The challenges of this time call for unity in purpose, bold leadership, and innovative solutions.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is a place of exceptional natural splendor and profound cultural and ecological importance. At more than 20 million acres, the region is defined by its two magnificent national parks, Yellowstone and Grand Teton, and the sprawling network of public and private lands that surround them. Rich habitat for an astounding array of fish and wildlife abounds here, from grizzly bears and bison to cutthroat trout and wolverines. It is the headwaters of America’s great rivers, supplying clean water for 60 million people downstream. Its sweeping vistas and stunning geothermal features attract and inspire millions of residents and visitors alike. It is sacred ground to more than 30 Indigenous Tribes.

Those who live here and those who visit know there is no place like it in the world.

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition’s work centers on conserving the unparalleled lands, waters, and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Since 1983, the organization has been a trailblazer in the practice of large landscape conservation, leading campaigns and initiatives that have conserved millions of acres, hundreds of river miles, and several vitally important wildlife species. To do this, we bring together the wide range of people who care about this place and create space to find innovative solutions to the complex threats and opportunities facing the region.

This new strategic plan reflects a time of change – both exciting and troubling – in Greater Yellowstone. A new federal administration is focused on addressing the climate crisis and is committing to an ambitious goal of conserving 30-percent of the nation’s lands and waters over the next 10 years. Recent work with Indigenous communities is expanding and creating new opportunities for restoration and renewal. However, longstanding resource extraction battles persist, and Greater Yellowstone is already experiencing climate driven changes that threaten the region’s ecological integrity and communities. Political shifts and deep divisions are testing the abilities of people and government to work together to solve today’s problems and prepare for tomorrow. And burgeoning communities, visitation, and recreational pressure raise new questions about what it will take to conserve this cherished ecosystem.

In this plan, we outline four conservation strategic priorities with accompanying goals that will guide the Greater Yellowstone Coalition over the next five years. These priorities focus on:

- protecting key public and private lands,
- working at the human-wildlife nexus to balance the needs of both,
- making Greater Yellowstone a global model for resilience to the impacts of climate change, and
- supporting the rights, interests, and conservation priorities of Greater Yellowstone’s Indigenous people.

The plan also introduces a new message framework designed to strengthen our external communications, calls for raising additional funds to support new investments in our work, and commits us to maintaining our multi-year, four-star rating on Charity Navigator. Finally, the plan directs continued emphasis on building and maintaining an already excellent staff and board, as we work together to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization.

The next five years will be a period of profound consequence. Our efforts must match the majesty of this world-renowned region. With this plan, we renew our commitment to safeguarding one of the most remarkable places on the planet for generations to come – the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
THIS LAND

Long before the arrival of Europeans and the beginning of the Western conservation movement, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem was stewarded by Indigenous people who viewed its lands, waters, and wildlife as sacred. The Indigenous way of caring for the land acknowledged its life-giving energy, was centered on reciprocity, and used Traditional Ecological Knowledge to keep the ecosystem in balance. Today, more than 30 tribes, including the Apsáalooke/Crow, Cheyenne, Blackfeet, Shoshone, Bannock, Arapaho, and other Indigenous peoples are keepers of this knowledge and retain deep connections to this remarkable place.

The forced removal of Indigenous people from places like Yellowstone, the loss of Indigenous land stewardship practices that resulted, and the continued exclusion of Native voices from the Western conservation movement are realities we must acknowledge and confront. Recognizing and reinstituting Indigenous values, beliefs, and practices is a vital step in restoring the cultural and ecological integrity of the region. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition commits to identifying and fulfilling its role in advancing that paradigm shift.

ABOUT GYC

VISION
We envision a Greater Yellowstone where wild nature flourishes, plant, animal, and human communities thrive in reciprocity, and all people work together to conserve this globally significant ecosystem.

CORE VALUES

Integrity – We build authentic and trusting relationships, which is demonstrated by honesty, accountability, and respect for all. Integrity is the foundation of our work internally and externally.

Innovation – We lead the way in thinking big and creatively to advance new and inspiring ways to achieve our goals and mission.

Collaboration – We believe in the power of working together. We strive to respectfully partner and engage with diverse communities and viewpoints, including those often excluded from the conservation movement.

Excellence – We believe in what we do, which means we are committed to continuous improvement while contributing to a positive work culture and achieving impactful outcomes.

Inclusion – We welcome all and value individual differences within our team, on our board, and in the communities where we work.

MISSION
To work with all people to protect the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, now and for future generations.
**CONSERVATION PRIORITIES**

Conservation priorities at the Greater Yellowstone Coalition are driven by science, social, political, and ecological realities. The goals in this plan respond to and proactively address strategic habitat, wildlife, climate, and Indigenous priorities as we understand them today. Our success is contingent on our ability to be flexible and nimble as we respond to changing conditions, emerging threats, and new opportunities. The following four strategic priorities with goals will guide us for the next five years.

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**Conserve core habitat and enhance landscape connectivity.**

**LANDSCAPE PROTECTION**

GOAL: Secure land management policies and designations for key public and private lands that protect core habitat for wide-ranging wildlife and enhance landscape connectivity.

- 44,000 acres of ungulate winter range is protected in Idaho's High Divide.
- 100,000 acres of connective habitat in Montana's High Divide is protected.
- 250,000 acres of land adjacent to Yellowstone's northern border in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges is protected.
- 70,000 acres is protected from mining in the Centennial Range near Yellowstone.
- 250,000 acres of new administrative protections on public lands in Wyoming and Idaho protect ungulate winter ranges, migration corridors, and lands with wilderness character.
- 1,000 acres of private in-holdings in the mining districts on the border of Yellowstone National Park and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness is protected.

