Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC)
Whitebark Pine Subcommittee

Whitebark Pine Strategy for the Greater Yellowstone Area (2011)
Members/Area Covered

**GYGT Seed Zone**

- Five National Forests across three administrative regions (USFS – Regions 1, 2, 4 NF)
  - Custer Gallatin
  - Beaverhead-Deerlodge
  - Caribou-Targhee
  - Bridger-Teton
  - Shoshone

- Two National Parks (NPS)
  - Yellowstone (includes the Greater Yellowstone Network (GRYN))
  - Grand Teton

- Two National Wildlife Refuges (USFWS-NWR)
  - Red Rock Lakes
  - National Elk Refuge

- Three State BLM Offices (Wyoming, Montana, Idaho)
GYCC Subcommittees

- Aquatic Invasive Species Cooperative
- Clean Air Partnership
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Fire Management Team
- Fisheries Team
- Hydrologist Team
- Sustainable Operations
- Terrestrial Invasive Species
- Whitebark Pine
- Wildlife
- Connecting People to the Land
Whitebark Pine Subcommittee

Mission (est. 2001):
Create a collaboration of land managers, scientists, and other whitebark pine experts that leads to the long-term viability and function of whitebark pine ecosystems in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

Structure

- One representative (minimum) from each GYCC agency (except Refuges), including inter-regional Geneticist
- Chair/Co-Chair
  - Three-Year Term
  - Co-Chair replaces chair for continuity
- Executive Liaison
- Meet once/year minimum
  - Spring – Business Meeting (Teleconference)
  - Fall – Science or Field Trip/Business Meeting (Face-to-Face)
- Utilize working groups as needed
- Cooperate with RMRS
- Cooperate with NGOs and universities
WBP Strategy Strategic Objectives

1. Provide a basis for collaboration among the federal agencies in the GYA to promote effective conservation of whitebark pine across administrative boundaries.

2. Protect the remaining cone-bearing whitebark pine throughout the GYA.

3. Maintain and restore the role of whitebark in ecosystem function.

4. Ensure whitebark pine regeneration and genetic variability through natural and assisted regeneration.

5. Promote fire planning and use that protects high value whitebark pine and provides for long-term restoration.
WBP Strategy Methods

- Developed a
  - WBP Distribution Map
  - Stand Condition Assessment
  - Ecosystem Function Assessment

To Identify Areas of
- High Priority for Protection
- High Priority for Restoration
High Priority Restoration Areas
High Priority Protection Areas
Whitebark Pine Strategy Implementation Methods – Protection or Restoration

**Protection**

Tree Protection (individual tree, stand or landscape)
- Verbenone (Pouches/Flakes/SPLAT)
- Carbaryl Spraying

**Pruning**
- Preventative
- Sanitation

**Fire “Proofing”**

Preventing Loss of High Value Cone Bearing WBP from Wildland, Prescribed, or Prescribed Natural Fire

Long-term blister rust monitoring program (Greater Yellowstone Monitoring Network)

**Climate Change:**

Montana State University (MSU): Researchers projecting whitebark habitat under different climate scenarios and modelling if Strategy will maintain whitebark on the landscape under those scenarios.
Whitebark Pine Strategy Implementation – Protection or Restoration (cont)

Restoration

Genetics Program: Tree Improvement/Seed Orchard

- Identification, selection, cone collection, and testing of ‘superior’ trees within GYGT seed zone
- Protection of superior trees from bark beetle attack.
- Cone, pollen, scion, aeciospore, and other ‘tree part’ collections.
- Seed orchard establishment on the Gallatin NF – 1st grafted out plantings in 2012 and 2013
- Performance test and in-situ clone bank
Restoration

Cone Collection and Planting
- Operational and Plus tree cone collections – genetically diverse areas and 110 seed source study areas (known high blister rust resistance).
- Pre-planting and stocking surveys in burns/beetle hit areas
- Restoration Planting
Whitebark Pine Strategy Implementation – Protection or Restoration (cont.)
Whitebark Pine Management = Glorified Cage Management!
Whitebark Pine Strategy Implementation—Protection or Restoration (cont)

Restoration

Managing Wildland, Prescribed, Prescribed Natural Fire
- Mixed Species Stands
- Limited Access
- Moderate-High Rust Infection/Mortality
- Avoid Current MPB Activity
- Low Intensity – kill SAF/competing vegetation
- Protect seed sources from fire areas.

Creation of Nutcracker Openings

Natural Regeneration

Thinning
Subcommittee Project Implementation – Collaboration at its Finest!

Collaboration – Leveraging Potential

Funding Sources – GYCC, FHP, Reforestation Partnerships, NGOs, Reforestation Trust

Exact figures not known, but project level implementation costs since 2001 are estimated to be well in excess of $1.5 million.
Subcommittee Project Implementation – Collaboration at its Finest!

**Funding Transfer Tools**

- **Memorandums of Understanding**—establish agency commitment and operating parameters between four federal agencies.

- **Interagency Agreements**—movement of money between Department of Agriculture (USFS) and Department of Interior (NPS, USFWS, BLM) or vice versa.

- **Between National Forests** – use of override/shorthand codes between forests.

All this moves money to the agency(ies) that need(s) it to implement strategy projects. All activities coordinated to minimize overlap and maximize ground coverage.
Subcommittee Project Implementation – Collaboration at its Finest!

Results: Efficient On-the-Ground Management

► Force Account Climbers (Grand Teton NP and FS agencies)

► Contract Implementation (USFS Regions 1, 2, and 4 Acquisitions Management Offices (AQM)):
  ▪ Solicit multi-agency, multi-region cone collection and planting contracts or blanket purchase agreements (BPA).
  ▪ Funding moved to agency that houses contracts/BPAs.
  ▪ Use of override/shorthand codes budgets between National Forests needing cone collection or planting services.
  ▪ Minimized administration!

► Sweat Equity:
  ▪ All agencies provide expertise, labor, and supplies to manage their individual whitebark programs in conjunction with overall strategy

  ▪ Custer Gallatin NF provides employees to manage the seed orchard; all National Forests help fund the seed orchard via a MOU/IA.
Barriers to Implementation

Time and Money

“Other Duties as Assigned”

Physical Limitations of Whitebark Sites