

# VALLEY VOICE



The Newsletter of the Methow Valley Citizens' Council

SINCE 1974

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FALL 2009

okanogan county

## Environmental protections weakened in comp plan

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO REVIEW PLAN NEXT

**A**T ITS SEPTEMBER 28 MEETING, the nine members of the Okanogan County Planning Commission conducted their final deliberations on the comprehensive plan and voted to pass the plan on to the county commissioners, who will hold their own hearings and discussions and take public comment. They intend to have three or four meetings in different parts of the county early next year.

In addition to the comp plan, the planning staff and planning commissioners have completed a revised zoning ordinance (which applies the principles of the comp plan on the ground) and a new subdivision and cluster ordinance (designed to preserve open space by putting houses closer together). These documents have also been sent to the board of county commissioners.

The planning commissioners will now turn their attention to two important environmental documents—the Critical Areas Ordinance and the Shorelines Master Program—and will hold public hearings on them.

### Among the major changes in the comp plan:

- Much of the county along highways, and various other parcels outside of existing towns, has been given one- to three-acre urban zoning.
- Agricultural Resource Lands, intended to protect ag lands of long-term commercial significance, do not cover any irrigated acreage and allow non-agricultural commercial development.
- Outside of the Methow above Gold Creek, the new cluster ordinance allows a 300% density increase. It requires no minimum acreage for parcels of five acres or

less. Above Gold Creek in School District 350, a minimum of 10 acres is required for clustered residential development.

- Night-time lighting on all new construction is required to be shielded in all zones.
- Zoning for the Methow remains essentially the same, thanks in large part to Dave Schulz, the one Methow resident on the planning commissioner.
- A huge Twisp Urban Growth Area has been allowed to take in the flood plain north of Twisp, and it extends south almost to the Highway 20 intersection, which could encourage sprawl along Highway 153.
- The prohibition in the current zoning code on construction in the flood plain has been eliminated. Planning director Perry Huston has said regulations regarding the flood plain would be incorporated in the Shorelines Master Program and Critical Areas Ordinance.

As the examples in the chart on pages 4 and 5 show, many of the goals and policies contained in the current Upper Methow and Methow Valley plans, as well as those articulated by the neighborhood groups from the Middle Methow and Lower Valley, have been significantly altered or eliminated in the new comp plan.

It is hard for many Methow residents—and indeed, for many people throughout the county—to recognize their visions for the future of their communities in the current draft. It almost seems to have been written for some other area. The plan contains little mention of the recreation economy and environmental considerations that have been central to both Methow plans, in force for more than 30 years.

There current draft contains no meaningful goals and policies for rural lands and the environment, and many of the stated goals are so general as to be meaningless. Goals and policies that address the environment lessen existing environmental protections.

Huston has maintained throughout the process that public input will be integrated into one, countywide plan, but that input—at least from the Methow groups—is just not there at present.

Another important concern is the maps, which have been extremely difficult to read and plagued with inaccuracies.

Will these major problems be corrected before final adoption of the comp plan next summer? As the plan goes to the county commissioners for review, Okanogan County citizens have another opportunity for their voice to be heard. Attend a hearing, write a letter, or call county commissioner Bud Hover to provide feedback about how you want the county to look in the future.

The planning commissioners are expected to begin the next phase of the update by reviewing the Critical Areas Ordinance at their October 26 meeting at 6 p.m. in the commissioners' hearing room in Okanogan. They will also provide an explanation of the new Shorelines Master Program, which regulates setbacks from rivers and lakes and permitted uses in the shoreline area.

Public testimony will be taken on the Shorelines Master Program on November 30 at 6 p.m. in the commissioners' hearing room in Okanogan. Hearings before the county commissioners have not been set. ■

## Court ruling finds for citizens; requires new environmental review

For decades, appeals brought before the Okanogan County commissioners and the local courts on the basis of impacts to the environment and improper procedures by county officials have had little success locally. Citizen groups have often had to appeal to hearings boards or higher courts at the state and federal levels (including the U.S. Supreme Court in the Early Winters case) to receive fair treatment under the law and due consideration of important impacts to the environment.

