



Alpine Watershed Group

Protecting the Headwaters of the California Alps

STAFF REPORT FOR APRIL 20, 2024–JUNE 22, 2024 for Board of Directors Meeting on June 26, 2024

This Staff Report is formatted according to the AWG Strategic Plan to help identify where growth within the organization needs to be developed.

Goal 1: Alpine County’s watersheds and the waters that flow through them are protected, conserved, and restored.

Watershed Assessment and Monitoring

- * May 1 and May 14 – Bella and Kaitlyn went to Curtz Lake to tag 10% of the 500 Jeffrey pine seedlings that were planted during Alpine County’s Second Annual Arbor Day on April 26.
- * May 7 – Rachel watched a webinar on “Introduction to ArcGIS Data Pipelines.”
- * May 18 – Rachel conducted River Monitor Training with assistance from Bella. One new volunteer was trained that day, and four existing monitors refreshed their skills.
- * June 1 – Monitoring Impacts of Tamarack Fire for Meadow Recovery: Rachel and Kimra finalized and submitted the grant final programmatic and financial reports for the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) – California Headwaters grant.
- * June 6 through 8 – Rachel coordinated the second round of River Monitoring with support from Bella. Two new volunteers joined and were fully trained in the field. On June 14 Bella coordinated river monitoring for the final site.
- * June 10 – Bella and Kaitlyn assisted American Rivers with monitoring streamflow, beaver activity, and beaver dam analogs at restoration sites in Faith Valley.
- * June 13 – Rachel, Bella, and Kaitlyn attended a zoom meeting with Regional Board staff to go over sampling and shipping procedures for Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) monitoring this year at Red Lake.
- * June 18 – Bella and Kaitlyn went to Turtle Rock Park to collect data from the October 2023 tree planting along Millberry Creek utilizing the seedling survivability survey that they created with Wes last fall.
- * June 19 – With the help of three volunteers, Rachel conducted HAB monitoring at Red Lake.
- * Through June 21 – Hope Valley Restoration and Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Project: Rachel is working on the agreement with the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) practitioner for the post-project CRAM survey required this fall. Rachel sent out an email to the project’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to set up a site visit so that the TAC can brainstorm on adaptive management work that can be completed in this final year of funding. Work is funded by National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (Kirkwood settlement).
- * Through June 21 – West Fork Carson Prioritization Project: AWG is still waiting for the grant agreement from the State Water Board; it is expected in early July. Rachel issued the Request for Proposals for the project consultant on May 15; four bids were received by the June 14 deadline; the selection committee met on June 20 to discuss the proposals and next steps. Kimra has requested a proposal from attorney Thomas Archer to review the consultant

contract and private landowner site access agreement template; this attorney assistance was included in the grant budget. Work is currently funded by the Carson Water Subconservancy District grant.

Restoration

- * April 26 – Second Annual Alpine County Arbor Day, hosted by the Forest Health Community Working Group: There was a great turnout of 115 volunteers who were able to quickly plant all 500 Jeffrey pine seedlings at Curtz Lake before enjoying a complimentary lunch at Turtle Rock Park Community Center.
- * May 19 – Mary and Bill Young completed a cleanup of AWG’s Adopt-A-Highway stretch, as well as a cigarette butt audit.
- * Markleeville Creek Floodplain Restoration Project – As documented in the quarterly progress reports submitted to grant administrator South Tahoe Public Utility District: Monthly coordination meetings were held with various representatives from the AWG team, Alpine County Community Development, Caltrans, and Markleeville Public Utility District (MPUD); to save on consultant budget, Kimra had AWG host these meetings rather than Stantec since Stantec’s presence was not needed. Kimra coordinated with permitting agencies, Alpine County, and Stantec on addressing the incomplete notices received from California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board for submitted project permit applications. On June 13 Kimra and Bob Twiss attended the MPUD Board Meeting. Funded in part by an Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Implementation Grant.

Goal 2: Community awareness and participation in watershed stewardship is increased.

