



Blue Mountains Trail Newsletter - Spring 2025



Trail Coordinator Pip Redding at a BMT work party on the Skyline Trail in the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness

Federal firings mean the public must step up

Indiscriminate firing within the U.S. Forest Service and other federal agencies has dealt a crippling blow to the teams responsible for recreation in Northeast Oregon. That means even fewer folks for basic trail maintenance, facilities services, and visitor management. Think of trails blocked by fallen trees, dirty toilets, overcrowded campsites, and no one to ask for directions. An absence of dedicated recreation staff is a threat to access, responsible use, and sustainability of recreation on public land.

Even prior budget allocations for planning, restoration, and improvements have been

frozen. The effects extend beyond direct federal workforce. The USFS increasingly relies on volunteer partner organizations to supplement their meager recreation budgets with donated labor. Now, cooperative volunteer agreements are even frozen in many places.

The Blue Mountains Trail was started partly to serve as an impetus for greater investment in public recreation and protection of the surrounding landscape. Now, we are worried that self-serving oligarchs are intentionally pushing federal programs into disfunction, with the ultimate goal of privatizing services, stripping the land of its resources, and robbing us of our greatest natural treasures. We need people to speak up and lend a hand keeping things running.



A trail ambassador for the Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon Trails Association chats with hikers at a trailhead

Join us in service of our public lands!

Are you interested in helping on the ground, but can't commit to challenging trail maintenance outings? Here are a couple of options for you to consider:

1. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is looking for [volunteers](#) to work at developed recreational sites in the front country.
2. Our friends, the Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon Trails Association, need outgoing and knowledgeable people to help with their Trail Ambassador Program which is funded by our mutual partner Eastern Oregon Visitors Association. Trail Ambassadors help people at popular trailheads in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest find the trail they want to hike, ensure everyone fills out a permit, provide information on known trail conditions, have brief conversations about human and dog waste, point

out the rules for camping and fires, and collect information on trail conditions from returning hikers. [Find more information here.](#)

3. Join GHCC for one of a handful of outings led by our Trail Coordinator Pip Redding. Currently scheduled trips are May 20th at Dug Bar which also coincides with our annual McFarlane's 4 o'clock survey in the nearby Imnaha canyon on May 23-24. You can also join us on June 5th at Freezeout Saddle and June 12-13 near Buckhorn overlook which also coincides with our popular Xerces Society bumblebee survey. [Email Pip Redding](#) for more information.



Just a few of the items up for offer at our [online auction!](#)

Our Online Auction is Live!

Greater Hells Canyon Council is holding its [largest fundraising event](#) of the year this weekend in Portland! As part of this event, we have an online auction for packages that may be appealing to the outdoor inclined. If you'd like to support the Blue Mountains Trail, bidding in the auction is a great chance to help out!

Thanks to our generous auction donors, there's something for everyone:

1. **High-quality outdoor gear** from our business partners at Sawyer, Rumpl, CNOC, Patagonia and more!
2. **Outdoor adventures** with expert guides in Northeast Oregon!
3. **Getaways across Oregon** - in Bend, Baker City and nestled along Wallowa Lake.
4. **Wine tastings** - in Sherwood and Dayton, OR.

[Bidding is open now](#) through Monday, April 15th at 8:00 PM! So treat yourself to something that supports a great cause. Thank you for supporting our work!

Check out the auction!



Pip Redding presenting at the American Long Distance Hiking Association's annual ruck

BMT out in the hiking community

Blue Mountains Trail Coordinator, Pip “ScareCrow” Redding recently presented the keynote address at the American Long Distance Hiking Associations Cascade Ruck event in Stevenson, Washington. ALDHA’s Rucks are day-long gatherings designed for novice to expert backpackers looking to prepare themselves for the hiking season. The primary focus is on attendees setting out on their first long-distance hike, with instructional breakout sessions and opportunities to connect with organizations, gear makers, and other hikers.

Pip’s presentation was an introduction to the history, mission, and development of the Blue Mountains Trail, and its designation as an official Oregon Signature Trail. It included a section by section overview of the trail, their highlights, challenges, and logistics. Several prior BMT hikers were in attendance to recount their experiences. Some prospective hikers even expressed their intention to explore the BMT in the 2025 season after learning about the trail that day.

If you’d like to learn more about the BMT and will be around the Walla Walla Valley, we are planning an in-person info session and pub night at Quirk Brewing (425 B St, Walla Walla, WA 99362) on Friday May 16. Come on out and listen to an overview of the trail, grab a drink, and ask any questions you may have. [RSVP here!](#)

A BIG Thank You to BMT Sponsors!



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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