

Enhancing Wildlife Habitat and Environmental Education at the St. Helena Community Forest

*Native Habitat Restoration, Bird Conservation,
Pollinator Habitat, and Community Stewardship*

Grant Proposal Submitted to
Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission

Applicant	Sustainable St. Helena an Environmental Alliance
Mailing Address	P.O. Box 402, St. Helena, CA 94574
Project Location	St. Helena Community Forest, 1 Chaix Lane, St. Helena, CA 94574
Federal Tax ID	86-3594916
California Organization No.	4683332
501(c)(3) Status	Tax-exempt public charity; incorporated in 2021
Primary Contact	Paul Asmuth, Treasurer 707-738-0896 pasmuth.usaows@comcast.net
Amount Requested	\$9,030

Website: www.sustainablestheleena.org



July 22, 2026

Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission

Re: Wildlife Conservation Commission Grant Application - St. Helena Community Forest

Dear Commissioners,

Sustainable St. Helena an Environmental Alliance, respectfully requests \$9,030 to expand wildlife habitat and environmental education at the St. Helena Community Forest. The proposed project combines native habitat restoration, bird and bat habitat improvements, pollinator enhancement, student field learning, citizen science, and community stewardship.

The Community Forest is an established conservation project with a strong record of measurable success. Since its creation in 2011, more than 2,500 trees have been established. In June 2025, approximately 40 volunteers planted more than 160 native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants representing 19 California native species. Existing nesting structures have also performed exceptionally well: during the most recent breeding season, 12 of 13 installed structures were occupied, including bluebird boxes used by Western Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, an American Kestrel box, and a Barn Owl box that fledged three owlets.

The requested funds will support approximately \$3,000 in native plants, \$1,000 in drip-irrigation materials, \$4,530 in bird boxes, bat houses, raptor perches, poles, and hardware, and \$500 in environmental education supplies. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service recommends fall planting for the native species proposed, and the project timeline has been structured accordingly.

The project directly advances California Fish and Game Code Section 13103(e), improvement of fish and wildlife habitat, and Section 13103(a), public education relating to fish and wildlife conservation. It will also leverage substantial in-kind support from the City of St. Helena, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Napa County Resource Conservation District, Silverado Farming, Napa-Solano Audubon Society, local schools, and community volunteers.

Thank you for considering this request and for the Commission's continued commitment to protecting Napa County's wildlife resources.

Sincerely,


Paul Asmuth
Treasurer

Sustainable St. Helena an Environmental Alliance

Project at a Glance

Project purpose. Expand native wildlife habitat and environmental education through fall planting of diverse native vegetation, installation of bird and bat habitat structures, pollinator enhancement, student learning, citizen science, and volunteer stewardship.

Project Indicator	Current or Proposed Scale
Community Forest	16-acre City-owned site
Trees established	2,500+
Bird species documented	35+
Native plants installed in June 2025	160+ plants representing 19 native species
Volunteer participation	Approximately 40 volunteers at the 2025 planting
Student participation	Approximately 100 students annually through 3-5 field visits
Existing nesting structures	10 bluebird boxes, 2 American Kestrel boxes, 1 Barn Owl box
Recent nesting success	12 of 13 structures occupied; 3 Barn Owl owlets fledged
Grant request	\$9,030

Fish and Game Code Alignment

California Fish and Game Code Section 13103(e): improvement of fish and wildlife habitat through native vegetation, irrigation for habitat establishment, bird nesting boxes, bat houses, and raptor perches.

California Fish and Game Code Section 13103(a): supervised public education relating to wildlife conservation through student field investigations, bird monitoring, owl pellet studies, nature journaling, pollinator education, forest ecology, and citizen science.



Executive Summary

The St. Helena Community Forest is a living demonstration of ecological restoration in a vineyard-dominated landscape. Located adjacent to the Napa River, the 16-acre City-owned property has been transformed through long-term planting, habitat improvement, volunteer stewardship, and environmental education into a growing refuge for birds, pollinators, bats, and other wildlife.

