

**THREE-CAMPUS COMMITTEE
RESERVE EVALUATION
STRATHEARN RANCH**

Chapter 8 of the University of California Natural Reserve System (“NRS”) Administrative Handbook provides the guidelines for the acquisition of new UC Natural Reserves. Four phases must be completed prior to the establishment of a new reserve. The following report represents the penultimate step in the Evaluation Phase, Section II.B., known as the “three-campus” committee evaluation.

On September 16, 2013, NRS Director Peggy Fiedler established a three-campus committee (“Committee”) and requested that it evaluate the Strathearn Ranch (the “Ranch”) as a potential reserve. In response to Director Fiedler’s request, the Committee enthusiastically recommends the acquisition of the Ranch as a new reserve. The Committee submits the following evaluation and recommendation based on the criteria established in the NRS Admin. Handbook, Chapter 8, Attachment B, and the UC Santa Cruz advisory committee’s Strathearn Ranch report, dated August 26, 2013.

I. DATE OF EVALUATION

November 18-19, 2013

II. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Three-Campus Committee:

Paul Fine (Committee Chair), Assistant Professor, Dept. of Integrative Biology, UC Berkeley
Travis Huxman, Professor, Dept. of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, UC Irvine
Becca Fenwick, Sierra Nevada Research Stations Director, Yosemite, UC Merced
Michael Kisgen, Legal and Policy Coordinator, UC Natural Reserve System¹

Additional Participants:

Peggy Fiedler, Director, UC Natural Reserve System
Violet Nakayama, Retired Coordinator, UC Natural Reserve System
Gage Dayton, Administrative Director, UC Santa Cruz Natural Reserves
Jerry Heisel, Strathearn Ranch Caretaker

III. BACKGROUND

Strathearn Ranch is a 2700-acre property located in the Diablo Mountain range in San Benito County, bordering Merced County. The Ranch includes unique geological and biological characteristics that are scarcely represented or absent from the NRS. The Ranch would be an ideal teaching resource for a wide variety of university field-based classes at the undergraduate and graduate level. In addition, it could support K-12 education for local communities in the Hollister and Gilroy areas, facilitate research projects in a wide variety of disciplines, and

¹ Director Fiedler’s letter to the Committee on September 16, 2013 predated the retirement of Violet Nakayama, NRS Legal and Policy Coordinator. As Mrs. Nakayama’s successor, Michael Kisgen assumed membership in the Committee.

importantly, serve as replicate / partner site for researchers conducting studies at other NRS reserves and throughout California, including locations where research access may be difficult or restricted, such as Pinnacle National Park.

The Ranch's owner, Lee Von Hasseln ("Owner"), plans to transfer the property in fee title to the NRS (via The Regents), along with an endowment estimated in excess of \$9 million dollars to support the future management of a reserve.² Prior to the transfer, the Ranch owner may welcome limited use of the Ranch by UC Santa Cruz (the "Campus") faculty and students for field visits.

The following evaluates the critical issues raised by the potential incorporation of the Ranch into the NRS. The evaluation demonstrates that the Ranch meets the scientific, academic, administrative criteria necessary to become a reserve and the committee recommends that outcome.

IV. SITE EVALUATION

A. Scientific Criteria

1. Habitat Significance

a. Representativeness: The 2700-acre site represents a tremendous natural resource for Californians through its size, its diversity, and its supported biodiversity, including some federally and state threatened species. The Ranch is situated in a mosaic of relatively undeveloped rangelands that likely allows for significant individual exchange among populations surrounding the property and those on the Reserve. Thus, effective stewardship of the reserve likely will have broad geographic impacts on sensitive species management, as the immediate threat of development on site and adjacent to the property is low. Taken together, these features highlight the substantial value of the property in the context of biological conservation.

The area consists largely of late Miocene-aged andesitic volcanic rocks (the 'Quien Sabe volcanics') erupted via the so-called 'slab window volcanism' that traced/traces the northward migration of the San Andreas Fault (Figure 1). The Pinnacles (to the south, and on the opposite [western side] of the plate boundary/San Andreas Fault) represent half of an older 'slab window' volcanic field that has been offset to the northwest along the San Andreas Fault. In addition, the volcanic rocks on the Ranch comprise coherent ancient volcanic flows and pillow basalts that were subsequently altered by hydrothermal activity and mineralization. The Ranch also appears to contain a number of young (Quaternary-aged) deposits that record mass wasting events such as landslides and rockfalls, some of which are related to historical earthquakes on the nearby San Andreas and/or Quien Sabe Faults. These features present a landscape that is quite diverse in terms of mineralogy, age, form, and landscape placement.

