

In this issue



Stunt Ranch Reserve joins NRS as post-fire recovery continues

Report of the Director:

UC natural reserves host K-12 education programs

For decades, Natural Reserve System (NRS) sites have served as important outdoor classrooms. Our students come to us not only from the University of California, the California State University system, California's community colleges, and private colleges throughout the state (as well as from a large group of public and private universities from other states and nations), but also from K-12 youth (kindergarten through 12th grade) in both elementary/secondary schools and informal education programs. While some of our outdoor classrooms are immediately adjacent to UC campuses in urban areas (e.g., the San Joaquin Freshwater Marsh Reserve), others exist in remote wildland locations (e.g., the Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center). Both kinds of reserves bring the University into more of our public's "backyards."

Our Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve — which is the focus of this issue of *Transect* — is an ideal site for such programs. The award-winning Cold Creek Docents K-12 environmental education program, under the sponsorship of the Mountains Restoration Trust, has a long history of site use. The Stunt Ranch Reserve is close to many colleges and schools and, through the outreach efforts of the reserve's managers, shows great promise for broad-based environmental education at all levels. Moreover, the NRS, as a part of UC's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR), with its strong 4-H and Cooperative Extension programs, offers further opportunities for partnerships in education.

All of our University campuses are involved with K-12 education on their reserves; often resident reserve staff and

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The Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve officially joined the UC NRS in November 1995, becoming the system's 32nd site and the only one administered by the Los Angeles campus.

This 67-acre site is located four miles inland on the north central flank of the Santa Monica Mountains, southernmost of California's Transverse Ranges. Situated less than a 45-minute drive from UCLA, about midway between the cities of Malibu, on the coast, and Calabasas, on the inland side of the mountains, the Stunt Ranch Reserve offers an important resource for teaching, research, and public education in the midst of the heavily urbanized Los Angeles area.

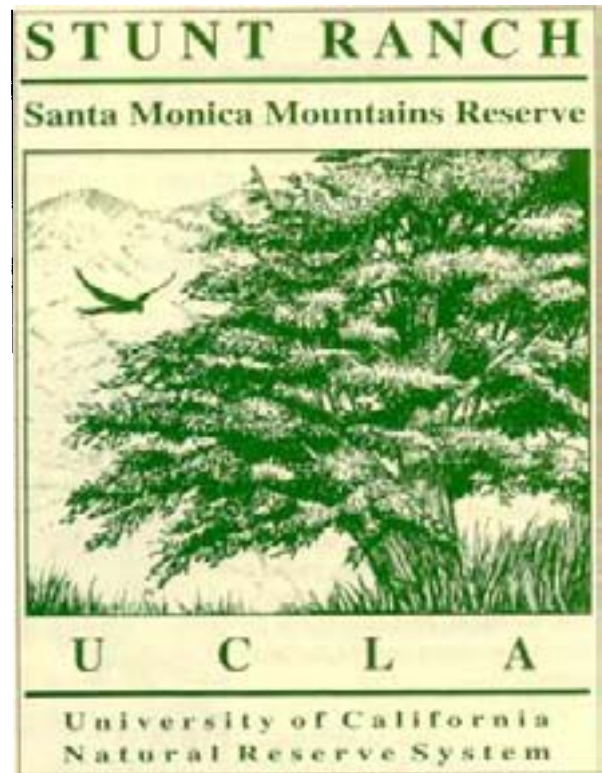
The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), a state agency that formerly owned the entire Stunt Ranch property, conveyed 67 acres of the site to the University for incorporation into the NRS on November 10, 1995. The remaining 243 acres of Stunt Ranch not transferred to The Regents of the University of California is currently retained by the State of California under an agreement that gives the University access to the property for research and education.

In 1993, this area was struck by a natural disaster that dramatically altered the landscape of the reserve and its surroundings. The Malibu/Topanga Fire of November 1993 burned more than 17,000 acres and destroyed more than 300 structures. At Stunt Ranch, most of the vegetation was burned and all of the facilities were completely destroyed. Although this fire was set by an arsonist, fire is a natural phenomenon that has

long been a major factor in the ecology of the Santa Monica Mountains. Years of fire suppression, undertaken to protect homes in the area, may have contributed to the intensity of this blaze.