Native plant diversity is especially important in an extensive vineyard environment. Vineyards are central to Napa County's economy and cultural identity, but they are managed for agricultural production rather than native biodiversity. The Community Forest complements the surrounding landscape by restoring a diverse mosaic of native oaks, shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants that provide food, nesting sites, shelter, and seasonal resources for wildlife. As the forest matures, it will function increasingly as an ecological stepping stone along the Napa River corridor.

Plant diversity supports wildlife diversity. Native plants sustain native insects, including specialist bees, butterflies, moths, and other pollinators. Those insects are essential food for Western Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, American Kestrels, and many other birds documented at the site. Increasing botanical diversity therefore strengthens the entire food web, from soil organisms and pollinators to songbirds, raptors, bats, and mammals.

Sustainable St. Helena requests \$9,030 to install additional native vegetation, expand drip irrigation, add bird boxes, bat houses, and raptor perches, and provide educational supplies. The project will be implemented with technical guidance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, which recommends fall planting for optimal establishment of the proposed native species.

The Community Forest already serves as an outdoor classroom. In partnership with the Napa County Resource Conservation District and local schools, students have participated in native planting, forest ecology, owl pellet collection and dissection, bird observation, nature journaling, pollinator education, carbon-cycle instruction, and habitat restoration. The grant will expand these activities and support approximately 100 students through three to five field experiences during the project period.

1. Organizational Description

Sustainable St. Helena an Environmental Alliance is a California nonprofit corporation incorporated in 2021 and recognized as a tax-exempt organization under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). Its Federal Tax Identification Number is 86-3594916, and its California Organization Number is 4683332.

The organization's mission is: Working to conserve, preserve, and protect our natural resources and habitats. Reversing environmental degradation through actionable climate solutions and education. Collaborating with government, industry, organizations, and individuals to protect the health and future of our community and the natural environment.

Sustainable St. Helena works collaboratively with local government, conservation organizations, educational institutions, agricultural partners, and volunteers. Its programs emphasize habitat restoration, climate resilience, environmental education, community stewardship, and long-term management of natural resources.

Board of Directors

Madeline Chandler - President
Leslie Stanton - Vice President
Paul Asmuth - Treasurer
Elaine DeMan - Board Member
Carolyn Sanders - Board Member

Applicant and Contact Information

Organization	Sustainable St. Helena an Environmental Alliance
Mailing Address	P.O. Box 402, St. Helena, CA 94574
Project Address	1 Chaix Lane, St. Helena, CA 94574
Website	www.sustainablestheleena.org
Contact	Paul Asmuth, Treasurer
Phone	707-738-0896
Email	pasmuth.usaows@comcast.net

Sustainable St. Helena has not previously received Napa County Fish and Game Fine Money funding for this project.

2. Statement of Need

Napa County supports a rich diversity of resident and migratory wildlife. Urban development, intensive agriculture, drought, habitat fragmentation, and climate change increase the importance of small but connected habitat areas that provide food, cover, breeding sites, and movement corridors.

The St. Helena Community Forest occupies a strategic location near the Napa River within an extensive vineyard environment. The site provides a refuge of native plant diversity and habitat structure in a landscape where large areas are necessarily managed for agricultural production. Diverse native habitat at the Community Forest complements neighboring vineyards by supporting wildlife while respecting agricultural priorities.

The native plant palette has been developed with technical guidance from Chip Bouril, District Conservationist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Species were selected to maximize bird, pollinator, and habitat benefits while avoiding plants identified as potential hosts associated with Pierce's Disease because of the site's proximity to Napa Valley vineyards.

The Community Forest already supports more than 35 documented bird species, including waterbirds, raptors, woodpeckers, owls, songbirds, and seasonal migrants. Existing bluebird, kestrel, and Barn Owl boxes have demonstrated that suitable structures are quickly used when secure nesting habitat is provided.

Continued investment is needed to expand the diversity and density of native vegetation, increase nesting and roosting opportunities, strengthen pollinator resources, maintain plant establishment through efficient irrigation, and involve students and volunteers in long-term stewardship.