### Such improper procedures over the years have included at least:

- last-minute information introduced by the county only at hearings
- exclusion of testimony and statements by agency officials and citizens
- unfair treatment of appellants
- erroneous interpretations of the law and violations of the State or National Environmental Policy Acts (SEPA and NEPA)
- claims that the absence of objections by agencies such as the state Department of Wildlife and the Department of Ecology equate to approval of a development by these agencies

But there is recent good news at the local level. In a September 20, 2009, oral decision in Okanogan County Superior Court, Judge Jack Burchard ruled in favor of three citizens who had appealed a decision of the Okanogan County board of county commissioners under the Land Use Planning Act (LUPA).

Jessica McNamara, Robert Harris, and Tom Black, who live in Eagle Canyon near Tonasket, appealed the commissioners' decision to deny their earlier SEPA appeal challenging the Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS) decision on Tonasket Homesteading LLC's Eagle Canyon Project. The commissioners' decision was reversed and the proponent must prepare a new environmental checklist. Planning director Perry Huston, the responsible official, is required to prepare a new mitigated determination.

Judge Burchard's oral decision addressed these problems in addition to confirming Ecology's restrictions on projects claiming excessive water rights from exempt wells

(wells not requiring a permit from Ecology). The impact of exempt wells upon water supplies is an ongoing and increasingly large issue in the Washington and Okanogan County.

In his oral decision, Judge Burchard found that under state law, "The plaintiffs have established that the commissioners engaged in unlawful procedures and their decision is an erroneous interpretation of law."

### Among the illegal procedures and unfair treatment of citizens cited by Judge Burchard are:

**Airport Safety:** In his SEPA comments, Mr. Timmerman of the Washington Department of Transportation objected to impacts of the project. Mr. Timmerman was not given the opportunity to review the last-minute mitigation submitted at the appeal hearing and therefore could not ascertain its effectiveness.

**Access Routes:** The court decided that the comments made by Robert Harris in his testimony were not invalid, as claimed by county commissioner Mary Lou Peterson, but should have been considered. They had validity as a result of the last-minute mitigation submitted at the appeal hearing.

**Standing for Robert Harris and Tom Black:** The court found that although Harris and Black satisfied three of the four requirements for standing required to file an appeal under LUPA, they had been excluded unfairly. The fact that the county had excluded them from standing based on a technicality, while excusing a procedural slip of their own, violated the perception of fairness and the concept that "government should be scrupulously just in dealing with its citizens".

### Burchard also found that county officials had ignored and misinterpreted agency comments on water supply:

Procedurally the county failed to follow the county code requiring that preliminary plat applications first be approved by the Okanogan County Public Health Department for water adequacy.

J.J. Bellinger of the Public Health Department had found there could be only one withdrawal (not eight, as proposed) from exempt wells. This was also the clearly stated opinion of Ecology, set out in a strongly worded March 23, 2009, letter by Ecology staffer Mark Schuppe to county planning director Perry Huston (and copied to the proponents' attorney).

Schuppe's letter was written in response to a county planner's statement, made at the hearing on the project, that Ecology had granted permission for eight exempt wells. When Schuppe saw a reference to the planner's statement in the *Okanogan Valley Gazette-Tribune*, he wrote the letter to explain that Ecology had in fact not allowed eight wells at Eagle Canyon.

As a result, Burchard found that the county commissioners had believed—in error—that Ecology had approved eight exempt wells, when in fact this was based on hearsay. In his ruling, Burchard cited a decision by the Attorney General that states that a group of wells drilled by the same person(s) at or about the same time, in the same area, and for the same project, should be considered a single withdrawal and would therefore not be exempt from the state's restrictions on domestic wells. Under this law, the total amount of water withdrawn may not exceed 5,000 gallons per day or be used to water more than one-half an acre of lawn or garden.

