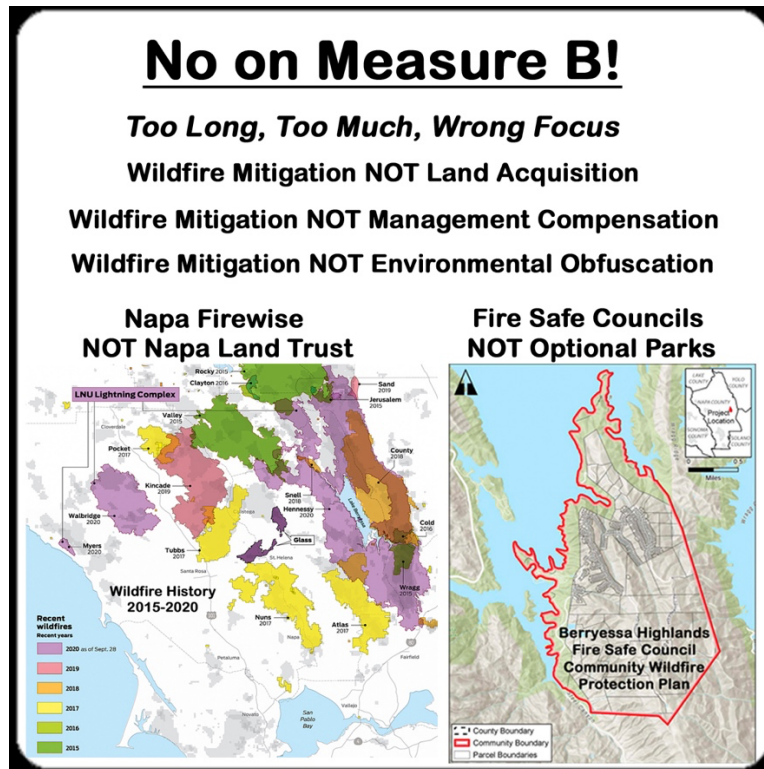


No On Measure B Factsheet (Update 10/14/26)



The Lake Berryessa News Opposes Napa County Measure B

It is a bit of a quandary to oppose something you've strongly supported for a decade, but Napa County's proposed Measure B sales tax provides such a dilemma. I've read and underlined the measure's text. It appears that the language of the measure was designed to confuse the reader.

There has always been the political tension involved with appealing to urban voters versus rural voters in many elections. Living in a rural section of Napa's District 3 which combined St. Helena with Lake Berryessa, I learned that our rural area could approve a ballot proposal by more than 80%, but St. Helena residents only had to oppose it by 60% to override us.

I sense the same thing is happening with Measure B. The Lake Berryessa News has long supported the development of Napa Firewise and contributed to the creation of Fire Safe Councils. Berryessa Highlands volunteers created one of the first Fire Safe Councils in Napa County. These volunteers also wrote one of the best wildfire protection plans:

Berryessa Highlands Firesafe Council Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Christopher Thompson, Chairman of the Board, Napa Communities Firewise Foundation
Joe Sponseller, Co-Lead, Berryessa Highlands Fire Safe Council
Evan Kilkus, Co-Lead, Berryessa Highlands Fire Safe Council

https://napafirewise.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/BHFSC_CWPP_Final_2026-signed.pdf

The Lake Berryessa News has long supported the development of Napa Firewise and contributed to the creation of Fire Safe Councils. I've hosted land clearing specialists camping in eight person tents in my front yard while they cleared the hills on Steele Canyon Road. During the last tragic wildfire that destroyed so many

homes in the Berryessa Highlands, flames surrounded my house, but, thanks to Evan's foresight, our multi-headed indoor/outdoor sprinkler system protected us. Two huge CalFire bulldozers were dropped off at my house to roll downhill to help contain the recent Steele Fire. To put it in perspective, the Measure B tax expires when I turn 100! But...

