





The Good Neighbor
HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Methow Valley!

You've decided to make the Methow Valley a part of your life. It's a special place: beautiful, rugged, fragile, resilient and complex. People have been caring for the Methow Valley for thousands of years, since the ancestors of the present-day Methow Tribe worked with the land to find food, shelter, joy, and community. Today, we strive to continue that tradition of being a good neighbor to the land, wildlife, and each other.



The first edition of the Good Neighbor Handbook was written by valley resident Katharine Bill in 1999. It was a big hit. Katharine was careful to craft a piece that was both welcoming and informative, inviting curiosity without passing judgment. We've tried hard to keep that balance in this third update.

Thanks to input from local community leaders, naturalists, builders, and many of your future neighbors, this Handbook offers useful tips to valley newcomers who want to learn about, explore, and help us cherish this special place. The printed Handbook offers only a brief introduction to a variety of topics, but we've also created an extended online resource guide for those who want to dig deeper:

www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor

Enjoy!



The Methow Conservancy has been the Methow Valley's nonprofit land trust and conservation education organization since 1996. Our mission is to inspire people to care for the land, and we work to:

- * **Protect healthy land, clean water, fresh air, critical habitats and open spaces.** Collaborating with private landowners, we've permanently protected more than 10,000 acres in the Methow Valley.
- * **Connect people to the land.** We offer a wide array of educational outings, classes, presentations and meaningful volunteer opportunities for people to get to know this landscape, ecosystem, and each other.
- * **Support local agriculture.** We believe in a bright future for agriculture in the Methow Valley. In addition to protecting agricultural lands, we also provide diverse programs and support for farmers and ranchers.

We believe that all who come to know the Methow Valley share a love for the land and for this community. The more we get to know this place, the more we come to love it -- and the more we recognize that it's up to each of us to find ways to care for, support, and protect the things we love most about this valley. Thank you for joining us!

who we are...

Learn more at www.methowconservancy.org





context

The Methow Valley is 70 miles long, reaching from Washington Pass to the Columbia River. Flanked on three sides by the Cascade Mountains, the valley holds 1.2 million acres within its watershed.

Approximately 90% of the Methow Valley is public land, managed primarily by the US Forest Service, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Private land is concentrated along the Methow River and its tributaries.

The Methow Valley is the traditional homeland of members of the Salish-speaking Methow Tribe, some of whom continue to make a home here. The Methow Tribe lost access to their ancestral territory in 1879 under an agreement that was negotiated without their consent, and members were forcefully moved to the Colville Reservation by the United States government in 1886.

White settlers began arriving in the late 1800's and made a living from logging, mining, farming, and ranching. The valley was forever changed by the opening of Highway 20 in 1972, which provided a direct route, albeit seasonal, from the west side of the Cascades to the Methow Valley.

Today, the driving economic forces are tourism and agriculture. The Methow Valley is home to approximately 6,400 full-time and 4,400 part-time residents. Each year, more than 500,000 (and rising) people visit the area.

Visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor for more links and information about the history of the Methow Valley.



Most of us are drawn to the Methow Valley because of its incredible beauty and wildness. And those who linger discover that what they treasure most is a community that cares about each other and about protecting the wild, rural nature of this place.

For thousands of years, members of the Methow Tribe have cared for the rivers, forests, and shrub-steppe habitats of the Methow Valley. And in more recent history, our community has been called upon to act:

- * In the 1970's a major, downhill ski resort was planned on Sandy Butte in Mazama. Community members led by the Methow Valley Citizens Council and other environmental organizations fought the development and won. The "ski wars" kick-started an era of thoughtful land use planning in the upper Methow Valley, and the Methow Valley turned instead to developing what has become one of the nation's largest cross-country ski trail systems.
- * In 2016, a Canadian mining company made preparations for an open-pit copper mine in the headwaters of the Methow River. The community again found its collective voice and stopped the mine, meanwhile protecting more than 300,000 acres from future mining threats.



a legacy of CARING



The Methow Valley has not stayed wild and pastoral by accident. This is a community that believes it has a say in the future. Certainly, not everyone may agree on what the future should look like – and hearty conversation and respectful disagreement are welcome. But the Methow Valley is a place where people engage, learn, think deeply, collaborate, and know that loving a place means acting to care for it.

