



**Napa County Resource Conservation District**  
Annual Report 2021-2022



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## Dedicated To Our Mission Since 1945



### Our Mission

To support and empower everyone in Napa County to conserve, protect, and restore natural resources and sustainably manage working lands.

### Our Story

Napa County Resource Conservation District (Napa RCD) was established in 1945 as a special district of the State of California to help farmers and ranchers in Napa County tackle erosion and other problems on their land. A lot has changed in the past 75 years, and so have we. As natural resource issues change, we continue to evolve.

Today, we help our community achieve shared goals like climate resiliency, water security, thriving ecosystems, and environmental literacy. We do this by providing technical assistance, environmental monitoring, education, collaboration, and funding assistance on issues ranging from fisheries to forest health, soil management, water conservation and quality, and more.

We are governed by a locally-appointed Board of Directors. Our leaders are also your neighbors — they live in Napa County and understand what the local resource needs and concerns are. Our team consists of conservation scientists and outreach and administrative professionals who are skilled at developing, implementing, and monitoring many types of projects. Napa RCD works at many scales — from the individual landowner to entire watersheds.



1,513 students increased their awareness of nature, conservation actions, and leadership skills



1,450 hours of volunteer service coordinated to plant trees, remove trash, and restore wildlife habitat



\$5 raised for every \$1 in property tax provided to Napa RCD



147 land stewards received free technical assistance to improve water use efficiency, carbon sequestration and forest health on their properties

## Letter from Napa RCD

Dear Friends,

This past year we have taken some important steps to clarify our goals and grow our capacity to respond to the climate and biodiversity crises that confront us. We can all feel overwhelmed when faced with droughts, wildfires, and economic hardship, but there are short-term and long-term actions that we can take together to protect and enhance the culture, community, and ecosystems we know and love.

Napa RCD's Board of Directors passed a Climate Emergency Resolution as an acknowledgement that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and is expected to impact our whole society and biological support systems. But the intention is more than just describing the problem and communicating a position. The Resolution also outlines key actions which Napa RCD will support and undertake in response to the climate emergency.

We pride ourselves on being an honest broker that uses science-grounded, community-embedded strategies to build climate-resilient and vibrant communities, farms, and wildlands. We don't pretend to have all the answers, but we will leverage our strengths to help our whole community find solutions and take action. Looking forward, we are very excited to grow our programs and advisory services to encourage climate change mitigation in areas such as forest health, watershed sustainability, and regenerative agriculture.

Our impact is the product of many community members and partners working together to create the Napa County we want to live in and pass on to future generations. We welcome you to reach out and make a difference in your community today!

**Lucas Patzek**

Executive Director



**Bruce Barge**

President, Board of Directors



## 8 Ways Resource Conservation Districts Benefit You

Established in response to the social, environmental, and economic struggles of the Dust Bowl Era, Napa RCD, like other RCDs across America, has been working hand-in-hand with land managers for the past 75-plus years to conserve and restore natural resources and provide community benefits.

Here is some of the critical work we do as technical assistance providers to benefit our communities — and the people, animals, and plants that live here.

### 1. **Supporting our farmers, ranchers, landowners, and land stewards in taking care of our watersheds:**

Through a variety of on-the-ground projects such as water-management technical assistance, drought assistance, irrigation system assessments, road-related sediment reduction, rainwater catchment, water-quality enhancement, and more, RCDs prioritize supporting land managers as they implement science-backed solutions to care for this shared resource.

### 2. **Supporting carbon farming design and implementation:**

RCDs offer comprehensive resources, insights and expertise to help agricultural land managers plan and implement carbon farm plans, from practice-specific resources to information about funding opportunities.

### 3. **Helping communities take climate action:**

RCDs provide local forums to support land managers, K-12 and college students, and the broader community to learn about and discuss the conservation of natural resources.



### 4. **Helping to ensure clean and abundant water for people and wildlife:**

Through community activities such as river clean-ups and stream and fish assessments, RCDs help the community understand how and why we all can contribute to clean, abundant water for all creatures.

