



Blue Mountains Trail Newsletter - Summer 2026

Hiking season on the Blue Mountains Trail is here. The warm and dry spring across the region means that the BMT is almost entirely snow-free in time for the summer solstice. If you plan to hike in Northeast Oregon this summer, this jam-packed update has it all: trail conditions and notices, summer events, a profile of our partners at Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association (WMHCTA) with their upcoming work parties on the BMT, and great ways you can support the Blue Mountains Trail in the months ahead. We hope to see you on the trail this summer!



Hiking on the Blue Mountains Trail through the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Photo by Mike Unger.

Trail Conditions - Share What You See

We have been expecting an early start to the 2026 hiking season with warm and dry conditions across the region this spring, and our forecast was spot on. As of June 8, the snow level in the Wallowas is at 7,400 feet, and with sun and warm weather in the forecast, the final stretch of snowy trail along Hawkins Pass at 8,300' elevation will soon be snow-free. Early season challenges remain, so please take these into account if you are planning to hit the trail before the middle of July, and be sure to reach out to us

(bmt@hellscanyon.org) if you have already planned a hike or have questions about how to get started.

High/cold water crossings: Rivers and creeks on the Blue Mountains Trail are charged by melting snowpack, and this means high and cold water conditions are present through spring and early summer. There are a few river crossings that you want to take special care to prepare for on the BMT: crossing the Wenaha River west of Troy on the Wenaha River Trail to access the Hoodoo Trail (see map waypoint S6015), crossing the South Fork Imnaha River at Blue Creek (waypoint S9017), crossing at the junction of the North Fork John Day River at Crane Creek (waypoint S2027), and traversing the trail along the South Fork Umatilla River where the road is washed out south of the Umatilla Forks Campground (waypoint S5016).

Insects: Mosquitos are at their most prevalent at high mountain lakes through the end of the summer snow melt until the warmth of August. Ticks are also expected through the middle of summer, especially along the North Fork John Day River Trail between Crane Creek and Granite Creek.

Snow and other winter remnant conditions: You will encounter patches of remaining snow along the trail for the next few weeks. In some cases, these may require some wayfinding or careful navigation. Winter also leads to blown-down trees and washed-out tread. Some portions of the trail are just now becoming accessible, so conditions on the ground may vary from those listed on the map and/or databook.

Your input and feedback are needed! If you're out on the trail and see anything that will help other hikers, please email us to let us know. Your feedback keeps the community informed, and it helps us keep our hiking resources up to date.



Support the BMT With Employer Matching + Smart Giving

Your generous donations support our work on the Blue Mountains Trail. Greater Hells Canyon Council is committed to updating maps, the databook, and town guides, and helping hikers plan their trips, working with our trail partners and public agencies, and organizing trail maintenance efforts in three national forests plus the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. As a 501c3, all of your donations are tax-deductible. Here are some ideas to **boost your impact** when supporting the trail with a one-time or recurring monthly donation!

Match Donations Through Your Employer: Many companies will match all or a portion of donations that their employees make to non-profit organizations. This is an easy way to double your giving! [Gabe Willard, board member at GHCC, matches his donations in support of the BMT through his employer, Intel.](#)

"I work for Intel Corporation and I'm delighted to make use of their donation matching program to supercharge my giving to GHCC, including support for the BMT. Employees often miss out on opportunities to have their employers match or add to their donations because they either 1) aren't aware of existing programs in the first place or 2) don't ask if or how their preferred non-profit organization can be added as a supported organization. While these programs are not ubiquitous, they have grown significantly in both size and flexibility; I encourage you to explore what's available and consider GHCC along the way. See you all down the (Blue Mountains) Trail!"

Greater Hells Canyon Council can receive donations through most matching portals. We can be found on EarthShare, YourCause by Blackbaud, and Benevity. If your company uses a different platform, just let us know.

More "Smart Giving" Ways to Support the Blue Mountains Trail:

There are more ways than ever to give to the organizations and causes you care about. From donating stock, required distributions from retirement accounts, giving from a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF), or by listing Greater Hells Canyon Council's work on the BMT in your estate plan, there are numerous ways to take advantage of current federal tax deductions that allow you to give larger gifts. For more details, see [GHCC's Join Us page](#) or contact Jared Kennedy at: jared@hellscanyon.org

Support the BMT



Partner Profile: WMHCTA + Trail Work Parties

We are lucky to have great partners in the region who take a lead on trail maintenance and stewardship through volunteer agreements with the U.S. Forest Service. Our friends at the [Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association \(WMHCTA\)](https://www.wmhcta.org/) do an incredible job leading volunteer trips across the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forest.

In the last couple of weeks, they completed trail-clearing trips in the upper Imnaha River area and on the West Fork Wallowa Trail, places that are on or adjacent to the BMT. Combined, these trips removed 158 trees from 16 miles of trail. We invite you to join them and get your hands dirty! Don't miss these upcoming trips on the BMT:

Twin Lakes Trail #1874

Friday, July 17, to Monday, July 20, 2026

<https://www.wmhcta.org/project-calendar/twinlakes>

Blue Creek Trail #1865

Friday, August 14, to Monday, August 17, 2026 <https://www.wmhcta.org/project-calendar/bluecreek>

The full calendar of upcoming work parties can be found on their website at:

<https://www.wmhcta.org/project-calendar>

Join us for Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) Days



What: [Pacific Crest Trail Days Summer Festival](#)

When: All-Day Saturday, Aug. 14, and Sunday, Aug. 15

Where: Marine Park Pavilion, Cascade Locks, Oregon

We hope to connect with you this summer in the Columbia River Gorge at PCT Days. This is the summer hiking and outdoors festival you don't want to miss. Greater Hells Canyon Council's staff will be there to share information and spend time with the Blue Mountains Trail community alongside some of our favorite business sponsors and many other outdoor brands and trail groups. If you are a part of the long-distance hiking community, a trails enthusiast, or just love a good party with great food, drinks, and fun people, come join us!

A BIG Thank You to BMT Sponsors!





The Blue Mountains Trail is an interconnected part of GHCC's broader vision of a region of abundant, biodiverse, and connected lands and waters where all wild species and human communities thrive. [Join us](#) in making this vision come to life!

By supporting our work on the BMT for \$10/month or more, we'll throw in a special gift.

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