3. Project Description

Native Habitat Restoration

The project will install approximately 160 additional native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants. Species will be similar to those successfully planted in June 2025, including locally appropriate oaks, Toyon, Coffeeberry, Ceanothus, California Buckwheat, Hummingbird Sage, Snowberry, Pacific Ninebark, Deer Grass, Yarrow, and other native plants selected for wildlife and pollinator value.

Following NRCS guidance, planting will occur in fall rather than winter to take advantage of cooler temperatures and seasonal rainfall, thereby improving establishment and reducing irrigation demand. All new plantings will be connected to drip irrigation.

Bird, Bat, and Raptor Habitat

Grant funds will purchase and install additional Western Bluebird boxes, songbird nesting boxes, American Kestrel boxes, Barn Owl boxes, bat houses, raptor perches, poles, and hardware. Structure placement will reflect species-specific habitat needs, existing vegetation, access for monitoring, and avoidance of unnecessary disturbance.

Environmental Education and Citizen Science

The Community Forest will continue serving as an outdoor classroom. Students will participate in bird identification, nest-box monitoring, habitat assessment, nature journaling, owl pellet investigations, pollinator studies, forest ecology, carbon-cycle lessons, and restoration activities. The project anticipates serving approximately 100 students through three to five field experiences.

Community Stewardship

Approximately 40 volunteers are expected to participate in planting and stewardship. Silverado Farming will pre-dig planting holes where appropriate to improve safety and efficiency. Volunteers will sign the City of St. Helena liability waiver and, when applicable, the Napa County RCD waiver. Sustainable St. Helena carries Directors and Officers insurance and will obtain general liability insurance for grant-funded volunteer events if required.

4. Objectives and Anticipated Results

- Install approximately 160 native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants selected for wildlife and pollinator value.
- Extend drip irrigation to support establishment and long-term survival.
- Install additional bird nesting boxes, bat houses, and raptor perches.
- Increase food, shelter, nesting, roosting, and hunting opportunities for wildlife.
- Engage approximately 100 students through three to five field experiences.
- Engage approximately 40 volunteers in restoration and stewardship.
- Document plant survival, structure installation, nest occupancy, fledging success when observable, wildlife use, student participation, and volunteer participation.

5. Project Methods

- Finalize the native plant list in consultation with NRCS and purchase locally appropriate plant material.
- Prepare planting sites and irrigation extensions in early fall.
- Conduct a supervised fall volunteer planting event consistent with NRCS recommendations.
- Install bird boxes, bat houses, and raptor perches in suitable locations during late fall.
- Coordinate school visits with the Napa County RCD and participating educators.
- Monitor plant establishment and wildlife use throughout the project period.
- Maintain records for the Commission's final report, including expenses, participation, photographs, installation counts, and observed outcomes.

6. Project Partners

Partner	Role
City of St. Helena	Owns the Community Forest property and supports access, stewardship, irrigation infrastructure, and recycled water.
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	Provides technical guidance on native species selection, pollinator value, agricultural compatibility, Pierce's Disease considerations, and fall planting.
Napa County Resource Conservation District	Supports student field education, environmental curriculum, volunteer coordination, and habitat stewardship.
Silverado Farming	Provides practical site support, including pre-digging planting holes to improve volunteer safety and efficiency.
Napa-Solano Audubon Society	Provides bird-conservation expertise and supports wildlife observation and monitoring.
Local Schools	Participate in supervised field experiences in ecology, habitat restoration, birds, pollinators, and citizen science.

7. Evaluation

Area	Performance Measures
Habitat restoration	Number of native plants installed; survival during establishment; irrigation completed; expansion of native habitat.
Wildlife habitat	Number and type of structures installed; nest-box occupancy; fledging success where observable; bird and wildlife observations.
Education	Number of students; number of field visits; activities completed; participation in citizen science and habitat monitoring.
Community stewardship	Number of volunteers; volunteer hours where recorded; completion of planting and maintenance activities.

Results will be summarized in the final report submitted to the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission.