Caring for this place also means caring for the people who live here. The Methow Valley is not a fairytale. There is real economic struggle for many families here. As this valley grows, it will be up to all of us to work together to care for the land and to also ensure a bright future for all of its residents.

your WILD *neighbors*



For many who come to the Methow Valley, getting to know our hoofed, pawed, finned, or feathered neighbors is a priority.

Bordered by the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth and Pasayten Wilderness Areas, the Methow Valley is an important corridor connecting habitats and wild expanses that many iconic species, such as the mule deer and gray wolf, need in order to thrive. Our mountain-fed streams and rivers provide the cool, clear waters on which many threatened and endangered fish species depend. The range of habitat types within our valley invites a stunning diversity of resident and migratory birds.

Whether you are recreating in the backcountry or landscaping your own backyard, it's important to consider your impact on the places these creatures all call home. In the age of social media, it's especially important to think carefully about over-sharing the secret, secluded spots that these animals depend on.

Learning to live with your wild neighbors can be an adjustment. Inevitably, you will find a packrat nesting under your car hood, a rattlesnake napping under your wood pile, a marmot industriously excavating around your foundation, or a well-intentioned flicker boring a hole in the side of your house. Remember that these small nuisances are part of the adventure, and that you can find creative ways to peacefully coexist with both the charismatic and the bothersome wildlife.

We invite you to get to know your wild neighbors more intimately, by joining one of the Methow Conservancy's regular seminars or guided hikes, or by checking out additional resources at www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor.



living by WATER



The Methow Valley receives only about 15 to 20 inches of average annual precipitation, and its aquifers are replenished largely by summer melt of the snowpack. As the climate changes, the timing and amount of water flowing from the mountains to the valley floor is expected to shift, affecting residents, recreationalists, farmers, native plants, and wildlife.

WATER FOR PEOPLE

You can help share this limited resource by checking your home's or yard's plumbing for leaks, landscaping with drought-tolerant natives, and watering at night or with drip irrigation. On some properties, it may not be legally possible to drill new domestic wells -- so if you are hoping to purchase property and build in the Methow, it's important to do careful research before buying.

WATER FOR WILDLIFE

Biologists estimate that riparian (streamside or wetland) habitats make up only one percent of the land in the Methow watershed, yet 80 percent of wildlife species depend on these habitats. Riparian grasses, shrubs, and trees play an important role in cooling water temperatures and preventing erosion, runoff and stream sedimentation. Cool, clean waters are especially critical to several species of threatened or endangered fish.

