



NEWSLETTER:
November 2022

www.methowvalleyinterpretivecenter.com

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

Dear Friends,

This time of year encourages feelings and expressions of gratitude and I am thinking of a quote from Robin Wall Kimmerer (author of "Braiding Sweetgrass") that says "How, in our modern world, can we find our way to understand the earth as a gift again, to make our relations with the world sacred again?" One way is to genuinely give thanks, for all that we have, all that we have been given, and (hopefully) for all that we have to share. Another way is to generously give, which can take many forms including financial, volunteering, simply being with a friend when they need it and so much more.

October is a big month of focused giving for many nonprofits here in the Methow Valley, called Give Methow. With that now behind us, we want to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who donated to us and to any of the other wonderful Methow Valley nonprofits who participated this year. Your generosity helped Methow Valley nonprofits raise over \$800,000, which is more than ever before! And in so doing you support the many different ways that make our community what it is. Our own organization raised close to \$15,000, a record amount for us and in so doing help us to

continue our work *fostering awareness and understanding of Indigenous people, geology and natural history of the Methow Valley and Upper Columbia region*. I feel so much gratitude and humility for the support, trust and encouragement that you continue to show us as we work toward greater awareness and understanding of this magical place.

In this newsletter we offer some gifts in return, words from our hearts mainly, but also some sense of what we've been up to lately and just a few of the many programs that we have offered in the last few months. A forest fungi talk, a film night to honor Indigenous Peoples' Day at the Merc, an exploration of geologic uncertainties, and gathering lodgepole pine poles with native friends. We also offer up the gift of being open this winter and a Winter Book Club. Check out the newsletter below for details.

As I finish typing these words, an echo of Robin Wall Kimmerer's words remains. Can we see the earth and our lives as gifts again and will we find our way to making our relations with the word sacred again?

May we make it so together!

David LaFever, Executive Director

Helen Lau and the Fun-Guys (Fungi)

By George Wooten, Board Vice President

On Saturday, October 8th, an enthusiastic group of people followed guest speaker Helen Lau into the forest. Despite the relentless heat of summer, we were going to look for mushrooms. Indeed, Helen found all sorts of mushrooms popping up, where the rest of us only saw leaves and logs. Helen is a mycologist for the National Forest Service Wenatchee Ranger District, in charge of ensuring that fungi (mushrooms and their relatives) have a healthy ecosystem to live in.

Our walk in the woods with Helen followed a slide presentation the night before at the Methow Valley Interpretive Center. In her presentation, Helen showed us amazing pictures of fungi while explaining their importance to the world of humans. Apparently, we have a lot in common with fungi. Someone even gasped (!) when Helen said that mushrooms were actually more closely related to animals than plants.

Helen described many uses of mushrooms as food, medicine and art. For instance, as carved figurines found at coastal archaeological sites. Perhaps the most important role of fungi lies in their ability to connect to a vast network of trees and shrubs through their thread-like roots (mycorrhizae) and share nutrients such as water, sugar and trace elements. Root colonization by fungi tends to increase the rate of photosynthesis in the host plants. When a tree dies, fungi then break the wood down into soil; a service without which the forest would be choked with unrotted logs.

The ecology of fungi remains mostly buried and unknown. Helen was asked whether she had ever seen thousands of queen boletes (*Boletus regineus*) all fruiting at once on cottonwood trees, as they did here in the Methow around 2017. She agreed that this seemed odd, since boletes (mushrooms with pores underneath instead of gills), generally grow with conifers. But then on Saturday, walking along the river through the cottonwoods, someone almost tripped on a mound of mushrooms pushing out of the ground. Dusting one off, Helen identified it as

probably a queen bolete, highlighting the need for more research on fungi. Rumors are that it tasted great.



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Memberships are vital to us. Half of our annual budget comes from local donors. *Thank you for giving!*

Memberships start at \$35/year or \$10/month (sustaining member).

To become a member or to donate, please use the form on our secure website using your Master Card, Visa or Paypal:

[Click here for our online membership/donation form](#)

**Or, you can print the membership form and mail it with your check payment to:
Methow Valley Interpretive Center, PO
Box 771, Twisp WA 98856**

For more information, visit [Memberships – Methow Valley Interpretive Center](#)

How Far up the Methow Valley Did the Ice Age Floods Reach?

By Bruce Morrison, Board President

Not only is the mouth of our Valley a confluence with the Great River Columbia. Here, two massive tongues of ice also met. These immense glaciers poured slowly down from the mile-deep ice cap covering western Canada. These tongues advanced and retreated many times in the last million years.

