



On the last day of summer, a light dusting of snow adorns an unnamed peak in the Wallows. Photo by Charles Jones.

## Hells Bells - September 2021

### Welcoming fall's arrival in the Blue Mountains

At GHCC, we're welcoming the arrival of fall. The equinox was met with cooler weather and a light dusting of snow on the long-bare mountaintops in the Wallows. The summer brought record heat and extremely dry conditions to Northeast Oregon, yet there were fewer occurrences of lightning, and the fires of early summer dissipated well before the end of the season. Fall is also a time to celebrate together. While we'd hoped this meant an in-person Fall Gala, this year's event will be a pandemic-safe online auction. Continue reading for more details on the event along with other updates and news from the Greater Hells Canyon Region.

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## Get Ready for the Fall Gala Auction

**This year's Fall Gala Auction kicks off on Tuesday, October 19 and runs until the following Monday, October 25.** It features *Drawing Lines*, a beautiful scene of Hells Canyon above the Hells Canyon Dam by Suzy LaRuffa. The artwork is a wood etching that was then

painted, a technique called pyrography.



You won't want to miss the chance to bid Suzy's artwork, as well as vacation rentals and B&Bs in the Wallowas and Blue Mountains, tickets to ski at Anthony Lakes, handmade artwork and textiles, plenty of ultralight outdoor gear, great food and other items from Six Moon Designs, Terminal Gravity, Sawyer, KEEN, Food for the Sole, and more of our supporters.

More information about the Fall Gala Auction is now [available on our website](#).

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## Hidden History on the BMT



We prioritized routing the Blue Mountains Trail in such a way that hiking the full route provides a deeper connection to the region. Here you can experience the region's flora and fauna, and also the living human history that leaves deep artifacts—both physical and emotional scars—that we regularly encounter in our work to protect, connect, and restore the wild lands and waters where both native species and human communities thrive. [Continue reading](#) to learn about some of the unique, largely hidden landmarks and natural features that are found hiking along the Blue Mountains Trail.

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## Lostine River Corridor Logging

Lament and a promise. A guest post by Marina Richie.

How often do we circle back to the places we tried to save and could not? What is it to bear witness? For those who were told that logging the lush, verdant corridor of the Wild & Scenic Lostine River surrounded on three sides by the Eagle Cap Wilderness was imperative for wildfire safety, what is this logging achieving?



March 2021 Lostine logging. Photo courtesy of Rob Klavins, Oregon Wild.

In this guest post, Marina Richie shares photos from before and after the start of the logging now happening along the Lostine, an effort we fought to stop. We lament the loss, and we remember the promise. When the Eagle Cap Wilderness boundary was drawn, the line could have come all the way to the cherry-stem road that provides access along the Lostine River to Two Pan Trailhead, but someone decided to make them a quarter mile from the road with a handshake promise to manage that corridor as de facto wilderness. That promise was broken. [You can read Marina's full article with before and after photos of the logging here.](#)

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## Other news we're following...

### This year's exceptionally low return of Columbia River steelhead

As of the middle of September, less than one third of the 10-year average steelhead have returned to the Columbia Basin. What is already a highly diminished fishery, "[it] seems like the bottom has just dropped out on steelhead" said Laurie Weitkamp, a research fisheries biologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Newport. While much of the decline in the past years is due to inland conditions of the Columbia Basin, researchers are also trying to better understand how poorly understood ocean conditions are also contributing to this year's depleted return. [Read the full article on OPB](#) .

### Bighorn sheep populations are hit hard by pneumonia bacteria

Starting in February 2020, state biologists noticed that *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* bacteria was decimating both of the bighorn sheep herds in Baker County. While biologists were hopeful the infections had dwindled in 2021, later studies reported that nearly all newborn bighorn sheep in 2021 had succumbed to the disease. Drought is exacerbating the problem, as more sheep congregate around fewer water sources. [Read more in the Baker City Herald](#) .



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 throw in a special gift.**

*[Find out more here, and sign up today!](#)*

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