

# UINTAH COUNTY

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017



## **ADOPTION**

September 18, 2017 Resolution 09-18-2017, R1

## **UPDATES**

### **December 17, 2018 Resolution 12-17-2018, R1**

Chapters Amended:

- 10- Forest Management
- 12- Land Access

### **August 12, 2019 Resolution 08-12-2019, R1**

Chapters Amended:

- 4- Cultural, Historical, Geological and Paleontological Resources,
- 7- Fire Management,
- 8- Fisheries,
- 10- Forest Management,
- 12- Land Access,
- 13- Land Use Policy,
- 15- Livestock and Grazing,
- 19- Recreation and Tourism,
- 21- Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species,
- 22- Water Quality and Hydrology,
- 23- Water Rights,
- 26- Wild Life,
- 27- Ashley Karst Recreation and Geologic Area (this chapter was added and the maps were moved down to Chapter 29), and
- 28- John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area ( this chapter was added and the Acknowledgements were moved to chapter 30)

Theses revision were made in response to the approval of S. 47, the “John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act”

### **October 31, 2022**

Chapters Added or Amended

- Chapter 6- Energy Resources

- Chapter 12- Land Access
- Chapter 16- Mining and Mineral Resources
- Chapter 29- Utility Corridors (New Chapter)
- Chapter 30- Pipelines and Infrastructure (New Chapter)

**November 26, 2024**

Chapter 12 Amended

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

1	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN INTRODUCTION.....	6
2	AGRICULTURE.....	8
3	AIR QUALITY .....	10
4	CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, GEOLOGICAL, and PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES .....	12
5	DITCHES, CANALS, and PIPELINES .....	16
6	ENERGY.....	18
7	FIRE MANAGEMENT .....	23
8	FISHERIES .....	25
9	FLOODPLAINS and RIVER TERRACES.....	27
10	FOREST MANAGEMENT .....	28
11	IRRIGATION.....	31
12	LAND ACCESS.....	33
13	LAND USE POLICY .....	36
14	LAW ENFORCEMENT .....	38
15	LIVESTOCK and GRAZING .....	40
16	MINING and MINERAL RESOURCES .....	45
17	NOXIOUS WEEDS .....	47
18	PREDATOR CONTROL .....	49
19	RECREATION and TOURISM.....	51
20	RIPARIAN and WETLAND AREAS.....	54
21	THREATENED, ENDANGERED and SENSITIVE SPECIES .....	56
22	WATER QUALITY and HYDROLOGY .....	59
23	WATER RIGHTS .....	62
24	WILD and SCENIC RIVERS .....	63
25	WILDERNESS.....	65
26	WILDLIFE .....	68
27	ASHLEY KARST NATIONAL RECREATION AND GEOLOGIC AREA .....	71
28	JOHN WESLEY POWELL NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA .....	75
29	UTILITY CORRIDORS .....	78
30	PIPELINES AND INFRASTRUCTURES .....	81

31 RESOURCE MAPS .....85  
32 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....86

# 1 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN INTRODUCTION

---

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Utah State Statute provides for the development of county-level plans under Title 17-27a-401. Components which are required to be addressed within these plans include: land use, transportation, environmental issues, public services and facilities, rehabilitation and redevelopment, economic concerns, recommendations for plan implementation, and "any other elements that the county considers appropriate".

In 2015, the Utah Legislature amended Title 17-27a-401 to also require that county general plans include a "resource management plan" to provide a basis for communicating and coordinating with the federal government on land and resource management issues.

Uintah County will continue to encourage the responsible use and development of its natural resources and support associated industries and businesses. Decisions affecting public land resource use and development directly impact the County. In this regard, it is in the County's interest, and their expectation, that federal and state resource management planning efforts provide the County with every opportunity to proactively participate in all relevant public land and resource planning processes.

Over 70 percent of the land within Uintah County is public land (defined herein as federal or state managed, non-private, non-Tribal properties). Due to the County's historical use of these lands and the accompanying resources, decisions made by public land agencies directly impact County residents and the economy. With respect to "public land management", the County continues to support "multiple-use" management practices, public-land resource use and development, and improved public and private access to and across public lands.

The abundance and availability of natural resources within the region provide a variety of economic development opportunities including, but not limited to, mineral extraction; gas, oil, oil shale and tar sands development; timber production; agriculture and grazing; tourism and outdoor recreation. Uintah County will continue to encourage the use and development of these resources and support associated industries and businesses. The County also supports the development of additional natural resources as they become available and as new technology is available.

