



**Democrats of Napa Valley**  
2024 Candidate Questionnaire  
Napa County Supervisor

**RETURN TO DEMOCRATS OF NAPA VALLEY by Friday, Nov. 3, 2024 6pm**

Return to: [napavalleydems1@gmail.com](mailto:napavalleydems1@gmail.com)

*Candidate's Name:* Amber Manfree

*Area/District:* Napa County Supervisor District 4

*Mailing Address:* 1370 Trancas St #304, Napa, CA 94558

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*E-Mail:* [info@amber4napa.com](mailto:info@amber4napa.com)

*Party Affiliation:* Democrat

*How long have you been a Democrat?* May 2023; previously no party preference

*Committee/Campaign ID #:* 1461788

*Campaign Manager & Contact Info:*

Craig Priess / (650)464-6202 / [craig.priess@gmail.com](mailto:craig.priess@gmail.com)

*Occupation:* Science Writer

*Employer:* UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies

***Candidate Specific Questions***

*1. Why are you running for office and what have you done to deserve the Democrats of Napa Valley (DONV) endorsement? (100 words maximum).*

As a fifth-generation Napan, I care deeply about our future. As a scientist with a career working in natural resource management, I know that today's decisions will have a long-lasting impact.

I made the decision to jump into the race for this seat because our county deserves leadership that can look ahead, work collaboratively for the benefit of every family, is committed to integrity and transparency, and will do the work to find solutions that don't leave anyone behind.

I am a champion for the environment. I have been a steady presence in interpreting land use policy outcomes from a science-based perspective for the past ten years in Napa County.

- Working in partnership with other community members, Napa Superior Court was persuaded to require of a full EIR for the Mountain Peak Winery project based on scientific materials I produced.
- I served on the Napa Valley Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Advisory Committee, where I advocated for environmental users of groundwater. I pushed for a more inclusive committee, encouraging the Groundwater Sustainability Agency to seek representatives that would fully reflect the community and to pay low-income participants in the public process.
- My detailed analysis of outcomes of pre-existing rules influenced the policy language in the Water Quality Tree Protection Ordinance, precluding “double dipping” and requiring more stringent conservation arrangements for lands set aside.
- I have volunteered with the Napa RCD to educate students about our fascinating landscape history.

My commitment to inclusion is evident in the way I engage the community. I was the first high profile candidate to run a bilingual (English-Spanish) campaign in 2020 - a precedent that many candidates have since followed.

My work in progressive movements for change stretches back to the late 1990s. I have marched with the UAW, celebrated and advocated for LGBTQIA+ acknowledgement and inclusion, fought for preservation of our last remaining old growth trees in Redwood Summers, protested the Iraq war in the streets of San Francisco, ridden for bicycle safety with Critical Mass, and joined women’s marches in Sacramento and right here in Napa. I attended Barak Obama’s inauguration in January, 2009. It was cold, but the crowd was buzzing!

I share the values of the Democrats of Napa Valley. I invite you to review my [priorities page](#) to see for yourself.

*2. Provide a bio of your relevant experience/background for this office. (200-word maximum)*

My great-great-grandparents moved to Napa in the early 1900s and raised a large family here. From the time I was a child, I have often lived in multi-generational settings with children, parents, grandparents, and sometimes even a great-grandparent all in the same home. I was raised in rural Napa and have a strong connection to nature. This led me to pursue an education and a career in natural resources.

Over the past 25 years, I have worked on a wide variety of projects advocating for a better world.

Some examples of my service-oriented work are:

- Member, Napa Valley Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee, 2020-2021. This 25-member stakeholder group contributed to the local Groundwater Sustainability Plan. I represented environmental interests and advocated for an inclusive member selection process.
- Founding board member, Secretary, Protect Rural Napa 501(c)3, 2014-present. This community group advocates for thoughtful planning at the landscape scale and is concerned about fire safety. We are frequently advocating for planning decisions regarding development. We have a dedicated and brilliant board of directors—I've learned much from them over the years.
- UC Extension instructor teaching Geographic Information Systems to public service professionals across California so that they can better serve our communities, 2017-2019. Students were from agencies such as CalTrans, the California State Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and city and county staff. My approach included students bringing in their current projects, so we made progress on real-world issues at every opportunity.
- Field technician with the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, 2005-2007. In this role, I ensured water quality and other environmental compliance goals were met for a 100-acre aquatic invasive weed management program. This ensured the well-being of nearby residents, fish, and wildlife.
- Board president and Vice President, Santa Rosa Community Market, 2002-2004. This worker-run not-for-profit health food store's mission is to serve the community. With the strictest health-oriented product policy on the west coast, a firm commitment to serving low-income community members with near-cost pricing on staples, free home delivery for seniors, and LOTS of donations to other organizations, this store walks the walk.

My immediate family is biracial, and social justice issues are deeply important to me. Throughout my life, I have advocated for equity and inclusion. I've lived in rural, urban, and suburban settings and have interacted with a wide variety of people, so I understand - and am comfortable in - many social contexts.

