



Hells Bells - December 2021

Happy holidays from GHCC! Each year, as we celebrate the winter solstice and the snow starts falling, we find time to take a break and spend time with family and friends. We hope you are able to do so as well. From all of us to you, we wish you a joyous and restorative new year!

GHCC's 2021 Recap

Here is a quick month-by-month rundown of our work this past year

January

2021 started quickly with the news that the outgoing Trump Administration had eliminated the 21" rule protecting large diameter trees in Eastern Oregon. We [asked Oregon's senators](#) to work with the Biden Administration to reinstate the rule, and we continue to advocate for large tree protections as we enter 2022. The [Blue Mountains Trail](#) was officially launched. We also [hired](#) Jared Kennedy as our Development Director and welcomed Lindsay Schuelke onto the GHCC Board of Directors.

February

Idaho Representative Mike Simpson [unveiled a concept](#) to remove the four lower Snake River dams as part of a comprehensive vision for the future of the Snake River basin. Alongside our coalition partners, we [asked Oregon and Washington's senators](#) to engage with the concept and commit to saving these salmon runs from extinction.

March

Our work to encourage engagement on Representative Simpson's plan for the Snake River basin continued, led by Connections Coordinator Christina deVillier's [advocacy](#). We also welcomed Stephen Hatfield and Mike Beaty to GHCC's [Board of Directors](#).

April

GHCC and La Grande residents breathed a sigh of relief when the [efforts to build a quarry on Robbs Hill Road](#) was dealt a long-term setback. Plans were set in place for our first virtual Hellraiser, and work continued on the effort to reinstate the 21" rule and build support in Northeast Oregon for breaching the lower Snake River dams.

May

Conservation Director Veronica Warnock [articulated an ecological approach](#) to managing the forests of Eastern Oregon. GHCC's virtual [Hellraiser on May 8](#) featured a rousing keynote by Renee Patrick, first solo thru-hiker of the Blue Mountains Trail. We also exceeded our fundraising goal thanks to the tremendous support and dedication of our members, sponsors and business supporters.

June

From Camas to Condors and the Blue Mountains Trail, to bumblebee surveys across the Greater Hells Canyon Region with Xerces Society, we were able to [return to field work](#). While we'd hoped for a sustained return, June proved to be brief a moment of reprieve from the COVID-19 pandemic.

July

July was dominated by heat and smoky skies across the Greater Hells Canyon Region. While the Umatilla National Forest was closed for much of the summer, hiking on the Blue Mountains Trail was paused. Instead, [volunteers joined staffers Pip Redding and Jared Kennedy](#) to clear downed trees and mark out the bushwhacks on the trail.

August

Christina deVillier's [Camas to Condors StoryMap](#) outlined the work underway in partnership with the Nez Perce Tribe's Water Resources, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources Divisions, Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands, Northwest YouthCorps, Nez Perce Wallowa Homeland and other organizations. We cheered the news that the first phase of the 15,000 acre purchase of lands on the Minam River by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for a wildlife area was approved. And against a steady stream of false claims about the impacts of wild and scenic river designations on Northeast Oregon's public and private lands, [we set the record straight on the benefits of the River Democracy Act](#).

September

While much of our work on forest protection, salmon restoration, and support for the River Democracy Act happened behind the scenes, we published an [update on the Lostine River logging by Marina Richie](#) and an article detailing the [hidden history of locations found on the Blue Mountains Trail](#).

October

In October, Nez Perce Chairman Samuel Penney [signed a resolution](#) formalizing involvement by Nez Perce tribal members and staff in the Blues to Bitterroots Coalition. Washington's Senator Patty Murray and Governor Jay Inslee committed to engage on the future of the lower Snake River. We also [introduced Brandon Kokinos to the team](#) as our new Office Administrator and held a successful [Fall Gala Auction](#), wrapping up a year of virtual fundraising events with a hope to return to in-person events in 2021.

November

Following an eventful October, November was a month to be grateful for the dedicated support of members, board and our staff. With Danae Yurgel's impending retirement in early 2022, Executive Director Darilyn Parry Brown penned a fond farewell [celebrating Danae's 14 years as GHCC's Office Administrator](#).

December

Work slowed down just a bit in December, as staff usually use this month as an opportunity to take time to visit with family and friends, near and far. Continue reading for some news and announcements as we approach the new year.

Other news we're following...

Western US Strategic Forest Reserves

The United States should immediately move to create a collection of strategic forest reserves in the Western U.S., including large parts of public lands in the Greater Hells Canyon Region, to fight climate change and safeguard biodiversity. The report was produced by Oregon State University ecologist Bev Law and forestry professor Bill Ripple, along with GHCC Advisory Board member David Mildrexler and others. You can [read more about their research in Science Magazine](#), and the full paper is [available here](#).

GHCC and others offer reward to find perpetrator of wolf killings

Greater Hells Canyon Council joined with other conservation and wildlife organizations to offer a sizable reward for the successful prosecution of the person or people behind the murder of five wolves in Northeast Oregon in February 2021. The full article can be [found here on Oregonlive](#).



GHCC works to protect, connect, and restore the lands, waters, native species, and climate resiliency of the ecologically magnificent Greater Hells Canyon Region.

[Join us](#) in protecting the Greater Hells Canyon Region today and for future generations! A monthly contribution, large or small, adds so much stability to our financial planning and lets us focus our energies on conservation instead of fundraising.

Darilyn Parry Brown, GHCC Executive Director

By joining GHCC's River Runner program for \$10/month or more, we'll throw in a special gift.

[Find out more here, and sign up today!](#)

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