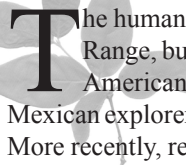


Human History



The human history of the Quail Ridge region is largely typical of the Inner Coast Range, but it took a unique turn with the building of the Monticello Dam. Native Americans lived here for thousands of years before the arrival of Spanish and Mexican explorers and ranchers, followed by Anglo-American gold miners and settlers. More recently, researchers, students, and tourists are regular visitors to the area. Local land use history is in some cases a tragic story of displacement and destruction, and in others a victorious tale of success, depending both on the event and the perspective. Quail Ridge Reserve lands remain relatively undisturbed by humans, retaining a large percentage of native species and having few man-made structures. The story of land use of the surrounding hills and valleys provides a useful historical and bioregional context for a fuller appreciation of Quail Ridge Reserve.

This chapter draws on many sources and relies heavily on work done by the Quail Ridge Wilderness Conservancy, especially its documentary video *Quail Ridge Reserve: The Human and Natural History of California's Coast Range* (1998), and on its collection of historical documents. Quail Ridge Reserve and the surrounding area offer numerous subjects for social as well as environmental studies in, for example, archaeology, anthropology, cultural succession, management, and policy, beginning with its first inhabitants.

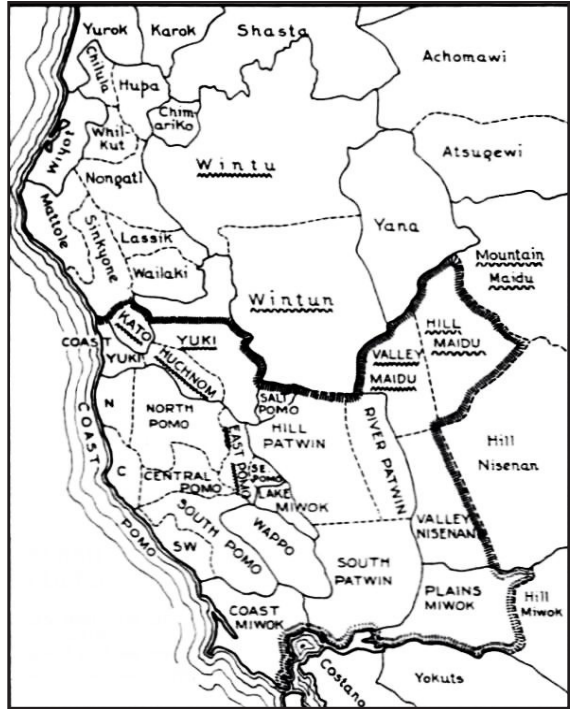
Native Inhabitants: The Patwin

The Quail Ridge region was home to Native Americans for thousands of years before Mexican or European peoples arrived (some authorities suggest 11,000 or more years; Fagan 2003). While the cultures of the earliest human inhabitants are essentially unknown, in historic times it was the Southern Patwin who lived in California's Inner Coast Range. Their ancestors are thought to have arrived in the Central Valley by c. 1400 BCE (Fagan 2003). The Patwin are a subgroup of the more northern-dwelling Wintun, whose language belongs to the important Penutian family of California languages. There are two main Patwin groups: the Hill Patwin of the Coast Range and the River Patwin of the Sacramento Valley. Patwin means 'person' or 'the people,' in the Patwin language, and was first applied to this group by Stephen Powers (1877), an American reporter turned amateur ethnographer who visited many of California's native groups in the 1870s and wrote about them for the *Overland Monthly* magazine.

Although no archaeological evidence of Patwin presence has yet been found at Quail Ridge, it is very likely that the Patwin did use this area. Approximately 150 prehistoric villages were found in nearby Berryessa Valley during an archaeological survey in 1948. In 1955 Professor A. Treganza of UC Berkeley and students from Sacramento Junior College excavated a number of these sites near the contemporary town of Monticello before the valley was to be flooded to create Berryessa Reservoir (Issler 1955).

