





**METHOW
VALLEY
INTERPRETIVE
CENTER**

**NEWSLETTER: Summer
2021**

www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com

FOSTERING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, GEOLOGY, AND NATURAL HISTORY OF THE METHOW VALLEY AND BEYOND

Announcement

Membership Drive time! Please renew, become a member or become a sustaining (monthly) member at whatever level is right for you. Members have numerous benefits including access to our amazing resource library and the satisfaction of being a part of something deep, connected, and centered. If you have already done so, we thank you very much!

Become a member at

www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com

Foam Berries, Bitter-Delight!

By Bruce Morrison, Board President

These bright red berries are prized as treats, gifts and medicine by Native peoples across northern North America. Their intense bitter flavor challenges our modern palate but delights the indigenous appetite. Known as foam berries, buffalo berries, sopolallie or soap berries, their name is *sx^wusam* in the *nsəlxcin* language,

Shepherdia in Latin. The berry pulp feels soapy to the touch because it contains the compound saponin. Whip it with a little water, and a sweetener into "Indian ice cream."

It is esteemed as a healing tonic for everything from indigestion to cancer. The stems are used as a laxative and purgative. All parts of the plant are used in healing. It was and still is a valued trade item. The berries can be dried and cooked into a syrup or canned. The plants are regionally common, but relatively rare in the Methow.

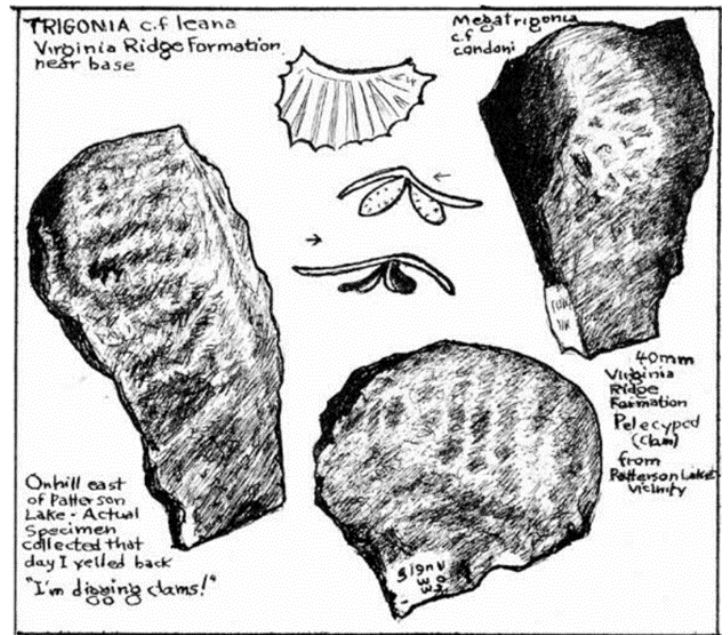


Photo by Bruce Morrison

They occur as an understory shrub in open forests and clearings. Its leaves are dark green on top and pale fuzzy underneath with pale yellow, inconspicuous flowers. It occurs from low elevation

to the sub-alpine, growing well into Alaska where it is a favorite food of Grizzly bears. People should be cautious, however, to eat sparingly of the potent berries.

Now is the time for foam berries and we recently found them widely scattered, growing all the way up the Chewuch. The berries appear when boughs are lifted, hanging brightly on their undersides, often paired or in small clusters. Your fingers quickly taste intriguingly bitter-soapy. Chipmunks resent the competition. Foam berries are a treasured gift, carrying the blessing of good health. An hour of picking yielded only a heaping cupful of berries. Out around Kettle Falls they grow as the dominant shrub under the pines. Lucky them when it comes time to trade or make ice cream!



Drawings by Julian Barksdale

"Notes from the Center" – The Chiliwist Trail

"Most Methow lived in seasonal villages, traveling up and down the Methow River and its tributaries. Because the topography of the lower valley made travel upriver to higher elevations difficult, especially during winter snow and high water in the spring, the Chilowist Trail was a major route. The trail went from the mouth of Chilowist Creek on the Okanogan River up over Three Devils Mountain and down the Benson Creek drainage, site of a Methow village, and on to the Methow River. Many people used this trail frequently during the year, sometimes traveling back and forth ten or more times."

