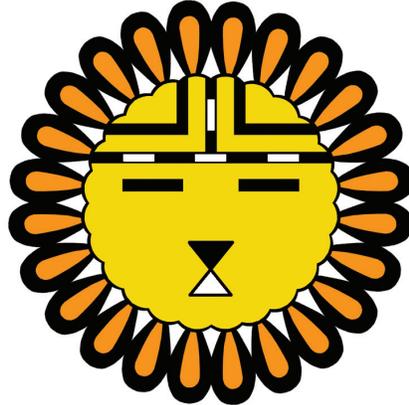


Journal from



the James

BY DIRECTOR JENNIFER GEE &
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Idyllwild is set in an ecologically fascinating area. It is a mountain island surrounded by a desert sea. This patchwork of contrasting ecosystems is a window into a rich biodiversity and endemism, life that is unique to a particular place.

Scientists have long recognized the San Jacinto Mountains as a particularly interesting site to study and better understand the natural world through studies on *Drosophila* (fruit fly) evolution to the effects of climate warming.

In 1908, a group of biologists from UC Berkeley surveyed the San Jacinto Mountains. Last year, we just finished a centennial resurvey of the same sites. A century produced many changes in our natural resources, and we'll be writing about these transformations among other topics having to do with the landscape

and populations of its natural inhabitants.

The James Reserve is in the backyard of Idyllwild and Pine Cove. It is part of the University of California Natural Reserve System, which consists of 38 other sites spread around California.

At the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve, researchers and teachers come from all over the world to study this region. In the last few years, the James has hosted a variety of researchers who hail from places such as Minnesota and Germany, and locals from the James Reserve's home campus, UC Riverside. Their work focuses on studies ranging from hybridization in oaks, small mammal and bird communities to insects.

The James also is the site of the reintroduction of the southern mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*), which has gone extinct locally at the James and in most of Southern California. In this

and many other ways, the James Reserve provides a living library and outdoor laboratory for students, researchers and others interested in the environment. As one researcher put it, "Field stations are places where we can read the book of life in the language in which it was written," (James Kirchner, UC Berkeley professor emeritus).

We hope this column will serve as a window into life at a field station, which itself provides a peek into the natural world that surrounds us and the people who devote their lives to monitoring it, learning how it works, sharing our discoveries and passing this understanding to others. In future columns we invite you to learn more about the James Reserve, your friendly neighbors to the north, and to explore the wonders of our distinctive region with us. Stay tuned.

To learn more about the James Reserve visit www.jamesreserve.edu/.