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Located just above Putah Creek and the former Patwin town of Topaidihi (or Topai, Topaidi), the rich resources of Quail Ridge, particularly acorn-producing oaks, would have provided food and fiber to the hunter-gatherer Patwin. Acorns are highly nutritious, relatively easy to prepare, and have good flavor (Bainbridge 1986); moreover, the yield per acre is very high (up to 2722 kg/acre (6000 lbs/acre)), with a mature oak tree producing 227-454 kg (500-1000 lbs) annually (Keyworth 1991). Tribelets would lay claim by hanging a visible marker on bearing trees to particular oak groves (e.g., scrub, valley, blue, black) that could yield up to 45,359 kg (100,000 lbs) of acorns per year. Warfare was not common among California Indians, but when it occurred it often was over disputed claims to oak groves or to poaching from them (Keyworth 1991). In years that acorn production was low, the Patwin resorted to buckeye nuts, although they preferred acorns (Heizer and Elsasser 1980).



Distribution of the different tribes of North Coast California. Quail Ridge is located in the area just above the "S" of the "South Patwin" region.

In addition to acorns and buckeyes, Native Americans used pine nuts from both sugar and gray pines, blackberries, juniper berries, elderberries, wild grape, and manzanita berries. They also dug a number of roots and bulbs, such as Indian potatoes ("pela" in Patwin), sweet potatoes ("tusu"), and onions ("buswai"). A chart of Indian uses of plants is included in *The Natural History of the Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve* (Greene and Huntzinger, 2001). It separates the plant species by use: food, tool, craft, medicinal, and spiritual.

A wide variety of animals were gathered or hunted by the Patwin. Using bone harpoons and nets, the Patwin fished for salmon, perch, and suckerfish. A number of mammals were hunted for food or furs. These included deer, elk, antelope, black bears and rarely grizzly bears, mountain lions, bobcats, foxes, wolves, beavers, and young skunks (Heizer and Elsasser 1980). They used birds – crow, eagle, and quail – and a variety of other taxa including turtles, angleworms, and grasshoppers. They did not eat dogs, coyote, condor, vulture, frog, lizards, snakes, or caterpillars (Kroeber 1932; Allred 1965).

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Although it is not known when California Indians first domesticated dogs, they were used in hunting. Based on the long association between humans and coyotes in this area, it is likely that domestication occurred long ago. Interestingly, Powers once commented, "...to judge from his appearance to this day, the Indian dog is an animal in whose genealogy the coyote largely assisted (Powers 1976 (1877)). In the Wintun language the word for 'coyote' is literally 'hill-dog'."

The Hill Patwin traded shells, skins, red woodpecker scalp belts, flicker quill bands, and dried salmon, among other valued items, with the neighboring Wappo, Pomo, and Lake Miwok, whose lands to the north and west included the headwaters of Putah Creek, and with the River Patwin, Maidu, and Eastern Miwok to the south and east (Kroeber 1932).

Local plants including oak, willow, and grapevines provided materials for construction of a variety of buildings: round dugout pits with domed coverings used for dwellings, menstrual huts, dance houses, and (in some places) sweat lodges. These same plants were also used for temporary lodgings when the Patwin left their permanent villages to hunt from midsummer to autumn. Tule and hemp were woven for mats, skirts, and belts, while the inner bark of cottonwood was used for women's skirts in the hill regions. Bear, rabbit, and deerskins made warm clothing and bedding. Green willow boughs provided comfortable seating and sleeping. Drums were built from hollowed sycamore logs (Powers 1976 (1877); McKern 1923; Kroeber 1932).

The Patwin, like many other California native groups, used fire to facilitate hunting and to entice game via the fresh green shoots that followed a burn. Intentional fire stimulated the growth of important native grasses such as blue wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*) that were harvested and roasted for consumption and also used for basket weaving. Fire also helped eradicate pests such as grasshoppers (Anderson 1990).

Tools included elkhorn wedges and split stones for cutting, gray pine fire drills in hearths of elder, sinew-backed bows, and arrows made of elder, dogwood, or tatsi (bitter weed from the creek) wood, with obsidian tips. Armor (for infrequent warfare) included elk skin tunics or waistcoats of tule, hemp cord, and pitch (McKern 1923; Kroeber 1932).



Depiction of a Patwin village along a river.