(from "Lost Homeland" by E. Richard Hart)

Check out the Methow Valley Interpretive Center's [YouTube Channel](#) for more on the Chiliwist Trail (Season 2, Episode 3).

A Strange Love Affair

by George Wooten, Board Member

The above title was given by Geologist Julian Barksdale on reminiscing of his life's work in the Spring of 1983. As an emeritus geology professor at UW, Barksdale wrote of his geological adventures in the Okanogan Heritage Magazine, published by the Okanogan County Historical Society.

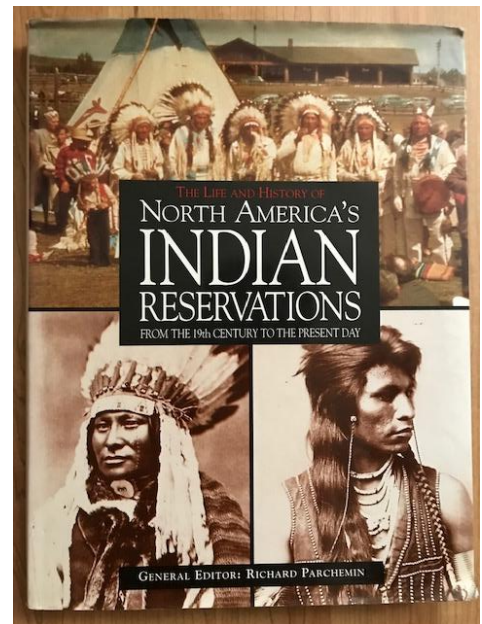
He described a typical day digging for fossils near Patterson Lake, as a long string of dude riders from the Sunny M Guest Ranch passed by. One of them yelled out, "What are you doing up there?" To which Barksdale replied, "Digging clams!" End of conversation.

Stopping at the Winthrop Cafe on the way back that day, the proprietor mentioned that there was a rumor going around town that some nut thought himself a clam digger. Reaching into his pocket, Julian laid his best *Trigonia leana* specimen, an ancient species of clam, on the counter. End of conversation!

As part of ongoing efforts for the geology exhibit at the MVIC, we are displaying specimens of the various types of rocks and fossils that were described by Barksdale in his classic "Geology of the Methow Valley" (1975). This work laid the

groundwork for later geologists to place the Methow Valley into the still emerging field of plate tectonics.

It's a testament to Barksdale's rigor that the geologic units he mapped are still accepted with only a few changes. Paleontologists now realize that the clam fossils from Patterson Lake are in a much older group (by over 10 million years), but Barksdale's Patterson Lake unit is still mapped the same. Barksdale's description of plant fossils from within the Winthrop Formation near Boesel Canyon have now been expanded to include over 150 species, making this the richest fossil flora in Western North America. End of conversation or just the beginning?



Methow Artifact Research Project

All artifacts on display or in our records and archives are the direct result of our requests for information, donations and/or owners allowing us to photo, record and measure artifacts directly related to the Methow Valley.

Please visit MVIC to see the full Artifact Album. Contact Rich Davis with questions or if you find an artifact. Anonymity is guaranteed, if desired.

davisrich@hotmail.com or 509- 997-2284



Arnold and Gail Cleveland donate 35 books to the MVIC Resource Library

by Carolyn Schmekel, MVIC Founder

Last fall, as fire swept across the Colville Confederated Tribal land, Arnold and Gail Cleveland were spared losing their home, but sustained property damage that left them without any power due to the power box being destroyed, as well as the loss of out-buildings and equipment. The Methow Valley Interpretive Center sent out a request for funds to help those tribal members who experienced fire loss and was rewarded with over \$15,000 in donations. The Cleveland's were recipients of help in the purchase and installation of a heat pump for their home, replanting burned areas, and other needs. Along with donations, folks from the Methow Valley spent hours at the Reservation working to repair and restore fire-related property.