This means that the developers of Eagle Canyon do not have the right to drill eight wells exempt from the 5,000-gallon daily maximum; rather, they can only withdraw that amount of water from one well.

### Burchard also cited the county's failure to address substantive environmental issues. Among the concerns he noted are:

- the cumulative effects of the projected water withdrawals on other aspects of the environment, including animal and plant life
- the presence of a seasonal spring in Eagle Canyon
- inadequate consideration of wildlife

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## Interpreting common acronyms (Reprinted from *Methow Valley Planning & Zoning for Dummies™*)

■ **FEDERAL** ■  
**CFR** Code of Federal Regulations  
**EPA** Environmental Protection Agency  
**ESA** Endangered Species Act  
**NEPA** National Environmental Policy Act

■ **STATE** ■  
**DNR** Department of Natural Resources  
**DOE** Department of Ecology

**EIS** Environmental Impact Statement  
**GMA** Growth Management Act  
**RCW** Revised Code of Washington  
**SEPA** State Environmental Policy Act  
**SMA** Shoreline Management Act  
**WAC** Washington Administrative Code

■ **COUNTY** ■  
**CAO** Critical Areas Ordinance

**DA** Development Agreement  
**DNS** Determination of Non-Significance  
**DS** Determination of Significance  
**LAMIRD** Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development  
**MDNS** Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance  
**PD** Planned Development  
**SAG** Shoreline Advisory Group  
**SMP** Shoreline Master Plan

### Court ruling calls for new environmental review

*continued from page 2*

displacement in the migration corridor and the effects on sharp-tail grouse

- the failure to note the discrepancy between the statement by the proponents in their environmental checklist that native vegetation would be protected and the fact this vegetation had already been extensively disturbed by alfalfa plantings.

*MVCC thanks McNamara, Black, and Harris for their personal time and expense in challenging the county on these issues and their attorney, Mr. Monnette, for his work. We also thank McNamara for supplying notes on the Judge's oral decision, on which this article is based. The court's order will be prepared by Mr. Monnette.*

The mission of the Methow Valley Citizens' Council is to preserve and protect the rural character of the Methow Valley



**METHOW VALLEY CITIZENS' COUNCIL**

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### State grants paid for public input on comp plan: Did we get our money's worth?

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, Okanogan County received three grants from Washington state's Department of Commerce (formerly the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development) to be used in developing public input in the process of revising the Critical Area Ordinance and updating the county's comprehensive plan. The three grants totaled \$125,000. Each grant was written and applied for with a slightly different result in mind, but in each case, the emphasis was the same: including the public in the important business of developing land-use policy within Okanogan County.

The first grant was developed and funded from July 1, 2006, through June 30, 2007, for \$33,000. It was intended to be used to review and revise the county's comprehensive plan in collaboration with the public and local towns and communities in consistency with the current requirements of the Growth Management Act and Critical Area Planning. The county project manager at that point in time was Sandy Cox.

The second grant was developed and funded for \$17,000 from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008, with the intent of continuing to work with neighborhood groups on consistency in reviewing and mapping Critical Area Ordinance/Best Available Science requirements. Current Okanogan County planning director Perry Huston was the project manager of record for this grant.

The third and largest grant was funded and utilized from October 27, 2007, through June 30, 2009. The grant totaled \$75,000 and was developed to review and revise Okanogan

County's existing comprehensive plan in collaboration with the public and surrounding jurisdictions so that the plan is consistent with the current county vision, other adopted planning efforts, and state law. Again, Perry Huston was the project manager.

In applying for this grant, the county said it would "Form groups representing each sub planning area. Groups will meet monthly identifying issues to address in the comprehensive plan. Draft vision statements and goals and policies" (August 2007 through September 2008). Additional language in the application states that the county would make necessary natural resource land and critical area designations, establish neighborhood groups and compose localized sub-planning area goals and policies in addition to the simultaneous countywide comprehensive plan update.

