



Preparing for another Long Winter during the Beaver Moon (November's Full Moon)

While many of us here in the Valley are out enjoying the colors of autumn in the mountains and riparian lowlands, our local beaver families are hard at work 24/7. Before the snow flies, they must be ready for whatever old man winter brings. This includes putting on body fat (which they primarily store in their tails), mudding lodges for added insulation, building large food caches to help get them through the long dark of the hunger moon, and digging deep pools behind their dams to evade hungry winter and lower the chance of their lodge pond freezing solid and trapping them. Beavers don't hibernate but have adapted to be less active in the hard winters of north central WA.

We are also busy working on coexistence strategies with private land owners/stewards to manage increased beaver activity at this time of year. Spring and Fall are very busy seasons for beavers due to the preparation for the long winter as described above and being very hungry coming out of a long winter in early Spring. Beavers lose the majority of their fat reserves by March and need to eat quite a bit to recover from the hard times. We can help people tolerate increased beaver activity with tree protection and flow devices that protect culverts and control flooding upstream of beavers dams. Check

out our [website](#) or Call us to find out more information. 509-289-2770.

We typically do not relocate beavers this late in the year in our watersheds because without time to prepare a food cache and have a safe lodge prepared, beavers will likely perish from exposure or be very easy targets for predation.

We did relocate a beaver family in early October, still later than we like, but took some steps to insure that they would be prepared for winter. Read on to find out more!

So far, November has been a truly beautiful time here in the Okanogan & Methow River watersheds. We have been working swiftly to tie up all the loose ends at our restoration sites, including BDA construction, quarterly data collection, and getting all of our plants in the ground before the first big freeze.

A Surprising Turn of Events...

In mid-October, we staged piles of locally sourced untreated posts, curated by our sawyer Jason Llewellyn, along the stream at one of our beaver-based stream restoration sites. We plan to use these posts in Spring 2024 following snowmelt to continue constructing small woody structures in the stream, often called Beaver Dam Analogues or BDA's. In September, we noted sign of beaver activity downstream of our restoration area and even a few blond sticks (beaver chewed sticks) within our restoration area but nothing more. We recently returned to the site to plant riparian vegetation and measure and inventory the structures that we installed in September and early October and discovered something AWESOME.... the local beaver population has moved into our restoration area and are showing us how they get it done....and are using our staged posts! How fantastic is that?



Above: The posts used by the beavers are visible in the middle of the dam facing downstream (they have sharpened tips). PC: Alexa Whipple.

Thank You, Give Methow Donors!!

From all of us here at MBP, thank you to all of the generous community based donors for the critical support to make this great work happen! In the coming year, your donations will be used to hire interns who help us restore streams, support the presence of native beavers, and build professional experience within the communities of the Methow and Okanogan watersheds. THANK YOU, we could not do this without you and we are excited for all of the restoration possibilities before us!



An Update on the Aeneas Valley Beaver Family Relocation to Private Lands on Chiliwist Creek

You may remember that we trapped three yearling beavers in Aeneas Valley in September... Lil' Bee, Rainy, and Pyro. We housed this young family together at our holding facility at the Winthrop National Fish Hatchery while we tried to capture an adult remaining at the site. We worried that without an adult, their chances of survival through the winter were slim. After another week of trapping, we joyously celebrated the capture of a savvy adult beaver we named Gertrude, whom the yearlings immediately recognized upon reuniting them. The four beavers freely piled into one of our temporary lodges which confirmed our hope that this was in fact a caring parent or adult sibling of the juveniles. It isn't always clear so we have to be

careful introducing questionably related beavers to one another to avoid territorial aggressive responses.

During their stay at the hatchery, we observed the juvenile beavers progress from exclusively eating aspen and willow leaves to stripping the bark from fresh branches of the same species. Each of them gained weight in captivity, a sure sign that they were healthy, adaptable to new surroundings and food resources, and ready for relocation.

We made plans to relocate this family to private lands along Chiliwist Creek in the Okanogan Watershed, stewarded by incredible naturalists and conservationists we have worked with for years who are now like family. Together, we are working with them, WA Dept of Ecology, Wildlife Conservation Society, and Okanogan Land Trust to restore water and habitat to the lands in their care. The 2014 Carlton Complex Fires took their home and many neighbors homes too, but didn't stop there. Debris flows following that fire incised Chiliwist Creek and took the homes of many species that relied on the diverse riparian and stream habitat too. In summer 2022, down stream of the ponds, MBP installed BDA's which have already collected several feet of sediment in some places as the structures slow water down during high flows and allow it to drop transported sediment out of the water column. This action can relatively quickly reconnect streams to their historic floodplains which creates incredible riparian and wetland habitat for so many species while also buffering the impacts of drought, fast snow melt and high summer temperatures! Did you know it's often 10 degrees cooler next to a stream buffered by riparian plants then without those plants? And they also serve as a beavers grocery store and garden (thanks for that analogy Gert).