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Patwin names for constellations reflect their relationship with the natural world: Orion was called “Coyote Carries on Head”, the Milky Way was “The Antelope Road”, and Ursa Major was “Stick for Knocking off Acorns” (Kroeber 1932).

It is likely that the Patwin and other California Native Americans lived this hunting/fishin/gathering lifestyle (with some incipient cultivation; see Anderson 1990) for millennia before the arrival of the European-derived peoples in the 1700s. Dramatic impacts on their cultures and populations began in the late 1800s, and by the 1880s, the Southern Patwin had been displaced by ranchers, forced by the government onto rancherías and reservations, or decimated by foreign diseases and bounty hunters. When Alfred Kroeber (1932) interviewed Patwin survivors on rancherías in the summers of 1923 and 1924, he noted that he could not find any who had come from south of Rumsey or Grimes, suggesting that no Patwin with ancestry from the Quail Ridge area remained. Any evidence of Patwin settlements in the Berryessa Valley, including Topaidihi, has since been flooded by Berryessa Reservoir, and any possible sites on Quail Ridge Reserve have yet to be discovered.

Today many of the estimated 2,500 descendants of the Wintun/Patwin reside on the Colusa, Cortina, Grindstone Creek, Redding, and Rumsey Rancherías, as well as the Round Valley Reservation. It is doubtful that any of their ancestors lived in the Southern region (Kroeber 1932). For more information on Patwin and other California tribes see *A Patwin Bibliography* (<http://www.mip.berkeley.edu/cilc/bibs/patwin.html>) or *California Indians* (<http://www.allianceofcatribes.org/californiaindians.htm>).

The Mexican Land Grant Era: The Berelleza Brothers & “El Rancho de las Putas”

When the Spaniards, and later the Mexicans, began settling in Alta California, life for the Patwin and other native residents changed dramatically. Starting in San Diego in 1769, the Spaniards established over twenty missions across the state, as far north as Sonoma (Mission San Francisco Solano), in their drive to convert the native peoples to Christianity and to expand the Spanish empire (Rawls 1984).

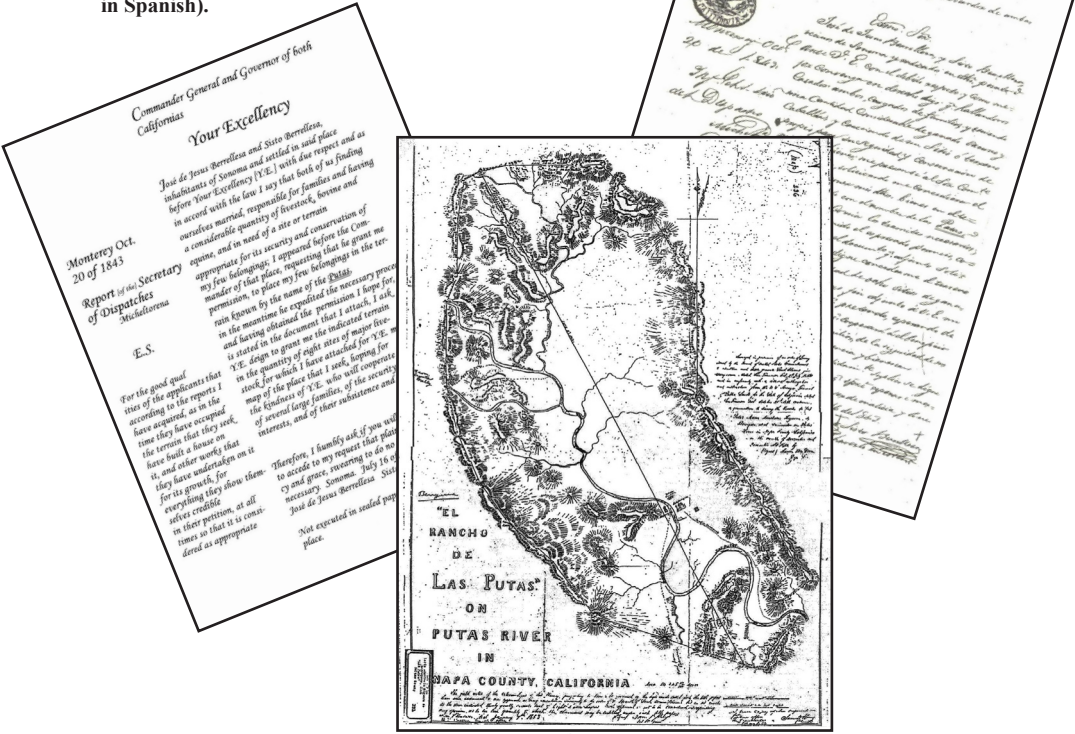
In 1820, Mexico declared independence from Spain and soon thereafter established the program of Mexican Land Grants in Alta California, ensuring consolidation of power in the north. Roughly 1000 such grants, ranging in size from one to eleven square leagues (one square league = 1796 hectares (4,438 acres)), were made available principally to Mexican citizens. Obtaining a land grant required a formal petition process through the offices of the Mexican Governor, headquartered in Monterey, but if one had a reasonable request, was willing to abide by the conditions attached to the land grant, and did not have a criminal record, the petition generally was granted (Salonites 1992).

