



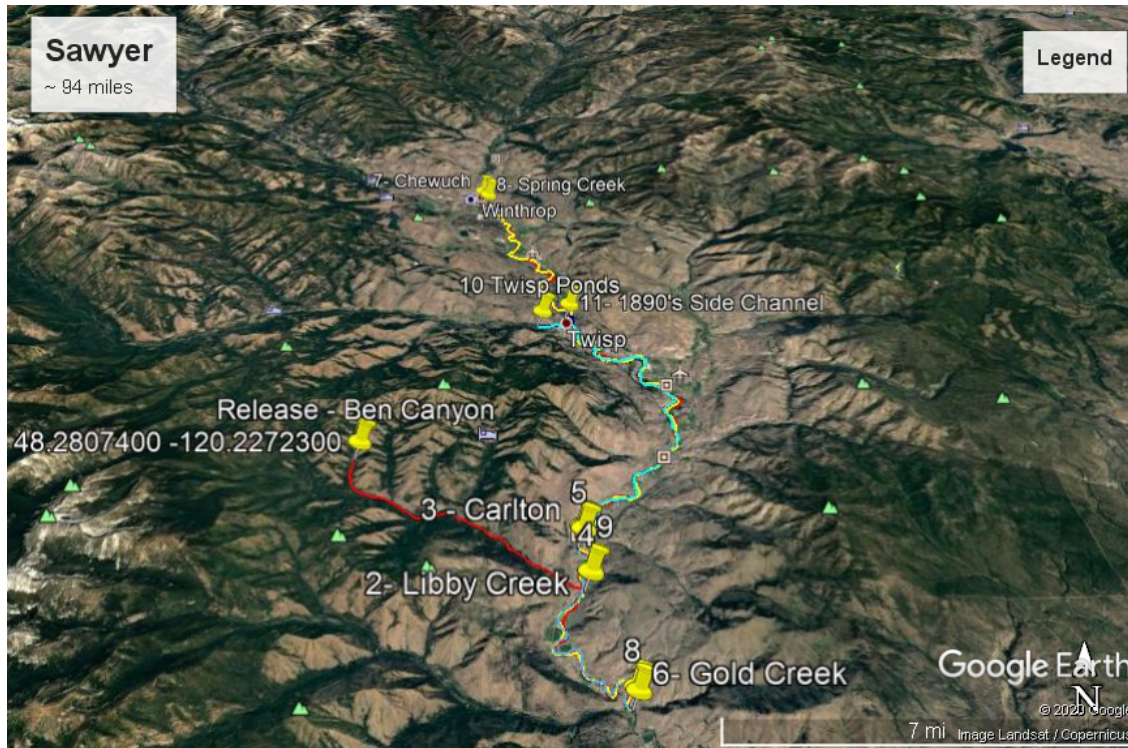
Methow Beaver Project

Our Vision is to respond and adapt to climate change and its predicted impacts in support of people, the environment, and sustainable ecosystem function.

