



January ——— December 2021

ANNUAL REPORT

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From the Executive Director

I'd like to start on a note of deep gratitude. While the past two years have been trying, I am extremely thankful for and buoyed by the generosity, patience, grace, agility, brilliance and strength I've seen embodied by the Arts Council staff, board, teaching artists, artists, partners, members, funders, program participants and the community at large over the course of 2021 (and 2020, for that matter). I'm proud of how as both an organization and community we've navigated the past two years, approached each challenge as an opportunity to grow, and kept our eyes on the road ahead. As you read through this report, I hope you enjoy learning about what we've been up to and where we're going.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cara Goger". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Cara" and "Goger" being capitalized and prominent.

Cara Goger

Right: Completed Student Mural Project
Clay River and Justus Wellcome stand in front
of their completed monarch mural, outside the
Mariposa Elementary School's K/1st building.



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Programs & Projects

Thanks to rigorous safety protocols and beautiful weather, in 2021 we were happy to begin transitioning away from virtual platforms to either hybrid or full in-person programming. Though several of our programs remain on hiatus, we are pleased to have been able to resume many of our established arts learning programs and public events as well as develop and install a few exciting creative placemaking/public art projects connected to larger community planning efforts.

[Artists in the Schools](#)

[JumpStArts](#)

[F/STOP Photography](#)

[Listening with Les](#)

[Music on the Green](#)

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[Poetry Out Loud](#)

[Stockton Creek Hide & Seek](#)

[Student Mural Project](#)

Left: Elizabeth, Greeley Hill Elementary School
Artist in the Schools self-portrait collage



“

The best part about working with the artist was that she showed me how to do things I never knew how to do, and I knew I could count on her to help me when I needed it.”

Student from
Lake Don Pedro Elementary

Artists in the Schools

In March, we were thrilled to resume our Artists in the School (AIS) program with a limited focus on Greeley Hill Elementary and Lake Don Pedro Elementary. This program places trained teaching artists into 5th grade classrooms for multi-month residencies. The teaching artists worked with their respective classroom teachers to develop an arts-infused, standards-aligned curriculum that teaches art in concert with at least one other academic subject. Students this year explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown through the lens of alternative photographic processes and self-portraiture.

67 students served

Supported by the California Arts Council’s Artists in the Schools grant program and Mariposa County Health and Human Services Agency



EXPLORE FURTHER:

Hear a special cinquain (a five-stanza poem) from an [Artists in the School](#) student describing her pandemic experience.



“

This year, as in previous years, the Arts Council’s Artists in the Schools program brilliantly combined math, science, history, civics, current events, reading, writing, and even poetry. The resulting lessons and the products produced at the end of each lesson were very exciting for the students. They talked about the lessons and worked on little projects for the next lessons with enthusiasm. The precious minutes of classroom time spent on these lessons were well spent.”

Liz Huber, 4th/5th Grade
Teacher at Lake Don Pedro Elementary

Chlorophyll Prints

Students at Lake Don Pedro photographed their classmates holding a single word or a phrase that described their personal experience during 2020. These leaves became a classroom word bank project where students arranged the leaf portraits into various patterns following poetic forms.



Writing with Light

This year’s curriculum focused on the importance of light to the field of photography. Artists in Schools students experimented with long exposure light paintings, chlorophyll images with leaves and sunlight, and portraiture with a variety of different natural lighting techniques



Jump StArts

Over the course of April, May, and June, we were able to again work with youth living at Sierra Quest Academy (group home) offering a 20 week artist-in-residency, led by Jackie Baxton, focused on metalsmithing. During the residency, youth learned how to cast metal, create bevels and set stones, and enamel.

These young artists made pieces of significance for themselves and their family and friends. They also made jewelry to sell and held a pop-up sale event in downtown Mariposa. We later learned that upon successfully returning home, one participant enrolled in a metalsmithing program at her local community college.



EXPLORE FURTHER:

Individual interviews with participant are available now on our [JumpStArts webpage](#). Note: the names and faces of participants are undisclosed to preserve anonymity.



How was the process working with Jackie?

I like working with her, because she's helpful - she just don't give us things and then tell or explain it and us just figure it out - you know, some people don't really help, but she does. She helps. If we don't get it, she'll explain it a thousand times until we get it.

And what did you make?

I made two rings, sterling silver, I made one for my pinkie and one for my ring finger. And [because] I made these on my own, I know what it is. It's real, it's nice material."

JumpStArts Participant in
an interview with Cara Goger

15 youth served

Program supported by the California Arts Council's JumpStArts grant program and Mariposa County Health and Human Services Agency





F/STOP Photography

We were happy to resume F/STOP, a photography-based program for people over 55 years of age in Mariposa County, this spring. This year's participants studied the work of Imogen Cunningham, a contemporary of Ansel Adams who created much of her work at home, and created original images of objects, humans, pets, and activities that brought them comfort during the lockdown. In December, their work was featured in an exhibition titled *Silver Linings: Photographing Personal Peace During the Pandemic* held at the Mariposa Museum and History Center in central Mariposa and at the Coulter Cafe in Coulterville.

35 participants served

Program supported by the California Arts Council's Local Impact grant program and Mariposa County Health and Human Services Agency

“

After the year of COVID-19 I had lost my desire to be creative. The F/STOP class brought that back. The class instructor was wonderful, instructive & inspiring, just the right combination for all levels of student's abilities. The only thing that I would have liked is either a longer term or another/follow-up course. I have not participated in this program before but will do so in the future if it is offered.”

F/STOP Participant, 2021



EXPLORE FURTHER

Browse a digital gallery of featured pieces from *Silver Linings*



Listening with Les

Notes on the
Orchestral Repertoire

From Mariposa Symphony
Orchestra's Founding Music
Director & Conductor

Listening with Les

While the Mariposa Symphony Orchestra has been on hiatus, its Founding Music Director and Conductor, Les Marsden, has been curating weekly listening selections (based on the MSO's repertoire) complete with thoughtful (and often humorous) notes, videos, and recordings. It's a wonderful, in-depth review of the orchestral repertoire, and a comforting alternative while the MSO remains on hiatus.

Above:
Listening with Les promotion



EXPLORE FURTHER:

At nearly 100 episodes, Listening with Les offers an ample archive available on our website. [Click here](#) to take a look or sign up for direct Listening with Les e-newsletters.

“

... My very first episode of "Listening With Les" was offered back on April 23, 2020 - and while things are now looking up, it's sobering to consider all we've been through as a nation and as individuals since. The experiences, the tragic challenges, the heartbreaking number of losses of our friends and family to this pandemic are all spirit-dampening - but it will be our honor, our obligation - our defiance in the face of this terrible time for us to overcome with MUSIC, and overcome we WILL."

*Les Marsden Listening with Les, Episode 52, April 14, 2021
"A Milestone of Sorts: A full year of Listening with Les"*



Music on the Green

Music on the Green was warmly welcomed back by community members, visitors and musicians after a year of virtual adaptation. Produced by Andy Roberts, this annual summer concert series featured six weeks of free concerts every Friday and Saturday evening, July - August, at the Mariposa Art Park. Attendance was at an impressive high as members of our community, visitors and artists gathered safely outdoors for the first time in over a year. As a special feature, we welcomed a student artist, Autumn Stock - a junior at Mariposa County High School - to create original artwork for Music on the Green's promotional material.

Approximately 2,000 audience in attendance

This program is made possible thanks to the generous support of local sponsors.

“

I believe that when we get together for Music on the Green and listen to music produced by local artists, meet each other, work in cooperative ways, it brings good for all! Mariposa is one of those small towns that still cherish a slow pace of life, local talents, each other's shoulder. From my point of view [it's] all about sharing resources for the benefit of the Earth, People and Future.”

Nataly Marchuk, 2021 - a public Facebook comment in support of Music on the Green.

Left: Little Tiger

Image by Gracie Tafoya

Right: Crowd at Music on the Green

The lawn of the Art Park provided opportunities for safe social distancing, allowing audiences to enjoy live music in comfort.

