

California adds two more forests to the Old-Growth Forest Network!

In March, two California forests were added to the network, one in San Francisco County and one in Marin County. In San Francisco County, The Oak Woodlands of Golden Gate Park was added on March 14. In Marin County, Samuel P. Taylor State Park was dedicated on March 15.

The Oak Woodlands celebration took place at the Conservatory of Flowers. Following the dedication there was a walk to the grove and a volunteer work party to continue the restoration.

The Oak Woodlands are located in the northeast corner of Golden Gate Park. The coast live oak, *Quercus agrifolia*, is really the only indigenous tree in San Francisco County that existed here before European colonization. There are 3 major areas where these old-growth oak woodlands occur: Golden Gate Park, Buena Vista Park, and the Presidio. The grove in Golden Gate Park is the largest of the three, and there is good documentation that the trees pre-date the park itself and are hundreds of years old. When Golden Gate Park was started in 1871 approximately fifty acres of wooded oak areas were left as 'wilderness.' The trees, an historic remnant of an earlier landscape, were eventually cut for fuel but they resprouted and some of the trees in the woodlands today are from those sprouts. The trees have not yet regained their maximum size. Some of the groves have a scattered overstory of human introduced non-indigenous trees such as the blue gum eucalyptus and the Monterey pine and cypress. Invasive species have changed the nature of the woodland, but aggressive restoration efforts are gradually bringing it closer to its native condition.

The effort to identify and formally qualify a forest for inclusion in the Old-Growth Forest Network is largely dependent on volunteer County Coordinators. Matthew S. Dietz of the Wilderness Society is the County Coordinator for San Francisco County. He and OGFN board member Susan Ives originally toured the forest with Robert Bakewell who has been working for over a decade to restore the Woodlands.