Inquiring minds might ask why the Upper Methow Valley Comprehensive Plan, last revised in 2000, and the Methow Valley Addendum from 1976 wouldn't be considered "other adopted planning efforts"? Why shouldn't the comp plan be required to reflect those prior planning efforts? An even more important question comes to mind: What happened to the goals and policies thoughtfully composed by the Upper and Middle Methow neighborhood groups and the Lower Valley Advisory Group?

The answer, unfortunately, is that these neighborhood efforts, paid for by state grant monies, have simply disappeared from the current comp plan update. They are not mentioned in the countywide

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# A partial comparison of 30 years of comprehensive planning

AS THE MVCC FALL '09 *Valley Voice* goes to print, it is difficult to set out exact comparisons of several lengthy documents or to present the totality of the differing views of county land-use governance and policies as applied to the Methow. This chart is intended, rather, as a vantage point from which to see how the best instincts and ideas for preserving the Methow 30 years ago have been retained and adapted for the future through the thoughtful ideas and documents produced by the neighborhood groups that provided input to the comp plan.

The chart also reveals how the language of the current county comprehensive plan update seems to repudiate that 30-year-old vision. In its current draft, the

comp plan update excludes virtually all references to the environment, clean air, clean water, wildlife, and recreation. It also fails to address land-use planning techniques that would assist the county in avoiding rural sprawl or in preserving vital irrigated agricultural land along river corridors. Ultimately, what is most troubling is how systematic these exclusions seem to be.

The following excerpts come from the 1976 Methow Valley Addendum to the comp plan (direct quotes and paraphrases where the original was overly complex), neighborhood group goals and policies (developed over the past two years at the direction of the county and submitted to the county as input for the comp plan) and, finally, the most recent draft of the comp plan.

	METHOW VALLEY PLAN (1976 ADDENDUM)	NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP GOALS & POLICIES (2008-09)	COUNTY COMP PLAN UPDATE DRAFT (2009)
<b>OVERALL GOALS</b>	In planning for growth and economic stability, protect low population density, natural beauty, clean air and water, forests, fields, and wildlife, as contributions to the high quality of life.	Preserve and protect the natural environment, clean air, water quality and quantity, fisheries, wildlife, agricultural lands, and open space.	Okanogan County recognizes the Constitutional protection of private property rights and the role the value of land plays in the retirement security of a generation of residents.
<b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACE</b>	<p>Clean air, clean water, the forests, the fields, the wildlife are all integral parts of the whole and have an important place in the planning process. Rivers are "unspoiled retreats" and "sanctuaries for fish and wildlife," so shorelines must be protected.</p> <p>Preserve open space in the form of agricultural lands, green belts, wildlife areas. Maximize the attractiveness of residential areas by retaining the rural character, feeling of openness and environmental quality of the valley. Encourage preservation, protection, enhancement and restoration of open space.</p> <p>Assure development will not be detrimental to the environment or place excessive cost on existing public facilities and services. Encourage new developments to locate close to existing community facilities and services.</p> <p>Signs should be limited in size, aesthetically pleasing and, where possible, be made of natural materials and illuminated indirectly.</p>	<p>Residents and visitors to the Lower Methow value rural character and open space that is the essence of rural character. Open space is essential for protection of wildlife habitat and water quality, as well as for preserving the value and character of historic rural landscapes.</p> <p>A natural ecosystem which is still intact and which continues to support native fish, plants, animals, insects and other forms of life which are part of this ecosystem; peacefulness; and a personal sense of well-being and safeness.</p> <p>Identify, prioritize, and designate open space for preservation, with an emphasis on larger parcels. Prevent sprawl and require that new growth and development be consistent with the policies of this plan.</p> <p>All lighting on private properties shall be shaded so that no light from any outdoor lighting shall be cast beyond the boundaries of the private property upon which the light is placed.</p>	<p>Not addressed other than through the state Shorelines Master Program and Critical Area Ordinance.</p> <p>"We further believe in the multi-use of our natural resources while assuring that the land will provide for future generations. Those who use the land today will accept the commitment to insure that renewable resources are replenished and consumable resources are used wisely." (<i>Countywide vision statement</i>)</p> <p>No requirement for building in proximity to existing services.</p> <p>Outdoor lighting for all new construction shall be directed downward and shielded to minimize potential glare to motorists and off-site residents. No exterior light with a direct source visible from a neighboring property shall be installed.</p>
<b>GROWTH MANAGEMENT</b>	Sprawling development results in higher costs in public services and facilities. Help assure that development will be an asset and that foreseeable adverse impacts will be minimized.	The rate of growth that we experience must be slow so that the elements of change can be integrated into the present environment and our lives without displacing or overwhelming the attributes we so highly value, which include: clean air; clean water; low pollution of all types (noise, light, air, water); strong and connected sense of community; low interpersonal conflict; low crime rate; large undeveloped areas of public land; large undeveloped areas of private land.	Commercial development is allowed in all zones.

