

# Fish Friendly Farming Environmental Certification Program

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## Fish Friendly Farming / Napa Green Goals

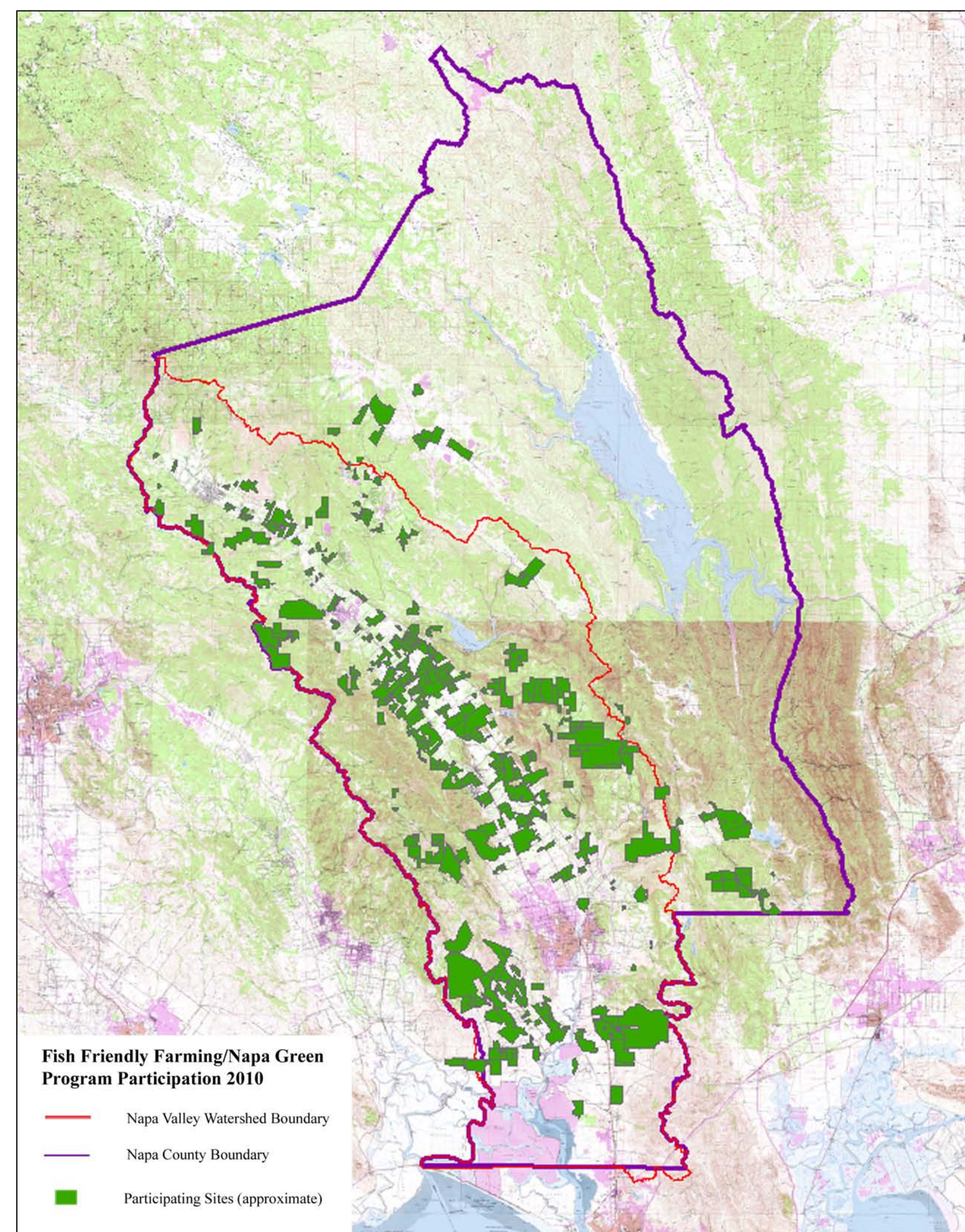
The Fish Friendly Farming Program (also known as Napa Green in Napa County) is a voluntary environmental certification program for farm and ranch land. This site-based program offers 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification from three regulatory agencies: NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Service, Regional Water Control Board, and the Agricultural Commissioners' office. The FFF Program operates in 5 counties: Napa, Sonoma, Solano, Mendocino, and El Dorado. The California Land Stewardship Institute (CLSI), a non-profit organization based in Napa, operates the FFF Program.



