

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
LAHONTAN REGION**

**MEETING OF JULY 8 - 9, 2015
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE**

ITEM: 12

SUBJECT: **ALPINE WATERSHED GROUP EFFORTS AND
COLLABORATION IN ALPINE COUNTY**

DISCUSSION: Alpine County, nestled in the Eastern Sierra Nevada, is the least populated county in California and contains the Sierra upper watersheds of the Carson, American, Mokelumne, Stanislaus and Truckee Rivers that provide vital water for both Central California and Western Nevada. The Alpine Watershed Group (AWG) informally set its roots in 1999 and became a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization in 2006. Its mission is to preserve and enhance the natural system functions in Alpine County's watersheds for future generations. The AWG works by inspiring participation to collaborate, educate, and proactively implement projects that benefit and steward the County's watersheds.

The AWG, with a staff of 3, has had a positive impact in the county including the development of a volunteer water quality monitoring program, implementing restoration projects, and providing education and outreach to the community. The AWG has forged partnerships in the community with regulators, ranchers, the community, and water purveyors and has been instrumental in getting projects on the ground including Markleeville Creek restoration and East Fork Carson River OHV restoration.

The Lahontan Water Board has recently partnered with AWG as a sub-contractor for the Proposition 84 *Rivers and Ranches* grant. The grant includes three major components: (1) education and outreach; (2) bacterial source tracking in Lahontan region waterbodies by the University of California at Davis; and (3) implementing water quality improvement projects on ranches with a focus on fecal contamination.

As the grant sub-contractor, AWG solicited ranchers to apply for grant funds to implement grazing management practices in Alpine County. The AWG encouraged the Ace Hereford Ranch to apply for grant funds and AWG has assisted the ranch owner in developing and implementing grazing management practices on the over 900 acre ranch located in Paynesville. The project includes many

components: (1) installation of exclusion fencing to improve pasture utilization, inhibit nutrient loading and disperse grazing; (2) fencing out riparian areas and other sensitive habitats so that they can effectively disperse, filter, and capture runoff; (3) repairing and improve infrastructure, including a bridge, to allow the ranch livestock to access pastures away from the river; (4) planting grasses, aspen, and evergreens to stabilize slopes, inhibit erosion while dispersing and capturing runoff; (5) and enhancing wetlands by improving an historic irrigation ditch to provide necessary water for the wetland. The projects under the grant will be completed by the end of this year. Other implementation projects for this grant (outside the AWG efforts) include riparian fencing in the Bridgeport Valley and culvert improvements in the Little Truckee watershed.

On May 18, 2015, the AWG hosted a field trip for the Diamond Valley School for kindergarten through eighth grade students. Lahontan Water Board staff assisted. Activities included a tour of the ranch and its improvements, water quality testing, the water cycle game, a planting party, wildlife and animal charades, and a reading on Native American history in the area. The AWG is also hosting their premier outreach and educational event, the Alpine Aspen festival on October 10-11th, 2015. The festival is an environmental fair that celebrates the importance of the upper watersheds of the rivers that originate in Alpine County. The goal is to raise awareness of the role Alpine County's meadows and mountain streams play in providing clean water to 5.2 million public water users across California and Nevada. Through outreach dollars in the Rivers and Ranches grant, \$5,000 has been awarded for this event. Activities include willow planting, hikes, flyfishing, music, and food. The AWG will also incorporate the Rivers and Ranches program into the festival and showcase the improvements completed on the Ace Hereford ranch. Board members are encouraged to attend.

Mr. Shane Fryer, Watershed Coordinator of AWG, will give an overview of the AWG efforts in a Power Point presentation (Enclosure 1).

