



## Hells Bells - March 2026



Wolf Fork Canyon. Photographed by Tara Graves

## Announcing Our 2026 Artist-in-Residence: Tara J Graves

We are thrilled to announce photographer Tara J Graves as Greater Hells Canyon Council's 2026 [Wild Blues Artist-in-Residence](#)! Now in its third year, our Wild Blues Artist-in-Residence program creates a unique opportunity to engage with communities about NE Oregon through creative expression.

Tara is a Walla Walla native who received her BFA in Photography from San Francisco's Academy of Art University in 2013. Her fine art portfolio spans night photography, landscape, architecture, water, topography, and macro imagery. For Tara, photography is a way to explore themes by noticing and focusing on details, combining the technical and creative to achieve a distinctive aesthetic.

For her residency, Tara's goal is to explore the theme of Refugia in the Blue Mountains through storytelling and raise awareness through her photography. She plans to photograph landscapes and use macro shots to highlight the details within different ecosystems. We look forward to seeing where the project takes her!

Tara's work will be on display starting September 1st, 2026, in Walla Walla, WA, with an artist reception scheduled for September 19th. Stay tuned for details!

We are grateful to all the talented artists who have been part of this program, including last year's artists, Caretakers of the Land, [who just launched their hand-carved canoe at Wallowa Lake.](#)

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## Historic Funding for Wildlife Passes Oregon Legislature

After years of work against some of Oregon's most powerful interests, a bipartisan HB 4134, the "1.25% for Wildlife" bill, passed the Oregon legislature. The bill now heads to Governor Tina Kotek's desk to be signed into law.

"With 1.25% for Wildlife, we are investing in our fish and wildlife, in the landscapes and communities that sustain us, in our drinking water, health, and safety. While this bill is focused on wildlife and their habitats, it is really a commitment to future generations: that the Oregon we know and love today is the one we are determined to pass along." says one of the lead advocates, Danielle Moser of Oregon Wild.

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Buckhorn Overlook, Hells Canyon. Photo credit: Leon Werdinger

## Plan a Hike on the Blue Mountains Trail

Hiking season through the mountainous stretches of the Blue Mountains Trail generally starts in July when the snow melts, but with this winter's low snowpack, we are anticipating

an earlier start. If you are hiking into Hells Canyon, spring can be one of the best times before the summer heat. We have made many important updates to our trail materials with improved trail GPS data and updated mileages, as well as an up-to-date databook showing water availability and other trail information for each map waypoint. If you plan to do a section hike or thru-hike of the BMT this year, make sure you have requested the latest maps and resources.

If you are interested in a smaller day hike or overnight backpacking trip, check out our BMT trips page to see guides to these shorter and easier BMT itineraries. If you are interested in hiking on the BMT but still having trouble figuring out how to get started, you can email [Jared Kennedy](#), and he'd be happy to help orient you to this amazing trail route through the Blue Mountains.

[Request BMT Maps](#)

[View BMT Short Trips](#)

## Upcoming Events



### **GHCC's Annual Golden Raffle**

We're selling just 99 tickets at \$100 each! Choose from three unforgettable Pacific Northwest getaways: [a 5-night whitewater rafting trip in Hells Canyon with OARS](#), a 3-night stay at the stunning [Good Bear Ranch](#) in the Elkhorn Mountains (sleeps up to 10!), or a 3-night stay at [Barking Mad Farm](#) in Enterprise, including a guided fly fishing or birdwatching outing with a member of our staff.

\*\*\*You do not need to be present at Hellraiser to win. Raffle winner will be announced Saturday, April 18th, at 6 pm.

Grab your tickets before they're gone!

[Get Raffle Ticket](#)



**Wilderness & Public Lands Talk by Great Old Broads for Wilderness | Thursday, April 16 @ 5:30PM | Boise, ID**

Join the Boise Chapter of Great Old Broads for Wilderness for their inaugural event at the Bown Crossing Library (Martie Brennan Multipurpose Room)! This free, public evening will explore why wilderness and public lands matter, from wildlife habitat and clean water to recreation and the stories of those who know these places best.

**Hear from two remarkable speakers:**

Jennifer Blake, a former Forest Service leader with 36 years of experience in wilderness and public land management, and Ed Cannady, a former backcountry ranger, Sawtooth Wilderness expert, and wildlife photographer with nearly 40 years in the field. Come curious, bring friends, and be part of the conversation!

**Event Details**

Bown Crossing Library – Martie Brennan Multipurpose Room  
Thursday, April 16, 2026  
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM



**Hellraiser - Saturday, April 18 | 5PM @ Rossi Farms | Portland, OR**

Join us on Saturday, April 18th at 5pm at Rossi Farms for a lively evening of community, celebration, and conservation in support of Northeast Oregon's wild lands, waters, and wildlife. The night will feature a chef-prepared dinner by Gregory Redfield and the team from [Bauman's on Oak](#), an energizing live auction, our signature Golden Raffle with vacation and adventure packages, and a special presentation from Stewardship Manager Ian Wilson on his restoration and beaver coexistence work in the region.

[Purchase Tickets](#)

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## Other news we're following...

### [High up in an old-growth redwood, a condor couple appears to be tending to an egg](#)

A pair of California condors appears to be nesting high in an old-growth redwood. This is the first time in over a century that this has happened in Northern California. The remote location has kept the nest undisturbed and unconfirmed, which wildlife officials say is a great sign.

### [Letter to the editor for March 9th, 2026](#)

Advisory Board member Mike Higgins expresses alarm that climate change didn't appear on a recent list of top concerns for northeast Oregon residents, despite decades of scientific warnings. Now in his 80s, he calls on the community to take personal action and not give up the fight for our planet.

### [Planned wildlife area project in Union County hits roadblock](#)

A plan to purchase 11,400 acres near Starkey using \$22 million in federal funding has stalled after the landholding nonprofit withdrew for undisclosed reasons. Agencies say they remain committed to pursuing similar conservation opportunities.

### [OPB Politics Now': Salmon, dams, and energy, plus an Oregon legislative potpourri](#)

After the Trump administration canceled a Biden-era salmon deal, a federal judge stepped in with a new ruling. OPB breaks down what it means for fish, dams, and energy in the Pacific Northwest.

### [Minam Wildlife Area gets management plan](#)

Oregon's Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted a management plan for the 17,087-acre Minam Wildlife Area in northeastern Oregon. The plan, developed with tribal and community input, will be reviewed every ten years.

### [Recreation facilities added to Asotin Wildlife Area](#)

Washington DFW has added new campgrounds and vault toilets to the Asotin Wildlife Area, funded through a state recreation grant. The 36,500-acre area is popular with hikers, hunters, mountain bikers, and equestrians.

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## 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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