Uintah County depends on the use and development of natural resources for economic stability. Decisions affecting public land resource use and development directly impact the County. In this regard, it is in the County's interest that federal and state resource management plans provide better access to public land resources and allow resource exploration and development. In order to effectively articulate and protect their interests, the County will proactively participate in all relevant public land and resource planning processes.

It is expected that the Federal Agencies will follow the local policies found in the Uintah County Resource Management Plan 2017, in accordance with all applicable federal laws.

## 1.2 PLAN ORGANIZATION AND MAINTENANCE

The following plan was developed to communicate the County's position on various public land management issues and provide suggestions on how concerns may be addressed. **Further information on findings, objectives, maps, and data references for the issues addressed here are located in the Appendix to the general plan.**

In order to convey the County's desired future conditions, each resource discussed in this plan includes:

1. Issue overview and definition
2. References to related resources
3. Economic conditions
4. County objective and policy for the resource/issue

Additionally, the appendix to this plan includes:

1. Findings of historic and current conditions
2. Summary of the custom and culture
3. Listing of best available data sources

For this document to function as a valuable decision-making tool, it should be reviewed and amended as necessary to address County issues and interests as they develop. It is anticipated that future County planning efforts will expand on the "values and objectives" identified in the County's General Plan. With respect to this purpose, County priorities and the issues facing the County will most likely change over time.

## 2 AGRICULTURE

---

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

According to the USDA Farm Service Agency (2016), the primary crops produced in Uintah County are alfalfa, yellow corn, and mixed forage. These crops were grown on 258 farms in the county, however, forage and grazing crops are also grown in areas of the county that are not officially farms (Farm Service Agency 2016). The market value of crop sales in the County was over \$14.9 million in 2015, accounting for 38% of all agricultural products sold (Headwaters Economics 2016). In Uintah County the growing season averages four months (Utah State University 2005). *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 2.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Water rights

Irrigation

Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines

Noxious Weeds

Water Quality

Land Use

Land Access

Livestock and Grazing

Economic Considerations

### 2.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.3.1 “Agricultural sales account for about \$1.5 billion annually. Food growers, processors, and other agriculture related businesses employ more than 66,000 people and contribute approximately 14 percent to the State’s economy. Grocers are not included in these figures” (Utah Department of Agriculture and Food 2012).

### 2.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 2.4.1 Encourage the preservation of agricultural land. Balance this objective with a reasonable growth focused approach that recognizes the value of expanded residential and commercial development in the county.
- 2.4.2 Support current agricultural lands through educational, clerical, and financial assistance.
- 2.4.3 Stimulate community involvement in agriculture for cultural enrichment and public health.
- 2.4.4 Continue to allow access, and increase access to public lands for agricultural development in a manner that 1) satisfies local needs and provides for economical and environmentally sound agricultural practices; and 2) is consistent with, and complementary to, the Uintah Basin’s lifestyle, character, and economy.
- 2.4.5 Support and encourage the continuation of greenbelt for agricultural lands.
- 2.4.6 Adopt zoning ordinances that support agricultural land, while also reflecting a reasonable, growth-focused approach.
- 2.4.7 Establish incentives and guidelines to encourage the preservation of agricultural lands.
- 2.4.8 Support voluntary efforts initiated by agricultural landowners to create Agriculture Protection Areas covering their properties per state code (Utah Code Title 17.41).

- 2.4.9 Encourage interested agricultural landowners to take advantage of voluntary tax incentives by placing agricultural conservation easements on property that they own and wish to keep in agriculture.
- 2.4.10 Continue to offer increased residential density as an incentive for developers to set aside irrigated agricultural land voluntarily and keep some of the property in agricultural production.
- 2.4.11 Support the programs that educate the public regarding the needs of agriculture, grazing, and ranching enterprises.
- 2.4.12 Recognize the unique and diverse agricultural areas and interests within the County.
- 2.4.13 Agricultural land use regulations should be tailored according to the specific objectives and needs of each area.
- 2.4.14 Maintain the County's position that agricultural land uses remain the priority/primary land use within designated agricultural areas.