### 5. **Engaging and educating youth:**

RCDs engage youth through an array of activities, including internship or fellowship opportunities, on-farm experiences, collaborative nature-based educational programs, youth stewardship councils, connections to climate jobs, and more.

### 6. **Building wildfire resiliency:**

RCDs offer on-the-ground technical and financial assistance to those threatened or impacted by wildfire.

### 7. **Earth-friendly landscaping around our homes and schools:**

RCDs offer a variety of programs for the public, including workshops and demonstrations, garden tours, work days, and educational resources.

### 8. **Wildlife and biodiversity support:**

RCDs enable landowners to restore creeks and rivers that are home to threatened and endangered species of salmon and trout populations by improving local watershed conditions.

# Prioritizing Pollinators

## By the Numbers

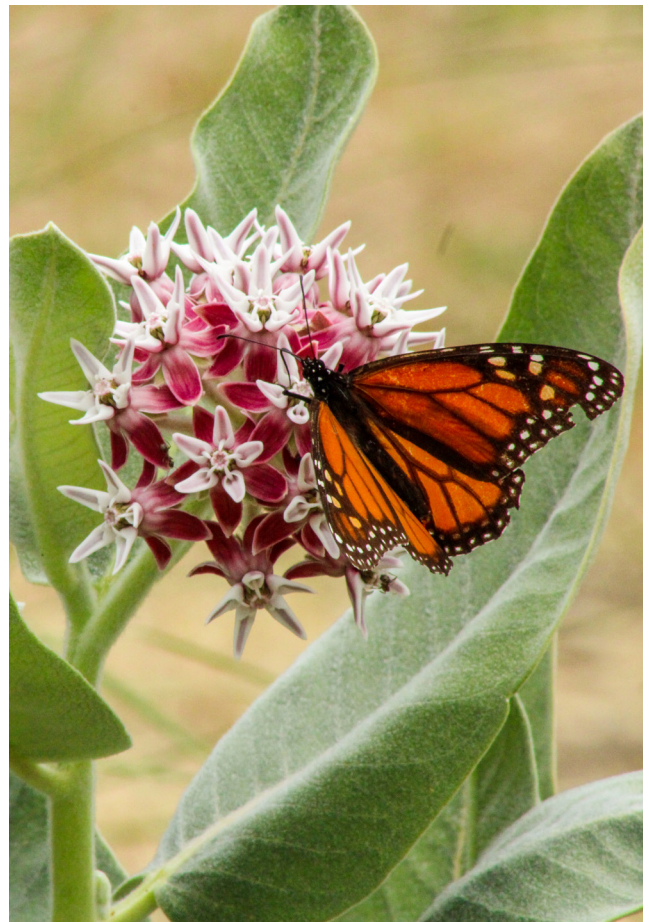
- 🌿 17 planting projects completed
- 🌿 39 land managers provided with technical guidance
- 🌿 2.5 acres of habitat planted

## Highlights

Recently, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) added migratory monarch butterflies to its threatened species list. With myriad threats to monarch survival, Napa RCD focused on working with local community members to create high-quality habitat for this species and other native pollinators.

Collaboration is key to success, as is milkweed, the monarch’s host plant. We gave away hundreds of pollinator plants to farmers and gardeners in partnership with the Western Monarch Society and the Xerces Society.

Just one season after planting, there were monarch eggs, caterpillars, and butterflies found at our project sites! This is one conservation action that yields immediate benefits to threatened wildlife.



## Looking Ahead

We are excited to partner with schools, parks, and others on pollinator plantings in urban and public spaces. We want to help more people feel connected to nature and take action in their own backyard.

We will continue coordinating the Napa Monarch Working Group to build local capacity and develop educational materials and trainings in English and Spanish to support pollinator planting efforts.



“Working with Napa RCD, we can see the success of our partnership not just in the local increase in pollinator activity and the number of native milkweed plants given away, but in the passion for pollinators that our communities have shown in such a short time after receiving and caring for their free plants.”

