

Oak Woodland

Description: Oak woodlands are defined as oak (*Quercus* spp.) stands with more than 10 percent canopy cover. The predominant oak species in the Central Valley include valley oak, blue oak, and interior live oak.



Interesting Facts

- Acorn crops can vary greatly from year to year. During “heavy” years, acorns can rain down from the trees, almost covering the ground beneath them. In “sparse” years, one can travel from tree to tree and have difficulty locating more than a handful.
- A single acre of oak woodland may be home to 10 to 100 million types of insects and other invertebrates.
- Oak gall wasps actually put the oaks to work for them by manipulating oak biochemistry to form galls, the curiously shaped, often brightly colored swellings that occur on oak leaves and twigs. The galls provide nutrients and protection for the wasp’s larvae.

Why is this community important?

- Oaks and other hardwoods are found on over 21 million acres in California, occurring in 48 of the state’s 58 counties.
- Oaks preserve water quality and increase water availability in California by filtering runoff.
- Healthy perennial oak grasslands provide excellent protection from erosion, and produce a much lower fire fuel load potential.

Conservation Status and Threats:

- Approximately 80% of hardwood rangelands are in private ownership; therefore wildlife conservation will depend in large part on the activities of private landowners.
- The principle threat to oak woodlands in the Central Valley comes from residential development and intensive agriculture conversion.