

CONSERVE • PRESERVE • RESTORE • ADAPT

Strategic Framework

2021 — 2026



WHO WE ARE

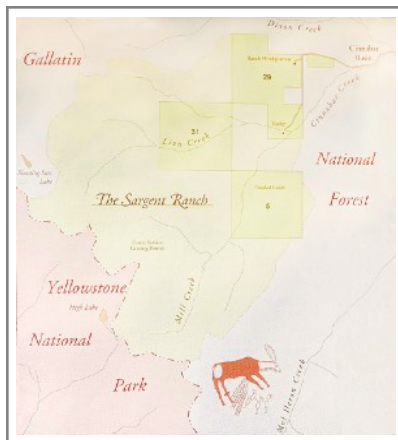
The Cinnabar Foundation is a **private independent foundation** with a creation story as unique as its founders. The vision for the foundation was birthed, in 1983, by four longtime conservation activists — ranchers and philanthropists Len and Sandy Sargent; environmental activist and law student Phil Tawney; and Jim Posewitz, wildlife biologist for Montana’s Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks — during a hunting weekend at the Sargents’ ranch in the Cinnabar Basin on the northern rim of Yellowstone Park. Their conundrum was how best to support longterm the constitutional right of Montanans to a clean and healthful environment. The answer that emerged was to establish the Cinnabar Foundation.



Len and Sandy Sargent at their ranch
in Cinnabar Basin

As activists and philanthropists, the Sargents were always willing to add their voices and offer financial support to Montana’s grassroots environmental movement. Thus, seeding the Foundation was a natural extension of their philanthropy. ***The intent was, and continues to be, to invite others to join in growing this permanent fund by consolidating and strategically directing resources — in perpetuity.*** Upon their passing in 1997, the Sargents left the bulk of their estate to the Foundation.

Jim Posewitz served as the first executive director of the foundation from 1983 to 2010. Phil Tawney served on the board from 1983 until his death in 1995, when he was succeeded by his wife Robin. Upon Len’s death, Robin became board chair and served in that capacity for 22 years. She remains on Cinnabar’s board of directors.



In 2018, the Sargents were posthumously inducted into the Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame “for their vision and generosity in developing a model that ensures funding to address conservation and environmental issues within Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.” That same year Phil Tawney (posthumously) and Robin Tawney Nichols also were inducted for their lifetime of service in protecting and defending Montana’s environment. Two years earlier, Jim Posewitz had been inducted into the Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame for his lifelong service and reputation as the environmental conscience of Montana’s state government and modern green movement.

The Cinnabar Foundation remains Montana’s only homegrown, statewide conservation fund. Presently, a five-member board of directors and an executive director oversee the operations of the Foundation. In addition, an emeritus director and a growing Conservation Legacy Society express belief and confidence in our work.

OUR VISION

We envision a future for Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem that safeguards this landscape of promise, graced by generations of people with a commitment to preserve and conserve its clear water, restored wildlife, wild lands, and epic national parks alongside rural and urban communities.

OUR MISSION

The Cinnabar Foundation helps protect and conserve water, wildlife and wild lands in Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem by supporting organizations and people who share our vision and work to implement strategic conservation solutions to preserve and restore our natural heritage and communities as they adapt to change.

WHY WE'RE HERE

In 1899, seventeen years after the creation of Yellowstone National Park, President William McKinley placed the lands that buffered the Park, some adjacent to the Sargent Ranch, into the national forest reserve system. The authority to create forest reserves, such as this one, came from a Congressional act supported by progressive environmental pioneers including Theodore Roosevelt (TR), George Bird Grinnell, and Gifford Pinchot. During TR's presidency, our nation was effectively introduced to the conservation idea and endowed with a 230 million-acre public land estate that also included the future Glacier National Park. When William Taft succeeded TR as President in 1909, he immediately fired Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, and successfully influenced Congress to cut the fledgling agency's budget. A century later, we live with custodial and regulatory agencies badly compromised by political expedience and, in many cases, dysfunctional.

In this era of unprecedented threats to the environment — especially human-induced climate change — we are actively dedicated to supporting the collaborative initiatives of people who are creating bold new models of conservation.