**METHOW VALLEY PLAN  
(1976 ADDENDUM)**

**NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP  
GOALS & POLICIES (2008–09)**

**COUNTY COMP PLAN  
UPDATE DRAFT (2009)**

**UPLAND  
USE  
POLICIES**

Coordinate forest practices so as to minimize impacts on critical wildlife and fisheries areas.

Identify and prioritize forested areas and shrub-steppe lands for protection of critical areas. Avoid or minimize potential adverse impacts on critical wildlife & fisheries areas, environmentally sensitive areas, and designated natural resource lands.

Protect or enhance beaver ponds.

The following shall be permitted uses: harvest and processing of forest products; Agricultural activities including raising and processing of food and fiber as well as live-stock grazing; single family residential uses. Residential development is responsible for buffering from the impacts of surrounding permitted resource based activities; commercial tourism (hunting, fishing, trail systems, lodges, transient accommodations; i.e., retreat centers); mineral extraction; manufacturing that requires proximity to forest products.

**RESIDENTIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
POLICIES**

Encourage residential and second home developments to locate in proximity of existing community facilities and services.

Prohibit development designed for human habitation in the 100-year flood plain or subject to destruction from geologic hazards.

Insure that residential developments have minimal fiscal impact in terms of providing community facilities and services.

Subdivisions, planned developments, resorts and related types of developments shall only be located where such development is compatible with neighboring land uses and where required services exist or can be provided in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Require that project sponsors pay for and fully mitigate the public costs and the adverse impacts associated with new development, such as impacts on public services, roads, sewer and water systems, schools, emergency services.

Require new residential septic systems to be located outside channel mitigation zones.

A wide range of compatible uses should be identified with reliance on the permitting process to ensure compatibility with the surrounding uses and the historical characteristics of the neighboring area.

Development proposals shall be reviewed for impacts to the transportation system and conditions of approval will be identified to mitigate adverse impacts to current and future levels of services. Improvements will be required based on a proportionate share nexus to prevent onerous requirements on new development while at the same time avoiding unreasonable impacts to the existing tax base.

**COMMERCIAL  
POLICIES**

Prohibit strip development within the study area.

New commercial development should emphasize local ownership and be sized to serve the local community. Retail facilities greater than 10,000 sq. ft. shall not be permitted [no big-box stores]. Strip development shall not be permitted.

Retail Trade, also tied in the five-year study as the second leading industry in our area. This is due to the expansion of the Wal-Mart Supercenter, the opening of Home Depot, Game Shop, the Dollar Store, Starbucks, as well as many of our local retail businesses diversifying their products to make them unique to the counties [sic] retail market.

**INDUSTRIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
POLICIES**

Confine industrial development to a limited number of areas.

Permit industrial development having obnoxious features only upon the issuance of a conditional use permit.

Permit industrial development only upon the issuance of a conditional use permit that adequately mitigates potential adverse affects, such as impacts on public services, roads, sewer and water systems, schools, emergency services, and minimizes impacts of noise and light.

Support the development of transportation and public water, sewer and utility systems that enhance economic growth.