The Great River brought meltwater from far to the east and north, driven to find its way to the ocean. A wall of granite, capped by deep layers of lava stood in its way to the south, barring the door to the Columbia Basin, pushing the river west straight into the advancing ice.

This mash-up of massive forces at the doorstep of our Valley created ancient Lake Columbia, far larger and deeper than our own present-day dammed reservoirs.



Other glacial lobes impounded the river upstream, flooding much of Montana. Since ice floats and flowing water cuts ice, these dams were breached every time the climate warmed. When the ice dams failed, all hell broke loose as a wall of water ten miles wide and nearly one-thousand feet deep, rushed downstream, flooding an immense amount of land. Floods and ice have sculpted much of the lands that we call home in the Upper Columbia region.

Today, you can spot house-sized black basalt boulders perched a thousand feet above our river. Another huge, black boulder is lodged in the river below. How did they get there? The nearest basalt is ten miles to the east, across the Great River. Rocks don't float except when they are embedded in ice. They can also roll across a glacier, pushed by floodwaters.

We may never know which mechanism transported these giant "erratics" to their scenic resting places, but we can stand in awe of cataclysmic forces that dwarf our puny human projects, and remind us how dynamic ice, water and rock can be.

Winter 2023 Book Club

After you finish a book, don't you wish you had somebody to discuss it with? Join our book club this winter and you'll have the chance to reflect on what you read with a whole group of folks! We're not meeting until the end of January, so you have plenty of time to read the book.



Book: The Seed Keeper by Native author Diane Wilson

Discussion: Wednesday, January 25, 2023, 5:30pm-7:30pm, in-person at the Methow Valley Interpretive Center (and on Zoom/phone if requested, but in-person attendance is encouraged). There will be some great discussion, and we'll have snacks as well!

Interested in joining? [Fill out this form](#). At the top of the form, you'll find some options on where to buy the book, and a brief synopsis.

The Doctrine of Recovery

By Sarah Jayne "Wind Woman" Cavanaugh, Board Member



The highlight of attending our showing of *The Doctrine of Recovery* at the Merc Theater in the Methow Valley was listening to Methow elders Arnold Cleveland, Elaine Timentwa Emerson, and Ernie Brooks, while enjoying a shared experience with a community that seems supportive in the revitalization and recovery of Native lives. I grew up in what I knew as the Pacific Northwest, and now know as Duwamish and Muckleshoot territory, in a family of Minnesota White Earth Chippewa Tribal members. Even though we carried remnants of who we were after the boarding school and stolen children era, it seemed that we were invisible in the dominant mainstream society. Here we were sitting in classes of U.S. history, learning about how amazing the Founding Fathers were while tribes sat in the shadows with their stories untold. I was four when I first recalled my family sharing about what we had endured as Native people. I knew that it mattered that my Grandfather and his 11 siblings were forcibly removed from their parents, that it was illegal to hunt, gather, and practice ceremonies. Later, I learned that the Native American Religious Freedom Act wasn't passed until 1978; that our "Native land" was illegally taxed and sold off to settlers, that my grandparents endured forced removals and relocations because they were in the way of western expansion, and that it was severely wrong that my Aunties were sterilized without their consent. After we endured all of this, I knew that when people said,

"get over it", this was an insensitive expression of denial as we struggled to survive and recover in the remains of colonial destruction. It is clear that Native peoples everywhere are amazing for having survived while picking up the pieces of unique tribal identities and ways of life, and still continuing to express unique important indigenous knowledge.

Following the film, it was such a gift to hear Methow elders Arnold, Ernie, and Elaine speak to a respectful and attentive audience as they shared their first-hand indigenous perspective of their experiences here in the Methow homeland and surrounding tribal territories. Arnold shared stories of growing up in a boarding school on the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. He told stories of heart-break like being kicked out and humiliated in front of the entire school as he was sent away cuffed in a police car. None of us will forget his story about seeing the nuns bathing in a waterfall, which made the audience laugh. Ernie shared, with humor and resilience, what it was like to be a young boy who didn't attend boarding school, and then of his successes and challenges of attending college as a Native man. Then, we all had the honor and surprise of Methow Elder Elaine coming up to share about her invaluable work preserving and revitalizing language and culture, and building educational curricula. It was also such a gift to be able to listen to these elders share local experiences after watching a film with a much broader focus.

