



Land Cover

Climate, elevation, soil type, and topography (the shape of the land) all influence what types of plants grow in different parts of the state. Most of the state has a Mediterranean climate, which brings cool, wet winters and warm, dry summers. The mountainous topography is also important because air temperature decreases with elevation, and the mountains block much of the ocean's moisture from reaching eastern California.

Evergreen forest dominates the northern part of the state but depends on higher elevations further to the south. In the Sierra Nevada, tree canopy shades the snowpack that accumulates in the winter, reducing evaporation and the pace of melting in the spring. **Grasslands** are found in the lower elevations, below the forest, where the climate is warmer and drier. These are important grazing lands for cattle and sheep. Agriculture is concentrated in the Great Central Valley and several valleys of the Coast Ranges. Some agriculture is also in urbanized areas. The **wetland** areas once common in the Central Valley and the coastal **marshlands** are difficult to find on the map because the land is now used for agriculture and cities. Shrub/scrub and exceptionally dry and barren areas without vegetation (including the Mojave Desert) are much less likely to be impacted by human activities.

Land Cover Types

- Developed, Urban
- Agriculture
- Grassland
- Forest
- Shrub/Scrub
- Wetlands
- Year-Round Snow / Ice
- No Vegetation
- Water