As is typical in the mountains after an intense wildfire, winter storms in 1994 caused widespread flooding and erosion. The 1995 winter storms caused further damage to the reserve and its access road. Although moderate erosion occurred on the reserve itself, Stunt Road was closed by a major landslide several hundred yards from the reserve entrance. The road remained closed for four months — March through June — and required a

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(Art by M. L. Herring)

Report of the Director: K-12 education programs

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their families play leadership roles in these programs. A few examples illustrate the depth of these activities:

- At the Angelo Coast Range Reserve in Mendocino County, Reserve Manager Peter Steel and his wife, Trish Steel, work closely with the Laytonville public schools to design and host regular class visits to their site along the Eel River. Students stay overnight in small cabins, with parents as chaperones. On nature hikes, they learn to be good observers and also conduct hands-on activities.

- At another remote site, the Landels-Hill Big Creek Reserve, Reserve Manager John Smiley and his wife, Kim Smiley, have designed and coordinated an array of year-long class projects on the area's marine and terrestrial biomes. Kim Smiley has developed an extensive curriculum for use not only at her reserve located on the Big Sur coastline of Monterey County, but also at the DANR's Elkus Youth (4-H) Ranch.

- At the Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserve in Mono County, Leslie Dawson, wife of Reserve Manager Dan Dawson, has developed a suite of hands-on science activities for K-12 classes from Mammoth, Bishop, and Lee Vining. During the summer months, when school is out, this reserve hosts groups of children scheduled and arranged by the local public library. Resident and visiting scientists conduct demonstrations and work closely with the students; students are given ample time for independent scientific discovery.

I believe we are very fortunate to have professional teachers residing on some of our reserves. Working with our professional managers, reserve stewards, and scientists, they are putting together some excellent materials, including collections, that support real-world science activities. As our campuses, reserves, public schools, and state public libraries become increasingly linked via the Internet, our emerging K-12 scientists are able to return to their schools, libraries, and homes — yet further explore the world of the NRS reserve they visited, the ecological region of which it is a part, and larger regions of the world as well. We hope many of these young scholars visit, intern at, and eventually conduct research on our reserves in the years to come.

— Deborah L. Elliott-Fisk
Director, Natural Reserve System



Oaks shade the Stunt Ranch access road.
(Photo by Rob Peters)

Stunt Ranch joins NRS

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massive reconstruction and mitigation effort by the L.A. County Public Works Department.

The reserve is now open and is again being used for research and education. While researchers track the regrowth of vegetation on the charred slopes, facilities reconstruction and University-community outreach are top priorities of the reserve's project and faculty managers.

Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve includes fine examples of chaparral and oak woodland ecosystems. Its value is further enhanced by its location adjacent to extensive natural areas, including state and federal parklands and areas managed for conservation purposes by the SMMC and the Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT). The potential for cooperative research and education programs with these agencies is tremendous. The reserve lends itself to programs that focus not only on the natural ecosystems, but more broadly on issues of resource management in the urban/wildland interface.

— Carol Felixson
Project Manager
Stunt Ranch SMM Reserve
and

— Tim Stephens
NRS Senior Science Writer

Longtime human use enhances value of site

Cold Creek Canyon's eastern ridge marked the interface between two tribes of native Californians, the Gabrielino and the Chumash. Although linguistically distinct, the two tribes were culturally similar. Relations between them were generally friendly and intermarriage was common. Gabrielino territory included Santa Catalina Island, a major source of steatite,* which was highly valued for making tools and ornaments and was traded in rough or finished form throughout California.

Located in the heart of the Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve is a rich deposit of prehistoric artifacts dating from 3,000 B.C. to 1,000 A.D. This is a significant archaeological site, offering researchers and students an opportunity to study the changing adaptations of human populations in the Santa Monica Mountains. All of the major periods of regional archaeological interest are represented here, providing a record that extends back to this region's earliest human inhabitants.

Artifacts found at Stunt Ranch Reserve include steatite bowl fragments, quartzite** hammerstones, and metate (i.e. grinding bowl) fragments. There are several bedrock mortars on the ranch. In 1982-83, an archaeologist from California State University at Northridge catalogued more than 3,000 artifacts, remnants of both seasonal and year-round encampments.

