



## Press Release

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Community Generosity to Last Generations**

*Imagine the Methow Campaign reaches 1,300 donations and counting!*

**Winthrop, WA** – The Methow Conservancy is proud to announce that it exceeded its Every Dollar Counts challenge, bringing in an astounding 1,322 donations and an additional reward of \$100,000 from a group of donors to its Imagine the Methow Campaign.

Since kicking-off the community phase of the Imagine the Methow campaign on Memorial Day Weekend, the Methow Conservancy has been visiting neighborhoods throughout the Methow Valley to share information and invite community participation as it seeks to increase its capacity to respond to landowners interested in conserving their properties.

Increased development pressures threaten to break up working farms, ranches and wildlife habitat forever. Outside of the towns of Winthrop and Twisp, the Methow Valley is only 25 percent built-out. Working with willing landowners, the Methow Conservancy will use the funds raised by the Imagine the Methow campaign to work with willing private landowners to protect the best working soils, habitats and views in the Methow Valley by creating voluntary conservation easements that keep the land in private ownership and on the tax roll.

### **Impact of the campaign to date**

The money raised by the Imagine the Methow Campaign will go directly to conservation easement projects, rather than supporting the annual fund or day to day operations of the Methow Conservancy. Grounded in scientific research and input from community focus groups, the campaign

is already protecting some of the best conservation land in the Methow Valley, with the completion of 17 new conservation easements including:

- **FARMLAND:** Working with a fifth-generation rancher to protect his family's legacy in the fertile Winthrop to Twisp farmland corridor;
- **RIPARIAN:** A 62-acre conservation easement that contributes to nearly 8 miles of protected riverfront between Winthrop and Mazama;
- **HABITAT:** Protecting a 44-acre private inholding on the Chewuch River that is home to the watershed's most dense Spring Chinook salmon spawning area; and
- **VIEWS:** Partnering with private landowners at the Mazama Junction to preserve an iconic viewshed corridor at one of the valley's most celebrated gateways as an example of how conservation and development can compliment one another.

As government budgets tighten, many of the public grants that conservation organizations like the Methow Conservancy have relied upon are now requiring 50% matching private dollars. The private funds raised through the Imagine the Methow Campaign position the Methow Conservancy to be able to compete for these funds with increased confidence.

### **Leave a Legacy Tree**

Each donation to the Imagine the Methow Campaign has been commemorated with a hand-made copper leaf on a beautiful Leave A Legacy Tree donated by local Methow Valley artist Barry Stromberger. More than the dollars raised, and the land saved, the Leave a Legacy tree represents personal stories of hope in the Methow Valley, with more being added every day. "From the four year old who gave a few dollars and change from selling fresh eggs, to the woman who came into our office one morning and gave us every bit of money in her pockets, every dollar has truly counted in this campaign," said Jason Paulsen, the Executive Director of the Methow Conservancy. "Every dollar raised this summer is another step in reaching our overall campaign goal and we are so very thankful for the outpouring of support from our community," continued Paulsen.

For more information about the Imagine the Methow Campaign, or to donate go to [www.imaginethemethow.org](http://www.imaginethemethow.org), call 509-996-2870, or visit the Methow Conservancy office at 315 Riverside in Winthrop.

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