



Hells Bells - April 2026



We had a great time at Hellraiser on Saturday, April 18th.

Hellraiser 2026 Recap

This year's Hellraiser was another fun and successful event, and our cups are filled by the support of everyone who joined us at Rossi Farms on April 18th.

It's hard to fit everything into one evening, but we made it count. We shared updates on our conservation work and Stewardship Manager Ian Wilson gave an excellent presentation on the coexistence work he's been accomplishing in support of beavers in our region, a real highlight from the first year of our stewardship program.

Jamie and Emily also prepped our friends on how to engage with us as opportunities for public comment on decisions affecting public lands come up. We want you to know: we will be calling on our member base for "the moment that matters," and we will equip you with the tools to take meaningful action, to stand up for our public lands.

And in typical fashion, we hosted our annual "clownery for a cause" style live auction, where we raised ~\$50,000 in support of our work. We are so grateful to all of our supporters, far and wide, those who joined us and those who sent their generosity from afar. We are truly buoyed by your support.

- Your GHCC Team



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Elk and Roads, Elk and Roads - Ellis Litigation in Sum

On April 6th, GHCC and Oregon Wild filed a lawsuit challenging the Forest Service's final decision on the Ellis Integrated Vegetation Project - a logging project proposed in the Umatilla National Forest. The Forest Service drastically changed course on this project in the 11th hour, removing key actions that would improve elk habitat by reducing road densities. This is a big deal for us, and is not something that we take lightly. Learn more about the project and our decision to litigate here: [We're suing the Umatilla National Forest over the Ellis project. Here's why.](#)



Build Your Trail Skills with WMHCTA

Our friends with the [Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon Trails Association](#) are offering three hands-on training opportunities. We highly recommend them for anyone looking to build the skills needed to keep the trails of Hells Canyon and the Wallowa Mountains open and accessible:

Backcountry Stock Use and Safety — May 9th

Crosscut Saw Safety and Use — May 15–17

Chainsaw Safety and Use — May 27–29

These trainings are a fantastic way to build practical skills while investing directly in the trails and landscapes we work to protect. WMHCTA will do several more of these this summer until everyone has their saws tuned up and ready to cut fallen trees!

If you are interested in these trainings and have not already signed up, [you can register on their website.](#)

Merkley's Eastern Oregon Town Halls Rescheduled!

Senator Jeff Merkley will be holding a series of open town halls across Eastern Oregon this week, giving community members a chance to share their ideas and hear directly from their

senator.

Baker County

Community Connection of Baker County, 2810 Cedar St, Baker City
Saturday, May 2 — 10:30 am

Wallowa County

Wallowa Senior Center, 204 E 2nd St, Wallowa
Saturday, May 2 — 2:15 pm

Union County

Eastern Oregon University, Badgley Hall, La Grande
Saturday, May 2 — 5:15 pm

[For the full list of Merkley's upcoming town halls — See this list](#)

Please consider attending and asking a question. Senators pay serious attention to issues raised at town halls. If you're able to attend, please consider asking him about one of the following issues:

Protecting Roadless Areas - we have around 650,000 acres of roadless areas currently protected under the 2001 Roadless Rule in this region, including much of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. What is the Senator doing to pass the legislative fix currently in Congress - the Roadless Area Conservation Act? [Learn more about roadless areas here.](#)

Protecting old growth trees - the upcoming draft Blue Mountain Forest Plans are likely to drop all protections for old growth trees and allow commercial logging of trees of any size or species. What can be done to stop this?

Any issue that matters to you!

Upcoming Events

FREE!

Presentation Series
WILDERNESS
IN A CHANGING WORLD

The Future of Public Lands in the Blue Mountains

Jamie Dawson
Conservation Director, Greater Hells Canyon Council

Friday, May 15th • 7pm • at Wallowology!

- The future of public lands management across the region is up for debate
- Who decides what these lands are for? You do!
- Join for a discussion on current issues & learn how to get involved

Wallowology!

Natural History Discovery Center
508 N. Main • Joseph • wallowology.org • 541-432-0112

The Future of Public Lands in the Blue Mountains | Friday, May 16th @ 7:00PM | Wallowology - Joseph, OR

Conservation Director, Jamie Dawson, will be at Wallowology on Friday, May 15th, talking about the future of public lands in the Blue Mountains. Learn more about the present and future of public lands management and how you can get involved in affecting those decisions. Come with questions!

Return to the River Salmon Festival

Saturday, May 16th
11am - 3pm

Walla Walla Community College
By the ballfields along Tausick Way
(Parking available on campus)

Admission: **FREE to the Public**

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Salmon releases into Mill Creek
- Lamprey & native fish on display
- Stream tables, beaver dam displays, macroinvertebrates, groundwater models, fish printing, & other fun hands-on activities!

The Wild Thyme food truck will be on site w/ kid's options!

Follow us @wwccwec for more info!

Return to the River Salmon Festival | Saturday, May 16th | 11:00AM - 3:00PM | Walla Walla - by the WWCC ballfields along Tausick Way

Come see stewardship manager, Ian Wilson, and senior advisor, Brian Kelly, at this FREE family-friendly community event in Walla Walla! This special event celebrates the return of salmon to the Walla Walla Basin each year. It is coordinated jointly by the Water & Environmental Center and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in order to provide a glimpse into our region's rich cultural and natural resource-driven history.

Other news we're following...

[The Hidden World of the Blue Mountains Trail](#)

This piece goes deep on everything hiding in plain sight along the Blue Mountains Trail: the living history, the ghost towns, the rediscovered orchards, the ancient organisms underfoot. A great read for anyone who thinks they already know the Blues.

[Fool's Gold: Digging into the Proposed Stibnite Mine webinar](#)

Stibnite Gold Mine sits in Idaho's South Fork Salmon River watershed, right next door to our region. In this video, the panel unpacks the far-reaching risks the massive project poses and what's being done to protect irreplaceable resources. Speakers include Shannon Wheeler, Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, as well as representatives from Idaho Rivers United, the Idaho Conservation League, and Advocates for the West.

[Forest Service overhaul sows confusion, concern](#)

The U.S. Forest Service announced plans to move its headquarters from Washington, D.C. to Salt Lake City, closing all nine regional offices, and shuttering research stations in more than 30 states, including Portland's spotted owl research station.

[Grant will pay for trail work in Eagle Cap Wilderness, new docks on Wallowa Lake](#)

Some welcome local news: a Wallowa County nonprofit will receive a \$72,000 federal grant to replace a bridge on the Chief Joseph Mountain trail near Wallowa Lake and replace about 150 trail signs in the Eagle Cap Wilderness and North Fork John Day Wilderness. Separately, Wallowa County received a \$450,000 state grant to replace aging public docks on Wallowa Lake, which have significantly deteriorated and been deemed unsafe.

[Agreement returns thousands of historical items to the Umatilla Indian Reservation](#)

A remarkable homecoming: the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation signed an agreement with collector Fred Mitchell to acquire his vast collection of Columbia River Plateau tribal artwork and artifacts, including 15,000 stone points and tools, 1,250 historic photographs, and 800 beaded bags and pouches. [Tamástlikt Cultural Institute](#) opened in 1998 with zero collection, making this acquisition a watershed moment for the tribes' ability to tell their own story.

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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