8. Project Timeline

Time Period	Activity
Early Fall 2026	Finalize species list; purchase native plants, irrigation materials, habitat structures, and educational supplies.
Fall 2026	Prepare sites, extend drip irrigation, and conduct a volunteer native planting event in accordance with NRCS recommendations.
Late Fall 2026	Install bird boxes, bat houses, raptor perches, poles, and hardware.
Winter 2026-2027	Monitor establishment, inspect irrigation, and maintain new plantings.
Spring 2027	Conduct student field programs, bird observations, nest monitoring, pollinator education, and citizen science.
Summer 2027	Evaluate outcomes, document nesting and plant

establishment, compile expenditures, and submit final report.

9. Budget and Expenditure Detail

Budget Item	Purpose	Amount
Native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants	Approximately 160 native plants selected for wildlife, pollinator, and ecological value.	\$3,000
Drip irrigation materials	Tubing, fittings, emitters, connectors, and related materials for establishment.	\$1,000
Bird boxes, bat houses, raptor perches, poles, and hardware	Habitat structures and installation materials based on the Clark's Sustainable Systems quote.	\$4,530
Educational supplies	Field notebooks, clipboards, identification materials, binocular-related supplies, and monitoring materials.	\$500
TOTAL REQUEST		\$9,030

10. Other Funding Sources and Matching Contributions

- No cash match is requested. The project is substantially leveraged by in-kind contributions and existing infrastructure.
- City of St. Helena: land ownership, recycled irrigation water, access, and existing irrigation infrastructure.
- Sustainable St. Helena: project management, coordination, administration, volunteer leadership, monitoring, and long-term stewardship.
- USDA NRCS: technical guidance regarding plant selection, pollinator habitat, agricultural compatibility, and planting timing.
- Napa County RCD: educational collaboration, field instruction, volunteer coordination, and waiver procedures when applicable.
- Silverado Farming: site preparation and pre-digging assistance.
- Napa-Solano Audubon Society and community volunteers: bird expertise, observation, stewardship, and labor.

11. Public Access and Community Benefit

The St. Helena Community Forest is a City-owned community conservation site used for organized volunteer activities, educational field experiences, wildlife observation, and community stewardship. Grant-funded habitat improvements will benefit the public through supervised educational visits, volunteer restoration events, interpretation of wildlife habitat, and continued opportunities to observe and learn about native plants and wildlife. Access and activities will remain subject to City requirements, site conditions, and appropriate supervision.

12. California Fish and Game Code Section 13103 Compliance

Section 13103(e) - Improvement of Fish and Wildlife Habitat

The project will improve wildlife habitat by increasing native plant diversity and structural complexity; expanding food resources for insects, pollinators, birds, and mammals; providing nesting and roosting structures; creating raptor hunting perches; and supporting plant establishment through efficient drip irrigation.

Section 13103(a) - Public Education Relating to Fish and Wildlife Conservation

The project will provide supervised public and student education through wildlife observation, bird identification, nest monitoring, owl pellet investigation, nature journaling, pollinator ecology, forest ecology, carbon-cycle instruction, restoration, and citizen science.

13. Why This Project Matters

Healthy wildlife populations depend on healthy, diverse habitats, and healthy habitats depend on communities willing to restore and care for them. The St. Helena Community Forest demonstrates what can be accomplished when science, education, agriculture, local government, and volunteer stewardship work together.

Within a vineyard-dominated landscape, the Community Forest restores ecological complexity. Every native tree, shrub, grass, and flowering plant contributes food, cover, nesting habitat, and resilience. Every nesting structure adds a breeding opportunity. Every student field experience builds ecological understanding. Every volunteer event strengthens community ownership of conservation.

14. Conclusion

For a modest investment of \$9,030, the Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission can build upon an established project with documented habitat, wildlife, educational, and community outcomes. The proposed work directly advances the Commission's statutory purposes, leverages substantial in-kind support, follows NRCS technical recommendations, and will provide benefits that increase as the Community Forest matures.

Sustainable St. Helena respectfully requests favorable consideration of this proposal.

Certification and Signature

I certify that the information presented in this proposal is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that grant funds, if awarded, will be used for the purposes described.



