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Protecting oak woodlands

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Oaks in the Urban Landscape,
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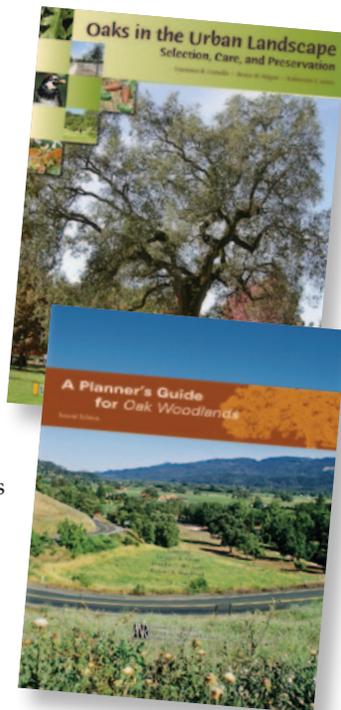
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COMING UP in California Agriculture



Implications of eliminating the Williamson Act

Budget cuts have resulted in dramatic reductions of funding for the Williamson Act, California's land protection program that reduces property taxes for the owners of 15 million acres of farms and rangeland. In the next issue of *California Agriculture* journal, researchers report the results of a study in which ranchers were asked their plans under a hypothetical scenario including the elimination of all Williamson Act contracts. More than 70% of the rangeland parcels enrolled in Williamson Act contracts contained habitat important for statewide conservation goals, and survey respondents reported that they would sell 20% of their total 496,889 acres under the proposed scenario. A majority (76%) of the ranchers who reported that they would sell land predicted the buyers would develop it for nonagricultural uses, suggesting substantial changes to California's landscape in a future without the Williamson Act.