Vegetation in the valley lowlands demonstrates the impact of an extended grazing history, such that the current vegetation consists primarily of non-native grasses mixed with a wide diversity of native wildflowers. The lowlands are a low-density savanna with scattered live and valley

² The title will be subject to a life estate of the property in favor of Jerry Heisel, the Ranch caretaker, over a portion of the property.

oaks and several riparian woodlands dominated by enormous sycamore trees descending from several near-perennial water sources to a common drainage that becomes the eastern tributary of Quien Sabe Creek. These lowlands are flanked on three sides by ridges covered in coastal scrub, oak woodland, native and non-native grasslands, bare areas, riparian habitat, and rocky outcrops. Native fauna associated with open country habitats, such as golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*), and mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) are commonly observed on the property. These types of oak savanna and grassland habitats, which characterize the majority of Strathearn Ranch, used to cover an enormous area encircling the Central Valley of California. However, development, ranching and agriculture have modified a large percentage of these landscapes.

b. Uniqueness: The Ranch contains a large area of an important Californian habitat type for at least one threatened species. The California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) is State and Federally listed as threatened. Upland habitat for the salamander exists throughout the site and potential breeding habitat is nearby, though it is unknown if the species occurs on the site. California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) is also federally listed as threatened and is known to occur on the property.

c. Habitat Diversity: The Ranch harbors a diverse variety of habitats. The grasslands are dominated by nonnative grasses; however, native bunch grasses are located throughout the property in protected physiographic settings. Lowland grasslands are peppered with large live (*Quercus agrifolia*) and valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*). Native and non-native forbs are common throughout grassland areas, especially in areas with thin soils on slopes where blue oaks (*Quercus douglasii*) are common. Several patches of scrub/chaparral are scattered throughout the property. Dominant species in scrub habitat include California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), several species of buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.), and sticky monkeyflower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*). The riparian habitat that is found in the main valley on the ranch includes a large population of California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), as well as California buckeye, *Aesculus californica*, red willow, (*Salix laevigata*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and holly-leaf buckthorn (*Rhamnus ilicifolia*).

d. Level of Disturbance: The majority of the Ranch is leased annually to a neighbor for grazing activities. This land-use, along with fire suppression and other activities (e.g., polo pony ranching), has led to dominance by non-native grasses in the lowlands and significant cover of these species in the uplands. Other current uses include the presence of a small (approximately two-acre) vineyard. Recent historical human use appears to be limited to cattle ranching. Prior to ranching, the site was occupied by Native American Ohlone (Costanoan) of the region.

Factors such as unauthorized human encroachment, trespassing, off-road vehicles, illegal dumping, and vandalism, are not likely to be major problems. The site is in a sparsely-populated area of San Benito County with no paved road boundary, multiple cattle fences, and is positioned at the center of a series of properties that make incidental access unlikely. Grass fire, however, resulting from carelessness or improper vehicles or use of equipment, is a serious risk factor.

Disturbances by colonial California ground squirrels and pocket gophers are a dominant feature of the grasslands. Their burrows are located throughout the area, and most abundant on lands that

are slightly higher in relief. Mammalian carnivores including coyotes, mountain lion, bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) and, likely, badger (*Taxidea taxus*) are also found here. Mammal disturbance creates important habitat for California tiger salamander and burrowing owl populations (*Athene cunicularia*), which may also occur on-site.

2. Ecosystem Viability

The property and neighboring lands are not likely to undergo significant development anytime soon, meaning that the plants and animal populations currently found on the property are likely to persist long into the future. However, if the grazing regime changes, it is likely that woody encroachment would reduce the area currently managed as grassland.³ The property currently leases rangeland to the neighboring cattle ranch, and this relationship should be maintained at a similar level until a land-management system is enacted that assists in the maintenance of this specific ecological complex (or an acceptable alternative determined through a valuation process). The proximity to a large working cattle ranch provides opportunities to conduct research aimed at examining impacts of varying levels of grazing intensity on plant flora and fauna. Replicated experiments of this sort could be valuable.

Weed control and/or a research program aimed at reducing invasive species dominance, especially in the grasslands would be an excellent addition to the long-term management plan for the reserve.

B. Academic Criteria

1. Research Value

a. Suitability for Research: As a large tract with a large diversity of species and geologic formations, the Ranch represents a tremendous resource for research across the sciences. In addition, its close proximity to UC Santa Cruz and the town of Hollister and Gilroy, and ease of transport on the Reserve is of great research value.