**TRANS-  
PORTATION  
POLICIES**

Where appropriate, provide areas along road right-of-way for bicycle, pedestrian and horse traffic. <None>Develop a comprehensive trails plan for the study area.

The County shall identify, prioritize, design, and construct a system of trails or by-ways that can safely be used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians. These should utilize public property and such features as right-or-ways, easements, and irrigation ditches while connecting communities, schools, parks, and public places.

Provide access to walking and bike trails that provide alternative transportation to centers of employment. Provide park and ride lots to encourage affordable transportation between employers and housing developments.

## By any other name: Sewage sludge still stirs concern

FROM PRINCE EDWARDS ISLAND TO PENNSYLVANIA, south through North Carolina and Alabama, and west to Arizona and San Francisco Bay, communities are awakening to the silent horror of sewage sludge application. Headlines read:

*Sewage Sludge Spoils Lawrence County Wells (Alabama)*  
*Biosolids Concerns Bubble to Surface (North Carolina)*  
*Grass Roots Opposition to Sludge Gains Momentum (Ontario)*

What do we in the Methow Valley need to know about sewage and septic sludge, where it winds up, and how it affects our air and water quality?

“Sewage sludge” is the regulatory name for the solids removed from sewage at a wastewater-treatment plant. Both Twisp and Winthrop use sewage lagoons, with treatment and discharge to the Methow River. They need to meet water-quality regulations for certain bacterial and chemical contaminants. The Department of Ecology regulates the resulting sludge as “bio-solids,” which are treated more extensively than septage, and authorizes their use as fertilizer.

The Sludge Watch List-Serv notes: “The wastewater industry hired some fancy spin doctors (against the advice of at least one of their consultants) and decided to start to call sewage sludge ‘biosolids’. At first the industry moniker ‘biosolids’ was invented as a pretty synonym for sewage sludge. The industry tells reporters that there is some kind distinction between ‘sewage sludge’ and ‘biosolids’.... If you read the U.S. regulations on sewage sludge, the stuff, no matter how it is treated, is all called ‘sewage sludge’.”

In many communities spreading cheap fertilizer is big business. Sludge from New

York City goes to farms all over the eastern seaboard. Several communities even argue over the qualitative difference between local sludge and out-of-state sludge. Some laws regulate industrial waste separately from ordinary sludge.

Locally, our sludge is what is pumped out from our septic systems. Do you know what you or your neighbor puts down the drain? Would you want it in your ditch water? If you use it as fertilizer will you be able to smell it or your roses?

The concerns of neighbors regarding the awful smell of land fertilized with biosolids are common all over the world. Folks report that the smell leads to headaches, nosebleeds, depression, and increased asthma. There are several studies from many nations documenting the potential health issues, according to the Sludge Watch Working Group of the Ontario Environment Network Waste Caucus.

In Ontario, grassroots opposition to sludge gained momentum in 2006. In one case, they noted some pathogens in sludge include “not only *E. coli* but 15 other pathogens, as well as 16 viruses, six protozoa, 12 helmet worms, six fungi, and six strains of yeast.” They found the Ministry of the Environment staff unconvincing in their arguments that “sludge is safe.”

In Arizona studies show spread of *E. coli* by common “filth flies.” Just north of Dateland, Arizona, there are two farms side by side: one spreads Los Angeles-area sludge and the other grows organic baby greens. The flies move freely, as shown in a July 2009 article in the *Journal of Food Protection*. The reviewed study results indicate that flies are capable of contaminating leafy greens under experimental conditions and confirm the importance of further investi-

gation of the role of insects in contamination of fresh produce.

In Sweden studies were conducted to investigate a possible connection between the *Salmonella* content in sewage sludge and human cases of salmonellosis. An additional aim was to survey the antimicrobial resistance in *Salmonella* isolated from Swedish sewage sludge. The studies indicate that strains of *Salmonella* originating in infected humans can survive sewage-treatment plants. As a result, the risk of *Salmonella* being spread through sewage sludge to the environment and then to people and animals is enhanced. The threat to society is even worse if the bacteria are resistant to antimicrobial agents.

