The UC Natural Reserve System provides a library of ecosystems throughout California. Reserves offer outdoor laboratories to field scientists, classrooms without walls for students, and nature’s inspiration to all.

Founded in 1965 to provide a network of wildland sites available for scientific study, the NRS has grown to include more than 40 locations encompassing more than 756,000 acres across the state.

The NRS is the world’s largest university-operated system of natural reserves; no other network of field sites can match its size, scope, and ecological diversity.
UC Davis Reserves

Bodega Marine Reserve

Tidepools give way to beaches, active dunes, marsh, and coastal prairie at Bodega Marine Reserve. Harbor seals, shorebirds, and a wide array of marine invertebrates live here year round. A stretch of the San Andreas Fault and the facilities of UC’s Bodega Marine Laboratory help make the reserve a magnet for scientists of many disciplines.

Quail Ridge Reserve

The waters of Lake Berryessa surround the peninsula of Quail Ridge Reserve. Rare native grasses and diverse oak woodlands cloak its steep slopes. Isolation has kept out many weeds, giving stands of native purple needlegrass, juncgrass, and California oniongrass room to flourish. Precipitous terrain plus freedom from electromagnetic noise makes the reserve an ideal site to test environmental sensor and wireless mesh networks.

Jepson Prairie Reserve

An island of remnant Central Valley prairie amid a sea of farmland, Jepson Prairie Reserve comes alive with winter rains. Natural clay-lined vernal pools fill, drawing breeding California tiger salamanders and rousing tadpole and fairy shrimp to hatch. Native wildflowers bloom in rainbow rings around drying pools through spring.

Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve

Stebbins Cold Canyon is nestled within the dry ridges of the northern Coast Range. A riparian woodland lines the banks of its intermittent stream, while the canyon rises on either side through habitats that include chaparral, blue oak woodland, and grasslands.

McLaughlin Natural Reserve

Located at a former gold mine, McLaughlin Natural Reserve protects unusual serpentine habitats. Oak woodlands are interspersed with serpentine and non-serpentine chaparral in a mosaic that includes pristine habitats, rangelands, and reclaimed mining areas.