The Lake Berryessa News Opposes Measure B

Too Long, Too Much, Wrong Focus

Wildfire Mitigation NOT Land Acquisition

Wildfire Mitigation NOT Management Compensation

Wildfire Mitigation NOT Environmental Obfuscation

Napa Firewise NOT Napa Land Trust

Fire Safe Councils NOT Optional Parks

This sales tax is projected to generate approximately \$23 million annually. Over its 18-year lifespan (from April 2027 to March 2045), it is expected to bring in a total of roughly \$414 million. The proposal establishes a countywide half-cent (0.5%) sales tax with annual funding to supposedly be split evenly between two main purposes: wildfire prevention and preparedness grants, and Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District for land preservation and watershed protection.

This split has the wrong focus. Wildfire prevention should be paramount, regional parks and more open space should be secondary. In reality, this sales tax unfairly conflates two goals that are politically and practically distinct. Even proponents familiar with the size and complexity of the wildfire mitigation projects completed so far are not convinced that Napa Communities Firewise Foundation can organize and manage that level of annual revenue.

The Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce Opposes Measure B

This sales tax does not recognize the importance of the Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program and the value of the Lake Berryessa region to Napa County. It appears to place open space and parks above the real fire protection of rural residents. It's written in a way that conflates the actual, practical fire protection needs of the large population of vulnerable residents with the optional recreational wants of a much smaller group. A need is something essential for survival and basic functioning, while a want is a desire that improves your quality of life but is not required to live.

History has shown that fire protection needs are expensive and important, while parks and open spaces are secondary. This, and any future sales tax, should be specific to wildfire mitigation. It appears that this proposal was consciously written to use wildfire concerns to siphon tax money to park and open space advocates.

Napa County Taxpayers Association Opposes Measure B

Here we go again. Another election cycle and another proposition for an additional sales tax increase. Vote "No" due to cumulative tax burdens on residents. Combining the Regional Park and Open Space District with a Wildfire Preparedness agency funding request is an attempt to gain passage of a new tax that had been previously defeated by voters as standalone propositions. Each of these agencies has separate and independent boards of directors. This blurs accountability.

On the heels of the City of Napa's approval of a 1% sales tax increase and the current proposed American Canyon 1% sales tax increase, and adding the Measure B tax has the effect of increasing the sales tax burden for some Napa residents to 9.25%. This would be a 19% increase over our old 7.25% rate. We have all heard the political rhetoric about affordability, let's do something about it. Vote No on Measure B.

Napa County Farm Bureau Declines to Support Measure B

Like the measure itself, the Napa County Farm Bureau is split between supporting additional and ongoing revenue for needed fire mitigation and prevention services, and opposition to an overly broad tax that has the potential of putting pressure on Napa agriculture. The Farm Bureau cannot oppose the measure because of the proven value of fire prevention, yet cannot support the measure without a better track record of open space agencies working in collaboration with agriculture. Because of this, the Napa County Farm Bureau will remain neutral in the campaign.

Lake Berryessa News Reader Opposes Measure B

I just cannot stomach approving a sales tax to benefit the Napa Land Trust and the Regional Parks and Open Space District (RPOSD) under the guise of fire protection. The whole thing just reeks of a scam. Giving RPOSD and Land Trust land acquisition the same priority as fire protection is obviously wrong; a blatant effort to manipulate voters into approving a lower priority item they would not otherwise approve.

In addition, the new tax is supposedly justified because fire protection is such a high priority. Well, our elected representatives' job number one is to spend our tax dollars wisely, i.e., on items of highest priority to the taxpayers. If fire protection is such a high priority item, then the BOS should already be spending our tax dollars on that rather than on other lower priority items. If they spend our money on lower priority items, they are not doing the job for which they were elected. Lower priority items should be bumped to the bottom of the list and if there is not enough money left for them, then the voters should be asked if they want to impose an additional tax to fund those lower priority items.

