

# Volunteer groups help to keep trails hazard free

By ELLEN MORRIS BISHOP AND SABRINA THOMPSON  
EO Media Group

WALLOWA — Forest users have volunteers to thank for easier trail access.

The next time you go for a walk or ride in the woods — specifically on a U.S. Forest Service Trail in the Eagle Cap Wilderness or Hells Canyon — consider taking a moment to appreciate the hardworking volunteers from Wallowa and Union counties who keep the trails open.

The Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association and their partners expend time and energy to make your walk or horseback ride hazard-free. Without their efforts, and a supporting cast of horses, mules, volunteer pilots and other team members, those trails would likely be cluttered with brambles, fallen logs and ankle-rolling rocks.

Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association's members are dedicated to keeping mountain and canyon trails open and historic sites accessible to hikers and horsemen. Last year, their 73 members cleared a total of 89 miles of trails, including most of the 40-mile Minam River Trail, removing 398 trees and brush to make the trip easier for people and stock.

They also cleared the historic blackberry-choked, poison ivy-infested and shrub-tangled ancient trail

from Dug Bar to the Chinese Massacre Site on Deep Creek. USFS Trail 1726 between two of Wallowa County's most historic locations had in many places become impassible. It took nine volunteers and two Forest Service employees three days to hack their way about 2 miles through what seemed an infinity of brambles. Now, trail users can ride or walk from Dug Bar to Deep Creek — a journey that for years has been possible only via boat.

In addition to reestablishing the two historic trails, WMHCTA has also begun projects to renovate the Lick Creek Guard Station and the bridge over BC Creek on the Chief Joseph Trail, both of which are slated for completion in 2019.

This summer, WMHCTA set its summer priorities on clearing trails that lead from the Minam River Trail into the high Wallows and also connect the Minam and Little Minam rivers with the trails at Moss Springs Trailhead east of Cove. With USFS approval, they are basing their work out of the historic Red's Horse Ranch on the Minam, as well as camps near Splash Dam Meadow and the confluence of the Minam and North Minam, clearing another 30 miles of trails 1673 (Minam River Trail), 1675 (North Minam Trail), 1901 (Little Minam River Trail) and 1928 (Rock Springs Trail).

Why devote all this time to



EO Media Group Photo/Ellen M. Bishop

**Jan Keil, of Imbler, works one end of the crosscut saw and Miles McFall of Joseph guides the other, while Brent Lewis of La Grande drives a wedge into the cut so the saw won't bind.**

clearing up trails in the forest?

"The main purpose is to try to get the trails on Minam safe," Mary West said.

West and her husband, Russ, of Imbler, packed into Red's Horse Ranch as part of the multi-county Minam team.

"They probably needed to be done 10 or 15 years ago," she said of the trails. "And anyone who has been up there would agree."

Former Union County planner Hanley Jenkins has been involved with the WMHCTA, and like everyone else on the team worked hard to clear the trails.

"If you don't maintain (the trails) they get worse and worse," he said. "They become impassible, which has happened. When it does, people will go around, which causes

more resource damage."

As Holly Akenson, WMHCTA board member and treasurer, pointed out, many of those involved with the association are active users of the trails and realize nothing will change unless they do the work.

"We all agree we want to see (the trails) in usable shape," the Enterprise resident said.

Akenson noted that easy-to-use trails are important for emergencies, allowing access in case someone is hurt or lost. Plus, trails are a big part of our tourism.

"People assume the trails are cleared, but those who are local know that isn't true," she said.

Veteran pilots Bill Ables and Doug Fremont flew in supplies and some volunteers

to Red's Horse Ranch to help the effort. Packer Steve Morris, of Wallowa Mountain Packers, volunteered his time and stock to scout the trail to the North Minam, and then bring in supplies and volunteers for this rougher portion of the project. And a number of volunteers, including WMHCTA Board Chair Jim Akenson of Enterprise, the Wests, and Brent Lewis of La Grande, hitched up their own pack strings, saddled their mules and rode into their assigned trail to help.

These trails are all within the Eagle Cap Wilderness, where motorized equipment is not allowed.

"We're using all hand tools," Jim Akenson said. "Crosscut saws, handsaws, Pulaskis, axes, shovels, in compliance with the wilderness policy."

For many, the chance to use hand tools takes them back to a slower time, when hard work was the essence of being in the woods.

