

UC SANTA BARBARA

**VALENTINE EASTERN SIERRA RESERVES
STRATEGIC PLAN | 2019-2029**



**RESEARCH
EDUCATION
PUBLIC SERVICE**

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Executive Summary

The Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserves (VESR) comprise 2 of 39 field research stations in the University of California Natural Reserve System. The VESR sites, the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL) and Valentine Camp, provide facilities, programs and expertise to facilitate use each year by over 3500 researchers, educators and students of all ages from the local community and across the globe.

VESR's mission is to advance knowledge and promote stewardship of the Eastern Sierra region through science, education and outreach. This plan provides a guiding framework for the activities and management of the reserves over the next decade and is the result of a formalized strategic planning process funded by the National Science Foundation and the University of California. The planning process included identification and development of a strategic plan specific to VESR, virtual and in-person workshops led by a professional facilitator and inclusive of VESR's broad stakeholder community, and an iterative process by which the strategic plan was written and revised by the VESR strategic planning steering committee. Additionally, a VESR specific Mission, Vision and Theory of Action have been articulated.

Through this process, we have identified six strategic goals in support of the VESR mission:

1. **Research** – VESR will continue to facilitate cutting edge research relevant to the Sierra Nevada and Great Basin Regions and beyond.
2. **University-Level Education** – VESR will facilitate university-level training in field, experimental and laboratory science in the Eastern Sierra.
3. **Public Engagement** – VESR will broaden its array of education and outreach programs through strategic regional partnerships.
4. **Diversity and Inclusion** – VESR will seek new opportunities to engage with underserved populations and aim to support a body of users reflective of the diversity of California.
5. **Land Stewardship** – VESR will steward the lands of the reserves using science-based approaches that support both social and ecological well-being.
6. **Sustainability** – VESR will continue to work towards environmental sustainability by decreasing energy demands and reducing consumption and waste of other resources.

We aim to meet these goals by making strategic investments in three realms: 1) Infrastructure, 2) Programmatic areas of focus and 3) People. Through the planning process, we have arrived at a series of recommendations and activities to advance the three strategic investments. We will measure the success of our efforts through the milestones and Key Performance Indicators associated with each of the recommended actions.

This plan is a living document, and we intend it to be flexible and adaptive as new priorities arise or as ongoing pursuits require new approaches. Also, in five years, and with the participation and advice of the steering committee, we propose to revisit these goals and priorities for investment in order to ensure that VESR is 'on track' with our vision; that we are responding to the needs of the communities we serve; and that our goals are well aligned with the University of California's goals and vision for the future.

