



## **Methow Watershed Council Work Plan 2023-2024**

***Approved December 15, 2022***

**Mission:** The Methow Watershed Council actively assists in managing water supplies for a sustainable balance between human and ecological needs. The Council endorses the development of voluntary strategies for optimizing water use and provides ongoing community outreach and education on valley-specific water issues.

### **Our Priorities: The MWC Vision is to have:**

- **Water for our Rivers: Maintain sufficient instream for aquatic species**
- **Water for our Farms: To ensure sustainable agriculture**
- **Water for People: Sufficient water supplies for vibrant towns and thoughtful rural development**

**Approach:** The MWC recognizes its unique role in the community as a source of current and historic water information with the ability to advise local policy makers. The MWC recognizes the temporal and economic challenges to developing sustainable water policy and projects, along with current opportunities to address issues that are affecting the community now. The organization addresses short- and long-term water issues by serving as catalyst for new ideas and forming strategic partnerships, and as an implementer of projects to address these needs.

### **A. Water banking**

- Timeline 2023 (Review at Dec 2023 to assess need to continue)*
- Proposed Goals and Objectives:* Understand and provide information on current water banking efforts, advise, review and participate in County development of water code and mitigation water use. Advocate for local water banking funding, assist other orgs in informing the public about opportunities and issues.
- MWC Role:* MWC is monitoring other organizations working on this issue.
- Funding:* Support of Water Banking Committee currently funded through County contract.
- Human Resources:* MWC Water Banking Committee, Administrator (County Funding); Partner organizations.
- Tasks:*
  - Keep informed on the current status of local water banking developments.
  - Provide community education opportunities on water banking (101)
  - Respond to County's request for advising on water code and mitigation development
  - Assist with learning more about potential for water bank to lease excess water from irrigators
- Projected Cost:* (See Notes; Full costs to be approved by MWC in full budget)
- Strategic Partners:* Conservation District, Okanogan County

### **B. Outreach and Education**

- Timeline 2023-2024*
- Proposed Goals and Objectives:* Provide timely information to the community about current water issues in thoughtful, accessible presentations; engage expert presenters; use a variety of

- methods to inform the community. Increase the profile of the MWC in the community. Build MWC's relationship with Tribes.
- c. *MWC Role*: MWC initiates educational events and projects; MWC also seeks opportunities to partner with other organizations to increase the breadth and depth of community reached and information shared.
  - d. *Funding*: Community Foundation grant will fund through 2023. County funding covers some costs. Seek new funding this year for 2024.
  - e. *Human Resources*: MWC Outreach and Education Committee, Administrator (County Funding); Partner organizations.
  - f. *Tasks*: (note: Many presentations overlap with other work plan items – Outreach will coordinate with other committees)
    - i. Outreach Committee is undertaking informal meetings with other groups/interested parties, either setting up meetings to discuss common issues/work, or attending other orgs' public events.
    - ii. Public events winter/spring 2023 (some potentially Fall)
      1. Methow Water Security: Drought Resilience at a Local Level
      2. Water Rights 101
      3. Water Banking: Conservation District's Water Bank – What, How, Why
      4. MWC Presentation at a MWC Mtg: Tyson Carlson Presenting on how the CD Water Bank will work
      5. Idea: Water for Housing 101 (include metering project)
      6. Working on: Irrigator round table
    - iii. Other outreach efforts
      1. Where does your water go? Sewer system tour/ presentation
    - iv. Public profile/ being known by community
      1. Trail signs – partner with MSRF
      2. Schools – connect with school in spring re water cycle/hydrograph
    - v. Build relationship with Tribes
      1. Listen
      2. Attend events
  - g. *Projected Cost*: (See Notes; Full costs to be approved by MWC in full budget)
  - h. *Strategic Partners*: Conservation District, Okanogan County, Other NGOs, Irrigators

### **C. NEW Drought Mitigation Planning 2023-2024**

- a. *Timeline 2023-2024 Initially*
- b. *Proposed Goals and Objectives*: (More detail in Draft Proposal initiated by Councilmember Bodeau)
  - i. Understand current state of drought planning, roles and responsibilities of agencies and organizations. Learn about which data are used for monitoring the status of water supply
  - ii. Identify a range of options available for response to drought
  - iii. Identify/coordinate coalition of groups working on water security; work with them to develop prepared list of drought mitigations to provide to Ecology in the event of drought declaration

- iv. Proactively conduct work needed to quickly put mitigations in place (such as facilitating/supporting drought leasing agreements)
- c. *MWC Role*: MWC will explore what work needs to be considered in developing a drought management plan, and will begin developing this work, bringing in partners.
- d. *Funding*: \$2000 unrestricted funds from Moccasin Fnd. Seek other funding through BoR, Ecology, BEF, Moccasin, etc.
- e. *Human Resources*: MWC Technical Committee, Administrator (County Funding); contract project coordinator as project is developed. Partner organizations.
- f. *Tasks*:
  - i. Gather data, perform vulnerability assessment/ potential Basin Review
  - ii. Develop Water Security Plan that includes proactive actions to be taken in advance of drought, and potential mitigations to be undertaken in the event of drought. Obtain Community input.
- g. *Projected Cost*: (See Notes; Full costs to be approved by MWC in full budget)
- h. *Strategic Partners*: Irrigators, CD, Towns, County, NGOs,

#### **D. NEW Water for Housing**

- a. *Timeline 2023-2024*
- b. *Proposed Goals and Objectives*: Understand water needs for housing in the Methow, explore potential for updating consumptive use definitions/ credit for returns (towns), learn about options for mitigation water availability and priorities; work alongside groups working on housing from the water perspective.
- c. *MWC Role*: MWC participates with other organizations working on this issue, bringing the water perspective.
- d. *Funding*: None currently, seek funding through WA Commerce, Ecology, Community Foundation.
- e. *Human Resources*: MWC Ad Hoc Housing Committee, Administrator (County Funding); Partner organizations.
- f. *Tasks*:
  - i. Attend and learn about water needs from groups working on housing issues/projects. Review Beckwith Consultant study.
  - ii. Provide community education opportunities on water and housing (101)
  - iii. Partner with groups to provide needed information/assistance for water elements of housing initiatives.
- g. *Projected Cost*: (See Notes; Full costs to be approved by MWC in full budget)
- h. *Strategic Partners*: Towns, Methow Housing Trust, Methow Housing Network, Chambers, (Developers), Housing Solutions Network.

#### **Other potential projects**

Searchable database on website. Digital storage and a contractor to perform the work.  
Code updates to IFR Database/ public access option

#### **Notes**

Projected costs are included as informational only for the purpose of initial budgeting. Each committee working on projects will refine work budgets and present to the MWC for spending approval.