



Alpine Watershed Group

Protecting the Headwaters of the California Alps

STAFF REPORT FOR JUNE 23, 2024–AUGUST 23, 2024 for Board of Directors Meeting on August 28, 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

- * Through August 28 – Faith Valley Meadow Restoration Project: On August 15 Rachel and Bella attended a meeting with American Rivers and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest staff to discuss adaptive management in this final year of the Faith Valley Meadow Restoration Project. AWG received a grant addendum to extend AWG’s assistance with monitoring and outreach for an additional year (through February 1, 2025) and provide an additional \$3,632 in funding. Funding procured by American Rivers.
- * Through August 28 – Hope Valley Restoration and Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Project: Rachel, Bella, and Kaitlyn conducted photo monitoring on June 27. The project’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met at the site on July 3 to brainstorm on adaptive management work that can be completed in this final year of funding. Rachel has since followed up with permitting agencies and funding liaisons; she is exploring whether a grant extension might be possible. The California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) practitioner conducted the post-project CRAM survey in early August. Work is funded by National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (Kirkwood settlement).
- * Through August 28 – West Fork Carson Prioritization Project: AWG received the fully executed grant agreement from the State Water Board on August 20. The selection committee conducted consultant interviews on July 10. Rachel, and now Kimra, is working with the selected consultant on scope of work and agreement development. Work to date has been funded by the Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD) grant.
- * July 1 – Kaitlyn, Bella, and volunteer Bill Young completed vegetation and photo point monitoring of the Musser and Jarvis watershed.
- * July 17 – With the help of four volunteers, Rachel, Bella, and Kaitlyn conducted HAB monitoring at Red Lake. Results from the testing caused the placement of “caution” signage at Red Lake.
- * August 8 through 10 – Kaitlyn and Bella coordinated the third round of River Monitoring with support from Rachel.
- * August 14 – With the help of three volunteers, Bella and Neil conducted HAB monitoring at Red Lake. The “caution” advisory continues.

Restoration

- * [Creek Day](#): Rachel continued planning for Creek Day projects and coordinating with site leaders for the annual community workday to be held on Saturday, September 21, from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Bella is taking over on workday coordination and outreach, with support from Kimra and Neil.
- * 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. On August 8 AWG led a site visit with permitting agencies, Alpine County, MPUD, and Stantec to discuss the issues raised in the incomplete notices received from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board on submitted project permit applications, as well as to discuss sequencing and the nexus between MPUD's project and the floodplain restoration project. Funded in part by an Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Implementation Grant.
- * June 25 – Bella assisted California State Parks with invasive weed removal at Grover Hot Springs State Park.
- * July 11 – Bella organized an invasive weed removal event at Grover Hot Springs State Park with workday support from California State Parks botanists, Rachel, and Kaitlyn. Nine volunteers removed approximately two acres of cheatgrass and tumble mustard. Bella made a public comment to report out on the workday outcomes at the Board of Supervisors meeting on July 16.
- * Rachel started an online, remote learning course on Streambank Assessment and Restoration offered by UC Davis Continuing and Professional Education. This is funded by The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment's Professional Development Grant.
- * August 21 – Bella attended a webinar on "Beaver Restoration and Management on Tribal Land."

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

Partnership Development

- * June 24 – Kaitlyn presented at a California Climate Action Corps (CCAC) informational session, sharing AWG's work with potential 2024-2025 CCAC Fellows.
- * June 24 – Mary Young attended the Turtle Rock Park Rehabilitation Master Plan Community Workshop.
- * June 27 and July 18 – 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). At these meetings participants discussed the observations made at the May 28 and 29 site visits and provided input on a draft survey designed to get input from planning group members on the general proposed recommendations that have been discussed to date.
- * June 28 – Rachel, Bella, and Kimra toured Kirkwood Meadow with Kirkwood staff to discuss possible projects and ways that Kirkwood and AWG could partner to improve the meadow's health.