The Cleveland's deeply appreciated the support, and in appreciation, donated a portion of their large collection of books to the MVIC to use as part of the resource library at the Center. Most of the books are first editions, and feature Native American

stories, history and photographs. Some that are notable are:

Saga of Chief Joseph By Helen Addison Howard: Copyright 1941 by the Caxton Printers, LTD, Caldwell, Idaho. Reprinted 1978

Book Summary: This completely revised edition of the author's earlier War Chief Joseph presents in exciting detail the full story of Chief Joseph, with a reevaluation of the five bands engaged in the Nez Perce War, objectively told from the Indian, the white military, and the settlers' points of view. Especially valuable is the reappraisal, based on significant new material from Indian sources.

The Life and History of North America's Indian Reservations: From the 19th Century to the Present Day

Book Summary: Using archival materials from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Canada's Dept. of Indian and Northern Affairs, this book examines the history of Indian Reservations (or Reserves) from their early beginnings to the present, exploring a complex and often unpleasant story.

"Since Time Immemorial"

Many Tribes use this phrase and it is common in land acknowledgements. I have been thinking about this a lot lately. What does it mean and what might it be like to have lived here, right here, for longer than time?

Since Time Immemorial = Since before time began

The Methow Artifact Research Project has found evidence of human occupation here back at least 11,000 years. That's at least 440 generations of people – the people, the Methow People. Actually before first contact, they didn't call themselves Methow or The People. Rather they called themselves *sqilxw*, People. Simply people as they have been since before time began, as they are today.

Since Time Immemorial = Indigenous

Arnold was born 82 "snows" ago in Ellensburg and is Wenatchi, however, like most local tribal folks, he can claim family connections with many other bands; Entiat, Okanagan, Yakima and more. After serving in the US Marines during the 1950's, he managed pear warehouses for growers in Northern California for many years. An accomplished singer, songwriter and musician, he spent many evenings and weekends singing in clubs and bars. Arnold has earned a reputation locally for being willing to sing country songs upon request. Of greater importance is being called upon to play flute prayers for first salmon feasts and other ceremonies in the region.

MVIC Resource Library: Part of the Methow Valley Interpretive Center membership benefit gives members access to the resource library. The resource book list is available via email and books can be checked out by visiting the Center or emailing:

mvic.library@gmail.com

Pick up and delivery options available.

Spring Chinook Salmon Come Back Home Once Again

by Jennifer Molesworth, Board Secretary

Adult Spring Chinook Salmon, King Salmon, *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, or their oldest name *ntitiyix* in *nsalxcin* (the Interior Salish language) have once again returned to their Methow natal waters as they have done for thousands of years. They return home after spending the last 2 to 4 years in the Pacific Ocean, growing big and hopefully fat. They bring marine nutrients back home to the Methow in the form of fatty pink flesh, scales, and eggs. To get back home they enter the Columbia River in the spring and pass over 9 Columbia River dams travelling roughly 600 river miles to reach spawning areas in the Methow watershed.

As young smolts they were carried to the sea through the reservoirs and over dams to the ocean on the spring flood, one year after they emerged from the gravel as fry and about 1 year and 6 months after

they were placed in the gravels as eggs by their parents. They prepare to enter salt water by undergoing a remarkable physiological transformation (going from fresh to salt water isn't easy). This transformation is reversed when they return as adults (going from salt to fresh water isn't easy). Adult Chinook stop eating once they enter fresh water and will use their marine fat reserves to make the journey home, dig their redds, lay eggs and then die after using the last of their energy to defend their redds. Think about this journey for a moment and all the challenges they face all throughout their lives and the gift they offer all along the way.

Spring Chinook spawn in upstream areas of the Methow watershed such as the upper Methow River, Lost River, lower Early Winters Creek, Chewuch River, and Twisp River. The majority of adult Spring Chinook arrive in the Methow in May and early June and are now holding in deep pools of the mainstem Methow, Twisp and Chewuch Rivers where they wait until it is time to spawn. Spawning begins around August 15 in shoals of large gravel typically where a pool breaks into riffle.

