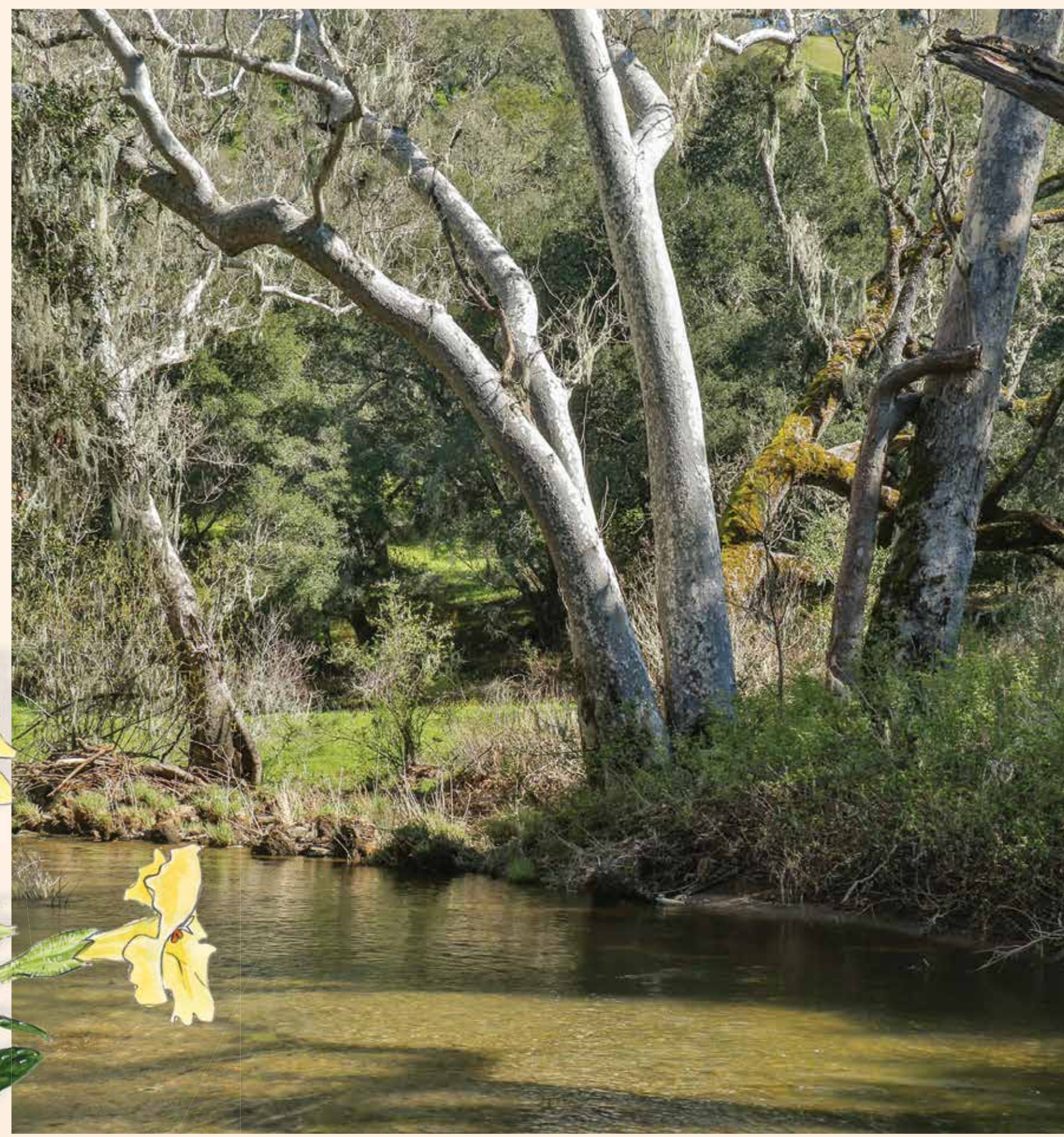


# WHY THIS PRESERVE IS UNIQUE

Three Bridges Oak Preserve has a large elevation change, many north facing slopes, and a strong marine influence at upper elevations. This results in four habitat zones uniquely situated in only 103 acres.



## Riparian Woodland



## Blue Oak Woodland



## Mixed Chaparral



## Coast Live Oak Woodland



Riparian zones are the vegetated areas along rivers and streams. The dynamic conditions in this habitat zone require species which can tolerate flooding, erosion, and sediment deposition. Sycamores and willows are common species in the riparian woodland. California bay, cottonwoods, and a variety of oak trees may also be present. Streams and rivers frequently have gravelly or sandy beds where rapidly

moving water scours away fine soil particles. The finer textured soils accumulate on banks and floodplains. The fine-textured sediment is nutrient rich and supports diverse plant and animal communities. Roots of herbaceous and woody plants stabilize stream banks and reduce erosion. The overhanging tree canopy shades fish habitats, lowers evaporation, and promotes infiltration into the soil.

Walking in this untouched Blue Oak Woodland can be calming. The Blue Oak is endemic to California, meaning they naturally exist nowhere else in the world.

Spacing of trees in the Blue Oak Woodland can vary from dense woodland to an open savanna, covered with a carpet of seasonal grasses. In the spring, annual wildflowers emerge

amongst the grass along with the first flush of young oak leaves.

Blue Oak trees are winter-deciduous and adapted to survive fire and drought. Blue Oak regeneration is frequently low due to competition for water from non-native plants and loss of acorns eaten by wildlife. Blue Oak acorns are a good source of food for deer, rodents, and at least a dozen species of birds.

Drought tolerant plants of the Mixed Chaparral are found on the ridgelines and exposed slopes growing in shallow, nutrient deficient soil. Chaparral communities are dominated by plants adapted to dry, water-scarce environments with prolonged, hot, dry summers, such as California's central coast.

Chaparral shrub species typically have a dense stature, stiff, rigid branches, and thick waxy leaves to help conserve

moisture. They are not normally deciduous, but may shed their leaves during long, hot summers or drought. Chamise, manzanita, scrub oaks, and ceanothus are common in chaparral, as well as toyon, woolly blue curls, deerweed, and bush poppy.

Chaparral communities are adapted to survive periodic wildfire. After a fire, some species recover by re-sprouting from roots, while others species have seeds which actually utilize fire to stimulate sprouting.

The Coast Live Oak, with its dense crown of leaves, is found clustered among the upper seasonal drainages on north and east facing hillsides. This woodland community is composed of a mixed stand of hardwood trees, primarily Coast Live Oak, with scattered California bay along drainages and occasional stands of madrone trees. Between and beneath the tree canopy a diverse mix of shrubs thrive, including manzanita, poison oak, mountain mahogany,

coffeeberry, and wild currant. Mixed evergreen woodlands in California experience periodic wildfires and many of the species are adapted to survive fire. Coast Live Oaks, manzanitas, and madrones in this community re-sprout after a fire.

The Coast Live Oak is most susceptible to Sudden Oak Death (SOD), especially those growing near California bay trees. Valley and Blue Oaks have not demonstrated susceptibility.

