



THE CURRENT

Informational Newsletter for Winter 2025-2026 (Dec.-Feb.)

American River Conservancy



Environmental Education: Building Community Capacity for Conservation

By Elena DeLacy, Executive Director

American River Conservancy (ARC) staff and board members recently gathered at the Sly Park Environmental Education Center in Pollock Pines for a day to dream up our new vision for conservation at American River Conservancy. The day began with us defining a "Problem Statement" to inform our vision for the future. This process evoked a range of emotions in participants: from grief and anger to hope and passion. What eventually emerged was a familiar problem – we (humans) are disconnected from nature and each other.

In 2025, there are so many opportunities for people to become disengaged and disconnected from their relationships with each other and the earth. So much of our lives are increasingly spent behind screens and indoors. It's been 20 years since the first press of Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, and the premise is still relevant, unfortunately. Louv states, "Nature-deficit disorder describes the human costs of alienation from nature, among them, diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses." (Louv, p.36). A 2015 report by University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research concluded that the average American child aged 6 to 17 spent only seven minutes per day in unstructured outdoor play, a 50% decline over the previous 20 years. More recent estimates suggest unstructured outdoor play time could be as low as four to seven minutes per day for American kids.

It's clear what the human costs of disconnection from nature are, but what about the environmental cost of this fractured relationship between humanity and the natural world? A disconnect from the natural world can result in a decreased understanding of its value and a weaker desire to protect it. How can we protect something we have seldom experienced? Nature-deficit disorder is associated with negative physical and mental

health outcomes and has a corresponding impact on environmental behavior. Perhaps the key to our humanity and the future of our species resides in this connection with nature and our non-human kin.

Environmental and outdoor education encourages curiosity and critical thinking from a young age to move beyond rote memorization and towards understanding and application. Multi-generational opportunities that center observation of the natural world and unstructured time outside are critical for maintaining these connections to nature AND each other. Furthermore, educational programs that focus on

emotional and sensory connections to nature, not just scientific facts, can build a stronger foundation for environmental conservation.

At ARC, connecting people with nature is part and parcel of what it means to "do" conservation. Indeed, our strategic conservation planning session in September emphasized the importance of weaving connections to the land within our communities through education and out-

reach. It's how we ensure a resilient future for all life. Louv's book concludes with this resonant passage, which says it all: "We have such a brief opportunity to pass on to our children our love for this Earth, and to tell our stories. These are moments when the world is made whole."



ARC Board and Staff gathered at Sly Park Environmental Education Center for a retreat in September 2025

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American River Conservancy

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work with. Earlier I first heard of ARC while working as a raft guide after college on the American River; ARC was always in the back of my mind. When I learned there was a job opening, I knew I had to apply, and I am so glad to have the opportunity to do what I love and contribute to an important vision.

Being at ARC reinforces my belief that what benefits the environment ultimately benefits people. For too long, our society has prioritized short-term convenience over the enduring impacts of our actions. However, I believe we are shifting to a more long-term perspective, one that considers other beings and future generations. They matter, too. My teachers emphasized that environmental work and advocacy are ongoing efforts, never truly complete. I am grateful to work with others who have their heart in supporting ARC, which protects these lands and the lives it sustains in perpetuity — the long term.

Special thanks to JoAnn McAllister for her support in writing this article.

MEET THE STAFF

Sabrina Clark

Forest Health Technician



Working at ARC is very much the fulfillment of a dream — working outdoors at an organization that supports my values. I have been the Forest Health Technician at ARC for nearly two years. Many of my days working with my supervisor, Autumn, are spent out in the field. Currently, we are focused on the South Fork American River (SOFAR) Restoration Project, a 1,943 acres fuels reduction project in the American River watershed, and we are in the planning phase of a similar project in the Cosumnes River watershed. In addition to field work, I contribute to the work that supports these projects — grant writing, environmental permitting and compliance, project management, and fostering and maintaining relationships with collaborators.

