



Camping on the Zumwalt Prairie along the Blue Mountains Trail. Photo by Joella Arment.

## Hells Bells - May 2022

It has been a particularly rainy and snowy spring this year in the Greater Hells Canyon Region, a welcome gift ahead of what is forecasted to be another hot summer. We've been hearing anecdotally of abundant songbirds this year compared to those past, visiting on their annual migrations. We invite you to read Joella Arment's story on the amazing but threatened birds of the Blue Mountains. You will also find an update on the Stop B2H effort and the incredible volunteers who have worked tirelessly to resist the project. But before jumping straight to these stories, please join us and our partners at any of the upcoming events below that are community-led efforts to help our region thrive.

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## Upcoming Events

- **Blue Mountains Trail Community Workshop in Sumpter and La Grande**  
**(RESCHEDULED)**: We invite you to be a part of the Blue Mountains Trail! While we had intended to host the workshops in Sumpter and La Grande this week, health protocols required we reschedule them for June. We will host community workshops in Sumpter on

Wed., June 22, and in La Grande on Thurs., June 23 with support from Eastern Oregon Visitors Association, Eastern Oregon University, and the Ptarmigan Collective. [More information and how to register for these workshops is available on our website.](#)

- **Wallowa Land Trust Community Potluck:** In conjunction with the 2022 Wallowa Gathering event, Wallowa Land Trust is hosting a [Community Potluck](#) on Sunday, June 5 at 5pm at the Wallowa Homeland Dance Arbor in Wallowa, Oregon. The goal is to welcome tribal members to the county and build connections after their annual root gathering. Wallowa Land Trust is looking for more volunteers to support with the potluck and the gathering events. Reach out to [Sarah Kleinhazel](#) for more information or complete the [Volunteer Sign-up Form](#).
- **Bumblebee Surveys - June 25-27 at Union County Fairgrounds:** This spring, we're teaming up with our partners at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to train detection dogs to find bumblebee nests by scent. These outings will aim to find nests that we can use for the training. Let us know if you are interested in being a part of this critical effort to protect high quality habitat for threatened pollinators at all stages of their life cycle. A formalized sign-up process will be out in early June.
- **Voluntourism with Go Wild: American Adventures - June 17-21 :** In similar fashion, we've teamed up to support a fun outing with Go Wild: American Adventures that combines a guided expedition with trail work the Blue Mountains Trail in Hells Canyon. Pip Redding, Blue Mountains Trail Coordinator, will be leading the trail work on behalf of WMHCTA. [Sign up today](#) and get a 20% discount by emailing Go Wild's owner, Dan Sizer, at [gowildusa@gmail.com](mailto:gowildusa@gmail.com).

Please [email Jared Kennedy](#) if you'd like to take part in any of the volunteer opportunities above (or in general) to be included on our volunteer list for future opportunities.

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Morgan Lake in La Grande on the proposed B2H transmission line route. Photo by Ashley O'Toole.

## Stop B2H's Contest Case Warriors

### Environmental impacts of the Boardman-to-Hemingway Transmission Line

The plan proposed by Idaho Power to build a 300-mile high voltage transmission line from Boardman, Oregon to Hemingway, Idaho, right through La Grande's fire-prone Wildland Urban Interface, is just one of many aspects of the project that hasn't been adequately analyzed. Matt Cooper is one of many active volunteers that Stop B2H fondly calls its Contested Case Warriors. These individuals are working to challenge Idaho Power's environmentally-damaging project. Matt's case exposes Idaho Power's flawed analysis that the project poses no fire risk to La Grande. Read the [recently published blog post](#), written by Stop B2H's Fuji Kreider, that includes Matt's case along with a general update on the efforts to stop the project.

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## Learn more about: **Birds on the Blue Mountains Trail**

"It is mid-May on the Zumwalt Prairie of Northeast Oregon. My daughter and I strike camp on "The Edge...always the place to be to see the most wildlife, and to drink in the glorious views of the Blue Mountain country. May is also the time to observe a great variety of birds on nesting territories, preparing to hatch and raise young in what is a short summer at this 6000 ft + elevation. Places like the Zumwalt Prairie grasslands are vitally important to avian conservation efforts, because birds are in trouble."



Mountain Bluebird. Photo by Joella Arment.

Guest writer Joella Arment, a retired academic adviser turned bird photographer, [tells a story](#) of annual migrations and the Important Bird Areas that provide protected habitat for the vast numbers of bird species threatened by habitat fragmentation and climate change.

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## Thank you JoAnna

The Blue Mountains Trail is a community-led effort, and recently this has provided us the chance to work with JoAnna Campbell, a Senior at Eastern Oregon University graduating this spring with a degree in Sustainable Rural Systems. JoAnna will be leading a portion of our [upcoming Blue](#)

[Mountains Trail Community Workshops in Sumpter and La Grande](#), sharing case studies of other Oregon communities that have worked with public agencies and private entities on long distance trail efforts similar to the BMT. She and her Sustainable Rural Systems classmates also assisted GHCC with a grant proposal for funding support for our community engagement efforts. We are so grateful for her contributions to the trail.

JoAnna is from Challis, Idaho. In addition to her coursework, she competes in Track and Field events, including pole vaulting and triple jump, for Eastern Oregon University.

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## Other news we're following...

### Our cultural survival is tied to salmon's survival

From Alaska to British Columbia to northern California, we are one nation under salmon and ought to act like it! We can start by acknowledging that wild salmon are a gift: to the land, water, animals, plants and people. We give thanks for this gift and give back by taking care of salmon and their habitat. We live in relationship with salmon by seeing them as the gift that they are, not treating them solely as resources for the taking. [Read this poignant op-ed by Amy Gulick on the importance of protecting wild salmon](#).

### Scientists believe beavers can build resilience in Northwest waterways

Ecosystem engineers and rotational crop farmers, the American beaver is hands-down the best restoration partner in the West storing water, slowing floods and fires, and creating habitat for everything from butterflies to moose to salmon to ducks. [Read the OPB article on how beavers are integral to climate change mitigation](#).

### Biden's Executive Order on Forests

President Biden's executive order on forests has the potential to transform the management of federal public lands administered by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. But what does this really mean for the remaining mature and old growth forests on public lands? Well, it's complicated. Andy Kerr unpacks the executive order in a two-part blog series. Follow these links to read [part 1](#) and [part 2](#) of his analysis.

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## Job Openings at GHCC and in the Region

Help our region thrive by sharing these job openings.

**Greater Hells Canyon Council is hiring its next Executive Director.** For more information about the role and how to apply, visit [www.hellscanyon.org/jobs](http://www.hellscanyon.org/jobs). Please help us share this job

opening with your network so we can continue to grow our critical work in the Greater Hells Canyon Region.

- **Idaho Conservation League** is hiring a number of positions including a Wildlife Advocate, Marketing Manager and more positions. [See the full list of job openings here](#). (Boise, open until filled).
- **Oregon Natural Desert Association** is hiring a [Campaign Manager](#) (full-time, Bend).
- **Oregon Rural Action** is hiring a [Communications Coordinator](#) (part-time, Eastern Oregon, open until filled), a [Director of Community Organizing](#) (Eastern Oregon, open until filled), a [Rural Energy Organizer](#) (La Grande, open until filled), and a [Director of Finance and Administration](#) (Eastern Oregon, open until filled).
- **Wallowa Land Trust** is hiring a [Conservation Program Manager](#) (Enterprise, open until filled).
- **Wilburforce Foundation** is hiring a [Program Associate for Yellowstone to Yukon](#) (Seattle, application deadline June 21, 2022).



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!](#)*

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