Background: "Tuolumne Meadows: Indian Paintbrush"

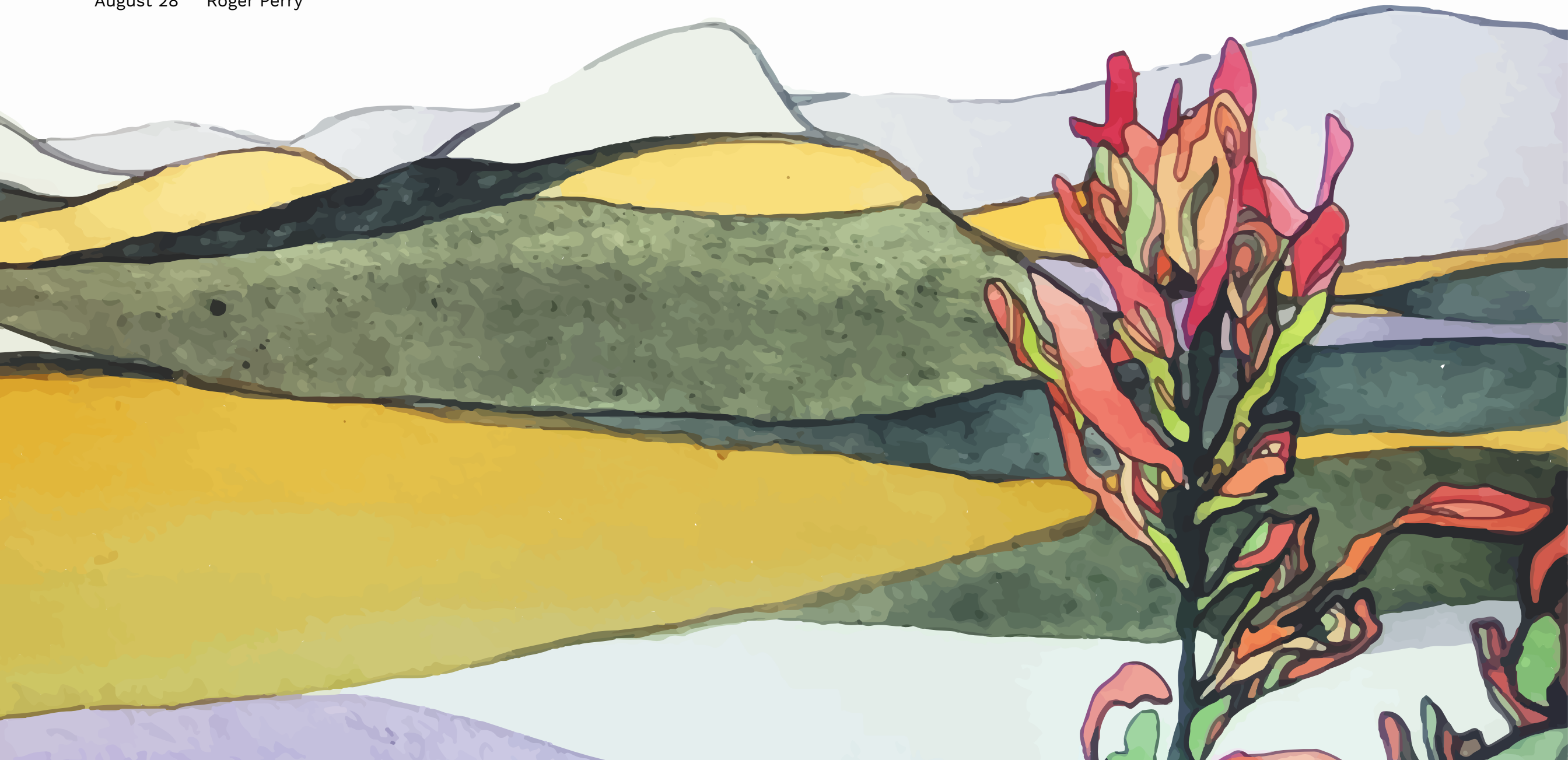
Detail from watercolor by Autumn Stock. This piece became the base for stickers, postcards and promotional material.

SUMMER LINE-UP 2021

July 9	The Trespassers
July 10	Nicholas Lefler
July 16	Yosemite Songwriting Retreat
July 17	Tarantula and the Turtle Doves
July 23	Scott Little
July 24	Soul Galaxy
July 30	Clan Dyken
July 31	Green Machine
August 6	Hank Lamar/Tom V and the Creekers
August 7	Adam Burns (solo) and Little Tiger
August 13	Annie and Renee
August 14	Blue Skies Trio
August 20	The Grasskickers
August 21	Mike Hammar and the Nails
August 27	Good Medicine
August 28	Roger Perry

COMMUNITY SPONSORS

Carol Johnson	Mountain Yoga Studio
Dave and Terry Rozelle	Pizza Factory
Dog Grooming by Tess	Ranch Fence
Foster Ace Hardware	Restful Nest Bed & Breakfast
Fremont House	Saralynn Nusbaum & Don Melcher
High Country Health Foods	Ladybug Embroidery & Garment Printing
James Whittkopf	Savourys
Mariposa Lodge of Odd Fellows	Sierra Gold Cleaning Services
Mariposa Museum & History Center	Starchman & Bryant Attorneys at Law
Mariposa Shipping Company	Sticks Coffee
Mariposa Yosemite Rotary Club	Sue Overstreet
Mariposa Yosemite Tourism Bureau	Yosemite Pilates
Meadow Creek Ranch Bed & Breakfast	





Screenshot from Zoom poetry reading

Restricted to their facility and with strict visitation policies, this event was a special and unique way to connect to the individuals in the Arts in Corrections program. After Suzanne Buffam and Anna Maria Hong delivered their readings, the conversation opened into an organic and free-form exploration of poetry as an accessible medium for expression, and by the end, AIC participants voluntarily read their own work aloud to Suzanne and Anna Maria.

Courtesy of Small Press Print, copies of Suzanne and Anna Maria's published works were donated to the Facility library, the Mariposa County Library, and to the Mariposa County High School English Department.



WATCH NOW:

Poets Suzanne Buffam and Anna Maria Hong [reflect on poetry](#) as means of personal expression, in conversation with Arts in Corrections participants in the Mariposa County Detention Facility.

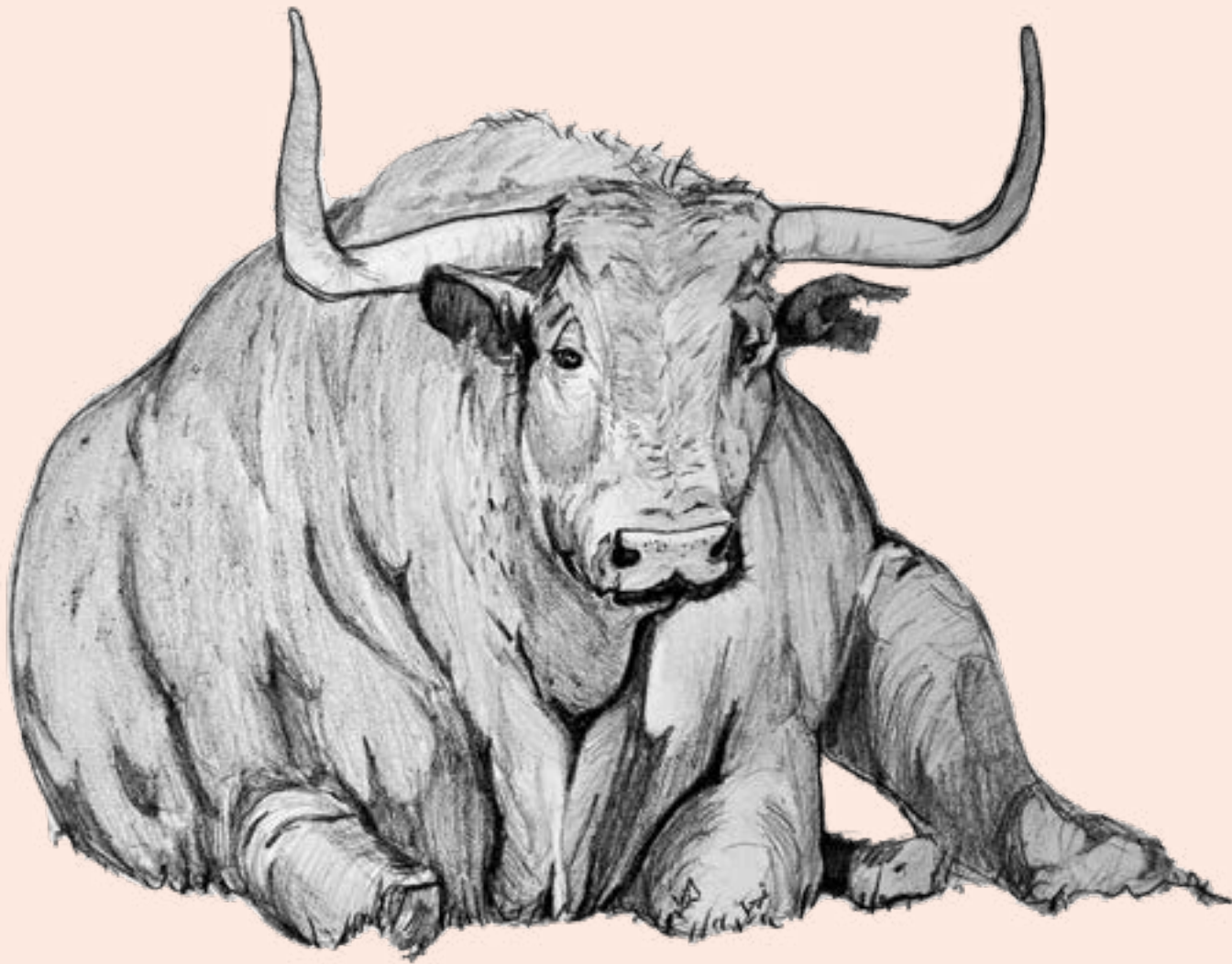
Arts in Corrections

In April, our poetry program in the Mariposa County Adult Detention Facility resumed. This program for system-engaged individuals is a partnership program with the Mariposa County Sheriff Office and offers poetry workshops to every inmate in the facility on an ongoing basis. The program is designed to develop the artistic abilities of incarcerated individuals through sequential, hands-on learning; promote life skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and positive self-expression; and develop long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between arts organizations, teaching artists, and the incarcerated population in Mariposa. Most importantly, it utilizes the arts as an equalizer that can create a level playing field where underrepresented voices can be heard, amplified and engaged. This program was led by poet and writer, Laura Phillips for two 10-week residencies.