Partnership Development

- * April 23 and May 21 – Kimra attended stakeholder meetings organized for the East Fork Carson River hot springs thanks to the technical assistance procured by the Carson Ranger District from the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). Bella also attended on May 21. These meetings included an overview of research on Wild & Scenic status, as well as discussions of possible recommendations for the various areas. NPS RTCA liaisons visited on May 28 and 29; unfortunately the float trip on May 28 had to be canceled due to low flows, but they were able to visit the hot springs via both the Nevada route and the California route from Airport Road, with some stakeholders, during their visit. NPS RTCA awarded one last year of technical assistance to get to a final proposed plan for the East Fork Carson River hot springs for agency consideration.
- * April 24 – Rachel attended the Carson River Coalition Floodplain Management Working Group Meeting.
- * April 24 & June 5 – Kaitlyn attended a Take Care Sierra Working Group Meeting, orchestrating the collection of Take Care Sierra outreach materials for AWG.
- * April 30 – Rachel met with Jamie Phillips of Alpine County Unified School District regarding the new Community School Program, where next school year AWG would come into a classroom once a month, and out of this would come a community service-learning project that would be presented by the class to the community. Rachel is in discussion with AWG staff on what topic could be covered in the 2024 fall semester.
- * April 30 – Rachel attended the Chamber of Commerce Open House.

- * May 2 – Rachel and Bella attended the Washoe Woodfords Community Council Meeting where they discussed upcoming events and HABs. Concerns were raised about the quality of drinking water for Hung-A-Lel-Ti residents. Rachel has been working with Mikhail Gadowski with Alpine County Public Health to identify existing data and potential resources.
- * May 10 & June 14 – Bella attended Create the Good at the Hung-A-Lel-Ti Firehouse.
- * May 13 – Kimra walked the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Hope Valley Wildlife Area with CDFW staff to discuss the ongoing interpretive signs project.
- * May 15 – Kaitlyn attended the Carson River Coalition Education Working Group Meeting, sharing the news of AWG’s newly reinstated environmental education program.
- * May 16 – Kimra attended the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Carson Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) meeting.
- * May 16 – Rachel attended a webinar on “Valuation of Ecosystem Goods and Services in the Upper American River Watershed.”
- * May 22 – Bella virtually attended the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group Planning Work Group Meeting.
- * May 29 through 31 – Bella attended the Sierra Meadows Partnership Annual Gathering held at Sequoia National Park. The gathering consisted of two field days with a “conference” style day full of presentations splitting up the field days. The field days consisted of touring three different meadows within the park, and each meadow utilized a different restoration technique. The three techniques that were discussed and observed were the pond-and-plug method, partial channel fill, and full channel fill.
- * May 29 & June 17 – Kaitlyn presented at California Climate Action Corps (CCAC) informational sessions, sharing AWG’s work with potential 2024-2025 CCAC Fellows.
- * June 17 – Bella met up with Nikki Hill who works for Grow With Trees and is contracted to do vegetation/wildlife monitoring under utility poles (in Markleeville amongst other areas) for Liberty Electric. Nikki has a vast understanding of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Indigenous First Foods.
- * June 19 – Kimra attended the Alpine County Health and Wellness Coalition meeting, at which Sierra Club presented on tobacco waste.

Community Outreach and Awareness

- * April 22 – AWG staff released AWG’s [April 2024 Newsletter](#).
- * April 22 – Kaitlyn tabled at Sierra Nevada Alliance’s Wild and Scenic Film Festival in South Lake Tahoe.
- * April 27 – Bella and Kaitlyn attended South Lake Tahoe’s Earth Day at Lake Tahoe Community College. They reached a large audience with at least 182 community members stopping by the AWG booth to obtain information about the organization and to interact with the watershed model.
- * April 27 – Rachel tabled at the Teddy Bear Parade at Diamond Valley School.
- * May 4 – Bella and Kaitlyn attended the Washoe Environmental Protection Department’s Earth Day event held at the Carson Colony Gym. They reached an audience of 91 people and received positive feedback about the watershed model being a great activity for the kids.
- * May 8 – Representative Kevin Kiley recognized Alpine Watershed Group for receiving the [Forest Service 2022 Volunteers Program Citizen Stewardship and Partnerships Award](#) on the House floor; [link to video](#). AWG received a hard copy of the Congressional Record to display with the award.

