

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH**

**Declaring “Oaktober” in Los Angeles County**

Oak trees are exceptionally beautiful and beneficial trees, with many oak species native to Los Angeles County. Our native oaks are critical species in our region’s cultural and ecological histories. Local tribes have long cultivated oak woodlands in their ancestral territories and oaks continue to hold great cultural significance. Oaks are a keystone species supporting whole ecological systems that support many species of insects, birds, fungi, and mammals.

Oaks play an outsized role in securing our climate resilience. For example, coast live oaks provide dense, evergreen shade, which can reduce urban heat island effect and even lower energy bills for nearby buildings. Their deep taproots and wide canopies mean they can provide maximum above-ground benefits while limiting underground infrastructure conflicts. They are drought tolerant during dry periods and act as sponges during stormwater events, preventing soil erosion and helping to mitigate flooding due to stormwater. Oak trees are also particularly resilient during wildfires due to their thick bark that insulates them from heat. They are the exclusive host plant for many native pollinators in addition to supporting huge amounts of other species.

In the County’s *OurCounty* sustainability plan, Goal 2 focuses on creating buildings and infrastructure that enhance human health and resilience. A key strategy for achieving this goal is to develop a climate-appropriate and equitable urban tree canopy. To support this, the County is actively increasing its urban forestry efforts, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of trees in our communities. The County is utilizing a \$1.5 million grant from CALFIRE to create the “Room to Grow” Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP), and a \$8 million Urban and Community Forestry grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for early-action implementation

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of the CFMP.

This long-term strategy will oversee tree management in unincorporated communities and ensure a climate-appropriate, healthy, and equitably distributed community tree canopy. The plan will also provide valuable information, analysis, and guidance for the entire LA region, ensuring that all residents can benefit from trees today and in the future. The plan aims to deliver numerous benefits, including shade to mitigate extreme heat, rainwater capture, wildlife habitat, and shade to mitigate extreme heat.

The County also has an oak tree protection ordinance in place, which includes a permit requirement for certain oak trees. This measure safeguards oak trees deemed significant for their historical, aesthetic, and ecological value. Finally, in May 2024, the Board passed a motion to take decisive action against the Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB), which has been identified within the County. GSOBs are an invasive pest that is typically fatal to oak trees and can spread rapidly through human activity.

The County's efforts will be supported by additional projects from Urban and Community Forestry grant recipients in our region, including the cities of Azusa, Bellflower, Carson, Glendale, Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Signal Hill, as well as Cal State Northridge. TreePeople, which publishes free educational videos and articles to assist with tree planting and maintenance, also hosts weekly tree planting events in October that are open to the public. For more information on volunteering, visit [TreePeople's website <<https://treepeople.org/volunteer/>>](https://treepeople.org/volunteer/). The [Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains <<https://www.rcdsmm.org/>>](https://www.rcdsmm.org/) and the [Santa Monica Mountains Fund <<https://www.samofund.org/people>>](https://www.samofund.org/people) are also hosting numerous events associated with "Oaktober," including oak tree care and planting workshops, and educational nature hikes. More information can be found by visiting their websites. Finally, the LA County Fire Department's nurseries are giving away free native trees to residents, including oak saplings. For more information, reach out to [fire-malibuforestryunit@fire.lacounty.gov <<mailto:fire-malibuforestryunit@fire.lacounty.gov>>](mailto:fire-malibuforestryunit@fire.lacounty.gov).

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors [proclaim October 2024 as "Oaktober" throughout Los Angeles County and encourage all County agencies to promote awareness of trees in general and of oak trees in particular, thereby enhancing our environment, protecting our cultural heritage, and supporting a sustainable and resilient future for all residents.]

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