





**METHOW
VALLEY
INTERPRETIVE
CENTER**

**NEWSLETTER:
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www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com

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

Announcement

We are very pleased to announce that you can now stream the film "Two Rivers" on our website! This is the result of countless hours of countless people to make this happen and has been in the works for a number of years. The MVIC is the only place licensed to share this film about the very important work of reconciliation here in the Methow Valley! Watch it for free and donate to MVIC if you feel moved to do so.

Watch the "Two Rivers" film at

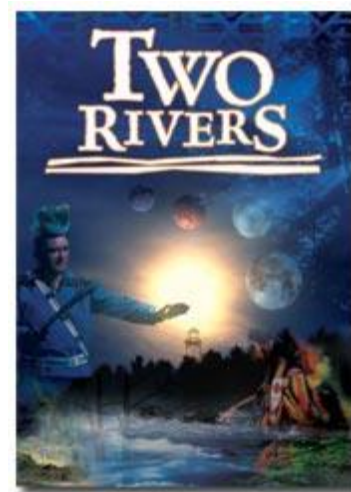
www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com

Speaking from the Heart - Two Rivers Reconciliation

By Carolyn Cilek, Board Member

More than twenty years ago, Glenn and Carolyn Schmekel were inspired to "plant seeds" that would harvest a connection with native Methow People.

With open hearts and intention, they connected with a few and began with small gatherings in their home, sharing food, talking, listening, learning and building understanding. This process grew into a cycle of traditional pow-wows held in the Twisp Park and fulfillment of promises made at the first one in 2002. Current Methow Valley residents invited and welcomed descendants of the first people of this place for a Reconciliation Pow-Wow which included Methow history, drumming and dancing, a naming ceremony, an intentional statement of reconciliation, and exchange of a rifle and blanket of two elders representing each group. This was followed by a traditional feast of salmon, venison and elk.



A lot was learned through this on-going process of reconciliation, including listening to one another and speaking from the heart. We continue to value the richness of difference and what can be learned from another culture. We continue to learn to notice our arrogance and learn to speak from our heart in the process of truly connecting and forming real friendships. We welcome all people who think of and call this valley "home." Over the years trust and connections have grown with other people and organizations in the valley resulting in native art exhibits, creation of Homestream Park, and the recent purchase and gifting of the Wagner Ranch to the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in honor of the Methow People.

The film "Two Rivers," which documents the early reconciliation work and traditional pow-wows aired on PBS allowing people around the world to witness and example how the power of reconciliation grows. Last September, we gathered together yet again to renew friendships and to honor commitments made and watched the film together at the TwispWorks Pavilion. Several Methow descendants were present along with the film-maker Rodney Mitchell. Descendants of Georgia and Steven lukes Sr. expressed how touched they were to see their parents talking again, almost as if they were still here with us. And in many ways that is true, their lives and presence are still here with us, in this film and beyond. We can now stream this film for free on the MVIC website, letting their words and actions guide us still.

Land Return - The Wagner Ranch

By Bruce Morrison, Board President

One of the first lessons our founders, Carolyn and Glenn Schmekel learned when they were called to heal our relationship with the Native Methow People was understanding the native culture of gifting. The honor of giving and receiving a gift is a primary value in native Methow culture. Relationships were built in gift exchanges at the Reconciliation Pow Wows of the early 2000s that laid the groundwork for our Interpretive Center and its programming honoring

and welcoming native people and culture back to the Methow Valley.

Still the enormity of the loss of their ancestral homeland remains as an historic wound that dwarfs small gestures. MVIC, along with the Methow Conservancy and others, has sought a way to return Methow Valley land back to its original stewards. When the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (aka, Colville Confederated Tribes) approached the Methow Conservancy to help them acquire the Wagner Ranch on the Chewuch River, the Conservancy stepped up, using their substantial capacity and reputation to do the right thing for social justice and land return. When the property almost went to developers, the Conservancy put everything they could into making this happen for the purpose of gifting it to the Colville Confederated Tribes in honor of the Methow People.

The Methow Conservancy deserves all praise for the very heavy lifting required. MVIC folks were able to assist by reaching out to our elder friends to witness, bless, and reimagine what native presence might be here. MVIC's years of working together with native people have instilled humility and patience as larger processes unfold with trust in each other's intentions. There is still more work to be done to welcome the Methow People to their homeland. The Methow Conservancy has taken a huge first step and deserves our deep gratitude to honor this landmark act of land justice and reconciliation.



Photo by Jennifer Molesworth



Photo by Bruce Morrison

Where in the world is Keller, WA?

By Jennifer Molesworth, Board Secretary

As the Methow Valley was covered in smoke this past summer, several fires broke out to the east on the Colville Indian Reservation (officially the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation). Structures were burned, people suffered losses and needed some help. The Methow Valley Interpretive Center, Room One and many others got the word out and people donated food, blankets, clothing, money and more. So generous!

The MVIC worked with indigenous and other organizations like River Warriors Society and the Foundation for Youth Resiliency and Engagement (FYRE) to know who need what kind of donations.