- * May 11 – Kaitlyn, Bella, and Rich Harvey tabled at The Market at Markleeville. Approximately 51 people stopped by the AWG booth.
- * May 14 – AWG staff released AWG’s [May 2024 Newsletter](#).
- * June 11 & 12 – Rachel, Kaitlyn, and Bella attended the Carson Water Subconservancy District Get on the Bus Tour, learning about a variety of watershed topics and making personal connections with others working in the watershed. Kimra presented on forest health and resilience and tagged along for part of the Alpine County portion of the tour. Rachel presented an overview of AWG’s projects and programs at the Faith Valley stop. During the bus ride, Bella and Kaitlyn presented on the California Climate Action Corps program and the work that they have accomplished with AWG so far.
- * June 18 – Kimra attended the Death Ride Captain’s meeting. Bella and Kaitlyn had a conflict, so they could not attend, but they have been organizing AWG’s volunteers to take care of trash and recycling and the water station at Turtle Rock Park on July 12 and 13. Kimra has been coordinating with January Riddle to represent AWG at the Arts and Culture Alpine County walk at Grover Hot Springs State Park on the morning of July 13.
- * June 21 – AWG staff released AWG’s [June 2024 Newsletter](#).
- * June 21 through 22 – Kaitlyn and Bella staffed the AWG outreach table at Woollystar Festival 2024.

Environmental Education - Funded by California Coastal Commission’s Whale Tail Grants Program

- * May 23 – Rachel and Bella, along with staff from Alpine County Library and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), led a field trip at Curtz Lake for Diamond Valley School. Sugar Pine Foundation provided 60 Jeffrey pines for the students to plant on BLM property around Curtz Lake.
- * June 4 – Rachel, Kaitlyn, and Bella went to Bear Valley School to present lessons on the water cycle.
- * June 6 – Rachel, Kaitlyn, and Bella went to Bear Valley School to present a lesson about bird adaptations.
- * June 7 – Rachel, Kaitlyn, and Bella went to Diamond Valley School to present lessons about the water cycle and bird adaptations.

California Climate Action Corps (CCAC) Fellows

- * Ongoing – Rachel has attended CCAC Site Supervisor meetings monthly. She continues to submit timecards bimonthly for each Fellow and has continued to work with Bella and Kaitlyn to submit Monthly Climate Reports that are required through the program.
- * Kaitlyn continued participating in an 11-week UCLA extension virtual course on Soil and Plant Nutrition, which she has now completed. It educated Kaitlyn on the interactions between soil and water, the chemical composition properties of soil, the intricacies and impacts of fertilizer, the ecosystem within soil, soil structure modifications via amendments, tilling methods and erosion control, and soil testing options and procedures. Kaitlyn now has the option to take a few more select classes and earn her Horticulture Certificate from UCLA Extension.

- * Ongoing (May 14 through July 16), Kaitlyn and Bella are both participating in a 9-week UC Agriculture and Natural Resources virtual course on Forest Stewardship. This included an in-person field day on June 8 at Sugar Pine Point State Park where they learned how to use various forest inventorying tools. These forestry tools have been added to the California Alpine Club Foundation grant request.
- * May 30 through 31 – Kaitlyn attended a Sierra Nevada Alliance Grant Administration Workshop, hosted by the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts. She learned about grant reporting, timesheet keeping, and invoicing.
- * Bella and Kaitlyn have participated in many webinars related to climate change and forest resilience, including:
 - Webinar by Eurofins Environment Testing “PFAS in Source and Ambient Air, Part 5”
 - Webinar by The Outdoor Learning Team & Take Me Outside “Invasive Species Education and Action”
 - Webinar by Ohio Sea Grant “Freshwater Science: Project CYBORG (CYano BLOom dRivers and Genes)”
 - Webinar by Yale Forest Forum, Tribal Forestry: Understanding Current Issues & Challenges in Contemporary & Traditional Management of Forested Landscapes, “Ways of Seeing and Stewardship of Tribal Lands Into the Future”
 - Webinar by Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network “Centering Community in Evaluation Practices”
 - Webinar by Eurofins Environment Testing “Non-Stick Humans: A PFAS Story, Part 6”
 - Webinar by California EPA, OEHHA, CA DWR, and State Water Resources Control Board “Hydroclimate”
 - Webinar by California Fire Science Seminar Series and USDA Forest Service “Developing a Practical Physical Wildfire Behavior Model” with Dr. Mark Finney
 - Webinar by USGS Friday Finding’s “Adaptive Management, Fire, and Restoration in the Sagebrush Biome”
 - Webinar by The Soil Food Web “Soil Health, Fungi, and the Soil Food Web”