The Ranch complements existing NRS reserves with oak woodland (especially Blue Oak Reserve, McLaughlin Natural Reserve, Hastings Natural History Reservation, and Sedgwick Reserve) for unparalleled geographic coverage of an important habitat type, inviting multi-site and comparative studies of oak woodland ecology. This site could also serve to distribute UC research across more oak woodland reserves, especially those with existing chaparral or sage scrub systems integrated in the landscape.

Global climate change over the past 100 years has been associated with flora and fauna range shifts in a series of high profile research projects in California. Much of this work has focused on the Sierra Nevada, yet the potential for water availability to decrease in the Central Valley and Coast Ranges could have far reaching consequences for Mediterranean plant and animal communities. A network of oak savannah sites spanning several UC Reserves represents the

³ It is important to note that the Ranch is subject to the Williamson Act, which requires that a portion Ranch be used for an agricultural purpose. The grazing lease maintains compliance with said act. Once testamentary transfer occurs from the Owner to the Regents then the Campus may remove the agricultural requirement placed on the property or continue grazing based upon the reasons stated within this paragraph and beyond.

possibility of conducting replicated observational and manipulative experiments on some of California's most iconic biotic communities. Both monitoring and experimentation will provide the foundation for scientific research that will help anticipate and mitigate the effect of global climate change on extant biota. Strathearn Ranch's location, further south and east of Hastings Reserve and Blue Oak Reserve, means that it is warmer and drier than both of those other oak woodland /savannahs and may give us clues to how higher temperatures and lower water availability will affect oak woodlands further north.

The potential for protection for field experiments and equipment is excellent. Onsite management of the infrastructure would be critical, but the functioning of the systems on the ranch (including the current major buildings and the operations of the vineyard) suggest that an investment similar to other isolated reserves would be sufficient to provide constant upkeep.

The Ranch includes access to some interesting geological features allowing unparalleled comparative approaches with geological research being conducted at Pinnacles National Park.

The Reserve location is very accessible to UC Santa Cruz at about an hour and a half away and only a few hours from UC Davis, UC Berkeley, and UC Merced. Other colleges, such as San Jose State University and California State University Monterey Bay, will also be able to take advantage of the Reserve for research or field trips, including the local community college district that operates Gavilan College. The potential for on-site accommodations means the facility will be attractive to any of the UC campuses and other institutions.

b. Range of Opportunities: As already noted, it is potentially an excellent site for oak woodland ecology. The position of the Ranch in the context of the north-south and east-west distribution of NRS sites presents the opportunity for fine-scale phylogeographic work within the California Floristic Province. In addition, geological features unique to NRS sites provide opportunities for geological studies and teaching. This is fact is magnified in that the Ranch is located near Pinnacles National Park and thus would provide excellent opportunities for both researchers and teachers to conduct activities at several locations while staying at the Ranch. The extreme topography provides uplift for soaring birds and leads to consistent use of the area by golden eagles and other raptors. There are also populations of mountain lions, bobcats and other large animals. Both it and the adjacent lands are topographically ideal for long-distance, low-power radio telemetry. Thus, the site offers unusually good opportunities for animal radio-tracking studies.

For studies of geophysical processes, the site offers radio silence, includes many geologic faults. It offers many interesting features to geologists, geomorphologists studying hillslope processes, hydrologists, atmospheric chemists studying patterns of pollution transport, archeologists and other scientists.

The local context of grazing and the land-history of the site present the opportunity for research and curriculum to be developed around topics associated with coupled human-natural systems (CHNS). The long-history of humans modifying the landscape in California and the likely direction management of the lands will take upon acceptance into the NRS presents an opportunity to engage scholars on specific CHNS questions that relate to practical applications and local management dynamics.

2. Teaching Value

a. Suitability for Teaching: The site has significant UC teaching value in all of the same areas listed under Research Value. UCSC classes could easily make day trips to the Ranch. The Ranch also offers very suitable overnight facilities for classes. Currently, Landels-Hill Big Creek Reserve has been hosting many field courses and research projects from UC Santa Cruz and numerous other universities, and each year demand increasingly exceeds the ability of Big Creek to accommodate all activities. Thus Strathearn Ranch's availability and close proximity to Santa Cruz and the Bay Area would be beneficial for UC Santa Cruz Students and Researchers as well as other users in general.

b. Range of Teaching Opportunities: See above. In addition to UC use, the reserve would likely have high educational value for the K-12 schools and community college district, along with the public of the Hollister and Gilroy communities.

