

California Native Plant Society

POLICY ON SHRUBLAND MANAGEMENT

Adopted in September 1993

Modified from 1985 CNPS Guidelines to Chapters

1. The California Native Plant Society recognizes the inherent value of the more than 10 million acres of native shrublands in California. These shrublands include the vegetation types variously called shrub, chaparral, or brushland. These values include:

a. The protection of easily eroded slopes by breaking the fall of rain drops, slowing run-off, and preventing wet, unstable soil from slipping or slumping through the anchoring of deep perennial root systems.

b. The ability of shrublands to grow in soils of low fertility, as well as in better soils. This low fertility may be due to the natural mineral composition of the soil or may be the result of agricultural practices that have altered the original soil composition or structure.

c. The habitat provided for California's native wildlife, including insects, reptiles, birds and mammals. About 40 per cent of California's rare plants are found in shrublands, more than in any other vegetation type.

d. The shrub plants themselves and their associated plant species provide enjoyment and beauty and offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

e. The shrub habitat constitutes an evolving outdoor laboratory for understanding our natural environment.

2. The California Native Plant Society supports management activities which sustain the biodiversity of the shrubland community and do not threaten elimination of its native components. Any change in activities which have hitherto sustained the community should be thoroughly analyzed.

3. The California Native Plant Society opposes the conversion of shrubland by any means to forage, row orchard, or cover crops, or other forms of natural vegetation (type conversion), except by natural processes. If type conversion is proposed, compelling evidence should be provided that the fertility and stability of the soil is capable of supporting the modified resource in a sustainable manner, and that a reasonable return on the investment, including public resources, can be expected.

4. The California Native Plant Society acknowledges the value of controlled burning under limited and carefully controlled conditions where it can be shown to be necessary to protect property, significant stands of vegetation, and to reduce fuel levels through the creation of areas of younger vegetation. The Society recommends that agencies use their policies, regulations, and management actions to discourage building structures in fire-prone areas.

5. The California Native Plant Society supports the use of cool fire as a management tool only at such times that late winter and early growth periods are avoided and at frequencies that maintain a natural ecological balance of these shrubland communities.

6. The California Native Plant Society generally opposes seeding after wildfires, because it interferes with natural revegetation processes.

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