More recently, archaeologists found at the site an unusual fish otolith (i.e., ear bone) that may represent a food source

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UC officials celebrate Stunt Reserve opening

January 5, 1996 marked the official opening of the Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve, culminating 12 years of negotiating, planning, and coordinating. Nearly 40 UCLA administrators and faculty found their way to the heart of the reserve, along with Philip Rundel and Carol Felixson, the site's faculty and project managers, and Liza Riddle and Violet Handelman, from the NRS systemwide office. Kumar Patel, Vice Chancellor for Research was in attendance, along with Provost Brian Copenhaver, Deans Fred Eislering and Scott Waugh, and other faculty and administrators from many programs. The group toured the site that day, hiking down a steep, winding access road and gathering beneath an ancient oak tree.

— C.F.

Longtime human use

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and fish species not previously identified as used by the prehistoric inhabitants of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Spanish colonists settled in the Topanga Canyon area in the late 1700s, but European settlement of the Cold Creek watershed began with the arrival of the Stunt brothers — Harry, Walter, and Ernest — and their cousin Sidney from Kensington, England. The Stunt brothers homesteaded the reserve land in the late 1800s, building a small cabin on the site around 1885. This is believed to be the first building in the Cold Creek area. Their homestead, approved in 1889, was signed by President Grover Cleveland.

The Stunt brothers planted a large orchard that included apple, pear, fig, olive, and citrus trees. They had planned to establish a nursery to produce fruit-tree rootstocks, but that venture never worked out. In 1919, they built a larger cabin on the property. The Stunt brothers lived and worked in Hollywood during the week,

using the ranch on weekends. Walter died in 1928, and Harry moved to the ranch in 1937. Their sister Ethel, who had spent many years as head secretary at the British Embassy in China, also moved to the ranch in 1937.

Harry and Ethel Stunt were both outgoing, friendly people who became well-known in the area for their hospitality. Locals knew them as "Uncle Harry" and "Aunt Ethel." Boy Scouts from Topanga's Camp Slauson were frequent visitors to the ranch, as were many other Cold Creek Canyon residents. After Harry died in 1953, Ethel built a modern house on the property, where she lived for the remainder of her life. Ethel Stunt bequeathed the ranch to Occidental College for use in field instruction. She passed on in 1971.

In 1978, the State of California purchased Stunt Ranch with park bond funds, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy assumed administrative responsibility for the site. Trails on the property were opened for public hiking and equestrian use. The Cold Creek Docents, a division of the Mountains Restoration Trust, expanded their

environmental interpretation activities onto the ranch from the adjacent Cold Creek Canyon Preserve.

In 1984, the University of California transferred approximately 400 acres of land in the Santa Monica Mountains for public parkland as a trade for the portion of Stunt Ranch that joined the UC Natural Reserve System in November 1995. The Stunt High Trail, which crosses through the western portion of the reserve, remains open to the public daily from dawn to dusk for hiking and equestrian use.

— C. F. / T. S.

**Steatite is a massive metamorphic rock, greenish in color, that is closely related to soapstone and consists predominantly of talc.*

***Sedimentary quartzite is a sandstone so well cemented by quartz that it fractures indiscriminately across both grains and cement (versus fracturing just in the cement, as most sandstones do). Conchoidal fractures can occur in sedimentary quartzite as they do in obsidian, hence the use of quartzite in tool-making.*

Stunt Ranch natural diversity undiminished by disastrous wildfire

The Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve lies within the Cold Creek watershed, perhaps the best preserved and most biologically diverse watershed area within the Santa Monica Mountains. Cold Creek itself, which flows through the 243-acre section of Stunt Ranch adjacent to the reserve, has its origin on the north face of 855-meter (2,805-foot) Saddle Peak, one of the highest points in the Santa Monica Mountains. Cold Creek flows continuously throughout the year, even in dry years, although the highly variable rainfall regime of coastal Southern California strongly affects the level of flow. This permanent water flow, rare in the Santa Monica Mountains, is critical for the maintenance of a number of rare species. Smaller tributaries of Cold Creek flow out of the core area of Stunt Ranch Reserve, providing a well-developed corridor of riparian habitat.

Rainfall records for the upper elevations of the Santa Monica Mountains are not extensive, but it is estimated that Stunt Ranch receives a mean annual rainfall of about 60 centimeters (23.4 inches). This average value, however, obscures the extreme variability of rainfall between drought and flood years. In

addition, rain in this region may fall with remarkable intensity for brief periods.

Extreme summer temperatures may occasionally reach 111°F (40°C) or higher. In general, however, temperature conditions are moderated by the close proximity of the Pacific Ocean. Frosts occur occasionally in winter.

