

Introduction

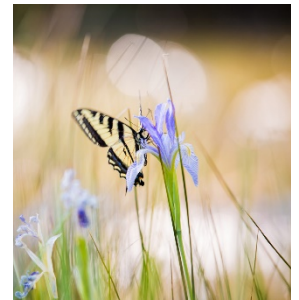
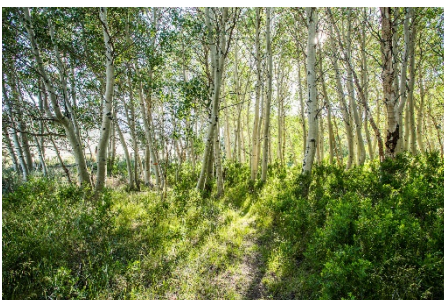
The Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserves are uniquely well situated to advance the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Eastern Sierra ecosystems. The impacts of these advancements have important implications through increased opportunities for science-based training for K-12 and university level students, enhancements of knowledge and strategies for land managers and stewards, and ultimately the improved prosperity and success of the Eastern Sierra region. They can also serve as the keystone in a regionally based community of excellence for collaborative research, and education, providing learning opportunities and experiences for students of all ages and backgrounds.

The two VESR reserves, Valentine Camp and SNARL, have been research field stations of the University of California Natural Reserve System since 1972. Valentine Camp, with its historic buildings characteristic of the Eastern Sierra from the early 1900s, pristine meadows, and diverse habitats represents one of the last, and most biologically diverse montane ecosystems remaining in the Sierra Nevada. In compliment, SNARL represents the one of the most actively utilized research stations in the Eastern Sierra and arguably, in all of California. Its assets include an accomplished and expert group of resident researchers and staff, research and education support facilities, including a fully equipped modern laboratory, high speed internet and computing infrastructure, state of the art classroom and meeting space, and housing accommodations for long and short-term visitors. Both reserves host one of the state's largest and most active Outdoor Science Education Programs, providing critical experiential learning opportunities for students of all ages in the Eastern Sierra region. Opportunities for impact exist at VESR across all education, research and knowledge platforms.

Significant investments by the Valentine Foundation – through the initial generous gift of the Valentine Camp property and associated endowment, provided the initial support for VESR. Additional support from the University of California, Federal and State science and infrastructure programs, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and especially private philanthropists through the Valentine Reserve Fund (VRF) have resulted in a VESR that fully satisfies and excels in all three components of the University of California (UC) Natural Reserve System's (NRS) mission: research, university level education and public service.

New leadership at VESR provides an ideal opportunity to define a renewed set of goals and plans for the future directions of research and education at VESR. Effective 2016, Dr. Carol Blanchette, a scientist and program leader with over 20 years of experience coordinating and implementing field-based ecological research programs at UCSB, assumed the Directorship of VESR. Under Dr. Blanchette's leadership, and through the steps laid out in this plan, we seek to enhance use of VESR in order to better serve users from California and around the nation and to protect these lands, and others, in perpetuity, for the purposes of research, education, stewardship and sustainability.

We seek to continue to fulfill the wishes of Mrs. Carol Valentine, who decided that donating "Valentine Camp to the UC Natural Reserve System was the best possible way to preserve the land and use it beneficially" (Farrell 2015).

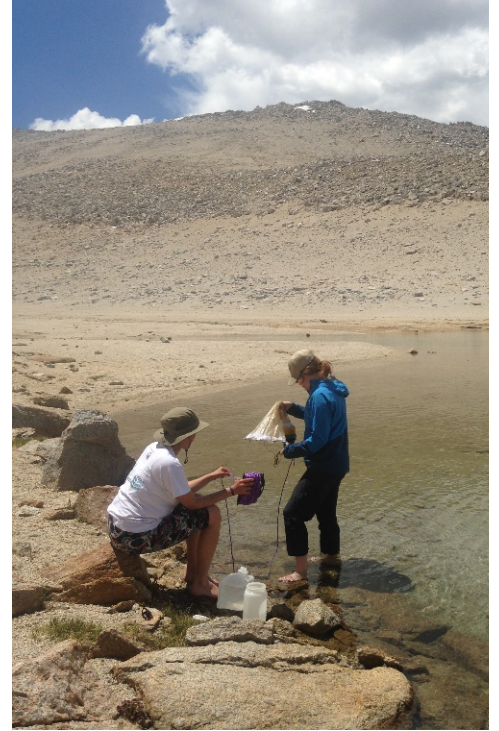


Mission – Our Fundamental Purpose

VESR's mission is to advance knowledge and promote stewardship of the Eastern Sierra region through science, education and public engagement.

Vision – The Future We Seek to Create

An environmentally sustainable Eastern Sierra region with an engaged and scientifically literate community of stewards.



Methods to Achieve our Vision

Through continued scientific research focused on Sierra Nevada and Great Basin ecosystems we will better understand how these systems function and be better equipped to conserve and protect them. Sharing this knowledge through public engagement and education programs will deepen the public understanding and appreciation of the Eastern Sierra and foster continued environmental stewardship of this ecologically and economically important region.

Strategic Plan

With this document, our purpose is to develop a sustainable plan to advance long-term research and education goals at the Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserves over the next decade. This planning process has been informed by a broad array of VESR stakeholders and is intended to frame a science-based vision for research, education and public engagement and to identify the investments needed to achieve this vision.