Access is by foot — two feet or four feet. Trails must be cleared to U.S. Forest Service standards — 4 feet on both sides of the trail centerline. Overhanging branches that might interfere with a rider must be removed. Smaller trees that lean into the trail are cut. Especially where forest health problems have created many dead trees, meeting this requirement is labor intensive.

But the volunteers based at Red's and on the North Fork

were up to the task. On Saturday, they cleared 62 trees from the Minam River Trail 1673. This week, teams brandishing crosscut saws, axes and pruning tools are working to clear the trails to specs.

"We expect to have more than 24 volunteers on the projects this week," Akenson said.

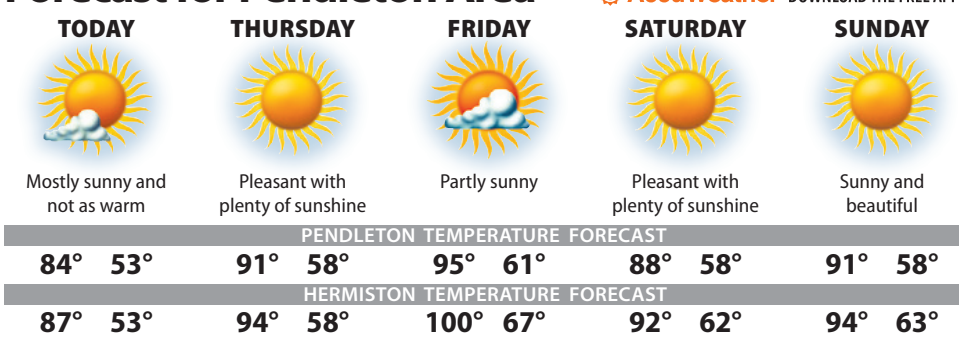
Support for the effort comes from a slim Forest Service cost-share budget that provides per diem for food and mileage for the distance from the nearest Forest Service station or office to the trailhead. Other funds come from the Wallowa County transient lodging tax, which provides some equipment, and a Cycle Oregon grant supports volunteers' food and travel. But those funds don't stretch very far.

"Our organization provides the Forest Service with about four times the value of the funds they give us. We keep track of the time, travel, materials — of everything we do," said Holly Akenson, who estimated the total value of services of volunteers probably exceeds \$100,000 each year.

But for many backcountry hikers, riders and hunters, the work done by these volunteers from Union and Wallowa counties is truly invaluable.

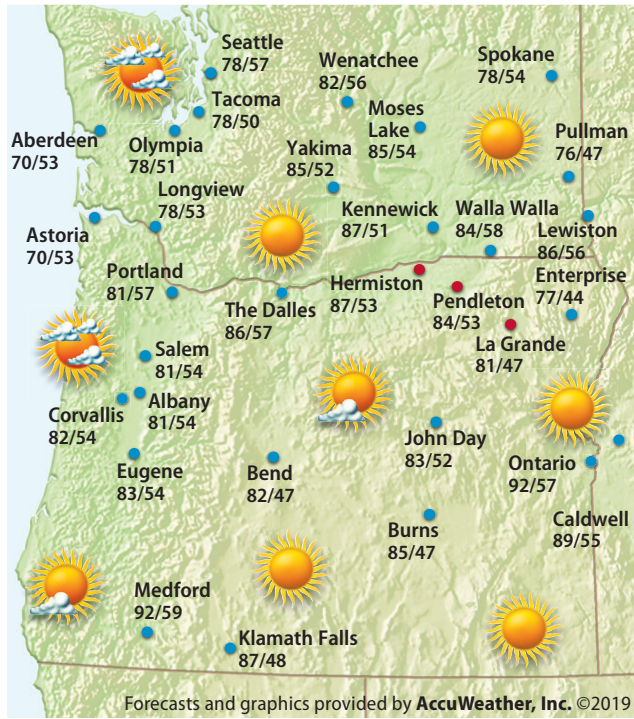
"(The forest is) truly a unique place," said volunteer Jan Keil. "Just being here is inspiring. But keeping these historic trails open is really special."