The core reserve area of Stunt Ranch encompasses a mosaic of chaparral, live-oak woodland, riparian, and grassland communities. The chaparral community on north-facing slopes is largely dominated by scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*), with a diverse mixture of

other shrub species. Extensive areas of the reserve are dry, south-facing slopes dominated by *Ceanothus megacarpus*, chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), and laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*). Adjacent areas of protected lands support other chaparral communities with diverse shrub species, including redshank (*Adenostoma sparsifolium*).

Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) is the primary dominant of the oak woodland community. Riparian communities are particularly well-developed, both on small tributary streams and along Cold Creek.

The dominant woody species in the riparian zone are coast live oak, sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), and willows (*Salix* spp.). Herbaceous riparian species include the relatively uncommon stream orchid (*Epipactis gigantea*).

Both native and secondary grasslands are present on Stunt Ranch. While European annual grasses are the dominant species in these areas, good local populations of native bunchgrasses (*Stipa* spp.) occur as well. A rare member of the sunflower family, *Pentachaeta lyonii*, a



Most of the oaks on the Stunt Ranch Reserve were not seriously damaged by the wildfire. (Photo by Rob Peters)

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Research activities and opportunities abound at Stunt Ranch Reserve

The Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve offers excellent opportunities for research on the ecology of chaparral, oak woodland, grassland, and riparian ecosystems. The presence of significant archaeological sites adds a cultural dimension to the reserve's research potential.

Various research projects are already under way at the Stunt Ranch site, including several studies that focus on the ecological aftermath of the 1993 Malibu/Topanga Fire. This 17,000-acre fire was extremely destructive, burning more than 300 homes and all of the reserve's buildings, but it has provided unique opportunities for studying the effects of such fires on chaparral communities.

One of the most spectacular features of chaparral slopes after a fire is the appearance of an amazing abundance and diversity of spring annual flowers. These annual plants are not found under the dense woody cover of mature stands of chaparral, but their reappearance after fires is dramatic. Many are almost entirely restricted to such postfire appearances and may disappear for 50 years or more if the interval between fires is long.

It is well known that both the heat of the fire and the release of chemicals from the burned wood are important in stimulating the germination of seeds that have lain dormant in the soil. However, much remains to be learned about seed germination in fire-adapted annuals, including the dynamics of their soil seed pools. Do all of the seeds in the soil germinate after a fire? Do seeds accumulate in the first year after the fire and remain, or is there heavy predation by birds and small mammals?

The ecology of these soil seed pools is one focus of a broad-ranging project initiated by UCLA researchers to monitor the postfire successional processes in chaparral plant and animal communities at Stunt Ranch. The research team includes Philip Rundel and others from the Department of Biology at UCLA, as well as a group of international collaborators. Karen Esler from the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa is studying the dynamics of soil seed pools on burned and unburned sites. Qinfeng Guo, a postdoctoral fellow with Rundel, is monitoring postfire changes in plant diversity and abundance in the chaparral communities.

The group's other major research activities include studies of postfire nutrient uptake by chaparral plants, comparison of burned and unburned riparian ecosystems, and studies of rodent population dynamics.

Another important project addressing the aftermath of the fire is a study of the



Stunt Ranch includes a mix of oak woodland, grassland, and chaparral habitats. (Photo by Erhard Pfeiffer)

nature and magnitude of postfire erosion in selected drainage basins of the Santa Monica Mountains. UCLA geography professor Antony Orme and his assistants established two principal research sites, one in Sycamore Canyon at the western end of the mountains and the other in Cold Creek Canyon. They set up about 60 plots within each basin for monitoring erosion and also tracked sediment movement and channel geometry in the main channel of each creek. A major goal of this work is to establish the relationships between erosion, measured as sediment yields, and such factors as slope declivity, slope aspect, and vegetation recovery.

Also relevant in this postfire context is the work of Stephen Davis from Pepperdine University, whose research includes studies on the impact of water relations on post-fire seedlings of *Ceanothus* spp. and a comparative study of water relations of chaparral and coastal sage seedlings after wildfire.