I grew up in the Bay Area where there was attention to environmental issues in the general culture. Nature documentaries and the environmental media I consumed growing up had a profound impact on me and cultivated my awareness of the natural world. Although I had an interest in environmental protection, I had little exposure to nature in my everyday life. I was a Girl Scout from age six to sixteen, and this was a valuable outlet for me to experience the outdoors firsthand. After high school, I attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. I studied environmental management and protection alongside fellow students and professors who were wonderful role models. It was at Cal Poly that I dove into outdoor adventure and fell in love with backpacking the Sierras and exploring California's many natural wonders.

My first professional job was with the Buena Vista Rancheria of the Me-Wuk Indians and my work focused mainly on water issues. During my time there, I learned more about California tribes and the environmental and government agencies they



Sabrina rafting on the South Fork American with family

OUR MISSION

The American River Conservancy serves our communities by ensuring healthy ecosystems within the Upper American and Upper Cosumnes River watersheds through land conservation, stewardship and education.

LAND CONSERVATION UPDATE

For 36 years, ARC has worked with private landowners, public agencies and funding partners to preserve native habitat, agricultural lands, recreational access, and riparian corridors. As the human population grows, conservation of large open spaces is critical. We are currently working toward the advancement of several exciting conservation projects in the Upper American River and Upper Cosumnes River watersheds, including the following highlights:

El Dorado Ranch Trailhead - In September, ARC was awarded \$100,000 from Impact100 of Greater Sacramento to support construction of the future El Dorado Ranch Trailhead Facility. Located along Highway 49 near the North Fork Cosumnes River, the planned facility will provide parking and trailhead improvements that will allow the public to access the future El Dorado Ranch State Wildlife Area. Outdoor enthusiasts will have the opportunity to traverse the south end of Logtown Ridge, revealing sweeping views of the Cosumnes River canyon, rolling hills, unbroken blue oak woodlands, and riparian habitats.

El Dorado Ranch Phase 5a - Over the last 11 years, ARC has protected 4,182 acres of El Dorado Ranch in 4 different phases. We are now working with the landowner to purchase and permanently protect the remaining 3,000 acres. In 2026, we will complete the acquisition of Phase 5a (2,000 acres), the second to last phase. In October ARC was awarded \$2.7 Million by the CA Department of Conservation via their Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program, supported by the Strategic Growth Council. With a secured \$1.5 Million grant from California Natural Resources Agency's EEM Grant program, ARC has made significant progress in securing funds to complete this acquisition, and will look to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) for remaining funding. Visit www.arconservancy.org/eldoradoranch to learn more and donate to this exciting project.

Steely Ridge Conservation Easement - ARC has been working with the Frost-Hurzel family for nearly two decades to facilitate the permanent protection of the Steely Ridge-North Fork Cosumnes River confluence area in Somerset. After donating the 150-acre Wells Preserve property in 2021, this conservation-minded family is now ready to place a conservation easement on their adjacent 158-acre property. Bordered by the Wells Preserve and BLM land, this conservation opportunity will ensure the permanent protection of North Fork Cosumnes River riparian habitat, mixed conifer forest, pond habitat (we've observed many native pond turtles here!), and several beautiful heritage black oak trees. In September ARC was awarded the remaining \$20,000 needed to complete this project by the Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust. With \$25,000 awarded by the Latrobe Fund and \$5,000 contributed by the Sierra Nevada Foundation, this project will close by end of the year!

Meet Ryann Savino, ARC's new Education Program Manager

Ryann was born in El Dorado County, raised along the banks of the Middle Fork of the Cosumnes River, and currently lives along the South Fork of the American River. The watersheds that ARC is committed to protecting are the watersheds that have shaped her life, and she is thrilled to have the opportunity to combine her passion for environmental education, conservation, and rivers through her work as Education Program Manager here at ARC.

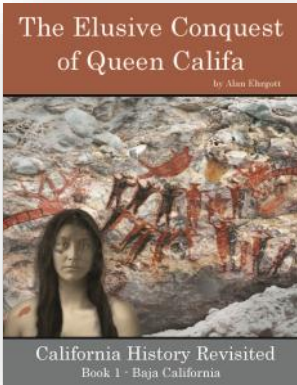
With a BA in Environmental Studies and Humanities from Whitman College, she centers her work on the desire to connect people to place. For over a decade she has worked in environmental education –leading multi-day river trips and field camps for student groups on the Colorado Plateau, instructing gap-year students on glacial-fed rivers in Patagonia, teaching local natural and cultural history to 4th graders and river runners in the Coloma Valley, and working as a Grand Canyon River Guide and river historian. She brings care and thoughtfulness to her work while managing the small and large details of expeditions and projects. While her work has taken her to watersheds in different regions and countries, Ryann is thrilled to bring those experiences and skills back to her homeplace and the students here in El Dorado County.



