

SAN BENITO

Protections in place:

	Oak Tree Retention/ Replacement Provisions	Oak Protection	Heritage Tree Protection	Riparian Vegetation Protections	Oak Canopy Retention Requirements	Oak Woodland Conservation Program
General Plan Language	The Conservation Element promotes tree replacement on- or off-site in oak woodlands. Native tree removal from development projects shall be controlled. A revegetation plan including maintenance and remedial action in the event of mortality is required	None	None	None	None	The Conservation Element promotes regeneration of oak woodland through habitat conservation planning, inter-agency coordination, and development review including clustering. The county should educate landowners and develop programs. Most oak woodland is in 40 acre zoning.
Specific Ordinance	The Interim Woodland Management ordinance requires a permit for tree removal on parcels with 10% woodland removal approaches a canopy retention standard or on slopes >/ 30%. Clearcutting and grading to remove woodlands is prohibited. Permit conditions may include a revegetation plan and a performance bond.	None	None	None	The Interim Woodland Management ordinance requires canopy retention from all when canopy is 20%, up to 65% when cover is 80-100%. Retention standards are increased for tree removal on slopes.	None
Voluntary Guidelines	None	None	None	None	None	None

Documents reviewed:

Date of Review: August 2003

- Open Space Element
- Conservation Element
- Land Use Element
- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Ordinance

- Grading and Erosion Ordinance
- Roads/Sidewalk Tree Ordinance
- Tree Removal Ordinance
- Voluntary Guidelines
- Other County Codes: Environmental Resources Constraints Inventory 1994

Summary of Oak Protection Policies:

<p>Open Space and Conservation, 1995</p>	<p>OAK WOODLANDS: The County will promote restoration, restocking, and protection of oak woodland habitat on public and private lands in the County through habitat conservation planning, inter-agency coordination, and development review procedures. Coordination with neighboring counties where oak hardwood communities intermingle is necessary to inventory resources, educate private and public landowners, and develop programs for regeneration and maintenance of these significant plant communities. Development near oak woodlands shall be clustered to avoid, where practical, the loss of trees, and transitional buffers shall be developed to help maintain viable ecosystems. Where removal of trees cannot be avoided, a mitigation plan shall be developed for tree replacement on- or off-site. Oak woodlands should be included in a sensitive resource overlay.</p> <p>TREE REMOVAL: Grading, erosion, and native tree removal for all development proposals shall be controlled to minimize erosion. All native trees must be illustrated on site plans along with proposed grading plans and location of utilities. A revegetation plan shall be submitted with the grading plans detailing the type of plants to be re-established, details of the preparatory measures, and methods of planting and maintenance. The plan shall include provisions for remedial action in the event the revegetation plan fails.</p> <p>WILDLIFE HABITAT: In rural areas, road and development sites shall be designed to maintain habitat connectivity of open space areas. Measures to maintain the long-term health of the plant and animal communities in the area shall be incorporated into project design. Where mitigation is not feasible off-site mitigation measures shall be developed</p> <p>OPEN SPACE: Plan amendments and studies that result in a net increase in general plan buildout shall include methods to conserve open space for natural resources including wildlife habitat such as conservation easements and/or other similar resource protection measures). Proposed development areas shall protect resources on-site and contiguous to the project with clustering, conservation easements, and other similar programs.</p>
<p>Environmental Resources And</p>	<p>General Plan Guidelines recommend that Counties identify specific oak species that occur in stands 5 acres or larger and have 5 or more trees per acre. Hardwood rangeland covers nearly half of the County. Over 82% of the hardwood lands</p>

Constraints Inventory, 1994	are in private ownership. None of the hardwood resources in the County are "reserved", or protected as habitat on public or private lands. One of the factors used to determine whether hardwoods are and will be threatened by urbanization is to review zoning and land use practices. The majority of the hardwood resources in the County are located within the Agricultural Rangeland zoning district with a minimum lot size of 40 acres. The base density will deter sub-urbanization of most woodlands. The allowed land uses of rangeland and some wood-cutting could hinder successful regeneration of some hardwood habitats particularly Blue Oak, Blue Oak Foothill Pine and Valley Oak. The Coast Oak Woodland is the only habitat in the County that may be threatened by suburban development. Existing and future development in the Aromas area with Rural (1 unit/5 acres) and Rural Transitional (1 unit/2.5 acres) zoning and the San Juan Canyon with Rural (1 unit /5 acres) zoning could limit habitat.
Zoning Ordinance, 1997	<p>SCENIC VEGETATION: The Zoning Ordinance designates Scenic Corridors of 340-400' from state highways. The County shall carefully review all projects involving grading within scenic corridors. The proposed project shall be relocated, modified, redesigned, or if no alternative, screened to minimize visual impacts of grading operations seen from any scenic highway. Vegetative cover is required to hide grading scars and blend with the natural landscape.</p> <p>OPEN SPACE DISTRICTS: Open Space Districts are established to protect open space land for wildlife habitat. Existing natural vegetation shall remain in a natural state unless modifications found to be necessary for specific use as approved by the Planning Commission. Reduction or elimination of fire hazards shall be required where heavy concentrations of flammable vegetation Occurs. Removal of trees may be permitted upon approval of the Planning Commission. All grading shall be subject to the provisions of the Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance.</p>
Interim Woodland Management Ordinance 757, 2002	<p>TREE REMOVAL: The ordinance applies to parcels covered by at least 10% woodland vegetation or that historically supported woodlands. Tree removal requires a permit when 90-100% of the allowable amount is slated for removal within 10 years, or slopes are >/ 30%. Allowable amounts are developed as canopy retention standards based on original canopy cover. All canopy must be retained when cover is 20% or less. 65% of the canopy must be retained when original cover is 80-100%. Retention standards are increased for tree removal on slopes. Retention of undisturbed woodlands is preferred to retention of individual trees. Clearcutting and grading to remove woodlands is prohibited. Permit applications must include a statement of reasons for removal. Permit conditions may include time of operation, a revegetation plan, and prohibition of removal of some trees. Reforestation must be started at least 1 year before clearing, grading, or construction permits are issued. Permits may be denied when the project requires excessive cutting on slopes >30% or is a public nuisance. A performance bond and inspection are required. Violations are infractions.</p>
Subdivision Ordinance	Subdivision tentative maps must show any trees proposed to be removed or impacted by species, dbh and dripline of existing trees with a dbh 4" or more.

Contact Information:

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County Contacts:

- No contacts
- Policies provided by county staff
- Policies discussed with county staff
- Policy inventory reviewed by county staff