



Blue Mountains Trail Newsletter - Spring 2024



Volunteer Trail Work Parties

In addition to finding funding for paid maintenance crews, GHCC leads volunteer trail work parties both independently and in collaboration with partner organizations like the Wallowa Mountain Hells Canyon Trails Association ([WMHCTA](#)) and the Blue Mountain Land Trust [Blues Crew](#). These fun and rewarding trips are a great way to see a new part of the trail or give back to a familiar destination. We have several options coming up soon.



BMT Volunteer Trail Maintenance - [P.O. Saddle/Freezeout – July 24-27](#)

BMT Volunteer Trail Maintenance - [Russell Mountain/ Sugarloaf- July 11-16](#)

BMT Volunteer Trail Maintenance - [Strawberry Wilderness - July 19-22](#)

We need volunteers to make these trips happen, so if you are interested in joining us for any of these outings, you can register at [our events and outings page](#). You are welcome to join even for a day!

NF Umatilla project



This season, visitors to the North Fork Umatilla Wilderness will notice some major improvements to the trails! A stewardship grant from the Oregon Trail Coalition enabled GHCC to partner with the Blue Mountain Land Trust's "Blues Crew", and Northwest Youth Corps to restore miles of eroded tread, remove fallen logs, and trim overgrown brush. As is the case for all capital "W" Wilderness trails, this much needed maintenance is all done without the assistance of powered tools. Rather, crews rely on their body strength and tools like pulaskis, picks, loppers, and crosscut saws. We're honored, and humbled, to be a part of this hard, dirty, and rewarding work on the ground.

RIMS and iNaturalist monitoring

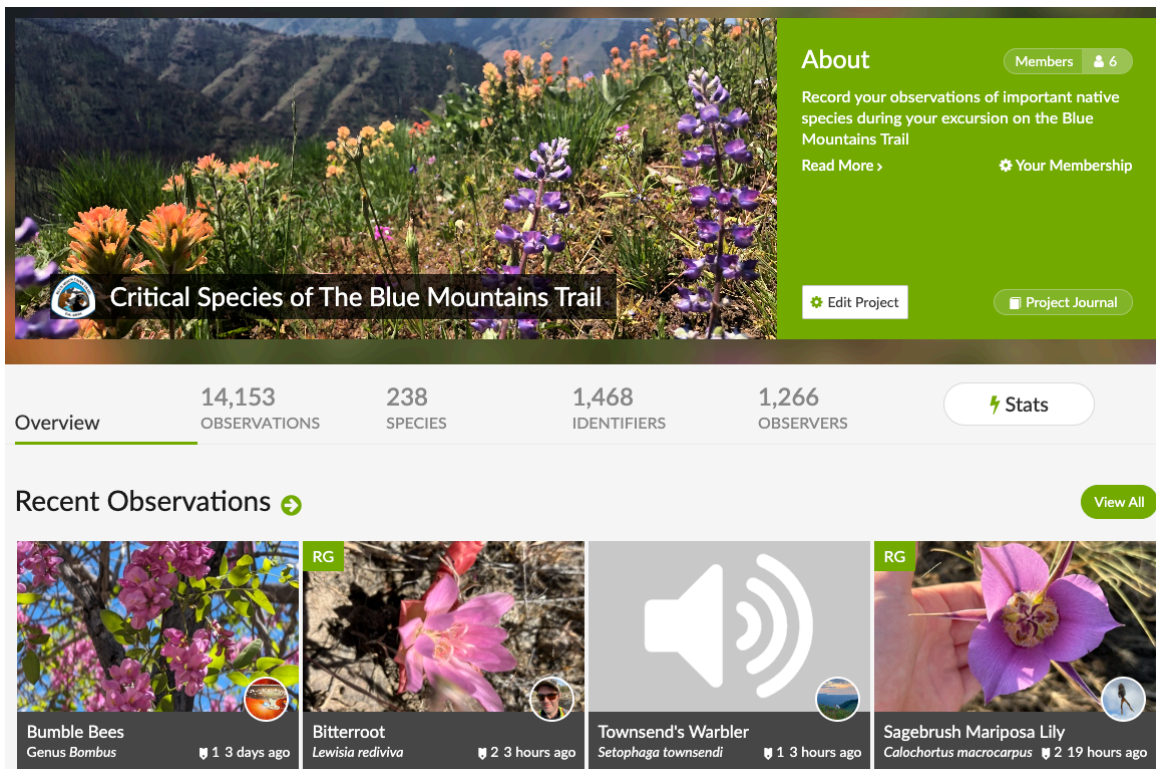
One of the guiding principles of the BMT is to strengthen the connection between outdoor recreation and stewardship. Which is why we're asking all trail users to contribute to our documentation and monitoring of public trail infrastructure and critically important wildlife species. There are 2 easy ways to get started!

