



## **2026 Eastern Washington Riparian Planting Symposium - AGENDA**

**WHEN:** February 26, 2026 Doors Open at 8:30 am, Symposium begins at 9:00 am

**WHERE:** Wenatchee Convention Center, Orchard Hall: 121 N Wenatchee Ave.,  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

**MODERATOR(S):** Merritt Mitchell (Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group) &  
Committee of [Populus: The Columbia Basin Riparian Planting Partnership](#)

**THEME:** **What It Takes: Real Tools for Riparian Practitioners**

**8:30-9:00** Registration/Coffee/Networking

**9:00-9:10** Welcome -- Merritt Mitchell – Welcome and Overview, Speaker Introductions,  
Committee Intros, Sponsor Thanks, etc.

**9:10-9:40** **Current Funding & Resource Landscape** - Elizabeth Spaulding, Habitat Policy  
Specialist, Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office; Amy Martin, Riparian Grant Program  
Manager, WA. Conservation Commission; and Ken Muir, Riparian and Shrub steppe  
Biologist, WA Fish and Wildlife

**9:40-10:10** **Beaver Management during Project Establishment**, Ryan Watts, Project Manager,  
Wildlands, Inc.

**10:10-10:25** **Ice Breaker Activity:** *An Honest Look at Survivability and Cost Per Acre (Anonymous  
Google Survey will be sent before the Conference for real-world data sharing)*

**10:25-10:35** **HOSTED BREAK**

**10:35-11:35** **A Functional Approach to Riparian Reforestation** – Katrina Strathmann, Riparian  
Program Director, [Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group](#)

**11:35 -12:20** **Land Stewardship Is a Relationship – What Chiliwist Creek Has Taught** — Gert  
Webster, Land Steward; Chevelle Yeckel, [Okanogan Conservation District](#); and Alexa  
Whipple, [Methow Okanogan Beaver Project](#).

**12:20-1:30** **LUNCH - Networking & Featured Video: Beavers Return to Triple Creek -  
Methow-Okanogan Project Video**



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- 1:30-3:10**                    **Yakima Basin Floodplain Reconnection and Riparian Restoration**
- **Schaake Restoration in Kittitas County** - Katherine Fitch, Restoration Ecologist, [BFI Native Seed](#) & Timothy DeWeese, Professional Engineer, [Bureau of Reclamation](#)
  - **Little Naches (Upper Reaches of Yakima Basin)** - Becca Wassell, Yakima Basin Program Director, [Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group](#)
- 3:10-3:25**                    **Hosted - BREAK**
- 3:25-3:45**                    **Natural Floating Wetlands: Community-Based Innovation** - Julie Vanderwal, Project Manager, [Methow Okanagan Beaver Project](#)
- 3:45-4:15**                    **Utilizing Wetland Sod in Restoration** - Joanna Cowles, Senior Riparian Conservation Scientist, [Walla Walla Conservation District](#)
- 4:15-4:45**                    **Growing Connections - Lessons from Riparian Restoration in the Methow River Watershed**, John Crandall, Aquatic Ecologist and Monitoring Program Coordinator, [Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation](#)
- 4:45-5:00**                    **INTRO to Friday Field Trip Locations - Lower Peshastin RM 0.3 & Sleepy Hollow** [Cascade Fisheries Staff](#) and [Chelan-Douglas Land Trust](#)
- 5:00-5:15**                    **Wrap Up**
- 6:00 – 8:00**                    **Happy Hour Social nearby – Timberline Brewing, No Host Bar & Light Appetizers**

### **Field Trip – Friday, February 27, 2025 – 9 a.m. to Noon**

#### **Lower Peshastin River RM 0.3 — Restoration in Action**

See a newly completed project at the Peshastin–Wenatchee confluence: 3.7 acres of new aquatic habitat, over 1,900 feet of reconnected channels, and large wood restoration—now tested by recent high flows. Join us to see how it’s working on the ground.

#### **Revisiting the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust Sleepy Hollow Site (from 2024)**

The 40-acre Lower Sleepy Hollow Preserve, along the Wenatchee River, permanently protecting one of the valley’s last intact floodplains. Developed in partnership with Tribes and regional conservation partners, the preserve safeguards critical salmon habitat, supports natural floodplain processes, and strengthens community resilience. Recent flooding events tested the site’s resilience, demonstrating the value of intact floodplains in absorbing high flows while advancing salmon recovery and honoring Tribal interests.