

# OAK WOODLAND ENHANCEMENT FACT SHEET

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program for Oak Woodlands

### Why Protect and Preserve Oak Woodlands?

#### Benefits

In California's North Coast region, deciduous oak woodlands represent hot spots of biodiversity. Oak woodlands in Mendocino County and throughout the North Coast, provide a wealth of ecological services to wildlife, people, and the landscape through improved water quality, maintaining fire-resilient landscapes, preventing erosion, and sequestering carbon.

#### Encroachment Problem

Oak woodlands are being lost to disease, urban sprawl, agriculture, and conifer encroachment. The spread of conifers into oak woodlands is due primarily to fire suppression in the past 50-100 years. Conifers, particularly Douglas-fir, grow quickly, overtop, and eventually shade out oaks, leading to a loss of this important habitat type.

#### Opportunities for Restoration

There are opportunities available to landowners interested in restoring and/or improving oak woodlands by working with local agencies such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), CAL FIRE, and the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD). These agencies can provide technical and financial assistance to landowners who want to participate in oak-centered conservation practices.

### Mendocino County Resources

Contact the following organizations for more information.

**NRCS - Ukiah:** (707) 468-9223

1252 Airport Rd, Ukiah, CA 95482

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/ca/home/>

**Mendocino County RCD:** (707) 462-3664

410 Jones St. Ste. C3, Ukiah, CA 95482

<http://mcrcd.org/>

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### Problems in Oak Woodlands

- Conifers in deciduous oak understories eventually overtop, shade out, and kill oaks.
- Conifer encroachment reduces the value of oak woodlands for livestock grazing and as habitat for deer and other wildlife.
- The presence of conifers in oak woodlands increases the "ladder" fuel effect during wildfires.
- California black oak is also under threat from Sudden Oak Death (SOD), which continues to spread throughout northwestern California.

#### Cost-Share Funding for Oaks

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for Oak Woodlands - NRCS
- NRCS and MCRCD staff are available for technical assistance
- Projects include conifer removal from historic oak woodlands

#### Eligibility

Applicants must own non-industrial forestland. Limitations on Adjusted Gross Income must also be met and control of the land must be documented.

#### How to Apply

Applications to NRCS's EQIP program are accepted throughout the year. To receive an application, call their office or visit their website.