I think the Regional Parks and Recreation Department (RPOSD), the Napa Land Trust, and the Board of Supervisors must all be thanking their lucky stars for getting to hitch a ride on the fire prevention bandwagon, giving them the best shot yet at getting the sales tax increase they have wanted for so long. It's too bad the Firewise people feel they can't get enough votes without allying themselves with the Land Trust, which has a long history of forbidding and frustrating fire prevention efforts on the land it controls.

George Bacich

Words Have Real Meanings, Applehood and Mother Pie Statements Don't

Conflation is the act of mixing two or more separate things, ideas, or texts into a single whole, often by mistake. Conflating being busy with being productive. Conflation is the merging of two or more sets of information, texts, ideas, or opinions into one, often in error. Conflation is defined as 'fusing or blending', but is often used colloquially as 'being equal to' – treating two similar but disparate concepts as the same. An example is conflating watershed protection with wildfire mitigation.

"Water"sheds are not "wet" except during the rainy season! Dry watersheds do nothing for wildfire mitigation.

A watershed is an area of land that channels rainfall, snowmelt, and runoff into a common water body such as a stream, river, lake, or ocean. A healthy or restored watershed can actively mitigate wildfire severity, but typically no wildfires occur during a California rainy season. A degraded or burned watershed can severely support or worsen the spread and aftermath of fires during the California dry season.

Watershed "protection" IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy. Buying or "protecting" Napa County watersheds as a wildfire mitigation strategy is a waste of money.

Applehood and Mother Pie Statements

The phrase "motherhood and apple pie" is an idiom that describes ideas, values, or goals that are so universally considered good and wholesome that no one can reasonably question or oppose them. A variation of the motherhood and apple pie statement is often used to gain undeserved emotional support for a controversial proposal such as Napa County's Measure B sales tax. The proponents of this sales tax are using what I consider false emotionally-colored words, or "Applehood and Mother Pie" statements. Actual examples of are listed below. (Emphasis added)

"Half of the revenue would go to Napa County for competitive grants supporting wildfire prevention projects such as hazardous fuel reduction, firebreaks and fire-safe evacuation routes. The other half would go to the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District for *projects involving open-space preservation, watershed protection, wildfire resilience, parks and trails.*"

"The Measure B expenditure plan includes *creating and operating parks, building trails, "protecting" key agricultural lands, "preserving" important watersheds, "protecting" oak woodlands and forests, "protecting" wildlife corridors and removing invasive species.*"

"The money would be kept in Napa County and dedicated to wildfire preparedness, *watershed protection and open-space preservation.*"

"Watershed protection and the lands surrounding our reservoirs is particularly *important because those natural areas are connected to the quality and reliability of Napa County's drinking water.*"

"As recent events have demonstrated, Napa County faces increasingly severe wildfire seasons and drought conditions that threaten our lives, homes, agriculture and communities". Meanwhile, the organizations that mitigate these risks and *protect our open spaces and drinking water* need stable, long-term funding. Without reliable sources, wildfire prevention and response efforts risk falling short just as the need is greatest."

"Lakes and water sources must be *protected from "pollution, overuse and wildfire damage"*. Without stronger wildfire protections to reduce the risk in our area, insurance companies will cancel more policies or charge significantly more for fire insurance."

"The sales tax could provide funds *to acquire land near cities where the public could take children or walk their dogs after work* without having to travel far to reach open space or a park. Lands near cities are more expensive than more remote properties."

Conclusions

The famous quote is, "If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with bullshit," attributed to comedian W.C. Fields. Some Measure B proponents seem to have embraced that strategy in their recent public comments and YouTube videos.

Open space "preservation" IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.
More parks and trails IS Not a wildfire prevention strategy.
Removing invasive species IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.
Pure, reliable drinking water IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.
Taking children to the park IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.
Walking dogs IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.
Appeasing insurance companies IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.

Defensible space IS a wildfire prevention strategy!

Defensible space is a managed buffer zone of cleared vegetation and reduced combustible materials created around a structure to slow wildfires and protect property.