VIRTUAL POETRY READING

In May, 2021, Arts in Corrections received special programming from nationally renowned poets, Suzanne Buffam and Anna Maria Hong, facilitated by author and poet, Megan Levad. The virtual poetry reading was designed to highlight the Arts Council's ongoing poetry initiatives and allowed AIC participants to engage in conversation with established and authored poets. The event was attended by local students and educators, Arts Council Members, and featured a special reading from Mariposa County Poetry Out Loud Champion, Sydney Jacobs.

Together with Members, local educators, students, poets and program participants, we discussed original works from Arts in Corrections, explored creative constructs of poetic form, craft, and the propensity poetry has for personal and cultural expression.



Killing the Animals

*The chickens cannot
Find their heads
Though they search for them
Falling in the grass*

*And the great bulls
Remain on their knees
As if they can not
Remember how to start*

*The goats cannot find their voices
They run quickly
On their sides
Watching the sky*

- Zer

POETRY CHAPBOOKS

As a means of sharing the voice of Arts in Corrections participants, this April during National Poetry Month, we published two chapbooks of selected participant poems, illustrated by local artists Anna Friedland and Daisy Phillips. Poems explore an unexpected range of themes from love, remorse and deep connections to the natural world. Proceeds from the chapbooks return directly to the Arts in Corrections program, and AIC participants were given complimentary copies.



SUPPORT OPPORTUNITY:

To purchase a chapbook (right), contact us to arrange pick up or direct shipping. Chapbooks are \$6 for one or \$10 for two. Proceeds return directly to the [Arts in Correction](#) program.



Poetry Out Loud Recitation Contest

An arts education initiative created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Poetry Foundation - Poetry Out Loud encourages the nation's youth to learn about great classic and contemporary poetry through memorization, performance and competition. This year, we ammended the program to a virutal platform and Mariposa High School Senior Sydney Jacobs scored high marks in our open contest, taking home the County Finalist title and a \$500 award. Coached by Laura Phillip and Megan Levad, Sydney moved on to compete in California State Poetry Out Loud Finals with a recitation of the poem "Enough" by Suzanne Buffam. Consequently, coach Megan was able to connect with Suzanne Buffam who volunteered to headline a poetry event highlighting the Arts Council's current poetry initiatives (see pg ##).

42 students served

Supported by the California Arts Council, the Poetry Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

“

I think that it's really vital to see yourself in what you're reciting . . . I only chose poems that focused on women and that were written by women, and more specifically, poems featuring women displaying strong and passionate emotion - emotions that society doesn't like women to feel - from grief, deep-seeded lonliness, to rage."

Sydney Jacobs
Mariposa POL Champion 2021

Coaching sessions and recitations

Sydney is joined by Megan and Laura outdoors (left) in preparation for her State Finals performance. Images by Gracie Tafoya.



WATCH NOW:

Sydney Jacobs introduces herself and [delivers a recitation](#) of Suzanne Buffam's "Enough" for the virtual Arts in Corrections poetry reading.



Installation day

Ben Goger, Jackie Baxton, Daisy Phillips and Alicia Rodriguez set a turtle into a rock bed along the Stockton Creek's Canyon Trail.

Stockton Creek Hide & Seek

In partnership with Sierra Foothill Conservancy and Mariposa Public Utility, we've been developing a fun public art project along the Stockton Creek Preserve entitled *Stockton Creek Hide and Seek*. Working with local artist, Jackie Baxton, this project leverages art in order to foster awareness of our local foothill ecology and wildlife habitat with life size bronze statues of vulnerable animals native to the preserve. The sculptures will be strategically situated along the Stockton Creek Preserve trail system and visitors are encouraged to play "Hide and Seek" as they search for the animal sculptures. This project is aligned with the Creative Placemaking Strategy's Land Preservation and Interpretive Art Recommendation.

Jackie Baxton, the Arts Council and Sierra Foothill Conservancy have identified several species which will be installed over the course of the next few years, starting with the Western Pond Turtle - four of which were installed this spring. The Western Pond Turtle is a California Species of Special Concern and is California's only native freshwater turtle. This special turtle has experienced population reductions of 75-80% due to loss of habitat, predation, and competition from non-native species, such as red-eared sliders.

Project supported by the California Arts Council



INSIDER TIP:

Western Pond Turtles love the water and rocky riparian nooks, take a look for them out and about the new Canyon Creek Trail on [Stockton Creek's](#) 6th St. entrance.



IN PROGRESS:

Grey fox statues are up next! After molding and bronze casting, they'll be ready for their new home on the preserve.



Student Mural Project

As part of the the implementation of the newly adopted Mariposa County Office of Education’s Strategic Arts Education Plan and the Mariposa County Creative Placemaking Strategy, the Arts Council is supporting the Mariposa County Office of Education and school sites, across the county, to develop and implement a number of arts education initiatives and programs.

Up first: youth-led mural projects. At 12 x 16ft, the magically realistic monarch wings are intended as a vibrant, interactive backdrop for students on the Mariposa Elementary School campus. This piece was designed and painted by Mariposa County High School (MCHS) seniors Autumn Stock and Justus Wellcome with mentorship from muralist, Clay River. The mural, located on the combined 1st-Grade and Kindergarten classroom, welcomes students as they begin their education and as they establish a sense of pride and self on campus.



Mural Process

Clay, Justus and Autumn spent evenings after school and weekend mornings developing layers for the mural. Frequently, they were joined by curious after-school program students, family and even community members who happened to walk by. Photos by Cara Goger and Daisy Phillips. Clay (right) played a significant role in the quality of the student's experience, both teaching and holding space for their individual creative expression and exploration.

Funding for this project came from an implementation planning grant from the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association Arts Initiative and the Stuart Foundation. Additional funding came from local donors who took part in a campaign to “Support Mariposa’s Student Artists.” during November 2021’s Giving Tuesday event.



WATCH NOW:
This mural took a collective 36 hours of work! Check out this short timelapse showing part of the process.





Policy, Governance & Advocacy

2021 was a big year for us with respect to policy. Since 2018, we have been working with the Mariposa County Planning Department to develop the County's first cultural policy and creative placemaking strategy, which we completed and adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in August 2021. We also partnered with the Mariposa County Office of Education to develop a Strategic Arts Education Plan focused on PK-12 arts education policy (adopted by the Mariposa County School Board in April 2021).

These planning and policy efforts caught the attention of the field, opening opportunities to share the good work that is going on in Mariposa at the state and national level. But perhaps more importantly, the local community also recognized this work as evidenced by an exciting growth in organizational membership and the onboarding of two new Board Directors.

[Creative Placemaking Strategy](#)
[Strategic Arts Education Plan](#)
[Arts, Culture & Creativity Month](#)
[Americans for the Arts](#)

[Smart Growth America](#)
[Special Press Features](#)
[Building Community Support](#)
[New Board Members](#)



Creative Placemaking Strategy

Adopted August 2021

On August 17, 2021 the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors adopted the Mariposa County Creative Placemaking Strategy, Mariposa's first cultural policy initiative. A partnership project between the Arts Council and the Mariposa County Planning Department, the Creative Placemaking Strategy offers a wrap-around framework for art and design to promote both a more resilient rural economy, and a more inclusive, representative, and diverse set of stories about our community.

The Strategy is informed by an 18-month art and public design-driven planning process that gathered diverse feedback and input from community members and stakeholders across the County. The conversations and ideas generated by the planning process informed a suite of recommendations for future projects, programs, and policies.

“

Mariposa County’s Creative Placemaking Strategy will promote the county’s economic, ecological, social, and cultural vitality, balancing historic narratives with contemporary ones and reflecting the community’s richness and diversity. By engaging artists and embedding artistic practice into the community experience, the Strategy will support a culture of creativity that contributes to livability in Mariposa County.

