



# Amador Resource Conservation District

May 2026

## NEWSLETTER

### Letter from the Executive Director

As the final blooms of spring give way to the long, golden days of summer, we're feeling a renewed sense of energy and possibility here at ARCD. It's a season of growth and we're thrilled to share that we're starting 2026 strong with two wonderful additions to our team!

Please join us in welcoming Cailin, our new full-time Outreach and Administrative Coordinator, and Billy, our new full-time Natural and Working Lands Project Manager. These two bring a tremendous amount of expertise, passion, and positive energy, and we're excited to see how they'll help ARCD continue to thrive and blossom in the months ahead.

At the same time, as many of you have already heard, our incredible colleague Megan Watts has stepped back from her role with ARCD. Megan is deeply missed, and we are so grateful for all she contributed during her time with us. Thankfully, you'll still see her around the county... as a Firewise lead and coaching some seriously talented high school volleyball players!

Here's to new beginnings, continued growth, and a vibrant season ahead.



Natural Working Lands Project  
Manager

### Meet Billy ARCD's newest team member

Billy Synk has worked at the intersection of agriculture and research ever since graduating from The Ohio State University, where he received a BS in environmental policy and management. After gaining experience with production agriculture he joined UC Davis, where he managed bees and participated in research projects. He has worked with photographer Anand Varma on the "Quest for a Superbee" article published in the May 2015 edition of National Geographic and the incredible honey bee metamorphosis video. With extensive knowledge of commercial beekeeping and soil health practices he managed Project Apis m's 'Seeds for Bees' program which installed more than 67,000 acres of bee forage cover crops in orchards throughout California. The focus of his work ties together sustainability practices which improve soil health, pollinator health, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in ways that are practical for all land managers.

# Defensible Space Assistance Program, 2026

The Defensible Space Assistance Pilot Program is up and running. This program was designed to assist our most underserved community members in creating a 100-foot protective space around their homes to help prevent embers from igniting nearby vegetation. The application portal opened on May 13<sup>th</sup> and will close on June 12<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM.

At least **150 qualifying residents** within Amador County will receive assistance in creating defensible space in 2026. In addition, at least **25 residents** will receive hazard tree assistance.



We will be working with this project's contractor, Alta Vista Landscaping & Tree Service, to have the work completed by November 2026.

Want to learn more about Defensible Space, visit the [CalFire website](#) to get a better understanding of the different zones and tips to protect your home.

# Natural Working Lands Survey

Around here, spring is more than a season—it's a reminder of our roots in agriculture, forests, and rangelands, and the people who steward them. This season of growth is the perfect time for ARCD to reconnect with our community.

With support from a Department of Conservation grant, ARCD is launching a countywide Community Needs Assessment to better understand local priorities. Whether you're a rancher, grower, landowner, or community member, your input will help shape our programs and services.

Visit our website to learn more, sign up for updates, and take part in surveys and feedback opportunities. QR code to the Community Input – Amador Resource Conservation District webpage.



## Meet Cailin ARCD's newest team member



Outreach and Administration Coordinator

Cailin McLaughlin joins ARCD and AFSC as the new Outreach and Administration Coordinator. She holds degrees from Humboldt State University, CSU Fullerton and a graduate certificate from Colorado State University, with research experience in animal behavior, small-scale agriculture, and community engagement. A Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Cailin served in Tanzania as a secondary school science teacher in the Kilimanjaro region.

For the past several years, she has worked in the Central Sierra as part of the UC Cooperative Extension CalFresh Healthy Living program. Cailin is excited to join ARCD and AFSC and looks forward to continuing her service to the Amador County community. When she isn't at work, you can find her gardening at home or backpacking/hiking/fishing in the surrounding counties.

# Habitat & Pollinators

Hedgerow's are a useful practice that supports the establishment of dense, perennial vegetation to achieve conservation goals.

Hedgerows are designed to provide critical wildlife habitat, improve habitat connectivity, support pollinators and beneficial insects, and enhance biodiversity across agricultural and natural landscapes. These plantings can also filter airborne pollutants, reduce chemical drift and odors, create visual and physical barriers, and increase long-term carbon storage in soils and biomass. Amador county landowners are utilizing this practice to achieve their conservation goals.

Hedgerows consist of woody plants, bunch grasses, and other flowering species that provide year-round ecological function and are often in spaces that are too small to be utilized for agricultural purposes. Narrow strips along roads, driveways, or adjacent vineyards are ideal areas to restore with native habitat hedgerows.



# Forest Health Series



On May 9th, landowners, practitioners, and staff gathered for a field day focused on forest health treatments, hosted by Jen and Alain Jobart at their property, Terre de Vie. The day included a field tour of on-site treatments, soil health demonstrations, discussions on forest health indicators, and a conversation on prescribed fire led by Morgan Galliano from the Amador-El Dorado PBA. Rich group discussions created space for landowners to share experiences and learn from one another, fostering a strong sense of community among attendees. Participants left feeling connected to a network of like-minded stewards and empowered to take action on their own land. Attendees were encouraged to complete a feedback survey, register for the upcoming Forest Health Stewardship Workshop Session 2, and connect with the Amador-El Dorado PBA for future volunteer opportunities.

# Upcoming Events

## Rancher to Rancher: Rangeland Health Series, Session 4:

Adaptive Management: Stewardship in the Immediate & Long-Term

June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026 9am-4pm  
Woodlystar Ranch  
Markleeville, CA

- For ranchers, graziers and rangeland managers
- Learn and observe in-field indicators of rangeland health
- Participate in knowledge sharing and community learning with fellow ranchers
- Prior attendance not required

Registration and Lunch are FREE



Or scan the QR code to register.

**Contact:** Kelci Brown, from Alpine Watershed Group  
kelci@alpinewatershedgroup.org



Provided by the AACT Natural & Working Lands Hub, a collaborative of Alpine Watershed Group and Amador, Calaveras County, and Tuolumne County Resource Conservation Districts. Event funding provided in part by California Department of Conservation.

# Contact Us



@amador\_rcd



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<https://www.facebook.com/AmadorRCD>



<https://www.amadorrcd.org/>

# Upcoming Events

## Forest Health Stewardship Series, Session 2:

Long Term Forest Health & Wildfire Resilience

June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 8am-3pm  
Campstool Ranch  
RailRoad Flat, CA

*Treatment Site Tour & Discussion of Forest Management Practices:*

- For forestland owners and stewards
- Learn and observe forest health indicators, management strategies and treatments
- Learn about forest health technical assistance
- Participate in knowledge sharing and community learning with fellow forestland stewards



Registration and Lunch are FREE



Event funding provided by the California Department of Conservation and Sierra Nevada Conservancy.



# Save the Date

## Gold Country Wildlife & Habitat Fair

Join us as we co-host our first Gold Country Wildlife and Habitat Fair with Calaveras & Tuolumne County RCDs where we can all *"Buzz, Bloom and Be Wild!"*.

*Time & Date*

September 12, 2026

2:00 - 7:00 PM

*Location*

Kennedy Mine

12594 Kennedy Mine Rd,  
Jackson, CA 95642

