

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

Declaring “Oaktober 2025” in Los Angeles County and Supporting Oak Tree Stewardship By Combatting Invasive Pests

Oak trees are an essential part of Los Angeles County’s natural and cultural heritage. Local tribes have long cultivated oak woodlands in their ancestral territories and oaks continue to hold great cultural significance. Oaks are keystone species that provide habitat for hundreds of species, help combat the effects of climate change, and contribute to the ecological resilience of our communities.

The County has taken important steps to safeguard these vital resources through policy, education, and interdepartmental collaboration. These efforts build on *Room to Grow*, the County’s first ever Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP), adopted by the Board in 2024, which provides a long-term, equity-focused framework for expanding and stewarding the community forest—including oaks—across neighborhoods, parks, and streets. Protecting our oak woodlands requires action across the full spectrum of stewardship—from forward-looking planning and permitting, to early detection of and rapid response to invasive pests, to community education and engagement efforts.

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The Department of Regional Planning (DRP) is currently undertaking a significant update to the County's Oak Tree Permit Ordinance. This effort, now in the community engagement stage, seeks to ensure that the permitting process is both effective at protecting oak trees and responsive to unintended consequences of the existing process—such as discouraging oak tree planting in some cases. By improving the regulatory framework, DRP is laying the foundation for stronger long-term protections and encouraging the continued presence of oak trees in our communities.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD), recently established the region's first Invasive Pest Management Unit (IPMU) and is working to secure permanent funding. The IPMU will serve as the regional authority on goldspotted oak borer (GSOB), an invasive pest that is typically fatal to oak trees and which is now present in parts of Los Angeles County. LACoFD is actively engaged in providing education about GSOB, surveying and trapping for early detection of new infestation, and monitoring and response for existing infestations. For example, the IPMU has partnered closely with DPR to respond to a recent GSOB infestation at Marshall Canyon.

At the same time, the Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures (AC/WM) is advancing multiple strategies to protect oaks and other trees from invasive pests. ACWM has expanded pest detection training for its own staff and is working to train relevant staff at County departments, including the Department of Public Works (PW) and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). AC/WM has also worked to assess the County's firewood and untreated cut wood supply chain and is preparing a public communications campaign based on those findings to promote best practices such as not moving firewood, sourcing local firewood, and contacting AC/WM for inspection

when signs of infestations are observed.

County departments are also collaborating to engage expert partners and build community capacity through a series of “GSOB Bioblitz” events, in partnership with University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). Earlier this year, the County and UC ANR held a GSOB Bioblitz event in San Dimas, hosted by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and co-led by AC/WM, DPR, and LACoFD, and additional events are scheduled this month at Placerita Canyon and in the Santa Monica Mountains. At these events, County and UC ANR experts work with volunteers to survey oak trees for signs of GSOB, while training participants in detection and reporting. Bioblitz events both expand the County’s ability to monitor oaks and create more oak tree stewards within our communities.

As part of CFMP implementation, the Chief Sustainability Office (CSO) reconvened the County’s internal Tree Committee in 2025 to enhance interdepartmental collaboration. The Committee has established several sub-groups, including two directly related to oak stewardship. The Oaks and Mapping sub-group is developing data-driven approaches to identify and protect oaks and other significant species, while the Invasive Pest Management sub-group is leading coordinated strategies to monitor, prevent, and respond to threats such as GSOB, including those described here. Through these combined efforts, Los Angeles County is demonstrating a comprehensive and proactive approach to oak tree stewardship. Declaring “Oaktober” in Los Angeles County provides an opportunity to celebrate this work, raise public awareness, and strengthen partnerships across agencies and communities.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Declare October 2025 as “Oaktober” in Los Angeles County to recognize and celebrate the ecological, cultural, and community value of oak trees, and encourage all County agencies to promote awareness of trees and community partners working to advance this work.
2. Direct Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures and the Los Angeles County Fire Department, in partnership with the Chief Sustainability Office and the Department of Parks and Recreation, to engage external partners—including cities and regional agencies—to provide training, best practices, and inspection services related to invasive pests and oak tree management.

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