Creative Placemaking Strategy Vision Statement
adopted by CPSAC, 2021

This project was funded by the Endowment for the Arts Our Town program, and supported by Atlas Labs, Inc., Smart Growth America, the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, the Mariposa County Planning Department, and the Creative Placemaking Citizens' Advisory Committee



In order to soliciate community input about the future of creative programming, the Mariposa County Planning Department, Arts Council, and the County’s Creative Placemaking Strategy Advisory Committee initiated three engagement projects through March 2021. These projects were developed based on creative placemaking principals and were intended to inspire and ask questions about new narratives while inviting diverse and thoughtful responses.

1. This Must be the Place

This community snapshot project prompted locals to submit portraits of themselves at their favorite places or at their most-loved events in Mariposa County. The images and statements collected in this project generated ample data about what makes Mariposa unique through the lens of our residence.

2. Ah-Lo'-Mah' (Basket) Installation

This site-specific project is located along the Mariposa Creek Parkway in downtown Mariposa. *Ah-Lo'-Mah'* draws on the Southern Sierra Miwuk traditions of the basket-making, a practice that combines environmental

“

A hometown is what the locals make of it. We have the ability to create progressive conversation, rooted solidarity, and distilled passion. These elements lead to collaboration, and collaboration in a small town like this can lead to truly life-altering projects within the community.”

Submitted statement from the Creative Placemaking Community Survey, 2021

Nancy Fluharty- Submission for This Must Be the Place, Stockton Creek Preserve

Unsuprisingly, over 40% of respondents to TMBTP indicated that their favorite places in Mariposa County are trails, and over 95% of responses are of Mariposans being outside.

stewardship, collaborative fabrication, and artistic expression to convey both the beauty of the county’s natural landscape and the richness of Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation's cultural history and identity. The interpretive signage doubled as an online engagement tool where viewers used a QR-code to responded to the Creative Placemaking Community Survey. This survey included a mix of structured, open-ended questions capturing a range of feedback and input that was then implimented in the strategic plan.

3. Seed Share Installation

Situated at the entry of the Mariposa Creek Parkway, *Seed Share* incorporates a custom feature that dispenses curated packets of seeds for native riparian plants, which visitors can take home with them for free. The project offers a commentary on native landscapes like the Mariposa Creek corridor as essential to local sense of place, complements *Ah-Lo'-Mah'* by offering an inclusive vision of worthwhile placemaking themes, and empowers community members to act as agents of resiliency—and to view those actions as creative placemaking work.



In general, the responses generated by the engagement projects revealed a widespread desire for future projects and structures that critically examine and define Mariposa County as a place of rich, textured, and diverse narratives, including some that depart from stories about the Gold Rush and Yosemite National Park.

For example, the survey revealed that nearly 79.5% of respondents want art and cultural events in Mariposa to explore themes related to “natural environment and conservation.” The second highest scoring response to this question (63.9%) was “Social and Cultural Dynamics.” And while “History” (54.2%) was the third highest scoring response to this question, it was followed closely by “The Future of Mariposa” (51.8%, a difference of two responses). At the very least, these responses indicate that respondents believe historical narratives should play some role in Mariposa County’s creative placemaking profile, but that other themes should be explored and examined with intention through creative placemaking policies, projects and programs.



EXPLORE FURTHER

The full data, including open-form statements, from the Creative Placemaking Community survey are listed here in the [Strategy Appendices](#).

Right: *Ah-Lo'-Mah'* at completion

Tribal leaders and culture keepers led weaving workshops at the Southern Sierra Miwuk Miwumati Healing Center, instructing new learners and guiding a multi-generational creative process
Photo by Atlas Lab.

Left: Kaiya Wellcome at *Seed Share*

Seed Share provides free seed packets that empower Mariposa's residence to plant native riparian species at their homes, businesses, and elsewhere in the county.



Transportation for America State of the Art Workshop and Training, Yosemite Bug Hostel, Bodie Building
Joseph Kunkle, principal and director of MASS's Sustainable Native Communities Design Lab and a 2019 Obama Fellow, presents ideas for creative placemaking design that is responsive to native communities.

Informed by the community's voice and vision, the Creative Placemaking Strategy recommends a suite of projects, programs and policies that promote the county's economic, ecological, social, and cultural vitality, balancing historic narratives with contemporary ones and reflecting the community's richness and diversity. By engaging artists and embedding artistic practice into the community experience, the Strategy will support a culture of creativity that contributes to livability in Mariposa County.

Furthermore, for each recommendation, the Strategy provides guidelines, expected outcomes, parameters within which to evaluate the effectiveness of each recommendation, identifies the appropriate organizations and entities equipped to implement them, and suggests next steps.

**“
I am excited about work that connect settlers with their own histories and to indigenous stewardship of the land, via land-based engagement and artistic response. I am excited about programming for youth that offers them a chance to artistically process and respond to the conditions they are living in. I am excited about programming that helps people connect with each other and co-create.”**

Submitted statement from the Creative Placemaking Community Survey, 2021



“

The Arts Council does a great job of bringing innovative and challenging ideas into our community through a lot of mediums. I would like to see that continue, and increase, particularly around the topics of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.”

Submitted statement from the Creative Placemaking Community Survey, 2021



EXPLORE FUTHER

Read the [Creative Placemaking Strategy](#) document and explore the entire investigation and recommendations, plus maps and more here.

Above: Nevada Rivers Project, Daniel McCormick and Mary O'Brien, 2014, Carson Valley, NV

Place-based artwork in the creek corridor can both be beautiful, and contribute to ecological restoration objectives like removing invasive species and providing habitat for native wildlife.

This installation was used as an example in the Creative Placemaking Strategy for thematic art around Land Preservation and Interpretive Art projects. The natural environment and the county's undeveloped landscapes are Mariposa's most universally valued asset. As overwhelmingly evidenced in every aspect of the stakeholder engagement process for this planning process, Mariposa residents feel a deep and profound connection to and appreciation for the region's wide variety of natural landscapes and vast swaths of uninterpreted vistas.

“

Given the positive academic and social emotional impact the arts have on our students, we are excited to invest resources into building systemic practices and partnerships which grow and support equitable and rigorous arts learning throughout Mariposa County. [This is] aimed at empowering classroom teachers, centering student voice, and integrating classroom curriculum with a myriad of creative placemaking efforts across the county at large.”

Jeff Aranguena, Superintendent of Mariposa County Office of Education/Mariposa County Unified School District

Strategic Arts Education Plan

Mariposa County Office of Education

Adopted April 2021

Over the winter of 2019/2020, the Arts Council helped lead a strategic planning process for the Mariposa County Office of Education *Strategic Arts Education Plan* that was adopted by the Mariposa County School Board in April. The newly adopted plan sets forth a vision, framework and implementation plan that works towards the goal of every student in Mariposa County having access to:

1. Equitable, sequential creative arts, TK-12
2. Increased capacity and support for arts integration, and
3. Student centered arts education that empowers students through voice and choice.



EXPLORE FURTHER:

Though the full plan is not public yet, a project overview can be [found here](#) (CCSESA Partners).



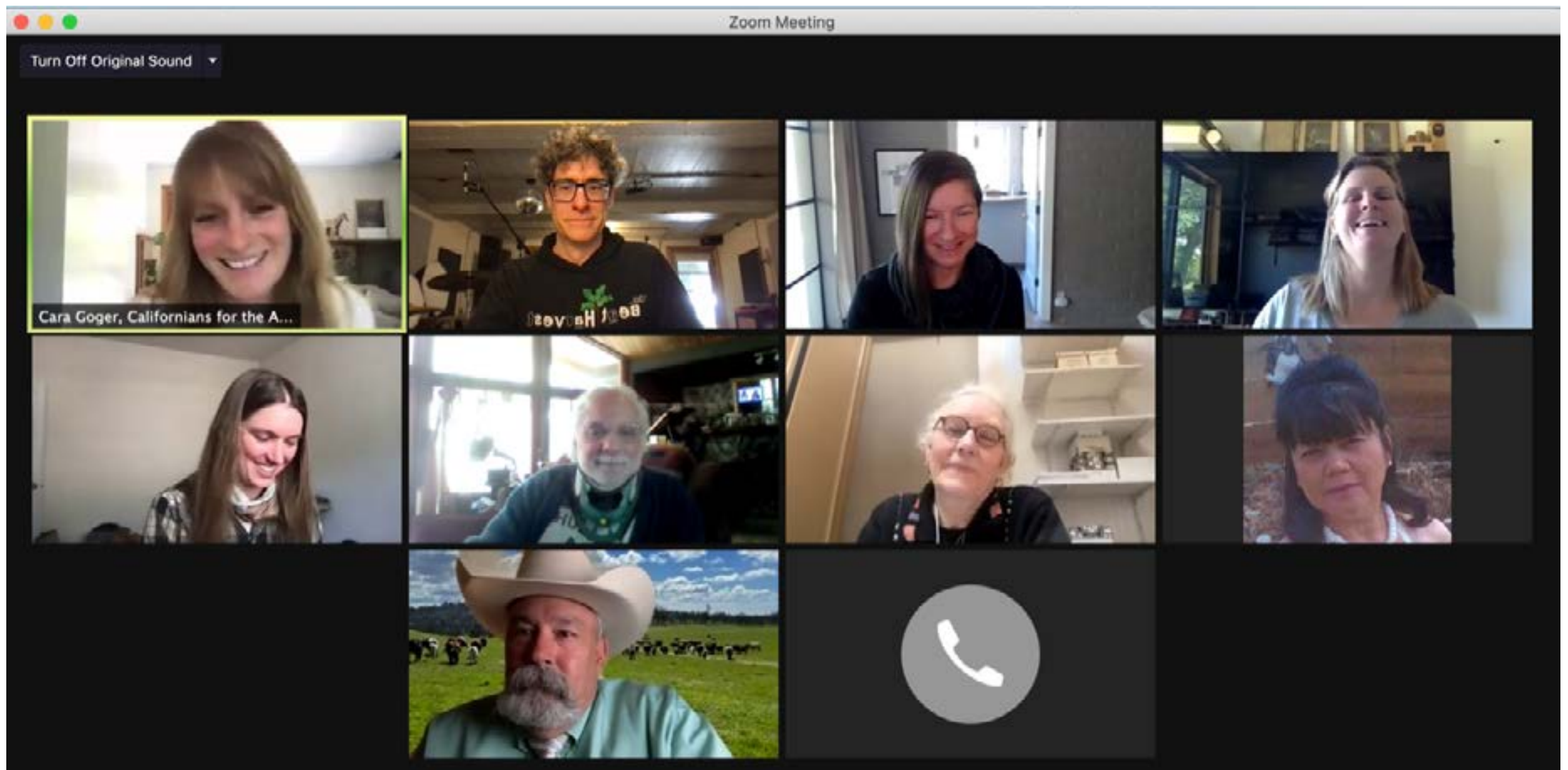
The Mariposa County Office of Education & The Mariposa County Unified School District