3. Facilities

a. Existing Facilities: Several structures are present on-site (UCSC Report, Figure 8). The condition of structures varies significantly and ranges from a falling-down barn to a recently renovated barn that is currently being used to house winemaking equipment. Facilities include an approximately 800 ft² main house ("Main House"), an approximately 300 ft² small shed ("Shed"), an approximately 250 ft² concrete wine cellar ("Cellar"), an old dilapidated barn ("Dilapidated Barn"), an approximately 4000 ft² newer barn ("Barn") used primarily to store large equipment and vehicles, with approximately 800 ft² dedicated to making wine, an approximately 600 ft² smaller house ("Secondary House"), and an approximately 500 ft² caretaker unit ("Caretaker Unit"). The Main House consists of two bedrooms, a kitchen, open dining and living area, and a covered porch along three sides. The Secondary House consists of one bedroom, one bathroom, and a kitchen/dining area. The Caretaker Unit is a one-bedroom structure with a small kitchen and porch. There are significant fenced open-space areas that present opportunities for out-door sleeping for large groups.

b. Needed Facilities: Restrooms with expanded capacity may be necessary to alleviate the burden on the septic tank system. Mobile restrooms with individual storage tanks could be a temporary solution. Resilient power to the site is likely an immediate investment as the site is currently powered by a system with limited long-term capacity. Additionally, extended water storage may be needed to meet the demand of more visits by researchers and students, yet the spring-system producing the potable water is apparently sufficient to meet a dramatic increase in usage.

4. Database

There are no existing site-specific data on stream flow, land use history, meteorology, etc.

C. Administrative Criteria

1. Management Factors

a. Accessibility⁴: The site rates high on physical accessibility from the outside provided the visitor could unlock the multiple gates across the property. The main road into the Ranch area is an approximately 15-ft wide one-mile dirt road that would require annual maintenance. The current caretaker informed us that the road does not require significant maintenance; however, during the winter it floods occasionally at two ephemeral creek crossings during heavy rain events. The main road provides two-wheel drive access to the Ranch facilities. There are additional Ranch roads that currently experience only occasional ATV use. These roads could be enhanced to provide better access into interior areas of the Ranch. Access along these roads would likely be restricted to vehicles with high clearance, 4x4, and/or small ATV's or four-wheel drive "mules."

b. Protectability: The site is generally favorable for protection. The grazing lessee must maintain the fences according to the terms of the lease. Currently, the lessee has been in breach of this duty, which has been a point of contention in the last few years.

Due to the remoteness, general trespass is nonexistent as the access points are relatively few and distant. However, there is an approximately one-acre inholding in the southern portion of the property that is used seasonally. The owners of this parcel use the main Ranch road as well as a Ranch road to the east of their inholding to access the property they own over the ridge in Merced County and have a recorded easement across the Ranch. The caretaker informed us that in the past he has observed salt-licks that had been placed within the one-acre parcel and believed this meant that occasional poaching of deer may occur on the Ranch. However, this has not been observed recently and is not considered to be frequent. Outreach to this inholding group would likely lead to acceptable coexistence.

c. Adjacent Land Ownership and Use: As discussed above, adjacent land uses are highly compatible with the existence of a reserve.

d. Size, Boundaries, and Buffers: One of the needs of a good research program is a site large enough to replicate observations or to find several populations of the study plant or animal. The site is large enough for a successful reserve, and as discussed above, boundaries are fenced and well buffered from outside impacts.

e. Proximity: As discussed above, the site is within one hour and a half of the UCSC campuses and two hours of UCD and UCB, and it is also close enough to the Pinnacles National Park to conduct replicative multi-site comparative studies.

⁴ The present section considers only physical accessibility to the site. Concerns regarding legal accessibility are discussed in the recommendations section.

f. Other Concerns: Roads will require some engineering and improvement and as well as regularly scheduled repair and upkeep. Maintaining the fences and gates will require regularly scheduled labor to check and/or repair the fences. Pig control is likely to be a permanent requirement at this site. Control of exotic plants will require an ongoing seasonal staff to burn, spray, disc, etc. as needed. A significant management plan for fire contingency is important to develop to protect the assets and prevent accidental catastrophic change of this reserve system.

