# City of St. Helena
# Parks & Recreation Commission
# Regular Meeting
# Monday, December 8, 2025 @ 5:30 PM
# Carnegie Building - Second Floor
# 1360 Oak Avenue

**PLEASE NOTE: Any person who wishes to speak regarding an item on the agenda or make a comment under the "Oral Communication" portion of the agenda may do so, but please observe the time limit of four minutes.**

**Members of the public or other parties are welcome to email their comments to the Staff Liaison, Ashley Sylvester at asylvester@cityofsthelena.gov. All public comments must be received three hours prior to the meeting. All other public comments received after the deadline will be attached to the item the next business day or soon thereafter. Public comments will not be read out loud but will be publicly available and attached to the online agenda.**

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1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL
   Commission Chair: Doug Boeschen
   Vice Chair: John Thompson
   Members: Julie Jenanyan, Denise Nelson, Stephanie Smithers
   Staff Liaison: Ashley Sylvester, Interim Community Services Director

3. PUBLIC FORUM:
   An opportunity for the public to directly address the Commission on items of interest to the public that are not listed on the agenda. Any person addressing the Commission should provide his or her name and address, and limit comments to four minutes. Because of restrictions imposed by **the Brown Act, the Commission may not engage in substantive discussion, nor take action on matters not described on the agenda.**

4. REPORTS BY STAFF AND COMMISSION
   Reports by staff and/or commission on items of general interest. Brief questions for clarification may be posed and answered, and Commission may request that items be placed on a future agenda. Except under certain circumstances, **the Brown Act prohibits any other discussion or action by the Parks and Recreation Commission.**

   4.1.
   - Park Maintenance Update
   - Recreation Services Update

   4.2. Commissioner Updates

5. CONSENT CALENDAR:
   Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission or the public may ask that any items be considered individually for purposes of considering alternative action, for extended discussion, or for public comment. Unless that is done, on motion may be used to adopt all recommendation actions.

5.1. Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes of November 17, 2025 3 - 5

Park and Recreation Commission Minutes for November 17, 2025

6. SCHEDULED MATTERS:

6.1. Napa Valley Community Forest of St. Helena Presentation 7 - 17

NVCF_Parks and Rec
Public Comment_M. Wilson
Public Comment_L. Harrison

6.2. St. Helena Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan BluePoint Planning Presentation
Prepared By: Mara Strickler, City Librarian

6.3. **THIS ITEM WILL BE MOVED TO THE JANUARY 2026 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**
Signorelli Tree Selection Discussion
Prepared By: Carlos Uribe, Assistant Public Works Operations Manager

6.4. Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Updates 19 - 21

PRC 2025-26 Goals and Subcommittees
PRC 2025-2026 Park Assignments

7. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular Parks and Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2026 at 5:30 pm, Carnegie Building, 1360 Oak Avenue.

This agenda was posted at City Hall, 1088 College Ave and 1360 Oak Avenue on December 5, 2025.

/s/ Ashley Sylvester
Ashley Sylvester, Interim Community Services Director

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in the meeting, please contact City Hall at (707) 967-2792. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting (28 CFR35.102-35.104 ADA Title II). However, City staff will attempt to assist at any time with accessibility.

# City of St. Helena
# Parks & Recreation Commission
# Regular Meeting
# Monday, November 17, 2025 @ 5:30 PM
# Carnegie Building - Second Floor
# 1360 Oak Avenue

- Call to Order- 5:32pm
- Roll Call
    - Chair: Doug Boeschen
    - Vice Chair: John Thompson
    - Members: Stephanie Smithers, Julie Jenanyan, Denise Nelson
    - Staff Liaison: Interim Recreation Director Ashley Sylvester
        - Following Roll Call there was a motion from staff to move item 6.1 to present before items 4.1 and 4.2 on the Agenda. Additionally move 5.1 immediately following the Public Forum.
            - Motion to approve- Jenanyan, Second- Boeschen
                - Approved: Unanimous

- Public Forum-
    - Public Comment
        - None
- Reports by Staff and Commission
    - Reports would be for 4.1 and 4.2 at the next Commission meeting on December 8th.

  4.1 City Staff
    - Park Maintenance Update
    - Recreation Services Update

  4.2 Commissioner Updates

- Consent Calendar

  5.1 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2025
    - Motion to approve: Thompson; Second: Smithers
        - Approved: Unanimous

- Scheduled Matters

  6.1 St. Helena Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan BluePoint Planning Presentation and Update
    - Interim Director Sylvester introduced the item and the BluePoint planning team along with a brief introduction of the item.
    - Consultants from bluepoint gave presentations on current progress and steps on the Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.