STRATEGIC ARTS EDUCATION PLAN

2020 - 2025

Cover Art by Gracie Tafoya

Our student intern and Communications Assistant, Gracie Tafoya, developed these graphics using photographs she'd taken during arts events in Mariposa County.

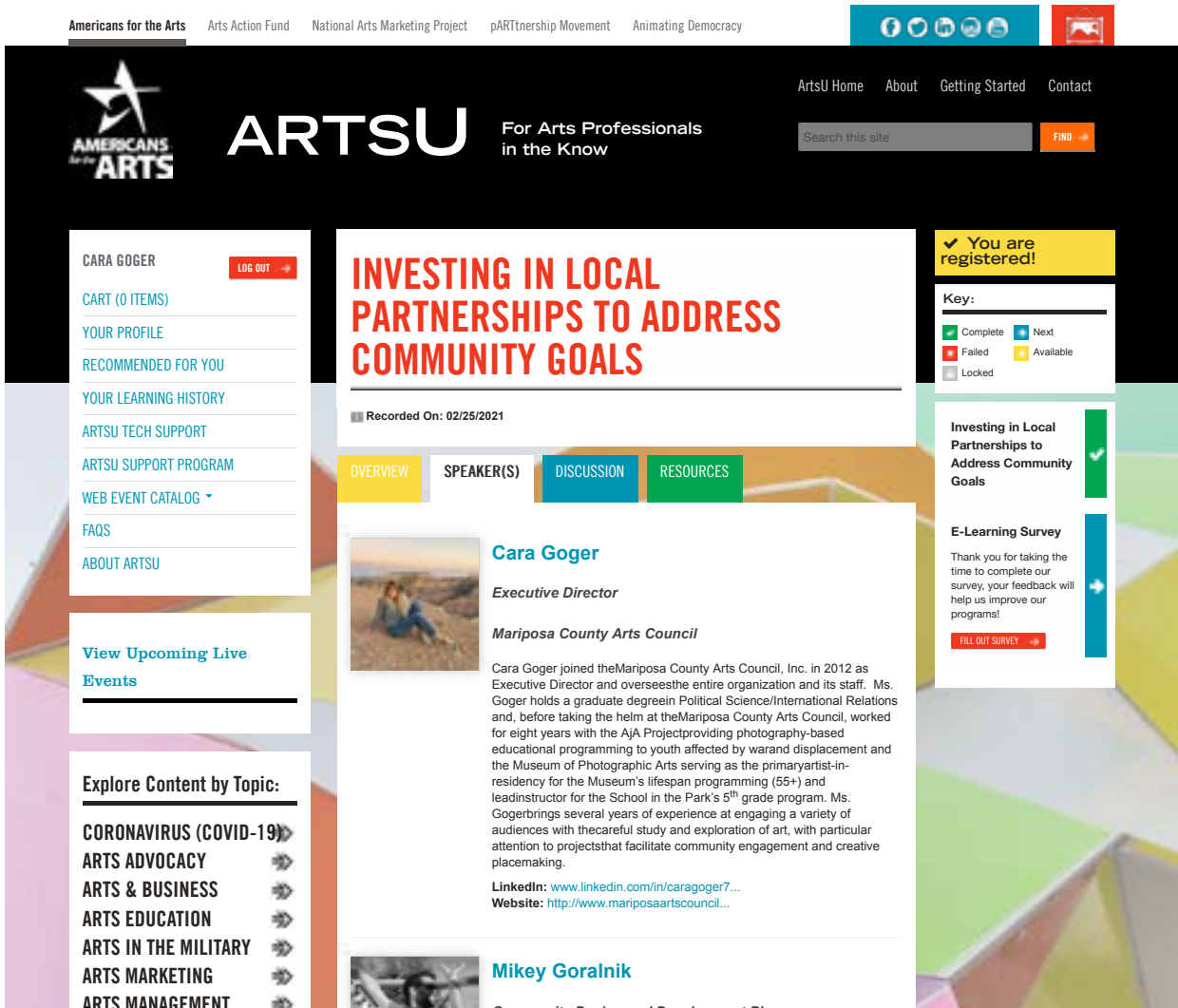


Arts Culture and Creativity Month – Advocacy Day

CENTRAL SIERRA ARTS DELEGATION

You may already know that April has been dedicated by the State of California as Arts, Culture and Creativity Month. As part of the larger work surrounding advocating for the arts, this April several members of the Arts Council Board and staff and members of the County's Creative Placemaking Strategy Advisory Committee (two of which happen to be local artists) met with Assemblyman Frank Bigelow, who represents Mariposa in the State Assembly. During this meeting, we discussed the future of creative

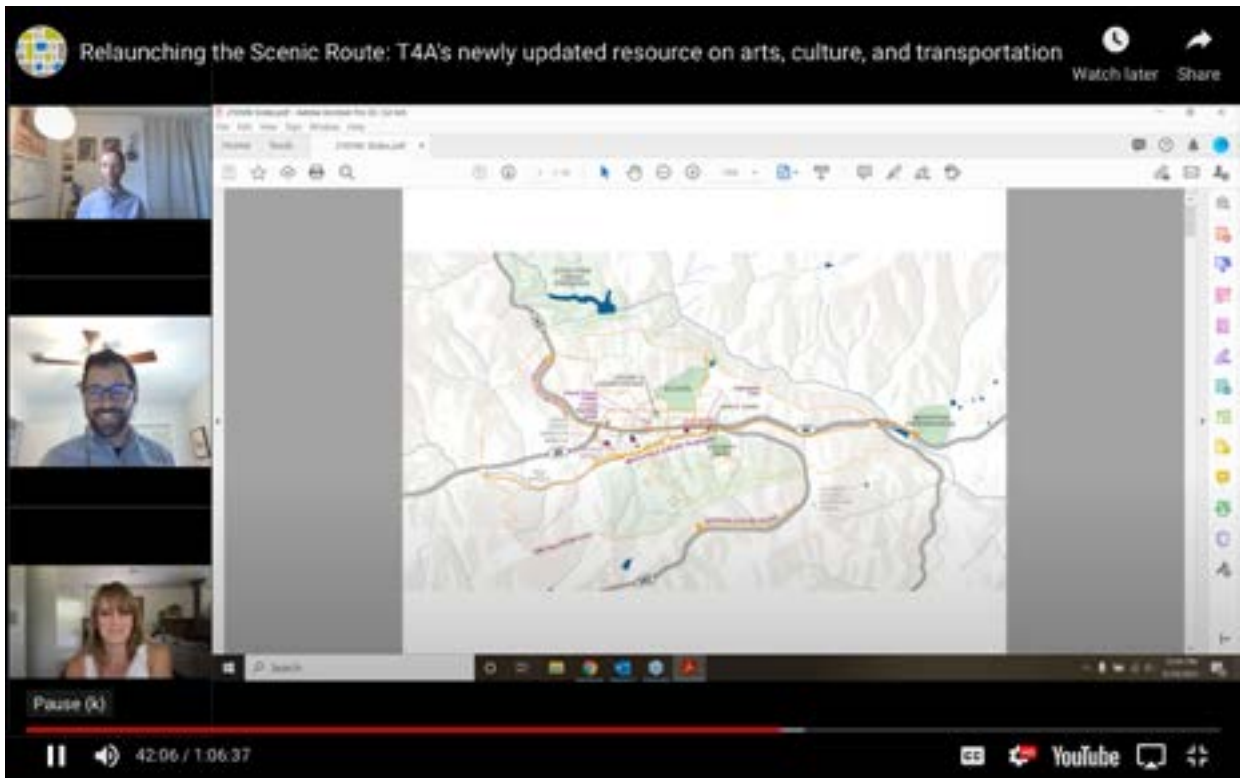
placemaking in Mariposa and learned about the positive impact the arts have had on Assemblyman Bigelow throughout his life. It was a pleasure to make a personal connection with the Assemblyman and we were encouraged by the value he places on the arts. This meeting was attended by Cara Goger, Adam Burns, Alex Vance, Les Marsden, Jackie Baxton, Kim Brisack, Sharon Hoffman, Laura Livingston and John Stewart.