"In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught" – Baba Dioum

ARC SPECIAL EVENTS

THINK HISTORY'S DULL? THINK AGAIN! - An Evening with Author Alan Ehrgott Saturday, February 28th 2026, 5:30–7:00 PM



Join us for an unforgettable evening with **Alan Ehrgott**, ARC's retired founder and director, as he shares stories from his newly released historical novel—a sweeping tale of early California filled with adventure, courage, and discovery. Alan's captivating photo presentation blends history, historical fiction, and personal memoir to bring the past vividly to life.

Perfect for curious minds ages 12 and up! Meeting location Gold Hill/Placerville area. Signed copies of the book will be available after the presentation. **All proceeds from this event support Phase 2 of ARC's Education Center.**

For every book sold—both at the event and online—Alan will donate \$10 to the Education Center. Registration and more details at ARConservancy.org/events.

Autographed first editions (\$28.50) are available at this special presentation and book-signing event, or order in advance online at californi-aconquest.com/arc-book-store/. Online book orders can be shipped or picked up at our ARC offices in Coloma. Orders of three or more receive a 10% discount.



2025 FALL EVENTS—RECAP

What's Happening at Wakamatsu Farm

ARC's community classes, workshops, field trips, special events, and farm rentals are really taking off at Wakamatsu Farm! In addition to many other visitors during the late summer and early fall of 2025, ARC hosted over 1,500 visitors solely during special events. Here are the highlights.



RIPE AREA: The Art of Native Plants Festival

ARC's latest collaboration with Myrtle Tree Arts brought more than 1,100 people of all ages to experience the beauty, creativity, and resilience of California's

native plants expressed by artists, performers, scientists, experts, and many other helpers. Through our new partnership with the El Dorado Chapter of the CA Native Plant Society, Wakamatsu Farm also became the distribution point for over 1,110 native plants! By blending art, science, and community spirit, this beautiful and vibrant day demonstrated how art and ecology inspire lasting care for the land, spark joy, and connect people across generations.



Nichi Bei Pilgrimage

This year's fourth bi-annual Nichi Bei Pilgrimage at Wakamatsu Farm was our biggest ever. Thanks to the Nichi Bei Foundation, more than 300 guests and helpers joined this unique cultural experience. We also wel-

comed eight descendants of the original Wakamatsu Colonists – the largest gathering ever – including visitors from Japan and the Marshall Islands. Eleven new plaques were added to our Donor Wall of Honor, including a touching memorial plaque for Gene “Penny” Gibson, descendant of Wakamatsu Colonist Kuni Masumizu. Guests enjoyed sake tastings and sales courtesy of ARC's community partners at Gekkeikan Sake. We look forward to the next Nichi Bei Pilgrimage on October 2, 2027.

ARC's Fall Fling

Following our annual tradition, ARC's supporter appreciation event remains all about great friends, gratitude, and a delicious free meal with drinks. This year, we were joined by over 150 supporters. We awarded “Donor of the Year” to ARC board member Lee Van Pelt. Our Native Plant Festival earned the El Dorado Chapter of the California Native Plant Society our “Partner of the Year” award. ARC's “Volunteer of the Year” went to both Rick Hartley and Pat Perez. As in prior years, our volunteers who tracked 100 or more hours over the past 12 months received special gifts. Special thanks to “The Audities” for their beautiful music and Placerville Food Co-op for their scrumptious meal. All supporters are welcome to enjoy Fall Fling, and please look for details to join us for this annual celebration again in September 2026.