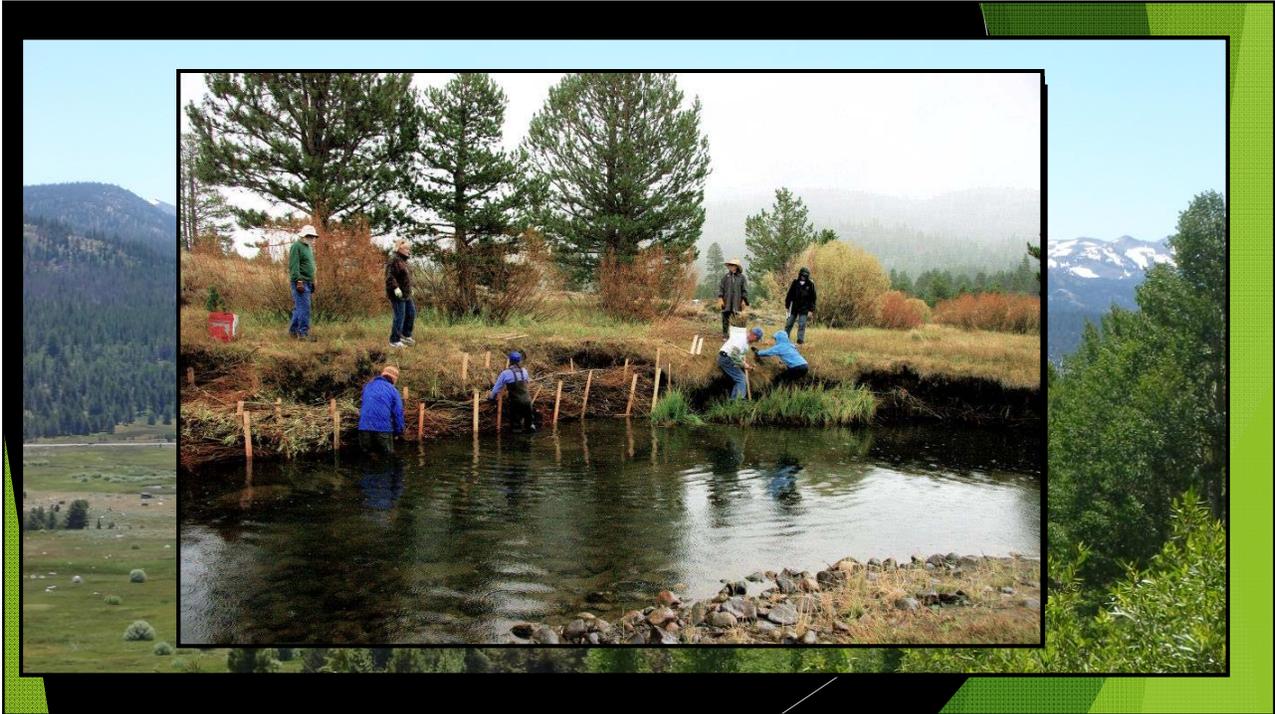
RECOMMENDATION:

