

Changing Winds

Dear Friends,

“Which way is the wind blowing?” This question took on distinct urgency during our Summer of 2017 as wildfire smoke blanketed the Methow Valley. When the winds shifted to reveal bluebird skies, we breathed deeply and witnessed the stunning beauty of the Methow with fresh eyes.

In many ways, our attentiveness to weather patterns mirrors our awareness of powerful forces propelling change all around us.

and pace incompatible with the natural environment and rural qualities we value most.

Through working together, MVCC helped establish a legacy of Methow Citizens navigating the winds of change.

On the horizon

Looking forward, we know that we must rise to the biggest challenge of our lifetimes: the impacts of global climate change.

With your help, MVCC will take on an array of complex issues – local land use and water supply;



ALEX FARRELL

“Of all the forces of nature, I should think the wind contains the largest amount of motive power – that is, power to move things.” – ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Whether it's massive population growth in Puget Sound, technology's profound impact on how we communicate, or global climate change – strong currents are transforming our Valley.

For more than forty years, MVCC has responded to forces of change that have the potential to shape our landscape and community.

Decades ago, we foresaw that the Valley's magical qualities would eventually bring people from far and wide to enjoy this place.

MVCC volunteers and supporters studied the laws protecting our public lands, waters and wildlife. We learned the ropes of county land use planning. And we collaborated with many others to thwart development of an international ski resort which would have altered our Valley at a scale

resilient public lands and natural resources; the potential for mining in the Methow's head-waters; ATV access; clean air and the impacts of smoke.

There is reason for great optimism. Residents and visitors alike are increasingly well informed and vocal. MVCC is proud to occupy a unique niche at the core of this growing activism. We are part of an amazing team of professional staff, knowledgeable volunteers and stalwart members.

We'll be tuning in to the direction and force of the wind – from breeze to gale. Because of your incredible support, we are poised to respond.

Are you ready?

If you are already an MVCC member, thank you! Please consider a special year end donation of \$100 or more. If you haven't yet joined, please use the enclosed flyer to do so TODAY!

Thank you for your generosity!

Maggie Coon, Board Chair &
Brian de Place, Executive Director

MVCC Board of Directors

Maggie Coon, Chair	Bob Naney
Phil Millam, Vice Chair	Craig Olson
DeeAnn Kirkpatrick, Secretary	John Olson
Steve Kern, Treasurer	Melanie Rowland
Kari Bown	George Wooten

Keeping our Place

MVCC STAFF recently had the opportunity to ask a group of 25 thoughtful neighbors, “What is the one thing you love the most about the valley?” People and community, trails and open spaces, agriculture, wildlife, quiet, dark skies, clean water, and abundant public lands topped the list – they always do.

When asked to envision the best outcome for the valley 30-50 years in the future, these folks figured keeping all of those qualities would be great, especially if we could also achieve affordable housing, meaningful jobs, and a healthy agricultural sector along the way. Tall order? Not yet.

We are setting the tone for the very character of this place, beyond some of our lifetimes.

We might also need to accomplish these things while navigating changes driven by forces far from the Methow: the effects of climate change on our ecosystem being among the most significant, along with the ever-present population pressure from urban centers. **In coming years, we will experience changes that are best buffered by planning ahead.** MVCC is preparing to meet these challenges head on – through creative advocacy, partnership and local action.

In 2017, the MVCC Board adopted a Resolution, establishing priorities for local actions to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change on the Methow Valley. The priorities cut across every level of our work, reinforcing the importance of using science and including an educated community to inform land use planning.

Our community is already involved in discussions about future projections for snowpack and river water, sharing resources among different human and ecosystem uses, and keeping the qualities we most love about this place alive into the future by setting appropriate limits.

These are difficult conversations. We are setting the tone for the very character of this place, beyond some of our lifetimes. Good land use planning really matters!

LOVE THE PLACE YOU LIVE

by Kari Bown

When I am feeling the weight of these times, I go outside. My dog gets really happy. We walk the ridges and forest. He knows how to be present.