Americans for the Arts

INVESTING IN LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

On February 25th, Cara Goger (our Executive Director) along with Mikey Goralnik (Community Design and Development Planner at the Mariposa County Planning Department and Arts Council Board Member) and Clay M. River (Managing Director the American Indian Council of Mariposa County/Miwumati Family Healing Center and Arts Council Board Member) developed and presented a webinar for Americans for the Arts titled “Investing in Partnership to Address Community Goals.” More specifically, the webinar explored how, over the past several years, the Arts Council has built successful partnerships with the County Planning Department, Sierra Foothill Conservancy and the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation in order to address issues related to recognition of both the painful history of Southern Sierra Miwuk and the important role this community plays in Mariposa with regard to wildfire mitigation and active transportation.



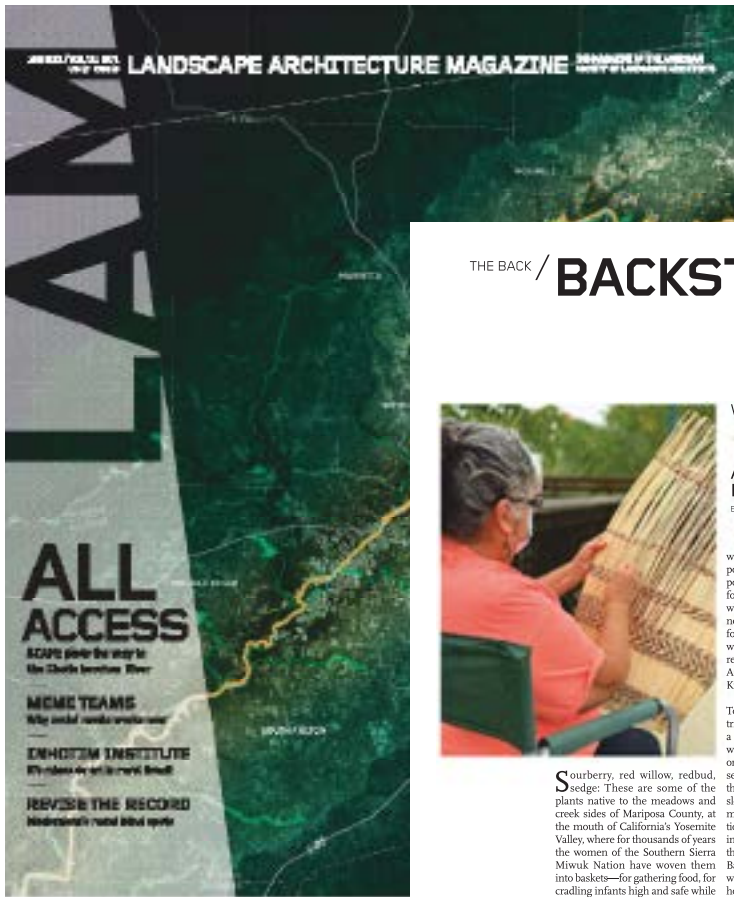
Smart Growth America Webinar

SCENIC ROUTE RELAUNCH

In May, Cara Goger and Mikey Goralnik were invited to participate in Smart Growth America’s relaunch of their Scenic Route Creative Placemaking Guide. Cara and Mikey shared the planning and creative placemaking work the Arts Council and the Planning Department have been doing surrounding active transportation and the Mariposa Creek Parkway (Ah’-Lo’-Mah and Seed Share, among other projects) alongside other presenters from the National Endowment for the Arts and Destination Crenshaw.



WATCH NOW:
 Cara Goger and Mikey Goralnik [present](#) on the Mariposa Creek Parkway project and the intersectionality of arts and transportation.



THE BACK / BACKSTORY



ABOVE
Sandra Chapman, a Miwuk elder, weaves with native riparian plants.

RIGHT
A gateway marker educates the public about native plants and invites input.

WEAVING PLACE

ATLAS LAB CONNECTS MARIPOSA COUNTY'S FUTURE TO THE NATIVE LANDSCAPE.

BY KATHARINE LOGAN

while broadening perceptions of the possibilities for public art, the temporary installation is located beside a footbridge crossing Mariposa Creek, where once-plentiful native plants are now struggling in a landscape transformed by settlement. "The strength we have as landscape architects is to reveal these hidden histories," says Atlas Lab's founder and principal Kimberly Garza, ASLA.

To produce the work on display, a tribal elder, Sandra Chapman, taught a circle of Miwuk women how to weave a receiving basket, handing on knowledge that her family has preserved through millennia. "To be in the tradition of weaving, you have to slow down a lot," says Clay River, the managing director of the Miwuk Nation's healing center and a participant in the weaving circle. "You have to let the plant tell you how to work with it." Basket making requires knowledge of whether a plant is healthy, when and how to harvest it, and how much to take without taking too much. Then there's the process of scraping off the leaves and prepping the bark—splitting and soaking it or wrapping it to dry—and waiting months for it to season, or, if it's for use right away, knowing how long it can soak without rotting and when it's malleable enough to work. That's just building up to being able to sit to weave, which

takes patience: "You're pressing these tiny strips of bark in and out of these sourberry sticks," River says, "and you have to be thoughtful of how the color is interweaving and how the material is reacting. It takes hours just to make a little bit." The weavers fill the hours with their stories.

"The baskets are an expression of our local sense of place, heritage, and identity," says Mikey Goralnik, ASLA, a planner with Mariposa County. With *Ah-Lo'-Mah'* (Miwuk for "basket") as the first in what will be a series of placemaking installations, "we're trying to expand the way people think about our history and the events that make this a special place," he says. ■

KATHARINE LOGAN IS AN AWARD-WINNING WRITER ON ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN, SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLBEING.



PHOTO: GARY ASLA

136 / LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE JAN 2021



Well Enough to Dream:

Wildfire, traditional ecological knowledge, art, and the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation

by Cara Goger, Executive Director, Mariposa Arts Council
with Clay Muwin River, Managing Director, American Indian Council of Mariposa County and Miwumati Healing Center



This piece explores the partnership work being done by the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation and the Mariposa County Arts Council to address wildfire mitigation strategies and representation of the Southern Sierra Miwuk — two deeply linked issues currently reframing Mariposa's community dialogue about wildfire management practices, historical narratives, and the connection between place and identity.

Special Press Features

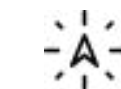
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MAGAZINE

Landscape Architecture Magazine (LAM) is the monthly magazine of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). It is the magazine of record for the landscape architecture profession in North America, reaching more than 60,000 readers, designers and planners. Our Creative Placemaking demonstration installation, Ah-Lo'-Mah' was specially featured in an article in their January edition titled "Weaving Place" and explores connectivity between community design and cultural identity.



EXPLORE FURTHER:

[Click here](#) to read "Weaving Place" on LAM's website



EXPLORE FURTHER:

[Click here](#) to read "Well Enough to Dream" on Medium.



“

Since moving here, I've been surprised by the arts culture in Mariposa. The authenticity of the programs and events here are exciting and becoming an Arts Council Member was a small way I could share my support. Its also been a good way to be in-the-know with the projects the Arts Council is working on with the County on right now - I've been able to connect my own work with a couple of the efforts and meet some other professionals that I might have not run into otherwise. It was easy to join and it feels so nice to be able to support in a way that's both meaningful to my community and accessible for me.”

Laura Wattles
Member since 2021

Building Community Support

Since March, we've seen an increase in new Members (from 2021) making up approximately 32% of our total Membership base, while 68% are Members who have returned/historically supported the Arts Council (fig.1) Overall, 2021 saw the highest number of Members in nearly a decade, with an over 40% increase from our usual annual average over the past nine years.

