



Media Advisory

May 9, 2025

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Permitting and Compliance Presentation Will Help Clarify the Rules for Sensitive Areas in the Methow

“What are the Rules around here?” For property owners, realtors, contractors and neighbors, this is an important question, and it can be hard to get clear answers. “Do you need a permit to build a road?”; “Can trees be cut close to a river to improve a view?”; “Can a driveway be built across a wetland to access a building site?” All these questions and many more are regularly confronted by landowners, realtors, excavators, architects, builders, landscapers, and neighbors. A significant shared value of living in the Methow is an appreciation of this place and the fields, forests and wildlife that surround us. To successfully protect our water supplies, fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands and open spaces into the future it is helpful to understand the rules. But looking at the tangle of state and local regulations can be intimidating and confusing.

The Methow Valley Citizens Council and business sponsors Windermere Methow Valley, The Kuehler Law Firm, PLLC, and Palm Construction are organizing an evening presentation and discussion at the Winthrop Barn on May 21st from 5-7:30 to present and clarify what the rules are that protect sensitive and critical areas in the Methow Valley. Representatives from the Okanogan County Planning Department, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Ecology will discuss what the rules are and how the county and agencies work together to meet their responsibility for upholding them. The important role of citizens in local compliance will also be discussed. This presentation is meant for realtors, excavators, architects, builders, landscapers, landowners and citizens of the Methow—anyone who cares deeply about this place and wants to protect it into the future!

Details:

Title: *It Ain't the Wild West Anymore! Permitting and Compliance in the Methow*

Hosted and Moderated by: Methow Valley Citizens Council (MVCC)

Sponsored by: Windermere Methow Valley, The Kuehler Law Firm, PLLC, Palm Construction

Presenters: Representatives from Okanogan County Planning Department, Department of Ecology, Department of Fish and Wildlife

What: Permitting and Compliance presentations, Q&A panel discussion

Where: Winthrop Barn

When: Wednesday May 21, 5:00 – 7:30pm

Schedule: Doors open 5pm

Presentations and Panel Discussion 5:30 – 7:10pm

Mingle and network until 7:30pm

Quotes:

“Navigating planning and permitting processes can be challenging for both developers and neighboring landowners, especially when regulatory codes and enforcement procedures aren’t always clear. That’s why we’re proud to sponsor this workshop — to help foster open dialogue between the community and the officials who shape and enforce these policies, and to shed some light on how the county and other regulatory agencies handle permitting applications and enforcement requests. This is a unique opportunity for both people who are affected by nearby projects and landowners who themselves have development plans to hear directly from county and agency staff.” -Natalie Kuehler

“Windermere hopes that by helping the community better understand the permitting process, current and future property owners will feel more informed and confident in their decisions.” -Alexis Port

“I truly believe that daylight is the answer when it comes to helping everyone figure out the ambiguity around when and how state and county rules apply, and everyone’s role in making sure that the rules are effective at protecting the things we all care about. This workshop is hopefully the first of more candid conversations we can have together that will bring clarity and cooperation on issues that are too often polarizing. As moderators and hosts of this event, it is our number one goal to ensure that we create a safe space to have an honest conversation. I’m looking forward to it!” -Lorah Super

Founded in 1976, the Methow Valley Citizens Council is one of the oldest non-profits in the valley. MVCC is a membership organization that raises a strong community voice for the protection of the Methow Valley's natural environment and rural character. MVCC played a major role in a two-decade battle to avert the development of a large downhill ski area in the upper valley. More recently, MVCC was the lead local organization in a successful campaign to protect the Methow headwaters from the development of an open-pit copper mine. Since its inception, MVCC has engaged at the county and state level to establish policies and laws that protect critical areas, shorelines, open space, clean air, and clean water. MVCC is committed to working with members and partners who bring diverse perspectives—geographical, cultural, professional, and socio-economic.