7. ACQUISITION GUIDELINES FOR RESERVES:
SCIENTIFIC, ACADEMIC, AND ADMINISTRATIVE

SCIENTIFIC CRITERIA

General

The objective of the NRS is to develop and maintain, for educational and scientific study, a system of reserves broadly representing California’s ecological diversity. Because ecosystems totally free of human influence are no longer to be found, units of a system of natural reserves will fall within a spectrum that ranges from undisturbed ecosystems to ecosystems heavily influenced by humans.

Criteria

1. Viable Ecosystem – Ecosystem viability is a prime requisite in establishing a natural reserve. The reserves should be of sufficient size and appropriate geometry so that the community may be maintained with the survival of the species and ecological/environmental processes assured. The boundaries must be located so as to encompass the critical landscape features necessary to maintain the ecosystem. An ideal reserve will be buffered from the detrimental impact of adjacent land uses.

2. Habitat Significance – Reserves should possess exceptional value in illustrating, interpreting, and protecting examples of the major habitat types of California. The most desirable situation is a reserve with a high diversity of extensive habitats. This maximizes the academic yield for its acquisition cost. It is easy to become enamored with the unusual and overlook the
common. Therefore, it is important that the NRS guard against unbalancing its system in favor of unusual habitats and take care to emphasize the inclusion of typical samples of widely distributed habitat types. However, a reserve has added value if it also possesses special features such as:

- important variations of the common habitat types, e.g., different successional stages (including important man-induced successional stages), variations in soil parent material, etc.;
- significant gene pools, e.g., isolated populations, or populations at extreme limits of the range of a species or habitat type;
- “type localities”, i.e., the location where a species, soil type, geological type, etc., are first described;
- transition zones (ecotones) and interfaces between adjacent habitat types;
- the presence of a feature of geological, archaeological, or paleontological importance;
- the presence of a rare or an endangered habitat type, or the presence of a rare or endangered species.

In some cases, unusual features will be deliberately acquired because they are judged to have special value to the NRS.
ACADEMIC CRITERIA

General
The NRS concentrates on serving the needs of higher education. Sites lacking in high degree of academic usefulness do not meet a fundamental criterion for inclusion in the NRS.

Criteria
Of particular interest are unprotected sites that enjoy current academic use, but are not in the system. The larger the variety of disciplines that can be accommodated, the more useful the reserve will be. Extended field trips and studies in remote locations play an important role in field studies and these needs should be met by the NRS, but the backbone of undergraduate and graduate education is the normal three-hour laboratory period. Sites close to a campus may receive more use and make a correspondingly higher contribution to the NRS.

ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

General
Even though a particular site may meet all of the academic and scientific criteria, it must also be administratively viable. Some reserves that are remote and little used will require little administrative attention in order to maintain their basic value, while near-urban and heavily used reserves will require intense administrative attention. In all cases, a sound administrative plan will improve the academic value of a reserve.
Criteria

1. **Campus Responsibility** – A campus must be willing to assume administrative responsibility for its reserves and provide, or secure from outside sources, the financial support necessary for the existence of each reserve (see Chapter 5, “Administrative Structure of the NRS” and Chapter 8, referring to the February 16, 1999 letter from VP-ANR Gomes to NRS Director Glazer). A limited amount of funds for special projects, emergency repairs, and maintenance and operations is available from Systemwide resources.

2. Reserve Categorization – Most new reserves will be categorized as a Standard Reserve (described below). Alternative categories (described below), however, should be considered during the reserve acquisition process in order to capture opportunities that may fall outside the Standard Reserve category. The following categories are **mutually exclusive**, except Interim Reserve (described below). All reserves should be publically referenced by their designated title without the following characterizations, except Sister Reserve (described below). The reserve categories are:

   a) **Standard Reserve** – This category is the benchmark and applies to a new reserve created through the acquisition process defined in Chapters 6-8. This should be the first category applied unless the potential reserve cannot meet all the criteria in Chapters 6-8, then it should be determined if any alternative category (described below) may apply.
b) **Partnership Reserve** – This category applies when a federal, state, or local government agency partner, provides a legal right to use their property as a reserve (preferably, including the use of the facilities), and, agrees, in writing, to share administrative responsibility and financial support needed by the reserve for the duration of the partnering agreement.

A Partnership Reserve makes a distinction to this chapter’s Administrative Criteria, Section 1., “Campus Responsibility” (described above) since a campus shares administrative responsibility and financial support with a government partner. Otherwise, this category of reserve is created through the acquisition process required in Chapters 6-8.

c) **Interim Reserve** – This category applies when a potential reserve goes through the acquisition process, defined in Chapters 6-8, including receiving the approvals required from the campus, Three-Campus Committee, and Universitywide Committee, but has not been submitted to the Regents for approval.

The delay in submitting to the Regents must be due to reasonably extenuating circumstances, as determined by the NRS Executive Director, and approved by the Universitywide Committee (for instance, the transfer of the reserve property will only occur via a donor’s estate plan and the donor is still alive.). The NRS Systemwide Executive Director shall submit the Interim Reserve for Regental approval upon the resolution of the extenuating circumstances. If submission to the Regents exceeds one (1) year from the
Universitywide Committee’s original approval, then the Executive Director must request an updated approval from Universitywide Committee prior to submitting to the Regents.

An Interim Reserve coincides with either the Standard or Partnership Reserves (described above), and should be categorized as either an “Interim Standard Reserve” or “Interim Partnership Reserve”. Once an Interim Reserve is approved by the Regents the “interim” categorization shall be removed.

d) Satellite Reserve – This category applies when a proposed site is adjacent, or in reasonably close proximity, to an existing reserve, and owning or securing a right to access the additional property is determined, by the campus, to be a de minimis cost in the existing reserve’s budget.

This category is exempt from the reserve acquisition process set out in Chapter 8 “Reserve Acquisition Process”. The campus must notify the Systemwide Office, in writing, that it seeks to add a Satellite Reserve to an existing reserve. Once all applicable University and NRS policies are met (including, due diligence), the campus must submit a letter to the Systemwide office that accepts responsibility for the addition of the Satellite Reserve, including a statement that guarantees full funding throughout ownership or duration of the access agreement. A Satellite Reserve is
established once the Executive Director approves the campus’s letter. *This category does not require Universitywide Committee or Regental approval.*

e) **Sister Reserve** – This category applies when a government or reputable nonprofit/nongovernmental organization has legal authority over a site outside of California, including international sites, and seeks to collaborate with the NRS and its mission at said site. An agreement (likely a Memorandum of Understanding) must define the partnership between the parties at the Sister Reserve location and shall not bind the University to any legal or financial obligation.

This category is exempt from the reserve acquisition process set out in Chapter 8, “Reserve Acquisition Process”. A campus must notify the Systemwide Office, in writing, that it seeks to add a Sister Reserve. If the Systemwide Office seeks to create a Sister Reserve, it must notify the Universitywide Committee, in writing. Once all applicable University and NRS policies are met, a campus, via the Systemwide office, or the Systemwide office, on its behalf, must submit a letter defining the Sister Reserve and attach the agreement establishing the partnership. A Sister Reserve is created when this letter is approved by the Universitywide Committee. *This category does not require Regental approval.*