. See: <http://www.fedgycc.org/WhitebarkPineOverview.htm>

The subcommittee completed a GYA Whitebark Pine Strategy in 2011, which will guide the pine’s protection and restoration.



Whitebark Pine Strategy for the Greater Yellowstone Area, 2011

<http://www.fedgycc.org/documents/WBPStrategyFINA.L5.31.11.pdf>

A seed orchard location for rust resistant trees was identified on the Gallatin NF. The GYCC helped fund seed orchard establishment, including site clearing and fencing.



Whitebark pine seed orchard fencing

Connect People to the Land

A new GYCC subcommittee formed in 2010 to coordinate, integrate and expand GYA program possibilities in reaching more diverse audiences. The Connect People to the Land Subcommittee explored expanding agency use of social media and new technology.

In 2011 the GYCC supported for the third year the Bear Creek Natural Resources Field Camp on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. Over 450 students in grades 3 -8 spent a day learning about fish, wildlife, plants, fly-fishing and other topics geared to each grade level.

For More Information:

The GYCC's website at www.fedgycc.org provides information on the GYCC's roles, participants, history, subcommittees, projects, and meetings and events.

Many of the projects mentioned in this document have a more comprehensive report with project methods, findings and reference materials, available on the GYC website

For additional information please contact GYCC Executive Coordinator Virginia Kelly at vkelly@fs.fed.us. 406-587-6704.

Public Outreach and Communication

Most GYCC units sponsored a project during National Public Lands Day in September 2011, as a trial coordinated "GYA volunteer day".



Yellowstone NP NPLD Event 2011

The GYCC public affairs staff coordinated several GYA press releases, announcing the release of the GYA Whitebark Pine Strategy, and the release of the GYA Climate Action Plan.

APPENDIX A. Summary of 16 FY 2011 GYCC Projects – In Order of Project Type

Project Reports are available at <http://www.fedgycc.org/GYCCProjectReports2011.htm>

Project Type: GYA Landscape Integrity. One Project.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
Gallatin NF	Reeb Estate Land Purchase near Cooke City MT.	Cost share title review, field inspections, resource studies, appraisal.	Completed title work and recording for 1500 acre purchase.	Trust for Public Lands
Project Type: Sustainable Operations. Three Projects.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
GYA - SOS Committee	Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Pilot	Implement newly completed <i>Climate Action Plan</i> . Smart Meters, xeriscaping guide, idle reduction, employee video	Project funds were obligated. The employee video completed Fall 2011. Xeriscaping guide initiated,	Montana State University
GYA - SOS Committee	Save water with low flow fixtures	Replace faucets and sinks at high use locations to reduce water use.	Replaced 48 donated fixtures at Mammoth Hotel, YNP. Estimated 1.5 million gallons saved per year.	Kohler Co.
GYA - SOS Committee	Historic Buildings Energy Savings and Water Consumption Assessments	Assess identified buildings and formulate renovation/restoration strategies that incorporate LEED principles.	Completed 2 locations: Wapiti RD, Shoshone NF and Buffalo Ranch, Yellowstone NP.	Georgia Tech Research Institute, Yellowstone Park Foundation.
Project Type: Ecosystem Health - Climate Change. One Project.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
Gallatin NF	Climate Change and Watershed Sensitivity Analysis	Understand climate change sensitivities at local scales using largely non-changing drives such as gradient, soils, topography, etc.	Methodology developed on Gallatin NF with intent to apply to GYA.	Wildlife Conservation Society, Forest Service Research
Project Type: Ecosystem Health – Air Quality. One Project.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
GYA-Air Quality Cmt	Critical Loads Establishment	Establish critical nitrogen load for high elevation lakes.	Workshop with experts in Spring 2011.	USFS, NPS, USGS, USFWS, BLM, ID, MT, WY Universities
Project Type: Ecosystem Health - Invasive Species. Four Projects.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
Terrestrial Invasive Species				
GYA- Idaho Weed Committee	“Holding the Line” Leafy Spurge Project	Prevent Leafy Spurge expansion in eastern Idaho and into Yellowstone NP. Bio-saturation targeted in Upper Snake River watershed.	2.5 million flea beetles collected; 1.5 million released. Three new insect-aries. 400 acres herbicide treatment.	High Country RC&D, USFS State and Private Forestry, other RC&Ds, local counties.
GYA Weed Committee	GYA Weed Mapping Support	Keep database current for GYA weed occurrence.	Over 472,000 records, tracking 132 weed species. Used for EDRR.	Fremont Co, WY Weed and Pest Dept, 20 contributors.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
GYA - AIS Committee	AIS Prevention and Outreach Activities	Inspection and education crews in multiple locations around the GYA, coordinated crew training.	Public outreach, youth education, staff training, set up scrub stations.	Snake River Fund, Teton Co, WYG&F, MT FWP, MT Dpt Ag, ID RAC, USFWS, YNP Fnd
GYA - AIS Committee	GYA AIS Inventory and Monitoring	Survey high priority waters for AIS infestations.	Surveyed high priority waters around GYA.	Same as above
Project Type: Ecosystem Health - Species on the Brink; Native Cutthroat Trout Conservation. One Project.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
GYA - Fish Committee	GYA-Wide Native Fish Distribution / Status Surveys and Response Actions.	Assess status of cutthroat trout and other native fish species populations around GYA.	Fish surveys and restoration actions on streams throughout GYA.	PPL, BLM, BIA, MT FWP/DNRC Crow Nation, TU, SW MT RAC, Gallatin Co, ID F&G & others.
Project Type: Ecosystem Health - Species on the Brink; Wildlife. Two Projects.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
4 Forests	GYA Winter Use Monitoring / Wolverine Program	Assess location of winter recreation use, especially snowmobiles, as baseline for future analysis of wolverine impacts.	Developed program for flights in winter of 2011/2012.	Wildlife Conservation Society
GYA	GYA Pika Distribution	Identify and survey potential pika habitat. Determine the GYA pika distribution evaluate climatic and habitat variables.	Survey completed; occupied pika sites found in both parks and five forests. Report in 2012.	Teton Science School, St Cloud State Univ. Craighead Env Research Inst, GTNP Found.
Project Type: Ecosystem Health - Species on the Brink; Whitebark Pine Conservation. Two Projects.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
GYA - WBP Committee	GYA Whitebark Pine Seed Orchard	Install seed orchard on Gallatin NF for GYA seedlings.	Site cleared, road reopened, fence / gate installed. Ready to plant Fall 2012	
GYA - WBP Committee	Sow Whitebark Pine in Nursery	Sowing whitebark pine seeds to grow seedlings for planting in the GYE.	Seedlings sown.	USFS Forest Health Protection
Project Type: Connect People to the Land. One Project.				
Unit	Project	Description	Accomplishments	External Partnerships
Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF	Bear Creek Natural Resources Field Camp	Place-based learning for 3rd-8th grade students from 5 area schools. Fish, wildlife, plants, geology, fire ecology, etc topics.	Approx 450 students attended a day long camp with topics geared to each grade level.	MOSS, Madison Valley Ranch-ands, Madison River Found, Madison Valley Cons Dist. Vols