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

STEWADING CONSERVED LANDS

UC Davis Students Join a Dedicated Team of Water Quality Monitoring Volunteers

The ARC Stewardship team is blessed with a long list of dedicated volunteers who make land stewardship happen in our watersheds. This land stewardship takes the form of ongoing monitoring and care for the land and rivers by our Land Stewards, River Cleanup volunteers, Trail volunteers, and participatory science volunteers such as the volunteers involved in the Cosumnes River Water Quality Monitoring program. This year, the 10-year celebration of our Water Quality Monitoring program highlighted this dedication through the collection of volunteer stories and photos, learning about research progress with our UC Davis partners, and welcoming the new energy of UC Davis students to our monitoring team! These students donate one Saturday monthly to this program during which they carpool from UC Davis to meet our regular volunteers in the town of Pleasant Valley. Upon arrival in Pleasant Valley, they team up with established volunteers and head out into the watershed to monitor sites and collect samples. Some sites are another hour-long drive from Pleasant Valley; others include a rigorous hike down into a remote canyon. This teaming up of volunteers who share values across generations is a win both for the people and the science of this program.



To support student travel costs we have created the UC Davis Student Fuel Fund for WQM Support. Please donate to ARConservancy.org/Stewardship if you would like to support the success of this collaborative effort.

Fill out our
Volunteer
interest form at

ARConservancy.org/join-us/



Learn more about how you can support stewardship by visiting

ARConservancy.org/stewardship

Wakamatsu Farm Workdays
Trail Workdays
Water Quality Monitoring
River Clean-ups
Land Stewards
Leek Springs
Bluebird Monitoring
Phenology



Thank you to ARC's amazing community of river stewards for participating in the 2025 Great Sierra River Cleanup! At three sites (Hangtown Creek, Happy Valley and Marshall Gold Discovery Park) ARC volunteers removed over 700 pounds of trash. Statewide the Great Sierra River Cleanup removed over 139,650 pounds of trash and included close to 20,000 volunteers.

**THE AMERICAN RIVER CONSERVANCY OFFICES ARE LOCATED IN THE
MARSHALL GOLD DISCOVERY STATE HISTORIC PARK
AT 348 HWY 49, COLOMA, CA**

OUR OFFICES ARE OPEN TO VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS

MONDAY—FRIDAY 8AM-4PM

WE CAN BE REACHED AT (530) 621-1224, ARC@ARCONSERVANCY.ORG,

OR VISIT ARCONSERVANCY.ORG.



PROGRAMS PLUS

See our website calendar for updates, full descriptions, and registration links.

ARConservancy.org/events

No dogs allowed unless otherwise stated



NEW YEAR CLEANSE “POP-UP” HIKE

– Weather dependent

January date and time TBD

Welcome the New Year with positivity and renewal! Join Ami Stroud for a peaceful 2.5-mile hike to the South Fork of the American River, designed to release the old and invite the new. Along the way, you'll gather acorns and leaves to represent any negative experiences or energy you wish to let go of from the past year. At the river, we'll symbolically set these burdens afloat, making space for a fresh start in 2025. To invite positive energy, we'll spend about 10 minutes practicing gentle standing Tai Chi on the riverbank before looping through Greenwood Creek and returning to the trailhead. Well-behaved children of all ages and dogs on-leash welcome. Meeting location Pilot Hill area. **FREE.**



IPHONE ARTISTRY CLASS

**Saturday, January 10th
10am-2pm**

Join local photographer and teacher Betty Sederquist for a short, fun workshop that introduces the basics of phone photography. Learn

how to capture better photos with your smartphone and explore some of the many helpful photography apps available. While iPhones are preferred, most newer phones are welcome. You'll receive a list of apps to download the week of the class. 14-year-olds+ welcome. Meeting location in Gold Hill/Placerville area.

Cost: \$45/members, \$55/non-members.

CAPTURING WAKAMATSU: A Poetry Walk & Workshop

Sunday, January 25th 12-2pm

Join poets Taylor Graham and Katy Brown—El Dorado County's first Poet Laureate and an award-winning Sacramento-area poet—for a creative exploration of the historic farmhouse, barn, and scenic surroundings at Wakamatsu Farm. After taking in the sights and atmosphere, participants will be guided to write a poem inspired by their experience. Those who wish may share their poems with the group and with ARC. Children 8+ welcome with adult supervision. Meeting location Gold Hill/Placerville area. **Suggested Donation: \$5/members, \$10/non-members.**