Submit trail reports using the [CMC RIMS app](#)

RIMS is a free to use monitoring platform created by Colorado Mountain Club. It crowdsources reporting on maintenance conditions, user conflicts, stewardship, and more. GHCC will use this data to prioritize our volunteer efforts, advocacy, and funding requests to improve the trail experience for everyone.

How to use RIMS to make reports.

1. [Download the RIMS app](#) on your device and open the menu indicated by 3 lines in the upper left.
2. Select Tutorial for a tour of the app. You will be prompted to the following.
3. Complete your profile.
4. Download maps for offline use. (Oregon (103.4 MB)
5. Complete a short training to ensures consistent reporting among users.
6. Then you'll be ready to make assessment reports when you're on the BMT!



Submit citizen science observations using the [iNaturalist app](#)

Document flora and fauna along the trail (and throughout the region!) using [iNaturalist](#) and join our project on the platform.

iNaturalist is a fun, free, and easy tool that empowers volunteers to contribute directly to the documentation and stewardship of wildlife on public lands.

Visit www.inaturalist.org, download the free mobile app, and start submitting observations of beavers, white bark pine, gray wolves, western bumblebees, or your favorite plant or critter on your next excursion.

How to join the project on iNaturalist

1. Join [iNaturalist](#) and download the app on your phone.
2. Join the "[Critical Species of the Blue Mountains Trail](#)" project.
3. Take pictures of listed species and record the location. If you're not sure of a species ID, photograph it anyway. Take multiple shots and angles if possible. Good quality images are necessary for research grade observations and positive ID.
4. **Upload photos to the app from your phone or to iNaturalist.org** using any browser. Once your observation is uploaded, scroll down on the observation page and click on "Projects" on the right-hand side of the screen. Select the "Critical Species of the Blue Mountains Trail". [Learn about adding observations to iNaturalist projects here.](#)
5. Try to identify the species. Volunteer experts will help confirm the ID.
6. Get back out there and add more observations!

A (mostly) complete list of notable species exists on the project website, but we are particularly interested in the following condensed list:

- Steelhead or salmon of any species and/or redds,
- beavers and/or dams,
- whitebark pine and/or Clark's nutcracker,
- Spalding's catchfly,
- raptors of any species and/or their nests,
- white headed woodpeckers,
- milkweed

Note: If using a device on the trail isn't for you, photos and a mapped location of any issues or notable wildlife are still useful. [Email those directly to Nash](#)

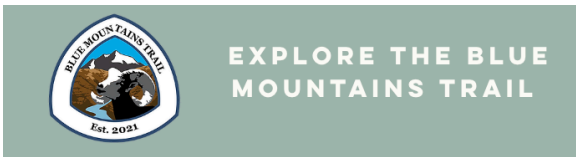


STRAWBERRY WILDERNESS LOOP - 2-3 DAYS

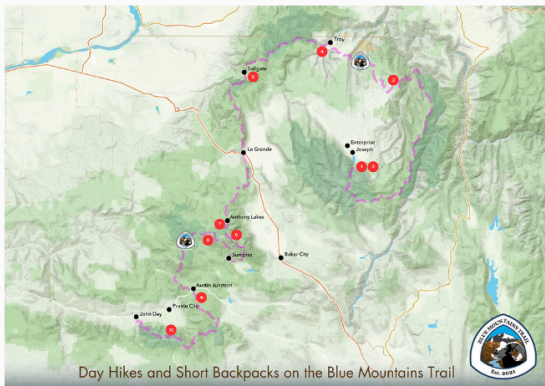
Departing from [Strawberry Campground](#), near [John Day and Prairie City, Oregon](#), this hike takes you into the heart of the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness. The relative crowds drop quickly dissipate after the short hike to Strawberry Lake. As the trail gains elevation, you'll experience the changing flora found through the Malheur National Forest, camp at pristine high alpine lakes, and enjoy the solitude of this majestic wilderness that feeds the South Fork John Day River.



Short itineraries on the BMT



Are you ready to explore the landscapes of Northeast Oregon, but can't manage a month-long thru hike on the Blue Mountains Trail? Plan your perfect outing with these day hikes and shorter backpacking trips that connect to the Blue Mountains Trail. The trips in this collection, compiled by Greater Hells Canyon Council, are recommended by visitors and residents of the Blue Mountains.



TRIPS FROM [JOSEPH AND ENTERPRISE](#)

On the northern end of Wallowa Lake, 6 miles from the Wallowa Lake Trailhead, [Joseph, Oregon](#) is a small but vibrant community with a lot to offer visitors and residents alike. As the northern terminus for the Blue Mountains Trail, it is a full-service town with a small grocery, laundromat, restaurants, and lodging. It is compact and all hiker services are easily walkable. It also has a vibrant arts community. The still small but larger community of [Enterprise, Oregon](#) is another 6 miles northwest of Joseph along Highway 82. Here you'll find more places to eat, sleep and get the gear and goods you need to make the most of your time in the mountains.