Within the *Doctrine of Recovery* film, the voice of Grandmother Casey Camp-Horinek radiated such healing gentleness in the face of such extreme atrocities. Her words made healing of all kinds seem possible. Her reminders of the importance of the restoration of the sacred feminine and returning to honoring Mother Earth reminded us that our lives literally depend on this, much like a baby needs a mother to grow. She reminded us that this was for all life and the interconnected web we seem to have forgotten we are a part of. Because of this, she shared the importance of listening to elders, grandmothers, Mother Earth, and women. She shared how important it is to rescind the Doctrine of Discovery, the document that gave way to the conquering of Indigenous peoples and still has an effect today, in places like our legal, economic and

justice systems. The impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery reverberate in the stories, faces and places shown in this film and within my own family.

The truths spoken about in the film *The Doctrine of Recovery* may be hard to hear and face and yet they continue to be felt throughout Indigenous communities on Turtle Island (North America) including in my own family. Now, as Native peoples pick up the pieces and reclaim who we are, it feels good to be among those that are willing to listen and believe our stories. May we stand face to face, see each other, hear one another, honor and respect one another in all of our sovereign ways of being. May we move forward in healing, towards a healthy earth and country where nature can thrive so that we can all thrive. May we make this country what it was meant to be: a place for liberty and justice for all.

Cutting Lodge Poles With Methow Families at Snowline

By Bruce Morrison, Board President



They were all waiting for me when I arrived late at the Loup Loup summit. Jimmy and his elder sister, Elaine, the Brooks family: Ernie (Ksaws'), his son Rob, and daughter, Julianne. Marjorie Timentwa brought her son, Omarion. Rob Crandall was already there, too. We were all eager to get started so we drove west through the gap between Bear and Buck Mountains into the headwaters of Beaver Creek. We passed through a controlled burn area, past billowing

smoke and flaming piles. As we emerged from the narrow rocky cleft into the broad expanse of boreal forest, we followed the road climbing to the north until snow and ice made it difficult. Here we parked below an old clearcut, now densely overgrown with mostly western larch or tamarack. Ksaws' knew that tamarack makes the best lodge poles; light but dense and strong.



All of us came with tools and gloves. Ksaws' gave a simple offering and prayer as we stood in the vast, quiet mist. As soon as we could cut and drag trees to the road, they were limbed and stacked. After two hours we had over fifty poles ready to load. Ksaws' truck had the only rack, which was nearly overloaded when the first snowflakes began to fall. He cautioned us only to take what was needed. Julianne drove the big load down slowly as snow came thicker, whitening the road. Our five trucks held up traffic coming down the highway into the suddenly white valley.



Driving the East County road, we stayed out of traffic with our long, heavy loads. Through Winthrop on the back street, turning up the Chewuch, we headed for their newly gifted ranch, ǵʷnámǵʷnam. The gate was open. John, from the Tribal Fisheries Program was already there winterizing the property. Backing the loads into the iconic round barn of the former Wagner Ranch, we were grateful for its shelter as the snow came down strong and heavy. And grateful, too, for the work of unloading to warm ourselves in the chilly barn. Ksaws' had brought a pair of heavy, newly sharpened drawknives to leave there for the winter work of peeling the big pile of poles. Stepping back a moment, we admired what we had laid in store. These poles will become the frames for traditional lodges of the gentle tribe driven from this valley one hundred and fifty years before.

Leaving a Legacy

We hope that the work that the Methow Valley Interpretive Center does touches your life in a positive way.

We recently set up a fund so that we are able to receive endowment donations. If you believe in the work that we do and are interested in setting up a planned gift to the Interpretive Center, we would be happy to answer any questions you may have, or let you know how to get started. Please contact us at mvinterpretivecenter@gmail.com.

We thank you for your continued support.

Methow Valley Interpretive Center

Now open for winter hours

Saturdays 12 – 4 pm

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Looking for an Indoor Activity This Winter?



Usually, the Interpretive Center is closed during the winter months, but for the first time, we will be open on Saturdays through the winter! If you're looking for a good indoor snowy-day activity, come on by! Have out-of-town guests visiting that don't do outdoor winter sports? Bring them to the Interpretive Center! They'll get to learn about the cultural and natural history of this area, and can peruse our selection of naturalist books, and books written by Native authors!

Saturday hours are 12pm-4pm, and Janice, our Board Treasurer is planning to be there most Saturdays, making sally bags (woven, cylindrical baskets). If you want to learn how to make them, stop in and see her! She will have materials available for those that want to learn.

We have a beautiful new sign and accessible entrance on 5th Avenue. We hope you'll come and visit us!