In Washington, all septic businesses must have an approved place to apply the septage after it has been treated. Under a permit issued by Okanogan County and the Department of Ecology, J.A. Wright Construction spreads septage and biosolids at the former Twisp landfill off Highway 20. Wright recently received permission to construct a storage lagoon there. The sludge content of the septage being deposited at this site may include any of the above disease agents, as well as a toxic soup of whatever you or your neighbors flush into the septic system.

Analyses of sludge in other areas show it can contain everything from caffeine to antidepressants, antibiotics, heavy metals, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals like birth-control hormones and Viagra, which have been shown to affect fish reproduction, amphibian limb growth, and age of puberty in humans. The citizens of the Methow Valley have a responsibility to keep our local sludge clean.

For more information or references on studies contact MVCC at [methowcitizen@gmail.com](mailto:methowcitizen@gmail.com).

### Comp plan grants

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vision statement or goals and policies, nor included in any appendix.) Huston had included them in an appendix, but the planning commissioners voted to remove them

because they were concerned they could have legal weight.) They are very difficult even to locate in the Planning Department records or through its website. The citizens

of the Methow Valley and other areas of Okanogan County, who worked for more than a year to provide input to the plan, are owed an explanation. ■

# Planning and zoning in the Methow Valley: A brief history

## PART 1:

### THE DAWN OF HISTORY TO 1900

Viewed through a patchwork of historical evidence, it is thought the Methow Valley's earliest native inhabitants reached an agreement to zone nearly the entire valley EHG (Excellent Hunting Grounds). Near the present day location of the USFS Early Winters Campground, a popular berry-gathering area was broken out into a distinct sub-area and designated PDC (Pretty Damn Cold).

Adjacent to the confluence of the Twisp and Methow Rivers, native peoples established a traditional camp site and fish-drying station, creating a second

sub-area and designating it TMT (Too Many T'wasps)—referring to the swarms of yellow jackets that were drawn to the processing of their fish. These early inhabitants of the valley kept it mighty simple: little zoning and few if any efforts at land-use planning, a laissez-faire approach to planning and zoning that would endure for hundreds of years but would change significantly with the coming of the first European explorers.

Following the lead of such luminaries as David Thompson (Northwest Fur Company) and Alexander Ross (Pacific Fur Company), trappers combed the valley and surrounding tributaries in search of beaver and other fur-bearing

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## MVCC consultant on the job

We're on it. MVCC has hired a part-time consultant to keep tabs on what's happening in the Methow—and throughout the county—that could affect the character of our region.

Jim Brennan, who started his work for MVCC on August 12, will focus on growth and development issues, including tracking local development plans and posting important dates and reminders for MVCC board members and interested community members so that they can attend meetings and submit informed public comment. Part of the importance of Jim's job is to alert concerned citizens about development proposals and county documents in time for them to submit their comment within a specific deadline. In some cases, submitting comments by a certain date is a requirement to secure "standing" for any future input on environmental, planning, or zoning matters.

Jim will also attend MVCC board meetings, handle mail, and perform clerical tasks and other administrative duties. Ultimately, MVCC hopes that the position will allow the organization to re-establish a working office in Twisp that

can serve as an information clearinghouse, both for MVCC members and the general public and anyone interested in participating in county issues.

MVCC also envisions that the consultant will be able to assist with special programs, events, or activities, and to serve as a contact for other environmental organizations and government agencies.

Jim was hired as a staff consultant by the MVCC board to fill the new position for a six-month period. Jim moved with his family to the Methow in 2008 from Bellingham. They have had the good fortune of enjoying reunions and hiking excursions in the valley for many years and now he and his wife, Gail, and daughter, Brooke, are delighted to be living here.

Jim's background includes small-business ownership, experience as a secondary-education teacher in Colorado and Washington, and direct experience working for a rural county in Colorado as a building official. He hopes his background and efforts can translate into a revitalized MVCC and be part of an ongoing effort to preserve the best of the Methow Valley.

