



Volunteers hike towards their trail maintenance project on the Blue Mountains Trail.

Congratulations 2023 Thru-Hikers!

As the hiking season wraps up, we would like to congratulate the handful of trail junkies who managed to complete the entire 530+ mile route. In 2023, at least 5 individuals joined the illustrious ranks of Blue Mountains Trail thru-hikers – bringing the total number of known thru-hikers to eleven. Each one has generously contributed photos, condition reports, maps, and suggestions on how to improve the experience. We regularly receive enthusiastic messages asking about the BMT, citing a positive encounter with one of these few thru-hikers. These folks are some of the kindest, most interesting, and sometimes smelliest people you could hope to meet in town or along the trail. Hats off to them for their accomplishment, for representing the BMT, and for giving back.

Trail Maintenance

Improving our neglected public trail infrastructure is an important part of our work on the BMT. Partnerships with other organizations and volunteer agreements with the National Forests allow us to get hands on with trail maintenance. This year, GHCC staff and volunteers were directly involved in maintaining ~17 miles of trails in the Southern Wallowas, Hells Canyon, and the Malheur National Forest. This work included logout, brushing, sign repair, and condition reporting on and off the BMT. Many more miles of the trail and its tributaries were ground-truthed to identify areas of need for future projects. If you'd like to join us in the field, please get in touch and take our [volunteer survey](#) to let us know how and where you can help.



A volunteer works to clear fallen trees from the Blue Mountains Trail.

Event Series & Survey

In conjunction with the survey, a fall event series introduced people of all kinds to the Blue Mountains Trail. These informal, in-person events took place in Baker City, Joseph, Bend, La Grande, Boise, and Portland. If you made it out to any of these events, thank you! These have been great opportunities to explain the “what” and “why” of the BMT, meet some amazing people, and answer questions.



Renee Patrick speaks to a packed crowd during a Blue Mountains Trail presentation at Mountain Supply in Bend.

This fall, we also launched an online survey designed to collect input from outdoor recreationists and local communities. This survey is just one part of our ongoing effort to learn about needs, wants, and concerns for trail development in Northeast Oregon. To date, we've received over 200 responses. We want to hear from anyone and everyone who cares about this amazing place – from thru-hikers to interested residents. If you or anyone you know hasn't taken the survey, please [find it here](#).

Take The Survey

PCT Days

The Blue Mountains Trail was once again invited to present at the 16th Annual PCT Days in Cascade Locks, Oregon. The multi-day festival in August is a celebration of the Pacific Crest Trail and the community that has grown around it. The Pacific Crest Trail Association welcomes representatives from across the outdoor industry, including thru-hikers, gear companies, and non-profit organizations.

We had a great time telling people about the trail, connecting with our business sponsors, and reuniting with old hiking buddies!



Blue Mountains Trail Coordinator Pip Redding presents at PCT Days in Cascade Locks.

Oregon Signature Trails

Close followers of the project will know that last year, the BMT was selected to represent Eastern Oregon among the [Oregon Trails Coalition's Signature Trails Inventory](#), alongside our friends with the Joseph Branch Trail and the Oregon Desert Trail. Support the OTC by [purchasing a calendar](#) featuring the BMT and the other amazing trails. This tremendous honor also presents opportunities to improve the trail and promote our work making the BMT a world class experience and a force for good in our region.

One such opportunity led to a collaborative agreement with the Blue Mountains Land Trust to restore 8 miles of trail and a foot bridge in the North Fork Umatilla Wilderness through their trail stewardship program, [The Blues Crew](#). The project is projected for the summer of 2024 and will employ both volunteers and youth corps trail crews.

Crowdsourced Stewardship on the BMT

Greater Hells Canyon Council is thrilled to be able to pilot Colorado Mountain Club's, Recreation Infrastructure Monitoring System, (RIMS), on the Blue Mountains Trail and throughout our mission area. This free app allows anyone to report trail conditions, campsites, water sources, overuse damage, and other factors of critical importance to the maintenance of our public land and the mitigation of impacts from recreation, grazing, logging, fire and more. We are asking everyone visiting the BMT or recreating in the region generally to [download the RIMS App](#), take a short training, and submit monitoring reports whenever possible. More interested in plants and wildlife? [Download iNaturalist](#) and report on critical conservation species like beavers, western bumblebee, or whitebark pine. The data you submit is confirmed by experts and can be used by researchers, managers, and the public to make informed decisions about the future of our intact landscapes.

Supporting the BMT



We are honored to be supported by both foundations and businesses in our efforts to develop the Blue Mountains Trail into a world class destination.

We are thrilled that Sawyer, Six Moon Designs, The Trailhead Baker City, Vernier, and Evermine Labels all renewed their support for our efforts in 2023. Thanks to all our [business supporters](#), we are able to connect more people to Greater Hells Canyon Region.

Our generous sponsor, Evermine Labels, is now located in La Grande Oregon. The printing business has acquired the historic Elks Lodge at 1124 Washington Avenue and is in the midst of restoring the façade. They've also taken a hand to the interior, which now houses La Grande's newest café and bookstore, named the [Press Room](#). A large-scale map of the Blue Mountains Trail features prominently in the bright and accommodating seating area. Drop by and check out the space next time you're in La Grande.



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 and making the Blue Mountains Trail a path to resilience for Northeast Oregon.
Pip Redding, Blue Mountains Trail Coordinator*

By joining GHCC's River Runner program for \$10/month or more, we'll throw in a special gift.

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