

**About the Great Southwest Council:**

The Great Southwest Council was chartered by the National Council in 1924, serving youth in northern New Mexico (from Socorro to the north), southwestern Colorado, and the Four-Corners region of Arizona and Utah. 2020 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Southwest Council and its predecessor councils.



**Environmental Context:**

The Great Southwest Council has been impacted by intense external pressures and factors over the past five years, including the National BSA bankruptcy, a global pandemic, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints ending their 100+ year relationship with BSA. Additionally, other charter partner organizations are re-assessing their relationship with Scouting. As a result, the Great Southwest Council has experienced significant losses in membership, volunteers, professional staff, and financial resources since 2019-2020.

The Council has weathered the storm in 2021 and 2022, rebounding modestly from the March 2021 membership low that reflects the full impacts of 2020’s challenges. GSWC Youth membership grew substantially in 2021 and held nearly flat from 2021 to 2022:

Youth Members	March 2021	2021 YE	2022 YE
Packs	391	714	777
Troops	638	957	851
All Other (Crews, Ships, Posts, Labs)	14	40	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,043</b>	<b>1,711</b>	<b>1,666</b>
Units	March 2021	2021 YE	2022 YE
Packs	29	38	33
Troops	54	68	61
All Other (Crews, Ships, Posts, Labs)	5	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>102</b>

## 2023 GSWC Membership Goals and Strategy

Resource-wise, the Council is emerging from 2022 in a stronger position thanks to the easing of pandemic restrictions, the resolution of the national BSA bankruptcy, and GSWC's management operating agreement with Yucca Council that has allowed for the hire of a shared Scout Executive. The Council will operate in 2023 with improved, but still limited financial and personnel resources, which will again strain our ability to fully execute the membership strategies and plans listed below.

### **Units Strong 2**

Units Strong 2 is a council-wide reorganization to achieve focus on small clusters of units instead of the traditional geographic bounded district construct. As seen in the map above the GSWC covers a large expanse of land which was determined to hamper effective program delivery and management.

The core of Units Strong 2 is the determination that all of the Council's efforts will be focused on developing membership: to recruit and retain youth, their families, and adult volunteers at all levels of the Program and throughout the Council's footprint through enhanced Unit support. The Council is implementing its Unit Strong 2 plan in 2023, which disbands its current four districts and replaces them with smaller, more customized zones of 6-8 units supported by a Zone Commissioner and a Membership Advocate. The plan also establishes three new board level leadership positions focused on age-based programs: 5-10 years old (Tigers/Cubs), 11-14 years old (Scouts BSA), and 14-20 years old (Venturing/Sea Scouting/Exploring).

## 2023 GSWC Membership Goals and Strategy

### Long Term Membership Strategic Objectives (Approved in 2021 GSWC Strategic Plan):

- Meet or exceed council youth membership levels as of December 31, 2020
  - Target = 2,570, YE 2022 Actual: 1,666
  
  - Grow female youth membership by 5% from end 2020 levels
    - Target: 307, YE 2022 Actual: 235
  
- Meet or exceed council youth unit levels as of December 31, 2020
  - Target = TBD, YE 2022 Actual: 102
  
  - Visit 50% of the school principals in GSWC area

### GSWC Guiding Principles & Strategic Approach:

- The quality of the Scouting experience for youth and adult volunteers comes first.
- The most effective recruiter in Scouting is a Scout who is enthusiastic about their unit
- The Council Membership VP and Committee are responsible for setting goals and council wide strategies. The committee looks to share information, ideas, best practices, and resources/materials to enable unit membership activities
- Most membership activity is executed at the unit level through personal interaction with scouters and youth/families.
- The Council Membership VP and Committee will pursue activities that can complement and enhance unit-led membership activities, with a focus on reaching new families
- Every Scouting activity has the potential to be a membership activity – be creative
- Membership (recruiting and retention) is an all-year focus, not just during spring and fall campaigns

### 2023 GSWC Membership Goals

- **Goal:** Grow youth membership (total, all programs) by 10% from 2022 actuals by December 31, 2023
  - Target: 1,833
  
- **Goal:** Grow Cub Scouts youth membership by 15% from 2022 actuals by December 31, 2023
  - Target 894

## 2023 GSWC Membership Goals and Strategy

### 2023 Strategies

#### Council Strategies

- Implement Units Strong 2 Plan and re-structure Membership organization
- Work across the Council Vice Presidents to ensure a coordinated focus on membership in all Council activities
- Interface monthly with NST2 membership committee for best practices and ideas
- Utilize Council Membership Budget to invest in marketing and branding to raise profile of Scouting within GSWC area
- Council Board with leadership from the nominating committee will focus on filling the zone commissioners, membership advocates and membership committee early in 2023
- Complete a market analysis of GSWC territory to identify areas and population to emphasize in membership growth activities. Share results with Zone commissioners, advocates, and unit leaders.
- Support unit level membership activities via through Zone Membership Advocates
- Provide regular communications and sharing of resources with unit commissioners and unit key three – connect them to national resources, best practices, and tools
- Coordinate spring and fall recruitment campaigns
- Coordinate a school outreach campaign in first half of 2023
- Plan and execute Council-led Adventure Day (or similar) activities in each quarter

#### Recommended Unit Strategies

- Re-recruit dropped youth and invite them back to unit activities
- Execute program activities with a membership focus – all unit activities are potential recruiting events!
- Each unit develops an annual membership activities plan, to include proactive recruiting of scouts transitioning between age-level programs
- Each unit holds Join Events as part of Spring and Fall Membership Campaigns
- Units take advantage of membership-oriented resources available from BSA National
- Units participate in Community Events to increase visibility of Scouting
- Units participate in a school outreach campaign (Adopt-a-School?) in first half of 2023