Goal 3: AWG has increased capacity and a plan for sustainability.

Regional Coordination and Collaboration

- * Organization and Local Capacity-building for Forest and Fire Resilience funded by Sierra Nevada Conservancy – Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (SNC – RFFCP):
 - AWG staff provided the quarterly progress report to Whitebark Institute for the subcontract from Sierra Nevada Conservancy.
 - AWG staff continued to participate in and help with administrative and outreach tasks for the [Forest Health Community Working Group \(FHCWG\)](#), which met on April 22 and May 21.
 - May 1 – Kimra, Kaitlyn, and Bella attended the Alpine County prescribed fire field workshop final design meeting/site visit for the [July 26 event](#), hosted by the Forest Health Community Working Group and CalPoly’s Fuels and Vegetation Education Program.
 - May 2 – Rachel, Bella, and Kaitlyn met with Alpine County Wildfire Project Coordinator Clint Celio to discuss the mapping and compilation of all the planting and fuels-reduction projects’ GIS polygon data. Kaitlyn and Bella met with Clint again on May 14 to go over progress made with the mapping project.

- May 21 – Kimra attended the RFFCP Subgrantee Workshop. The presentation by Butte County Collaborative Group was very pertinent to the forest health projects GIS database. The presentation by Upper Mokelumne Regional Watershed Authority (UMRWA) was also pertinent as our stewardship area falls within their area, and Kimra followed up to receive UMRWA’s draft Tribal Engagement Plan.
- * June 5 – Kimra attended a workshop on the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) hosted by the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.
- June 5 – AWG staff attended the Forest Health Community Working Group’s community meeting at Turtle Rock Park Community Center at which US Forest Service Forest Ecologist Ali Paulson presented on post-Tamarack Fire monitoring data. There were 47 attendees.

Organizational Management and Development

- * April 30 – Kimra was deposed as the person most qualified for Alpine Watershed Group for Alpine County v. South Tahoe Public Utility District.
- * The [Forest Health Coordinator job announcement](#) was updated with a priority application due date of July 20.
- * Rachel and Kimra will be conducting interviews for the two 2024-2025 California Climate Action Corps Fellows slots in July.
- * AWG’s CPA has made an initial pass at AWG’s QuickBooks file for 2022 tax returns that are due on August 15, 2024. Kimra and Bookkeeper Stacey Huber need to respond to CPA’s questions.

Fundraising

- * Woollystar Bar – Kimra and Amy Mecak of Alpine Trails Association continued to coordinate with Woollystar Festival organizers Daniel Strickland and Frank Gibbs on logistics for the Woollystar Music Festival bar on June 21 and 22. Daniel secured a generous beer donation from Moonlight Brewing Company, and Frank secured a generous donation from Zaddy’s of canned cocktails. Guayakí again generously donated their drinks. Frank picked up all donations from the vendors and brought them to the festival, for which we are very grateful! Thank you to AWG Board Members for purchasing and donating wine to sell.
- * *Invited* – California Alpine Club Foundation: AWG has been invited to submit a grant request for \$3,000 for equipment and supplies related to AWG’s monitoring and environmental education projects.
- * *Awarded* – SNC – RFFCP Round 3: Alpine County has technically been awarded this funding and is awaiting the final documents for signature. Alpine County and AWG will then work on the subgrant agreement for AWG’s assistance.
- * *Received* – The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment awarded AWG a \$5,000 Professional Development Grant to cover fees and staff time for a variety of professional development opportunities desired by AWG staff.