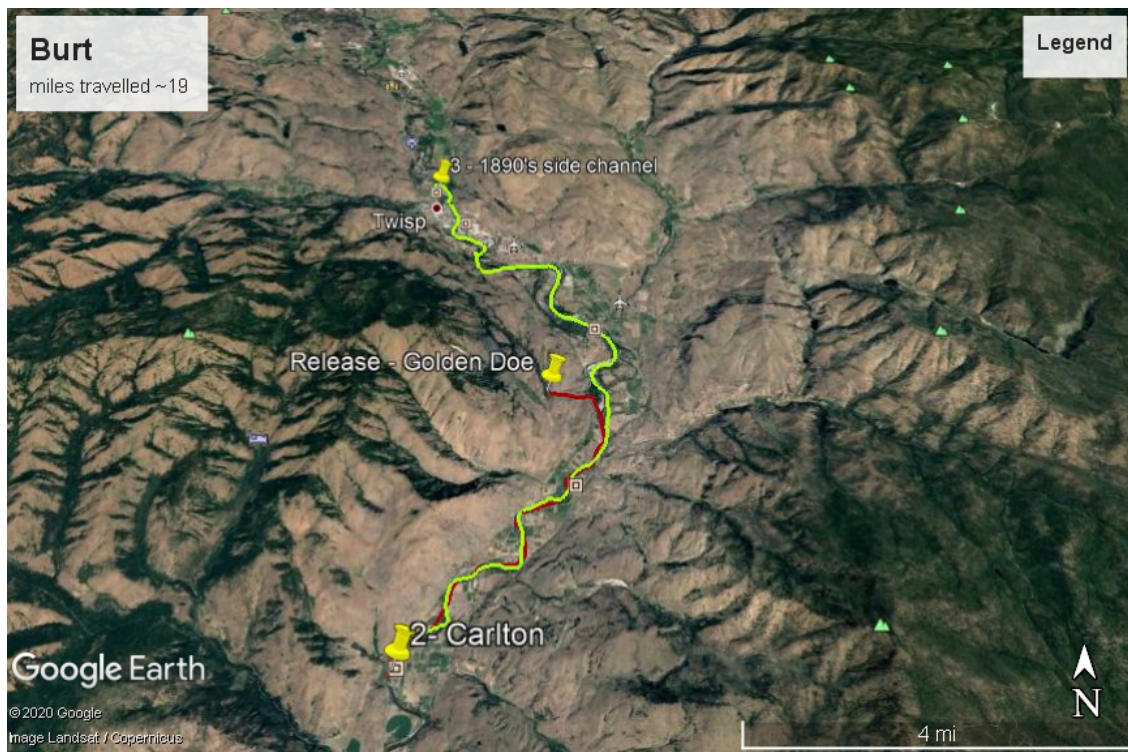
Tracking Beavers

Animal movement has fascinated scientists for centuries. In the spirit of scientific inquiry and to better inform our relocation efforts of beavers facing conflict with humans, MBP studies beaver movement to illuminate where beavers go when they choose to leave the relocation site chosen for them. The first conundrum in developing our beaver movement study was deciding how best to track this nocturnal, semiaquatic rodent. Their hydrodynamic body shape isn't conducive for any radio-telemetry or GPS neck collars and any alternative external, attachable devices needed to be water and snag proof. Our solution was the Passive Integrated Transponder tag or PIT tags, which are electronic implantable microchips with a unique 10-digit alphanumeric identification number. Analogous to a pet microchip, each individual animal has a unique and traceable identification number under their skin. The tags are the size of a grain of rice and are inserted into the leathery tail of beavers we work with. The tag is read when a beaver swims over an underwater reader, just like a grocery store scanner. Underwater readers or arrays are generally used for monitoring salmon movement and many have been deployed in the Methow and Okanogan watersheds to do just that. With cooperation from WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, we took advantage of that existing infrastructure to track swimming beavers, though some might escape detection if they were to travel on land past a reader. Through our PIT tag data collection, we have learned some fascinating things about a few of our Methow and Okanogan beavers. They can be very

transient and surprisingly intrepid travelers, many travelling dozens of miles to find their preferred habitat and one over 130 miles from Twisp to Oroville by water. Below are some visual examples of these travels. Each number on the map corresponds to an underwater reader. The time span represented on these maps is from time of release (summer) to fall of the same year.



One of our 2019 relocated beavers was Sawyer, notable for the 58 pounds of feisty attitude and unrelenting determination. After release, Sawyer travelled 94 miles up and down the Methow River looking for just the right place to call home.



In 2018, Burt was released into the pond at Golden Doe between Twisp and Carlton. Apparently, the pond didn't meet Burt's discerning eye for good habitat, so he left. He travelled down the Methow River to Carlton before turning back upstream, passing the tributary of his release and settling into the 1890's side channel near Twisp for the winter.

Wherever a beaver ends up on a large river like the Methow or her high flow tributaries including the Twisp or Chewuch, they are providing essential habitat and services in many forms. Their felling of cottonwoods helps augment rivers with woody debris that slows water down and creates cover for salmon. Their damming activity helps create slack water side channels that store water longer, release it slowly, and provide essential refuge for juvenile salmon to escape high flows during snowmelt as well as warmer overwintering habitat in dammed groundwater fed channels until the next high flows of Spring allow them to move on downstream. Beavers excavating of bank dens on large rivers instead of building mid-pond lodges provides sneaky shelters for salmon fry to evade predators.

The benefits of beavers are numerous and despite their activities being a natural part of the watershed, occasionally they present a few challenges to humans. We can help. Call us anytime for more information on coexisting with beavers.

Check out these Beaver Resources from around the World

Beavers without Borders

A beautiful short film by Beavers Trust about beaver reintroductions in Europe.

[View Here](#)

Sounds of Family Life

A typical beaver lodge houses one family consisting of the mating pair, 2-5 kits, plus 2-5 yearlings. Discover what family life sounds like in this delightfully endearing recording. The meowing sounds are the kits. How many different animals do you hear?

[Listen Here](#)

How do they do it?

Amazing footage of a master craftsman at work, note all the responsive senses the beaver draws on for the task. The downed tree will become larder and construction materials, and what isn't used will add diversity and complexity to the habitat.

[View Here](#)



Art by Deborah Hocking

Wishing you a very Healthy and Happy Holiday!
~ the Methow Beaver Project



Storing water for the future—one beaver at a time
www.methowsalmon.org



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