



Hells Bells - April 2023



Photo by Paul Stevenson.

We're Launching a Northeast Oregon Beaver Coexistence Program!

Climate change and biodiversity loss are twin crises that are already impacting ecosystems and communities throughout the Greater Hells Canyon Region, the West, and the world. **Beavers** are perfectly evolved to tackle both of these crises simultaneously by restoring riparian systems: the arteries of our landscapes.

Beavers create habitat for myriad species from salmon to butterflies, willows to willow flycatchers to moose. They store, filter, and cool water, keeping streams running cleaner, colder, and later into the season. They irrigate floodplains and recharge groundwater. The wetlands they maintain are fire refugia, biodiversity hotspots, and carbon sinks.

For all of these reasons, GHCC has been working with partners for the last few years to [survey for beavers](#) and support their restoration in our region. **This month, we're thrilled to announce that a private funder has awarded us \$50k to launch a beaver**

coexistence program in NE Oregon!

Ideal habitat for beavers closely matches ideal habitat for humans — so **supporting beavers on the landscape starts with solving problems where humans and beavers are most likely to encounter one another**. Many proven strategies, like tree wrapping and pond leveling, can help beavers and humans to coexist peacefully. The coexistence fund will support GHCC and our beaver-believer collaborators to deploy these strategies across Northeast Oregon in the year and years to come. Stay tuned for opportunities to learn more — and get engaged — as this exciting program gets off the ground!

For more information, contact Christina@hellscanyon.org



Save the Date!

The future of the **Eastside Screens** will be decided at a court hearing in Pendleton on **May 1st**. We'll be there and we hope you can join us!

Email jamie@hellscanyon.org for more details

Next Monday, May 1st, the fate of the Screens and the future of our public forests will be decided at a court hearing in Pendleton. Read the [full blog post](#) by Jamie Dawson.

Good Vibes at the Good Bear Ranch



Board members and staff explore near the Elkhorn Mountains during GHCC April retreat.

Update from Marina Richie, GHCC Board President

Enthusiasm, momentum, and lively conversation punctuated the Greater Hells Canyon Council's board and staff retreat held last week at the Good Bear Ranch, overlooking Baker City and the distant Wallowas.

We kicked off the two-day gathering with a community potluck featuring homemade pizza—making new friends with folks from the Powder Basin Watershed Council and others. Then, we dived in for a fantastic strategy day, followed by a Board meeting.

This spring we're seeing our version of a "super bloom" for GHCC. Our new staff stepped up to speak to us with style, grace, and fun—go Jamie Dawson (conservation director) and Nash Wadhams (outreach/development). They're integrating seamlessly with existing staff — what a tight-knit and caring group!

Our finances and programs are impressively stable after a transition year of 2022. Executive Director Emily Cain is leading by example—empowering our talented staff to go forward and make a difference, while working closely together for a common purpose. Our programs are more interwoven than ever and are expanding through new regional partnerships.

"I am so grateful for our wonderful staff and the opportunities they are creating to protect our wild places," said Robin Coen, Good Bear Ranch host and board vice president.

After all the smiles, hugs, and goodbyes, we closed the door as sandhill cranes bugled from the wild meadows—reminding us of why we are so willing to volunteer our time for a grassroots group committed to assuring generations to come will hear that wild primeval call.

Annual Wolf Report



OR30 in Wallowa County. Photo credit ODFW.

The annual [Oregon Wolf Report](#) is hot off the presses. 178 wolves were documented in the state in 2022. This is only an increase of *three* wolves over the year end count for 2021. Throughout the state, packs increased from 21 to 24, though we saw a decrease by 2 packs on the eastside of the state. The limited growth that did occur in Oregon happened on the westside where wolves are expanding west into lands where they still have federal protections.

Statewide population growth is nearly at ODFW's worst case scenario modeling, which they shared when they delisted wolves from state endangered species protections. It was another banner year for poaching and ODFW-authorized killing, [which we know can lead to increased \(not decreased\) livestock predation](#). Compared to an estimated carrying capacity for Oregon of around 1,500 wolves, we certainly still have a long way to go.

Oregon Signature Trails Virtual Event



Join Blue Mountains Trail Coordinator, Pip Redding, Oregon Signature Trails celebratory [virtual kickoff event](#) this Thursday, April 27, 12-1 pm PST

The [Oregon Signature Trails Project](#) is an ambitious initiative aimed at enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the state of Oregon. This collaborative effort spearheaded by the Oregon Trails Coalition, Travel Oregon, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department seeks to create a network of world-class, multi-use trails that showcase the diverse landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and stunning natural beauty of Oregon. With a focus on sustainability, accessibility, and community engagement, the Oregon Signature Trails Project will provide outdoor enthusiasts of all ages and abilities with unparalleled experiences while promoting healthy lifestyles, economic vitality, and environmental stewardship.

We at Greater Hells Canyon Council are thrilled that our very own [Blue Mountains Trail](#) was chosen to represent northeast Oregon as one of fifteen Signature Trails, alongside our friends and neighbors, the Joseph Branch Trail and the Oregon Desert Trail, as well as iconic trails like the Pacific Crest Trail and the Oregon Coast Trail. Participation in the project is a tremendous opportunity for GHCC and our partners to garner support for the work we do.

Please join the Oregon Trails Coalition in a celebratory [virtual kickoff event](#) this **Thursday, April 27, 12-1 pm PST**, where you can learn about the Signature Trails Inventory findings, see a map of the Signature Trails, and get an introduction to some of the trails from project partners, including our very own BMT Trails Coordinator, Pip Redding.

If virtual meetups just don't satisfy your enthusiasm for the BMT, keep an eye out for

opportunities to hit the trail with our volunteers and staff soon. We're putting together a calendar full of exciting hikes, trail maintenance, naturalist outings and more. Happy Trails!

For more information, contact Pip@hellscanyon.org.

Other News We're Following...

BLM puts conservation values on par with other “uses” of our Public Lands

[Read more.](#)

U.S. has inventoried old-growth forests. Will protection be next?

[Read more.](#)



GHCC works to protect, connect, and restore the lands, waters, native species, and climate resiliency of the ecologically magnificent Greater Hells Canyon Region.

We have a big vision for the future of the Greater Hells Canyon Region, and your support is critical to making it happen. [Join us!](#)

- Emily Cain, 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!](#)

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