

# California Native Plant Society

## POLICY ON OAK HARDWOODS

Adopted September 1989

### Issue Statement

The native oaks of California are a distinctive and unique feature of our landscape. Because of the rapid and extensive land conversions in oak woodlands, savannas, and riparian areas of the state, coupled with an apparent lack of regeneration of several species, the California Native Plant Society is deeply concerned about the long-term survival of native oaks. Fragmentation of oak habitats reduces their ability to provide the full range of ecological benefits, including maintenance of species diversity, soil and watershed protection, and wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic values. For most native oak species basic ecological information is incomplete; current management decisions are being made based upon inadequate understanding of their consequences for oaks. Adequate attention- -voluntary, regulatory, or legislative- -is not being paid to native oaks at the local, county, or state levels. The goals of CNPS are to protect, maintain, and restore native oaks and their natural communities for present and future generations.

### Oak Hardwood Policy

CNPS policy is to educate ourselves and others about the values of native oaks, to support and encourage research about the ecology and distribution of native oaks, to encourage voluntary conservation of these species, and where necessary to advocate regulation in order to prevent further loss of oak habitats in both urban and rural areas. The Society supports an accelerated program of data collection, census information, and mapping of all oak species (*Quercus* spp.) beginning with the valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) and Engelman oak (*Quercus engelmanni*).

CNPS supports land use decisions which permit uses of the land consistent with the long-term maintenance of oak populations. The Society strongly discourages further conversions of oak habitats to residential, commercial, agricultural, or other uses. Since most oaks grow on private lands, the Society encourages individuals, organizations, and agencies to explore cooperative, incentive, and other non-regulatory programs such as conservation easements, transfers of development rights (TDRs), acquisition, and cooperative resource management plans (CRMPs) to maintain and improve existing oak habitats. Where conservation of oak habitats cannot be achieved by non-regulatory programs, CNPS recognizes the need to advocate regulation. In many situations local ordinances and solutions are preferable to state level regulation.

On commercial public and private timber lands CNPS supports recognition of oak species as an integral component of the forest. Wherever oaks occur on these lands, the Society advocates restocking to the pre-harvest composition in timber stand regeneration.

Where oak habitats have been degraded or extirpated, CNPS supports efforts to artificially regenerate stands using only local seed and seedlings from ecotypically similar sites. Such restoration should extend to the entire complement of native species and dynamic processes associated with oak woodlands, savannas, and riparian areas.

CNPS supports creation of public and private preserves for permanent conservation of the variety of oak habitats in California. In some situations where it may be important to conserve local populations, mixed uses of the land may not be appropriate. Individual chapters are urged to identify critical oak habitat in their regions and work toward permanent protection of these sites.

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