Two Mexican brothers, Sisto and José de Jesús Berelleza (a name of Basque origin), petitioned the Mexican Governor in October 1843, asking for eight square leagues (14,366 hectares (35,500 acres)) of land along Putah Creek and in the surrounding foothills from Capay Valley south to Vacaville. On November 3, 1843, Governor

Manuel Micheltoarena approved the petition, on the condition that the Berellezas would build a house on the property within one year, that they would plant domestic trees along the periphery of the property, and that they would never subdivide or sell the property. The brothers agreed and moved in with their families and began raising stock – mostly cattle, sheep, and horses – as did most of the land grantees (California Land Grant Documents, 1843).

The Berellezas initially built two adobe houses – one for each brother and his family – and later they built a few more. Both of these adobes are now gone, but it is believed that one of them was located on the site of the future town of Monticello, which now lies at the bottom of Berryessa Reservoir. They called their property “Rancho de las Putas,” a name that has stimulated much curiosity. One belief is that the name refers to the suckerfish, or putahs, of Putah Creek. However, others suggest that the name may be a play on the Spanish puta/puto, meaning tramp or prostitute. In 1877 Stephen Powers wrote, “. . . on lower Puta Creek [the Patwin] were called by the Spaniards, on account of their gross licentiousness, Putos, and the stream Rio de los Putos” (Powers 1976 (1877): 218-219). Still another tale (Issler 1955) attributes the name to alleged shameful behavior by the Berellezas themselves. Bright (1998) claimed that the origin is from the Lake Miwok word *puta wuwwe* (‘grassy creek’), and that the similarity to Spanish *puta* is purely coincidental.

From Left to Right: 1843 Land Grant (Translation); Map of “El Rancho de Las Putas” - Quail Ridge is the lower right section; 1843 Land Grant (Original in Spanish).



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The Berellezas' ranch was a successful enterprise for a number of years in the 1840s-50s, but in 1859, the political climate changed, and they evidently lost their land either to squatters, by gambling, or by family members selling off pieces. In 1866, a Mr. Scholtz sold the land to John Lawley, Jr., H. Bostwick, and William Hamilton, who divided the land into family farms and the town of Monticello. The original Basque name Berelleza was subsequently transliterated into English as "Berryessa," whence the "Berryessa Valley" and "Lake Berryessa" of today (Issler 1955).

The United States: Monticello displaces El Rancho

Two key events in 1848 – Mexico's loss of the U.S.-Mexican War, and the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill – spelled the demise of the Land Grant Era. When it became clear that California would be controlled by the United States, the Mexican governor, Pio Pico, signed 800 land grants, giving them fraudulent dates so that they would appear to precede the American takeover (see Early California History: From Gold Rush to Golden State at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/cbhtml/cbintro.html>). But squatters began entrenching themselves on the land grant properties, and soon were emboldened enough to bring claims to court. In September 1850, California entered the Union as the 31st state. The judicial system was increasingly populated by Anglos, who tended to side with the squatters. Another contribution to the downfall of the ranchos came when miners married into land grant families, thereby ensuring inheritance of the land. By the early 1860s most of the original land grantees' holdings had been fragmented or lost entirely (Pitt 1966; Salonites 1992).



