



Photo by Charles Jones.

Hells Bells - February 2022

As a regular Hells Bells reader, you may notice some new additions to our monthly newsletter. With so many of our partners and collaborators looking to hire for key positions, we have added a job openings section. Please forward this newsletter to share these opportunities with your network. It is one of the many ways we are working to better protect, connect and restore our region.

We have also added an educational section. Each month we will bring you a new, short educational feature that highlights some of what makes the Greater Hells Canyon Region special. This month we are featuring native bumblebees. If you have a topic you'd like us to explore, feel free to reply to this email with your input. We are inviting guest writers as well. Think of it as a great chance to share your expertise with the GHCC community.



An animal crossing on the Trans-Canada highway - Banff. Photo by Flickr user m01229. (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Invest in Oregon Wildlife Crossings

Contact your State Legislators to help us protect migrating wildlife

Last month we brought you news about Oregon House Bill 4130 (the Wildlife Crossing Investment Act) that will provide up to \$7 million in funding to establish more wildlife crossings over key high-volume wildlife migration routes across Oregon. We provided written testimony in support of the legislation, and it recently passed the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources with a unanimous (10-0) vote of support. The bill has acquired 37 sponsors, including bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, and has progressed to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for budget considerations. This week is a critical juncture, and the bill needs all the support we can offer.

If you are an Oregon resident, [click here to send an email to your representatives](#) requesting their support the passage of House Bill 4130. If you'd like to contact your representatives directly, you can [use this link to find out who represents you](#) and obtain their contact information.

Thank you for joining GHCC in support of the Wildlife Crossing Investment Act!

Blue Mountains Trail Update

The following is a brief update on the work happening this winter on the Blue Mountains Trail. For a full update, please [sign up for our Blue Mountains Trail Newsletter](#) that we send out every other month.

- We will be conducting a series of **community engagement workshops** in 2022 and 2023

to ensure that individuals, businesses, and organizations in each town and community on the Blue Mountains Trail are aware of the effort and have a chance to engage with our team on what the trail means for their community. The first workshops will be in La Grande and Sumpter in late spring (dates coming soon).

- The **updated CalTopo hiking maps and 2022 databook** will be released this spring. We'll notify everyone on the Blue Mountains Trail newsletter list when they are available.
- In the coming months, we will begin our seasonal emails with scheduled **volunteer trail maintenance work parties** on the Blue Mountains Trail and elsewhere in the Blue Mountains. If you would like to be on our volunteer list, please [email Blue Mountains Trail Project Lead Jared Kennedy](#).

In addition, we are excited to welcome the support of **Eastern Oregon Visitors Association**, **CNOC Outdoors**, and **Terminal Gravity Brewing** in our effort to develop the Blue Mountains Trail. Their support is instrumental to our ability to hire a Trail Coordinator to support hikers, continue our trail maintenance work, and conduct community engagement workshops in the towns on the Blue Mountains Trail in 2022.

We hope to hire a full-time Trail Coordinator in 2023. If you would like help us build capacity for the Blue Mountains Trail coordinator, consider becoming a GHCC River Runner with a monthly sustaining gift, or donate over \$35, and we will include a 2022 GHCC calendar featuring the Blue Mountains Trail (or another gift of your choice). All funds will be reserved for and applied to our trail development efforts. [Donate now to support the Blue Mountains Trail](#).

Learn more about: **Native Bumblebees**

For the last few years, GHCC has been working with partners across the region, including the [Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#), to learn more about the needs and habits of one of our charismatic native microfauna: bumblebees.



Suckley's Cuckoo Bumblebee (*Bombus suckleyii*). Photo courtesy of Cory Sheffield, Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

Certain bumblebee species in the Pacific Northwest are of grave conservation concern. The Western Bumblebee (*Bombus occidentalis*) in particular is in [severe decline](#) across much of its historic range. This "white-buttred" bee was once one of the most common species in gardens and woodlands throughout the West. Today it's currently under consideration for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

And if *B. occidentalis* is listed, Suckley's Cuckoo Bumblebee (*Bombus suckleyii*) is almost certain to be listed as well. Why?

Well, this is a life history story worthy of some study. Cuckoo bumblebees are the handsome fuzzy freeloaders of the bumblebee world, laying their eggs in the nests of their hosts for the hosts to tend and raise. And each cuckoo is a specialized parasite on a specific host bee. If the host is in decline, so is the parasite. "Co-extinction" can be the fallout of mismanagement of our beautifully interconnected ecologies.

Read more about the fascinating relationship between bumblebees and their cuckoos in this [blog in Scientific American](#) . And if you're interested in bumblebees, **keep an eye out for more from us in the next few weeks**. We'll soon be sharing some exciting opportunities to significantly contribute to bumblebee conservation this spring and summer in Northeast Oregon.

Other news we're following...

Wolf Protections Reinstated for much of Oregon and the West

A U.S. District Court Judge reinstated federal protections for wolves across much of the United States, with the notable exception of parts of Eastern Oregon and in the Northern Rocky Mountains. For Oregon, this means wolves west of Highways 395, 78 and 95 are again

protected under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Following the ruling, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland indicated that wolves in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming may also deserve emergency protection if aggressive hunting rules in these states go into effect. You can [read about this news on Oregonlive.com](#).

GHCC Joins Efforts Urging Biden Administration to Protect Old Growth

This month GHCC, alongside 81 other environmental organizations, called on the Biden Administration to enhance protections for old growth forests. Our coalition is seeking to elevate the role mature trees play in combating climate change. Our forests should serve as a cornerstone to U.S. climate policy. [Find out more and take action today](#) by telling the Biden Administration to let trees grow.

Job Openings in the Region

Help our region thrive by sharing these job openings.

- **Advocates for the West** is hiring a [Development Associate](#) (Boise, deadline February 28, 2022).
 - **Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project** is hiring a [Staff Attorney](#) (remote, deadline March 31, 2022).
 - **Central Oregon Land Watch** is hiring a [Wild Lands and Water Program Manager](#) (Bend, deadline March 2, 2022).
 - **Oregon Rural Action** is hiring a [Communications Coordinator](#) (part-time, Eastern Oregon, open until filled), a [Director of Community Organizing](#) (Eastern Oregon, open until filled), and a [Rural Energy Organizer](#) (La Grande, open until filled).
 - **Oregon Wild** is hiring a [Forests and Climate Campaigner](#) (Portland, Eugene or Bend, deadline March 3, 2022) and a [Deputy Conservation Director and Staff Attorney](#) (Portland, Eugene or Bend, deadline March 3, 2022).
 - **Wallowa Resources** is hiring a [Firewise Community Coordinator](#) (Enterprise or Northeast Oregon, deadline February 23, 2022).
 - **Wallowa Land Trust** is hiring a [Wallowa Gathering Project Manager](#) (remote with travel to Wallowa County, deadline February 25, 2022) and a [Conservation Program Manager](#) (Enterprise, open until filled).
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GHCC works to protect, connect, and restore the lands, waters, native species, and climate resiliency of the ecologically magnificent Greater Hells Canyon Region.

[Join us](#) in protecting the Greater Hells Canyon Region today and for future generations! A monthly contribution, large or small, adds so much stability to our financial planning and lets us focus our energies on conservation instead of fundraising.

Darilyn Parry Brown, GHCC Executive Director

By joining GHCC's River Runner program for \$10/month or more, we'll include a special gift celebrating GHCC and the Greater Hells Canyon Region.

[Find out more here, and sign up today!](#)

Greater Hells Canyon Council
PO Box 2768
La Grande, OR 97850
United States

