



The Napa County RCD and USDA-NRCS

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If you would like your name removed from this mailing list or to receive our newsletter electronically, please contact Stephanie Turnipseed at (707) 252-4188 x111 or email [steph@naparcd.org](mailto:steph@naparcd.org)

General questions email [staff@naparcd.org](mailto:staff@naparcd.org)

Newsletter designer: Stephanie Turnipseed  
Newsletter Editors: Mary Alice Graff & Paul Blank

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## Upcoming Events

### EarthDay

Saturday, April 23, 2011 11 am - 4 pm  
Veterans' Park, Downtown Napa

Food, live entertainment and hands-on activities for the whole community!

For more information visit [www.EarthDayNapa.com](http://www.EarthDayNapa.com) or call Frances at 252-4188 x120.

Napa River Cleanup  
Saturday, April 23, 2011 9-11am

What better way to celebrate Earth Day than to celebrate the beauty of the downtown portion of the Napa River! Kick off your Earth Day weekend by coming out and helping clean one of the Napa River hotspots!

For more information call Stephanie at 252-4188 x111 or visit [www.naparcd.org](http://www.naparcd.org).

Open House at the Napa River Rotary Screw Trap  
Saturday, May 7, 9-11 am  
The community is invited to discover the rotary screw trap and the Napa River's fish first hand!

2011 Napa County Watershed Symposium  
May 19, 2011 at the Yountville Community Center  
\$25 registration fee

The 2011 symposium will highlight progress to date on restoration, assessment, and planning projects in Napa County's three watersheds. The day-long event will promote awareness and coordinated action towards watershed goals through presentations, panel discussions, and a poster session featuring projects from local watershed groups and agencies.

Visit [www.napawatersheds.org](http://www.napawatersheds.org) to learn more.  
Sponsored by the Watershed Information Center and Conservancy of Napa County and the Napa County RCD

All About Oaks Workshop March 19, 2011  
9am-12:30pm UC Cooperative Extension Office, Napa

This free workshop will promote understanding of Napa Valley's oak woodlands. Experts will discuss the fundamental role of oaks in the ecosystem, their historical distribution, maintaining the health of mature and young trees in vineyards and urban areas, and promoting their success in the future.

RSVP to Frances at [frances@naparcd.org](mailto:frances@naparcd.org) or call 707-252-4188 x116.

WINTER

2010/2011

# NAPA COUNTY CONSERVATION NEWS

A Quarterly Publication by the Napa County Resource Conservation District (RCD) and the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

## Local Students Lend a Hand

Stephanie Turnipseed, Education Coordinator

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, Julie Lovie's class from Valley Oak High School took a field trip to the Napa River Ecological Reserve in Yountville for a "hands-on" ecology lesson. The students started the day with a lesson about the history and ecological significance of the reserve. They learned that the site was given reserve status in 1976 to protect the riparian forest surrounding the Napa River in Yountville. The Department of Fish and

Game owns the land and the Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District manages the site. The reserve covers 73 acres in the middle of the Napa Valley and is primarily composed of oak woodland and grassland. Roughly 150 bird species and over 230 plant species live in the Eco Reserve, and some of the resident oaks are 280 years old!

Armed with this new knowledge, Ms. Lovie's class rolled up their sleeves to lend a hand with some of the reserve maintenance. Under the direction of Chip Bouril with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Chino Yip with the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, the students spent several hours removing invasive teasel and euphorbia plants that threaten to out compete the native plants.



Chino Yip passes out oak acorns to students to plant at the Ecological Reserve.

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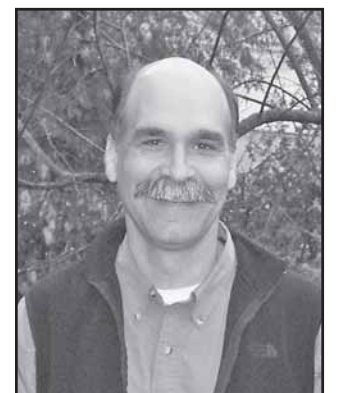
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## Phill Blake To Help Rebuild Agricultural Sector in Afghanistan

Article courtesy of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

Phillip Blake, a District Conservationist with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Napa, is currently serving a one-year assignment in Afghanistan to help rebuild that country's agricultural sector. Blake is one of 56 USDA employees serving in Afghanistan. The growth of Afghanistan's agricultural sector, which employs more than 80 percent of its workforce, is a key piece of the U.S. government's strategy to stabilize the country.

"The efforts of people like Mr. Blake are crucial for creating a stable, democratic and economically viable Afghanistan," said Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator John Brewer. "Whether their expertise is in forestry, soil and water conservation, marketing, agricultural extension and policy, or veterinary services, volunteers like Phillip are contributing their specialized skills to help Afghans rebuild their economy so that stability may take hold."



Phill Blake, who is currently serving a year in Afghanistan.

1303 Jefferson Street, Suite 500B, Napa, CA 94559

## Acting District Conservationist for Napa

Dave Steiner, Senior Soil Conservationist



Acting District Conservationist  
Rita Steiner.

Rita Steiner has been named District Conservationist for the Napa Field Office of NRCS, replacing the venerable Phill Blake, who is on a year's assignment with the Foreign Agricultural Service in Afghanistan. Rita has spent the last six years as the State Conservation Agronomist in the NRCS State Office in Davis. Prior to that, she was Area 4's Resource Conservationist in Riverside, California. She has also served as Natural Resource Manager and Urban Team Leader in the Los Angeles Urban Office, and as the Acting Director of the Plant Materials Center in Lockeford.