**Erin Arnsteen**, Co-Founder,  
Western Monarch Society

# Breaking Down Barriers

## By the Numbers

- 80 miles of fish spawning and rearing habitat reopened in the past few decades
- 29 fish passage barriers removed or in design stage of removal
- 8 fish-bearing streams impacted by artificial barriers are beginning to be remediated

## Highlights

One reason fish populations struggle across California is that artificial barriers prevent them from reaching the habitat where they breed and grow. Locally, steelhead trout and Chinook salmon populations have been the most impacted. In the Napa River watershed, barriers range in size from foot-tall concrete structures in streams to the Conn Creek Dam. Even small barriers impact fish when flows are low, a more common occurrence with our changing climate.

For this reason, Napa RCD has been focused on removing barriers in eight important fish-bearing streams in the Napa River watershed. We are collaborating with local land managers, the Flood Control District, The Refugia Project, academics, and regulatory agencies to remove the negative impacts of barriers quickly and effectively.



Before

## Looking Ahead

We aim to efficiently spend public resources for maximum restoration value, so we are using a watershed-wide and collaborative approach to determine which barriers to target for remediation, and how best to streamline design and permitting. As our understanding of the value of intermittent streams grows, we are seeking restoration opportunities to enhance access to these critical habitats as well.



After

This small concrete structure was preventing fish, like steelhead trout, from accessing one mile of beautiful upstream habitat in Cyrus Creek. With the partnership of landowners and the Flood Control District, this barrier was safely removed this year.

# The Next Generation of Stewards

## By the Numbers

- 🌱 1,513 students participated in nature-based learning in the classroom and outside
- 🌱 104 students took steps to restore forest health and riparian habitat
- 🌱 4 on-campus habitat projects completed

## Highlights

Through our education programs we aspire to deepen connections to nature, improve environmental literacy, and provide opportunities for students to take direct stewardship action. Our staff are increasingly focused on developing inclusive and equitable activities which engage folks with hands-on experiences who may not typically experience environmental science education. Environmental science presents profound opportunities for students to use a multitude of abilities to understand their surroundings.

Recently, we began partnering with Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired and their Enchanted Hills Camp to help students investigate and get better connected to Mount Veeder, the location of the camp. After working with the Camp on road and forest stewardship practices over the years, we were excited to connect with their campers, who come from across the country for a unique outdoor experience. With help from Dr. Hoby Wedler over several summers, and trial and error with campers, we have adapted several of our core activities, such as texturing soils, collecting leaf and tree samples, and measuring tree diameter and height.



## Looking Ahead

As we expand our forestry programming for youth across Napa County, we look forward to showing Enchanted Hills Camp students how to take action to care for our forests. Next summer, we plan to support campers in removing invasive species and planting trees in strategic locations.



“I had no idea how much carbon was sequestered in a tree! Knowing how to calculate how heavy a tree is, is truly incredible and I’m going to use that method to figure out how much carbon is in the trees around my school!”

**STEM Camp Student,**  
Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired



# Stewarding Healthy Forests

## By the Numbers

- 🌱 256 community members of all ages helped us enhance habitat by planting oaks
- 🌱 268 sites planted with acorns in areas previously home to oak woodland ecosystems
- 🌱 262 acres of forest treated to improve forest health

## Highlights

Napa Valley has lost 98% of its stately Valley Oaks since the 1800s. This was our motivation to begin re-oaking Napa County in 2012. Over the past decade, this countywide effort has brought together school groups, volunteers, and land managers to restore our historic oak woodlands. Each year, we coordinate acorn collection and plantings, and maintenance and monitoring of new saplings.

Over the past few years, our attention has grown to include enhancing all types of forested landscapes in Napa County. Our goal is a healthy forest-scape that provides values to all living things in our community.

In 2017, we began offering free and critical technical assistance related to fire recovery and fire resiliency, with an eye towards enhancing Napa County's forest health for future generations. We are now developing forest health plans for several key strategic properties, and helping land managers connect with financial assistance programs related to fire recovery, forest health planning, and on-the-ground projects.

## Looking Ahead

We are building a science-based approach to help community members plant the right trees and other native plants in the right places to ensure lasting benefits.