Town of Monticello, 1954

As a result of these 19th-century sea changes in politics and economy, a new American town, Monticello, came into existence in the Putah Creek Basin. It soon developed into a prosperous agricultural community during the early years of the 20th century. At this time Berryessa Valley was a flat, fertile valley watered by Putah Creek, and the soil of the valley was considered among the most fertile in

the country (Lange and Jones 1960). The town of Monticello stood in the center of the valley, surrounded by thousands of acres of land used to raise livestock and for dryland farming of grain. The subsequent development of a canal system for irrigation contributed to successful crops of pears, grapes, walnuts, alfalfa, and other grains, and to herds of cattle and horses. In springtime, wildflowers carpeted the valley floor and hillsides, and California poppies spilled into the town cemetery (Lange and Jones 1960).

Monticello also became a popular venue for rodeos, baseball games, and “cow roasts,” drawing people from miles around. The town enjoyed the further distinction of being the first community in the state to have a telephone system installed. Photographers Dorothea Lange and Pirkle Jones (1960) described Monticello in the 1950s



“Devil’s Gate”, 1955

as “a center with only one store, two gas pumps, a small hotel, and a roadside spot, ‘The Hub,’ and the valley held generations in its palm.” However, this community was to follow in the sad trail of the Patwin and the Berellezas.

The Monticello Dam Controversy and Lake Berryessa

Mirroring the fate of the Patwin Indians and Mexican settlers who preceded them, Monticello’s residents would find themselves displaced by forces greater than themselves. The U.S. Government had been eyeing the valley for years as a site for a dam on Putah Creek to prevent flooding downstream and to provide a reservoir of water for agricultural, urban, industrial, military, and recreational uses. Residents of Monticello tried desperately to reverse the “Solano Project,” but to no avail (Greene and Huntzinger 2001).



Monticello Dam Construction, 1956

In *Death of a Valley* (1960), Dorothea Lange and Pirkle Jones documented the destruction of Monticello; and three decades later, *Berryessa Valley: The Last Year* (Jones 1994) was compiled to accompany an exhibit at the Vacaville Museum. Both photo-text compilations provide moving visual accounts of the final year at Monticello. After valiant attempts to thwart the plans of the government dam-builders, Monticello residents at last

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had to accept the fate of their town: they abandoned their homes, hiring African-American laborers from San Francisco to move the town cemetery to higher ground at Spanish Flats. “The big oaks were cut down. Cattle had rested in their shade for generations. On old maps and deeds they had served as landmarks”



Monticello Dam looking west. Pre-hydroelectric power plant, 1958. The spillway is clearly visible on the bottom left of the dam.

(Lange and Jones 1960). Anything taller than five feet and wider than two inches was removed. Houses and fences were moved or burnt. Ranch and farm equipment was auctioned, and the fertile, historic valley was leveled to dust, burnt to ashes, and filled with water.

By 1957, construction of Monticello Dam at Devil’s Gate, the narrow point of the Putah Creek Canyon, was completed. By 1963 1.6 million acre-feet of water had flooded the valley, creating the second largest human-made water body in California (after Shasta Reservoir), with 165 miles of shoreline. Thus, Quail Ridge emerged as a peninsula on the southern shore of this new 26 x 3 mile reservoir. Water now passes in regulated flows through the dam into what is left of Putah Creek.

The reservoir and dam generate electricity via the three hydroelectric units of the Monticello Hydroelectric Power Plant, built from 1981-1983 and financed by a local bond. The plant is owned and operated by the Solano Irrigation District, and the electricity is transmitted to Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s power grid.



Aerial view of the Quail Ridge peninsula from the northeast.

Today the reservoir ensures the supply of water for Travis Air Force Base and the major towns of Solano County, and it is a favorite venue for water sports enthusiasts. Seven resorts are run by concessionaires under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and cater to anglers, campers, water skiers, and jet boaters. The Markley Cove and Pleasure Cove



The spillway at a low lake level.

resorts sit at the east and west inlets on either side of the Quail Ridge peninsula, respectively. BOR began updating their Visitor Services Plan in 2003, a process that evaluated land uses and needs in the region. In 2012, new leases were granted by BOR to the existing marinas along the shore of Lake Berryessa. The new recreational guidelines place an increased emphasis on non-motorized watercraft and on hiking access.