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



## ALMANAC

**PENDLETON** through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	93°	60°
Normals	90°	60°
Records	111° (1928)	41° (1924)

**PRECIPITATION**

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.03"
Normal month to date	0.23"
Year to date	9.60"
Last year to date	6.49"
Normal year to date	7.81"

**HERMISTON** through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	96°	63°
Normals	90°	59°
Records	108° (1959)	41° (1934)

**PRECIPITATION**

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	Trace
Normal month to date	0.16"
Year to date	4.55"
Last year to date	5.10"
Normal year to date	5.86"

**WINDS** (in mph)

Today	Thu.
Boardman WSW 7-14	WSW 3-6
Pendleton W 7-14	NNW 4-8

**SUN AND MOON**

Sunrise today	5:29 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:34 p.m.
Moonrise today	12:04 a.m.
Moonset today	1:07 p.m.

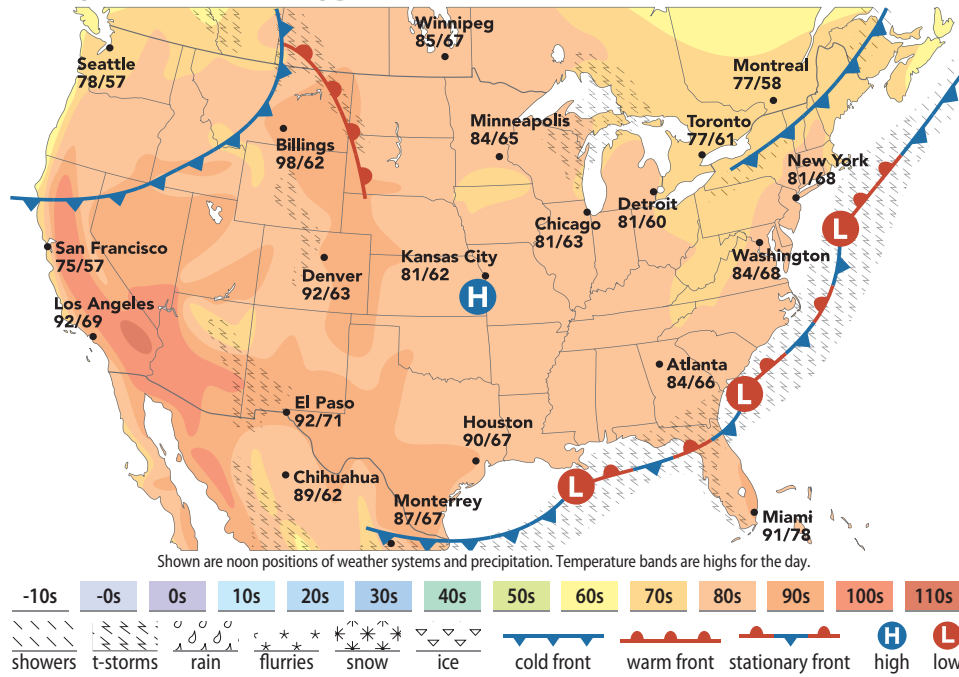
Phase: Last (July 24), New (July 31), First (Aug 7), Full (Aug 15)

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 112° in Thermal, Calif. Low 37° in Leadville, Colo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



# In some states, GOP sees the recall as its way back to power

By JAMES ANDERSON  
Associated Press

DENVER — Republicans frustrated by losing their grip on political power in some Western states have begun deploying a new weapon: the recall.

Once reserved for targeting corrupt or inept elected officials, the recall has become part of the toolkit for Republicans seeking a do-over of election results. One GOP strategist in Colorado has put a name to it — "recall season."

To be sure, Democrats also have used recalls, most notably in Wisconsin, where they tried unsuccessfully to oust then-Republican Gov. Scott Walker in 2012 over his actions to weaken public sector unions.

But Republicans have been mounting recall efforts against Democratic state lawmakers and governors at an unprecedented rate over the past two years in a handful of Western states, at the same time their political fortunes in those states have been declining.

In 2018, they recalled a freshman state senator in California as a way to temporarily undo a Democratic supermajority.

The same year in Nevada, two Democratic lawmakers and an allied independent fended off recall attempts.

In Oregon, Republicans are pursuing a recall of Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, who was re-elected last year, after GOP lawmakers walked out of the Senate to try to block votes on climate change and education bills.

Colorado, where Democrats control both houses of the legislature and the governor's office, is seeing its

highest level of recall activity since 2013, when two Democratic lawmakers lost their seats for supporting gun control legislation and a third facing recall resigned.

