



**NEWSLETTER: May / June
2022**

www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com

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

Membership Drive 2022

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!

We did a membership drive last Fall but want to return to having our regular membership drive in May so please pardon any awkwardness in this transition. We are also working on creating a new membership database so the timing is right for signing up or renewing!

Become a member or renew at:

www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com

The Colville Tribe Accepts the Wagner Ranch for Conservation

(Nespelem, WA) — Official Press Release

The Colville Tribes Accepts the Wagner Ranch for Conservation (Nespelem, WA) — The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation announces that it held a signing ceremony today to receive the deed to the Wagner Ranch from the Methow Conservancy. The Wagner Ranch includes 328 acres of largely undisturbed riverfront land which will now be held in conservation to protect valuable fish and wildlife habitat. The land lies in the heart of traditional Methow territory and the Methow are one of the tribes of the Confederated Colville Tribes.

The land will be conserved under the guidance of Methow descendants through Colville Tribal ownership. The Tribes' Fish and Wildlife Anadromous Program will continue work in this watershed with this property serving as prime area for salmon recovery efforts. There may also be potential for restoration of native plants and wildlife. The Tribes will pursue habitat improvements and educational programming to benefit all inhabitants of the valley and surrounding region.

More information about how the Methow people are protecting their traditional lands and waters, and about how the Colville Tribes and Methow Conservancy collaborate on salmon restoration efforts, may be found at <https://colvilletribes.com/newsroom> and <https://www.methowconservancy.org>.

The Sweetest Bear in the Valley

By Jennifer Molesworth, Board Secretary

Long honored as a culturally significant part of this place, *skam'xist* is also known as the American black bear or *Ursus americanus* in the Binomial nomenclature of science. If you haven't been to the Interpretive Center lately, please stop by and say hello to our newest member, a sweet little black bear, donated by the Confluence Gallery. She recently made her way down Glover Street accompanied by Board Presidents Sam Kolmeyer of the Confluence Gallery and Bruce Morrison of MVIC to her new home where she is already enlivening things with her beauty and grace. There is just something about her that draws us in.

If you are lucky enough to see a bear around here, chances are that it is a black bear even if it's not black. Our local black bears can be the darkest black, sweetest cinnamon or lovely golden color like honey. Black bears breed in early summer and cubs are born in a den in January or early February. Cubs may stay with their mothers until they are nearly a year and half old. Black bears have a varied or omnivorous diet. They eat seeds, nuts, fruits, grasses and insects, as well as fawns and carcasses of large ungulates like deer and elk and spawned out salmon. In the spring bears are hungry because they haven't eaten all winter and in the fall they are hungry because they need to pack on fat to make it through the winter. If habituated to people, bears can become a problem by aggressively enjoying whatever morsels they may find in a picnic basket or trash can. It is best to make sure that your food and waste are secure so that bears don't become a problem. Like they say, "a fed bear is a dead bear".



Photo by Bruce Morrison

More common than seeing an actual bear are the various signs that bears leave behind such as footprints, scratch marks on trees, large piles of scat, and flipped over rocks or torn apart logs. It's always exciting to find bear claw marks gouged into the smooth bark of an aspen tree or fresh tracks in mud. While we are grateful that our little black bear has come to den at the MVIC we discourage hunting of any animal just for display purposes.

Weaving Together Past and Future at Wagner Ranch

By Bruce Morrison, Board President

There are times when we find ourselves in places we dreamed of but never expected to stand. When Elaine Emerson suggested we might weave some tule mats at the Wagner Ranch up the Chewuch River, no one knew quite how this could come to be. The iconic ranch with over a mile of the river flowing through it was admired but has been in private White settler ownership for just over a century. Then something remarkable happened! The Methow Conservancy put its considerable reputation and

member resources on the bright line of cultural justice and gifted this stretch of the Chewuch River valley to the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) in honor of the Methow People. We found ourselves on a chilly spring morning opening the doors to the round barn to welcome Methow elders. They were there to weave tule mats for the first tule mat lodge to be built here since their ancestors had been removed in 1883.

As other Methow descendants rolled in, everyone looked around, at the rock bluffs high above, the shining ponds, the lush riparian groves, the verdant pastures. Holy smoke! Jimmy scanned the range with a mind to his herd back on burned-over reservation pasture. The Sirois family spread out, the kids around back, John and his wife offering to help set up the tables and lay out the spacing for sewing tule mats. Elaine, Cindy and Bernadine got busy sorting armloads of the tule rushes for size, threading their long needles. Most of us had done this before but everyone deferred to them, the keepers of the culture and original technology. We worked in teams, keeping the wooden needle straight while we pushed it through the pithy stems, making sure no stems were dropped while holding the tension just right. Hours went by as mats emerged from the laughter and stories. We took turns at the needle, sorting the stalks, and tying in the willow ends. We grazed on the lunch CCT fisheries staff had provided, grateful for the coffee in the chilly barn.