According to guidelines from agencies like CAL FIRE, defensible space is typically divided into three distinct zones extending up to 100 feet or more from a home:

Zone 0 (0 to 5 feet from the structure / Immediate Zone): Focuses on intense fuel reduction and ember defense. Use non-combustible materials like gravel, pavers, or concrete directly next to the house. Remove all dead leaves, pine needles, debris, and flammable plants (such as junipers or bark mulch) from the roof, gutters, and base of the walls.

Zone 1 (5 to 30 feet from the structure / Lean, Clean, and Green): Focuses on removing ladder fuels and creating separation. Clear all dead plants, grass, and weeds. Prune tree branches so they are at least 10 feet away from chimneys and keep tree crowns spaced 10 feet apart. Prune lower tree branches up to 6 feet from the ground.

Zone 2 (30 to 100 feet from the structure / Reduced Fuel Zone): Focuses on fuel reduction. Keep grass mowed to a maximum of 4 inches. Maintain horizontal and vertical spacing between shrubs and trees to prevent fire from carrying rapidly across the ground or leaping into the canopy.

Measure I from 2006 Morphs (Sort Of) into Measure B in 2026

Napa County Measure I, passed by voters in November 2006, established the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District. The measure was highly controversial and only passed with 54 percent of the votes cast. Many opponents and at least one county supervisor opposed it, preferring that such a

department simply be created as a formal part of Napa County's organizational structure - a Parks Department or Parks and Open Space Department within the Public Works Department.

The District had no original funding mechanism and so has been operating as a de-facto County Department for 20 years supported by an average \$1 million per year from the County Transient Occupancy Tax. Their original property inventory growth was due in part by their acceptance of California state property declared "surplus" (i.e., the State no longer wanted the expense of maintaining that property).

Several years ago the District decided, for some internal reason, to de-emphasize the words "regional park" in its name as can be seen from its present logo. It is often referred to in its literature, and that of the Napa Land Trust, as the Napa Open Space District. (NOSD)

Napa Regional Park and Open Space District as Defined by Measure I

Created as an independent special district to manage, plan, and improve public parks, trails, outdoor recreation, wildlife habitats, and conservation education programs across all of Napa County (including incorporated cities).

Governed by an elected five-member Board of Directors aligned with the county's supervisor districts (separate from the County Board of Supervisors). The district has no power to regulate private land use, must follow all local city and county rules, and may only purchase property from willing sellers. It is funded via grants, fees, gifts, program income, voter-approved taxes, and transient occupancy (hotel) taxes.

Should Non-Profit Corporations Be Given Municipal Sales Tax Revenue?

In general - No. Non-profit corporations are rarely given direct sales tax revenue, as public tax dollars are typically reserved for government entities. However, non-profits can legally access these funds through specific government contracts, public-private partnerships, or specialized local tax allocations. Sales tax revenues are primarily designated to fund essential public services like roads, public safety, and public education. Whether sales tax revenue should be allocated directly to nonprofits in California is a subject of ongoing policy debate, balancing the need for public funding with the value nonprofits provide to local communities.

Non-profit organizations do not automatically receive public sales tax revenue, as sales tax is a public fund collected by state and local governments to fund public infrastructure, safety, and government operations. However, they could receive a portion of this revenue through government grants, contracts, or dedicated ballot measures. Diverting these funds could strain municipal budgets. Broadly distributing tax revenues to nonprofits could set a precedent that reduces the overall tax base available for maintaining civic infrastructure.

This tax initiative is strongly supported by the Napa Land Trust, which is a non-profit corporation. The Land Trust of Napa County is actively involved in a major local policy initiative regarding public sales tax allocation. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it cannot receive tax revenues directly as a general donation. However, it is co-sponsoring a citizens'

initiative, Measure B, a 2026 ballot measure to legally funnel public funds into local conservation and wildfire safety.