We exist to help conserve, preserve and restore this region's clear skies, clean water, and diversity of wildlife and wild lands in perpetuity. We believe there are achievable, adaptable solutions to current and future challenges based on sound science, forward-thinking conservation policy, and community action. These solutions are based on a firmly held belief that the destiny of humans is inextricably tied to the health and well-being of our environment. We recognize that to conserve nature requires a collaborative community of stakeholders — individuals, organizations, governmental and non-governmental agencies and partners — who together work to preserve and protect our precious natural resources.

The absolute beauty of our democracy lies in the reality that the people who “get it” respond. And that is why Cinnabar is here.

OUR PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

The following principles guide all aspects of our work:

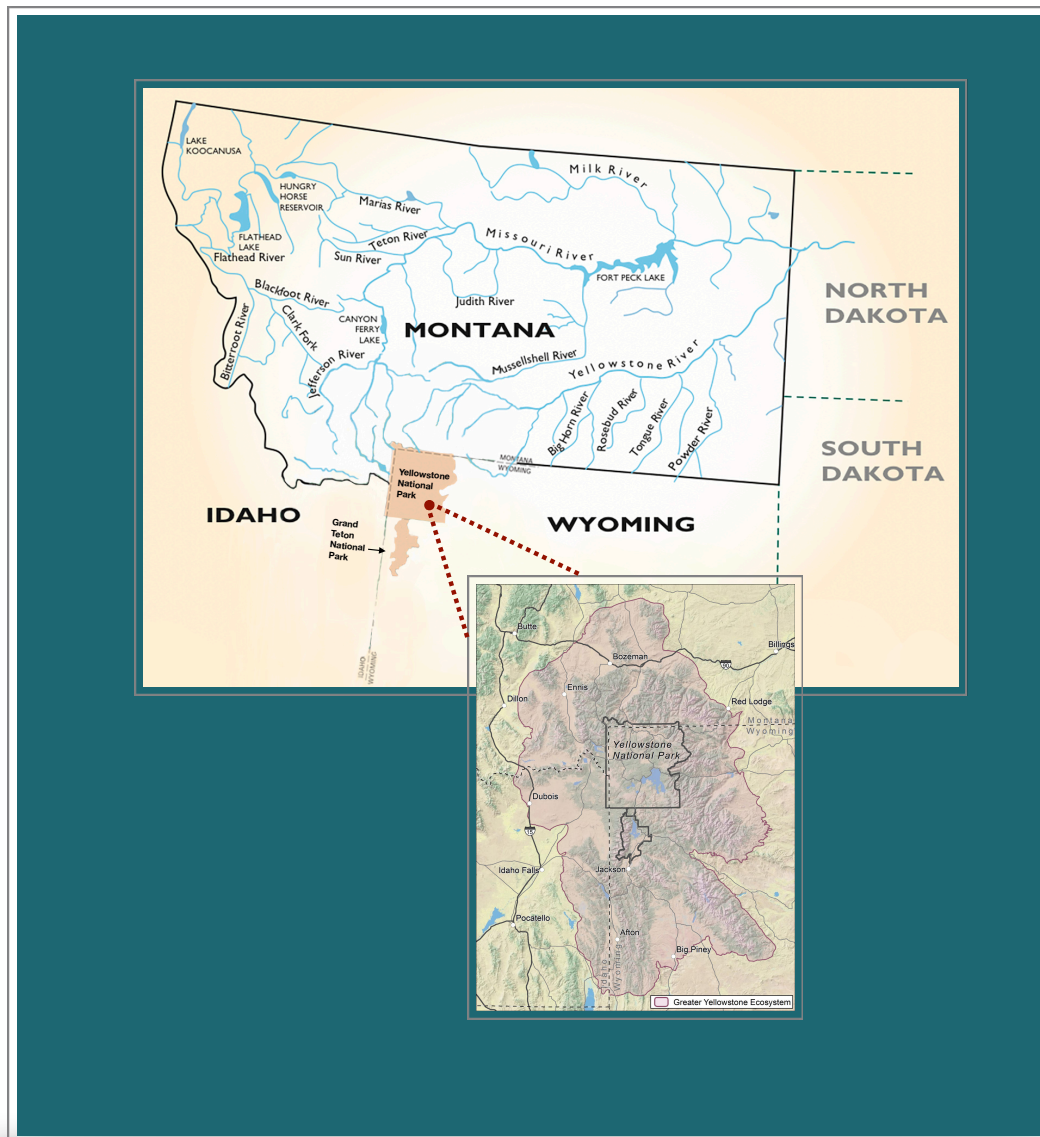
- We have a **long-term commitment** to our mission, which is reflected in the strong and enduring relationships and effective conservation partnerships we have developed with our grantees, foundation colleagues, and other constituents.
- We recognize that many conservation decisions are ultimately political decisions. Thus, in addition to **supporting “on-the-ground”** conservation actions, we support organizations engaged in conservation education, outreach, and advocacy efforts.
- We believe that **integrity and respect** are essential in our institutional and individual interactions with the public, our grantees, our colleagues, our donors, and among our board members and staff.
- We invest in organizations and projects where **opportunities for impact and success** are supported by sound science, strategic planning, effective organization, strong leadership, and community-based constituencies.
- We **collaborate** with other private conservation funders through the mutual sharing of information to **leverage support** for conservation efforts in Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
- We invite other like-minded individuals to join **Cinnabar’s Conservation Legacy Society** and grow the foundation’s capacity to realize its vision and mission now and in perpetuity.