While community and youth education programming has been at the heart of our re-oaking work, we will be adding workshops and resources to give more land managers the tools they need to choose, plant, and care for trees.

“Napa RCD’s forest health program presents an opportunity to make a major impact, providing a resource for community members who want to act but don’t know where to start. Napa County is home to an unusually diverse array of forest habitats, which means we have an important responsibility to take care of our forests for future generations.”

**Tom Gamble**, Owner,  
Gamble Family Vineyards



# Associate Director Spotlight

Bryan Avila & Lauren Winczewski



### What drew you to get involved with Napa RCD?

**BA:** The effects of climate change can no longer be ignored. As a technical writer in the wine industry and father of two Gen Z boys, I see and feel its impact on multiple fronts. I stumbled

upon Napa RCD at a booth at Napa Valley Grapegrowers' Rootstock event in 2019. Napa RCD is an opportunity for me to learn about how to communicate more effectively about environmental issues into the wine industry, apply better practices at home and hopefully inspire my kids to get involved at a younger age than I did.

**LW:** After moving to California to pursue graduate studies, I developed a passion for studying trees in my spare time. I initially learned of Napa RCD when a friend observed its involvement in a project dedicated to planting and maintaining oak saplings. I had never heard of Resource Conservation Districts, so it was inspiring to me to learn that there is a local institution that provides resources and technical education on matters pertaining to the environment and conservation. As an educator, I feel extremely grateful for the work and the expertise of the Napa RCD staff and directors.

### What excites you about being a Napa RCD Associate Director?

**BA:** I teach, freelance, and am starting up a new business. Being an Associate Director allows me to invest time and energy into my community with the flexibility that I need to participate with my schedule. I enjoy contributing my time and talents to the Napa RCD staff and fellow board members and learn heaps more in return. It's a special group of people, committed to making Napa County a cleaner, greener place.



**LW:** The potential for a stronger relationship between Napa RCD and Napa Valley College is especially exciting, given that these are two important institutions in our community that could inspire more people to pursue careers in environmental science and

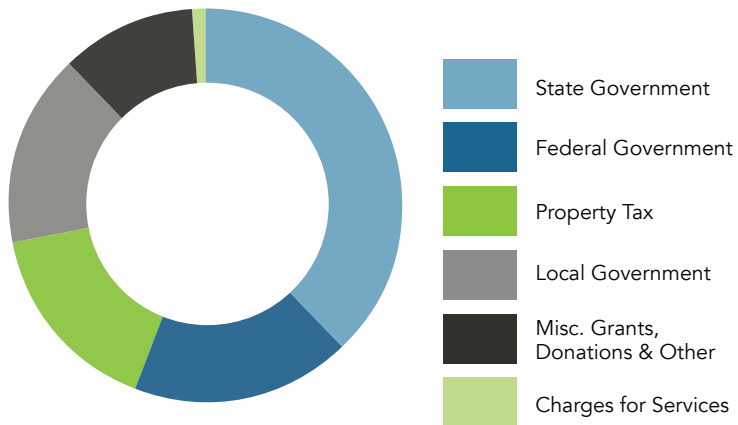
conservation. And although I am newer in the position, I am especially excited about the opportunity to meet people who are doing important work in this space. It is inspiring to meet people who are contributing to the betterment of the environment in these ways, and I am eager to support Napa RCD's mission from my corner of the community as best I can.

**Associate Directors are volunteer advisors to the governing Board of Directors and staff. They are an essential source of expertise, leadership, and relationships and help Napa RCD fulfill its mission.**