A southern California native, Rita has a Master's Degree in Horticulture from Cal Poly, Pomona, and is a Certified Crop Advisor, with credentials from the American Society of Agronomy. In addition to her formidable expertise in plant materials and crop science, Rita has specialized in teaching computer modeling conservation tools to Area and Field Office personnel

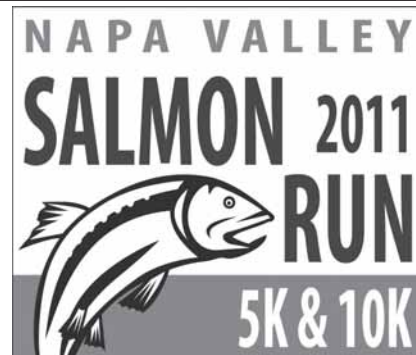
throughout the State. Included among those educational endeavors has been a special effort—with Napa Field Office staff—to adapt the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE2) for use with hillside vineyard planning.

And no, Rita's last name is not merely a coincidence. She and FCD Senior Soil Conservationist Dave Steiner were married in June.

### Napa's First Bay Friendly Garden Tour May 1, 2011

Be inspired by glorious gardens in your neighborhood! This year's tour features 12 gardens, each with a unique approach to integrating natural beauty, enjoyment of the outdoors, and enhancing the San Francisco Bay's ecosystem. \$10 registration fee provides access to all 12 gardens on the tour and a guidebook with tips to reaching your bay friendly garden goals. Register at [www.bayfriendlycoalition.org](http://www.bayfriendlycoalition.org)

Get out your running shoes and start training for the **3rd Annual Napa Valley 5K/10K Salmon Run!** Saturday, June 18th at 8am at the picnic ground of the Yountville Veterans Home. All ages and ability levels welcome! For more info, or to register for the event, visit [www.naparcd.org](http://www.naparcd.org).



## Local Students Lend a Hand

(Continued from page 1)

Once the hard work was completed, the students spent time with RCD Biologist Jonathan Koehler to learn about the fish community in the Napa River and how fish benefit from a healthy riparian corridor like the one at the Eco Reserve.

Just a week later, 300 seventh grade students from Harvest Middle School visited the Eco Reserve to help remove more teasel and euphorbia. The students also collected oak acorns and black walnuts and planted oak seedlings near the entrance to the site. Students learned about native plants in the reserve and conducted a creek water quality survey that was designed to show the kids what scientists study to determine the health of a stream. Members of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society led the students on a walk to see and identify some of the bird species that live in the reserve.



Harvest Middle School students digging up invasive teasel plants.

Everyone had a fantastic time and we want to thank all of the students, teachers and volunteers for their hard work!

### Bay Friendly Landscape Maintenance Training and Qualification Program

Become a recognized expert in Bay-Friendly Landscaping and gain a competitive edge! This seven-week program trains landscape professionals who design, construct, or manage landscapes in Napa County.

March 15-April 26, 2011, Napa  
Register at [www.bayfriendlycoalition.org](http://www.bayfriendlycoalition.org)

## SLEWS Update

Stephanie Turnipseed, Napa RCD Education Coordinator

This is the third school year that the RCD is coordinating the SLEWS (Student and Landowner Education and Watershed Stewardship) program in Napa County.

This year we are working with Napa High teacher Sarah Loft and New Tech High teacher Peter Abboud.

Sarah will be bringing her algebra class to our Doak Creek site where students



New Tech High students performing restoration work at Scott Creek.

will work to restore a stretch of creek bank on Robert Mondavi winery property. This is our second year working at this site and we are very fortunate to again be working with Katey Taylor, a viticulturist with Icon Estates, who will be overseeing the project and providing the restoration plan. We would like to extend a thank you to Robert Mondavi Vineyards for generously providing lunch for the students on the SLEWS field days!

Peter's class will be working at a site along Scott Creek in Carneros where three earthen dams have been removed to create a continuous stream channel. RCD Education Coordinator Frances Knapczyk is overseeing the project and directing the restoration work on each field day. We would like to thank the owner of the property, David Graves, for spending time with the students at our first field day and for providing the tools necessary for the field day work.

So far this year, both of our participating classes have had two great SLEWS field days! Students helped plant native trees, shrubs and grasses and remove invasive plants such as Himalayan blackberry and cocklebur. The students have learned about numerous topics including: the importance of native plants, members of the local bird community, how benthic macro invertebrates can be identified and used as water quality indicators, and about population dynamics in nature.

Every year we look for new program sites where our students can participate in restoration work. If you are completing a restoration project on your land and would like to become involved in SLEWS, please call Stephanie at 707.252.4188. x111 for more information.



**Napa County Resource Conservation District**  
a local non-regulatory agency whose mission is to promote responsible watershed management through voluntary community stewardship and technical assistance.

**USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service**  
a federal agency that provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. The NRCS assists the RCD in carrying out their conservation programs.

Equal Opportunity Providers and Employers

To reach any of the staff below call 252-4188 and dial their extension.

### RCD Staff

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Paul Blank, x 112<br>Hydrologist                 | Jonathan Koehler x 109<br>Senior Biologist         |
| Kathleen Edson, x 108<br>District Administrator  | Anna Mattinson, x 100<br>Bookkeeper                |
| Steph Turnipseed, x 111<br>Education Coordinator | Leigh Sharp, x 110<br>District Manager             |
| Frances Knapczyk, x 120<br>Education Coordinator | Dave Steiner, x 107<br>Senior Soil Conservationist |

### USDA-NRCS Staff

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Rita Steiner, x 101<br>District Conservationist | Kelly Gin, x 104<br>Soil Conservationist      |
| Chip Bouril, x 102<br>Soil Conservationist      | Carolyn Jones, x 114<br>Agricultural Engineer |

### RCD Board of Directors Associate Directors

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The Napa County RCD Board of Directors meets on the second Thursday of each month from 8:00 to 10:00 am at the RCD office