The Cove opened their doors to temporarily store a trailer full of goods donated by a Sedro Wooley motorcycle club. Several people, including youngsters, helped to load our pickup trucks for the trip east. Glenn said that this time there were no families with babies that needed help “so unload those diapers and baby food – they don’t need that. Grab those blankets there and take those boxes of food over there.” “How about this gallon of hand sanitizer?” “No, they don’t need that,” Bruce said. Finally, the two trucks were fully loaded up and David said, “put that hand sanitizer in – yeah they would want that.” Loaded with sanitizer, blankets, food, a small barbeque, an envelope of cash donations and no diapers we set off east for a small native community in the heart of the Colville Indian Reservation, Keller. We were to meet with Faith Zacherle and Robert Tonasket, both part of the River Warrior Society.

Where’s Keller? I know now. It’s three mountain passes from here, beyond Nespelem on the Sanpoil River. We nearly got lost in Nespelem but managed to find the unsigned road east and over the last pass through a freshly burned landscape – green shoots beginning to poke through the ash. The carefully thinned and maintained pine forest had burned hot despite that good work. Winding down to the Sanpoil, a lovely river that flows into Lake Roosevelt, I wondered if it had once been a destination for returning salmon and bull trout before Grand Coulee Dam was built. We found Keller, crossed the river and drove up to Faith's house.

She was ready for us. She had a small crew of River Warriors there to help us unload the trucks. (The River Warriors are an organization of young people that seek out ways to help people on the reservation.) Faith knew where everything was going and who needed what. She is well organized and well connected with her community. She left a promising career to return to her place and people. Her daughter came back, too, to live next door and start a small business.

At first awkward in each other's presence, handing boxes to each other, imagining how these supplies could help heal losses, seeds of friendship were planted in this community that gets few visitors. We said goodbye in the smoky sunlight and wished each other well.

Driving home we ate fresh peaches as we wound along the Sanpoil River and then high above Lake Roosevelt - so big and so still.

Two new episodes of "Notes from the Center"

Join David LaFever as we explore First People of the Methow map in this second season of the Methow Valley Interpretive Center's "Notes from the Center."

Episode 9: Sa Teekh Wa Park and Trail at the north end of Winthrop, near Winthrop North Village.

Episode 10: Land Acknowledgements from the Bush School near Mazama.

Check out the Methow Valley Interpretive Center's [YouTube Channel](#) for Season 2 - Episode 9 (Sa Teekh Wa) and Episode 10 (Mazama).

Visit the Methow Valley Interpretive Center for a free copy of the "First People of the Methow Map."

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Fun at the outdoor classroom. Photo by Rob Crandall

Traditional Foods Systems: Connecting Past, Present and Future

by David LaFever, Executive Director

One of the most exciting and important projects that we have been involved in lately is the "Traditional Foods Systems" project at the Paschal Sherman Indian School (PSIS) outside of Omak. This project, funded by the Native American Agriculture Fund, was envisioned by Rob Crandall and PSIS and has the following goals: (1) Create an indigenous plant garden, (2) integrate traditional foods systems program in school curriculum, and (3) focus on native leadership of this program.

One of the first tasks of this program was to connect with elders to understand more deeply what traditional foods and traditional foods systems are and to then connect that understanding with students at PSIS. Learning from elders, sharing with students involved field trips for traditional foods systems educators to get a deeper sense of the importance of traditional foods and how to respectfully gather and process them. One such field trip involved a collaboration with the indigenous-led nonprofit "Indigenous Roots & Reparation Foundation" and the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust to learn about gathering and processing Indian hemp. Participants learned from elder knowledge keepers and shared food, stories and laughter.

During the 2021 school year, an outdoor classroom was created by planting over 150 native trees and shrubs and installing gravel paths, work tables and benches. The Traditional Foods Systems program worked with students from kindergarten to 9th grade, integrating with science, art, language arts, and collaborating with other programs such as Nature Immersion and native language programs to weave traditional foods into PSIS curriculum. During the spring and fall, PSIS students visited the outdoor classroom regularly to propagate, plant and create including seeding Indian hemp and making yarrow oil. They also went on field trips to places like the Methow Valley Interpretive Center and Homestream Park to learn about traditional foods and culture. During one of these field trips, students were able to taste the very first foamberry fruit to ripen in the Methow Native Garden. It was an exciting and bitter experience! Students also had the opportunity to learn about traditional meat processing through a partnership with Nature Immersion and the Young Warrior Society.



First ripened foamberry. Photo by Rob Crandall



Propagating native plants. Photo by Rob Crandall

One important aspect of the Tradition Foods Systems program is the focus on empowering native leadership of the program. This is done through involvement of elders, other native organizations such as Young Warrior Society, and through the transition of program leadership to indigenous leaders. We are honored to be able to welcome Morgan Moomaw, an Okanogan descendant, as the new Project Coordinator for the Traditional Foods Systems program. Morgan brings a wealth of experience with native plants and culture to this position and we are excited to see her blossom and bloom in this important role. We also want to thank Rob Crandall for his hard work and vision for this program.

Connecting elders and youth, learning about plants and culture, establishing an outdoor classroom, collaborating with others, empowering indigenous leaders, processing plants and animals, learning from the plants themselves, and getting our hands dirty. I cannot think of more meaningful or important work to be doing!