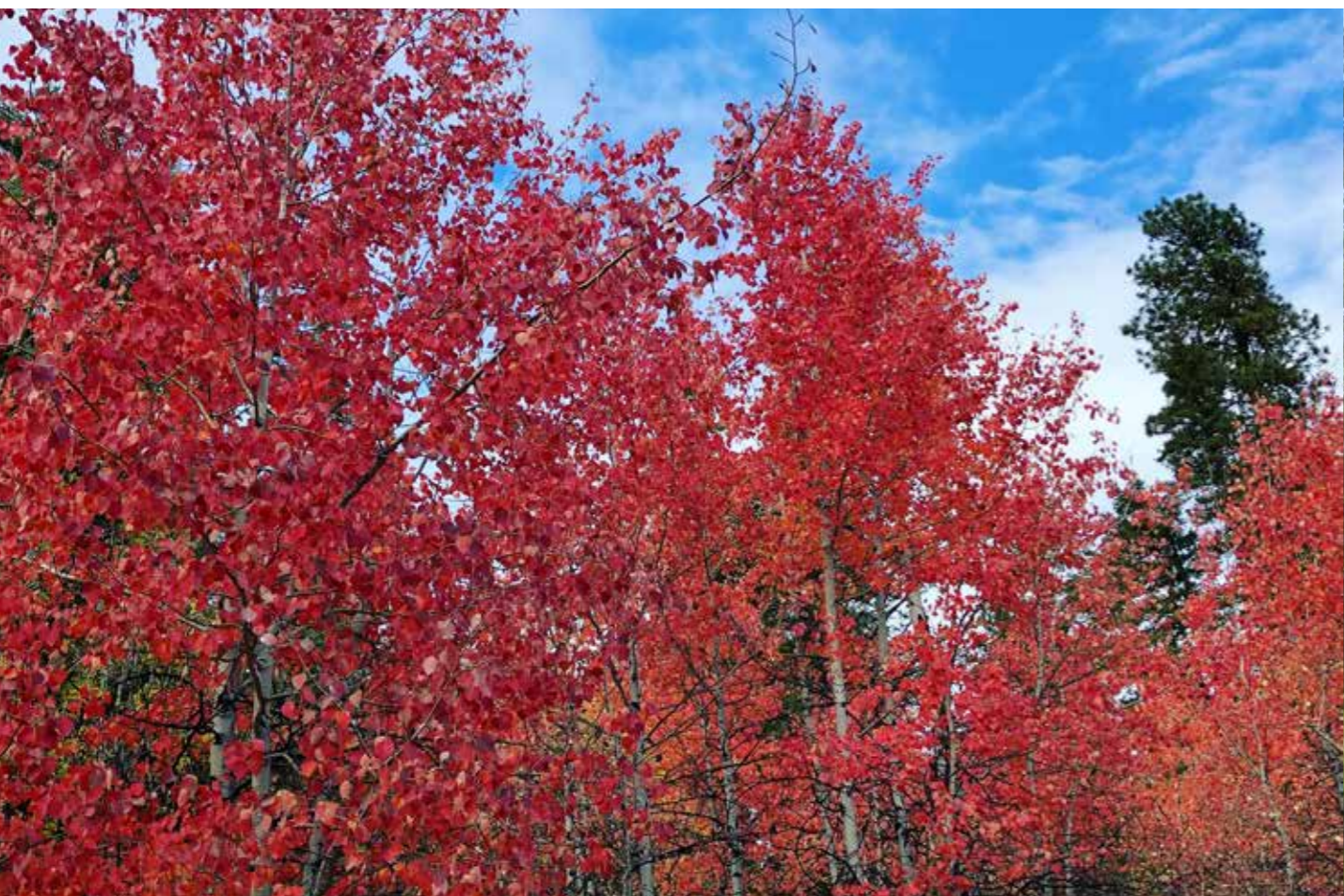
If you have riparian areas on your property, you can keep them wild and healthy, and support the countless birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and fish that depend upon them. Avoid mowing too close, cutting down trees, or building roads or structures near the water. Ensure your septic system is well maintained. Aquatic life is very vulnerable to chemicals: consider going organic, or be sure to leave a buffer zone between sprayed areas and streams, and avoid using sprays or fertilizers during windy or wet, rainy periods. Keep livestock out of streams and marshy areas with wildlife-safe fence. Consider re-planting native riparian species in areas that may have been disturbed by previous uses.

WATER FOR FARMS

Without irrigation water, there would be very few farms in the Methow Valley. Historically, farms used a network of open ditches and flood irrigation to deliver water to their fields but have upgraded to increasingly efficient systems for their orchards, pastures, hay fields, and other crops. Many properties that are no longer farmed still have irrigation rights, but these water rights must be maintained through regular, beneficial use.

We invite you to learn more about enhancing riparian habitats on your property, preserving your irrigation water rights, and meeting domestic water needs by visiting www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor.





these WOODS *are lovely*

Methow trees give us many gifts. Cool shade, fragrant smells, warmth for our houses, food and shelter for our wild neighbors, clean air and water, a sense of peace and joy in their presence. Black cottonwoods and quaking aspens inhabit streamsides and marshy areas of the Methow Valley. Ponderosa pines and Douglas fir populate the lower elevation forests, and at higher elevations, spruce and larch also grace the mountainsides.

Forest ecologists believe that low-intensity fires burned through low-elevation Methow forests every five to 15 years, clearing understory vegetation and leaving the large, widely-spaced trees. Wide spacing also helps trees resist the spread of insects and disease and allows more rain and snow to reach the forest floor, replenishing soil moisture and underground aquifers.

