

THE LYTLE RANCH PRESERVE







Mission Statement

The Lytle Ranch Preserve is a remarkable desert laboratory located at the convergence of the Great Basin, Colorado Plateau, and Mojave Desert biogeographical regions. This unique convergence of life zones endows the preserve with an unusually rich combination of living communities. The preserve is dedicated to providing students, scientists, and visitors with an opportunity to experience the flora, fauna, and ecological complexities of this living system. Brigham Young University is committed to the care and preservation of this unique natural resource so that future generations can enjoy and learn firsthand about the biological and historical features of the Lytle Ranch Preserve.

History

The Lytle Ranch Preserve was originally settled by Dudley Leavitt sometime during the 1870s. Dudley's daughter, Hannah Louisa, married Thomas Sirls Terry as his third polygamous wife and moved to the Beaver Dam Wash in 1889. The remote nature of the wash provided Hannah and her six children with security from federal authorities, who were actively prosecuting those participating in polygamy.

In addition to raising hay and cattle, Hannah and her children planted fruit trees and other crops. Today, a grove of persimmon trees near Hannah Terry's original cabin site offer shade to anyone who hikes upstream from the preserve's entrance. Hannah raised her chil-

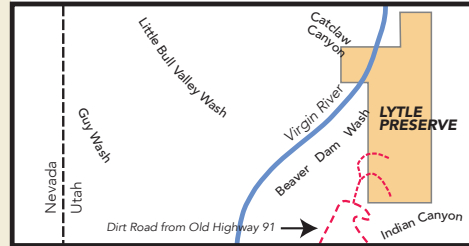
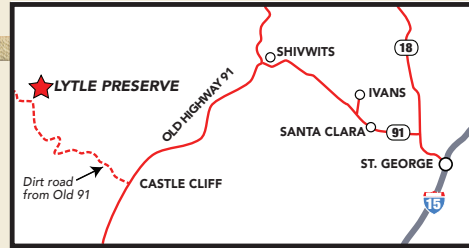
dren along the wash, finally leaving in 1912. Her sons, Ed and Jed Terry, continued to farm downstream from the original home site.

In 1928, a portion of the original Terry property was purchased by John Eardley, who with his wife and six children, cleared the fields and built a ranch house, reservoir, fences, and ditches. The Eardley family raised alfalfa, sorghum, melons, and fruits of various kinds. Talmage and Eleanor (Marie) Lytle purchased the ranch from the Eardleys in 1952. After Marie's death, Talmage sold the property to The Nature Conservancy, and in August 1986 Brigham Young University acquired the property from The Nature Conservancy.



Location

The preserve is located 36 miles west of St. George, Utah, across the Beaver Dam Mountains in Washington County. The 680 acre preserve is situated along the Beaver Dam Wash drainage at an approximate elevation of 2800 feet, one of the lowest points in Utah. Beaver Dam Wash drains south into the Virgin River, a tributary of the Colorado River. The unusual combination of geology, climate, elevation, and year-round surface water produces an environment that supports a diverse group of trees, shrubs, and wildlife – much of which is unique to this part of Utah.



Take an aerial tour of the Lytle Ranch Preserve by visiting the preserve's webpage (mlbean.byu.edu/lytle).





Faculty Research and Student Mentoring

The Lytle Ranch Preserve provides unique ecological and biological conditions that promote and support the teaching and research of BYU faculty and students, as well as colleagues from other institutions. The dual mission of the preserve is to push forward the boundaries of science while placing students at the forefront of that effort. Each year, BYU faculty teach hundreds of students on-site, giving them valuable hands-on learning experiences in tackling complex questions and problems across diverse disciplines in authentic work environments. The study of extreme environments, like those represented at the preserve, is important for



understanding how environmental changes might impact the health and life-sustaining qualities of the earth.

For example, in 2011 BYU faculty and students established long-term research plots at the preserve to investigate how plant invasions and wildfire, which are increasing globally, affect the highly sensitive desert environments that make up approximately 35% of the earth's terrestrial surface. Data from these experimental plots are generating insights into how sensitive ecosystems respond to change. These data are being used to develop management tools to help land managers, policymakers, and the general public make more informed decisions about our relationship with desert ecosystems.





Also, for nearly 20 years, scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Jena, Germany, have been conducting research at the Lytle Ranch Preserve. The Max Planck team explores fundamental questions about how native plants detect and respond to insect pollinators and herbivores. These research results have broad implications for better management of agricultural systems.



Facilities and Resources

The preserve is managed by the Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. The "Bunkhouse" facility includes a living area and dormitory-style sleeping arrangements for 24



people. The living area has two large restrooms, a classroom, a common area, and a large eat-in kitchen. An adjacent campground accommodates 15 people at three campsites. Please review the preserve's "Use Policy and Fee Schedule" (mlbean.byu.edu/lytle) for details on all preserve facilities and guidelines for day visits and overnight stays.



Visiting the Preserve

To schedule a visit to the Lytle, go to the preserve's webpage (mlbean.byu.edu/lytle), review the "Use Policy and Fee Schedule," and request a reservation.





Donations to the Lytle Endowment

Operational costs of the preserve are covered in part by earnings from two endowments. The "Lytle Endowment" was initially funded with a gift from the late Hildegard Scheuber, a remarkably generous woman who lived in Washington County for many years. The preserve also receives spendable income from the "Florence and Duane Butler Endowment." Please consider a gift to the preserve by calling 801-422-5052 or by using the "Donate Online" option on the preserve's webpage (mlbean.byu.edu/lytle).