FROM TRAILS TO TALES: A Park Ranger's Stories – Author talk

Saturday, January 31st 10am-12pm

Ever wonder what a park ranger REALLY does? You'll be amazed to hear the stories of the life of a woman park ranger who worked right here on the American River! Laugh out loud and cry tears of joy as you listen to these wild tales from a former California (and U.S. National) Park Ranger. Rosanne McHenry will regale you with stories like you never have imagined! Prize drawing and book signing. Well behaved children welcome. Meeting location in Gold Hill/Placerville area. For more information about Rosanne McHenry, also known as Ranger Rose, please visit triptalesbook.com. **Suggested ARC donation: \$5/members, \$10/non-members.**



SIP, SAVOR & SOLVE: ARC's Inaugural Trivia Night

Saturday, February 7th 6:30-8pm

Join ARC for our very first Trivia Night, where curiosity meets community! Mingle with Legacy Circle members, board members, staff, and fellow nature lovers for an evening of lively conversation, laughter, and local lore. Informal teams will puzzle over trivia questions about our local flora and fauna, Native American tribes, Wakamatsu, the Gold Rush, watershed, and surprising Conservancy trivia! Enjoy a relaxed evening with wine, desserts, and friendly competition—and maybe even take home a prize! Space is limited, so register online to reserve your spot. Adult supporters only. Meeting location Gold Hill/Placerville area. **Donations encouraged.**

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION

IS A RIVER ALIVE? by Robert Macfarlane

Thursday, February 26th 6-7:30pm

Join us for this discussion of *Is a River Alive?* by Robert Macfarlane. At the heart of this thought-provoking book is a transformative idea: rivers are not just resources for human use but living beings that deserve recognition and respect. Inspired by the global “Rights of Nature” movement, Macfarlane takes readers on journeys to Ecuador, India, and Quebec—places where communities are fighting to protect their waterways from mining, pollution, and damming. Along the way, he reflects on his own relationship with a fragile

English stream, weaving together science, activism, and deep ecological insight. Through reading and discussion, we'll explore how this book challenges us to reimagine our connection to rivers and the natural world—and what it means to live in partnership with the waters that sustain us. Mature 15-year-olds+ welcome. Meeting Gold Hill/Placerville area. **Suggested donation: \$10/members/\$15/non-members.**



**THINK HISTORY'S DULL?
THINK AGAIN! - An Evening
with Author Alan Ehrgott
Saturday, February 28 | 5:30–
7:00 PM**

Join us for an unforgettable evening with **Alan Ehrgott**, ARC's retired founder and director, as he shares stories from his newly released historical novel—a sweeping tale of early California filled with adventure,

courage, and discovery. Alan's captivating photo presentation blends history, historical fiction, and personal memoir to bring the past vividly to life. Perfect for curious minds ages 12 and up! Meeting location Gold Hill / Placerville area. Signed copies of the book will be available after the presentation. **All proceeds from this event support Phase 2 of ARC's Education Center.** Purchase your copy in advance, and for every book sold—both at the event and online—**Alan will donate \$10** to the Education Center.

californiaconquest.com/arc-book-store/

MUSHROOM "POP-UP" WALKS – Weather and bloom dependent

Dates and times TBD

When winter brings mushrooms, it's time to explore! Join ARC volunteer Elizabeth Standeven for a

leisurely hike and mushroom foray through the winter landscape. The adventure begins with a short introduction to the property and tips on where to look for mushrooms. Along the way, you'll discover a variety of local fungi, discuss how they relate to the surrounding botany, and practice basic mushroom identification in the field using helpful handouts. After the hike, gather to share your finds and appreciate the fascinating diversity of mushrooms discovered. Responsible 12-year-olds+ welcome. Meeting location (TBD) will be within 30 minutes of Placerville area. **Suggested Donation: \$5/ members, \$10/non-members.**



SNOWSHOE "POP-UP" HIKES

Weather and snow dependent

Dates and times TBD

ARC volunteer & board member Scott Vail will lead Snowshoe hikes (5-6 miles) this winter and spring. These are intermediate-level hikes for snowshoers ages 12+. Well-behaved dog on leash OK. Meeting location Placerville area. **Suggested Donation: \$10/members, \$15/non-members.**

Many thanks

to the program leaders who taught a workshop, led a hike, or gave a presentation this fall.