- * July 10 – Bella attended the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group Monitoring Workgroup Meeting.
- * July 10 – Kaitlyn attended a Take Care Sierra Working Group Meeting.
- * July 11 – Kimra attended the fourth meeting of the new Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Carson Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) working group focused on fisheries coordination and developing community engagement materials.
- * [Eastern Sierra Land & Community Survey Project](#): On July 22, Kimra met with Paul Burrow and Alex Basaraba on this project’s team. Subsequently Alex and another researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with Kimra, Neil, and Bella.
- * July 24 – Kaitlyn attended the Carson River Coalition Floodplain Management Working Group Meeting, sharing updates on floodplain-related projects and encouraging participation in Creek Day 2024.
- * July 31 – Kaitlyn and Bella attended the Carson River Coalition Agricultural Producers Working Group tour of Joe Frey’s ranch, getting to see firsthand land being utilized using regenerative practices.
- * August 2 – Neil, Bella, Kaitlyn, and Kimra attended the Sierra Meadows Partnership tour of the Faith Valley Meadow Restoration project and the proposed project in Little Indian Valley.
- * August 16 – Kimra attended a meeting between CDFW, Alpine County Economic Development Director JT Chevallier, and Trout Unlimited to hear CDFW present on opportunities to highlight fisheries in Alpine County.
- * August 21 – At the request of CWSD General Manager Ed James, Kimra provided an update on AWG’s activities at the CWSD Board Meeting held in Alpine County.

Community Outreach and Awareness

- * June 29 – Mary Young and Bella tabled at the Market at Markleeville. Approximately 10 people stopped by the AWG booth, and four people signed up for AWG’s newsletter.
- * July 5 – AWG staff released AWG’s [July 2024 Newsletter](#).
- * July 12 & 13 – Bella and Kaitlyn coordinated five volunteers to collect Death Ride trash, separate out recyclables, and service the water station at Turtle Rock Park. The Fellows were present throughout the event to assist with outreach at AWG’s booth. For the first time, aluminum cans were sorted separately, then hauled by Kaitlyn to South Tahoe Refuse to be redeemed for funds for AWG.
- * July 13 – Kimra represented AWG at the Arts and Culture Alpine County walk at Grover Hot Springs State Park, stationed by one of the interpretive signs that AWG designed for the boardwalk.
- * July 20 – Kaitlyn attended the Alpine Outdoor Recreation Association and Alpine Trails Association community event, soliciting input on Creek Day projects from community members.
- * July 27 – Kaitlyn attended the Wa She Shu Festival at Meeks Bay, observing in hopes to inform the annual Washoe Mountain Gathering and see if AWG might want to table at future Wa She Shu Festivals.
- * July 27 – Bella tabled at the Market at Markleeville. Approximately 20 people stopped by the AWG booth, and three people signed up for AWG’s newsletter.
- * August 6 – Kimra and Neil attended the Board of Supervisors meeting to publicly introduce Neil as AWG’s new Forest Health Coordinator.

- * August 6 – Kaitlyn and Bella attended the Woodfords Hung-A-Lel-Ti Community Back-to-School Night, where they shared AWG information with community members.
- * August 13 – AWG staff released AWG’s [August 2024 Newsletter](#).

California Climate Action Corps (CCAC) Fellows

- * Ongoing – Rachel has attended CCAC Site Supervisor meetings monthly through the end of the 2023-2024 term on August 15. She continued to submit timecards bimonthly for each Fellow and continued to work with Bella and Kaitlyn to submit Monthly Climate Reports that are required through the program.
- * Ongoing (May 14 through July 16), Kaitlyn and Bella participated in a 9-week UC Agriculture and Natural Resources virtual course on Forest Stewardship.
- * June 26 – Kaitlyn picked up plants from Villager Nursery for a demonstration garden project, the goal of which is to have a drought-tolerant, native, and fire-wise planting bed outside of the AWG office. She planted the plants on August 15. This project is funded through The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment’s Office Beautification Grant.
- * July 18 – Bella and Kaitlyn presented an ArcGIS StoryMap on the beaver dam analogs project in Faith Valley to their CCAC cohort for the 2023-2024 CCAC Graduation; Rachel and Kimra also attended this portion of the virtual graduation.
- * August 1 – Bella, Kaitlyn, and Neil hosted the CCAC Program Director, taking her to Curtz Lake and showing her the impact of AWG as a partner for the tree planting and monitoring.
- * August 14 through 16 – Kaitlyn attended a Grant Writing Workshop, hosted by California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) and presented by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.
- * Bella and Kaitlyn have participated in many webinars related to climate change and forest resilience, including:
 - o Webinar on “Human Health Impacts: Infectious Disease”
 - o Webinar by California EPA, OEHHA on “Wildlife Impacts”
 - o Webinar on “Indicators of Climate Change: Bridging Science and Action. ‘Impacts on Oceans’”

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):
 - o AWG staff continued to participate in and help with administrative and outreach tasks for the [Forest Health Community Working Group \(FHCWG\)](#), which met on June 23, July 30, and August 21.
 - o A FHCWG subcommittee was organized to explore the possibility of Alpine County applying to be on the Fire Risk Reduction Community List. AWG staff have participated in two meetings, providing administrative support.
 - o A FHCWG subcommittee was organized and began meeting to explore developing materials on brush identification and management and potentially hosting a workshop. Bella, Neil, and Kaitlyn are working with Andy Lovell, Jill Trainer, and Clint Celio on this effort.