Researchers from UCLA have conducted studies in the Cold Creek Canyon watershed since the mid-1960s. UCLA biology professor Martin Cody began studying bird communities on Murphy Ranch, just up the canyon from Stunt Ranch, in 1966. His data on bird communities in different habitats provide a valuable foundation for current and future research at Stunt Ranch Reserve. They include the periods before and after a 1970 fire, the last major fire in Cold Creek Canyon before 1993.

UCLA biologist Tom Langen is currently involved in two research projects at Stunt

Ranch Reserve concerning the behavior of scrub jays (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*). One study seeks to characterize the communication repertoire of scrub jays, including vocalizations and visual displays. The other study is designed to elucidate how scrub jays make decisions about caching food. Scrub jays naturally cache acorns and will also cache peanuts when they are available. Langen has found that when presented with peanuts of different sizes, the jays spend time picking up and dropping the nuts to assess their weight and size. He hopes to uncover the decision-making rules that govern their caching behavior.

Studies of amphibian ecology and behavior at Cold Creek began in 1990. Lee Kats from Pepperdine University and his students have focused primarily on three species of stream-breeding amphibians: the Pacific treefrog (*Hyla regilla*), the California treefrog (*Hyla cadaverina*), and the California newt (*Taricha torosa*). Whereas many streams in the Santa Monica Mountains have reduced populations of amphibians — due, in part, to the presence of such non-native predators as crayfish and mosquitofish — Cold Creek does not have these introduced species and has healthy breeding populations of native amphibians.

Clearly, the loss of the site's facilities in the 1993 fire has not kept investigators from continuing or initiating research projects at Stunt Ranch Reserve. Nevertheless, planned reconstruction will greatly

Research activities abound

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enhance the reserve's capability to serve the needs of the users — among them, instructors and their students, researchers, and local environmental education programs.

As a site for research activities, Stunt Ranch Reserve benefits from its location in the heart of an extensive area of protected lands, including state and federal parklands and areas managed for conservation purposes by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Restoration Trust. While protected from development, these lands lie adjacent to a densely populated urban area, and recreational use is heavy in much of the Santa Monica Mountains. This situation presents exciting opportunities for research on resource management issues and the impact of nearby urbanization on natural ecosystems.

— *Tim Stephens*
NRS Senior Science Writer

Site use remains high despite loss of facilities

Even without facilities, the Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve continues to offer excellent opportunities for research and education. It is still actively used by both classes and researchers. The site features chaparral, grassland, oak woodland, and riparian habitats, with opportunities to study ecophysiology, fire ecology, vegetation management, habitat restoration, endangered species protection and management, watershed management, geology, geomorphic stability, and archaeology. The reserve can be a valuable resource for a broad range of academic programs, including biology, anthropology, geology, earth sciences, environmental engineering, physical geography, public health, and resource management.

Stunt Ranch Reserve is readily accessible by paved roads and is about a 45-minute drive from UCLA. Areas of undisturbed vegetation can be reached easily via Stunt Road and a network of trails.

This is a transitional period for the reserve, and there will be times when reserve staff are not on site. The few buildings that once existed on Stunt Ranch were destroyed in the 1993 wildfire. Currently, there are no facilities on site other than an outhouse. The Mountains Restoration Trust/Cold Creek Docents have set up a trailer to serve as a nature center for their children's educational program.

STUNT RANCH
Santa Monica Mountains Reserve



U C L A
University of California
Natural Reserve System

(Art by M. L. Herring)

Get your Stunt Ranch t-shirts!

The new Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve t-shirt, featuring the logo shown above, is available now by mail. The logo t-shirt comes in light blue, natural, or ash, with the reserve logo printed in green ink on the shirt's back. Available sizes are large and X-large, with limited quantities in medium and XX-large.

To obtain a Stunt Ranch Reserve t-shirt, send your \$12 check, payable to "UC Regents," to: Carol Felixson, Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve, University of California, Los Angeles, 23-126 Warren Hall, 900 Veteran Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90095-1786. Be sure to specify size and both first and second color choices.

To protect the site's natural environment and archaeological value, UCLA will confine reconstruction to previously disturbed areas, next to the access road. Plans are underway for a caretaker's residence, an education center, and a modest multi-purpose research facility that would serve as a bunkhouse and lab for research and environmental study. In addition, a variety of environmental monitoring systems will be established, including a weather station, stream gauges, fixed plots, transects and photo points, and a grid to locate research plots.

