

The Methow Valley is graced with an eclectic collection of homes and vacation cabins, ranging from craftsman to DIY. If you are one of the lucky folks considering building a dream house here, whether you are planning to do the work yourself or hire a contractor, you'll want to consider some important design and site criteria.

Proper design and construction ensure that your home is comfy and energy-efficient across our wide-ranging seasons and weather conditions: from 110° summer days to -20° winter nights; and from persistent winter snows to the threat of wildfire. You may want to spend all four seasons on your land before building, to get a sense of summer and winter sun exposure, wind and snow loads, spring runoff and drainage, and privacy considerations. Satellite imagery and soil and topographic maps, which the Methow Conservancy is happy to provide, are great resources for planning.

building from the **GROUND UP**



You'll also want to consider how the construction process and the placement of your driveway, outbuildings, and your new home will affect local wildlife, native plant communities, nearby waterways, the night skies, and your human neighbors.

You can:

- * Protect local waterways and wetlands by identifying the 100-year-flood plain and building 150-200 feet or more from the shoreline;
- * Prevent erosion and invasive weeds by minimizing the area of disturbed ground around your home site and by contouring your driveway with the slope (not zig-zagging across a hillside). Replant any disturbed areas as soon as possible with native, drought-tolerant grasses, and keep a lookout for weeds in those areas.
- * Preserve the scenic beauty that we all enjoy by siting your home away from ridgelines and ensuring your roofline is below the skyline when viewed from the valley floor. Consider roof and siding colors that blend into the natural landscape and use native plants to camouflage your home. Try sitting on your neighbor's porch, and consider how the view would look from there!
- * Shield our night skies and nocturnal wildlife by selecting exterior lighting that aims downwards, can be used with a timer or motion sensor, and provides no more lighting than you need.
- * Protect your home by creating defensible spaces and following Firewise building guidelines.

We know choosing a site for your new home that honors the land and your neighbors is a big task. But consider the planning process as an opportunity to discover the unique ecosystems and neighborhoods that you will get to be a part of!

We invite you to visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor for additional information about site selection, Firewise practices, and weed management.