

Pateros unveils a lasting monument to the Methow Valley's first people



Photo by Joanna Bastian

It's a family affair: In March, design team members decided the location of the interpretive signs. Mark Miller holds a sign with a photo featuring his aunt Mary Marchand and uncle Lewis Miller. Mark's daughter Crystal stands in the background holding a sign that features information about Bobbi Hall's pictograph tiles. Bobbi is the granddaughter of Mark, and Crystal's niece.

By Joanna Bastian

Located along the shoreline of the Columbia River, the Methow Monument integrates the natural elements of water, stone, and native plants. An educational park, the space is designed to recognize the Methow's role in shaping this community from past to present. Last year, the idea of a historical sign and sculpture celebrating the Methows was floated between Chuck Borg, a native of Pateros who was born and raised in the lower Methow Valley, and Richard Hart, a nationally recognized historian and scholar on Native American issues. The two men gathered together a team to discuss content and location. The team included tribal members Mark Miller and Randy Lewis, two members of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT) History and Archaeology Department, Jackie Cook and Crystal Miller, and writer Joanna Bastian. When the team approached Pateros City Hall to ask permission, Jord Wilson, Pateros public work superintendent, saw an opportunity.



Photo by Joanna Bastian A new ADA sidewalk provides access to the shoreline trail from the street. Pictograph tiles by Bobbi Hall embedded in the sidewalk recreate rock images found throughout the Methow Valley.

“We had been talking about adding an ADA sidewalk for shoreline access from the road and something noticeable to bring people in from the highway,” he began. “I’ve always admired the Beebee Bridge sculptures and the Soap Lake teepees. It was a combination of making (those elements) work here in the city.”

The initial idea of one historical sign and one sculpture was set aside, as Pateros city officials encouraged a full educational park featuring sculptures of a traditional salmon encampment, native plants, a salmon bake oven, pictograph-tiled ADA sidewalk, and five interpretive signs to tell a larger story about the history of the Methow people.

Traditional salmon encampment

A 14-foot canvas teepee is noticeable from the highway and offers a shady place for children to play. Near the teepee is a sculpture by Virgil “Smoker” Marchand of a little girl hanging salmon from drying racks.

Flowing through the Methow Monument is a dry riverbed, filled with salmon sculptures by Smoker. At the center of the dry streambed is a nine-foot fisherman spearing salmon from horseback. Smoker’s inspiration was a 1930s photo of a Methow Indian seated on horseback, gaffing salmon in the Methow River.

Five colorful signs include historical photos and content that provide insight into the people for which this valley was named, the Methows. Winthrop graphic designer Sally Ranzau created the layouts for the Methow Monument signs. Sally also designed the interpretive signs located at the Shafer Museum. Photos were provided by the Shafer Museum, the Okanogan County Historical Society, and the family archives of Randy Lewis.

A gorgeous rock-walled salmon bake oven resides at the center of the monument. The salmon bake oven was paid for by the Pateros hotel/motel tax. Wilson and Wilson Landscaping designed and built the oven using native rock from south of Pateros. The cap on the rock is from the only remaining Methow family allotment located in the Methow traditional territory, MA 27. Tom Miller and Lionel Wilson selected the cap rocks from around Tom’s family home.

Cultural significance of native plants

The native plants at the Methow Monument are the result of a senior project undertaken by Austin Yancey and Isaac Wall, 2017 graduates of Pateros High School. The young men conducted research on native plants, created a topographical map for the planting plan, and then planted serviceberry, chokecherry, kinnikinnick, and more on Arbor Day.

Rob Crandall, owner of Methow Natives Nursery, donated over 100 culturally significant native plants to include in the Methow Monument landscape. Rob also designed the Methow Valley Interpretive Center (MVIC) native plant garden located in Twisp, and he works closely with the CCT on educational programs for students to learn habitat restoration and native plants. “Habitat restoration works in parallel with reconciliation,” Rob explained, “Hopefully what I see developing is a welcome stop where people can get a piece of the story about the Native community and will continue up the Methow Valley to the MVIC to learn more about the role Methows played in shaping our community.”

Methow Natives Nursery also donated bundles of sweetgrass to give away to visitors during Saturday’s dedication ceremony.

Pictograph walkway



Photo by Chuck Borg

Colville Tribal artist Virgil “Smoker” Marchand directs the placement of the fisherman sculpture.

Roberta “Bobbi” Hall, created the pictograph walkway for her 2017 Pateros High School senior project. Bobbi teamed up with art instructor Todd Steenhard and the Pateros Junior High art class to recreate rock images found throughout the Methow Valley. All images, known or unknown, remain spiritually important to Native people and are protected by federal, state, and tribal cultural preservation laws. To recreate the pictographs onto 12x12 concrete tiles, Bobbi enlarged images found in archeology reports to fit the size of the tiles. The art students transferred the images to the tiles. “I had a lot of time to think about the people who made these pictographs. This is how they wrote

and recorded things,” Bobbi said. “I hope visitors interact with the history of this place.”

Bobbi, a Methow descendant, might have a family resemblance to the people pictured on the interpretive signs. Bobbi is the great-granddaughter of Lewis Miller, and great great great great granddaughter of Nancy Paul.

A public space

The Methow Monument is designed for a large number of people to mingle and socialize. Gebbers Farms donated the labor to place large boulders and driftwood logs throughout the site for visitors to use as natural benches.

The salmon bake oven is a permanent fire pit, open to the public to use for family barbecues and special events. A facilities use permit can be found online at www.pateros.com.

The Methow Monument is endorsed by the Pateros City Council, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Okanogan County Historical Society and Douglas County PUD.