



Blue Mountains Trail Newsletter - Spring 2026



Buckhorn Overlook on the Blue Mountains Trail. Photo courtesy of Leon Werdinger.

Planning to Hike the BMT in 2026

Hiking season through the mountainous stretches of the Blue Mountains Trail generally starts in July when the snow melts, but with this winter's low snowpack we are anticipating an earlier start. If you are hiking into Hells Canyon, spring can be one of the best times before the summer heat. We have made many important updates to our trail materials with improved trail gps data and updated mileages, as well as an up-to-date databook showing water availability and other trail information for each map waypoint.

If you plan to do a thru-hike or take on a section of the BMT this year, make sure you have requested the latest maps and resources. And if you are interested in a smaller day hike or overnight backpacking trip, check out our BMT trips page to see guides to these shorter and easier BMT itineraries. If you are interested in hiking on the BMT but are still unsure how to get started, you can [email Jared Kennedy](#) and he'd be happy to help orient you to this amazing trail route through the Blue Mountains. He will also be presenting at the BMT happy hour at Migration Brewing in NE Portland next week, information below.

[Request BMT Maps](#)

[View BMT Shorter Trips](#)

And continue scrolling for more events and outings, including our annual Hellraiser celebration in Portland on Saturday, April 18. There's more: an opportunity to comment on a fast-tracked logging project being planned along the BMT near Austin Junction and other ways you can support our work to develop and maintain a premier hiking experience across the vast landscapes of Northeast Oregon.

Next Wednesday! Blue Mountains Trail Presentation and Happy Hour in Portland

We'd love to see you at an upcoming Happy Hour dedicated to the Blue Mountains Trail! Whether you're a seasoned thru-hiker or just starting to explore what the BMT has to offer, this is a great opportunity to connect with fellow trail enthusiasts and get the information you need to plan your next adventure.

Event Details:

Blue Mountains Trail Happy Hour

Wednesday, March 18 | 4:30–6:00 PM

[Migration Brewing](#) | 2828 NE Glisan St, Portland, OR 97232

BMT project lead Jared Kennedy will kick things off with a short presentation on the trail, covering what makes this route so special and the resources available to help you plan your hike, from updated maps and GPS data to the latest databook with water availability and trail information. After the presentation, we'll have plenty of unstructured time to mingle, swap stories, and ask questions.

Thinking about a thru-hike this season? Curious about a day hike or shorter overnight trip? Want to chat with us about the role of recreation in conservation? Come catch up with us at

Migration!

An RSVP is not required, but we'd love to know you're coming — just reply to this email if you plan to attend.

A big thank you to Migration Brewing for generously donating the use of their space to make this event possible.

Join GHCC for 2026 Events and Outings

Following next week's happy hour in Portland, we have more events and outings around the corner. It starts with Hellraiser, our annual fundraiser and party in Portland, on Saturday, April 18. Later this year, we will again host a multi-day hike along a section of the Blue Mountains Trail to link together two great music festivals, Juniper Jam in Enterprise and Pine Fest in Halfway. We'll have plenty more fun ways to learn about, support and engage with GHCC's staff along the way. [Click here for our current list of 2026 Events and Outings.](#)

Hellraiser - Saturday, April 18 | 5:00-9 PM @ Rossi Farms | Portland



Join GHCC's staff and board for a lively evening of community, celebration, and conservation in support of Northeast Oregon's wild lands, waters, and wildlife. The keynote will focus on our stewardship program, with plenty of fun and great food along the way. Don't miss this chance to get to know all of GHCC's work on behalf of the incredible place we call home.

[Buy tickets and learn more about Hellraiser 2026!](#) And you don't need to be at the event to [buy a Golden Raffle Ticket](#) for a chance to win one of three amazing travel packages.

