

Placer County Oak Woodland Management Plan

The California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program, enacted by Chapter 588, Statutes of 2001, recognizes the importance of California's oak woodlands, how they enhance the natural and scenic beauty of the State, the critical role of the private landowner and the importance of private land stewardship. The Act further acknowledges how oak woodlands increase the monetary and ecological value of real property and promote ecological balance.

Placer County's Oak Woodland Management Plan provides a consistent policy for oak woodland habitats throughout the county and compliments programs and policies including: 1) projects subject to an environmental assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); 2) projects subject to the Placer County Tree Preservation Ordinance; and (3) projects evolving out of the Placer Legacy Program. Ultimately the goal of this plan will be to adequately mitigate the impact of the loss of oak woodland communities, and provide guidance on the conservation of the oak woodland communities. The management plan also takes into consideration other trees and plants associated with the oak woodland-dominated natural communities and the value these communities provide to wildlife, air and water quality benefits, and quality of life.

Placer County's Oak Woodlands Management Plan will give the County the opportunity to obtain funding for projects designed to conserve and restore Placer's oak woodlands. While the Plan is countywide in nature, it provides opportunities to address oak woodland issues on a project priority basis to achieve oak woodland protection. More importantly, this Plan will provide a mechanism to bring ranchers and conservationists together in a manner that allows both to achieve that which is so valued, -- sustainable ranch and farming operations and healthy oak woodlands.

Recognizing the importance of oak woodlands and the critical role private landowners have in the conservation of oaks, Placer County created the Oak Woodlands Management Plan with the expressed intent of accomplishing the following:

- Support and encourage voluntary, long-term private stewardship and conservation of Placer County oak woodlands by offering landowners financial incentives to protect and promote biologically functional oak woodlands;
- Provide incentives to protect and encourage farming and ranching operations that are operated in a manner that protect and promote healthy oak woodlands;
- Provide incentives for the protection of oak trees providing superior wildlife values on private land, and;
- Encourage land use planning that is consistent with oak woodlands preservation.
- Identify appropriate methods to mitigate oak woodland losses.

The Oak Woodland Management Plan contains a number of key elements. In part these are incorporated to address the requirements of the grant funding program for which applications will be filed. Additionally, the Plan provides additional policy direction for staff on conservation efforts associated with Placer Legacy and for mitigation for oak impacts. The following is a brief summary of those key elements.

Importance of Oak Habitats for Wildlife: Oak woodlands provide habitat for some 331 species of wildlife, moderate temperature extremes, reduce soil erosion and sustain water quality. Oak

woodlands are thought to have the richest wildlife species abundance of any habitat in California, as some 331 species depend on this habitat to varying degrees.

The Economic Importance of Oak Woodlands: The Plan forests such as oak woodlands are important assets, and their economic and social value to the state is well documented. Placer County recognizes the importance of California’s oak woodlands, how they enhance the natural and scenic beauty of California, the critical role of the private landowner and the importance of private land stewardship.

Conservation Goals & Policies: An implementation strategy for the Placer County Oak Woodland Management Plan is in development. It will include the engagement of local, bioregional conservation efforts to better define bioregional priorities for acquisition, restoration, and focused conservation efforts. The implementation process will eventually include a series of local workshops and public outreach to:

- Familiarize local organizations with the Management Plan and the implementation ideas.
- Identify local initiatives, projects, and organizations capable of working as local partners to achieve habitat conservation and restoration targets.
- Develop conservation and restoration acreage objectives based on inventory, assessment and biological need.

Attachments:

Oak Woodland Management Plan

Figures:

1. Woodlands of Placer County
2. Valley Oak Woodlands
3. Valley Foothill Riparian
4. Blue Oak Woodlands
5. Montane Hardwood
6. Montane Riparian
7. Montane Forest
8. Upper Montane Forest
9. Sub-Alpine Forest
10. Juniper Woodland