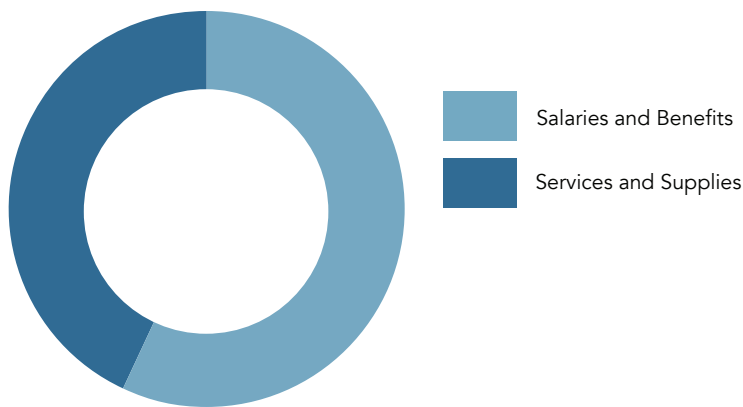


# Fiscal Year Financials

Napa RCD is a special district of the State of California and, as a government entity, is an exempt organization under the provision of IRC §115. The financial data for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, are presented below.



Revenues		
State Government	\$979,810	38%
Federal Government	\$472,240	18%
Property Tax	\$423,437	16%
Local Government	\$406,170	16%
Misc. Grants, Donations & Other	\$278,137	11%
Charges for Services	\$13,113	1%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$2,572,907</b>	



Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	\$1,388,170	57%
Services and Supplies	\$1,058,129	43%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,446,299</b>	

## Thank you to the 120 individuals and businesses who donated this year!

With your support we help wildlife and farms thrive, ensure clean and reliable water, and combat climate change.

## Please donate your money, time, or expertise.

Contributions to Napa RCD may be tax deductible under federal law, including gifts, services, property, cash, stocks, and securities.



# Acknowledgments

We are grateful for all of the partners in conservation with whom we work, including community members, local, state, and federal agencies, community organizations, foundations, and more. Our work is a team effort, and we are honored to work together to help the land, water, soil, and wildlife of Napa County thrive.

## Board of Directors

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**Rainer Hoenicke**, Vice President  
**Ashley Anderson Bennett**  
**Jon Kanagy**  
**Jim Lincoln**  
**Bill Pramuk**  
**Gretchen Stranzl McCann**

## Associate Directors

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**Dennis Bowker**  
**Pam Harter**  
**John Henshaw**  
**Jeri Hoover**  
**Zen Hunter-Ishikawa**  
**Joseph Nordlinger**  
**Matt Reid**  
**Tyler Varian**  
**Pierre Washington**  
**Lauren Winczewski**  
**Margaret Woodbury**  
**Bob Zlomke**

## Staff

**Lucas Patzek, PhD**, Executive Director  
**Danielle Ashton**, Coordinator  
**Amanda Benton**, Forestry Program Manager  
**Bill Birmingham**, Conservation Project Manager  
**Paul Blank**, Environmental Scientist III  
**Ali Blodorn**, Principal Program Manager, Forestry  
**Miguel Garcia**, Sustainable Agriculture Program Manager  
**Frances Knapczyk**, Program Director  
**Jonathan Koehler**, Senior Biologist  
**Ashley Kvittek**, Community Engagement Project Manager  
**Anna Mattinson**, Office Manager  
**Eric McKee**, Education Project Manager  
**Martin Perales, PhD**, Environmental Scientist II  
**Ruby Stahel**, Conservation Project Manager

## USDA-NRCS Staff

**Evelyn Denzin**, District Conservationist  
**Chip Bouril**, Soil Conservationist  
**Frank Bradley**, Biologist  
**Liz Colby, PE**, Agricultural Engineer  
**Erika Valek**, Soil Conservationist

## Photo Credits

**Eric Bastidas**  
**Andrew Lincoln**  
**Monarch Joint Venture**  
**Napa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District**  
**Napa RCD**

## Connect with Us



### Board of Directors Meetings

Second Thursday of every month  
8:00 AM at the NVTA, 625 Burnell St., Napa  
(unless otherwise posted)  
Meetings are open to the public  
Agendas and minutes can be found online

### Contact Information





#### Napa RCD Office

1303 Jefferson St., Suite 500B  
Napa, CA 94559  
707-690-3110  
NapaRCD.org

#### Natural Resources Conservation Service Napa Office

1303 Jefferson St., Suite 500B  
Napa, CA 94559  
707-252-4189  
NRCS.USDA.org

### Follow Us on Social Media

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