



# Methow Beaver Project

*Partnering with beavers to adapt to climate change and its predicted impacts in support of people, the environment, and sustainable ecosystem function.*

## Happy May, Beaver Believers!

Spring is a magical time in the Methow ... the balsamroot and serviceberry are blooming, the songbirds returning, the cottonwood seeds sailing on the wind, and the rivers are starting to swell from a good snow year. As the days grow warmer and longer, we are feeling that **beaver-y** urge to be more productive, get out in the field, and help beavers slow down that snow-melt water skipping town way too fast. Partnering with beavers to slow and store our snow-melt water longer in floodplains, wetlands, side channels, and upland streams helps all of us who depend on water year round, especially in drier climates like the lovely Methow River watershed. Check out what's keeping us busy, and other exciting beaver related happenings in the region this May! Enjoy the Flowers!!!

### MBP Happenings

The Winthrop Hatchery Is 'Open for Beavers' and visitors, of course! Thanks to our partnership with the USFWS National Fish Hatchery in Winthrop, we can safely relocate entire beaver families, in irreconcilable conflict with private landowners by providing exceptional short term housing & care before offering them a 'forever home', typically on public state or federal lands. When we have beavers in residence, we flood the retired raceways, and

bring in fresh vegetation daily to give the beavers a taste of home while they wait for relocation. The cinder block structures simulate a beaver lodge and provide a hiding spot and cover from the Methow's whimsical weather. We are very fortunate to have Chris Pasley and staff at the Winthrop Hatchery as some of our biggest supporters in rebuilding beaver populations, improving habitat, and storing more water naturally in the Methow. Makes perfect sense, our salmon need that water and beaver created habitat too! Our Beaver Naturalist volunteer crew are also the grease in our wheels, helping to care for transitioning beaver families at the hatchery, a huge thanks to them as well. SO! If you know anyone with a beaver challenge, tell them to give us a call. We have lots of coexistence tricks and even some funding up our sleeves to help our community learn to coexist with the finest ecosystem engineers in fur pants. But if that doesn't work, relocation is sometimes the best option and a necessary part of partnering with beavers! Stop by the hatchery occasionally to see who's around!



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Decommissioned raceway repurposed to temporarily house beavers, located at the USFWS National Fish Hatchery in Winthrop WA.

## Budding Biologists!

MBP's Outreach & Education Coordinator, Julie Nelson, recently collaborated with the North Central Educational Service District and other community partners in developing a STEM field day for 5<sup>th</sup> graders from Tonasket Elementary in the Okanogan River watershed. During this event, students rotated through 4 stations exploring science and engineering principles and how restoring natural processes to the ecosystem, such as placing woody structures in streams, known as Beaver Dam Analogs, and planting native plants, helps restore endangered Sharp Tail Grouse habitat. MBP helped develop a simple dichotomous plant key, unique to the

riparian plants at Scotch Creek Wildlife Area, and introduced students to their use and identification of native plants in their community. A big shout out to the Methow Elementary Kinders Program for working with us! Please reach out if interested in having MBP in your classroom!



Top Left: 5th Graders from Tonasket Elementary using dichotomous keys to identify native plants. Top Right: Students planting riparian plants to support grouse and shade the creek for fish. Bottom Left: Ed. Coordinator, Julie Nelson, showing students different types of plant morphology for identification. Bottom Right: Kindergarten students building model beaver dams to illustrate the water retaining power of beaver dams at small scale.

**That's A Wrap!**

We are currently working with the managers of Bear Creek Golf Course to oblige a feisty beaver family while protecting natural aesthetic and vital course infrastructure. We began by wrapping aspen near the pond off hole X. Trees in close proximity to the golf greens have the potential to do serious damage if a beaver accidentally felled it the wrong way. They wouldn't be the first one to "slice" it at Bear Creek Golf Course! Am I right fellas!? Our next move is to sand paint groups of trees around the pond to protect the view-shed of local residents and recreators. Don't worry, we always leave plenty of food for the beavers. Lastly, we are addressing flood risks by installing a culvert protector near the access road to the golf course. These devices are designed to lure beaver activity away from culvert openings as well as provide constant flow through the culvert. This is an excellent example of the multiple tools we have at our disposal to live more harmoniously with beavers! Make sure to thank the guys and gals at Bear Creek Golf Course for showing their commitment environmental stewardship and keeping the Methow lush and beautiful!



If you look close, you can see these trees are wrapped with field fencing. This simple practice will protect your prized trees from becoming beaver snacks. The wraps are so low profile, you might forget they are even there at all.

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## Beaver Events

ATTENTION beaver restoration practitioners!!! There is a big training event coming up next week, May 17<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, covering all aspects of beaver based stream restoration (BBR) with MBP instructing several courses. From beaver history and ecology, coexistence and relocation, to wildfire & climate resilience, this workshop has everything but the field time! Don't miss out on this world class event featuring North American & Europe based instructors & multiple case studies of how more and more communities are partnering with beavers for their myriad of ecological and social benefits! View the full course offerings through the link below.



## PARTNERING WITH BEAVER IN RIVER RESTORATION

4-HR CLASSES: MAY 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, & 28

[WWW.RRNW.ORG](http://WWW.RRNW.ORG)

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### Beaver News

We don't like to toot our own horn too much here at MBP, but our director was quoted in the Smithsonian Magazine earlier this month! Check out this great article featuring multiple beaver projects from around the state and how beavers are helping support endangered salmonids. We find the "death by 1000 cuts" analogy from the article to be quite poignant. With every beaver pond drained, side channel removed, or floodplain developed, we

push salmon one step closer to extirpation. Help us fight back by supporting beavers!



A beaver peers out of a Hancock live trap after being captured by Molly Alves, a wildlife biologist with the Tulalip Tribe in WA, who trained with MBP in 2015. (Photo: Ben Dittbrenner)

**Enjoy the blossoms, greenery and high water of May in the Methow and Okanogan Watersheds!**



[methowbeaverproject.org](http://methowbeaverproject.org)



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methowbeaverproject@methowsalmon.org

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