Residential and commercial development has been limited in the area, although there has been a certain amount of land speculation. Most notably, some of the parcels now comprising part of Quail Ridge Natural Reserve were sold in the 1970s to unfortunate Europeans under the guise of the “Swiss Alps of California” (L. Timm, pers. comm.). Bit by bit Quail Ridge Wilderness Conservancy, the California Department of Fish and Game, and recently the University of California, have been acquiring parcels



Lake Berryessa sunset

on the peninsula, thereby extending and fortifying the boundaries of Quail Ridge Reserve.

The UC Davis library holds a number of documents and photographs of Monticello and the building of the dam; many of these are available online (<http://lib.ucdavis.edu>, search ‘Monticello California’).

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Quail Ridge Reserve – Piecing Together a Dream

Quail Ridge Reserve continues to be a work in progress. It is a result of hard work and fundraising to protect the Quail Ridge peninsula from development and to provide a teaching and research site for the University of California. The beginnings can be traced to the summer of 1983, when Frank Maurer and Lenora Timm were exploring the Inner Coast Range. An acquaintance and real estate agent showed them a 76-acre parcel at the tip of Quail Ridge Peninsula, and Maurer and Timm both were struck by the beauty of this extraordinary terrain. Initially considering it a possible retirement destination, Maurer and Timm changed plans after a professional botanist noted stands of rare, native bunchgrass and oaks (see chapter on Vegetation).

Maurer and Timm purchased this parcel with the goal of protecting it from development. The western border of their new property passed through a blue oak grove and a magnificent stand of purple needlegrass. An adjacent 75-acre parcel was owned by a Spanish couple who had been scammed in the “Alps” real-estate scandal noted above, and they were eager to sell. After some negotiations, the land was sold to Maurer and Timm with



Blue Oaks at Quail Ridge.



Full moon and hillside oak

financial assistance from an imaginative trade-off with the Napa County Land Trust (now the Land Trust of Napa County) in which the Trust loaned the \$60,000 needed for the purchase in exchange for a perpetual open space conservation easement being placed on both parcels. The Trust had attempted before, unsuccessfully, to protect these two parcels with easements. This agreement was, therefore, a victory for both sides.

Maurer and Timm subsequently bought parcels from two other European victims of the land scam, and between 1983 and 1989 they spearheaded the purchases of a total of ten parcels – 1,072 acres in all – protecting these properties from plans to develop hunting, ranching, pig farming, and camping sites. They involved other individuals as “tenants in common” and “limited partners” in Quail

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Ridge Associates, and in 1989 they established a non-profit organization, Quail Ridge Wilderness Conservancy (QRWC), to serve as a basis for educational outreach to the public and for fundraising for the Reserve. The Conservancy currently enjoys the support of over 400 members.

In the late 1980s, site visits by scientists from three different UC campuses (Berkeley, Santa Cruz, and Davis) sparked interest in this land from the University of California. In 1991, 242 ha (600 acres) of Quail Ridge became one of 29 Reserves in the UC Natural Reserve System (38 Reserves as of 2013). Quail Ridge Reserve was now official. Through the years, the California Coastal Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and private donors have helped UCD NRS purchase additional property for inclusion in the Reserve. Indoor overnight accommodations for twelve researchers/class participants are now available, plus camping areas appropriate for 15-20 more. A reserve manager now lives in an on-site residence.

Currently spanning 2,578 acres, the Reserve is owned by multiple parties, including the Quail Ridge Wilderness Conservancy, the University of California, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the California Department of Fish and Game, and private individuals (Map 3). Through cooperative agreements, it is managed by the UC Davis Natural Reserve System. The Land Trust of Napa county continues to hold and monitor conservation easements on some of the parcels.

As the primary manager, UCD NRS keeps the roads in repair, maintains facilities for classes and researchers, oversees use, and attempts to control invasive plants such as yellow starthistle, barbed goat grass and medusahead grass that threaten the remnants of native grassland at the Reserve. As the reserve has expanded, and access and facilities have improved, research and class use of the reserve have grown steadily.