Without speaking everyone knew that something very different was happening on this day. Methow people were back on their rightful land beginning a lodge, like beavers setting saplings in the stream. Reestablishing the order of things. Making a place where culture grows again, children learn, and fish spawn. At the end of the day three long mats hung on three stalls in the quadrants of the barn. We just stood there smiling. Today's work was done. The people of this place are back, weaving a future, an open invitation for their children and their children's children to know the place their ancestors have held dear since time immemorial.



Photo by Bruce Morrison

What Do the Rocks Say?

By George Wooten, Board Vice-President

The Methow Valley is an exciting place to study rocks because we keep making new discoveries.

The oldest sediments of the Twisp Formation once lay offshore of a chain of island volcanoes, about 165 million years ago. The youngest sediments are the Pipestone Canyon conglomerates, which are about 67 million years old, a date that is either just before, or just after, the asteroid event that wiped out the dinosaurs. In between these dates, the sediments tell of a gradually shallowing ocean as the North Cascades Island archipelago began to collide with North America. Around 100 million years ago, the ocean closed and the sediments of the Winthrop Formation finally rose above sea level.

The Winthrop Formation supported lush tropical swamps and jungles along a huge, sandy river flowing from a dry continental interior, much as the Columbia River does today. The Winthrop plant fossils are the richest fossil flora in Western North America, containing over 150 fossil plant species

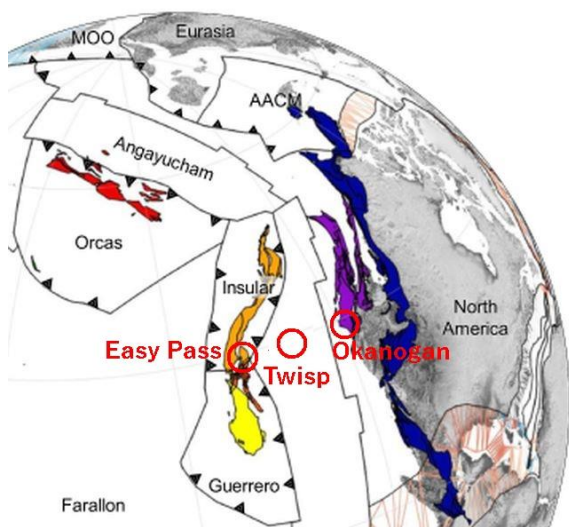
But despite general consensus with this story, geologists just can't agree *where* on earth this flora originally was. Some say the Winthrop Formation lay as far south as Baja California, while others strongly

disagree. A moderate compromise to this argument is shown in the diagram below.

And why don't we have dinosaur fossils? Rocks found in the Rocky Mountains of similar age have lots of dinosaur fossils, but only a couple dozen plant fossils. Maybe you know some young scientist who wants to unravel these conundrums, as our own Julian Barksdale once did in creating the first map of the rocks of the Methow.

The Methow Valley Interpretive Center has a brand new geology map that shows all of the geological units by their age and type. If you want to learn more about the rocks, then come in and check out the new geology map. A smaller laminated version is available for purchase, suitable for table mats or rolling into your camping gear.

Reconstruction at 170 Ma



A Quantitative Plate Reconstruction of Western North America and the Eastern Pacific Basin from Clennett, Sigloch, and others (2020).

Welcome Tiffany Ban, new MVIC Staff!

We are incredibly excited to welcome Tiffany as our *Communication and Administrative Coordinator*, a new staff position at MVIC! Tiffany comes from a background in natural resources management and water resources engineering, but in the past several years, has focused on transitioning from technical roles to roles that align more with her interests and passions. She previously enjoyed working with The

Mountaineers, an outdoor education and conservation non-profit, before finding her way here to the beautiful Methow Valley. In her free time, she enjoys all of the outdoor recreation that the Valley has to offer, works on projects around the house, and studies Spanish. Being born and raised in Hawaii, she also stays connected to her roots through Hula and Tahitian dance. We are honored to have such a talented and caring person join our organization!



Methow Valley Interpretive Center

Open Saturdays 10 – 4 pm

and

Sundays Noon – 4 pm

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