Paul Asmuth, Treasurer

Sustainable St. Helena an Environmental Alliance

Date: 7/22/24

Clark's Sustainable Systems

P.O. Box 15
St. Helena, CA 94574

Quote

Date	Quote #
7/8/2026	248

Name / Address
Paul Asmuth 141 Knoll Circle St. Helena, CA 94574

Rep	Project
THC	

Description	Qty	Total
Chateaux Style Blue Bird Box	12	780.00
5' EMT pole for perimeter mounting	12	120.00
Any field work provided. Labor involved in digging holes and setting poles.	12	300.00
Barn Owl Box	2	800.00
12' Steel pole w/ welded plate set in concrete	2	300.00
American Kestrel Box	2	300.00
American kestrel pole - 18' 1 1/2" pole w/ 2" galv. receiving pole & concrete.	2	370.00
Four Chamber Bat House	2	300.00
Bat house pole 18 feet w/ ground mount, set in concrete	2	370.00
Song Bird Box w/ slanted roof / tree mount	8	520.00
Raptor Perch/ 1 1/2" black pipe w/2" galv. receiving pipe & concrete.	2	370.00
Paul: I envision placing boxes on West side of property this time to somewhat mirror what we have up already. The wood duck boxes would be placed along river attached to two different tree locations. The song bird boxes would be placed in the older forest on the trees about 10 feet off the ground. These provide nesting habitat for nuthatches, titmouse, chickadees, wrens, etc. The raptor perches would be placed out in the open areas to maximize daytime raptor activity for hunting ground squirrels and other rodents. Merchandise		0.00
I stand behind all my work and guarantee the workmanship.		Total \$4,530.00

July 31, 2026

Pam Arifian

Planner III – Conservation

Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services

1195 Third Street, Suite 210

Napa, CA 94559

**Re: Letter of Support for Sustainable St. Helena Environmental Alliance Wildlife
Conservation Commission Grant Proposal**

Dear Ms. Arifian:

On behalf of St. Helena Montessori School, I am pleased to offer our strong support for the Sustainable St. Helena Environmental Alliance's proposal, **"Enhancing Wildlife Habitat and Environmental Education at the St. Helena Community Forest."**

As Director of the Adolescent Program, I believe this project represents an exceptional educational opportunity that closely aligns with our Montessori philosophy and our curriculum emphasizing environmental stewardship, ecological literacy, and experiential learning. Our students regularly engage in the study of native flora and fauna, ecosystem relationships, biodiversity, and the responsibility we all share in caring for the natural world. The St. Helena Community Forest provides an outstanding living classroom where these concepts can be experienced firsthand.

The proposed project's educational components—including native habitat restoration, wildlife monitoring, bird and pollinator observations, nature journaling, citizen science, and hands-on conservation work will offer meaningful learning experiences that extend well beyond the traditional classroom. Students participating in these activities will gain practical knowledge of California's native ecosystems while developing scientific observation skills, environmental awareness, and a lifelong ethic of stewardship.

We are especially supportive of the proposal's commitment to engaging students directly in planting native species, monitoring habitat improvements, documenting

school + farm

wildlife use, and learning how healthy ecosystems support both biodiversity and resilient communities. These experiences exemplify Montessori education, where authentic work in nature fosters independence, curiosity, collaboration, and respect for the interconnectedness of all living things.

The educational objectives described in the grant proposal strongly support California Fish and Game Code Section 13103(a) by providing supervised public education related to wildlife conservation and habitat restoration. They also complement the habitat enhancement goals identified under Section 13103(e), creating a model in which conservation and education reinforce one another.

We appreciate Sustainable St. Helena Environmental Alliance's leadership in creating opportunities for students to become active participants in restoring and caring for our local environment. We look forward to continuing opportunities for collaboration that connect classroom learning with meaningful community conservation efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal. St. Helena Montessori School is proud to support this grant application and the educational benefits it will provide to our students and the broader Napa Valley community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexander Heil". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "H".

Alexander Heil

Adolescent Program Director
St. Helena Montessori School