



Spring Workshops, Planting and Coexistence Calls!

Greetings, beaver folks!

In April, with streams bulging from the Spring thaw, local beaver families were extra busy making sure that their dams were strong enough to hold back the water. In addition to providing deep water habitat for beavers, these dams do all kinds of important things, from improving water quality and filtering out pollutants to maintaining cold water rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids. After spending the long winter cozied up in their dens, beavers were also rebuilding their fat reserves and feeding on their favorite sweet Spring stems: willow, aspen, and cottonwood. It has been a joy to see so much beaver activity this month!

During the month of May, juvenile beavers will be exploring surrounding areas

and beginning to disperse into new territories. Pregnant mothers and their mates are preparing to deliver their kits who will spend the next few months safely inside the lodge. The younger offspring will soon be big brothers and sisters, and will help raise this next generation.

Here at the Methow Beaver Project, we are embarking on another busy field season. **We need volunteers this Friday, May 10th! You can find more information about this event at the end of this email!**

So, How do I Coexist with Beavers?

If you live along a stream or river in the Methow or Okanogan, chances are you are seeing some beaver activity in your backyard! Maybe you are seeing some chews, downed trees, or flooding. Living with beavers can be really simple and is often treasure in late summer when water is scarce. If you have some questions about coexistence, read on!





There are many coexistence strategies private land owners and stewards can apply to manage increased beaver activity this time of year, such as fence protection around your favorite trees and flow devices that protect culverts and control flooding. We are happy to explore solutions with you.

Visit methowbeaverproject.org or call (509)289-2770 for more info.



Beaver Relocation & Coexistence Workshops

We hosted three workshops over the past month; two for WDFW employees from across the state, and one for that was open to the public. These workshops consist of presentations from our team members, restoration site visits, BDA construction, and trapping and relocation demonstrations. If you or

someone you know are interested in participating in a workshop, will have another in June! Here are the highlights!





Top: WDFW workshop participants on the bank of an incised creek we are working to restore. Middle left: Landowner Gert Webster speaking to the workshop about the history of her land. Middle right: Joe Weirich teaching workshop participants how to weave BDA's with conifer boughs (Pictures: Emma Burgess). Bottom: WDFW engineers on site at Bear Creek (Picture: Alexa Whipple).



Planting Beaver "Gardens"

An important step to re-wilding some of our restoration sites is planting. Many of our sites are in an early successional stage post-wildfire, and so introducing a variety of species can help kick-start the diversity the ecosystem while providing food for beaver and other riparian species. This month we planted thousands of starts across our sites. These included Willow, Cottonwood, and Aspen (beaver favorites), as well as Water Birch at a sharp-tailed grouse conservation site managed by WDFW.



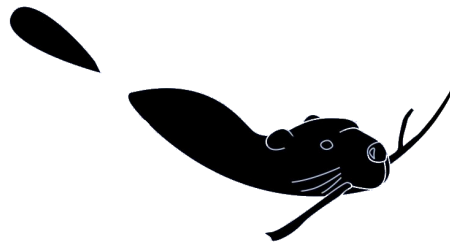
Willow stakes planted in the bank along Loup Loup Creek (Picture: Emma Burgess).



Earth Day Festival!

We had a blast at the Earth Day festival hosted by Methow Recycles. Thank

you to everyone who stopped by to chat with us, learn about beavers, and make clay beaver figurines! We were stoked to meet so many people who are interested in volunteering this spring! We'll see you all soon!



A Call for more Coexistence Devices

Why are Coexistence Devices Necessary?

Many of us know that beaver and salmon coevolved over thousands of years. A popular saying among beaver advocates says that “beaver taught salmon to jump” – calling to mind images of the fish leaping over beaver dams on their way upstream to spawn. However, in this day and age the missing piece of the puzzle is habitat complexity. The streams and rivers that we know today were vastly more complex before colonizing humans removed beaver and engineered streams to be straight and absent of woody structure to convey water easily. In historic complex stream systems, one beaver dam would not prevent fish migration because there were likely always other pathways upstream. Now that we have simplified so many of our river systems, it is up to us to ensure the coexistence of these two species.

Restoring Anadromous Fish Passage

This month we installed a fish passage device in a Steelhead bearing stream in the Okanogan. Steelhead are capable of jumping over many natural barriers to other species so smaller beaver dams, waterfalls, and log jams are no problem. At this site and in this water season, flows are lower and not spilling copiously over the dam, which also prevents a deeper jump pool from forming. This limits passage for even the most athletic of steelhead. The dam was also built taller, a common beaver response in low water years, and is posing an impassable barrier for the fish. A Fisheries biologist from the Colville Tribes reached out to us after noticing a “pile up” of steelhead below the dam for more than 2 weeks. After acquiring permission from the actual landowner and the required permit from WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife they notched the dam and those steelhead were all able to pass over the dam through the outflow and continue migrating upstream.

The device we installed aims to prevent the beavers from repairing the notch and allowing fish to pass safely through the device. This is an exclusion technique we learned from Beavers Northwest, an organization that specializes in non-lethal management options as coexistence situations arise.

We plan to remove the device when spawning season is over to retain cold, deep water in the beaver pond for juvenile rearing through summer and that doesn't freeze to the bottom in winter. The beavers will rebuild it, likely within a night or two but the spawning steelhead will have passed into the 14 miles of

additional habitat upstream by then. We may need to reinstall the device next spring depending on how this 20 year old dam responds to next year's high flow event.





*Top: The notched 20 year old beaver dam. Middle: Coexistence device looking upstream.
Below: Coexistence device looking downstream (Pictures: Emma Burgess).*

Call for Volunteers!

Want to volunteer with us in the field this month? You're in luck! In May we will be hosting two volunteer work parties; one at Chiliwist Creek in the Okanogan and another at Bear Creek in the Methow.

The first work party will be this Friday, May 5th, at Chiliwist Creek!

We will be adaptively managing our stream restoration structures (a.k.a working like beavers to maintain dams). This event is open to the public and suitable for all ages! If you are interested joining us, email methowbeaverproject@methowsalmon.org to be added to our volunteer list. More info coming soon!



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