

# Methow Conservancy



## Board of Directors

October 12, 2017

Mary Johnston  
(President)

Mary McCrea  
(Vice-President)

David Schooler  
(Treasurer)

Ashley Lodato  
(Secretary)

Peter Bauer

Phil Davis

Mary Drobka

Jane Gilbertsen

Sam Nancy

Peggy Porter

Gordy Reynaud

Stephanie Stewart

## Staff

Executive Director  
Jason Paulsen

Associate Director  
Sarah Brooks

Land Program Manager  
John Sunderland

Stewardship Director  
Heide Andersen

Educational Programs  
Director  
Mary Kiesau

Conservation Biologist  
Julie Grialou

Monitoring and IT  
Coordinator  
Dawn Woodruff

Land Project Manager  
Jeanne White

Agricultural Coordinator  
Alyssa Jumars

Membership Assistant  
Mary Morgan

Bookkeeper  
Joy Schwab

Roxana King  
Okanogan County Planning Department  
123 5th Ave. N, Suite 130  
Okanogan, WA 98840

Okanogan Comprehensive Plan Comments

Dear Roxana,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Methow Conservancy, thank you for this opportunity to provide public comment re: the Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan. The Methow Conservancy has been an active participant in the comprehensive planning process in Okanogan County over the past 10+ years, and we appreciate the County's willingness to provide opportunities for constructive participation by staff members John Sunderland and Jason Paulsen.

Our input and suggestions for your consideration during this review are as follows:

### More Completely Planned Areas or CPA's

Most importantly, we would like to recognize and express our continued appreciation for the decision made by the Planning Commission and previous County Commissioners to retain the two historic Methow Valley sub-area plans as part of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Adoption. We ask that you retain this structure in the Comprehensive Plan going forward in any edits you may make, honoring this history of land use planning that has served the upper Methow Valley well for over 40 years.

One item we would flag for the Commissioners related to More Completely Planned Areas is in Chapter 7 of the plan (Line 716) which relates to the process of establishing future More Completely Planned Areas. As written now, the Chapter 7 of the Comprehensive Plan requires a landowner petition to initiate the designation of a More Completely Planned Area. We believe this was a drafting error, and that it was the intent of the former Commissioners to also allow for the County Commissioners themselves to initiate such a designation.

We would encourage the County Commissioners to review this process, and consider adding language clarifying their legislative authority to create future More Completely Planned Areas when they find it to be in the best interest of the County. A process allowing for a petition by landowners should also be retained.

### **Resource Lands**

We also continue to encourage the County to seek ways to ensure that agricultural lands of long-term significance are retained by including goal and policy language in Chapter 3. This language should direct the implementation of new incentives in the subdivision and cluster subdivision codes so that owners of these important private agricultural lands or forest lands are provided with provisions in the code such as clustering opportunities which support future development consistent with their underlying zoning, while ensuring that agricultural or forestry uses can continue.

To this end, we encourage you to review the draft cluster subdivision code language we worked to develop with former Planner Ben Rough and a small working group he convened.

### **Firewise Incentives**

Given that our community has experienced wildfire events in 2014, 2015 and 2017, we would encourage the inclusion of goal or policy language in the Comprehensive Plan that supports provisions in the yet to be published subdivision code which provide incentives for the incorporation of Firewise practices in new subdivisions and cluster subdivisions. The use of incentives like these have been very successful historically here in the Methow Valley, and we believe that good design of both subdivisions and new construction within them will result in a "win-win-win" for developers, their buyers and public service providers.

Again, we encourage you to review the draft cluster subdivision code language we worked to develop with former Planner Ben Rough and a small working group he convened to see how simple incentives in the subdivision code can be used effectively to encourage these practices.

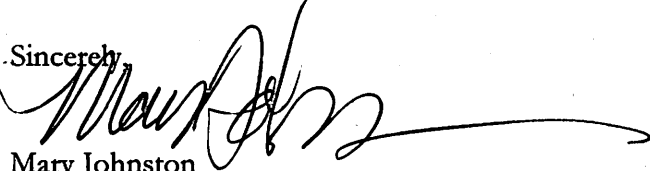
### **Water Resources**

We understand that the County is obligated by way of a settlement agreement to address water resources as part of this Comprehensive Plan update process, and we support that work. We also encourage the County to continue to support the watershed planning underway in the Methow Valley to ensure we have the water we need for future planned development.

With good watershed planning happening alongside this Comprehensive Planning process, we believe it is possible for the Methow Valley to have a reliable blueprint for growth (including within our towns and their future growth areas), while protecting both natural resources and historic water rights essential to the agricultural sector of our economy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this input, and please do not hesitate to call or e-mail if you have any questions re: the items noted above, or the past work we have contributed in support of the Planning Department, Planning Commission and County Commissioners in updating the County Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,



Mary Johnston  
Board President