- Commissioners asked questions regarding the number of residents current and projected with potential housing coming up in St. Helena would change any metrics on the number of parks and open spaces that are currently listed.
- Director Sylvester mentioned that this master plan will work alongside other plans or potential housing projects coming up to ensure we are keeping on goal with open spaces as referenced in the master plan and would work alongside other departments to communicate on these projects.
- Commissioners expressed disappointment on where the plan was at during the presentation. Commissioners would like to see what we are going to accomplish with results from this plan.
- Staff expressed that this presentation was to show the progress so far which was mainly collecting information from staff, outreach, and conducting and pulling together the needs assessment.
- Commissioners asked staff and bluepoint to consolidate the presentation that will go to council in December to get to the progress happening and expectations for the final draft preparation.
- Smithers asked questions on the Park opportunities and clarification on areas the open spaces are located. Additionally with a top priority of making these trails already used by residents become formal trails in the St. Helena.
- Commissioners asked if bluepoint can come back prior to council to review the revised presentation.
- Staff expressed the master plan is composed of a lot of data as well as what could be done in the future. It is the staff's job to determine the priorities of the projects and funding opportunities for it.
- Commissioners gave suggestions for staff to give back to Bluepoint regarding their council presentation.

6.2 Grapevine Updates and Data

- Commissioners moved to make a motion to move 6.2 to a later meeting due to time of meeting.
    - Motion to approve: Thompson; Second: Nelson
    - Approved: Unanimous

6.3 2025 Harvest Festival Flashvote Results

- Director Sylvester gave an update on the public survey that went out to the community regarding the Harvest Festival.
- Commission gave staff kudos on a successful Harvest festival with comments that reflected the survey results
- The PRC gave a recommendation for council to move the location for the future Harvest Festival to Adams and Library Ln due to the responses and successful comments the community gave.

6.4 Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Updates

- Commissioners asked for the December commission meeting to be moved to Decem:ber 8th.

- Adjournment: 8:01pm

APPROVED:

_____

Doug Boeschen, Commission Chair

ATTEST:

_____

Ashley Sylvester, Interim Community Service Director

# The Napa Valley Community Forest of St. Helena

## Frequently Asked Questions

St. Helena Parks & Recreation Committee
December 8, 2025

### Overview

In 2011, Mayor Dell Britton authorized the planting of an experimental timber forest of coast redwood trees on unused City of St. Helena land in the County, south of the wastewater treatment facilities off Chaix Road. Over the past fourteen years, this work has grown into the Napa Valley Community Forest—an ecological, educational, and community resource managed by Sustainable St. Helena. The Community Forest currently hosts 2,000 coast redwoods, 80 dawn redwoods, and 200 valley and coast live oak trees.

Sustainable St. Helena now requests:

1. Approval to expand the forest from 16 to 37 acres on fallow, non-developable City-owned floodway land; and
2. Authorization of a Conservation Easement (CE) with the Land Trust of Napa County, permanently protecting the Community Forest acreage.

See Appendix A for maps showing the current 16-acre forest and Appendix B for the proposed 37-acre expansion.

### Why a Conservation Easement Is Needed Now

- Permanently protects the land from future development.
- Formalizes fourteen years of City-supported, community-funded work.
- Provides long-term ecological, recreational, educational, and climate benefits.
- Ensures land remains dedicated to habitat restoration and community use.
- Creates eligibility for regional and state climate funding.
- Recent upgrades at the wastewater treatment facility have reduced the City's reliance on the southern portion of the land.

## Conservation Easement 101

- The City retains full ownership of the land.
- A legal agreement between a property owner and the proposed holder that restricts and/or prohibits specific development rights.
- Perpetual in duration, under California Civil Code 815.
- Crafted specific to the property, based on current and planned uses.
- Preserves the conservation intent of the property owner in the face of external pressures or threats.
- Annual monitoring by CE holder to ensure compliance.
- Land Trust of Napa County current portfolio of 161 conservation easements, including 2 on City of St. Helena property and 16 other government-owned properties.

## Financial Commitment and Community Investment

Sustainable St. Helena has raised over $200,000 to plant, irrigate, and manage the existing forest—at no cost to the City. This demonstrates strong local support, stewardship capacity, and long-term investment.

Sustainable St. Helena plans to continue fundraising efforts for long-term stewardship and management of the Community Forest, including monitoring costs for the conservation easement. The only financial costs to the City for the conservation easement include: staff/counsel review of negotiation documents; and staff time to confer access for annual Land Trust monitoring visits.

## How the Community Forest Supports the Napa County Regional Climate Action Plan (RCAAP)

The draft Napa County RCAAP requires each municipality to increase tree canopy above 2019 levels. The Napa Valley Community Forest is the largest single contributor to St. Helena's canopy growth:

- Over 2,000 new trees planted since 2019.
- An additional 4,000 trees possible with the 37-acre expansion.
- Supports the Urban Forestry & Nature-Based Carbon Sequestration strategies outlined in the RCAAP.