The Napa Land Trust (officially the Land Trust of Napa County) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Founded in 1976, it focuses on preserving the natural and agricultural character of Napa County. (Napa County Land Trust, EIN: 94-2315096, Tax-exempt since Feb. 1976.)

While a government cannot simply hand over tax revenue as a blank-check donation, it can distribute sales tax funds to non-profits through three primary legal mechanisms:

Fee-for-Service Contracts: A city or county collects sales tax and hires a non-profit to run a public service, such as operating a homeless shelter or managing a community clinic.

Special Local Tax Districts: Voters sometimes approve a dedicated sales tax increase (e.g., a "0.1% tourism or arts tax") specifically earmarked to fund local cultural or environmental non-profits.

Government Grants: Public agencies distribute collected tax revenues via competitive grants to non-profits that align with public policy goals.

Who Owns What Where?

Napa Communities Firewise Foundation (Napa Firewise) is a nonprofit dedicated to reducing wildfire risk and strengthening community resilience across Napa. While Napa Firewise wants money for actual wildfire protection and mitigation, the Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) and the Napa Land Trust seem to want to use public tax funds to simply acquire more land.

In their literature supporting the Napa Measure B sales tax, they consciously use emotionally-colored words like "protection" and "watersheds" to convince voters that they actually do something to benefit wildfire protection and mitigation. But how much land do they already own and plan to acquire?

And how much is enough - if ever...

Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District

<https://napaoutdoors.org/>

Napa Open Space District Parks & Trails

Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park

Berryessa Peak Trail

Berryessa Vista Wilderness Park

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park

The Cove

EcoCamp Berryessa

Mayacamas Preserve

Moore Creek Park

Napa River & Bay Trail

Napa River Ecological Reserve

Oat Hill Mine Trail

Old Howell Mountain Trail

PUC Forest

Robert Louis Stevenson State Park

Suscol Headwaters Park

Wetlands Edge Park

Future Parks & Land Banks

<https://napaoutdoors.org/parks/future-parks-land-banks/>

Mayacamas Preserve/Amy's Grove
Smittle Creek (Cedar Roughs)
John Woodbury Preserve
Crystal Flats Unit

Land Trust of Napa County: 50 Years of Conservation - The Next 50 Begin Now.

