



Hells Bells - May 2026



Looking over the Morgan Nesbit project area towards the Wallowas. Photo credit: Jamie Dawson

Mark Your Calendar: Public Meetings for the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revisions

The Forest Service is hosting meetings about proposed revisions to the Blue Mountain Forest Plans across Eastern Oregon and SE Washington over the next two weeks. At the time of writing (Wednesday, 5/27), the draft plans have not been released for the public to review, but we've been doing our best to interpret what is likely in the plans from the limited sources that exist. So far, we have a number of concerns around the proposed revisions, including proposals to:

- Allow commercial logging of old-growth trees of any size or species;
- Remove all protections for Inventoried Roadless Areas, setting the table for large-scale roadbuilding, logging, and development of previously protected landscapes;
- Remove all enforceable requirements that currently protect elk habitat in a heavily roaded landscape.

These plans affect the future of the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Malheur National Forests and will guide every future management decision made across the Blues for years to come. We'll share more as soon as documents are available for the public to review, but in the meantime, we hope you'll consider attending and asking a question at one of the public meetings. They'll run from 5-8 pm starting Monday, 6/1. [See the full meeting schedule here.](#)



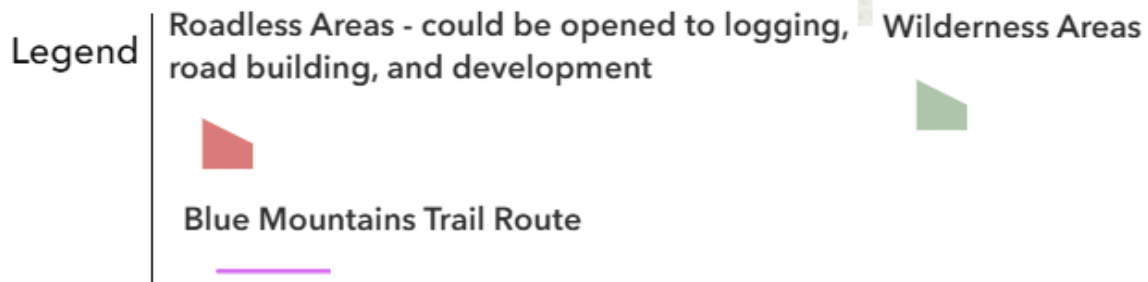
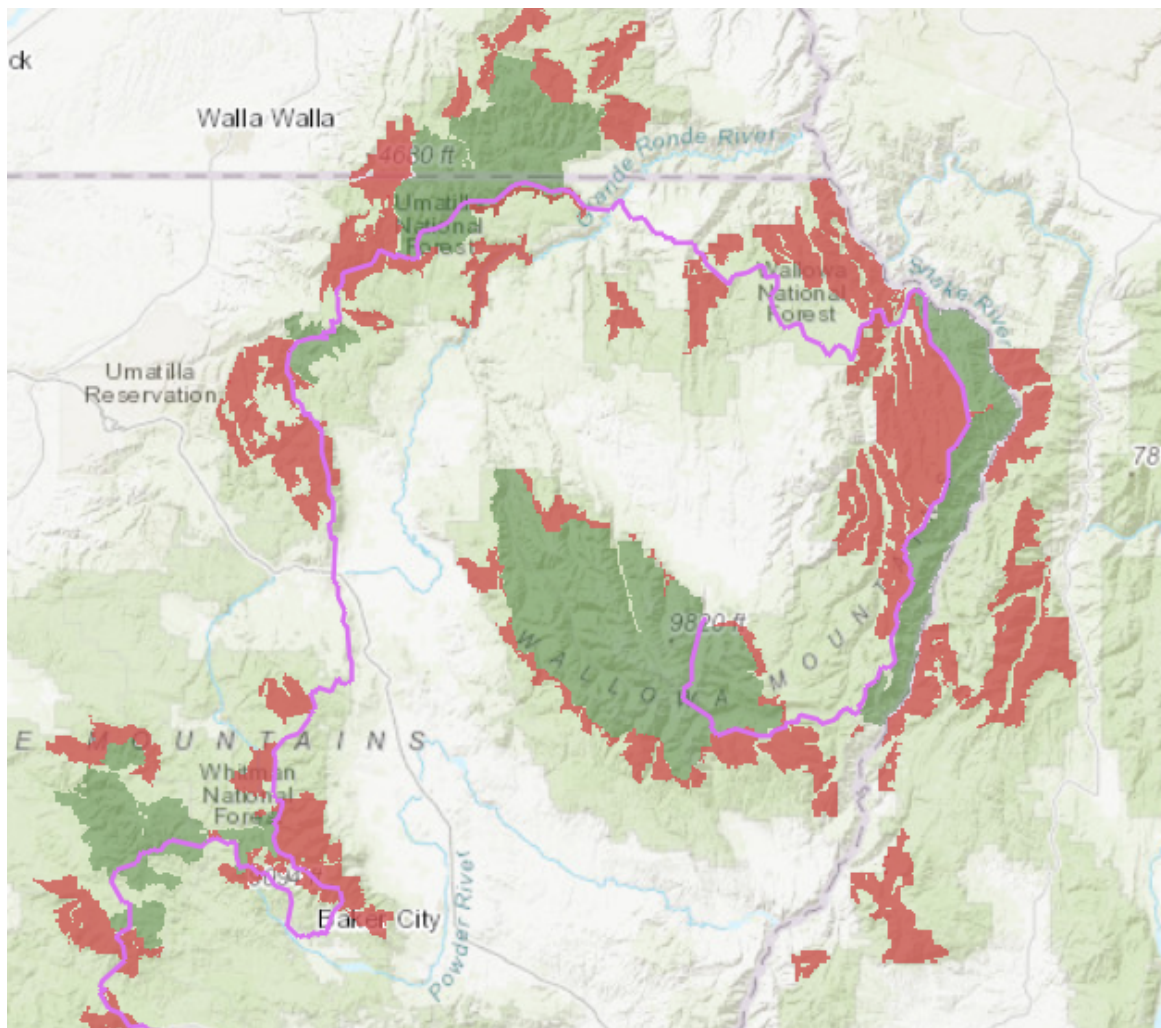
Stewardship Manager Ian Wilson on-site at Walla Walla Community College, pictured here next to the pond leveler installed by the team.

