

# Beavers be dammed, district cares for Napa watershed

By **JULIA HOLLISTER**  
For the Capital Press

California's Napa Valley is home to about 400 premium wineries but Richard Thomasser, operations manager of the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, is more concerned with beavers.

"Wildlife management — monitoring beaver activity and protecting against excess tree harvesting by beavers for dams — is an important part of our work," Thomasser said.

Beavers are just one of the things the district deals with. He wouldn't say they are a "big" problem because many actually create beneficial habitat in riparian areas.

Thomasser said he doesn't want them to chew down all the riparian trees, so the dis-

trict protects some of them to prevent that from happening.

The district started in 1951 and now covers 426 square miles of watershed in the valley.

"We are principally a flood control agency," said Thomasser.

The district doesn't own any water supplies. It provides flood and storm water services within Napa County, including five cities: Napa, American Canyon, Yountville, St. Helena and Calistoga.

Most of the district's work involves the Napa River and its tributaries, which is a 426-square-mile-watershed, he said.

The services the district provides to the vineyards relate principally to flood management and riparian area maintenance and restoration.

The work is done on an "as-needed" basis.

"We encourage protection of the river, streams and riparian areas and conduct projects such as invasive species removals, native vegetation planting, erosion control and debris removal," Thomasser said.

The district also coordinates the cities and the county in complying with the state's storm water management regulations, he said.

"We have varying issues and problems depending on areas along the river," he said.

Besides beavers, these include homeless encampments in the city of Napa reach, invasive species and erosion in several areas.

Funding is one of the biggest challenges for the district. He said there are always

more projects and activities to do than funds to do them.

The county recently launched a "Do It Yourself" groundwater monitoring program. The program allows Napa County residents

to borrow a well water-level monitoring tool for free to measure their wells.

"The recent rains in Northern California have put a big dent in the drought, at least in that part of the state," he

said. "Napa County is actually in pretty good shape with its local water supplies. We get our domestic use water from the State Water Project, which is generally in good shape this year."



We focus on your legal needs, so you can focus on the rest.

WATER RIGHTS | WETLANDS & DRAINAGE | WATER QUALITY

**Steven L. Shropshire**  
steve.shropshire@jordanramis.com  
(541) 550-7900



**Peter D. Mohr**  
peter.mohr@jordanramis.com  
(503) 598-7070

2 CENTERPOINTE DR. 6TH FLOOR, LAKE OSWEGO, OR 97035  
BEND, OR | VANCOUVER, WA

W17-2/#T1D

Boise



**Norman M. Semanko**  
nms@moffatt.com

Idaho Falls



**Lee Radford**  
lkr@moffatt.com

**WATER, ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES LAW**



**Matthew J. McGee**  
mjgm@moffatt.com

Boise



**Alex N. Semanko**  
ans@moffatt.com

Boise

**LEADING IDAHO LAW.**

Moffatt Thomas leads the field in litigation, business, banking, insurance, agriculture and more by bringing together many of the top legal minds across Idaho.

**MOFFATT  
THOMAS**

BOISE • POCATELLO • IDAHO FALLS

TO LEARN MORE:  
call (800) 422-2889  
or visit *Moffatt.com*

W17-4/#17