— *C. F. / T. S.*

All of Stunt Ranch's facilities were destroyed in the 1993 fire. (Photo by Carol Felixson)

Natural diversity undiminished

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state-listed endangered species, is also present. Overall, more than 300 species of vascular plants have been reported for the Cold Creek watershed.

Vertebrate diversity is also high, providing almost a complete cross-section of the vertebrate faunas of the Santa Monica Mountains. Bird species are particularly abundant because of the mosaic of habitat types and the seasonal presence of migratory species. The riparian corridors are especially rich, supporting excellent populations of birds and amphibians. The Stunt Ranch fauna also includes the San Diego horned lizard and San Diego Mountain kingsnake, both species of special concern to the California Department of Fish and Game.

All of Stunt Ranch burned in the extensive Malibu/Topanga Fire of November 1993. Chaparral and grassland communities burned to the ground in the very hot fire, but shrubs are now resprouting from root crowns and seedlings of reseeding chaparral specialists are becoming established. Oaks in the woodland community were largely spared serious damage and have been resprouting new canopy leaves. Only in the tributary riparian areas on the slopes of Stunt Ranch did the oaks receive extremely high temperatures and extensive charring of their trunks. These oaks are now resprouting slowly from epicormic shoots. The larger riparian areas along Cold Creek were spared the primary fire intensity, because of their topographic position, and these have returned rapidly to normal form.

— *Philip W. Rundel*
Faculty Reserve Manager
Stunt Ranch SMM Reserve





(Photo by Barry Slobin)

Philip W. Rundel

Professor of Biology, UCLA, and
Faculty Manager, Stunt Ranch
Santa Monica Mountains Reserve

Philip Rundel has worked for 25 years on a variety of aspects of the ecology of chaparral and arid zone vegetation in California, as well as in Mediterranean-climate regions of Chile, South Africa, Australia, and the Mediterranean Basin. He edits the MEDICOS newsletter, which provides a forum of communication between Mediterranean ecologists worldwide, and he is currently editing a book on landscape degradation and biodiversity in Mediterranean-type ecosystems. In addition to these studies, Rundel also has worked extensively in studies of the ecology of dry tropical forests, with ongoing field studies in Thailand and Brazil.

Rundel joined the faculty of UC Los Angeles in 1983 after 13 years on the faculty of UC Irvine. He teaches courses on ecology and evolutionary biology, plant adaptations to environmental stress, tropical ecology, and plant physiological ecology. He has edited books on the use of stable isotopes in ecological research, field methods in plant physiological ecology, and tropical alpine ecology. More recently, he coauthored a new book with Arthur Gibson at UCLA on the ecology of the Mojave Desert.

With a residence in the Santa Monica Mountains, just a few miles from Stunt Ranch Reserve, and with many years of experience in studies of chaparral fire ecology, Rundel was excited to become involved in the new site. He is currently working toward the reconstruction of facilities and the development of effective programs in teaching and research to utilize the opportunities that Stunt Ranch Reserve offers.

Carol Felixson

Project Manager, Stunt Ranch
Santa Monica Mountains Reserve

Carol Felixson, Los Angeles native and longtime resident of Topanga Canyon (a neighboring community to Stunt Ranch Reserve), earned a B.A. in Social Welfare from the University of Wisconsin. She subsequently developed skills in mixed-media art, design, and public relations, and operated her own business in Topanga Canyon for over ten years. She is now nearing completion of UCLA Extension's Professional Certification in Public Relations.

Felixson has served as vice-president of the Topanga Chamber of Commerce and was a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Inside Edge Foundation for Education. She also served as manager and public affairs officer for the state's Fire Recovery Center in Malibu after the 1993 Southern California firestorms and was involved in establishing the Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness. Now, as a volunteer member of the coalition, she writes HOTLINE, a biweekly emergency preparedness column for the Topanga Messenger newspaper.

Felixson is a prolific poet who recently completed her fifth annual collection, *Life in the Forest: Haiku and Poetry*, as well as an art and poetry anthology, *Of Drums and Divination*. Her latest collection, *Dancing on Mountain*, is in progress.

With her extensive background as a community liaison, Felixson is providing valuable support for the Stunt Ranch Reserve. Her activities on behalf of the reserve include working toward the establishment of cooperative projects with individuals, organizations, and agencies that share an interest in education, the environment, and activities in the Santa Monica Mountains.