- * Musser and Jarvis Assessment Report – On August 1 Kimra, Neil, Bella, and Kaitlyn met with Bill and Mary Young to discuss the assessment report of the Musser and Jarvis watershed, a grant deliverable that is intended to provide a roadmap for future activities in the watershed. On August 22, AWG staff and Clint did a site visit of the watershed from the spring to the Markleeville Water Company intake. AWG staff is working with Clint to refine the outline for the report.
- Bella and Kaitlyn, with the addition of Neil, continued conversations with Alpine County Wildfire Project Coordinator Clint Celio on mapping and compilation of all the planting and fuels-reduction projects’ GIS polygon data, as well as on seedling survivability sampling protocol.
- June 24 – Rachel attended the Healthy Eldorado Landscape Partnership (HELP) Meadows Collaboration Workgroup Meeting to collaborate and share knowledge.
- June 25 – Kimra attended the Southern Sierra Cohort Call to meet with other RFFCP subgrantees and share knowledge. This conversation was focused on partnership building.
- June 26 – Kimra attended the Forest Projects Plan Phase 2 Public Stakeholder Meeting organized by the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority.
- July 16 – Kimra attended the RFFCP Subgrantee Workshop, at which all current grantees shared about the work they are doing under the RFFCP, and Round 3 grantees officially joined the bimonthly workshop for the first time.
- * July 16 – Bella and Kaitlyn attended an office hour with CARCD on seed collection and sourcing, presented by the Forest Service’s LA Moran Nursery.
- July 26 – Kimra, Kaitlyn, Bella, and Neil attended the Alpine County prescribed fire field workshop, hosted by the Forest Health Community Working Group and CalPoly’s Fuels and Vegetation Education (FAVE) Program. Bella made a public comment to announce the event at the Board of Supervisors meeting on July 16.
- August 8 – Kimra, Bella, Neil, and Kaitlyn met with David Griffith to continue the discussion of possibly starting a nursery in Alpine County, and specifically to explore if the Sierra Jobs First program might be an opportunity to fund this project development. Bella is working on some research and looking into the program.
- August 19 through 21 – Neil attended a Reforestation Camp hosted by CARCD. The workshop focused on reforestation practices on a post-wildfire landscape. Most participants were resource conservation district staff members and nonprofit team members who often work in a post-fire landscape to immediately start the reforestation process on nonindustrial private forest lands. The information on reforestation could be applicable on any projects.
- August 21 – Kimra and Bella attended a tour on post-Tamarack Fire restoration that Clint Celio gave for the CWSD Board at Turtle Rock Park.

Organizational Management and Development

- * Neil Mortimer started work as AWG’s Forest Health Coordinator on July 25.
- * Bella is working for AWG from August 16 to September 15.
- * Rachel started maternity leave on August 21. She plans to return on a part-time basis in early October.
- * June 25, July 16, & July 31 – Rachel attended trainings on Program Evaluation & Impact Assessment and Leadership Structure & Styles, and Rachel and Kimra attended a training on Board Development: Recruitment and Selection that were offered to AWG through the Whale Tail Grant program. Although training hours cannot be invoiced to the grant, AWG will be

receiving a \$150 stipend for each training attended thanks to the hosting organization Justice Outside.

- * August 12 – AWG’s returns for fiscal year ending 9-30-2023 were filed by AWG’s CPA.
- * Kimra began coordinating with Christine Rontal of Solid Ground Consulting on a board and staff retreat to take place on November 14; this strategic planning help is coordinated by CARCD and funded by SNC-RFFCP.

Fundraising

- * Creek Day Sponsorship *Received* – Resource Concepts Inc. (\$250)
- * *Received* – California Alpine Club Foundation 2024: AWG received a \$3,000 grant for monitoring, restoration, and environmental education supplies.
- * *In Process* – SNC-RFFCP Round 3: Alpine County’s grant agreement with Sierra Nevada Conservancy for \$491,216 was fully executed on August 14. Kimra has been working with JT Chevallier and Clint Celio on the scope of work and contract for AWG’s assistance.
- * *Invited* – The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment invited AWG to submit a Tax and Audit Prep grant application for AWG’s fiscal year ending September 30, 2023; the application is due September 18.
- * Trout Unlimited – Sagebrush Chapter – The 2025 Conservation Grant application is due November 1, with an in-person presentation of the grant on November 12.
- * Rachel attended a webinar on 2025 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) NOAA Fisheries Citizen Science Funding Opportunity.