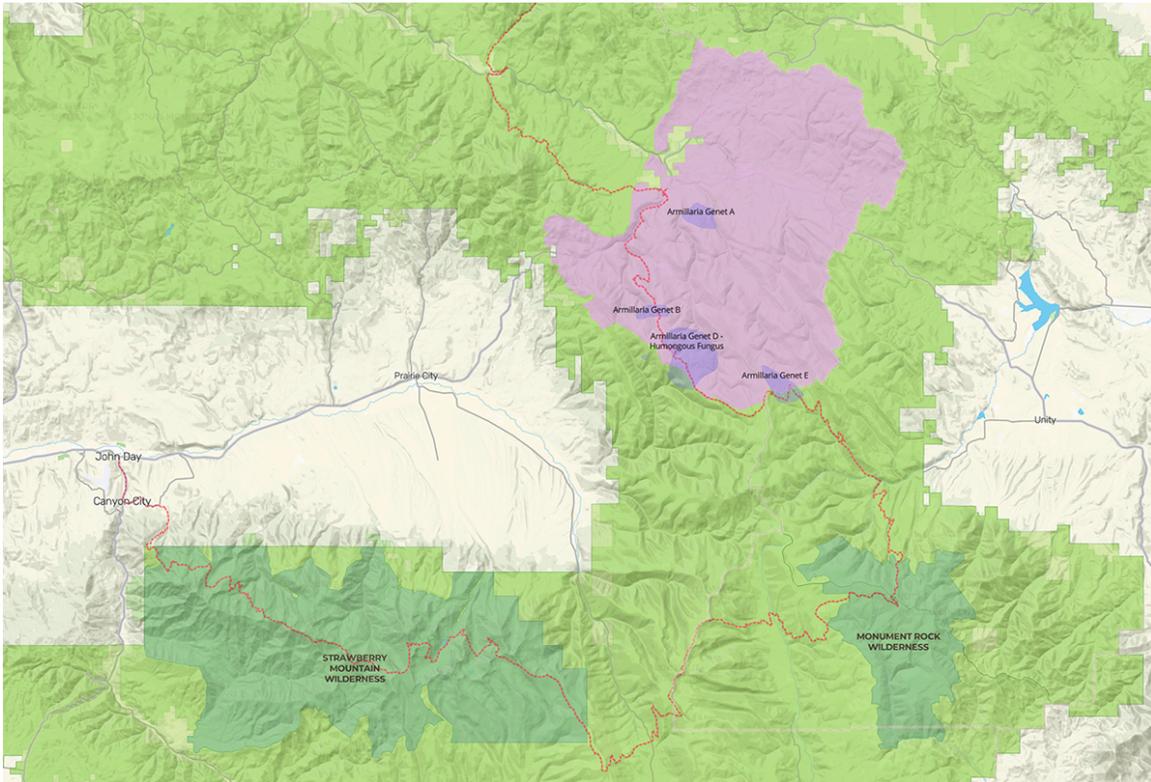


Juniper Jam to Pine Fest with GHCC - August 30 - September 6 | 5 days backpacking + music festivals

Join GHCC for this 4-night / 5-day excursion into Oregon's largest wilderness, bookended by two of Eastern Oregon's premier music festivals: [Juniper Jam](#) in Enterprise, OR and [Pine Fest](#) in Halfway, OR. Daily hike distances range from 5-10 miles and up to 3000' elevation gain.

[Learn more and reserve your spot!](#)

Action Opportunity - Proposed Logging Along the BMT Near Austin Junction



Map showing the Austin Project boundary (pink) in relation to the Blue Mountains Trail (red dotted line) and the Humongous Fungus genets (purple) within the project boundary. Strawberry Mountain and Monument Rock Wilderness Areas are shown to further provide context to the size of this commercial logging project outside of Prairie City, Oregon.

The Malheur National Forest is currently rushing through the environmental review process for a [logging project along the BMT near Austin Junction, Oregon](#). The project was initially proposed in 2019, fell dormant, and was resurrected in 2025 using a new “emergency” authority that limits public input and drastically fast-tracks decision making. As a general rule, we evaluate every logging project by asking three questions: are they proposing this activity in the right place, at the right time, and for the right reasons? Unfortunately, this one isn’t passing the test.

In addition to logging over 27,000 acres and seeking to cut some of the largest remaining trees on the landscape, the Forest Service is also intending to build 43 miles of “temporary” roads in a landscape that’s already rife with road-related problems. The current proposal will further exacerbate the issue of elk fleeing public lands and taking refuge on private property, all while decreasing the public’s ability to adequately participate in what should be a transparent public process.

If you have two minutes, please take a moment to submit a comment to the Forest Service on this project. It can be as simple as:

“I’m writing to request that the Forest Service drop the use of the emergency authority on the Austin project, as well as the proposed site-specific forest plan amendments related to increasing road densities, reducing wildlife connectivity, and logging trees over 21” DBH”.

Submit a Comment

If you're interested in submitting a comment but would like more information, [sign up for our action alerts list](#) where we'll share more detailed information and draft comments next week.

Support the Blue Mountains Trail



2026 is proving to be a year with plenty of challenges, and this includes funding to support our efforts on the Blue Mountains Trail. The trail is nearly entirely on lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service, and following the political winds, funding and staffing at the agency is shifting away from recreation to prioritize extraction in the form of logging, grazing and mining programs. Within this context, volunteer organizations like us and our partners are being asked to take on a larger role in maintaining trails and ensuring trail users are safe and respectful of the lands on which we traverse. Foundations and state agencies are adjusting on the fly to deploy limited funding where it is needed most, which has impacted a few key funding channels that until recently supported staff salaries.

Every dollar we raise for the BMT supports our ability to deliver better resources, maintain trails and improve the hiker experience. Even a small monthly donation makes a huge difference!

[Make a Donation Today](#)

A BIG Thank You to BMT Sponsors!



The Blue Mountains Trail is an interconnected part of GHCC's broader vision of a region of abundant, biodiverse, and connected lands and waters where all wild species and human communities thrive. [Join us](#) in making this vision come to life!

By supporting our work on the BMT for \$10/month or more, we'll throw in a special gift.

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