(Photo by Ken Nagy)

Onsite public education continues to receive commitment from UC

The Cold Creek Docents offer educational and interpretive programs at Stunt Ranch Reserve and in the surrounding area. A division of the nonprofit Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT), the Cold Creek Docents began their environmental interpretation programs at the adjacent Cold Creek Canyon Preserve and later expanded their activities to include Stunt Ranch. In 1982, they converted an equipment shed at Stunt Ranch into the Kay Spensley Nature Education Center. This was among the buildings destroyed in the 1993 fire, and the center is now housed in a temporary trailer. Thousands of local schoolchildren visit the center each year to learn about the area's natural and cultural features.

The Natural Reserve System and UCLA are committed to the continuation of this program. Our license agreement with the MRT formally recognizes the continued use of portions of Stunt Ranch Reserve by the Cold Creek Docents for their educational programs.

These and other public access and educational activities can now benefit from access to UCLA as a source of academic and scientific support and training. Public appreciation of the site will be further enhanced by new knowledge of local ecosystems and fire recovery processes derived from ongoing research projects. The UCLA campus plans to establish an active public outreach program for the reserve, which may include semiannual open houses and campus-sponsored extension courses.

The reserve is situated within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a unit of the National Park Service, and as additional lands are protected, new opportunities for educational and research uses emerge. Numerous private conservation groups and public agencies interested in the protection of natural resources are actively acquiring property in the area. The campus is exploring the potential for multi-agency research projects and joint programs on a variety of topics related to environmental education, conservation, and resource management.

In addition to its interactions with the Mountains Restoration Trust, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and National Park Service, the reserve is establishing relationships with the Sierra Club, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, Santa

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Onsite public education

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Monica Mountains Trails Council, environmentally active homeowners' associations, and local colleges and universities.

The proximity of the Santa Monica Mountains to one of the largest urban areas in the country creates both problems and opportunities. The reserve's activities can serve as a prototype for other natural areas in anticipating and dealing with issues related to urban pressure on natural areas, community development, and management of public lands.

— C. F. / T. S.



Jean Burns, who helped create the Burns Piñon Ridge Reserve, stands next to the reserve gate in 1990, shortly before she moved away from the desert that was her home for over 40 years. (Photo by Charlotte MacDonald)

How to contact personnel for Stunt Ranch SMM Reserve

If you are interested in using the Stunt Ranch Reserve, contact —

Carol Felixson, Project Manager
Stunt Ranch
Santa Monica Mountains Reserve
UCLA—Warren Hall
900 Veteran Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90095-1786

Phone: (310) 206-3887
E-mail: cfelixso@ucla.edu

To reach Faculty Reserve Manager
Philip Rundel —

Phone: (310) 206-3887
E-mail: rundel@lbes.medsch.ucla.edu



(Photo by Rob Peters)

Long-awaited tales of Burns Piñon Ridge available again — and even better than before

High desert lovers will feel an ache of longing for their favorite habitat when they read *Tales from Piñon Ridge*. The book was written by Jean Burns, who, along with her husband, Bruce, was responsible for the creation of the NRS's Burns Piñon Ridge Reserve.

Tales from Piñon Ridge is a montage of local history, folklore, personal anecdotes, science, and poetry. Many of the 38 *Tales* first appeared in 1973 and 1974 in Ms. Burns's biweekly column for the Yucca Valley newspaper, *Hi-Desert Star*.

Ms. Burns's recollections offer a portrait of rural Californian life as many lived it nearly half a century ago in that post-World War II era when the availability of electricity could not be taken for granted, when water-seekers still "witched" for wells, when hungry homesteaders might occasionally feast on "slow elk," when total enrollment at the area's only high school was 72 students, when irate folks might relocate a derelict outhouse to make a point.

It was back in 1947 that Jean and Bruce ("Boo") Burns moved, with their teenaged son, from the L.A. suburb of Brentwood to the Yucca Valley area and purchased 300+ acres on the eastern slopes of the San Bernardino Mountains, at the western edge

of the Mojave Desert. This land, donated to the UC NRS in 1973, encompasses piñon-juniper woodland with elements of Joshua tree woodland and montane chaparral, desert wash, and freshwater seep.

Tales from Piñon Ridge is an eloquent expression of the region's unique beauty, charm, and simplicity. This attractive, 127-page paperback book adds a valuable dimension of human history to the natural history that has now been protected by NRS for over 20 years.

