Welcome to the first Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) newsletter. It begins with an introduction to GYCC purpose and operation.

**Setting Priorities**

The GYCC coordinates federal land management in the Greater Yellowstone Area (map back page). GYCC Managers set priorities for ecosystem-scale coordination among their agencies and define broad outcomes for these priorities. They then assign resources, both people and funds, to advance priorities.

**Assigning Resources**

GYCC Managers assign resources to advance their priorities. Resources include employees, working in both formal subcommittees and ad-hoc project teams. The GYCC also annually pools about $275,000 from their operating budgets and “re-grants” the funds to priority projects. The GYCC Coordinator serves as staff to the Managers, and attends to day to day business, liaises with the subcommittees, manages the project grant process, and leads various GYA efforts.

**Getting Together**

The GYCC Managers meet twice a year and hold monthly conference calls. Once every two years the Managers meet in an Executive Retreat to focus on strategy, priorities and working procedures. The Managers are proud of the work accomplished by GYCC staff. The working relationships developed among the Managers are another key GYCC benefit.

**National Public Lands Day in the Greater Yellowstone Area**

The GYCC federal agencies invite the public to the first coordinated Greater Yellowstone Volunteer Day. The land management agencies are hosting a variety of volunteer projects on and around National Public Lands Day September 24, 2011.

Trail maintenance, weed removal and fence work are some of the volunteer opportunities around the Greater Yellowstone Area.

Volunteers are needed from Pinedale, Wyoming to West Yellowstone, Montana; from Cody, Wyoming to Pocatello, Idaho, and points in between. See the National Public Lands Day website for details. All of the Greater Yellowstone volunteer events begin with “Greater Yellowstone Area”.

See: [http://www.publiclandsday.org/npld-sites](http://www.publiclandsday.org/npld-sites)
GYCC Funded Project - GYA Pika Distribution

The GYCC annually pools about $275,000 and “re-grants” the funds to projects proposed by units and subcommittees. In 2010 and 2011, the GYCC helped fund a Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) survey of pika distribution.

Pikas are one of the few mammals residing at GYA high elevations. Seemingly common, little is known about their GYA distribution, habitat requirements, historic presence, or how climate change may impact this local population.

Goals of the initiative are to determine the GYA distribution of pikas and to evaluate climatic and habitat variables important for future pika persistence.

In 2009, Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks began collecting information on the presence of pikas. The effort expanded to the National Elk Refuge and five National Forests in 2010.

Occupied pika sites were found on all of the surveyed Parks and Forests. Surveys continue in summer 2011 with partners Teton Science School, Craighead Environmental Research Institute, Grand Teton Foundation and St Cloud State University (Minnesota).

GYCC Subcommittee Profile - Connect People to the Land

The Connect People to the Land Subcommittee is among the newest of the eleven GYCC subcommittees. Staff from the GYCC Parks, Forests and Refuges began meeting in summer 2010 to coordinate, integrate and expand program possibilities around the GYA. The team hopes to reach more diverse audiences while incorporating social media and new technology.

Outdoor activities among today’s children are declining, with children gravitating towards a virtual indoor reality. Concerned that a growing disconnect from nature affects our children’s health and wellbeing and the future stewardship of our public lands, the GYCC Managers identified “Connect People to the Land” as one of its top four priorities.

Babete Anderson (Custer National Forest) is the first Chair of the new subcommittee. Subcommittee members are currently exploring a Smart Phone application that encourages kids to get outside.

Keeping up with GYA People

**Moving on.......**

**Greg Bevenger**, a long time GYA Hydrologists leader, is now Regional Hydrologist in Forest Service Region 4 (Ogden, Utah). Greg was the Shoshone NF Hydrologist since 1988.

**Mike Fiebig**, Forest Service Presidential Management Fellow, led the GYA greenhouse gas emission reduction plan. Mike took a job with American Rivers in Bozeman, MT.

**Mary Maj**, a former GYCC Coordinator, is the new Wildlife Biologist, Forest Service Region 9 (Milwaukee, WI). Mary also held positions as Shoshone NF Resource Staff Officer and Gardiner District Ranger, Gallatin NF.

**Bob Vogel** is the new Park Superintendent of the Washington Mall in D.C. Bob served as Deputy Park Superintendent of Grand Teton NP since 2007.

**Moving up in the GYA...**

**Steve Iobst** is Yellowstone’s new Deputy Park Superintendent. Steve was promoted from Park Chief of Maintenance.

**New faces.......**

**Paul Santavy** is nearing his first year anniversary as the National Elk Refuge Deputy Manager. A Michigan native, Paul came to the National Elk Refuge from the Maine Fisheries Program Complex. In addition to his Refuge duties, Paul is a member of the Sustainable Operations Subcommittee.
Meet the GYCC Managers - Dan Wenk, Yellowstone NP

Dan Wenk is one of the newest GYCC Managers. The Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park arrived in February 2011. Immediately busy with Yellowstone’s bison and winter use issues, Dan is also adding his voice to the GYCC Managers.

