2022 STRATEGIC PLAN

Cottonwood’s goal is to be one of the most effective conservation organizations on the planet. We measure our effectiveness by looking at our on-the-ground impacts—whether we have stopped old growth logging or development that will pollute our rivers.

Our strategy has always been, and in 2022 will continue to be, to work on issues in ways that other groups are not. Cottonwood’s small size affords us the luxury of not having to collaborate with the government. At a time when larger conservation groups in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are focused on playing nice in the sandbox so they can look good for donors, Cottonwood will continue to hold the government accountable to protect our natural resources. As we continue to speak the truth, we will continue to have success in the court of law, and the court of public opinion.

In 2022, we will continue our legal campaign to protect old growth forests in the lower 48 by working to enjoin U.S. Forest Service timber sales until it updates Forest Plans to address climate change. The federal government, with support from large NGOs, is logging old growth forests in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Our approach to stopping this heinous practice is multi-faceted. We will educate the public about what is at stake, hold large NGOs that support old growth logging publicly accountable, and file strategic lawsuits to protect the little remaining old growth that is necessary to fight climate change. Cottonwood is the only group in the United States working in courts to require the Forest Service to update its management plans to address climate change.

Cottonwood will expand upon our Montana Rivers campaign in 2022. In addition to litigating several state and federal Clean Water Act lawsuits in the Big Sky area to protect the Gallatin River, we will spearhead a ballot initiative...
that will allow Montana voters to decide whether to designate sections of the Gallatin and Madison Rivers as Outstanding Resource Waters. The designation is the strongest protection available for any water in Montana and prevents the Montana Department of Environmental Quality from issuing any permits that would have any temporary or permanent adverse impacts.

Cottonwood has recruited new board members that are able to help the organization raise the funds necessary to hire two new staff attorneys in 2022.

Cottonwood is a tiny nonprofit with limited resources. We will continue to use our hearts and minds to solve difficult problems that most large groups are scared to effectively engage. Cottonwood is changing the world.