UC San Diego Ecological Reserve

UC San Diego's Ecological Reserve is preserved open space that contains the campus's most high-quality native habitats. It is protected from development and maintained to support continued ecological function. These lands are located in four distinct parts of the campus: Scripps Institution of Oceanography, West Campus, East Campus, and University House/Beach Properties.

EDUCATION

The reserve is a key master planning principle of the UC San Diego Long Range Development Plan, balancing urban growth with natural open space spaces. Many native plants and animals live in the Ecological Reserve and some are listed as threatened or endangered. It also provides benefit to the people who live around it by providing opportunity for connection with nature, as well as research and educational opportunities.

RECREATION

Hiking, jogging, or walking in the Ecological Reserve is encouraged, however only on defined trails so that foot traffic does not degrade sensitive biological resources. When using the trails, be aware that you are sharing the area with species that are a natural part of this ecosystem, including rattlesnakes. Please respect the signs to keep out of sensitive habitat areas, even if there appears to be a trail beyond the sign. Access beyond these signs jeopardizes the success of ongoing habitat restoration. The attached Ecological Reserve map shows authorized access areas and trails within each Ecological Reserve areas.

RESTORATION

The Ecological Reserve, like any natural area surrounded by urban development, faces many threats. Ongoing efforts by UC San Diego to actively restore disturbed areas include nonnative species removals, unauthorized trail closures, native species plantings, erosion control, and litter removal. Many signs are posted throughout the Ecological Reserve to indicate where these restoration projects are occurring. Please avoid these areas.

STEWARDSHIP

The Ecological Reserve is accessible by many existing trails. While you take advantage of this opportunity to connect with nature, you can help support and maintain the functions and values of the Ecological Reserve by using "Leave no Trace" principals.

KEEP IT CLEAN. Please help keep these natural areas free of litter by disposing of your trash in designated receptacles outside of the reserve. If you see litter, pick it up and pack it out.

NO PETS. The Ecological Reserve is home to sensitive wildlife. The presence of dogs and other pets causes wildlife to move away, temporarily or permanently reducing the biodiversity of the Ecological Reserve. Dogs can also have a direct impact on vegetation.

STAY ON TRAIL. Use only existing, primary trails that are not marked by no access signs. Do not walk off trail.

NO SMOKING. The entire campus is a tobacco and smoke-free campus. Please do not smoke in or near natural areas, as this presents a wildfire hazard.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Following these simple steps will ensure that the Ecological Reserve remains a healthy and valuable UC San Diego asset.

1. Stay on defined trails.
2. Respect wildlife.
3. Leave native plants in place.
4. Take your trash with you.
5. Keep noise levels to a minimum.

NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA

The Ecological Reserve consists of habitat types, ranging from Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub to dense chaparral, grasslands, and wetlands. These habitats, unique to southern California, support many sensitive plants and animals. The health and integrity of these habitats are critical to ensure the survival of threatened and endangered species, some of which are present in our Ecological Reserve (e.g., coastal California gnatcatcher). Habitat protection is not only important for the sensitive plants and animals present here, it ensures the beauty and serenity of our neighborhood.

Coastal California gnatcatcher is a year-round coastal sage scrub resident that is sensitive to human disturbance, excessive noise, and predation by cats. Its breeding season is from mid-February through August. To harass, harm, pursue, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, etc., this species is a violation of the federal Endangered Species Act and can result in fines and/or incarceration.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher

Ashy-spike Moss

Native Annual Flowers

Least Bell's Vireo

CURRENT RESTORATION PROJECTS

East Campus- Central Canyon Giant Reed Removal

A large-scale giant reed (*Arundo donax*) removal effort occurred within East Campus, Central Canyon. Giant reed is a non-native species that can easily out-compete native species. A total of 0.20 acre of giant reed was removed from within southern willow scrub, an essential habitat for various sensitive species, such as least Bell's vireo. Ongoing non-native treatment and removal will occur throughout 2024. While the native willows will naturally fill in the open space once dominated by giant reed, installation of pole cuttings of native species in Spring 2024 will expedite this process.

West Campus - Native Plant Installation

Around 3,000 native plants have been installed in West Campus, within Campus Services Canyon, south of Genesee Avenue. Currently, three mitigation sites within West Campus have open space that fills in with annual native species once or twice a year. To ensure year-round coverage and reduce opportunistic non-native species filling in the open space, native perennial shrubs and herbaceous plants were installed Fall 2023. This planting effort will fill in the open space within the slopes and increase shrub coverage and habitat for wildlife, such as the coastal California gnatcatcher, as well as native pollinators.