If you are lucky enough to own forested land, you can support the health of your forest through a variety of Firewise and forest treatments. We encourage you to reach out to the Okanogan Conservation District or the Department of Natural Resources for help and technical expertise. Both agencies have programs to help landowners improve the health of forest habitats and reduce wildfire risk. Visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor for links and more information!

shrub-steppe

The shrub-steppe is a hidden jewel of the Methow Valley and offers something new in every season. Walk the neighborhood paths in spring, and you will be greeted by new blooms each time: yellow bells, shooting stars, arrowleaf balsamroot, lupines, lomatium and so many others. Enjoying the shrub-steppe in summer requires rising early to beat the heat, but it's well worth the opportunity to catch a glimpse of our local songbirds, including meadowlarks, phoebes, kinglets, sparrows and warblers. By July, the native wheatgrasses, bluegrasses, and fescues have turned from green to golden, completing their seed production and entering a period of dormancy. When the rains return in the fall, you can almost smell the soil awakening -- as the mosses, lichens, and mycorrhizae that hold the delicate soil crust together drink in the long-awaited moisture. In winter, herds of mule deer gather on the shrub-steppe, recovering after a long migration down from the mountaintops.

Over 60% of Washington State's delicate shrub-steppe habitat has been converted by development and other land-use activities. If you are lucky enough to own or rent land in this unique and delicate ecosystem, there is much to learn about being a good steward of the native plants, fragile soils, and diverse wildlife that call it home.



Visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor
for some great educational resources!

getting to know your



neighbors

Like your furry, feathered, or scaled neighbors, you may find that your human neighbors in the Methow Valley are quite diverse and often rather unique. Some will shower you with kindness, others will perplex you, and some will drive you a little bit crazy. But sooner or later -- when you get stuck in your first snowbank, experience your first wildfire, or endure a days-long power outage -- you will come to lean on all of them.

One of the best features of the Methow Valley is a community simply not big enough for echo-chambers or silos. You'll find that your neighbors have wide-ranging backgrounds, personalities, and political beliefs. Perhaps by choice, or out of necessity, you will come to appreciate them for their best qualities and for what you can find in common.

Being a good neighbor in the Methow Valley means holding an open mind and opening your heart to those around you. There are many ways you can get to know your neighbors, including shopping at local businesses, attending educational seminars or workshops, or volunteering with organizations that serve the community.

Here are a few more tips on being a good neighbor:

VOLUNTEER - There are more than 40 nonprofit organizations in the Methow Valley doing important work. You'll find that many of them offer services that in other places might be provided by governments. The valley's nonprofits keep our community together, and they rely on people who love this place to volunteer and support them. The Volunteer Methow website (www.volunteermethow.org) is a great place to learn about these organizations and get involved.

BUY LOCAL - We love our local businesses, and we want our friends and neighbors to stay in business. You can find just about everything you need in the Methow Valley -- and in the process, you help the local economy and get to know a local business owner.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE - In addition to being our local recycling center in Twisp, Methow Recycles organizes innovative programs like the Take-It-or-Leave-It Tent and Repair Cafes, which help community members find, fix or share items like tools, appliances and building materials. The Senior Center in Twisp is also great for sharing or finding gently-used goods.

BE A GOOD LAND STEWARD - Whether you rent or own land, you can care for the land around your home. Pull invasive weeds, plant pollinators and drought-tolerant native plants, use water efficiently, and remember that you share your land with wildlife.

ASK FIRST - No one expects you to arrive in the Methow and know everything you'll need to thrive! People here are happy to share their experience and knowledge with you. Simply reach out and ask - someone will help you learn more!

BE CURIOUS - Attend a presentation at the Methow Valley Interpretive Center and learn about the original Methow People; spend an afternoon at the historical Shafer Museum; join a hike and learn about native plants with the Methow Conservancy; keep up on local events by reading the weekly Methow Valley News.

BE PATIENT - Chances are, things will be different here than wherever you came from. Resist the temptation to make this valley bend to your expectations. Methow time might be a bit slower than what you are used to, but that can be a good thing!

CHOOSE TO BE FRIENDLY -The Methow Valley isn't perfect by any means, but it is generally friendly. When in doubt, choose to be kind!

Visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor for links and more resources.

recreation



Whether you love to hike, bike, bird-watch, ski, snowshoe, horseback ride, snowmobile, climb, paddle, camp, hunt, forage or fish -- the Methow Valley has something for literally everyone. With over one million acres of public land to lose oneself in, the Methow Valley has become an outdoor destination for hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

As a community that strives to make outdoor recreation welcoming and accessible, we've also had to grapple with the impact of rapidly increasing use of our wildest places.

Tips for enjoying the great outdoors:

- * Be friendly! We all appreciate exchanging a quick hello to those we pass on the trail;
- * Keep your boots (or tires) on designated trails;
- * Be aware of multi-use trail etiquette: bikers should yield to hikers and horseback riders, and hikers should yield to horseback riders;
- * Help our local ranchers and leave gates open or closed, exactly the way you found them;
- * Be respectful of private property that public trails might pass through;
- * Use restrooms at trailheads, and if you must go in the woods, make sure to bury your waste 6 inches deep and at least 200 feet from any open water;
- * Keep your dogs close or leashed to reduce their impact to deer, birds, and other wildlife;
- * Avoid spreading noxious weed seeds: before and after your hike. Check your socks, clothing and pet's fur for hitchhikers;
- * If you need to share your excursion on social media, consider using the opportunity to set an example of good stewardship of our collective wild places.





for the love of FARMS

Agriculture in the Methow has a rich past and a vibrant future. Historically, the valley floor was dotted with family-run farms. Today, there are many dozens of thriving, small farms still producing livestock, dairy, hay, orchard fruits, grains, and diverse vegetables. Roughly 9,000 of the valley's privately-owned irrigated and dryland acres are currently used for farming and ranching. This working, agricultural landscape is part of what makes the Methow Valley so special.

The valley's unique rural character is shaped by the dedicated individuals who are up dawn to dusk, stewarding the land and raising wholesome food for us. Being a good neighbor to farms requires a certain amount of curiosity and tolerance for the agricultural way of life. It's also important to know what obligations you have as a resident living in open range or nearby to commercial orchards.

The best part of living among working farms, however, is enjoying the bounty! There are many ways to buy the diverse and delicious farm offerings: visit the Saturday Twisp Farmers Market, sign up for a weekly CSA, order a meat share, ask for local produce at the grocery store, look for local items on the menu at your favorite Methow eatery, or browse the Methow Grown Farm & Ranch directory to buy directly off the farm.

Visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor for links and more resources!



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.

dark skies

Looking up at the valley's night sky and dazzling constellations instills a sense of awe and wonder. In Okanogan County, we are lucky to have some of the darkest skies in the lower 48 states.



The choices we make about the lighting around our homes impacts our collective enjoyment of the night sky, as well as next-door neighbors and nocturnal wildlife. Poorly-positioned outdoor lights can create glare, obscuring the stars and also making it harder for nocturnal animals to thrive. These are easy problems to solve:

AIM LIGHTS DOWN. Purchase lights that are shielded and direct to the ground, where you need it. You can also retrofit existing lights. Ideally, you don't want to see a bare bulb when a light is illuminated at night.

USE ONLY THE LIGHTING YOU NEED. Take a tour of the outside of your house at night and assess where you need light for safety - and where you might have more light than you need. Consider if your lights are shining upwards or towards your neighbors.

USE TIMERS WHERE YOU CAN, or consider motion-sensor lights.

To learn more about light pollution, dark-sky-friendly lighting, and the Methow Dark Sky Coalition, visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor.

Fire is a powerful force that shapes the ecosystems of the Methow Valley. Historically, fires were frequent but less severe than the more recent megafires caused by climate change and a hundred years of fire-suppression policy. Fire plays a vital role in shifting the balance among plant communities, allowing for cycles of diverse species to thrive or regenerate. Native People understood fire's fine balance and used it as a tool for stewarding the land. Today, public land managers also use prescribed burning (as well as forest thinning) to reduce the extent and severity of future wildfires.

living with FIRE



Coexisting with fire requires landowners to be proactive. You can protect your home and property by following Firewise practices, creating defensible spaces, and conducting fuels mitigation on your forest or shrub-steppe. It's also important to be aware of common human activities that could spark a devastating wildfire -- such as parking in tall grass or running a mower or chainsaw during hot, dry weather conditions.