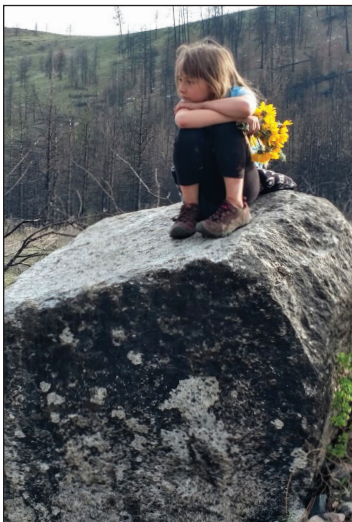
Love this place we live: home, Methow Valley, Okanogan Co., Washington, USA, North America, Earth.... Begin where you are, again and again. Go outside. Listen.

Watch the animals, wind, water. Notice beauty (among the challenges) in the world, in our neighbors, in ourselves.

All natural systems, our bodies included, strive for balance and healing. Soil itself is a vital thing, creating living soil out of decay, turning waste into that which supports life and growth. Soil is under our feet, so common and important. The work of the world is common as mud.

With our feet on the ground we can act, again and again. No act is too small. We can love this place we live.

Kari Bown is an MVCC Board Member, organic farmer and fermentation goddess. She lives with her family in the Twisp River watershed.



LORAH SUPER



ANNE YOUNG

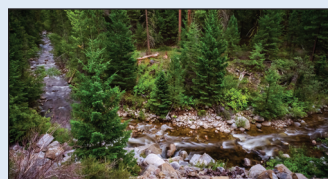
We're in this TOGETHER

IN OUR MISSION to protect the natural environment and rural character of the valley, MVCC takes on a lot of big, complicated issues. To accomplish everything on our plate, we have always employed an “all hands” approach, using the incredibly qualified help of dozens of community volunteers and board members to help us strategize and make the best use of our strong community voice.

In addition to working at the land use planning level to address our common issues, we also take the team approach with other organizations, working together on different scales to address big issues such as clean air, forest health, public lands access, and protecting the Methow Headwaters.

NCW Forest Health Collaborative (NCWFHC)

MVCC closely follows the work of this group, which includes a diverse membership of timber industry representatives, conservationists, tribal government, elected officials, and local, state and federal land managers working together to restore the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest



(OWNF) in Chelan and Okanogan Counties. MVCC provides feedback on restoration proposals in the Methow Valley.

ALEX FARREL

Methow Headwaters Campaign

The Headwaters Campaign formed in response to the threat of development of a large scale open pit copper mine in the headwaters of the Methow River. MVCC is the central local organization behind this campaign, providing operational support, local outreach and communications in partnership with local, regional and national conservation groups. Our goal is a withdrawal of 340,000 acres of federal land from large scale mineral extraction, to protect the clean water upon which we all depend.



HANNAH DEWEY

It takes all of us to ensure access to clean air, abundant water and resilient public lands for future generations.

Okanogan Open Roads Coalition (OORC)



TANIA THOMAS

MVCC is a supporter of the OORC, an emerging campaign formed by Okanogan County citizens (hunters, anglers, families, business owners and taxpayers) who are fighting to prevent privatization of important public rights of way that access public lands and provide escape routes during natural disasters.

Enloe Dam Working Group

MVCC works together with this broad collective of concerned Okanogan PUD ratepayers and conservation groups including Columbiana, Trout Unlimited, American Rivers and American Whitewater. Our common goal is the decommissioning of Enloe Dam and the restoration of the Similkameen River, a tributary of the Okanogan River.



U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Clean Air Project (MVCAP) Takes on ‘Four Seasons of Smoke’

THIS PROACTIVE PROGRAM was initiated by Dr. Raleigh Bowden in 2014, in response to the valley’s frequent poor winter air quality. Following our experience during recent wildfires, MVCAP has expanded its scope to address year-round air quality. Now led by toxicologist Liz Walker and guided by an all-star advisory team, MVCAP works to provide information to protect our health

continued on page 4

MVCAP Collaborators

Lookout Coalition	Fire District 6
Methow Conservancy	WasteWise
Washington Department of Ecology	Okanogan Conservation District
Town of Twisp	Mazama Store
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Carlton Store
	KROOT

PLANS TO WATCH IN 2018!

