



PLAN



STRATEGIC

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Park County Environmental Council's mission is to work with our community to safeguard the land, water, wildlife, and people of Yellowstone's Northern Gateway.

- ✓ **We envision a community** where all life can thrive.
- ✓ **We value** connection, not separation.
- ✓ **We build** deep collaboration and authentic partnership.

Formed in 1990 by a group of Park County citizens, PCEC was established to create a local voice for the wild in this one-of-a-kind ecosystem. Our work takes place on Indigenous lands in one of the most critical wildlife habitat areas in North America. We are not the first generation of people to love and care for this place, and we won't be the last.

Our community is increasingly challenged by an ever-expanding human footprint, growing wealth inequality, and a changing climate. The future of our work must be collaborative, proactive, and adaptive.

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**WE BELIEVE IN DOING THINGS TOGETHER, RATHER THAN ON OUR OWN.**

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# OUR PROGRAMS

## Thriving Communities

We work with residents to implement proactive community and land use planning policies, so people and wildlife have a safe, healthful home and the opportunity to thrive in a changing climate.

## Conservation Leadership

PCEC aims to build a local environmental movement that is equitable, inclusive and diverse. We elevate the voices of underrepresented people that are often the most impacted by environmental threats.

## Healthy Landscapes

We protect, restore and connect wild lands, water and wildlife in this one-of-a-kind natural and cultural landscape for future generations.







Photo: Tom Murphy

## OUR COMMUNITY

**PCEC is found within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.** From the Paradise and Shields valleys, to the wild grasslands and working ranchlands, to the montane forests, to the highest alpine peaks in Montana, PCEC's conservation work takes place in the wild and rural landscape that is Yellowstone's northern gateway. Park County also contains the headwaters of the longest free-flowing river in the Lower 48. We work to protect one of the most critical wildlife habitat areas in North America.

**PCEC's conservation work takes place on Indigenous lands.** Many people have, and continue to call this landscape home, including but not limited to the Apsáalooke (Crow), the Nimiipuu (Nez Perce), the Očhéthi Šakówin (Sioux), the Séliš (Salish), the Shoshone-Bannock, the Siksikaitapí (Blackfoot Confederacy), and the Tsistsisistas and Suhtaió (Cheyenne). This acknowledgment is foundational to our

relevance as an organization. PCEC is engaged in a long and essential journey to become an organization that champions belonging, inclusivity, and where we bring people together to do big things for communities and our wild backyard.

**Part of what makes Park County special is how many people are working** to make the community a better place, using their unique expertise to improve our overall quality of life. We value the Indigenous stewards of these lands. We value open spaces and the farming and ranching heritage of Park County. We value the mountains and rivers that define this place and the northern Yellowstone ecosystem. We hunt, fish, recreate, and find solace in the wilds of Paradise Valley and the Shields Valley. We hope to develop a culture of reciprocity between this place and these communities.



Photo: Tom Murphy

## OUR APPROACH

- PCEC focuses locally to protect habitat and build community resilience so all life can thrive.
- We share knowledge and stories to foster deep relationships between people and wild places so we can be better ancestors to future generations.
- PCEC prioritizes collaborative, proactive, and adaptive approaches in all our work.
- As members of our community, we have a responsibility to stand shoulder-to-shoulder on the most pressing issues and face them together.
- We are not the first generation of people to care for this unique place, and we won't be the last.
- We seek creative local solutions to controversial problems. We bring effective organizing, partnerships, and conservation knowledge together to find community solutions.

## OUR VALUES

**Building diverse coalitions** is central to PCEC's work in community and local-led initiatives. We prioritize listening, learning, and understanding our community and neighbors. We ensure that our work is grounded in local needs and supported by strong relationships.

**Sharing responsibility** for each other, the land, and future generations guides PCEC's work. We advocate for projects that strengthen our social and environmental fabric. We believe in leaving this place better than we found it by caring for land, water, wildlife, and our community today.

**Strengthening equity** in outcomes and processes is core to PCEC programs. We believe our work must be interconnected in community and viewed with an environmental justice lens. We believe we all build more resilience when everyone has healthy environments to thrive and belong within.



# OUR PROGRAMS

At PCEC, all of our programs hold unique value and importance. We also work across programs to address overarching community and environmental challenges. We believe in building redundancy to create equity, resilience and adaptability in our work. The following are listed in alphabetical order.

## Thriving Communities

PCEC engages the public and builds expertise to advance smart growth policies in order to strengthen our local economy, protect our community from unchecked development, and build resilience in the face of climate change.

- PCEC advocates for and participates in pro-active planning efforts for the preservation of land, water, and wildlife in Park County and to ensure a good quality of life for the people and wildlife that call this place home.
- PCEC advocates for pedestrian infrastructure and trails so people can safely walk, bike and use alternative transportation to get where they are going and access nature.
- PCEC works to help Park County adapt to our new climate reality, including drought, flooding and increased wildfire, by building community and individual relationships, using physical resources, and developing strategic planning initiatives to remain sustainable, equitable, and strong.