2. Costs

a. Acquisition: The property is a prospective donation.

b. Operation and Maintenance:

Annual Cost Assumptions: Cost estimates in this document are based on actual expenses incurred from UCSC Reserves, purchase prices for equipment, and estimates of equipment depreciation. Summaries for major categories are provided below. This model presents a completely funded scenario that has the reserve fully up and running year one. It is important to note that a phased approach could occur over a period of several years if funding levels were not adequate to achieve full phased implementation. During this phased period the endowment could grow to a level needed to achieve full implementation while still maintaining essential research, education, and stewardship activities. All estimates in this funding analysis are in FY 13-14 dollars and estimates for inflation will need to be updated to current year dollars at the time of endowment establishment.

Personnel: The cost model includes salary and benefits for two full-time employees: a resident director and steward (on or offsite). Salary and benefit increases for UCSC staff are expected to grow at a rate of approximately 3.0% each year.

Staff would oversee the education and research uses of the property as well as conduct stewardship and land management. The resident director will be responsible for enhancing research and educational opportunities on the reserve through outreach to, and support of, diverse users and user groups. The director will also be responsible for supervising a steward that will maintain trails and roads, conduct vegetation management, erosion control and tractor work. Facilities and infrastructure such as springs, fences, plumbing septic, grounds, houses, barns, camping areas, etc. will also be maintained by the steward. An invasive plant management plan will be created and implemented with surveillance, control, treatment and reporting being scheduled on a regular basis.

Equipment and Facilities: Replacement costs for equipment are incorporated into the overall annual operating budget. Time to replacement is based on estimated lifespan of specific equipment. The model assumes an annual increase of 3% for replacement costs. Facility cost estimates were based on realized costs per square foot for facilities at Big Creek Reserve (\$2-\$7/ft² depending upon the year). We used a cost estimate of \$3/ft² for the maintenance costs at the Ranch (based on the types of structures and the environment at the Ranch).

Research and Directorship Funds: In order to promote research and education on the property, up to \$20k will be allocated annually to support scholarships, graduate research projects, educational endeavors, and faculty support.

Contingency: A 10% annual contingency rate is included each year in order to set aside funds for unforeseen expenses.

Annual Operating and Start Up Costs

Summary of operating and start up costs are summarized here:

Category	Year One Costs	Annual Costs
Facilities	\$106,134	\$45,304
Vehicles (tractor and attachments, truck, ORV, etc.)	\$175,000	\$24,333
Office Supplies and Expenses	\$8,600	\$2,200
Tools	\$17,115	\$2,711
Resident Director (includes benefit rate of 50%)	\$105,000	\$105,000
Steward (includes benefit rate of 50%)	\$75,000	\$75,000
Scholarships and Faculty Stipend	\$20,000	\$20,000
Sub-total	\$506,849	\$274,548
Contingency and Admin (10%)	\$50,685	\$27,455
TOTAL	\$557,534	\$302,003

c. Endowment: An endowment of approximately \$7.5 million and startup costs of approximately \$550,000 are needed to fund year one and ongoing operations in perpetuity. However, current facilities will very likely need to be upgraded to some extent in order to meet UC and code. Upgrades will vary between structures and be dependent upon the assigned use. In addition to upgrades to existing structures, we recognize the need for a teaching facility. This function could either be incorporated into an existing structure (the newer barn may be appropriate) or require a new structure. Cost of upgrades and potential new additions would be a significant cost that would need to be determined at the time of the donation. It is likely that significant upgrades to existing facilities and/or the construction of a new facility would cost over \$2 million dollars. Thus, when structuring the endowment it will be necessary to establish it in a manner that allows for at least some of the principal to be spent for year one costs and facility improvements during the first few years. It is suggested that an appropriate portion of the donation be incorporated into a Fund Functioning as and Endowment (FFE) that would allow a portion of the gift to be spent in its entirety on facility improvements over time. For this funding analysis that sum has been estimated at \$2 million; however, a cost estimate at the time of the donation will be needed.

d. Funding Summary: Based on estimates and assumptions detailed above, a funding need of approximately \$10 million dollars (of which approximately \$500k would be spent on year one start up costs and an additional approximately \$2 million would be used for facility improvements and/or additions) is needed. Thus, at this point, structuring the endowment so that \$2.5 - \$3 million was included as and FFE and the remaining funds were set aside as a regular endowment would provide assurance for long-term functioning of the reserve

along with the necessary funding for infrastructure needs in the short-term. It is important to recognize that prior to the donation, a complete due diligence of the facilities will be required in order to obtain a more precise estimate of the funding requirements for facility improvements and development. Additionally, if the target endowment level is not achieved, startup and annual funding costs could be reduced while still providing sufficient adequate funding for the Ranch to function as a UC Natural Reserve.