Want to volunteer? Have an idea for a program?

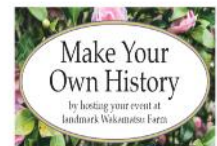
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ARConservancy.org/Merchandise



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WOW points to
ARC**



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Wakamatsu Farm
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wakamatsu-events](http://ARConservancy.org/wakamatsu-events)

Or email:

[wakamatsu
@ARConservancy.org](mailto:wakamatsu@ARConservancy.org)

EDUCATION UPDATE

Seasons in Education

By Ryann Savino, Education Program Manager

Autumn along the American and Cosumnes River watersheds and their surrounding landscapes marks a time of transition. Temperatures drop, frost begins its morning ritual, and the leaves are turning. Here in our Education Programs at ARC we are mirroring those natural transitions with some transitions of our own. In late summer, we welcomed two new staff to our team, our interim Education Coordinator, Aimee LeBlanc, and our new Education Program Manager, Ryann Savino. They have taken over a remarkable amount of Education Programs that Nic Russo, Megan Matthews, and Spencer Cortright had been leading with care and creativity. While we look forward to seeing Megan back in the office after her maternity leave, we wish Nic and Spencer the best of luck in their new professional endeavors. Their time and effort have advanced ARC's mission through education and we are grateful.

While in transition, our dedication to delivering quality environmental education programs is unwavering. Turning towards fall and a new school year marks the return of ARC's field trip programs at Wakamatsu Farm. So far this fall, we have welcomed 12 school groups to our property and hosted 4 Homeschool Friday programs, with an estimated 500 students exploring and learning at the farm. With the support of our dedicated education volunteers, we have shared the art of inquiry and observation through Nature Journaling, learned about animal characteristics through adaptation and tracking, and engaged in activities about our watersheds – from water consumption over time to the life cycle of sockeye salmon. Students have learned the skills of orienteering with a map and compass and explored the property –their feet running along the loop trail and working together in teams. All the while, we have had the joy of witnessing and connecting to the natural world around us –from looking up and seeing Sandhill Cranes singing in their migration high above us, to crouching down to watch furry caterpillars crawl across the trail.



Education Coordinator, Aimee LeBlanc, and students from Indian Diggings school of Omo Ranch investigate decomposition along the Wakamatsu Loop Trail.



Students from Sutter's Mill Elementary practice the art and observation of Nature Journaling.

In addition to our school programs, we participated in the Ripe Area Festival with an exciting ARC Education station where participants learned to use microscopes, dyed silks with native mushrooms, and conduct a science experiment with leaves and their pigmentation. In October, we hosted our final 2025 installment of our Empowering Educators through Climate Action Teacher Training series, with a Project WILD and Project Learning Tree curriculum training. By the time you read this, we will have led our California Naturalist course with the Placer Center California Conservation Corps (CCC). Looking ahead towards the new year, we are excited for what's to come in 2026 – more Field Trips and Homeschool Fridays, our spring California Naturalist public course, Nature Bowl, Summer Nature Camps, and more.

Upcoming programs:

Nature Camp: Mark your calendars –registration opens February 6th! Camp will run the weeks of June 8th, 15th, 22nd, and July 6th.

California Naturalist Course: The next California Naturalist course will begin in March and run through May. Please keep an eye out for registration information in January.

As a conservation organization based in California's Upper American River and Upper Cosumnes River watersheds, we acknowledge that we work within the traditional and unceded lands and waters of the Miwok, Nisenan, and Washoe people, who have stewarded this region for millennia. We pledge to honor, learn from, and actively engage local tribes in our work.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Ag in the Classroom

By Aimee LeBlanc in collaboration with Ag in the Classroom's Executive Director, Melissa Neal

American River Conservancy's education team recognizes our community partner, El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom. Ag in the Classroom is a local, grassroots, charitable organization that provides quality agriculture-related educational resources and a Fields of Learning program that pairs classes with local farms to connect local youth to the abundance of agriculture in El Dorado County.