**SECURE HABITAT**

GOAL: Increase wildlife habitat in Greater Yellowstone.

- 500 miles of unnecessary or illegal roads across Greater Yellowstone's five national forests are restored.

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**Enhanced Connectivity**

GOAL: Ensure wildlife movement and connect landscapes across Greater Yellowstone through a systematic approach to transportation planning, wildlife highway crossing projects, and fencing.

- Federal funding is secured for wildlife transportation projects that support migrating ungulates.
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs include wildlife connectivity infrastructure at priority locations in Greater Yellowstone.
- Fences in important areas that impede wildlife movement are removed or retrofitted.

**Protect and restore Indigenous conservation priorities that honor cultural landscapes, Tribal rights, and Tribal ways of life.**

**TRIBAL WATER**

GOAL: Revitalize the Big Wind River on the Wind River Reservation.

- Improvements are made to flow regimes, water quality and quantity, riparian habitat, and native fish and beaver populations.
- Improved riparian habitat supports Tribal food security and climate adaptation through reconnected floodplains and natural water storage.

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**Elevating Tribal Interests and Rights**

GOAL: Improve Tribal consultation, recognition, and expression of treaty rights across Greater Yellowstone.

- Tribal consultation with federal agencies effectively incorporates Indigenous perspectives and priorities and allows expression of treaty rights related to land, water, and wildlife.

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**Capacity Building**

GOAL: Identify and invest in capacity-building that supports the needs and interests of Indigenous communities.

- Effective Tribal conservation and cultural programs are thriving on Tribal lands and reservations.

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**Protect and balance the needs of wildlife and people.**

**CONFLICT REDUCTION**

GOAL: Reduce grizzly bear, bison, and elk conflicts and promote social tolerance for wildlife across the region.
• The Yellowstone Bison Conservation and Transfer Program expansion successfully diverts disease-free bison from slaughter and restores herds on Tribal and public lands across North America.

• Bison fully utilize the existing tolerance zones on the north and west sides of Yellowstone and GYC’s Bison Coexistence Program continues to build tolerance in the Gardiner Basin and around West Yellowstone, Montana.

• Coexistence programs successfully reduce livestock-carnivore conflicts in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

• Secure a long-term funding source that supports landowners who provide habitat and stewardship for Greater Yellowstone’s big game.

RECREATION
GOAL: Shape policies, planning, and projects to balance recreation with native fish and wildlife needs, mitigate conflicts, and minimize habitat fragmentation.

• Seasonal closures protect key habitats that are critical to animal survival.

• GYC supports collaborative community groups working to balance recreation access with protecting wildlife habitat.

• New Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Travel Plans reduce redundant routes and habitat fragmentation.

WILDLIFE POLICY
GOAL: Secure and defend state and federal policies that benefit wildlife in Greater Yellowstone with priority given to achieving our goals for conflict reduction, connectivity, secure habitat, and funding for conservation.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT FUNDING
GOAL: Create a new, perpetual funding source to support cross-boundary wildlife conservation and management region-wide.

• Federal and state policies and programs improve habitat and conserve ungulate migration corridors in Greater Yellowstone.

• Future state and federal grizzly bear policies maintain a stable population, reduce conflicts, and promote connections between isolated populations.

• A new Yellowstone Bison Management plan incorporates a science-driven population range, supports Tribal treaty rights, and includes effective government-to-government consultation.

Confront the impacts of climate change.

PROTECT HEADWATERS AND CLIMATE REFUGIA
GOAL: Protect the headwaters of the three major rivers (Columbia, Missouri, and Colorado) of the western United States from new dams, diversions, and pollution.

• 350+ river miles and 20 river segments in southwest Montana are designated by Congress as Wild and Scenic Rivers.

• 25 additional rivers on the Bridger-Teton National Forest receive administrative protections in the new forest plan.

• Comprehensive River Management Plans for congressionally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers are completed and include appropriate protections that factor in climate change.

COLLABORATIVE RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION
GOAL: Make Greater Yellowstone more resilient and adaptable to the impacts of climate change through partnerships and on-the-ground projects.

• Community forums are created and facilitated to review The Greater Yellowstone Climate Assessment and implement climate resiliency projects.

• Projects that factor in climate change impacts on rangelands, riparian areas, and the health of our forests are carried out in key areas of Greater Yellowstone.
ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

GROWING OUR REVENUE
We will work strategically with our board and staff to diversify and expand our funding resources while creating lasting, collaborative, and respectful relationships with our supporters. We plan to grow our budget over the next five years to meet our ambitious goals, create opportunity for innovation, and ensure we are able to rapidly respond to threats and opportunities.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS
We will use a new messaging framework that allows us to tap into the powerful values of in-region and out-of-region audiences who associate with GYC’s unique role of tackling the complex challenges facing Greater Yellowstone.

INVESTING IN STAFF
Our goal is to attract and retain the best staff in the field. We will continue to provide a positive and visible culture based on our core values. We are committed to effective leadership at all levels of the organization and will provide accessible and equitable paths for ongoing professional development and training. We also aim to diversify our staff as we grow the movement and bring a wider range of experiences and perspectives into the organization.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
The Greater Yellowstone Coalition envisions a Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem where plant, animal, and human communities exist in reciprocity. We know we will only achieve this through work that is inclusive of the lands, waters, wildlife, and diverse communities of this region. For too long, the Western conservation movement has excluded and ignored diverse voices and perspectives, causing harm and creating a weaker movement as a result.

It is our responsibility to find and embrace our role in changing the existing paradigm by advancing inclusion and equity within our organization, our culture, and our corner of the conservation movement.