V. RECOMMENDATION

The committee strongly recommends Strathearn Ranch as a potential addition to the Natural Reserve System. However, our enthusiasm is contingent on the resolution of three critical issues. In her September 16, 2013 letter, Director Fiedler requested that the Committee consider the following three topics, which are addressed, respectively, by the Committee:

1. Is Strathearn Ranch a valuable new addition to the UC NRS in terms of representing California ecosystems, especially given its relative proximity and similarity of plant communities to Blue Oak Ranch Reserve? Does the Ranch provide new opportunities for research and teaching facilities, and, research, teaching, and outreach opportunities?
 - a. The Committee affirmatively responds to both these questions based on the extensive information provided in its evaluation above, specifically Sections A. Scientific Criteria and B. Academic Criteria.

2. Strathearn Ranch will not be given to the NRS until the passing of the donor, at which time the property and an endowment estimated in excess of \$9,000,000 will come to the NRS. While it is impossible to know when this transition will occur, the consensus is that the Ranch will not come to the NRS in the near future. Therefore, what safeguards can be required for UCSC to ensure that this property remains in an untrammled condition at the time of its future acceptance into the NRS? Further, should some limited use of the Ranch be possible prior to its passing to the NRS *in toto*?
 - a. The Committee strongly recommends that the Campus pursue a written agreement with the Owner in order to secure a right to use the Ranch during the period before the property transfer. A use right will serve a dual purpose. An agreement will permit the Campus to monitor the property to make sure that the safeguards required by Director Fiedler are in place to keep the Ranch in untrammled condition. Additionally, an agreement will secure the Campus's right to access the property and cover all liability issues. It is also recommended that a fund amount be included in the written agreement and provided by Mrs. Von Hasseln, perhaps from the future endowment proceeds, to cover maintenance costs of the property during the interim period. The amount requested should estimate costs over a 10- to 20-year period, and start with a baseline for the most minimal involvement by the Campus to a more extensive role.⁵

⁵ This estimate of time is based on the presumed age and life expectancy of the Ranch owner.

As stated above, Mr. Heisel communicated to the Committee, in addition to various Campus representatives, that Mrs. Von Hasseln is amenable to students and faculty accessing the property at the present time. Therefore, it is also in the Ranch owner's interest to create a legal agreement describing the extent of the use and liability issues raised by Campus visitors.

Finally, the Committee's recommendation is grounded in precedent already existing within the NRS. The Kenneth S. Norris Rancho Marino Reserve ("Rancho Marino Reserve") managed by UC Santa Barbara shares some similarities. The Rancho Marino Reserve property owner has not transferred the property to the NRS but has entered a use agreement to allow UC Santa Barbara students and faculty to access the property. The Rancho Marino Reserve also followed the same NRS guidelines, including a three-campus review, in order to reach its current status. Ultimately, the Rancho Marino Reserve, and its respective use agreement, demonstrates a successful model at bridging the temporal gap between our present desire to use the Strathearn Ranch and the future testamentary transfer by Mrs. Von Hasseln.

3. Strathearn Ranch is accessible by a single road that has been the subject of litigation in the past. What are the issues for Strathearn Ranch to function as an NRS reserve should the road access easement be constrained?
 - a. A great deal of research has been conducted on this issue, including commissioning a title report and conducting historic record review at the San Benito County Recorder's Office. Unfortunately, these efforts have not produced a definitive answer to Director Fiedler's question.

The Committee recommends that the Campus continue to research Mrs. Von Hasseln's access rights. Ultimately, the Committee recognizes this instance as one of the rare cases where the University should exercise its rights of eminent domain, but only if the right to access the Ranch proves to be unsurpassable obstacle to the creation of the Strathearn Ranch Reserve.

By necessity, our report has focused on the utility of the property as a field research station and what it would take to maintain the land as a field station in a sustainable way. In addition, however, there is an intangible utility to this property that goes beyond that focus. This land includes highly scenic oak woodlands that are inspiring to anyone who travels through them. This well-maintained land is part of a disappearing California. We therefore envision that the property will be used not only by scientific researchers, but also by artists, art classes, and others interested in thinking deeply about, and capturing in various ways, the rapidly disappearing vision of natural California landscapes.

In conclusion, for all the reasons stated in this report, The Committee believes the NRS would be greatly enhanced by the Strathearn Ranch Reserve and we recommend its establishment.