2017 site visit with Blackfoot Challenge that included Cinnabar Foundation board members and Legacy Society members.

OUR REGIONAL FOCUS

The Cinnabar Foundation works exclusively in Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.



WHAT WE DO

The Cinnabar Foundation uses a model of impact investing to support nonprofit organizations and special projects that demonstrate the ability to advance our mission and vision. Many of the organizations we fund work in more than one conservation program area, in particular climate action. The conservation program areas we fund are:

- **Community Conservation & Sustainable Agriculture**

- ✓ Promote community-based natural resource collaboration
- ✓ Enhance sustainable agriculture and ranching practices that preserve open space, wildlife habitat and corridors

- **Conservation Education & Research**

- ✓ Expand environmental awareness
- ✓ Grow the next generation's ecological knowledge
- ✓ Support citizen science, field work and wilderness stewardship

- **Environmental Advocacy**

- ✓ Build awareness and take action on local, state and regional issues
- ✓ Prevent or mitigate irresponsible natural resource extraction
- ✓ Build a constituency that supports a clean and healthy environment



- **Private Land Conservation**

- ✓ Protect wildlife habitat and migration corridors
- ✓ Preserve strategic open space and agricultural lands

- **Public Lands**

- ✓ Preserve, steward, protect and advocate on behalf of public lands
- ✓ Protect wildlife habitat and migration corridors
- ✓ Preserve and maintain public access

- **Water Quality & Fisheries**

- ✓ Preserve, protect, restore and advocate on behalf of clean water and fisheries
- ✓ Preserve and maintain public access

To fulfill our Vision and Mission, we:

- Prioritize and implement discretionary grant making to align with our vision, mission, and the needs of Montana and the GYE.
- Invest in the capacity — time and resources — of our grantees and their staffs to help them become more efficient and effective.
- Encourage the exchange of knowledge, strategies and, where appropriate, strategic project coordination among our grantees.
- Foster professional relationships with grantees, agency leaders, scientists, and decision-makers.
- Collaborate with other funders to leverage and ensure our collective investments are coordinated and have greater impact.
- Energize generosity through increased visibility, outreach and education.

OUR INVESTMENTS IN MONTANA and GREATER YELLOWSTONE ECOSYSTEM

Our investments through grant and awards programs advance the Cinnabar Foundation's vision and mission. Through strong relationships with our grantees, scientists, decision-makers, and other funding partners, the Cinnabar Foundation aims to:

- Identify and eliminate, decrease or mitigate local, state and regional threats to wild lands, wildlife and water.
- Improve the ecological resilience of the landscapes in which we work.
- Encourage a political environment that supports sound science-based conservation actions.
- Increase the social and political relevance of conservation.
- Support grassroots conservation organizations that actively protect and conserve Montanans' right to a clean and healthful environment.
- Improve the effectiveness of grantee organizations and their key staff members.
- Increase communication, cooperation and collaboration among grantees, funders, scientists, and governmental decision-makers.

