



Hells Bells - September 2025



GHCC's Fall Gala This Saturday!

GHCC's Fall Gala is this Saturday, October 4, at 5 PM in La Grande, and we'd love to see you there. Come enjoy a local foods dinner, a silent auction of regional goods and getaways, and a special presentation from our 2025 Wild Blues Artists-in-Residence duo, *Caretakers of the Land*, whose work aims to revitalizes traditional arts and lifeways in the Blue Mountains

This year's event marks the 50th anniversary of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, a milestone moment for conservation and a powerful reminder of what grassroots advocacy can achieve. We're looking forward to a joyful evening that both celebrates our irreplaceable wild lands and waters, and calls us to continue showing up for their protection, especially in these increasingly uncertain times.

Get your tickets here!



Caption

Comment Deadline Approaching for the Blue Mountains Forest Plan

It's time to submit your comments on the new forest plans for the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Malheur forests! Comments are due by next [Monday, October 6th](#). This comment period determines what issues get serious attention and consideration in these new management plans. If the issues you care about aren't raised now, the Forest Service is unlikely to prioritize them in the final plan. Even few sentences sharing what you care about most is meaningful!

At present, the draft plans do not contain any meaningful or enforceable protections for key components of our forests like old growth trees, wildlife habitat connectivity, and special habitats that species need to survive (snags, aspen/meadow habitats). They also completely shy away from meaningful consideration of roads and their impact on wildlife.

Learn more about the new draft plans and the comment period [in this blog](#), or go straight to submitting your own public comment [here](#).



Massive Public Response to Roadless Rule Repeal

Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit comments on the proposed repeal of the Roadless Rule!

Over 620,000 people submitted comments, and initial reviews found that nearly all (99%+) of the commenters were strongly opposed to rolling back these protections. If this follows a standard rulemaking process (which unfortunately feels a little unlikely at this point as more and more of the public engagement processes are removed), there will be a formal analysis of comments by the Forest Service and another comment period next year.



Juniper Jam to Pinefest Recap

Beginning on Labor Day, GHCC welcomed five members to Wallowa County for our second annual *Juniper to Pine: a musical trail experience*. We always look forward to the times we can connect directly with folks to talk frankly about the joy and challenge of our work while enjoying the beautiful landscape we all care about so deeply.

The week-long adventure kicked off with Juniper Jam, billed as the sweetest little music festival in Eastern Oregon. Now in its 5th year, Juniper Jam is organized by Janis Carper of the Wallowa Valley Music Alliance, a local non-profit organization dedicated to supporting music and musicians in the region. The line-up was fantastic this year with appearances by Ashleigh Flynn & The Riveters, Desolation Horse, and local barroom heroes, the Strange Striders.

For the next four nights and five days, the group backpacked south through the Eagle Cap Wilderness, starting at Wallowa Lake Trailhead. Daily distances of 8 miles or less left plenty of time and energy for photos, reading, and heated card games. Highlights included Glacier and Hawkins Passes, swimming in the South Fork Imnaha, and Crater Lake. On Friday, the crew emerged at Summit Point Trailhead, dusty, tired, and smiling to find volunteer shuttle drivers waiting with cold drinks.

At the Pine Valley Fairgrounds, our hikers grabbed a shower and a good meal before settling in for a truly epic two days of music. Pine Fest is organized by the Cornucopia Arts Council and has been put on every September since 2012. This year's headliner was a special one; the Council blew out the budget to bring the well-known and supremely

talented Sam Grisman Project to the tiny town of Halfway. Their brand of energetic and heady string music comes with an impressive pedigree. Band leader and bassist Sam is the son of renowned jazz and bluegrass mandolin player David Grisman of Grateful Dead fame. Other groups did not disappoint either. Marimbacopia, a local ensemble composed entirely of handmade marimbas, offered an inimitable performance.

After a quick scenic drive back to Enterprise via the 39 road on Sunday, the crew said their goodbyes and parted. Each person expressed how grateful they were for the fun and beauty of the experience, but most of all for the camaraderie and for our shared vision of a healthy and connected landscape.



PDX People of Color Outdoors Visits Hells Canyon

This September, we were honored to again host our friends from PDX People of Color Outdoors. POCO is a Portland-based non-profit organization created and led by nature lover Pamela Slaughter. Founded in 2017, POCO works to create safe and inclusive spaces for BIPOC folks to thrive outside through education and outdoor recreation of all kinds. By organizing hundreds of trips over the years, they have provided opportunities and

encouragement for people of all colors, ages, nationalities, and socioeconomic backgrounds to get out and learn about themselves and the world around us.

