

NRSN A T U R A L
R E S E R V E
S Y S T E M

University of California

Site Specs

Administering
Campus
UC IrvineEstablished
1972

Location

San Bernardino County, 2 km (1.2 mi)
north of Yucca Valley.

Size

124 ha (306 acres)

Elevation

1,080 to 1,300 m (3,540 to 4,260 ft)

Average Precipitation

25 cm (10 in) per year

Average Temperatures

July maximum: 35°C (95°F)

January minimum: -1.1°C (30°F)

Facilities

Burns home provides workspace with a computer station and housing for individuals and small groups; workshop is being renovated into a multi-purpose dormitory, classroom, and research space; small trailer; primitive campground; locked gates at entrances.

Databases

Vascular plant and vertebrate surveys; synoptic collection of moths.

Personnel

Reserve steward on site; faculty reserve manager on campus.

NRS Publications

Reserve brochure published 1997.

Contact Information

William Bretz

Office of Natural Reserves

University of California

Irvine, CA 92697-1459

Phone: 949-824-6031

E-mail: WLBRETZ@UCI.EDU

NRS Website

<<http://nrs.ucop.edu>>

Burns Piñon Ridge Reserve

Set in the Morongo Basin of the western Mojave Desert, the Burns Piñon Ridge Reserve is a dry, boulder-strewn landscape of shallow canyons and ridges of sculptured granite. Three floristic regions meet at the site: Transverse Range, Sonoran Desert, and Mojave Desert, creating a diverse mixture of flora and fauna characteristic of both deserts and mountains. Habitats intermingling at the reserve include piñon-juniper woodland with elements of Joshua tree woodland and montane chaparral, desert wash, and freshwater seep. At least 153 vertebrate species cross paths here, including desert and coast horned lizards, desert and dusky-footed woodrats, mountain and Gambel's quail, and three rare species: Townsend's western big-eared bat, California mastiff bat, and the federally and state-threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizi*). Research opportunities are enriched by other natural lands throughout the desert, such as the Joshua Tree National Park a few miles away. Two other NRS reserves for desert research are the Philip L. Boyd Deep Canyon Desert Research Center, less than an hour's drive to the south, and the Jack and Marilyn Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center, two and one-half hours to the east.

Selected Research

Census of small mammals.

Inventory of insects.

Census of avifauna.

Monitoring and inventory of bat species.

Special Programs

Reserve restoration includes removal of exotic plant species.

A preliminary vegetation study has been conducted to establish a possible long-term monitoring site for assessing the impact of global climate change on plant distributions.

The site is used by university field courses in desert ecology, field zoology methods, natural history, biology of deserts, field ecology, botany, environmental ethics, freshwater biology, and others.