

From Methow Conservancy's September 2021 Enews

An Opportunity for Conservation and Land Justice in the Methow Valley

There are some hard truths to loving this Valley. One of them is the reality that the U.S. government stole, no less than two times, the land that the Methow People have cared for and called their homeland for time immemorial. This injustice is ongoing for the Methow people and their descendants. While they actively teach their younger generations about the Methow culture, language, foods, and medicines, they do so without significant ownership of their traditional lands. We have an opportunity, as a community, to make an initial step toward justice.



We are honored to announce that we are currently under contract to purchase the iconic Wagner Ranch property -- 324 acres of amazing fish and wildlife habitat up the East Chewuch, with an astounding 1.6 miles of uninterrupted riverfront and prime steelhead and Chinook salmon spawning grounds. Upon closing, we intend to honor the Methow People by making a gift of the land to the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. The

Methow Band is one of the twelve Bands of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. This would represent the largest ownership for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in the Methow Valley and their only landholding in the Upper Valley.

You can add your voice to this land justice effort and help make the Methow People feel welcome here by donating to this project before September 30th. At the time of this E-News, we have \$1.3M left to raise to complete this purchase. We welcome gifts of all sizes to show community support for this effort.

“The Chewuch Valley and Wagner Ranch are part of the Methow homeland where the ancestors of our people have fished, hunted, gathered, and practiced their traditional cultures for millennia and it is that relationship with the lands and waters of the Methow that inspires our commitment to anadromous fisheries habitat protection and restoration there. Ownership of the Wagner Ranch would represent a small, but significant step toward redressing historical injustices and dispossession of the Methow People’s ancestral lands and allow the Tribes to protect and restore significant salmon and steelhead habitat” stated Andy Joseph, Jr., Chairman on behalf of the Colville Business Council.



“When we learned in June that the Wagner Ranch property was back on the open market, we realized there was an opportunity to do something right for the land and for the people who have always called this Valley home,” says Jason Paulsen, Methow Conservancy Executive Director. “We’ve been honored to be in conversation with Methow descendants and leadership of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation to

understand that owning a significant piece of property in the Upper Valley is a powerful next step in reestablishing acknowledgement of the Methow People.”

We are grateful for the many community members who, through the years, have initiated significant and meaningful efforts to welcome the Methow People back to their homeland. And, we are genuinely excited to extend the opportunity to the community to honor the Methow People and their deep connections to the Valley by supporting this land justice project.

This is a new and complex process for us, so we’ve created [a FAQ sheet with more information](#). If you’re interested in adding your voice to this effort, you can ask to set up a meeting with Methow Conservancy staff by [contacting Sarah Brooks](#). You can donate directly to the effort by mailing a check to:

Methow Conservancy
PO Box 71
Winthrop, WA 98862

With: Land Justice - Methow People written in the memo section of the check

Or

By making a secure on-line donation [via our website](#). Click on the Donate Now button. As you fill out the information, please include “Land Justice -Methow People” in the comments section.

(photos by Daniel Senner)