ARC Education partners with Ag in the Classroom to deliver memorable programs that inspire youth to connect with their natural local environment and discover sustainability practices. With a collective mission of bringing kids outdoors and creating meaningful experiences, we work together to assist each other's field trips and deliver the highest-quality environmental education opportunities. This fall ARC Education Coordinator, Aimee LeBlanc joined Ag in the Classroom at Blodgett Forest Reserve to assist with a local field trip for 5th grade students. In late October, Melissa Neal, Executive Director, and Trish Abbott, Program Coordinator of Ag in the Classroom joined ARC at Wakamatsu Farm to help lead field trips for two local schools.

In addition to their field trip program, Ag in the Classroom hosts an annual Farm Day event that is always held on the first Tuesday in May. Their 24th annual event is scheduled for May 5th, 2026, and ARC looks forward to being one of their many partners for this special day of education in El Dorado County. Melissa Neal shared, "In 2025 we hosted 1,398 3rd graders from South Lake Tahoe to El Dorado Hills for a day of agricultural education in which they visited learning stations from 64 participating organizations. We cannot do this without the support of our community members, local nonprofits and agencies. We feel truly supported by our community partners who empower us to deliver educational opportunities to our growing generation."

It's been a pleasure working with Melissa and Trish. They are both amazing individuals that have shown immense kindness to our new education team. We greatly appreciate Ag in the Classroom and look forward to continuing to work together supporting local youth education programs in true community spirit.



Participants Enjoying Farm Day at El Dorado County Fairgrounds in Placerville
(photo courtesy of Melissa Neal)



Welcome Aimee LeBlanc!

Aimee is our new Education Coordinator as of August. As a local, she loves working in Coloma and Wakamatsu!

Aimee grew up in Garden Valley and has many fond memories of visiting the Nature Center and Wakamatsu. She went to Gold Trail School and was fascinated by the history of the Gold Rush and the Japanese settlers. She has witnessed ARC's development of Wakamatsu Farm and the Graner House since we first bought the property in 2010.

After graduating high school in 2020, she moved to the coast and attended UC Santa Cruz. Last year she graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies and Biology. Since then, her career path has consisted of various environmental education jobs. Incredibly passionate about conservation, she hopes to foster a deeper connection to individuals and the natural world.

"Becoming the education coordinator has been a fulfilling, full circle moment for me. As a kid, I remember going on Fun Runs around Wakamatsu's property and participating in Nature Bowl, which after making a poster on plastic pollution, changed the trajectory of my life. Now I'm the one leading field trips and making life-long memories for the students visiting. So far, it's been an absolute pleasure working with our wonderful staff and volunteers. I look forward to connecting with my community and meeting more of you lovely ARC folks!"

"We must teach our children to smell the earth, to taste the rain, to touch the wind, to see things grow, to hear the sun rise and night fall – to care." — John Cleal

THANK YOU, AMERICAN RIVER CONSERVANCY SUPPORTERS! JULY-SEPT. 2025

Our Generous Supporters

ARC is sincerely grateful for the dedication of our volunteers, donors, and partners who commit their time, talents, and resources in benefit of local watersheds. Please join us in appreciation of countless individuals and organizations through the decades who have helped us preserve rivers and land for life. May this list serve as public acknowledgement of our supporters from last quarter.

Aguilar, Briegan
 Ahlf, Laurie
 Akers, Aiko
 Aldridge
 Allen, Ed and Joanne
 Almeida, Charles
 Almeida, Keoni
 Amemiya, Yoshiko
 Amen, Shoshanna
 Andrew, Gary
 Andrew, Jane Marie
 Anonymous
 Aranda, Marty
 A-Total Fire Protection
 Atwater, Keith & Vrechek, Jean
 Bakken, Liz
 Baldwin, Stephanie
 Barley, Nina
 Barrow, Karen & Randy
 Barton, Brett
 Bass, Maria
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 Bertke, Carol
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<https://bit.ly/3eTOVN4>

- New/used commercial dishwasher, installation, initial supplies
- Walkie talkies (long range)
- Large water jugs
- Small camp stove and lightweight cooking gear
- Canvas folding wagon
- Cellular game camera
- Canoe paddles
- Adult medium and large life jackets
- Kegerator
- Photos of ARC properties (with rights of use)
- Animation design expertise
- High quality button-making machine

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