PROGRAM GOALS

## ONGOING INITIATIVES

- Park County Housing Coalition
- Trails and Active Transportation Coalition
- Climate Resilience Program
- Neighborhood Planning
- Downtown Master Plan
- Livingston Loves Trees
- Boomerang Bags





## Conservation Leadership

Fundamental to our theory of change, PCEC aims to build a local environmental movement that is equitable, inclusive and diverse. PCEC supports leaders and elevates the voices of underrepresented people that are often the most impacted by environmental threats. We work with all people to share knowledge, access and tools to participate meaningfully in local decision-making and community building.

### PROGRAM GOALS

- PCEC works with local partners and community members to identify emerging threats facing our community. PCEC staff listen and support community-driven conservation objectives.
- PCEC educates, supports and empowers emerging leaders to be [1] knowledgeable [2] influential and [3] confident in their efforts to find solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our community and environment.
- PCEC staff, board and volunteers build deep relationships and stand shoulder-to-shoulder on important issues impacting our community even when they may not be clearly identified as “environmental issues” (for example access to decision-making, equal representation, and providing mutual aid in times of community crisis).

### ONGOING INITIATIVES

- AmeriCorps NCCC and VISTA community capacity building
- High School Internships
- Park High Green Initiative
- Barbara Hays Fellowship



## Healthy Landscapes

PCEC is the local conservation leader working to protect habitat connectivity and open land, clean and free flowing waterways, and iconic wildlife species in this one-of-a-kind ecosystem in Yellowstone's Northern Gateway.

- PCEC permanently protects wild, working and cultural landscapes through legislation, designations, policies, easements, land exchanges, and proactive community planning.
- PCEC defends the Yellowstone Gateway from irresponsible developments that would be harmful to wildlife, habitat, water, and human equity by mobilizing diverse community members.
- PCEC teams with local partners through scientific study and analysis to develop innovative solutions to help maintain the health and viability of our waters.
- PCEC leads and educates the community about current and future issues regarding our local water resources.
- PCEC supports reasonable wildlife management, backed by sound science and traditional ecological knowledge.
- PCEC works to reduce human-wildlife conflict through education, outreach, and partnerships focused on coexistence.

### ONGOING INITIATIVES

- Checkerboard land consolidation in the Crazy Mountains
- Crazy Mountain Oral History Project
- Noxious Weed Treatment Monitoring Program
- Defending Yellowstone's Gateway
- River Recreation Monitoring
- Climate Change Outreach & Drought Planning
- Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group
- Bear Smart Communities
- Yellowstone Safe Passages
- Save the Yellowstone Grizzly



# NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

**Park County Environmental Council is dedicated to you** — the people in Park County and our partners. We cannot do this without each other. We believe that the health of our community is tied to the health of our ecosystem. We focus locally so our interconnected communities can thrive. We hope to empower our members and partners to speak for this unique place. It is all of us working together that will create resilient and equitable communities in Yellowstone's northern gateway.

## THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITIES, WATERS, LANDS, AND WILDLIFE.

**Our community has been built by many for many.** We are committed to each other and our home. Our communities think of the generations yet to come and the generations that came before us. Over time, we continue to build deeper relationships with each other. We foster growing relationships through PCEC's work with community gatherings, advocacy support, and knowledge sharing.

**Water is the lifeblood of our community,** and the Yellowstone River is the intangible heart of it all. Its strength supports the health and vitality of our local ecosystems and livelihoods. Park County is upstream of many other communities. Our place at the headwaters of the river means we hold a great responsibility as stewards across the region.

**Land is home.** The land creates and sustains our life here. Spanning mountain ranges and valleys, the land is a key part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem – the largest intact ecosystem in the lower 48 states. PCEC advocates for the best possible stewardship of the land, our home. We believe in a future that is safe, inclusive, and accessible, so people can experience and be in relation with the land.

**Wildlife reflects our larger community.** As humans, we are part of the ongoing process of life along with the bears, bison, wolves, trout, elk, eagles, beavers, butterflies, and more. We coexist together. We find connection and partnership in our advocacy for wildlife and biodiversity. When we restore wildlife corridors, and wild ways of being, we restore interconnected landscapes that are healthier for us all.

**At PCEC, we work for community, always.** We strive to be a diverse and equitable community-based conservation organization by upholding our connection to people and place. Our team loves the land, water, wildlife, and people of Park County; we are neighbors helping neighbors. Together, our community can spark action for future generations and shape Yellowstone's northern gateway together, so we all can thrive.

*In Community,*



PARK COUNTY  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
— COUNCIL —



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