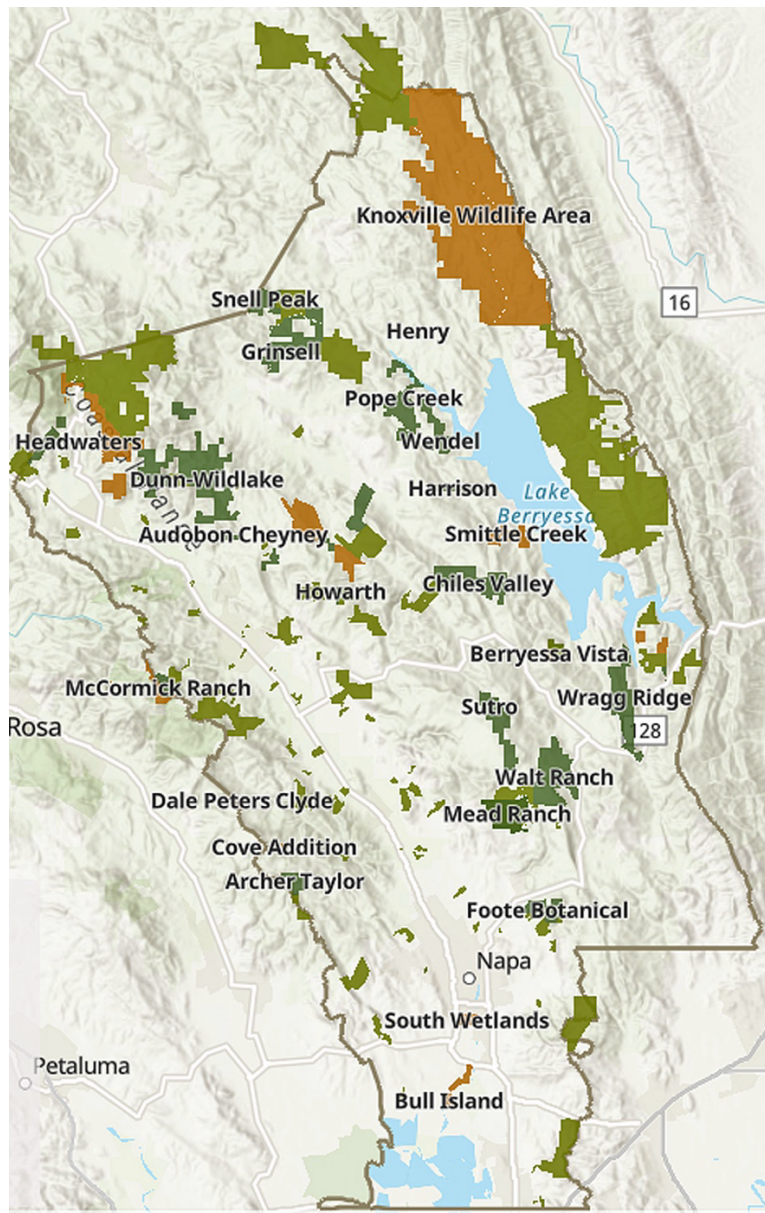
<https://napalandtrust.org/>

The Land Trust of Napa County is a community-based nonprofit dedicated to preserving the character of Napa by permanently protecting land. We actively steward the lands we own and foster meaningful connections between people and nature. Together, we have permanently protected more than 96,000 acres, representing over 18% of Napa County:

46,700 Acres Under Conservation Agreements: protecting natural habitats, watersheds, and working lands while supporting agricultural productivity.

22,000 Acres Owned By The Land Trust: stewarded for habitat health, restoration, and public benefit.

275 Real Estate Transactions Completed: each one a partnership and a permanent investment in Napa County's future.



How much land is still open to any development in Napa County?

Is the Napa Land Trust Obsolete?

Is the Napa Land Trust obsolete? The latest real estate analyses show that there are only between 76 and 88 parcels of undeveloped land for sale in Napa County. Per public research, only a tiny fraction of Napa County is open for general development, as roughly 82% of the land is permanently preserved or protected by strict agriculture zoning.

Development is heavily concentrated into incorporated cities (Napa, St. Helena, Calistoga, Yountville, American Canyon) and a few designated industrial areas like the Airport Industrial Park. Thanks to the landmark Napa County Agricultural Preserve (established in 1968) and the Land Trust of Napa County, over 96,000 acres (about 18%) of the county are permanently protected. Approximately 75% of the unincorporated county is zoned for agriculture, allowing only for very low-density residential uses (typically 40- to 160-acre minimums) to limit urban sprawl.

The principal hub for unincorporated commercial and industrial growth is the Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan area near the Napa County Airport, which comprises about 2,945 acres. Municipalities direct new development toward "infill" projects (such as the South Oxbow housing site in the City of Napa) rather than expanding outwards into open space. While there are still privately owned vacant parcels and empty lots listed on the open market (ranging from 0.25-acre plots to larger, rural ranch properties), their development potential is highly restricted by county building codes and water allocation limits.

Measure B: Strategy of the Political Boondoggle

The famous quote is, "If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with bullshit," attributed to comedian W.C. Fields. Measure B proponents appear to have taken up that strategy in their written and video propaganda, some of which is published above.

A political boondoggle is a wasteful and unnecessary government project funded by taxpayers, usually kept alive only because of political motivations or favoritism. Politicians often back these multi-million or billion-dollar projects to look busy, please special interest groups, or secure votes in their home districts, despite the project providing little to no public value.

When wildfire protection is a critical priority, buying land that is already protected and can't be developed is a boondoggle.