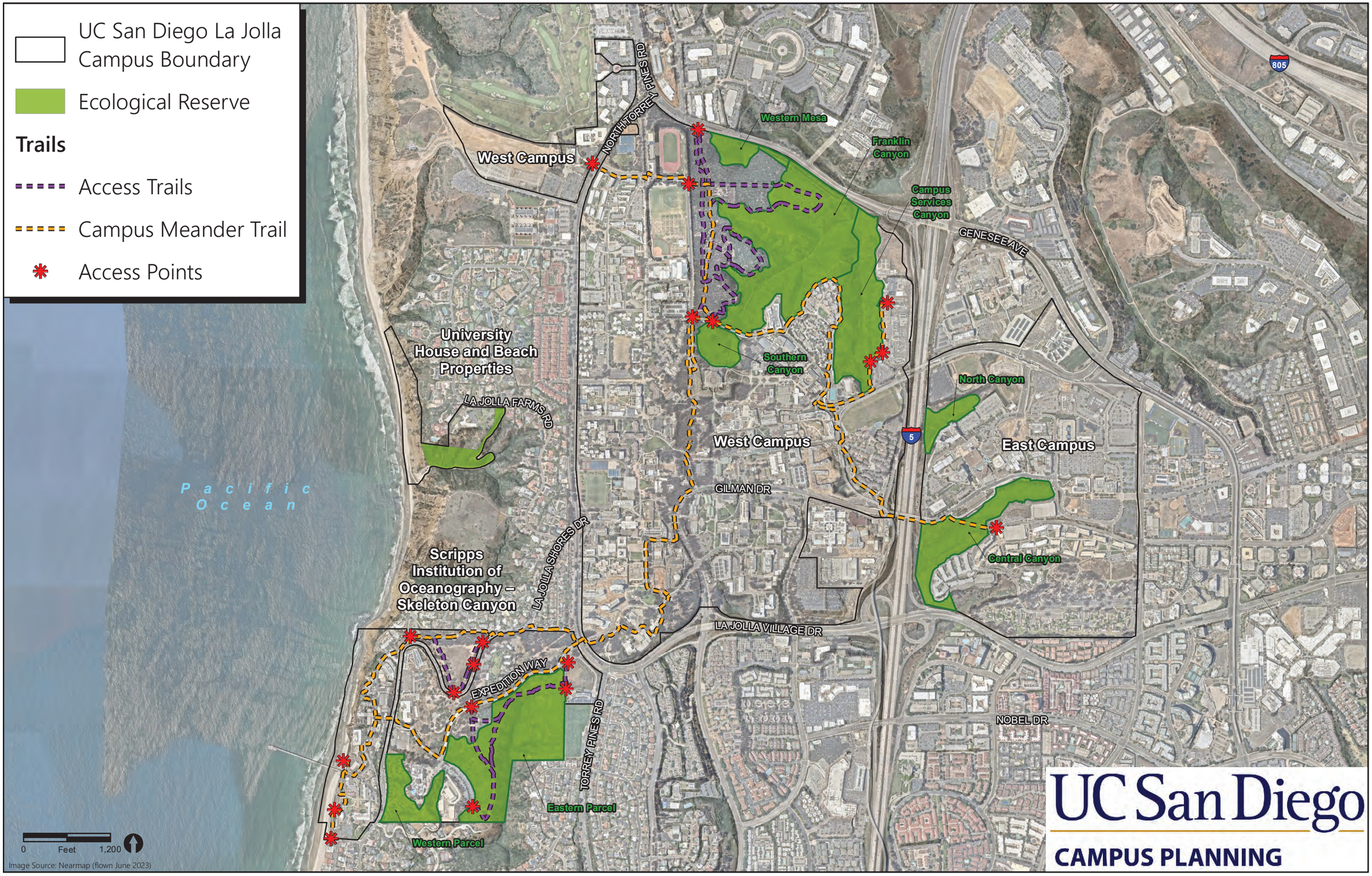
Scripps Institution of Oceanography- Hidden Swing Restoration Project

UC San Diego Campus Planning is in the planning process for a restoration project within the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The overall goal of the restoration project is to repair severe erosion along a southern trail near Birch Aquarium. Through the installation of native plants, fencing, and other erosion control measures, protection from further scouring and impacts from erosion to the surrounding native habitat will be one of the many benefits of the proposed project.

For details about UC San Diego's natural resource management, visit: https://plandesignbuild.ucsd.edu/planning/environmental.html#UC-San-Diego-Natural-Resource-M

UC San Diego

CAMPUS PLANNING


UC San Diego La Jolla Campus Boundary
Ecological Reserve
Trails
Access Trails
Campus Meander Trail
Access Points
West Campus
NORTH TORREY PINES RD
Western Mesa
Franklin Canyon
Campus Services Canyon
GENESEE AVE
805
University House and Beach Properties
LA JOLLA FARMS RD
Southern Canyon
North Canyon
West Campus
5
East Campus
Pacific Ocean
GILMAN DR
Central Canyon
Scripps Institution of Oceanography – Skeleton Canyon
LA JOLLA SHORES DR
LA JOLLA VILLAGE DR
EXPEDITION WAY
TORREY PINES RD
NOBEL DR
Eastern Parcel
Western Parcel
0 Feet 1,200
Image Source: Nearmap (flown June 2023)
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