OUR IMPACT

The Cinnabar Foundation's impact is seen and felt throughout Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE), and is reflected in the achievements of the region's thriving environmental and conservation community.

Because grants from the Cinnabar Foundation require a 1:1 match, the impact on Montana and the GYE is doubled. As a result, since 1985 when the Foundation awarded its first matching grants, our 300 conservation partners have leveraged nearly \$20 million for programs, projects and organizational capacity to support their vital work.

Almost every credible and effective environmental/conservation organization operating within our funding region has been the recipient of Cinnabar's support — some for more than 30 consecutive years. Rarely has there been an important environmental victory or major conservation achievement during the past three-plus decades — whether it be conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, preservation of our clean air and water, protection of public lands and wilderness areas, or environmental education for the next generation — that was not positively influenced in some way by support from the Cinnabar Foundation.

Approximately two-thirds of Cinnabar's grants are awarded as general support grants to long-term conservation partners to help fund the infrastructure and capacity required to fulfill their missions. The remaining one-third of Cinnabar's grants are designated for specific, high priority environmental and conservation projects.

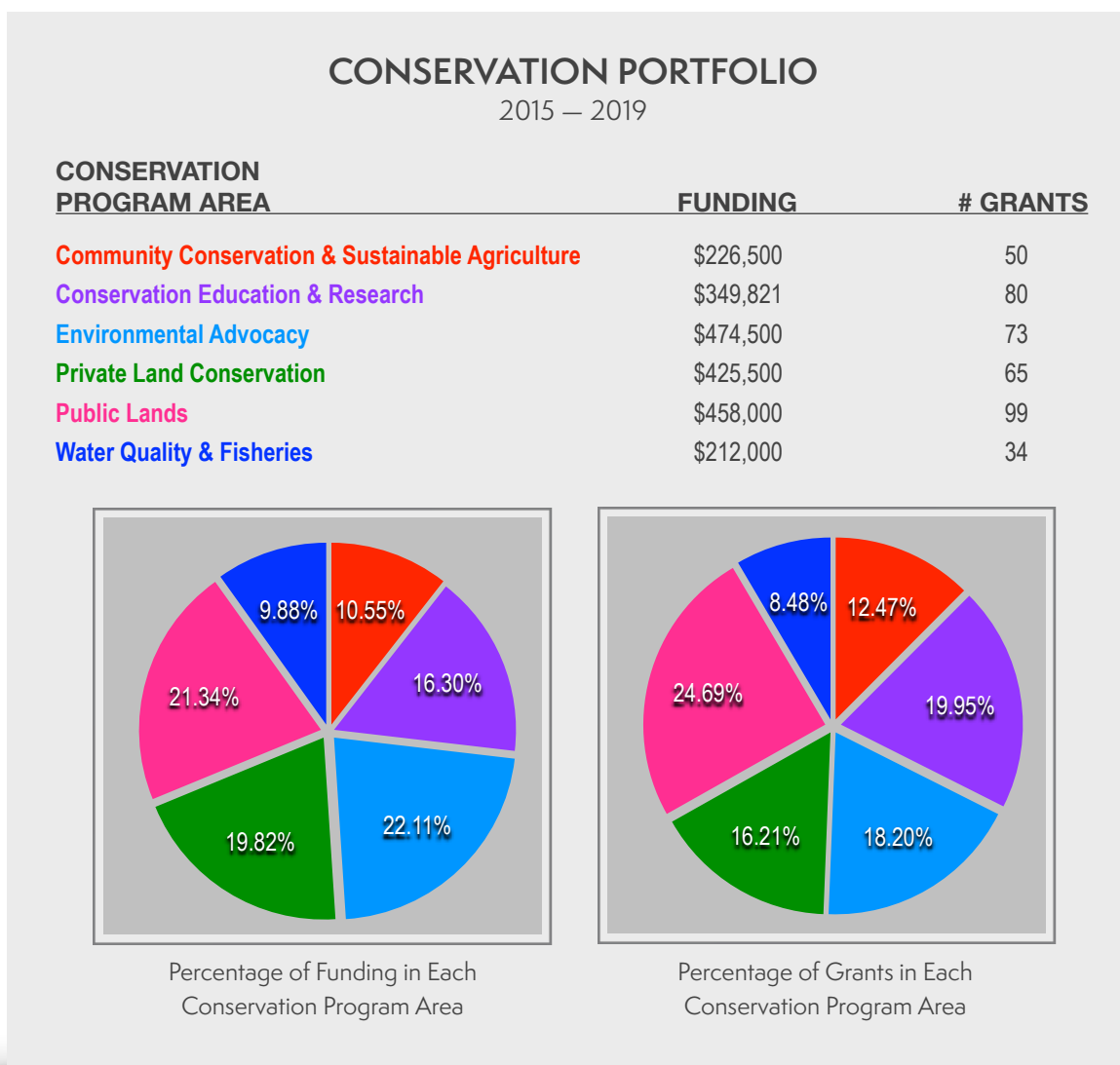
Each year, the Cinnabar Foundation's board of directors considers the most pressing environmental issues and conservation opportunities facing Montana and the GYE, and prioritizes its grant-making accordingly.