## Alignment with the St. Helena Master Walking Path Plan

The forest lies along the alignment of the City's Master Walking Path Plan.

- Creates a continuous public walking and nature trail.
- Connects to the proposed Napa River Trail.
- Provides community recreation, wellness, and open space benefits.

## Accomplishments to Date

- 16 acres planted with over 2,500 trees including redwoods, oaks, ash, and buckeyes.
- 160 additional trees and shrubs planted in partnership with NRCS and Napa RCD.
- Drip irrigation installed to prevent effluent drift.
- Maintenance supported by Silverado Farming and community volunteers.
- Forestry oversight provided by three Registered Professional Foresters.

## Environmental Benefits

The Napa Valley Community Forest provides significant environmental benefits that expand meaningfully with the proposed 37-acre expansion:

- Carbon sequestration: approximately 250 tons of $CO_2$ removed annually at maturity.
- Long-term carbon storage exceeding 4,410 tons across the expanded forest.
- Floodway enhancement: improved water infiltration, lower runoff velocity, and strengthened Napa River corridor function.
- Biodiversity: enhanced habitat for birds, pollinators, and native species—including occasional sandhill cranes and egrets.
- Air quality and heat-island mitigation: shade canopy lowers temperatures and improves local air quality.
- Soil improvement: redwood and oak litter builds organic matter and improves soil structure.

The expanded forest strengthens climate resilience, improves watershed health, and supports long-term ecological stability within the Napa River system.

## Why Redwoods?

- Ideal soil and climate conditions.
- Strong health observed among redwoods planted over 30 years ago.
- High fire and climate resilience.
- Excellent carbon sequestration capacity.
- Regenerate naturally after harvest; no replanting required.
- Tolerant of treated effluent in well-drained soils.
- Native to Napa County.

## Carbon Sequestration Benefits

A sustainably managed redwood forest with an average age of 20 years stores approximately 210 tons of carbon per acre. The 21-acre expansion would provide:

- 4,410 tons of carbon stored in a steady state.
- Approximately 250 tons of $CO_2$ removed annually once fully established.

## Challenges

- Seedling stress due to heat, frost, wildlife, and competition.
- Treated effluent availability is limited to 3 times per week.
- Some native species are salt intolerant, but redwoods and oaks perform well.

## Tree Spacing and Harvest Plan

- 200 trees planted per acre.
- Thinned to 100 trees per acre after 15–20 years.
- Selective harvest of ~20% every 5 years beginning in year 20.
- Creates a sustainable multi-aged forest.

## Timber Revenue Sharing

Timber harvested from the forest will be selectively removed under Registered Professional Forester supervision. Net revenues will be shared 50/50 between the City and Sustainable St. Helena after the nonprofit recovers its direct capital costs.

## Project Leadership

Project Director Paul Asmuth holds a Master of Science in Forestry and oversees operations alongside three Registered Professional Foresters:

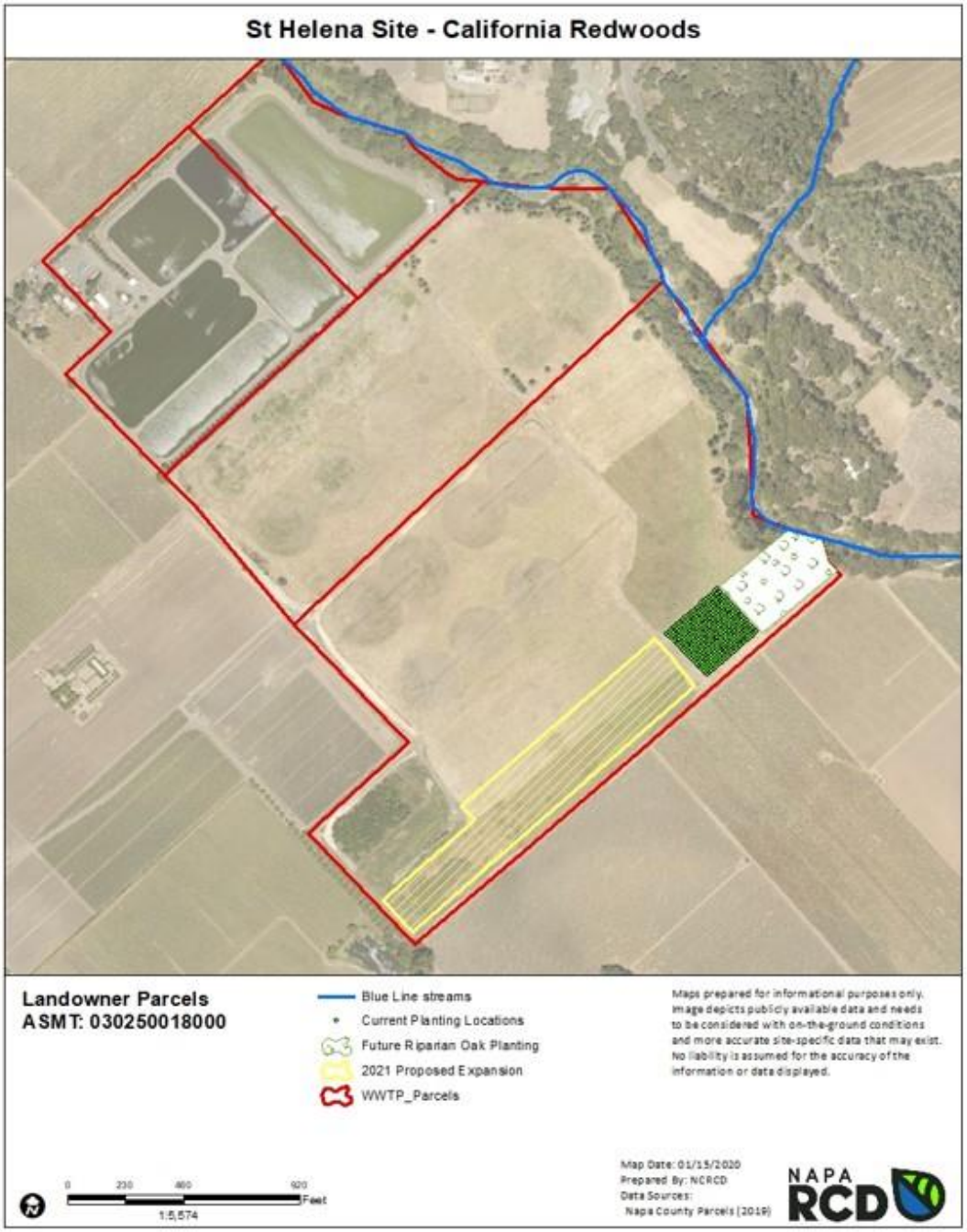
• Nicholas Kent (Cal Fire)
• John Henshaw, RPF
• Andy Armstrong, RPF

Lena Pollastro is the Conservation Director for the Land Trust of Napa County, on staff for over 18 years. She supervises all new conservation acquisitions as well as the monitoring and compliance program for the organization.

## Summary Request

- Approve expansion of the Napa Valley Community Forest from 16 to 37 acres.
- Authorize a Conservation Easement with the Land Trust of Napa County.
- Secure permanent open space, climate resilience, and community benefits with no additional City staffing.

## Appendix A – Current 16-Acre Planted Area



## Appendix B – Proposed 37-Acre Expansion

**From:** Mary Wilson
**To:** Ashley Sylvester
**Subject:** Redwood forest
**Date:** Sunday, December 7, 2025 8:44:52 AM

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I'm not sure if this is the correct portal to write a note of strong support for the Community Forest that has been so generously spearheaded by Paul Asmuth. In this time of so much going wrong, this is a project that is going right! I'm hoping that they can finally obtain a contract to continue this fine work.

Respectfully submitted ,
Mary Wilson
1426 Kearney St, St. Helena
Sent from my iPad

Mary Wilson
1426 Kearney St.
St. Helena, Ca. 94574

707-529-4406

**From:** Lyndsey Harrison
**To:** Ashley Sylvester
**Subject:** St Helena Community Forest
**Date:** Monday, December 8, 2025 9:17:42 AM

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Hi,

I am in favor of giving a contract to the above and easing  the way to make this happen.Slso making people aware of the ssset to our community.

Thanks,

Lyndsey Harrison
1521 Allyn Avenue
St. Helena

Please excuse typos

**ST. HELENA PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**
**2025-26 Goals and Ad-Hoc Subcommittee Assignments**

1. Parks & Recreation Master Plan & Park Enhancement Strategy(Nelson & Smithers)
2. Communication and Marketing(Jenanyan & Smithers)
3. Parks & Recreation Grants(Thompson)
4. Cross- Community Integration(Boeschen)
5. Arts & Culture (Jenanyan & Nelson)

**Updated September 2025**

**ST. HELENA PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**
**2025-26 PARK ASSIGNMENTS**

- Doug Boeschen: Crane East
- Julie Jenanyan: Crane West
- Denise Nelson: Lyman, Stonebridge, Hunt
- Stephanie Smithers: Lewis Station, McCullagh, Mary Fryer, Mennen, Starr Baldwin
- John Thompson: Jacob Meily, Wappo