

mətxʷu /Methow Descendants

DONOR UPDATE FALL 2025



Donors to and funders of the mətxʷu /Methow Descendants have been an important part of the mətxʷu /Methow Descendants' ongoing efforts to protect and sustain our culture in our homeland. The following update provides an overview of what the mətxʷu /Methow Descendants have been working on over the past year.

In 2021 the Methow Conservancy purchased 328 acres along the Chewuch River: traditional territory of the mətxʷu /Methow People. In 2022 they returned it to the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation on behalf of the mətxʷu /Methow People. Now, xʷnámxʷnam/Hummingbird offers an important place for the mətxʷu /Methow Descendants to protect and sustain our knowledge, skills, and traditions in our homeland. This cultural programming—including food, dances, regalia, songs, arts, and crafts—and land stewardship is supporting the mətxʷu /Methow Descendants in strengthening connections with our traditional territory and cultural traditions; and ensuring that cultural knowledge endures across generations.

WITH COMMUNITY SUPPORT, THE mətxʷu /METHOW DESCENDANTS HAVE:



Formalized a board of decision-makers for strategic planning, coordinating events and classes, spending priorities, and other choices regarding the use of and visitation to xʷnámxʷnam. With the Methow Conservancy and the Methow Valley Interpretive Center serving as fiscal sponsor and supportive allies, the mətxʷu Descendants decide which grants to apply for, determine how to spend grants we receive, approve or deny photo use requests, and have a voice in which groups are invited to visit the land and buildings.



Increased engagement by developing a website, mailing list, and social media presence. The website provides information about our group and our work, lists events, hosts a gallery of photos, and offers a way to submit inquiries. Online platforms allow mətxʷu and other Native members who can't be present at all gatherings to remain engaged with the mətxʷu Descendants' activities. Social media is an especially effective way to provide information and offer opportunities to engage.



Created some financial independence through successful grant applications and community philanthropy. Currently, the work of the mətxʷu Descendants is supported by Icicle Fund, the Methow Valley Fund, and community members. Having a pool of discretionary funds has been critical to the mətxʷu Descendants' success in establishing xʷnámxʷnam as a place for our work and community-building.



Established a workshop space at xʷnámxʷnam/Hummingbird where we can teach traditional arts. In addition to purchasing supplies (tule, rawhide, awls, needles, yarn, jute, peeling tools, beads, thread, etc), the mətxʷu /Methow Descendants replaced the white carpet in the great room of one of the houses with vinyl plank flooring, which is much more appropriate for an arts teaching area in terms of durability, ease of cleaning, etc. We also purchased sturdy work tables and chairs to use for teaching and social purposes.



Hosted two Root Feasts at xʷnámxʷnam, in 2024 and 2025. Linked to season cycles and the arrival of spring, a Root Feast celebrates digging the first roots from the ground each season, with camas and bitterroot serving as the centerpiece of these traditional foods, augmented by venison and salmon. The 2024 Root Feast at xʷnámxʷnam was, according to a mətxʷu Elder, the first Root Feast to be held in the upper Methow Valley since the 1880s, when the mətxʷu People were forcibly removed from our traditional land and relocated to the reservation near Omak.



Raised awareness about the importance of land back efforts and connecting with homelands and traditions. For example, members of the Chelan Douglas Land Trust board and staff visited xʷnámxʷnam, talked to mətxʷu Elders, heard about habitat restoration projects the tribal Fish and Wildlife Dept. is planning on, and learned about the land return and subsequent activities. They will use what they learned to inform their own conservation work. The Indian Land Tenure Foundation also visited xʷnámxʷnam.



Hosted field trips for school groups. Youth are learning about the culture of the mətxʷu through field trips to xʷnámxʷnam. In addition to students from the Paschal Sherman Indian School on the Colville Reservation, other school groups to spend time learning at xʷnámxʷnam include Liberty Bell Junior High, The Methow Valley Independent Learning Center, The Bush School, and Whitman College.



Established more native plantings at xʷnámxʷnam. With the help of community volunteers, mətxʷu Elders and others planted chokecherry, serviceberry, elderberry, rose, willow, and other shrubs. These are plants that Native people have used for millennia for food and cultural work. Planting the shrubs was an important step in reestablishing the presence of the plants that previously grew at xʷnámxʷnam in abundance.



Held two Open Houses in 2024 and 2025 that welcomed 200 members of the Native and non-Native community from the Methow Valley and the Colville Reservation to xʷnámxʷnam. Visitors toured the buildings and grounds, looked at examples of traditional arts, learned about traditional foods, and watched and learned as mətxʷu Descendants and other Colville members demonstrated traditional activities, from cooking salmon to peeling tipi poles to making cordage to preparing cedar bark.



Presented at the Colville Business Council. In April 2025, about 10 mətxʷu Descendants presented to the Culture Committee of the Colville Business Council, which is the governing body of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. We described the group's background and work; explained alliances and partnerships; shared a financial report; and outlined goals for 2025.



Strengthened our voice as a people. A core group of mətxʷu Descendants gathers each month to chart a course forward for our use of the property and to address needs in coordination with representatives from the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. For more than a century, the mətxʷu People did not own land in the upper Methow Valley, thereby limiting our connection to the land that has been our home since time immemorial. Now, we have both a land base and a voice in our homelands.

Photos: John Sirois, Crystal Miller, and non-Native allies.



Learn more about the mətxʷu Descendants at www.methowdescendants.org. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook.



Additional cultural and governmental information about the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation: www.colvilletribes.com