Recall campaigns are targeting Democratic Gov. Jared Polis, two Democratic state House members and two Democrats in the state Senate. Recall committees have been formed for other lawmakers, and the GOP's top-ranking officials have encouraged the efforts.

U.S. Rep. Ken Buck, newly elected as chairman of the Colorado Republican Party, told supporters earlier this year, "We need to teach them how to spell R-E-C-A-L-L."

Colorado recall proponents accused their targets of overreach on issues of gun control, climate change, taxes, sex education and the electoral college — issues that many of the Democrats ran on during their successful campaigns.

Karen Kateline, a talk show host working on the Polis effort, insists that she and other Republicans aren't abusing the original misconduct intent for recalls.

"Nobody is putting the brakes on these people," she said of Democrats.

"It's our constitutional right to recall," insisted Nancy Palozzi, a Republican from the Denver suburb of Lakewood, who is leading an effort against state Sen. Brittany Pettersen. "We can't wait for new (GOP) candidates to be vetted for the next election. Three more years for the governor? And three more years for Brittany? No."

Democrats see the recalls as a blatant attempt to undo the results of the most recent elections, which produced a

Democratic wave in several Western states.

Matt Harringer, spokesman for the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, has a simple label for the Republicans pursuing the recall attempts — "sore losers." The committee, which gets involved in state legislative races, has dedicated \$135,000 to help fight the Colorado recall attempts.

"Republicans are definitely on the decline in the West, and Colorado is the leader of that," Harringer said. "We don't think there's a huge appetite to recall legislators who are doing what they said they would do."

Nevertheless, Republicans see it as a worthy strategy. The Colorado Republican Party started months ago offering training sessions for what GOP consultant Ben Engen calls "recall season."

Proponents can use the process to time an election and shape the electorate on their own terms, when most voters aren't paying attention, said Engen, a Denver-based consultant who conducted some of those sessions.

For example, a petition drive can be timed to produce a special recall election during the winter holidays — taking advantage of lower turnout by unaffiliated voters who have helped turn Colorado, once a swing state, into Democratic-leaning territory, Engen said in an interview.

"There's a drop-off in turnout from presidential to midterm elections, and the same thing between midterms and off-year elections," Engen said. "Initiators of a recall can use the timing to maximize that enthusiasm gap."

**CORRECTIONS:** The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

**EAST OREGONIAN**  
— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —  
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211  
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211  
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Closed major holidays

**EastOregonian.com**  
To subscribe, call 1-800-522-0255  
or go online to EastOregonian.com  
and click on 'Subscribe'

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday, Monday and postal holidays, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR.  
Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801.  
Copyright © 2019, EO Media Group

**Subscriber services:**  
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 1-800-522-0255 ext. 1

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay \$13/month	60 percent
52 weeks \$173.67	41 percent
26 weeks \$91.86	38 percent
13 weeks \$47.77	36 percent

\*EZ Pay = one-year rate with a monthly credit or debit card/check charge

**Single copy price:**  
\$1.50 Tuesday through Saturday

**Circulation Dept.**  
800-781-3214

**ADVERTISING**  
**Regional Publisher and Revenue Director:**  
• Christopher Rush  
541-278-2669 • crush@eomediagroup.com

**Advertising Services:**  
• Angela Treadwell  
541-966-0827 • atreadwell@eastoregonian.com  
• Grace Bubar  
541-276-2214 • gbubar@eastoregonian.com

**Multimedia Consultants:**  
• Jeanne Jewett  
541-564-4531 • jjewett@eastoregonian.com  
• Audra Workman  
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com

**Business Office Coordinator**  
• Dayle Stinson  
541-278-2670 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com

**Classified & Legal Advertising**  
1-800-962-2819 or 541-278-2678  
classifieds@eastoregonian.com or legal@eastoregonian.com

**NEWS**  
• To submit news tips and press releases: call 541-966-0818 or email news@eastoregonian.com  
• To submit community events, calendar items and Your EO News: email community@eastoregonian.com or call Tammy Malgesini at 541-564-4539 or Renee Struthers at 541-966-0818.  
• To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries: email rstuthers@eastoregonian.com or visit eastoregonian.com/community/announcements  
• To submit sports or outdoors information or tips: 541-966-0838 • sports@eastoregonian.com

**Business Office Manager:**  
541-966-0824

**COMMERCIAL PRINTING**  
**Production Manager:** Mike Jensen  
541-215-0824 • mjensen@eastoregonian.com