



Alpine Watershed Group

Protecting the Headwaters of the California Alps

STAFF REPORT FOR APRIL 24, 2021–JUNE 18, 2021 for Board of Directors Meeting on June 23, 2021

GRANTS AND CONTRACTS UPDATES

American Rivers (AR) – Meadow Restoration in Faith Valley:

On June 2, Mo attended the project's pre-bid meeting.

On June 7 and 8, Mo assisted American Rivers staff with groundwater and flow monitoring.

Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD):

On May 17, Mo participated in the Carson River Coalition Education Working Group meeting.

Hope Valley Restoration and Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Project, Phases II & III (National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, or NFWF):

On May 13, Mo led volunteers in re-installing the public exclusion fencing around Site 1 as well as completed tagging willows at Site 2 for monitoring purposes.

Mo toured the site with Hydrologist Sally Champion and Wildlife Biologist Maureen Easton of the US Forest Service on May 26. Sally was pleased with how the access route looked from the campground area to Site 2 and said she would report that we've met US Forest Service expectations for rehabilitation and do not need to do seeding there.

Mo toured the site with project designer Matt Weld/Waterways and contractor Loren Roach/Hanford ARC after the Faith Valley Project pre-bid meeting on June 2.

On June 10 and 11, Mo led volunteers in setting up the sprinkler system at Site 1 and Site 2, with the assistance of Loren Roach.

Mo has continued time-lapse camera efforts in order to capture seasonal changes at Site 1.

South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD, Alpine County):

Mo distributed sampling results from the April 2021 sampling to the PPCP Committee on June 4.

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) WaterSMART Grant (community outreach/partnership development, data collection, and restoration planning):

Kimra submitted a request for a grant extension and provided an updated milestones timeline with a proposed grant completion date of October 31, 2021. Our grant liaison is waiting for program approval to proceed with processing the extension.

Ky has drafted and Kimra has reviewed the majority of the content for Sections 1 and 2 of the USBR report. Ky is currently working on subsections for Section 3, the in-depth look at the Carson River watershed.

RESTORATION & MONITORING PROGRAMS

Restoration & Monitoring Committee:

While preparing the 2020 Water Quality Objectives Report, Mo made some discoveries that led her to do a quality assurance (QA) check on the entire River Monitoring dataset dating back to 2004. Since completing that task, she convened the Restoration & Monitoring Committee on June 9 to discuss improvements related to the 2020 Water Quality Objectives Report and to begin planning for Creek Day.

Restoration:

Adopt-A-Highway: Rich led the AWG Adopt-A-Highway spring cleanup on May 8 in conjunction with the Markleeville Enhancement Committee spring event. On May 20, Mo picked up new helmets for AWG's Adopt-A-Highway program.

Mo began to plan for Creek Day. This included attending a Coastal Cleanup Coordinator Workshop (the California Coastal Commission has taken back over coordinating the Great Sierra River Cleanup).

Monitoring:

Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Monitoring Program: CDFW collected samples at Red Lake and Heenan Lake in May. None of the samples detected cyanotoxins. Mo collected samples at Red Lake on June 15. Those results are not in yet.

On May 27, Mo distributed the newly-created [Harmful Algal Bloom \(HAB\) Visual Survey](#) to AWG's volunteer River Monitors. This simplistic survey is intended to help guide the HAB Monitoring Program in expansion for further protection of public health.

Mo prepped for and coordinated water quality collections at all sites for the River Monitoring Program on June 10-14.

On June 3 and 8, Mo assisted a concerned Mesa Vista resident with getting two plants identified by El Dorado County Department of Agriculture.

Mo drafted "Smoke and Air Quality Index (AQI) Guidelines for Working with Volunteers" and ran the draft by Phill Kiddo of the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District and Alpine County Public Health Officer Dr. Johnson. On June 23, she will attend a State Water Resources Control Board Health & Safety Branch webinar on "Guidelines for Working in Smoke Affected Areas," and then she will finalize the guidelines for distributing to River Monitoring volunteers along with the US Environmental Protection Agency's brochure "Air Quality Index: A Guide to Air Quality and Your Health."

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Outreach:

On May 4, Kimra announced the May 11 AWG meeting as a public comment at the Board of Supervisors meeting.

For AWG's virtual bimonthly meeting on May 11 on "Alpine County Recreation: Continuing the Conversation," 35 people signed up and 30 people signed into the meeting. Kimra reviewed the information presented by public lands managers at the March 9 AWG meeting, and then attendees introduced themselves and their concerns about Alpine County recreation, followed by a group discussion.

Death Ride: Mo plans to attend the Captain's Meeting on June 25 so that we can learn more about what assistance is needed from AWG volunteers on July 16 and 17.

Partnerships:

On April 28, Mo attended the Sierra Nevada Regional Workshop on Expanding Nature-Based Solutions and Advancing 30x30. This was California Natural Resources Agency's workshop for our region meant to engage the public in the effort to protect 30% of California's lands and waters by 2030. The well-attended webinar slowly stepped participants through an online public input questionnaire, and it is difficult to see AWG's role in this process.

On May 10, Kimra met with Irvin Jim to talk about how AWG can work more closely with the Hung-A-Lel-Ti community.

On May 12, Rich Harvey attended the Sustainable Fishing Task Force Meeting.

