

### 5.3.35 Valley Oak Woodland (*Quercus lobata* Woodland Alliance)



**Valley oak woodland**  
Photo Credit: Danny Slakey

#### Status

- State Rarity S3 (Vulnerable)

#### Ecological Requirements

- RCIS Regions: All terrestrial regions
- RCIS Natural Communities: Valley Oak Woodland
- Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) is dominant or co-dominant in the tree canopy (CNPS 2019b).
- Valley oak woodland (VOW) occurs in valley bottoms, lower slopes, and summit valleys in alluvial or residual soils (CNPS 2019b).
- Has low sapling recruitment (CNPS 2019b)
- Full account available: A Manual of California Vegetation, Online Edition Online (CNPS 2019b)
- RCIS Conservation Priority: Moderate

#### Associated Non-Focal Species

- Western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*)
- Yellow-billed magpie (*Pica nuttalli*)

**Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment**

Table 5-58. summarizes the climate change exposure, spatial distribution, and vulnerability for valley oak woodland natural communities statewide, which could experience a 25 to 75 percent reduction in habitat suitability.

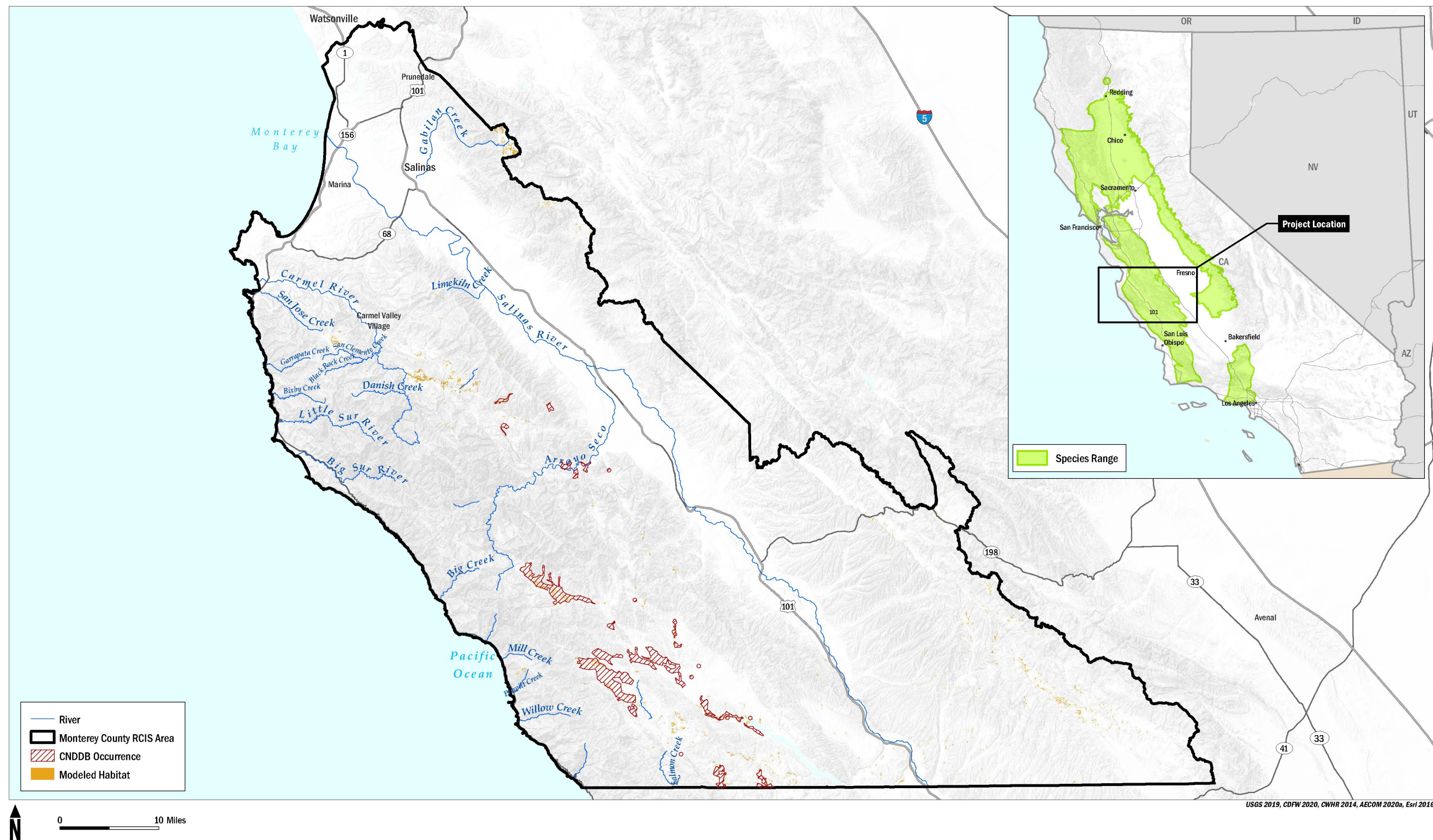
**Table 5-57. Valley Oak Woodland Natural Community Vulnerability Ranking**