Currently - in the absence of admission-based funding from ticketed events during pandemic - Membership accounts for the majority of our community funding. Considering the many demanding challenges and restrictions over the past two years and the shift in our community engagement methods, we see this data as an encouraging and substantive demonstration of our community's growing support.



JOIN TODAY:

Our Members are catalyst for creativity, inspiration, discovery and civic engagement for every person in our community. Support the arts in Mariposa by [becoming a Member here.](#)

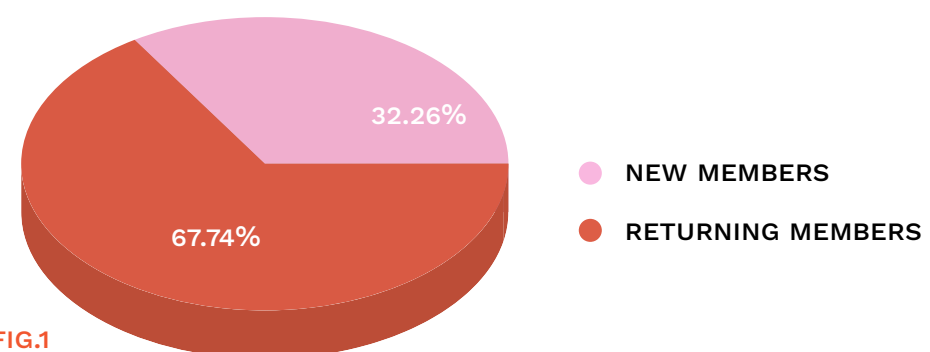


FIG.1

Special Swag

As an added benefit, Members receive occasional fresh collateral and small gifts that tie directly to our ongoing programs and projects or that showcase the work of a student artist. Shown: Postcard cover art from the student Monarch mural concept design and Music on the Green stickers from Autumn Stock's original watercolor.

Welcoming New Board Members

We were thrilled to welcome two new board members to our organization, Clay M. River (left) and Flora Savage (right). “Our volunteer board is the governing body for the Arts Council and we are grateful to both Clay and Flora for their commitment to serving our organization.



CLAY MUWIN RIVER

Clay Muwin River is the Managing Director for the Southern Sierra Miwuk’s non-profit; American Indian Council of Mariposa County and Miwumati Healing Center. River has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Native Youth Education and a Master of Arts degree in Indigenous Education & Curriculum from Goddard College in Vermont. River has a wide-ranging background on issues that directly impact Native Americans and works directly with tribal governments, tribal consortia, federal agencies and national and regional organizations impacting Indian country. River’s experience areas include cultural arts revitalization, Native education, curriculum, program development and implementation, social services, native wellness and community health, environmental protection and restoration, management and leadership, grant writing and positions held on cultural arts steering committees and boards.

River has served Native communities for most of their life, providing traditional education, cultural training and intergenerational guidance to build resiliency. Clay has traveled, lived and worked in many Native communities across Turtle Island and honors the knowledge learned from hundreds of traditional teachers and elders. Whether they are providing youth leadership training, assisting Elders healing from historical trauma or helping to bring

indigenous wellness back to remote native communities, Clay shares their passion for being positive and proactive. River is a cultural arts activist, mural painter, weaver, beader, quilter, land restorer, water protector and a member of the Passamaquoddy and Mi’kmaq Tribes.

FLORA SAVAGE

Flora, a visual artist and musician, is the Director of School Counseling at Mariposa County High School. She holds a MS in Educational School Counseling and a BA in Studio Arts.

Working on the ground with youth, the importance of arts education is impressed upon her on a daily basis - particularly art's ability to center and amplify youth voices and contribute to positive academic and social emotional learning outcomes.

Photographed above, Flora receives a gift from Mariposa Boosters as a thank-you for her dedication to education and student success during the pandemic lock-down.





Looking Forward

We are excited to see that much of the planning and policy work done in 2021 effectively set the stage for ambitious new projects and programs currently coming to fruition in 2022. Take a peek at the new partnership projects and collaborative initiatives in the development or implementation stages right now.

[Creative Placemaking Strategy Implementation](#)

[Landscape Restoration Along the Creek Parkway](#)

[Mariposa County Trails Day +
Participatory Poetry Programming](#)

[Creative Youth Development Working Group](#)

Mariposa Creek Parkway Restoration

Filmmaker, Amanda Law, documents the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, Sierra Foothill Conservancy and CalFire as they begin the first phase of the Mariposa Creek Restoration project using conventional prescribed fire led by the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. Photo by Cara Goger.



Creative Placemaking Strategy Implementations

Aformentioned in the sections above, the Creative Placemaking Strategy identifies a range of artistic and cultural intereventions in Mariposa County. In addition to the Arts Council, many local organizations have already begun to utilize the tools the Stratgey offers as well as lay groundwork on the following Recommendations for projects, programs and policies:

County-Wide Mural Project

(Creative Placemaking Strategy, PROJ. 1)

Murals are a classic creative placemaking intervention, and can offer effective, economical, and low-barrier opportunities to achieve a range of community building objectives. For these reasons, it is perhaps not surprising that murals were the most frequently referenced and recommended project type among survey respondents and county stakeholders. Community members also embraced murals as a way to animate the public realm and address the issue of “too many blank walls” in certain parts of the county. This approach could be highly effective in the Town of Mariposa, where the relatively developed built environment is most appropriate for a high density of murals. In addition to democratizing access to art, a cohesive countywide mural project could also help capture the richness and diversity of communities, landscapes, and lifestyles throughout the county.

Left: Clay River and student artist, Justus Wellcome
Mariposa Elementary School Mural Project

Mariposa Creek Parkway

(Creative Placemaking Strategy, PROJ. 4)

Long a priority project for its mobility and recreation benefits, the [Mariposa Creek Parkway Master Plan](#) (2019) identified the project as a powerful and multi-dimensional creative placemaking opportunity. Through extensive engagement, highlighted by the Creek Week event, the community voiced a clear vision for the project, which when completed will follow Mariposa Creek between the County Fairgrounds and the creek's intersection with Highway 49 near the county jail. In addition to its importance as an easily accessible trail that connects destinations that are important for both residents and visitors, the community also sees the Parkway as an opportunity to both restore and celebrate the creek's riparian ecology, and to support a range of creative placemaking projects and programs. Specifically, the plan calls out locations for art installations, interpretive exhibits, and a performance space in the Phase II and Phase III segment of the project

Curated, Site-Specific Temporary Art

(Creative Placemaking Strategy, PROJ. 1)

Site-specific art is artwork created for a specific location. The artist(s)'s conceptual, material and technical choices are responsive to identified environmental, social, cultural or economic dynamics relevant to a particular place. The contextualized nature of site-specific art projects invites: participatory experiences designed to inspire curiosity; a call to action; civic engagement and/or social bonding all while building greater public investment for priority locations. It is important to note, site-specific artwork encompasses all art practices including dance, media arts, music, theatre, literary arts, and the visual arts and this program encourages the inclusion of all artistic fields and practices. Additionally, multiple site-specific pieces can be curated and presented as an exhibition or public pop-up event designed to promote social, recreational, economic, and civic engagement opportunities.



EXPLORE FURTHER

These descriptions are abbreviated. To see [Recommendations](#) in detail, including conceptual imagery and additional references, see the [Creative Placemaking Strategy](#) here.

Land Preservations and Interpretive Art

(Creative Placemaking Strategy, PROG. 1)

As overwhelmingly evidenced in every aspect of the stakeholder engagement process for this planning process, Mariposa residents feel a deep and profound connection to and appreciation for the region's wide variety of natural landscapes and vast swaths of uninterpreted vistas. In addition to scenic viewsheds and ample recreational space, Mariposa's open land provides important habitat and migratory corridors for a sizable number of threatened species; is home to many indigenous plant species providing unique ecosystems and landscapes that are important to the first people of this region; and support much of California's watershed. This recommendation proposes utilizing visual and media art projects and, when appropriate, music, dance, theatre performances, and literary events in concert with or lieu of traditional interpretive signage, brochures and environmental educational/ community programming.

Connect Creative Placemaking Projects & Programs with Creative Youth Development

(Creative Placemaking Strategy, POL. 2)

In 2021, the Mariposa County Office of Education/Mariposa County Unified School District School Board adopted an Arts Education Strategic Plan which includes the following goals: create authentic learning experiences/art instruction for students of all ages; create inspiring school campuses through the installation of public art and creative placemaking projects; and grow partnership between schools and community art partners/projects. The Creative Placemaking Strategy is in alignment with the Arts Education Strategic Plan and the assistance and coordination of the Mariposa County Office of Education and the Arts Council, many projects and programs recommended in this plan have the potential to provide opportunities for students, classroom teachers and teaching artists to: work alongside professional artists installing work on or nearby school campuses; develop and implement their own creative placemaking projects and programs; develop arts curricula connected to or supporting the county's existing and future creative placemaking portfolio.