Beaver Coexistence in Action at Walla Walla Community College

When beavers moved into Titus Creek on the Walla Walla Community College campus, the response was refreshingly different. Instead of frustration over rising water levels and trees falling across walking paths and onto a campus vehicle, WWCC staff were eager to learn to live with the beavers, and we were all too happy to help. Over the course of two days, our Stewardship Manager and WWCC staff installed a pond leveler on Titus Creek to reduce the water impacts to the college while ensuring the beavers still felt welcome. As a touché to the tree-felling behavior, our Stewardship Manager worked with WWCC staff to cage 25 trees and paint another 15 with sand paint to discourage beavers from felling trees near

walking paths and vehicles, while being mindful to leave plenty of trees for the beavers to eat and build with.

This work is an example of educational institutions and communities coming together to coexist and benefit from one another. Walla Walla Community College gets free water quality enhancements and biodiversity thanks to the beavers, and the beavers in turn get a safe place to call home. A BIG thank you to Drew Trostad-Isaacson, Interim Director of the Water Environmental Center at WWCC, and Robert Lenahan, Facilities Director, and his staff for their coordination, funding, and support in making this project possible. And Eliza Keksi with our partners at Anabran Solutions for the introduction to WWCC. Team work keeps the beavers eagerly working!



Any Day Now - Public Comment Period on the Roadless Rule to Open

We've been tracking this one closely, and we want you to be prepared: a public comment period on the proposed repeal of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule is expected to drop any day now. As we've covered in several blogs (links listed below), this Clinton-era rule has long protected unroaded National Forest land from new road construction, logging, and development. In the Greater Hells Canyon Region alone, it shields more than 696,000 acres of some of the wildest, most ecologically vital lands we have, including nearly half of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, the rugged terrain surrounding the Eagle Cap Wilderness, the headwaters above the Grande Ronde Valley, and the granite peaks of the Elkhorn Crest. These are places where you hike, hunt, fish, and find solitude, and they provide clean drinking water to communities across our region.

Consider Joseph Canyon, which contains 24,000 acres of dramatic, deeply-cut canyon country with profound cultural significance for the Nimiipuu (Nez Perce) people, whose ancestral ties to this land run deep. Tucked between the Blues and the Snake River canyonlands, it serves as a rare east-west habitat corridor in a landscape that badly needs connection. If the Roadless Rule is repealed, areas like Joseph Canyon would be open to road building and logging, permanently severing those ecological and cultural threads. Once roads go in, the damage is lasting and often irreversible. As soon as the comment period opens, we'll send you a direct action alert with everything you need to make your voice heard, but in the meantime, explore the [Roadless Area interactive map](#) to see exactly what's at risk that you care most about.