Getting there from the trail: The Wallowa Lake Trailhead, the northern terminus of the Blue Mountains Trail, is approximately 7 miles from Joseph via OR-351.

Trip No.	Name	Distance	Season	Trip Type	Difficulty	Tags
1	West Fork Wallowa	11.6 miles	Summer	Day hike Overnight	Physical: Moderate Logistical: Easy	Spokane Coeur Meadow
2	Wallowa Forks Loop	23.4 miles	Summer	Multi-day backpack	Physical: Difficult Logistical: Easy	Spokane Coeur Meadow
3	Buckhorn Overlook & Indian Village Grove	N/A	Mid Spring to Late Fall	Vehicle/ADA	Physical: Easy Logistical: Easy	Subaru Historic Adventure

Many of us outdoor enthusiasts dream of taking a month or more away from our daily responsibilities to reconnect with wild spaces while thru-hiking a long trail. But most of us don't have that kind of time and need help finding information on how to make the most of our precious time off.

Now, nature lovers looking to get out on the Blue Mountains Trail have a set of comprehensive short trip planning resources. A selection of excursions can be found on the [Short Hikes](#) page of the BMT website. We think these are some of the best options for locals and visitors in Northeast Oregon, and the list will keep on growing! The index is organized by town for ease of use. Entries include a detailed description, mileage, elevation profile, conservation connections, points of interest, logistical and physical difficulty ratings, maps, printable guides, and in-town services. There's no better time to get on trail.

Do you have an suggestion for our next itinerary? Interested in volunteering to ground truth or take photos? [Send an email to Pip!](#)



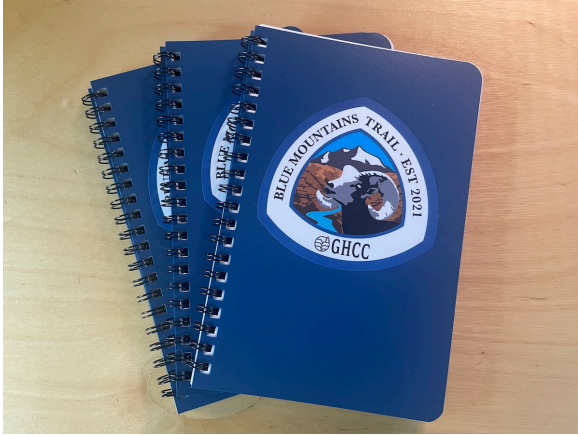
Funding for Wenaha River Section of the BMT

Since the early conception of the Blue Mountains Trail in the '70s, it was envisioned as a route that connected our region's designated Wilderness areas and demonstrated the enduring value of these special places. But since the trail's official launch in 2021, one Wilderness has been particularly difficult to access.

In 2015, the Wenaha River Trail #3106 was heavily impacted by the Grizzly Bear Complex Fire. Subsequent blow downs and regrowth made this section of the Blue Mountains Trail all but impassable, requiring trail users to bypass the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness entirely, or risk an unprotected crossing of the river.

Earlier this spring, the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee passed a funding package that included \$300,000 dollars for the Umatilla National Forest to finally restore the Wenaha River Trail along its entire length, a windfall only made possible by the efforts of our partners and legislators to recognize the Blue Mountains Trail as one of Oregon's Signature Trails.

Trail Registers



Our steadfast supporters at the [Press Room Coffee and Books](#) are the first recipients of a new BMT Trail Register. Their location in the historic Elks Lodge in downtown La Grande boasts a large-scale map of the Trail and a comfortable reading room. Thru-hikers and short-timers alike are encouraged to stop in, have a coffee and write a short note about their experience on the trail. Let us know if you manage a business or public space along the trail and are interested in your own register.

PCT days



The BMT will once again be attending the annual PCT Trail Days event in Cascade Locks, August 16-17. Come chat with us at our booth, hear a presentation from BMT Coordinator Pip Redding, and join in celebrating the culture of long trails, including live music, gear vendors, food and drink.

Attention thru hikers!

While the season for short trips and day hikes is in full swing, thru-hiking season on the BMT comes late. July is usually a safe choice to start for those hoping to complete the entire route, though September is prime. Based on the number of requests we've been getting for the maps; this could be the busiest year yet. If you are planning a thru hike, make sure to check in with us about trail angels, current conditions, and how your hike can help the trail. After your hike, debrief with us and receive a free woven patch as a congratulations!

A BIG Thank You to BMT Sponsors!

Sawyer®



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.

Greater Hells Canyon Council
PO Box 607
Enterprise, OR 97828
United States



If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please (Unsubscribing is not supported in previews).