



Hells Bells - August 2021

Standing up for the River Democracy Act!

Over the past few months, we've watched county commissioners across Northeast Oregon express their reasons for opposing the River Democracy Act in an effort to remove waterways in the Greater Hells Canyon Region from the final legislative package. Frustratingly, they have spun and misconstrued the Act to mean and do things that it flat out doesn't do. [It's time to put the record straight](#), and we invite you to help out with the effort.

Camas to Condors

We are working with the Nez Perce Tribe's Water Resources, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources Divisions, Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands, Northwest YouthCorps, and others on an effort to envision and enact whole-systems restoration for resilience, justice, and cultural survival in the place we call home. We call this work Camas to Condors.



Climate disruption is already wreaking havoc on ecosystems, culturally important species, and lifeways in our shared home. This is only the latest in a series of blows to ecosystem integrity initiated by extractive attitudes toward land and other species – a failure to understand or remember that we are all interconnected.

As we continue to build trust as a coalition and forge new alliances, we are excited to share this in-depth, visual [storymap that delves into the critical work we're doing and the work to come](#).

Blue Mountains Trail Update

Now is the perfect time to start a section or thru hike

The Umatilla National Forest reopened as of August 13, making it possible to once again hike the entirety of the [Blue Mountains Trail](#). The weather cools down in September and the mosquitoes and ticks are gone. The conditions make September the perfect month to take on the full trail or to hike one or more of the seven trail sections between Joseph and John Day.

Keep an eye out on our [Blue Mountains Trail Maps page](#) in the coming weeks for new overview and section maps. Email jared@hellscanyon.org for detailed hiker maps and the trail databook.

Other news we're following...

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla's former director Chuck Sams is tapped to lead the National Park Service

We were thrilled to hear the news that President Biden has selected Charles "Chuck" Sams III to

direct the National Park Service. Chuck Sams is the former director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, and when he is confirmed, he will be the first Native American to run the National Park Service. [Read more.](#)

Purchase approved for Minam River Wildlife Area

On August 6, Oregon's Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the purchase of 5,000 acres from Hancock Natural Resource Group by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to create a new 5,000 acre wildlife area on the Minam River. It marks the completion of the first of a two-phase effort to create a 15,000 acre area that will permanently protect salmon, bull trout, white headed woodpeckers, Rocky Mountain tailed frogs, and priority bat species. [Read more.](#)

In face of large fires, U.S. Forest Service returns to full suppression

Over the past decade the U.S. Forest Service has moved away from full fire suppression and recognized a regular fire return interval that varies based on the type of forest. However, in light of extreme drought and the severity of fires burning, the agency announced it will return to its old policy for the remainder of this year. We agree with the 40 scientists who wrote a letter to the U.S Forest Service asking it to not change its policy. [Read more.](#)

Fall Gala will now be virtual

While we had intended to hold our Fall Gala in La Grande at the Parish Church on Saturday, October 16, we have opted to make it virtual instead. Due to the resurgence of COVID-19 throughout Oregon, we've determined that holding in-person events, even with a mask mandate, pose too high a health risk to our supporters and staff. We have very much enjoyed returning to in-person events over the past few months, and we hope that infection rates will diminish before long. In the meantime, stay tuned on how we'll make the most of the Gala, and please save the date!



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!

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