The goal of the FFF Program is to provide farmers and ranchers with the tools and resources to attain and maintain compliance with water quality and endangered species regulations and to demonstrate their commitment to long-term environmental stewardship of the land. Certification is reviewed every 5-7 years, and certified sites document the implementation of Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) through annual photo-monitoring and record-keeping. Fish Friendly Farming offers an incentive-based method for creating and sustaining environmental quality and habitat on private land.

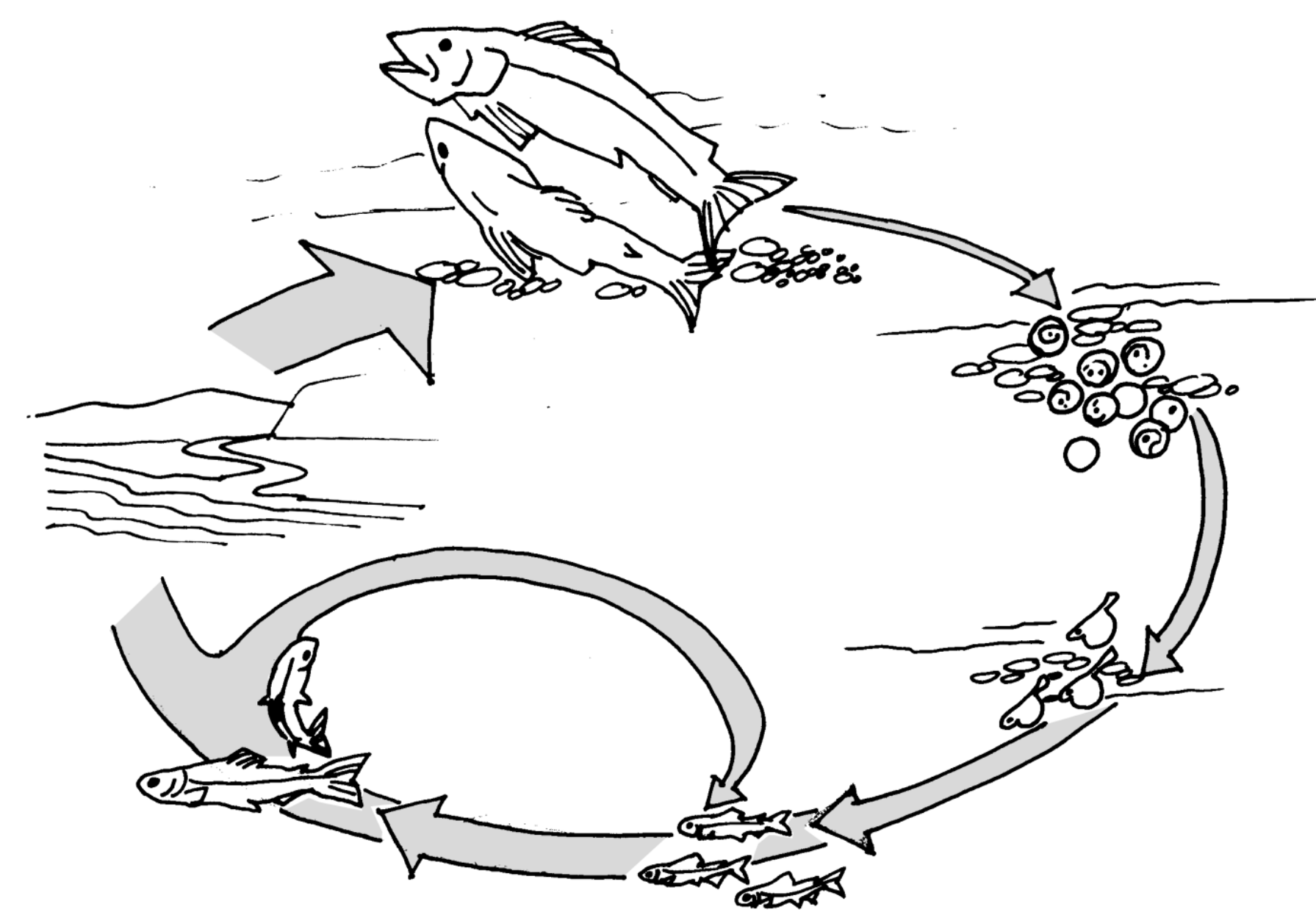
## Location

FFF sites are located throughout Napa County and are particularly well represented in the Napa River watershed. Sites range in size from less than 1 acre to over 2,000 acres.