In the meantime, there is also a bill called the Roadless Area Conservation Act (H.R. 3930 / S. 2042), introduced in both the House and Senate last year, which seeks to permanently protect Inventoried Roadless Areas within the National Forest System through an act of Congress, rather than leaving them vulnerable to reversal by the whims of any current or future administration. We appreciate that this bill recognizes that these landscapes safeguard clean drinking water for tens of millions of Americans, provide critical fish and wildlife habitat, serve as biological strongholds against the fragmentation of our public lands, and offer unparalleled opportunities for hiking, hunting, fishing, and recreation. Unlike the current Roadless Rule, which came from presidential action, RACA would write these protections into law for good. To read more, visit the [RACA action page](#) and urge your Senators and Representatives to support this bill. The best defense for places like Joseph Canyon is permanent protection by Congress.

In case you missed these blog posts on the Roadless Rule:

[Speak up for Roadless Areas in Hells Canyon and beyond](#)

[Roadless Areas on the BMT are Under Threat](#)

[Why Roadless Areas Matter: The Saga Continues](#)

Upcoming Events



Happy Hour with GHCC Staff | Thursday, June 11th @ 5:00PM | Migration Brewing on N Williams - Portland, OR

We hope you can join us in Portland on Thursday, June 11th, at Migration Brewing on N Williams for a casual Happy Hour.

We're pleased to be back at the N Williams location and are looking forward to a nice evening on the patio. This month, we'll be talking about conducting bumble bee surveys for the Pacific Northwest Bumble Bee Atlas Project, a citizen science initiative that anyone can take part in! We'll share a brief presentation highlighting some of our bumblebee surveys in our mission area, followed by time to mingle and catch up.

RSVP



July Bumble Bee Survey | Late July - exact date TBD | Mt Emily, outside La Grande, OR

We hope you can join us in late July for a bumblebee survey in the Mount Emily Recreation Area — exact date and time to be announced soon, so RSVP today to stay in the loop!

This is a wonderful opportunity to explore our mission area, learn about native bees, and contribute to community science in the Grande Ronde Valley. We'll follow protocols developed by the [Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#) and the [Pacific Northwest Bumble Bee Atlas](#) to help monitor and protect these important pollinators. No prior experience needed.

Register



Salmon Life Cycle 'Pedalpalooza' Bike Ride | Tuesday, August 4th @ 5:30PM | Laurelhurst Park - Portland, OR

We hope you can join us in Portland on Tuesday, August 4th, at Laurelhurst Park for our annual Salmon Life Cycle Pedalpalooza Bike Ride!

For the third year in a row, we're teaming up with [Pacific Rivers](#) and [Save Our Wild Salmon](#) for a relaxed-pace, out-and-back ride in support of a free-flowing Snake River and Columbia Basin salmon recovery. We'll meet at Laurelhurst Park at 5:30PM, ride down Salmon Street to Salmon Street Springs, and then head back upstream to the park. Come dressed in blue — let's become the river! This ride is moderately easy and open to all.

RSVP

Other news we're following...

[The Billionaires' Club at the Center of America's Public Lands Fight](#)

A deep investigation into how the Yellowstone Club, whose members include tech billionaires and Trump cabinet officials, quietly orchestrated a Forest Service land swap in Montana's Crazy Mountains, trading away accessible public land and century-old trails. A cautionary tale for anyone watching what the agency is up to elsewhere.

[Chain Saws Get Green Light in Church Wilderness](#)

The Forest Service approved motorized chainsaw use on 542 miles of trails in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the largest contiguous wilderness in the lower 48, with no public process. More than 100 conservation groups and retired agency employees are pushing back.

[Beaver Works Restoration Projects Coming to Malheur and Ochoco National Forests](#)

Some refreshingly good news: [Think Wild Central Oregon](#) is bringing its Beaver Works habitat restoration program to the Malheur and Ochoco this summer, and they need volunteers. Trips run June 23–26 and July 9–12. Sign up at beaverworksoregon.org.

[Room to Roam: How Tracking Data Guides Conservation Action](#)

This video beautifully illustrates the importance of large landscape connectivity for wildlife migration.

Volunteer Opportunities

There are many ways to volunteer with GHCC and the Blue Mountains Trail. We are always thrilled to work with our members, supporters, and fellow conservation advocates.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, be it at a trail stewardship event, doing wildlife and wilderness surveys, monitoring and community science projects, or joining us on a GHCC-led outing, we've created a survey that will help us know where to direct you and which opportunities to send your way. Completing this survey should take 2 minutes or less of your time. Thank you — we look forward to spending time with you!

Volunteer with GHCC

Let's Protect the Greater Hells Canyon Region Together



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