A comprehensive listing of Cinnabar's [conservation partners](#) and [grants awarded](#) since 1985 can be found on our [website](#).

Since 1985, Cinnabar's conservation partners have leveraged their matching grants to total nearly \$20 million, critical funding to support their vital work.



From 2015-2019, the Cinnabar Foundation's investments in conservation in Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem totaled \$2,146,321. These funds advanced critical work in the Foundation's conservation program areas.



Examples of the impact Cinnabar's grants have had in recent years include:

- **Community Conservation & Sustainable Agriculture**

From 2015 to 2019, the Cinnabar Foundation invested more than \$225,000 in community-based watershed collaborations, land-use planning, and citizen science data collection.

IMPACT: Cinnabar's long-term investment in the [Western Sustainability Exchange](#) (Livingston, MT) has facilitated sustainable private land stewardship on over 1.45 million acres in Montana and the GYE by teaching, working and incentivizing farmers and ranchers to use regenerative agricultural practices that preserve open spaces and wildlife habitat and corridors by connecting them to lucrative markets.

IMPACT: Cinnabar's investment, in 2019, through the *Rick Hubbard Sargent Innovation Award* to the [Montana Watershed Coordination Council Watershed Fund](#) (Helena, MT) helped to leverage funds from federal, state and private partners to fund gaps experienced by watershed groups across Montana and to support their on-the-ground projects and capacity-building needs. In that year alone, the Watershed Fund facilitated 39 miles of stream improvements; 40 conservation practices implemented; 14,633 acres of land made more resilient; and 649 stakeholders engaged at the community level.

- **Conservation Education & Research**

Between 2015 and 2019, the Cinnabar Foundation invested approximately \$350,000 in local, state and regional education programs that address climate adaptation, renewable energy, water conservation, and wilderness stewardship, reaching students of all ages.

IMPACT: Cinnabar's long-term investment in the [Montana Natural History Center](#) (Missoula, MT) has supported state-of-the-art conservation and ecology teaching modules that are used by schools throughout Montana. In 2019 alone, MNHC reached over 15,000 people of all ages through more than 20 unique programs and exhibits. The Visiting Naturalists in the Schools program accounted for 32,300 direct contact hours of naturalist instruction in 69 classrooms in Western Montana..

IMPACT: Cinnabar's investment in the [Montana Outdoor Science School](#) (Bozeman, MT) helped to expand their Science in Residency Program with a focus on serving rural students. In 2019 alone, this project served more than 500 rural students who have collectively spent over 2,500 hours outdoors observing and exploring hypotheses around questions about the natural world. In general, MOSS provides learning opportunities to over 5,000 children annually.

- **Environmental Advocacy**

Between 2015 and 2019, the Cinnabar Foundation invested \$375,000 in nonprofit environmental advocacy organizations in Montana that build community awareness and responsiveness while addressing and taking action on local, state and regional issues; prevent irresponsible natural resource extraction; and promote the growth and use of renewable energy.

