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Community Members Receive Conservation Awards

*Methow Conservancy Honors Classroom in Bloom, Kirsten Cook of the Okanogan Conservation District,
and Carlene Anders for their Inspiring Efforts on Behalf of Conservation*

Winthrop, WA – The Methow Conservancy proudly announces the recipients of its 2015 Methow Conservation Awards.

Classroom in Bloom is the winner of this year's *Ken White Award*-- honoring people who carry on Ken White's love for the Methow Valley. The Methow Conservancy recognizes Classroom in Bloom's commitment to inspiring young people to understand agriculture, ecology, and natural history through their schoolyard garden and curriculum. Their award reads: "For connecting our community's next generation to the earth through the school garden, for inspiring future farmers and gardeners, and for believing in the power of sharing a love for the land."

In presenting the award to Classroom in Bloom representatives Anaka Mines, Lexi Koch, Kate Posey, and Danielle Micheletti, Methow Conservancy Associate Director Sarah Brooks noted that Ken White helped people find their own way to a connection with the land and that is what happens every day at Classroom in Bloom.

Kirsten Cook of the Okanogan Conservation District is this year's *Susie Stephens Award* winner. Susie Stephens served as the Methow Conservancy's Development Director years ago and left an indelible mark on the community and organization with her energy and passion for helping others. Kirsten shares that energy and has been instrumental in mobilizing Firewise efforts county-wide and countless other recovery outreach programs post-fire. Her award reads: "For tirelessly helping Okanogan County recover from two summers of fires, for inspiring neighbors to be prepared for future fires, and for being an amazing example of optimism and empathy when your community has needed you most."

Carlene Anders of Pateros received this year's *You Inspire Us Award* for her unfailing commitment to the long-term recovery process post-fire in Okanogan County. As Methow Conservancy Executive Director Jason Paulsen noted when presenting Carlene with the award, "The most important take-away if you don't yet know this year's recipient is that there simply isn't enough time in this evening for me to describe all the ways she deserves this award." She started serving our communities over 30 years ago as one of the first two female smoke jumpers in Washington state and today leads the county-wide long-term recovery efforts. She has provided confidence to literally hundreds of volunteers and dozens of funders as she facilitates fire recovery and rebuilding efforts.

The recipients were presented with their awards at the Methow Conservancy's Annual Holiday Social and Program at the Winthrop Barn on December 1st. For more information on the organization's awards and to see past recipients go to <http://methowconservancy.org/awards.html>.

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