## Methods

The salmonid lifecycle and habitat requirements form the basis of the FFF Program. Steelhead trout, Coho salmon, and Chinook salmon have a complex lifecycle involving freshwater streams and rivers and the ocean. These fish species are sensitive indicators of ecosystem health. Their recovery and conservation requires that human activities meet high environmental standards. The Napa River is home to steelhead trout and Chinook salmon, both federally listed under the Endangered Species Act.



The FFF Program takes a comprehensive, site-specific approach to the implementation of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs). Each site is reviewed for the application of more than 70 possible BMPs covering:

- Seasonal and year-round roads
- Perennial, seasonal, and ephemeral creeks and rivers
- Drainage ditches /culverts
- Subsurface drainage
- Wells
- Reservoirs and fish screens
- Chemical use and storage
- Pest management
- Water use and source
- Vineyard/orchard cover crops

The resulting Farm Conservation Plan is then used by site managers to guide long-term restoration and maintenance actions.

Participation in the FFF/Napa Green Program involves 6 steps:

- 1) Enrollment
- 2) 4 Workshops – covering all relevant BMPs
- 3) Farm Conservation Plan completion
- 4) Certification
- 5) Implementation – of all BMPs identified in the Farm Plan
- 6) Recertification every 5-7 years

The certified Farm Conservation Plan and photo-monitoring allows the owner to demonstrate compliance with environmental laws and a reduction in pollutant loading from the property.

## Results

Since 2002, the FFF Program has enrolled over 280 sites in Napa County. Over 250 miles of roads and over 116 miles of seasonal and year-round creeks and rivers have been assessed and enhanced. Total acreage of participating sites exceeds 50,000 acres – almost 10% of the entire county.

The FFF Program is incentive-based and focuses on education and assistance to land managers. Many managers will implement changes to their practices when the reasons for change are clear and presented in a collaborative manner. For many sites, the FFF Program provides validation of the land management practices already in use; for others, BMPs are given implementation timelines appropriate to their degree of complexity.

By using a rigorous science-based approach, the FFF Program assures that changes to management practices are well thought out and will have the desired results, and that larger efforts such as stream restoration projects undergo thorough analysis prior to implementation.



CLSI staff mapping vegetation on the Napa River

## Other Benefits

With the large number of sites enrolled in the program, CLSI is able to work with multiple landowners to design and implement broad-based plans and projects. Current examples include:

- Napa River Plan: Oakville Cross Rd. to Oak Knoll Ave.
- Carneros Creek Adaptive Management Plan
- Suisun Creek Watershed Program
- Napa River Gravel Augmentation Study
- *Arundo donax* removal and revegetation projects on over 5 miles of the Napa River and tributaries
- Road rehabilitation and fish barrier removal projects

## Next Steps

After a 2 year delay, the California Land Stewardship Institute recently received a contract to develop the Fish Friendly Farming Program for rangeland in Napa and Mendocino counties. CLSI staff will be holding meetings with ranchers in these counties in order to form a multi-stakeholder Technical Advisory Group consisting primarily of landowners as well as scientists, rangeland experts, and resource agencies.



Certifiers reviewing a Farm Plan in Napa Valley

## Program Funding & Partners

The following agencies and organizations have generously provided their support to the Fish Friendly Farming Environmental Certification Program in Napa County:

- CALFED Bay-Delta Authority Ecosystem Restoration Program
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
- San Francisco Estuary Partnership
- SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Napa County Agricultural Commissioner

The California Land Stewardship Institute also works closely with the following partners in Napa County:

- Napa Valley Vintners Association
- Napa Valley Grapegrowers
- Napa County Farm Bureau
- Napa Sustainable Winegrowing Group
- Napa County Resource Conservation District
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Project Sponsor & Contact Information

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