IMPACT: Cinnabar's long-term investment in the [Montana Environmental Information Center](#) (Helena, MT) continues to ensure the presence and advocacy of this government watchdog. MEIC rallies citizens to lobby the legislature and speak up on critical issues before state agencies. Their staff dives deep into the weeds of energy production and rate-paying, working toward a renewable energy future. In 2019, MEIC won legal victories revoking water discharge and water use permits for two mines that would dewater wilderness streams and degrade water quality in the Cabinet Mountains.

IMPACT: Cinnabar's long-term investment in the [Northern Plains Resource Council](#) (Billings, MT) has ensured that this longtime advocacy group continues to give Montana farmers and ranchers a voice regarding energy development and the air, water, land and livelihoods affected by continued dependence on fossil fuels. NPRC staff meet regularly with the state Department of Environmental Quality and the governor's office to make the case for thorough groundwater cleanup at Colstrip.

IMPACT: Cinnabar’s investment in the [Mountain Journal](#) (Bozeman, MT) is spreading in-depth, investigative stories about conservation issues affecting Montana and the GYE to more than 15 million readers from all 50 states, all 10 Canadian Provinces, and 193 other countries.

• Private Land Conservation

Over five years, the Cinnabar Foundation invested more than \$425,000 to secure property rights that protect wildlife habitat and migration corridors through local and regional land trusts.

IMPACT: Cinnabar’s long-term investment in [The Montana Land Reliance](#) (Helena, MT) has permanently protected agricultural lands, fish and wildlife habitat, and open spaces. As of the end of 2019, they have protected more than 1.13 million acres of working lands through 897 monitored conservation easements.

IMPACT: In 2019, Cinnabar’s investment in the [Flathead Land Trust](#) (Kallispell, MT) helped to protect land along the lower Flathead River and key wildlife habitat along Mill Creek near its confluence with the Flathead River.

IMPACT: Cinnabar’s long-term investment in the [Gallatin Valley Land Trust](#) (Bozeman, MT) has helped in securing and monitoring 109 easements on 48,086 acres.

IMPACT: Cinnabar’s long-term investment in [Five Valleys Land Trust](#) (Missoula, MT) helped secure over 90,000 acres through 182 conservation easements. These include working lands and agricultural soils, connected wildlife habitat and community open spaces in western Montana. In 2019 alone, Cinnabar helped FVLT secure 10,563 acres of critical habitat.

• Public Lands

From 2015 to 2019, the Cinnabar Foundation invested \$458,000 in nonprofit organizations dedicated to the preservation, protection, stewardship, public access, and advocacy of public lands throughout Montana and the GYE.

IMPACT: Cinnabar’s investment in the [Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Foundation](#) (Red Lodge, MT) delivered numerous educational programs to school-aged kids around the A-B

Wilderness; held 14 trail projects with more than 150 volunteers — almost half were under 20 years old — putting in over 2500 hours of work; undertook three multi-day projects in cooperation with the Montana Conservation Corps/Billings Indian Education for All program that gets Native high-school and middle-school kids from many tribes outdoors, doing service projects, camping out and learning about conservation; published the “Atlas of the A-B Wilderness;” built up fundraising capacity in keeping with their newly development Strategic Plan.

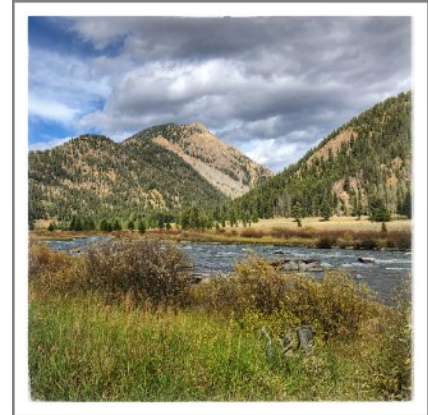


IMPACT: Cinnabar's long-term investment in the [Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness](#) (Sandpoint, ID) has helped recruit more than 8,800 volunteers who work to save the wild character of the Scotchman by keeping backcountry trails open with crosscut saws and other traditional tools; offering hikes and wildlife education programs; and using communications and outreach to build grassroots inevitability for permanent wilderness designation.

- **Water Quality & Fisheries**

Over five years, the Cinnabar Foundation invested \$212,000 in nonprofit organizations that focus on the protection; stewardship; public access; and advocacy of water resources throughout Montana and the GYE.