*3. List your key supporters, including campaign volunteers and hired consultants, and endorsements.*

**Campaign Consultants:**

four waters media // (916) 562-3252 // [four@fourwatersmedia.com](mailto:four@fourwatersmedia.com)  
 PMCohen Public Affairs // (510) 719-8263 // [paul@pmcohen.net](mailto:paul@pmcohen.net)

**Campaign Manager:**

Craig Priess // (650)464-6202 // [craig.priess@gmail.com](mailto:craig.priess@gmail.com)

**Endorsements from elected officials:**

**Scott Sedgley**, Mayor, Napa

**Donald Williams**, Mayor, Calistoga

**Joelle Gallagher**, Supervisor, Napa County

**Brad Wagenknecht**, Supervisor, Napa County (former)

**Kathryn Winter**, Supervisor, Napa County (former)

**Sam Chapman**, Supervisor, Napa County (former)

**Anthony Norris**, President of the Board, Napa County Parks and Open Space District

**Robert Minahen**, Treasurer-Tax Collector, Napa County

**Tracy Schulze**, Auditor-Controller, Napa County

**Marita Dorenbecher**, Vice Mayor, Yountville Town Council (former)

Partial list. For more, please visit: <https://www.amber4napa.com/endorsements>

*4. Where do you expect to receive your main financial commitments?*

The campaign is funded by community members, fundraising events, and like-minded organizations, such as yours.

*5. What do you see as the major issues and their possible solutions in this campaign?*

My vision is a safe and inclusive community that offers economic security, manages its natural resources with care, and preserves what makes Napa special. We deserve a livable future that includes a robust local economy with quality jobs in an affordable community. To achieve these goals, we must work together—residents, businesses, and elected officials—to meet the future on our own terms. Together, we can make sure Napa remains an amazing, accessible place to raise a family and build a life.

My top priorities are:

- Preserving agricultural lands and natural resources
- Equitably ensuring abundant water supplies
- Fire readiness
- Meeting the challenges of climate change
- Planning a livable future for all
- Protecting community health
- Transparency and ethics in government

A lack of adequate housing that is affordable is one of the most-frequently raised concerns of all residents in Napa County at every income level.

Napa County is limited in new housing location options due to zoning. Our urban growth boundaries are very firm, and everyone agrees that they should stay that way because they support a high quality of life and an agricultural economy. This means that all, or nearly all, additional housing will be built inside city limits, where supervisors do not have jurisdiction. Partnerships will be crucial.

As your supervisor, my role will be to coordinate with the State of California and cities throughout Napa County to secure and distribute funding to support the construction of housing that is affordable and attainable for low-income residents.

Some new projects, such as the Monarch housing development, are in the works, but we will need to do much more to comply with substantial state mandates. This will require strong and functional partnerships with cities, especially the City of Napa. I am committed to working toward that goal.

Napa Mayor Scott Sedgley and supervisor Joelle Gallagher, who share the goal of building housing that is affordable so that families can succeed in Napa, have endorsed me in this race. Each of us brings this issue forward at every opportunity. I look forward to successfully partnering with Scott, Joelle, and others on this issue.

For more details about solutions, please visit my [priorities page](#).

#### *6. What distinguishes your candidacy and campaign from the other candidates for this office*

As a 46-year-old scientist with a career working in natural resource management, I know that today's decisions will have a long-lasting impact. I am hard-working and always finding ways to leverage what I have at-hand to build a cleaner, safer, and more kind world. These are goals I've pursued through field science work documenting environmental conditions, producing books on natural resource management, teaching hundreds of state agency employees through the UC Extension, and researching and communicating a wide variety of topics.

Some examples of my mapping work include Safe Routes to School maps for the Napa Bicycle Coalition, a Connolly Ranch site map for kids (*gratis*), and educational maps for many issues of San Francisco Estuary News Magazine.

My skills in critical thinking, data analysis, and collaborative processes will complement the existing Board of Supervisors in meaningful ways. I have excellent working knowledge of regional environmental concerns, know what questions to ask, and have strong connections to the research community.

Even more importantly, I will serve with generations worth of love for our community and a commitment to our future. We need a champion who will not shy from difficult conversations—whose direction and decisions will be rooted in science, research, and community engagement while ensuring transparent governance. These are the elements that distinguish my candidacy.

*7. Do you believe that the County has a role in addressing climate change? YES!  
If yes, as a Supervisor, what main policy or two would you champion?*

I understand the nuts and bolts of the climate crisis and am prepared to work with urgency on the parts of this problem that we can address locally. I bring an unparalleled depth of knowledge on water resources, fire ecology, and sustainable transportation - each a critical component of getting on-track for climate solutions.

I would prioritize the finalization and adoption of a Climate Action Plan and work to update the General Plan in ways that fully incorporate current climate science. Napa County would benefit in many ways from adopting a Habitat Conservation Plan - something that I will advocate for when elected.

We need a more comprehensive drought contingency plan that involves partnerships with adjacent counties. More comprehensive monitoring for wells and better protections for surface water supplies will also help us for the years ahead.

With fire, we need to invest in fire readiness and fuel reduction, and find ways to secure long-term funding for maintenance.

Transportation is a major component of Napa's emissions. Preparing for the shift to electric and hydrogen-fuel vehicles and working to reduce vehicle miles traveled are key. I have a clear understanding of state and national transportation policy and how they connect to local processes.

*8. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?*

This community is amazing, and deserves excellent leaders. It is time we tackle the difficult issues facing our community with collaboration. I am committed to consensus-driven processes and transparent and accountable governance.

We are well-positioned to win in March! My campaign steering committee is hard working and productive. Over 100 community members have already expressed interest in volunteering. We are meeting our fundraising goals, have invested in software to aid walking precincts, are following an outreach plan, and will be running and attending numerous events.

Thank you for the opportunity to seek an endorsement from the Democrats of Napa Valley. I hope you will join our team!

AMBER MANFREE  
*Signature*

November 1, 2023  
*Date*