Four new friends from the Portland area joined BMT Coordinator Pip Redding for short excursions in Hells Canyon and the Eagle Caps. Some highlights included the Maxville Heritage Museum, spawning kokanee at Wallowa Lake State Park, panoramas and peaks at the top of the Wallowa Lake Tramway, raptors and mantids on the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve, canyon views at Buckhorn Overlook, and a herd of elk at Indian Village Grove.

We love showing off this amazing place and supporting the meaningful work that POCO does.

Come back soon!

Upcoming Events

50 YEARS OF A
WILD &
PROTECTED
HELLS CANYON

CELEBRATE WITH
GREATER HELLS
CANYON COUNCIL
AT THIS YEAR'S

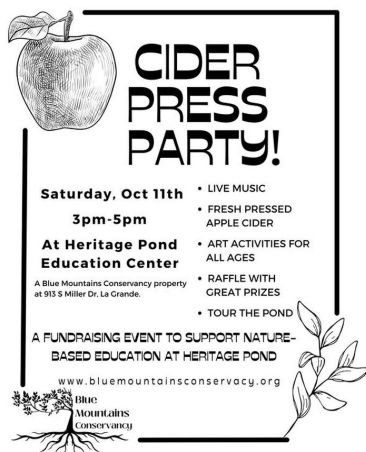
FALL GALA



OCTOBER 4 GHCC's Annual Fall Gala in La Grande

There's still time to grab your tickets and invite your friends to GHCC's annual fall gala in La Grande. This is a wonderful way to get to know us and our work over a delicious, locally sourced meal. We have a special evening planned, featuring a presentation by our current artist in residence duo, Caretakers of the Land, and a silent auction featuring local goods and getaways!

[Get Tickets](#)



OCTOBER 11 Blue Mountains Conservancy Cider Press Party

BMC's 4th annual cider pressing event will take place at Heritage Pond in La Grande, Saturday October 11th. This is a wonderful family event! Come enjoy music, fresh-pressed apple cider, art activities for all ages, and more at Pete's Pond. It's a chance to connect, celebrate the season, and support habitat work in the Blue Mountains with our friends at BMC.

[Learn More Here](#)



OCTOBER 13

What's Next for our Watershed? *A Public Briefing and Q&A Session*

“What’s Next for Our Watershed?” is a public info session on Monday, October 13, 2025, from 5 pm to 7 pm at the Walla Walla Regional Airport Conference Center. This free, community-led event will unpack the Tiger-Mill Project, which could reshape how the Mill Creek watershed (Walla Walla’s main water source) is managed. Join in for a clear overview of the proposal and a guided Q&A. Free pizza provided.

[RSVP Here](#)

Other news we're following...

[The dismantling of the Forest Service](#)

The Trump administration is pushing dramatic changes to the U.S. Forest Service, shifting its mission toward maximizing resource extraction and dismantling its conservation role. Soliciting public comments through September 30.

[What old growth forests have to do with your food](#)

Old-growth forests don’t directly produce our food, but by cooling landscapes and buffering climate extremes, they create conditions that make agriculture viable across the region.

[Guest column: Finding solitude in Oregon’s forgotten corner](#)

In a guest column, the author reflects on finding solace and deep connection in Northeast Oregon’s “forgotten corner,” highlighting its vast public lands, headwater streams, and ecological significance.

[More Than 99 Percent of Americans Disapprove of Roadless Rule Rollbacks, According to New Analysis](#)

During the public comment period, over 99 % of submitted remarks opposed the USDA’s proposed repeal of the Roadless Rule, signaling overwhelming public resistance to opening millions of acres to new roadbuilding and logging.

[New clinic on the horizon for wildlife rescue near Pendleton](#)

Blue Mountain Wildlife’s new clinic near Pendleton is slated to expand capacity and enhance care for injured birds, strengthening wildlife rescue efforts in Eastern Oregon.

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



Legacy Giving



Monthly Sustainer



Donate Now

Donating stock or qualified distributions from a retirement fund are **tax-advantageous ways to support GHCC**. You can also donate as a **business supporter**, and many **companies will match donations** to non-profit organizations. To learn more about all of these ways to give, visit <https://www.hellscanyon.org/join> or reach out to jared@hellscanyon.org.

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