To order *Tales from Piñon Ridge*, contact: Charlotte MacDonald, 11255 Mt. Crest Place, Cupertino, CA 95014. Make checks payable to "Gordon Burns." Each copy is \$15, postage paid.

Editor's note: On March 18, 1996, as this Transect was being prepared for press, Jean Burns passed away at age 91. She was an independent woman, strong-minded, well-traveled, culturally rich, a good writer and a good friend, much missed by the NRS. Her family has requested that donations in memory of Ms. Burns be sent to the NRS systemwide office (300 Lakeside Drive, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612; checks payable to "UC Regents"). These gifts will be used to benefit the reserve that bears the Burns name.

New chair appointed to head NRS advisory committee

Several new members have been appointed to the Universitywide NRS Advisory Committee, including a new chairperson. Mary E. Power, UC Berkeley professor of integrative biology, replaces Timothy Bradley of UC Irvine as committee chair, while Bradley continues to serve as an at-large member. Power served previously on the committee as a campus representative.

Campus and reserve-based members of the advisory group now include:

Campus Representatives:

- Peter A. Bowler, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, UCI
- Ted J. Case, Biology, UCSD
- Scott D. Cooper, Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology, UCSB
- Daniel P. Costa, Biology, UCSC
- A. Sidney England, Planning and Budget, UCD
- Harry W. Greene, Integrative Biology (Museum of Vertebrate Zoology), UCB
- Leonard Nunney, Biology, UCR (filling in for John T. Rotenberry, on sabbatical)
- Philip W. Rundel, Biology, UCLA

Campus Coordinator Representative:

- Margaret H. Fusari, Environmental Studies, UCSC

At-large Members:

- Timothy J. Bradley, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, UCI
- Paul K. Dayton, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UCSD

Reserve Manager Representative:

- Virginia (Shorty) Boucher, Sedgwick Ranch, UCSB
- Claudia Luke, Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center, UCR (alternate representative)

Web site for the NRS now has a new address in cyberspace

The NRS home page on the World Wide Web (WWW) has moved to a new location on the Internet. Our new Internet address is: <http://nrs.ucop.edu>. Users who connect to the old address will find a link to this new location.

The change of address is a result of moving our Web site onto a new WWW server located in the NRS systemwide office. This move enables us to maintain our own Web server so that we can more easily customize it to meet the needs of users. We can also monitor use of the site more easily to find out how many and what kinds of users are accessing it.

The new server allows us to create links from the NRS home page to Filemaker Pro databases that the systemwide office maintains. Eventually, the NRS's Web site will provide Internet access to a wide range of information on individual reserves, such as species lists, publications lists, and GIS maps.

Currently, information on the following topics, accompanied by full-color graphics, is just a click away from the NRS home page:

- Map and Information on NRS Reserves
- Currently available NRS publications
- Summer 1995 *Transect* newsletter
- Winter 1995 *Transect* (frames format)
- E-mail contacts for NRS Family
- List of reserves and contacts by campus
- Student Research Grant Program
- Mildred E. Mathias Graduate Grants
- Elizabeth Hall Blakey Travel Grants
- Robert M. Norris Undergraduate Grants
- Affiliated UC units and programs
- Interesting Ecological Links
- Interesting California Links

The NRS's Web site is designed for use with the Netscape browser and is also accessible with other commonly used Web-surfing software. If you have questions about accessing NRS information through the WWW, contact new systemwide staff member and Web mistress Jennifer Chen, who maintains the NRS home page, at: jennifer.chen@ucop.edu; phone: (510) 987-0150.

The NRS Web site is an ongoing project. Feedback from users is welcome. We are interested in your ideas about how to improve the site to meet your needs.

Subscriptions and back issues of *Transect* still free of charge

tran•sect (tran'sekt), *n.* 1. *Field Science.* A line along which physical and biological data are collected. 2. *Tech. Slang.* A cross-sectional slice of the environment under study.

In a broad sense, the UC Natural Reserve System is also a transect. It encompasses a cross-section of our state's natural diversity in a system of natural areas and field stations specifically created to support teaching and research. Recognizing this, we chose to call our award-winning newsletter the *Transect*. For back issues or a free subscription, write or call the systemwide NRS office.

♻️ 100% Recycled paper printed with soy-based inks
Susan Gee Rumsey, Pr. Publications Coordinator
Tim Stephens, Sr. Science Writer

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