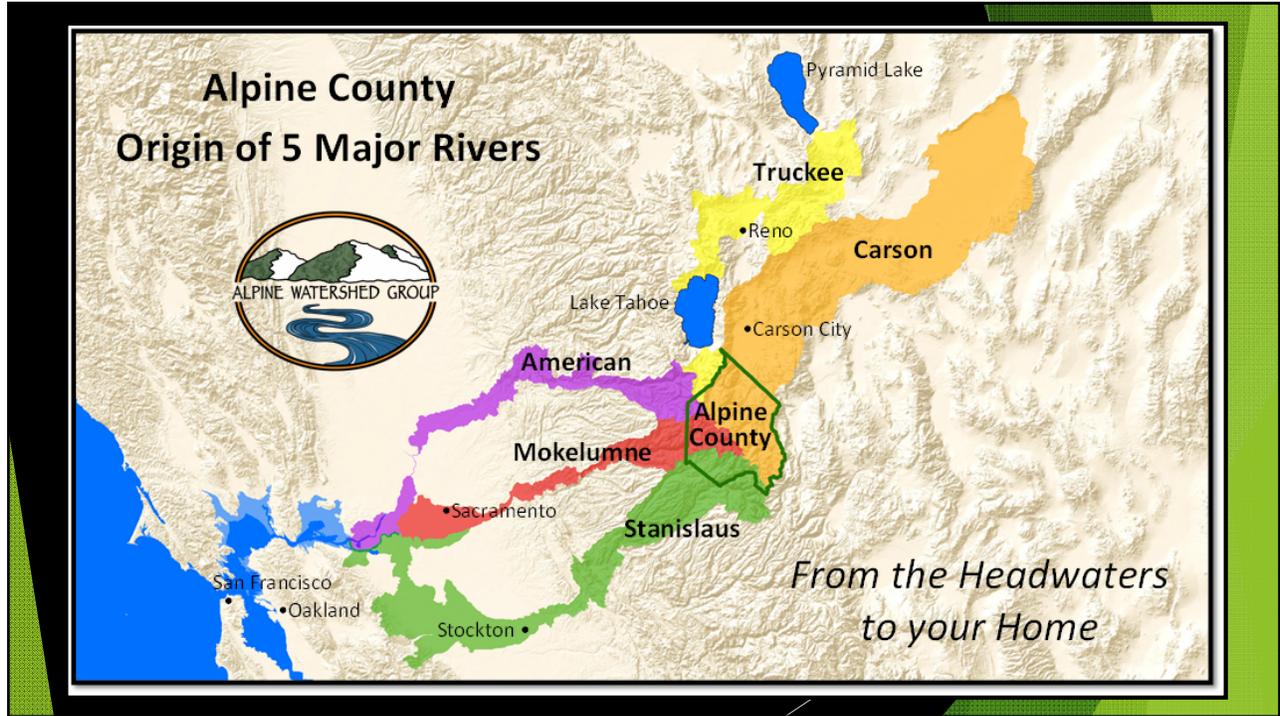
This is a discussion item only. No Water Board action is required for this item.

ENCLOSURE	ITEM	Bates Number
1	Slide presentation by AWG Watershed Coordinator, Shane Fryer	12-5

ENCLOSURE 1

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Ace Hereford Ranch Improvements

- Riparian fencing
- Plant riparian, tree Islands, and wetland habitat
- Improved fencing and pasture utilization
- Resurface bridge
- Rebuilding a road
- Created wetlands
- Repair Snowshoe Thomson ditch

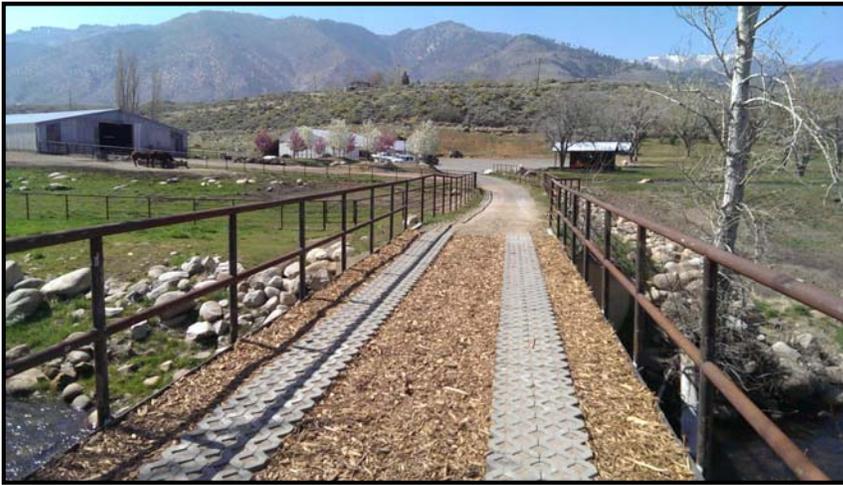
Improved Riparian Fencing



Replanting



Improved Crossing



Improved Road



Rebuilt Snowshoe Thompson Ditch



Rebuilt Snowshoe Thompson Ditch



Building a Wetland



R&R- Diamond Valley Elementary School



Alpine Aspen Festival

Alpine Watershed Group



October 10 - 11, 2015
2nd Annual Festival in Hope Valley, CA

www.AspenFest.org

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For more information contact us at AlpineWatershed@gmail.com, or (530) 694 - 2327

ANY QUESTIONS?

Shane Fryer
awg.shane@gmail.com

(530) 694-2327