Plan	What it Does	What MVCC is Advocating	Timing
Comprehensive Plan	It's Comprehensive! Establishes a vision for the future, creates special planning areas, describes the ordinances to be used to ensure water availability, water quality, agricultural viability and rural qualities of life, population growth, wildfire safety	Match anticipated growth with water supplies Describe how other codes will promote wildfire safety, protect sensitive areas, support agriculture	December 2018
Zoning Code	Prescribes densities, lot sizes and the types of permitted uses in different "zones"	Ensure density does not exceed water supply, implement fire safety standards, provide buffers to support agriculture	December 2018
Subdivision Ordinance	Sets requirements for densities within lots, clustering and open space, emergency access	Ensure density does not exceed water supply, require wildfire-safe access, protect agriculture and open space through clustering	2018
"Title 20"	Okanogan County's response to the "Hirst" decision Requires a case by case review of all new exempt wells to ensure there is enough water available	Complete research to figure out how much water is available, ensure permit decisions are transparent and predictable, develop standards for wells in subdivisions and "closed basins"	Ongoing
Shoreline Master Program	Protects water quality, ecological function and habitat adjacent to water bodies	Locate development far enough from water to prevent pollution and protect salmon spawning grounds	Final Stages of Approval
Critical Areas Ordinance	Protects aquifers for potable water, wetlands, wildlife habitat, floodplains and geologically hazardous areas	Use best available science to identify, map and regulate critical areas	2018

Water Law – Okanogan County's Response to "Hirst"

THE WASHINGTON STATE SUPREME COURT made the "Hirst" decision, also known as "Whatcom County vs. Hirst," on October 6, 2016. The Court held that a county must ensure that a new well for a house will not impact others who have a "senior" water right and will not bring streams below the threshold needed for fish habitat. This is known as "legally available" water.

This means that when the County plans for growth, we have to make sure there's enough "legal water" to serve new homes – without impacting other users, and without impacting fish. As you can see, land use planning becomes even more important when thinking about the number of lots that can be allowed in certain areas:

density needs to be set at a level where there is enough water for each new house. Unfortunately, there are already parts of the Methow Valley where there are more lots than legal water.

Okanogan County adopted "Title 20" at the end of 2016 in response to the Hirst decision.

It requires a case by case decision about legally available water prior to issuing new building or subdivision permits. MVCC believes managing our water supply is best done first in the Comprehensive Plan and Zone Code, where a thoughtful approach to density and allowed uses can meet our community's goal of preserving agriculture, and protecting existing water rights and endangered fish. ■

In 2017 MVCC and Conservation Northwest prevailed in our case challenging Okanogan County's 2014 Ordinance opening 600 miles of county roads to ATVs. The ordinance was repealed and those roads are closed to ATVs.

The County is now proposing new road openings district-by-district and has started with Com-

missioner District 3 (Jim DeTro). Unlike in the 2014 ordinance that was repealed, the County has removed some roads from consideration and consulted with state and federal land management agencies. MVCC is monitoring the environmental review process. We expect that ATV road openings in the Methow Valley will be considered next year. ■

Four Seasons of Smoke

continued from page 2

and find solutions for cleaner air in our valley.

Our major pollutant is called PM2.5 (a particulate matter of 2.5 microns or smaller in diameter).



Smoke from regional and local wildfires brought surreal and "Hazardous" air quality to the valley in 2017.

The source is predominantly from burning – smoke from woodstoves and outdoor burn piles, and of course wildfires. Inversions hold polluted air close to the ground where these tiny particles are inhaled deep into our lungs.

Approximately half of the valley – and anyone with a heart or lung condition – is considered especially sensitive to health effects of PM2.5. Health effects can range from coughing and wheezing, to increased likelihood of developing lung disease, to acute cardiac effects.

How we're working to improve air quality

In the past year, MVCAP has conducted two vegetation chipping drives and assisted the Pine Forest community with alternatives to burning. The Project also filled a vital community education gap during the summer's wildfire and smoke events, providing information to health care providers and local preparedness efforts, and coordinating with the Methow Valley School District to conduct indoor air quality testing and facilitate the purchase of HEPA air purifiers.

MVCAP is currently starting a project to create a network of ambassadors and citizen scientists who will install air quality monitors that report real-time conditions in strategic locations across the valley. ■

MVCC FINANCIALS

With a 2017 budget of \$175,000, the generosity of our membership provides over 75% of our revenue. This year, grants from the Icicle Fund, the Conservation Alliance and the Burning Foundation and other foundations have helped significantly. 89% of these revenues go directly to our advocacy programs.

Leveraging Volunteers. We estimate that countless volunteer hours provide at least \$100,000 in additional value. This means that for every dollar you give, we are able to leverage an additional 60 cents out of it.

PUTTING YOUR MONEY TO WORK