Spring Chinook spawning is an amazing event to witness. Look for gravel beds, large dark shapes moving in the water, fins breaking the smooth surface, large wakes of swirling water and occasional splashing. Watch as the female digs her redd where she will place her precious cargo of eggs. She digs by turning on her side and bending her body into and away from the gravel, lifting the stones away, creating an upstream pit and a downstream mound. These pits and mounds are big – maybe 5 x 10 feet and will appear brighter than the surrounding undisturbed riverbed. She drops her eggs into

the gravel and the male fertilizes the eggs. Other large males and smaller jacks will try to get in on the action. The male chases these interlopers away, while another guy tries to sneak in and leave his mark. Once the female has deposited her eggs, they defend the redd for days to weeks until their lives in the form of an adult spring Chinook is spent. Spring Chinook bodies begin to decompose while they are still living in adult form. Once they die their bodies become part of the food web transforming into fish, including salmon fry, insects, birds, mammals, and plants.



"Chinook carcass", photo by Jennifer Molesworth

Chinook Meditation: Sit on the streambank and watch salmon spawn. Sense the continuous ribbon of life in the river, of the salmon. Where does one salmon life begin and where does it end? Or does it? From the streambed to the big river, to the estuary to the ocean and back to the streambed and the surrounding land. How do the salmon connect us to the ocean, the river and other living beings in our watershed? How are we connected to the salmon, the river, and the life around us?

We want to thank our amazing docents for their role in keeping the MVIC a welcoming space for the public to make discoveries about the Methow not readily available anywhere else. Without these volunteers we wouldn't be capable of working successfully. By the way, there are other needs for volunteer help during the winter months as well! We will be posting a list of those on the Volunteer Methow site: www.volunteermethow.org. Check it out.

Fire's Lessons - Place, Interdependence and the Value of Reaching Out

by Bruce Morrison and David LaFever

When the Cold Springs Fire burned the homes, ranches, and family regalia of Methow elders and friends, we learned the rewards of showing up for them the best we could. The lesson is just to show up and to keep showing up. Bring drinks, food, supplies, equipment but mostly bring yourself.

And now as these elders and friends are in new homes and ranging cattle on new rangelands, new fires have threatened Tribal Headquarters and the entire town of Nespelem. While fires were still burning, we were asked to help, to show up in whatever ways we could so we put the word out and have been able to receive and deliver six carloads of food, water, camping supplies, fans, filters and more. We have been able to do this by working together with partners like FYRE, River Warrior Society, Room One, The Cove, and Methow Natives. Fires are teaching us about interdependence and the power of reaching out to one another.



"From the ashes", photo by Bruce Morrison

Now new plumes rise daily in the Methow Valley, threatening homes and land and risking our well-being through unhealthy and hazardous air. Threat, loss, and health risk are on everyone's minds. Those that can take refuge elsewhere are doing so but many

of us remain because we have nowhere else to go or because by gosh this is my home and I ain't leaving!

While our love for and commitment to this valley is strong and deep, we are left wondering what we would be feeling if we had lived here since time began ("Time Immemorial"), for at least 440 generations? Would we leave so quickly? Could we even begin to imagine leaving? What would it feel like for this place to be inseparable from our heart? And so these fires are teaching us another important lesson – what it really means to live here.

MVIC Helps with Nespelem Fire Relief

With a quick moving wildfire impacting our tribal friends and neighbors yet again, MVIC was asked to step up and help. Thanks to many in our Valley, we have sent over six loads of food, water, clothes, fans, filters and other necessities.

Donations are still happily accepted at the Methow Valley Interpretive Center.



Methow Valley Interpretive Center

210 5th Ave, Twisp, Washington
Mailing address: PO Box 771, Twisp WA 98856
Ph: (509) 997-0620 Email:
mvinterpretivecenter@gmail.com
www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com