We did a second round of BDA installations this summer and adaptively managed the preexisting structures from 2022 to maximize Spring 2024 snowmelt and the opportunity for continued sediment capture and floodplain reconnection. These natural process based restoration actions are working and in an incredibly short time frame. Beavers are improving the work we are doing and if all goes well, will take over as the resident ecosystem engineers soon. We are in this project with the land stewards, both human and beaver, for the long haul!



Above: Joe and Willy demonstrate the severe incision from post-wildfire erosion in this section of Chiliwist Creek.

Below: Cal and Emma show us a section of the stream before BDA installation (left) and after (right). We are excited to see what happens at this location after the next spring sediment flow. PC: Alexa Whipple.



Before releasing the family of beavers to Chiliwist, we did a series of site visits to ensure that this was an appropriate place to release these beavers which includes making sure that no other beavers had already established here to avoid territory conflicts, searched for old lodges that the beavers could spruce up and use this winter, and built substantial food caches in the ponds to ease the risks associated with a rapidly approaching cold winter season. On October 2nd we bundled up the family of four, transported them to the release site, and they entered their new home. Together with the land stewards, we are monitoring beaver establishment and despite expected challenges with natural predators in the area (black bears), the family has remained. The beavers are digging deeper water, building dams, and utilizing the food caches. Hurrah! We will continue to monitor and provide supplemental food until they are actively harvesting local resources on their own.

If you have interest in facilitating beaver presence on your property, reach out to us to talk about future relocation opportunities!!



Above: Alexa and Joe unload two of the beavers Below (left), transporting the beavers to the ponds (right).

Below: Lil Bee swimming through their new home. PC: Alexa Whipple.



Field Trips During the Month of October

During the month of October we have been hosting field trips with local school groups, including Paschal Sherman Indian School, Highlands Highschool, and Classroom in Bloom. It is a joy to be able to share our love for beavers and wetlands with the kids. Here are the highlights.



Above: Alexa gives the group a planting demo. PC: Jason Llewellyn.



Above right: Sarah Fox and a student planting a tree together. Above left: Colville Tribal member Morgan Moomaw sharing her indigenous knowledge of the native species we were planting that day. PC: Emma Burgess.



Above: Willy tucking a native plant into the ground during the Highlands HS field trip! PC: Jason Llewellyn.

Welcome to the MBP Team, Julie!



We are so excited to welcome Julie Vanderwal to the MBP team! Julie has worked at the intersection of ecological restoration and education for over 25 years. She graduated from the British Columbia Institute of Technology in environmental technology (engineering) and from Barstow College in child development (education). Julie has integrated ecology into a variety of educational contexts, working with all ages in Southern British Columbia, Northern California, South Eastern Quebec, and North Central Washington. As a Career and Technical Education High School Teacher in Oroville, she worked with students to start a habitat restoration program, a native plant nursery, and a farm-to-table program. She coordinated work-based learning and involved students in all phases of stream restoration. Julie especially enjoys developing trainings for other restoration practitioners and swapping lessons learned.

While working for a decade as Conservation Coordinator for the Okanogan Highlands Alliance (OHA), Julie developed and coordinated education and restoration programs. During this time, in 2010, she collaborated with Kent Woodruff, then-director of the Methow Beaver Project, to trap beaver from the Okanogan River for relocation in the highlands, and she has followed the organization with avid interest ever since!

As part of her work with OHA, Julie led riparian planting in a system dominated by reed canarygrass and managed beaver dam analog (BDA) based restoration that successfully built up a deeply downcut streambed. Her team started installing BDAs in 2014, after reading Michael Pollock's ground-breaking new paper on the topic, when the technique was still in its infancy. The OHA team's evolution of the BDA weaving method inspired Julie more recently to pursue hybridizing BDA methods with existing streambank soil bioengineering treatments, which led her to collaboration with her mentor, Chris Hoag. While managing noxious weeds for stream and wetland restoration projects, as well as at home, she has explored non-herbicide methods of re-establishing diverse native plant communities in wetlands, mixed conifer montane forest, and shrub-steppe environments. Julie helped found the Eastern Washington Riparian Planting Symposium, and is excited to reconnect with that community as she focuses more closely on restoration again in the coming years.

Julie has written, co-managed, and reported on about 2.5 million dollars in grants for non-profit organizations. She looks forward to working on grants with the MBP team.

Julie has extensive public speaking and music performance experience. Fun fact: You can search for her stage name, "Julie Du Bois" (Julie of the Woods), wherever you listen to music, to check out her original tunes and songs with friends. Some of the songs feature the natural history of the Okanogan. She has fond memories of singing about beavers at a MBP event at the Merc a few years ago, and hopes for more beaver music in the future.

Julie still works as a freelance consultant and is super excited to join the Methow Beaver Project team part-time! We are delighted to share in this work with her!



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