

ANR NEWS RELEASES

News releases from the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Partnership brings \$2.6 million to North Coast to restore oak woodlands

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Evergreen conifers crowd out oak trees. Photo by Redwood National Park staff

A partnership of eight agencies and organizations, led by University of California Cooperative Extension, is bringing \$2.6 million to Humboldt, Mendocino and Trinity counties through the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The grant will fund oak woodland restoration efforts on private lands over the next 5 years, providing much-needed resources to conserve and restore wildlife habitat.

The loss of oak woodlands in California's North Coast is a critical conservation concern because it is associated with losses of biodiversity and wildlife habitat, range values, cultural resources, and other oak-dependent ecosystem services. In the absence of natural disturbances like fire, conifers can outcompete deciduous oaks and eventually the oaks die. In recent years, the effects of conifer encroachment on oaks have become a focal point for UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, which has conducted important research on oak woodland conservation in Humboldt and Mendocino counties.

“UC ANR research has shown that conifer encroachment is threatening oak woodlands throughout the North Coast. This project is really exciting because it will give landowners the resources they need to restore their oak stands — resources that haven't been there in the past,” said Lenya Quinn-Davidson, UC ANR Cooperative Extension staff research associate, who led development of the project proposal.

Oak woodland restoration requires removing conifers from oak stands with prescribed fire or by cutting down the conifer trees.

“The North Coast Oak Woodland Conservation Project will provide technical guidance and resources for landowners who wish to restore or conserve their oak woodlands, and foster a strong alliance of organizations and agencies who can continue oak woodland conservation efforts into the future,” said Quinn-Davidson, who is based in Eureka.

For more information about the project or funds for oak conservation activities on private lands, contact Quinn-Davidson at lquinndavidson@ucanr.edu and (707) 445-7351.

The North Coast Oak Woodland Conservation Project was one of six projects in California selected for Regional Conservation Partnership Program funding. The funded projects focus on a range of issues, including bird habitat, climate change and forest health. The program, which is funding 84 projects totaling \$220 million nationwide, is highly competitive, requiring strong partnerships that address critical conservation issues.

"We are excited and energized by these new projects that bring together a diverse mix of partners to improve California's ecosystems and landscape," said Carlos Suarez, Natural Resources Conservation Service state conservationist. "It is very powerful to be able to engage in partnerships that embrace both agricultural and environmental interests and perspectives—and find collaborative ways of making progress on critical issues."

Partners in the North Coast Oak Woodland Conservation Project include University of California Cooperative Extension, CAL FIRE, the Watershed Research and Training Center, the North Coast Regional Land Trust, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Mattole Restoration Council, Yager/Van Duzen Environmental Stewards, and the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District.