



Hells Bells - February 2026



Seven Devils in Idaho. Photo credit: David Jensen

Pushing Back: Feds Want to End Public Input on Public Lands

We're seeing a swell in proposed logging projects in our region, and the windows for public input are getting shorter. Our bedrock environmental laws are under threat, and the democratic processes that allow the public to participate in decisions about our shared public lands are eroding fast. In this blog post, we break down what NEPA is and why it matters, explain the methods currently being used to fast-track projects with little to no public notice, and give you a preview of the specific projects and comment periods coming up this spring — including the Blue Mountains Forest Plan, the Roadless Rule DEIS, and "emergency" logging projects beginning to pop up across NE Oregon. [Read the full blog here.](#)

1.25% for Wildlife is Heading to the Oregon Senate NOW!

HB 4134 passed the Oregon House this week and now heads to the Senate. We need a vote from Senator McLane - please email or call to urge him to stand with his fellow Eastern Oregon senators and representatives and VOTE YES! If passed, HB 4134 would provide ODFW with its first-ever dedicated state funding to recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats — paid for by a modest 1.25% increase in the state lodging tax that would still leave Oregon with one of the lowest lodging taxes in the country. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect Oregon's natural legacy while supporting the outdoor tourism economy that sustains 192,000 jobs and \$16 billion in consumer spending statewide.

Urge Sen. Mike McLane to vote YES.

Sen. McLane is still undecided, and your voice could make the difference. If he's your senator, it's especially important that he hears from you — but even if he's not, a respectful message from a fellow Oregonian matters.

Sen. Mike McLane (R - District 30) | ([District Map](#))

503-986-1730

Sen.MikeMcLane@oregonlegislature.gov

When you reach out, keep it brief and personal, urge him to VOTE YES on HB 4134 when it comes to the senate for a vote.

Thank you for speaking up for our wild neighbors!



An Update on the Efforts to Remove the Lower Snake River Dams

The six sovereigns (Oregon, Washington, and NW Tribal Nations) are back in court demanding action on the removal of the Lower Snake River Dams. [Just this week, Judge Simon ordered new protective measures for Columbia River Salmon.](#)

As part of the original agreement with the Biden Administration to pause litigation (rescinded last year by Trump), the Washington Legislature commissioned major studies in 2023 and 2024 to evaluate alternatives to the services currently provided by the Lower Snake River Dams. The preliminary findings are promising across the board:

Transportation: A Washington State Department of Transportation analysis found that shifting wheat and other agricultural goods from barge to rail would actually reduce truck travel by about 18 million miles per year, cutting annual emissions by roughly 29,000 metric tons of CO₂ — and the relatively modest cost increase to farming enterprises would be far

outweighed by eliminating the projected \$4.5 to \$8.35 billion in taxpayer spending needed to maintain the dams over the next 50 years.

Water supply: The Washington Department of Ecology and Bureau of Reclamation found there will be more than enough water in a free-flowing lower Snake River to meet irrigation and municipal needs.

Energy: A Pacific Northwest National Laboratory report found the dams produce an average of just 700 megawatts per year, which is less than 4% of the Northwest's total power generation, and this number is likely to shrink further as the region trends toward less snowpack.

Dam removal would honor treaty obligations to Tribal nations and is the clearest path to restoring Snake River salmon and preventing the extinction of the endangered Southern Resident orcas. These studies are ongoing, with more findings expected through 2026 and beyond. [Read the full article in the Tri-City Herald.](#)

Upcoming Events



Blue Mountains Trail Happy Hour Wednesday, March 18 | 4:30–6:00 PM @ Migration Brewing | NE Portland

Join us in Portland for a Happy Hour dedicated to the Blue Mountains Trail. Jared Kennedy, BMT project lead, will share resources available to help you plan your hike - from updated maps and GPS data to the latest databook with water availability and trail information.

***An RSVP is not required, but we'd love to know you're coming!

[RSVP Here](#)



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

Join us on Saturday, April 18th at 5pm at Rossi Farms for a lively evening of community, celebration, and conservation in support of Northeast Oregon's wild lands, waters, and wildlife. The night will feature a chef-prepared dinner by Gregory Redfield and the team from [Bauman's on Oak](#), an energizing live auction, our signature Golden

Raffle with vacation and adventure packages, and a special presentation from Stewardship Manager Ian Wilson on his restoration and beaver coexistence work in the region.

[Purchase Tickets](#)

Other news we're following...

[Conservation in the West Annual Poll Analysis by RE:PUBLIC News](#)

Despite America's deeply divided political climate, protecting public lands remains a rare point of bipartisan agreement. The 2026 Conservation in the West poll, which surveyed nearly 3,500 voters across eight Western states, found that 76 percent want their representatives to prioritize public lands protection over oil, gas, and mineral extraction, up from 65 percent in 2019. The consensus holds across party lines, with 62 percent of Republicans, 80 percent of Independents, and 80 percent of Democrats sharing that view.

[Walla Walla man crafts canoe at Wallowa Lake](#)

Our friends Bobby and Brosnan (Caretakers of the Land) have been carving a dugout canoe at Wallowa Lake to strengthen the connection between the Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla, Nez Perce, Palouse, and other interrelated bands of the Columbia Basin and to reconnect them with their ancestral waterways and cultural sites. Check out the full article in [The Chieftain](#).

And if you missed it, Caretakers of the Land, our 2025 Artists-in-Residence, gave a wonderful presentation last week on Oregon Wild's Wild Wednesday webinar. [Watch the recording here.](#)

[NE Oregon trails association surpasses fundraising goal](#)

Our friends at Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon Trails Association have exceeded their fundraising targets, securing support to maintain and improve local recreational trails that provide outdoor opportunities across the region. Their success highlights strong community interest in outdoor access and trail stewardship.

[No more flattened frogs: Oregon's newest wildlife crossing latest in growing movement](#)

[Democrat or Republican, Americans want their National Forests kept intact](#)

[Mink in Oregon: an industry fades, the wild mink stays](#)

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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