On May 12, Mo attended the presentation of the Sustainable Recreation & Tourism Initiative's Regional Climate Adaptation & Resilience Assessment: "A Changing Climate: Vulnerability in California's Eastern Sierra." David Griffith had connected AWG staff with the presenter.

On May 25, Becky DeForest/Alpine County Chamber of Commerce and Kimra met to brainstorm next steps toward sustainable recreation in Alpine County. They also talked about next steps for bringing back the Aspen Festival.

On June 1, Mo attended the Alpine Biomass Collaborative virtual meeting, which included a presentation on the new framework for post-fire restoration in California's National Forests.

On June 17, Kimra and Becky DeForest/Alpine County Chamber of Commerce had a call with Derek Kirk, our Regional Business Development Specialist in the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). We were connected by Danna Stroud who thought Alpine County may benefit from some of the resources and technical assistance that Derek can bring to the region. Derek invited us to contact him with any sort of help needed; he described his office as California's customer service center for community-based organizations' economic development. We discussed having an in-person roundtable discussion on issues/initiatives being worked on locally and where we can align resources when Derek is in Alpine County the morning of August 2.

Letters of Support:

On April 29, AWG provided a letter of support for Alpine County's Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant application for Wildfire Risk Mitigation Plan Tier 1 Projects.

On May 10, AWG provided a letter of support for Whitebark Institute's "Wildfire Prevention in the Eastern Sierra: Visitor Education and Outreach" application to CAL FIRE.

On May 18, AWG provided a letter of support for Alpine County's Hot Springs Corridor grant application to CAL FIRE.

Trainings:

On April 27, Kimra attended a webinar on Managing Teleworking Employees hosted by Nonprofits Insurance Alliance (AWG's general liability insurance carrier).

On May 5, Mo attended the Algal Bloom Action Team's webinar on "Harmful Algal Blooms and Public Health."

FUNDRAISING**California Alpine Club Foundation:**

On June 3, Mo submitted a proposal for \$1,500 in funding to help support AWG's HAB Monitoring Program.

The Campbell Foundation:

In response to AWG's application for \$10,000 in general support, the foundation asked for some changes to the submission; Kimra resubmitted the proposal on June 14.

Markleeville Creek Restoration Project — Tahoe Sierra Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Implementation Grant and Caltrans Mitigation Funding for the Floodplain Restoration Project and Markleeville Public Utility District (MPUD) State Revolving Fund Planning Grant for the Sewer Relocation Project:

We received a rough draft cooperative agreement from Caltrans for the mitigation funding; Jeff Schwein/Green DOT (Alpine County's transportation consultant) passed it on to County Counsel for initial feedback on May 28.

On May 6, Kimra received the final grant agreement for the IRWM Implementation Grant between California Department of Water Resources and STPUD and the draft partnership agreement between STPUD and AWG. In discussing getting a partnership agreement from STPUD for Alpine County, Jeff Schwein suggested that the partnership agreement should name both AWG and Alpine County. Kimra marked up the partnership agreement, and Jeff forwarded the updated draft to County Counsel on May 28. The first IRWM quarterly progress report (for January 1, 2015-June 30, 2021) is due to STPUD on August 5; Jeff hopes to have both funding agreements presented to the Board of Supervisors on August 3.

On May 25, Kimra attended a meeting with multiple representatives from Caltrans and Alpine County to discuss the sequence of work.

On May 28, Kimra, Mo, Jeff Schwein, and Irvin Jim met at the project site to give Irvin Jim an overview of the project.

On June 15, Kimra had a catch-up call with MPUD's Engineer to get an update on MPUD's Planning Grant.

National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) Restoration & Resilience COVID Recovery Fund: We were informed that our application for \$2,500 to fund a summer "Earth Day" invasives removal event and a fall native grass planting day at Grover Hot Springs State Park was not selected; only 20 of over 170 applicants were invited to the next stage of the process. However, we were told we could still apply for the final round of funding due June 1; Mo resubmitted our application to meet this deadline.

Vail Resorts EpicPromise In-Kind Community Grant: AWG was invited to apply for in-kind support for fundraising purposes but was notified that due to changes to the community grant process the application did not include cash grants (which will be invite only in the fall). The invitation stated that if an applicant historically did an event with Vail, to reach out to the EpicPromise program. Kimra received no response from the program or from her attempts to contact individual Vail staff members to discuss the possibility of again being granted a Volunteer Appreciation Party at Kirkwood Resort as was done in August 2019. So that we might still be considered for support, Mo submitted an application by the June 4 deadline.

West Fork Carson Project – National Forest Foundation (NFF) Partnership: NFF informed AWG on June 16 that the application for a CDFW Prop. 1 grant for a portion of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest’s West Fork Carson Project was awarded; NFF will provide details and the plan moving forward in the near future. The project is to include fuel management treatment of 350 acres in the Hope Valley area in 2022; AWG was proposed to assist with community outreach and education and aspen monitoring. At the June Alpine Biomass Collaborative Meeting it was announced that NFF had also received a Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant for the West Carson and Monitor Pass fuel management projects.

ADMINISTRATION

Finance:

Kimra received the draft annual returns from AWG’s CPA on June 16. In accordance with AWG procedures, after she reviews the draft returns, she will send them to the Board Chair and the Finance Committee for review; once finalized, they will be distributed to the rest of the Board Members for information only.