Dan started working for the Park Service in 1975, as a landscape architect in Denver. His first National Park job was in 1979…in Yellowstone. He and his wife started their family in Yellowstone, adding two of their three daughters while stationed there.

Dan has been the Superintendent of Mount Rushmore National Park, and most recently was the Deputy Director of Park Operations in DC.

Publications and Reports

Several publications which include climate change information applicable to the GYA are available at: [http://www.fedgycc.org/ClimateChange.htm](http://www.fedgycc.org/ClimateChange.htm)

Climate and Terrestrial Ecosystem Change in the U.S. Rocky Mountains and Upper Columbia River Basin. David B. McWeethy, et.al. 2010.

Observed and Predicted Ecological Response to Climate Change in the Rocky Mountains and Upper Columbia River Basin, A Synthesis of Current Scientific Literature. Isabel W. Ashton, et.al. 2010


Climate Change, Aquatic Ecosystems, and Fishes in the Rocky Mountain West, Implications and Alternatives for Management. Bruce E. Riemann and Daniel J. Isaak 2010

Private Lands Conservation Toolkit and Training for Wyoming Land Managers. The toolkit includes information on land conservation and acquisition tools, land trusts and conservation partners, and funding sources. It was prepared by the Forest Service and Ruckelshaus Institute of Environmental and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming. The online version is available at: [www.uwyo.edu/toolkit](http://www.uwyo.edu/toolkit).

The GYCC prepared a GYA toolkit in 2008: [http://www.fedgycc.org/LandscapeIntegrity.htm](http://www.fedgycc.org/LandscapeIntegrity.htm)

GYCC Coordinator Virginia Kelly has hard copies of both reports.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

- September 16-17, 2011. Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation annual meeting in Cody, WY [http://www.whitebarkfound.org/]
- October 4-6, 2011. GYCC Terrestrial and Aquatic Invasive Species Subcommittee Meetings at Old Faithful, WY
- October 11-13, 2011. GYCC Managers Executive Retreat in Bozeman, MT
- October 13-14, 2011. Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee (YES) Grizzly Bear Meeting in Bozeman, MT
- October 18-19, 2011. GYCC Whitebark Pine Subcommittee Meeting. West Yellowstone, MT

GYCC / Subcommittee Meeting Information is posted as available at: [http://www.fedgycc.org/gycc_meetingsandevents.htm](http://www.fedgycc.org/gycc_meetingsandevents.htm)
The Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) includes federal land managers from national parks, national forests and national wildlife refuges across the Greater Yellowstone Area; the largest, essentially intact natural area in the lower 48 states. Together, these agencies manage 14 million acres of federal land.

The GYCC was formed to pursue opportunities of mutual cooperation and coordination in the management of core federal lands within the Greater Yellowstone Area.


Concerned about the threats to whitebark pine, the GYCC Whitebark Pine Subcommittee developed the Whitebark Pine Strategy for the Greater Yellowstone Area. The Strategy culminates five years of strong collaboration by GYCC agency professional ecologists, foresters, and wildlife biologists as well as others with an interest in whitebark pine.

Whitebark pine is currently threatened by both insects and disease. Impacts from non-native white pine blister rust and native mountain pine beetle, combined with the effect of altered temperature patterns on beetle population dynamics, have resulted in significant loss of whitebark pine in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA).

Whitebark pine is a foundation species of high-elevation ecosystems in the GYA. It grows on harsh sites at high elevation and occurs on about 2 1/2 million acres of the GYA.

The Strategy establishes management objectives, sets priorities, and describes coordination efforts for the GYA national parks and national forests. Sites proposed for protection and restoration will be prioritized according to criteria outlined in the Strategy.

The GYCC managers approved the Strategy in late May, 2011. GYCC Chair Steve Kallin said, “The Strategy demonstrates the commitment of every land manager in the GYA to addressing the precarious condition of whitebark pine in this ecosystem. We recognize that actions taken on any jurisdiction affect the long-term status of this important species throughout the GYA.”

Strategy Available at: http://www.fedgycc.org/WhitebarkPineOverview.htm

The GYCC thanks the creators of the Whitebark Pine Strategy:
Kelly McCloskey, Grand Teton NP, Chair
Jodie Canfield, Gallatin NF, Vice-Chair
Jay Frederick, Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF
Ellen Jungck, Shoshone NF
Cathey Hardin, Caribou-Targhee NF
Cathie Jean, GRYN
Nancy Bockino, Grand Teton NP
Jeff Dibenedetto, Custer NF
Elizabeth Davy, Caribou-Targhee NF
Shannon Podruzny, USGS IGBST
Karl Buermeyer, Bridger-Teton NF
Dan Reinhart, Yellowstone NP
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Kathryn Mellander, Grand Teton NP