



Hells Bells - June 2026



Blue Mountain Forest Planning Public Meetings Recap

Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend public meetings around the region this month. We appreciate the reports folks shared on their experience, and were not surprised to see some of the themes that emerged in that feedback. We share many of your concerns, including:

1. It was hard to provide meaningful feedback or ask thoughtful questions without access to the draft plans, and
2. While the tone of this round of meetings was less intense, there is still widespread frustration with the current direction of the planning process.

We remain very concerned that the pace of this planning process is rushed and unlikely to produce a durable final result. This is disappointing, to say the least! At the time of writing, we are still awaiting the release of the draft plans. We will inform you as soon as they are published and the comment period starts.

In the meantime, we hope you're having a wonderful start to summer and getting out to visit your favorite wild places in the Blue Mountains. While you wait alongside us for the draft plans to be released, we'd love to hear from you: what do these forests mean to you?

We've put together a short story collection form where you can tell us about your connection to the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Malheur National Forests. Perhaps a memorable

hike, a favorite creek, a place you've been taking your family for years. We'll use these stories to make the case for protecting these places when the comment period opens.

Share your Blue Mountains story

The comment period will be here before we know it. The more voices we have, and the more vivid and personal those voices are, the stronger our collective case will be. We'll be in touch the moment the draft plans are published.

We hope to see you out there this summer! And thank you in advance for standing up for these special places.

Connect With Us at an Upcoming Event



Woodlands & Watersheds Festival | Friday, June 26th | Wallowa County Fairgrounds - Enterprise, OR

Don't miss the 22nd Annual Woodlands & Watersheds Festival, hosted by Wallowa Resources! This free celebration brings together 30+ local and regional organizations, from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to the Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries to local nonprofits, for a day of hands-on activities, conversation, and community around the streams, forests, and rangelands of Northeast Oregon.

Stewardship Manager Ian Wilson will have a booth at the festival representing his work with the Northeast Oregon Beaver Working Group. [Learn more about the event here.](#)



Bumble Bee Survey with Grande Ronde Community Science Project | July 8th | Mt Emily (about an hour from La Grande), OR

Join us on July 8th for a bumblebee survey on Mt Emily near Indian Rock Overlook. We'll follow protocols developed by the Xerces Society and the Pacific NW Bumblebee Atlas to monitor these important pollinators. This is a great chance to spend a day exploring the heart of the Blue Mountains, learning about native bees, and contributing to community science.

No prior experience needed, just a love of the outdoors and pollinators!



[Register Here](#)



Hells Canyon's Living History: Exploring Nature, Culture, and a Legacy of Conservation | August 3–6 | Snake River, Hells Canyon

One seat just opened up!

Join Greater Hells Canyon Council and beloved local geologist Ellen Morris Bishop for a 4-day float through Hells Canyon, North America's deepest river gorge. Spend three days navigating Class II–IV rapids, exploring pictograph and petroglyph sites, hiking side canyons, and digging into the region's deep human and natural history. On day four, enjoy a relaxed morning on the water before a thrilling jet boat ride out.

Along the way, we'll visit the sites of proposed dams that were never built and reflect on the people-powered conservation movement that protected this wild river corridor.

[Register Here](#)



Salmon Life Cycle 'Pedalpalooza' Bike Ride | Tuesday, August 4th @ 5:30PM | Laurelhurst Park - Portland, OR

We hope you can join us in Portland on Tuesday, August 4th, at Laurelhurst Park for our annual Salmon Life Cycle Pedalpalooza Bike Ride!

For the third year in a row, we're teaming up with [Pacific Rivers](#) and [Save Our Wild Salmon](#) for a relaxed-pace, out-and-back ride in support of a free-flowing Snake River and Columbia Basin salmon recovery. We'll meet at Laurelhurst Park at 5:30PM, ride down Salmon Street to Salmon Street Springs, and then head back upstream to the park. Come dressed in blue — let's become the river! This ride is moderately easy and open to all.

 [RSVP](#)



Beaver Dam Analog Construction | Summer Season | Location TBD

Get in the stream with Stewardship Manager Ian Wilson this summer and help set the stage for beavers to thrive! We'll be building beaver dam analogs; simple in-stream structures that mimic beaver dams, slow water, raise the water table, and create the conditions that invite beavers back to the landscape.

We're waiting on permitting confirmation before we schedule exact dates for upcoming work parties and will share details as they emerge. In the meantime, if you'd like to stay in the loop for future BDA builds, let us know by signing up!

 [Sign Up Here](#)

Other news we're following...

[Senate Republicans propose rescinding 'roadless rule' — by tacking it onto federal wildfire bill](#)

Senate Republicans have attached a repeal of the roadless rule to a wildfire prevention bill, killing the bipartisan support it once had. The move would open 59 million acres of federal forest to new road construction.

[Logging could triple in Blue Mountains National Forests](#)

A draft management plan for the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Malheur national forests proposes more than tripling commercial timber harvest, to 377 million board-feet per year. The plan would also eliminate the longstanding 21-inch diameter limit on logged trees and recommend no new wilderness designations. The public should be able to review the draft and provide comments any day now.

[Do chainsaws belong in designated wilderness?](#)

The Forest Service approved chainsaw use on 542 miles of wilderness trails in Idaho, and a USDA memo is likely to open the door to more. The move threatens to undermine the protections, and Wilderness Watch is considering a lawsuit.

[The local economic implications of Lower Snake River dam removal](#)

A new Headwaters Economics analysis finds that removing the four Lower Snake River dams would not significantly harm the economies of the communities closest to them. In fact, a review of 24 comparable dam removals nationwide found modest gains in per capita income after removal.

[Tollgate Crossing owners look to breathe new life into Spout Springs Ski Area](#)

After nearly a decade of empty slopes, Umatilla County commissioners unanimously awarded the redevelopment bid for Spout Springs to Tollgate Crossing owner Trevor Abell. His proposal turns the Blue Mountains ski area into a year-round destination, with winter skiing and summer mountain biking, disc golf, and more.

Volunteer Opportunities

There are many ways to volunteer with GHCC and the Blue Mountains Trail. We are always thrilled to work with our members, supporters, and fellow conservation advocates.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, be it at a trail stewardship event, doing wildlife and wilderness surveys, monitoring and community science projects, or joining us on a GHCC-led outing, we've created a survey that will help us know where to direct you and which opportunities to send your way. Completing this survey should take 2 minutes or less of your time. Thank you — we look forward to spending time with you!

Volunteer with GHCC

Let's Protect the Greater Hells Canyon Region Together



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