Make an emergency plan ahead of each "fire season," and sign up for emergency alerts. Prepare for smoky periods by having in-home air filters and N95 masks on hand. Know where your family and your pets will go in case of an evacuation; have an emergency point of contact; and make a checklist of the most important things you can grab quickly. Power, phone, and internet may go out, so you'll need to be aware of your surroundings and decide for yourself if it's time to leave. It's okay to lean on your neighbors during these moments, and you'll want to check on those who might need a little extra help, too.

Please visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor for links and more resources!

climate



The impacts of climate change are wide ranging: hotter, drier and longer summers; earlier snow melt and lower late-season stream flows; increased risk of wildfire and other extreme weather events. The changing climate touches many of the things that we hold dearest: our snows and waters, our fresh air, our forests and shrub-steppe, our farms, and our wild neighbors. As climate change intensifies, local infrastructure will be stressed, and livelihoods will be at risk. We must work to understand the diverse impacts to our community at a level of detail that allows us to prepare and adapt. Thankfully, many individuals, organizations, Tribes, and agencies are already hard at work.

Some are going even farther, working to be part of the solution to the global climate crisis -- reducing carbon emissions or looking for ways to create carbon "sinks" in the Methow. Many are already putting their ingenuity to work -- and so can you!

Please visit www.methowconservancy.org/goodneighbor to learn more about climate efforts underway in the Methow Valley.

As you look out across the Methow Valley, know that it will be changed in the decades to come. You can both choose to love this valley for what it becomes and choose to play a role in its resilient future.





Welcome! and **THANK YOU!**

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide, and for allowing us to share our love of the Methow Valley with you! We hope this guide has piqued your curiosity and invited you to learn more.

We think you will enjoy discovering this valley and getting to know the community. We hope that you'll find joy and wonder in getting to know all of your neighbors.

The Methow Valley is a place that gives so much to each of us, and we hope you will be inspired to join us in caring for it.

Welcome home!

Photo Credits

Page 2: Dave Sabold Loves this Valley. *Methow Valley News*

Page 3: Studhorse. *Paul Pinsky*

Page 4: Brown Aspen Leaf. *Mary Kiesau*

Page 5: Methow Headwaters Campaign in Barn. *Benjamin Drummond*

Page 6: Radiating Skies. *Denny O'Callaghan*

Page 7: Methow Conservancy Truck. *Emily Chenel*

Page 8: Glacial Methow. *Denny O'Callaghan*

Page 9: Homestream Park. *Jason Paulsen*

Page 10: Sea of Season Change. *Jason Paulsen*

Page 11: Cider Squeeze. *Mary Kiesau*

Page 12: Mule Deer in Spring Green Up. *Jason Paulsen*

Page 13: River Otter With Fish. *Janet Bauer*

Page 14: Methow River Side Channel. *Mary Kiesau*

Page 15: Water. *Mary Kiesau*

Page 16: Red Aspens. *Jason Paulsen*

Page 17: Ponderosa Stand. *Mary Kiesau*

Page 19: Shrub-steppe Hills. *Daniel Senner*

Page 20: Post Fire Fence Repair. *Jason Paulsen*

Page 22: North Cascade Magic. *Jason Paulsen*

Page 23: XC Skier. *Mary Kiesau*

Page 24: Double Tree Farms. *Rachelle Weymuller*

Page 25: Tomatoes in Hand. *Sasha Swerdloff*

Page 26: Building a Methow Home. *Jim Salter*

Page 28: Ponderosa Star. *Teri Pieper*

Page 29: Starry Sky. *Teri Pieper*

Page 30: A Turn for the Worse. *Jason Paulsen*

Page 31: Burn at Wenner Lakes. *Mary Kiesau*

Page 32: Dry River Bed. *Jason Paulsen*

Page 33: Feeling the Soil. *Sasha Swerdloff*

Page 34: Western Bluebird. *Paul Pinsky*

Page 36: Early Winter Spires. *Jason Paulsen*