Mariposa Creek Parkway

Land Preservations and Interpretive Art

LANDSCAPE RESTORATION ALONG THE CREEK PARKWAY

The Mariposa Creek Parkway restoration project is a priority project for the County of Mariposa that draws together a number of critical community partners, specifically, the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, Sierra Foothill Conservancy, the Mariposa County Planning Department and the Arts Council. Central to this restoration project is the removal of invasive plant species (which created a hazardous fuel load for wildfires) and restore the plant diversity of the native riparian environment using Cultural Burning and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), a land management strategy that utilizes traditional practices to respond to the unique relational composition of specific ecological sites. This restoration is currently underway, and will continue throughout 2022, creating the conditions needed to return traditional first foods, medicines and cultural materials to the landscape and the Southern Sierra Miwuk people as well as mitigating wildfire risk and making space for public active transportation assets.

Tara Fouch-Moore

Tara, SSMN Tribal Sctratary, stokes a burn pile during a burn day in January. Invasive species that congest the riparian landscape - Himilian Blackberry and the Tree of Haven - are uprooted and burned, enriching and redistribute nutrients into the soil and making way for vital native plant species to return. Photo by Cara Goger.

Taking this one step further, the Arts Council will be supporting this restoration process through documentation and site-specific artistic interventions and cultural programs that: recognize and validate the trauma the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation have experienced; nurture the re-indigenization of the physical environment, and; amplify the contemporary indigenous voices, lifeways and practices central to this process.



Dreams are the visions of our spiritual leaders, and, right now, those visions center on the desire to restore conditions that provide native elders with what the need to educate tribal youth . . . ”

Clay M. River for DREAM Magazine
Managing Director, American Indian Council of Mariposa County and
Miwumati Healing

Partners: Sierra Foothill Conservance, Mariposa County Planning Department, CALFire, Mariposa County Fire Department, and the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. Funded by the California Arts Council Inovations and Intersections Grant.



MARIPOSA COUNTY TRAILS DAY + PARTICIPATORY POETRY

Slated for June 2022, Mariposa will be celebrating the inaugural Mariposa County Trails Day. This grassroots event will recognize the importance of Mariposa's trails in terms of community well-being, recreation, and exposure to nature. The Arts Council is currently working with poet [Megan Levad](#) (above, photo by Gregg Mizuta) to develop a participatory poetry program for the entire community of Mariposa. Guided by a simple curriculum, community members will be invited to compose and share their own original poems that explore their experiences/feelings/etc related to trails and wild spaces. Selected poems will be published in a community chapbook and interested participants will have the opportunity to formally read their poems during Mariposa County Trail Day.

Curated, Site-Specific Temporary Art

Alex Vance, *This Must Be the Place* submission

"No matter the season, the expansive views and dramatic skies of White Rock never disappoint."

Mariposa's diverse range of natural landscapes and outdoor recreation is one most common values identified by community members, like in *This Must Be the Place* project. In tandem with the Creative Placemaking Strategy, Mariposa County adopted a [Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan](#) which aims to enhance the quality of recreation while increasing the ability of the community and natural systems to prepare, recover, adapt, and grow from disruptive experiences.



EXPLORE FUTHER

The Arts Council will be putting out a call for participation in Trail's Day Poetry. If you'd like to be included in our outreach, [sign up for our e-newsletter](#) on [our website](#) to recieve direct announcements and news.



The Beat Harvest, Student Show 2019

Led by local musicians Adam Burns and Gail Dreifus, Beat Harvest shows are an opportunity for music students to perform in front of a live audience. The Creative Youth Development Working Group will help connect both new and existing programs like this one.

Program supported by the Mariposa County Probation's Local Innovations Block Grant program. Partners: Alliance for Community Transformations (Ethos Youth Center and Pathos Screen Printing), American Indian Council of Mariposa County (Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation), and the Mariposa County Unified School District.

CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Together with the Alliance for Community Transformations (human services nonprofit), the Mariposa County High School and the American Indian Council of Mariposa County/Miwumati Healing Center, the Arts Council were awarded a grant in November, 2021 from Mariposa County Probation Department to build capacity for Creative Youth Development program and projects in Mariposa County. (2nd Paragraph) Creative Youth Development is defined as deep arts learning centered in long-term, multi-generational relationships with artist mentors and culture bearers. It is based in the community and culturally reflective of the young people involved. In addition to arts learning, Creative Youth Development Projects and programs provide young people with holistic services such as mental health support, academic resources, college and career readiness, and opportunities to engage civically. The goal of this initiative is to build collaborative community capacity around Creative Youth Development so that organizations are well equipped to serve the County's youth.

This initiative will develop: best practices for working with youth, communication and recruitment materials; assessment tools for measuring the impact of a program; and documentation strategies that can be used by all organizations serving youth in Mariposa. Additionally, in alignment with both the Creative Placemaking Strategy and the Mariposa County Strategic Arts Education Plan, this initiative will pilot several creative placemaking and public art projects that center the voices, perspectives and narratives of Mariposa's youth. Right now, we're in our first phase and have gathered a working group of experts in the fields of human services, education, indigenous education, art, arts education, creative placemaking, and, most importantly, youth representatives. The campus mural projects are our first demonstration project attached to this initiative.

**Connect Creative Placemaking Projects &
Programs with Creative Youth Development**

Acknowledgments

MEMBERS

<i>Linda Abbott</i>	<i>Bridget Marie Fithian</i>	<i>Valerie Laszlo</i>	<i>Alicia Rodriguez</i>
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Linda Myers
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Bill Savage
Teresa Susman
Alex Vance
Minqing Zhou
John Zisa

SPECIAL THANKS

California Arts Council
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
Mariposa County Health and Human Services Agency
Mariposa County Probation Department
National Endowment for the Arts
Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau
Stewart Foundation

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Sierra Quest Academy
Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation
Smart Growth America

Adam Burns
Anna-Maria Hong
Autumn Stock
Ben Goger
Clay River
Gracie Tafoya

Jackie Baxton
Justus Wellcome
Les Marsden
Laura Phillips
Megan Levad
Nia Bothwell
Suzanne Buffman



Graduating Senior Award

Every year, the Arts Council's Board selects a graduating high school senior residing full time in Mariposa County to receive a \$500 award. Applicants are evaluated on the contribution they have made to the visual, performing, or media arts, through the Arts Council's programs or through other arts involvement in the community.

In 2021, this award was given to Nia Bothwell (left) for her exemplary dedication to her community and the arts. Nia has volunteered with both with the Arts Council and the Mariposa Museum & History Center Inc, represented Mariposa in the 2020 Poetry Out Loud State Finals, and has plans to pursue studio arts, art history and restoration.

Additional Service & Advocacy

On behalf of the Arts Council and the Mariposa County community, our Executive Director Cara Goger serves as an arts advocate in several capacities, including the following:

Californians for the Arts and California Arts Advocates, Board Director and Programs Committee Member - Representing rural and Central California

Duties include monthly board and program committee meetings, organizational strategic planning, organize and host regional convenings, organize and host Central CA advocacy meetings with elected officials, present at Statewide Arts Culture and Creativity Convening, and conduct/present webinars.

Coalition of County Arts Agencies, Member of Leadership Team.

This network consists of executive leadership from all California's State and Local Partners (SLPs). Duties include research and data collection on the work of SLPs across the state, development of educational materials about the work of SLPs, development of best practices for SLPs and peer learning leadership.

California County Superintendents Arts Initiative Region 7 and County Arts Lead, represent Mariposa County Office of Education.

Duties include monthly meetings, policy committee work surrounding equity in arts education, arts integration, standards implementation, framework development and building resources for COEs across the state.

Rural Arts Network, represent Mariposa County.

Duties include monthly meetings, yearly presentation, resource sharing related to arts education in rural regions of California, network building.

Mariposa County Creative Placemaking Citizen Advisory Committee, Chair.

Duties include monthly meetings, implement adopted Creative Placemaking Strategy in partnership with stakeholders across the county, review/vet/support creative placemaking/public arts proposal and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, serve as resource for individuals and groups interested in sponsoring/installing/producing public art or creative placemaking efforts, fundraise/write proposals for public art/creative placemaking initiatives tied to larger county projects and community goals.

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Plans & Strategies

- [Mariposa County Creative Placemaking Strategy](#)
- [Maripoca County Creative Placemaking Strategy Appendices](#)
- [Mariposa County Office of Education Strategic Arts Education Plan](#)
- [Mariposa Creek Parkway Master Plan](#)

Press & Appearances

- [Landscape Architecture Magazine "Weaving Place"](#)
- [California Arts Council DREAM Magazine "Well Enough to Dream"](#)
- [Smart Growth America Webinar](#)

Program Material

- [F/STOP Photography Exhibition Gallery](#)
- [This Must Be the Place Image Gallery](#)
- [Poetry Event Recording Clip](#)
- [Sydney Jacobs Recitation Video](#)
- [Student Mural Project Video](#)

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