IMPACT: Cinnabar's long-term investment in [Montana Trout Unlimited](#) (Missoula, MT) has conserved and restored populations of Montana's native fish; maintained and promoted self-sustaining wild fish management; protected and improved water quantity and quality by keeping and enhancing in-stream flows in rivers and streams; provided education and outreach to members and the general public; defended traditional access for public recreation on Montana's rivers and streams; and advocated and influenced policies that affect the health of Montana's fisheries and coldwater resources at the municipal, county, state, regional and federal levels. Montana TU also plays a key role in protecting the Smith River watershed from the proposed Black Butte mine.



IMPACT: Cinnabar's long-term investment in the [Clark Fork Coalition](#) (Missoula, MT) supports the organization's continual work in the Upper Clark Fork and Bitterroot river drainages and continues to advise stakeholders on the highly-contaminated former Smurfit-Stone site west of Missoula while keeping pressure on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as it completes its assessments. In 2019 the Coalition won major legal victories associated with water rights and wastewater discharge against former mining operations in the Cabinet Mountains; helped defend clean water protection laws and re-authorization of the state water conservation program during the legislative session; added 6.5 billion gallons/year of flow to the Clark Fork River tributaries; managed and monitored 37 water rights at 43 sites on 22 streams and two headwaters lakes; reached 1,800 students in nine Montana counties (5,400 learning hours) with hands-on, STEM-based watershed science programs.

OUR CHALLENGE

As our board of directors was handed the responsibility to honor the vision, mission and philosophy set forth by Cinnabar's founders, so will we one day pass this charge along.

With the knowledge that change is constant, we recognize that the long-term vitality and sustainability of this "last best place" will require conservation organizations working in this region to adapt accordingly and, thus, the Cinnabar Foundation to remain vigilant and nimble to address the increasing pressures caused by climate change, human population pressure, natural resource utilization, loss of fertile agricultural lands and ag producers, and more. Therefore, it is imperative that the Cinnabar Foundation grows its supporting endowment and grant programs to meet the ever-changing challenges of today and those of the future.

We believe science-based knowledge will solve our present and future challenges. However, unless this knowledge is widely shared and the political will to deploy it strengthened, future generations will not experience clear skies, clean water, diversity of plant and animal life, open space and access to wild lands that we enjoy.

The focus of the Cinnabar Foundation always will be crystal clear: To ensure a future for Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem that safeguards this landscape, we will provide critical funding to preserve and conserve its clear water, restored wildlife, wild lands, and epic national parks alongside rural and urban communities.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY & INTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Cinnabar Foundation was created to exist in perpetuity to carry through its vision and, as a private independent foundation, is required to expend at least five percent (5%) of its assets on programmatic activities each year. To meet our fiscal and programmatic responsibilities today and in the future, we pursue seven objectives:

1. Execute best practices in operations, financial systems and investments.
2. Sustain a long-term view in both our financial and grant-making portfolios.
3. Attract new philanthropic support through charitable gifts and donations. While we do not want to compete with our grantees, we invite individuals to make charitable gifts and/or join Cinnabar's **Conservation Legacy Society** by including the Cinnabar Foundation in a bequest or other type of planned giving.
4. Strive to achieve at least a five percent (5%) average annual growth in assets through return on investments and retained earnings to maintain and grow

2021-2026 Goals:

- **Increase philanthropic support by ten percent (10%)**
- **Grow membership in the Conservation Legacy Society by one hundred percent (100%)**

our award and annual grant-making; maintain administrative operations; and ensure the foundation's "long view" in perpetuity. While returns on investments are expected to vary from year-to-year, the assets of the Foundation are, and will continue to be, protected by an informed, flexible and prudent investment strategy.

5. Invest in qualified organizations working within Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem through a diverse and balanced portfolio of conservation programs, ensuring that our competitive grants are well leveraged for maximum impact through 1:1 matching requirements.



6. Conduct on-going monitoring and field visits and actively engage in the issues to fine-tune and reposition Foundation priorities as needs and opportunities across our funding region require.
7. Strengthen the Foundation's capacity to implement strategic initiatives based on ecological and conservation needs, grant requirements and internal resources.

CONSERVE • PRESERVE • RESTORE • ADAPT