



Photo by David Jensen.

Hells Bells - January 2022

January comes with many updates on issues impacting our mission area. An effort to log 300 acres in Mount Emily Recreation Area outside of La Grande brings misgivings from the La Grande residents who prize the recreation trails in the area. StopB2H, the effort to stop the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line through Northeast Oregon, prepares for the next stage of public comments. These stories, along with more news and updates, are all part of a busy start to 2022.



Monitoring Ponderosa pine marked for removal in Mount Emily Recreation Area. Photo by Norm Cimon.

An Update from MERA

A guest blog post by Norm Cimon

The plan to log 300 acres of predominantly Ponderosa pine forest in the Mount Emily Recreation Area is rightfully attracting concern and pushback from local residents who prize its trails. The Union County-led project was approved with little public involvement, and many question the necessity of logging in the first place. Long time GHCC member, La Grande resident, and retired Forest Service Systems Analyst Norm Cimon, along with GHCC's Brian Kelly and fellow GHCC member Kent Coe, toured the project area to see how trees were marked for removal, to better understand the scope, and to see how the implementation aligns with the County's stated project goals. Norm's [guest blog post](#) captures his thoughts on the project and how the details matter when it comes to implementation and follow-on work.

Efforts continue to StopB2H

Local advocates continue their push to prevent the proposed Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) high-voltage transmission line from being built across 300 miles of Eastern Oregon landscape.

Our friends at the [Stop B2H Coalition](#) have filed 71 Contested Cases against the B2H project, based on Idaho Power's failure to provide accurate information on the project's impact on important issues like noise from the lines, soil and forest degradation, wildfire dangers, damage to the Oregon Trail, destruction of scenery and wildlife habitat, and many others.

GHCC and Stop B2H have also engaged with the Oregon Department of Energy as they revise

their Rules for proposed energy projects affecting Protected Areas, Scenic Resources, and Recreation. Formal rulemaking and public comment period will take place in late spring of this year. We will alert you when the comment period begins for formal rulemaking.

Other news we're following...

Wolves across the U.S. West are literally in the crosshairs

The recent [news of a wolf killed a few miles from Wallowa, Oregon](#) continues a distressing recent trend. While wolves are being killed in Oregon, and state police ask for help identifying the culprits, efforts continue at the local and state level across the West to remove protections for the species. In Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, the states are creating laws seemingly approving wolf eradication. This [guest opinion in the New York Times](#) by author Thomas McNamee explains how these states are rolling back the clocks over 100 years, recalling a time when all-out carnage against keystone predators was the norm.

Wildlife crossing bill aims to bridge key highways in Oregon

GHCC recently signed on to support a new bill in Oregon, [House Bill 4130](#), that would invest \$5 million in wildlife crossings over key high-volume wildlife migration routes across Oregon. The funds may be used to install a crossing in our mission area, over I-84 near Meacham, in addition to other locations. With only 5 wildlife crossings, Oregon significantly lags behind other western states – Colorado has 69, Utah and California each have 50, and Nevada has 23 for large mammals alone. Crossing structures save human and animal lives and prevent millions of dollars in damages. Here is an engaging [short video](#) explaining why wildlife crossings are so beneficial and necessary. We encourage you to [share your support of this bill](#) by submitting written testimony to the upcoming House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources hearing on February 2 from 1:00 - 2:30pm. **(Note: the link to submit written testimony will go live on February 1. Please reply to this email if you'd like us to send instructions on how to do so when the link is live).**



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