Natural Communities	Climate Exposure and Spatial Disruption Rank High Emissions (RCP8.5) Warm and Wet	Climate Exposure and Spatial Disruption Rank High Emissions (RCP8.5) Hot and Dry	Combined Vulnerability Rank High Emissions (RCP8.5)
Valley Oak Woodland	Moderate	Mid-High	Moderate

Source: Thorne et al. 2016

The goals, objectives, and actions shown in Table 5-58. aim to protect, enhance, and restore present day suitable habitats for valley oak woodland, as well as habitats that may become suitable in the future because of projected climate changes. Actions also address population stability, such as managing grazing to allow for sapling establishment, which may lead to expansion into newly suitable habitats in the future.

Figure 5-31 shows the range and modeled habitat for valley oak woodland.



**FIGURE 5-31**  
Valley Oak Woodland

**Figure 5-31. Valley Oak Woodland Range and Modeled Habitat**

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### Valley Oak Woodland Conservation Priorities, Goals, Objectives, and Actions

RC Goal 1 and all Plant goals, objectives, and actions apply to valley oak woodland. Table 5-58 summarizes specific goals, objectives, and actions for valley oak woodland.

#### Conservation Priorities

- Protect and preserve habitat surrounding known occurrences in the San Antonio River Valley, Arroyo Seco Valley, and Nacimiento River Valley (RC Objective 1.1).
- Promote sapling recruitment through appropriate management of grazing and vegetation to protect seedlings (VOW 1.2.2).

**Table 5-58. Valley Oak Woodland Goals, Objectives, and Actions**

Goal	Objective	Threats	Co-Benefits	Action
VOW Goal 1. Promote persistence of valley oak woodland habitat in the RCIS area through protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat.	VOW Objective 1.1: Protect known occurrences and allow expansion by protecting 2,400 acres of suitable habitat. Measure progress toward achieving this objective by acres of habitat and adjacent/equivalent acres protected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat loss, degradation, fragmentation</li> <li>• Climate change</li> </ul>		RC Objective 1.1 (Protection) actions

Goal	Objective	Threats	Co-Benefits	Action
VOW Goal 1.	VOW Objective 1.2: Enhance valley oak woodland habitat. Measure progress toward achieving this objective by acres of habitat and adjacent/equivalent acres enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat loss, degradation, fragmentation</li> <li>• Climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change resilience</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Other focal/non-focal species</li> </ul>	VOW 1.2.1: Maintain plant and wildlife species diversity and richness.
VOW Goal 1.	VOW Objective 1.2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of sapling recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other focal/non-focal species</li> <li>• Working lands</li> </ul>	VOW 1.2.2: Manage grazing to ensure that it is compatible with valley oak woodlands (e.g., protecting seedlings).
VOW Goal 1.	VOW Objective 1.2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RC Objective 1.2 (Enhancement) threats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other focal/non-focal species</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Climate change resilience</li> </ul>	RC Objective (Enhancement) 1.2 actions

Goal	Objective	Threats	Co-Benefits	Action
VOW Goal 1.	VOW Objective 1.3: Restore valley oak woodland habitat. Measure progress toward achieving this objective by acres of habitat and adjacent/equivalent acres enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat loss, degradation, fragmentation</li> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Lack of sapling recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other focal/non-focal species</li> <li>• Working lands</li> </ul>	VOW 1.3.1: Plant valley oak seedlings in suitable habitat.
VOW Goal 1.	VOW Objective 1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant Objective (Restoration) 1.1 threats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire management</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> <li>• Other focal/non-focal species</li> </ul>	Plant Objective (Restoration) 1.1 actions

Sources: CDFW 2015, 2020; CNPS 2019b