**LEGAL-DEFENSE FUND.** MVCC is building a fund for legal advice and any necessary legal defense of the Methow Valley's rural nature and environment. Based upon our years of experience and successes in protecting the values of Methow residents, we recognize the need for legal assistance in responding quickly to government actions that will affect the future of the Methow Valley. Please send contributions to P.O. Box 774, Twisp, WA 98856; marked "legal defense."

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## ARE YOU A CONCERNED CITIZEN?

Then MVCC is your organization! For over 35 years MVCC has worked to protect the rural character and biological integrity of the Methow watershed. With your support we will continue to do so. Let's bequeath to our children a valley every bit as vibrant and beautiful as the one we are privileged to live in now. Join MVCC today.

I support MVCC's goals and actions in promoting and protecting the rural and environmental character of the Methow. I'd like to join.

- Limited Income: \$10       Regular Membership: \$35       Additional contributions welcome! \$\_\_\_\_\_
- I'd like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month/year (circle one) to support the MVCC consultant.
- I'd like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month/year (circle one) towards a legal-defense fund.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteers are welcome! I can help by doing one of the following:

- Joining the board       Attending meetings       Writing letters       Fund-raising       Networking and phone-tree help

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

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## Planning and zoning: A brief history

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mammals during the early years of the 19th century. The area's zoning was changed by simple acclamation to BTC (Beaver Trapping Country) and the pelts gathered from the region were shipped to commercial centers as far away as Montreal and New York.

As word of the Methow Valley's potential was beginning to spread, early settlers and prospectors were making their way to frontier outposts such as The Dalles, Spokane, and Walla Walla in search of prosperity and a better life in the rugged stretches of the Northwest. A few found overland transit to the isolated Methow, lured by prospects of rich mining claims and lush grazing lands.

Meeting informally, these first non-native settlers realized the need to re-zone. In no uncertain terms, the Methows and other Native American peoples were excluded from this process. In what was to become the first comprehensive plan for the valley, the early settlers and prospectors laid out their goals and policies. Gone were the original EHG zones and the BTC zone established by the fur-trappers. They were replaced by two new zoning classifications: GSB (Gold & Silver or Bust) and PPG (Plow Plant & Graze).

In 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant established the Colville Indian Reservation by executive order, but formal surveying of the area did not commence until 1893. Impatient settlers squatted on un-surveyed Indian lands and miners laid claims to thousands of acres. At first, the reservation encompassed almost the entire modern-day boundaries of Okanogan County, but lobbying by the early settlers and miners ensured the Colville Reservation was reduced to its current size. Over a dozen Columbia Plateau Indian Tribes—including the Methows—were summarily relocated.

Soon the valley floor was transformed, as bottomlands were cleared, fence lines appeared, and roads and ditches were laid out. Small settlements took hold near the confluences of rivers and other geographic features. The future of the Methow Valley was cast and the need for further re-zoning became abundantly clear.

By the 1890s, the Methow Valley's own version of Manifest Destiny was in full swing. Guy Waring's Methow Trading Post was incorporated in 1897 and the adjacent town of Winthrop grew rapidly. The town was zoned WWT (Wild West Town)—the de facto first UGA (Urban Growth Area) in the Methow.

Winthrop served both miners busily working the Harts Pass area as well as a burgeoning local cattle business. It also catered to regular folk who enjoyed frequenting Waring's Duck Brand Saloon.

The present-day town of Twisp (then Gloverville) became the first recorded town plat in the Methow, joining Winthrop in being classified as a UGA. In the Middle Valley, a primitive Transportation Corridor (TC) was designated for the Carlton stage, linking the Methow Valley with the Columbia River steamboat landing at the town of Brewster.

The hardy settlers and transplants embraced an early version of the property-rights movement, ensuring the surveying profession would remain a growth industry. Land-use rules and regulations remained modest in scope and were only loosely enforced.

As a new century loomed, however, the Methow Valley's land-use policies and procedures would not remain immune from changes. ■

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