# 3 AIR QUALITY

---

## 3.1 OVERVIEW

“Air quality” is the degree to which the ambient air is pollution-free, measured by a number of indicators of pollution. Air pollutants are those substances present in ambient air that negatively affect human health and welfare, animal and plant life, property, and the enjoyment of life or use of property. Ambient pollutant concentrations result from interaction between meteorology and pollutant emissions. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 3.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Fire Management

Energy

Mining and Mineral Resources

Land Use

Agriculture

## 3.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.3.1 Economic consequences of poor air quality may include: Increased time away from work and health care costs. Decreased appeal of tourism. Deterring new businesses and industries from moving to the area. Increased operating expenses for all pollutant sources due to pollution control measures as required by air quality management plans. Threat of additional federal regulation and potentially reduced highway funding. For these reasons, maintaining air quality is important to Uintah County.

## 3.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 3.4.1 Maintain or improve air quality to protect the health and well-being of county residents, and maintain or improve the desirability of the county as a place to visit and recreate.
- 3.4.2 Promote economic development without sacrificing local air quality. Air quality should be protected to prevent potential restrictions on future development.
- 3.4.3 Work cooperatively as full partners with other agencies and entities to identify baseline air quality for the Uintah Basin.
- 3.4.4 Work cooperatively as full partners with other agencies to establish an understanding of contributions from non-area emission sources.
- 3.4.5 Participate with regulatory authorities in determining air monitoring needs.
- 3.4.6 Cooperate with the Ute Tribe, EPA, the State of Utah and industry to create workable agreements to address air quality issues.
- 3.4.7 Continue to encourage and support research and studies to inform the decision-making process for better air quality.

- 3.4.8 Support research and improve knowledge of the wintertime O<sub>3</sub> in the Uintah Basin, including understanding non-area emission sources.
- 3.4.9 Work cooperatively with other agencies to develop solutions to reduce O<sub>3</sub> based on research outcomes.
- 3.4.10 Support the implementation of developed solutions for O<sub>3</sub> reductions.
- 3.4.11 Encourage industry to reduce VOCs and NO<sub>x</sub> to help address the O<sub>3</sub> problem.
- 3.4.12 When possible, consider sponsoring air quality forecasting for winter months and sending alerts to companies when impaired air quality is likely to help reduce emissions.
- 3.4.13 Collect and disseminate information about low-emission technologies that could be used by industry, and encourage voluntary adoption of those technologies.
- 3.4.14 Encourage incentives to industry for the adoption of emission reduction technologies (e.g., awards, an unofficial certification program).
- 3.4.15 Implement county policies to maintain good air quality and to avoid nonattainment (hazardous days).
- 3.4.16 Publish county requirements online for local burning. Encourage all residents to follow the requirements (e.g., the clearing index), especially during winter inversions.
- 3.4.17 Only allow agricultural burning during times when atmospheric conditions will disperse smoke efficiently.
- 3.4.18 Assist local health departments in enforcing Utah Administrative Code R307-202 (Emission Standards: General Burning), which prohibits open burning at sites used for the disposal of community garbage and other waste, and prohibits a person from burning petroleum wastes, demolition or construction debris, residential rubbish, garbage, vegetation, wood, and other types of waste.
- 3.4.19 Educate county communities about air quality issues and what they can do to help (e.g., reduce idling).
- 3.4.20 Work with natural gas providers and developers to encourage the wider availability of natural gas so that it can be used to replace more polluting fuels.
- 3.4.21 Work with the local health department and regulators to address fugitive dust issues. Implement measures to reduce fugitive dust from roads, gravel pits, etc. Such measures could include water applications, chemical applications such as magnesium chloride, and covering truck loads.
- 3.4.22 Support programs that educate the public about fugitive dust and about ways to reduce fugitive dust emissions. Work to prevent degradation from non-area sources, after the sources are better understood.
- 3.4.23 Encourage the expansion of natural gas infrastructure for heating homes, as an alternative to wood stoves. Residents switching to natural gas would ultimately reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in the county.

## 4 CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, GEOLOGICAL, AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

---

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

*Definition: Generally speaking, this refers to human and natural resources which have intrinsic value because of their age, anthropological, heritage, scientific or other intangible significance.*

*Cultural: of or relating to culture; societal concern for what is regarded as important in arts*

*Historic: of, or pertaining to, history or past events more than 50 years of age*

*Geological: the study of the Earth, its rocks, and their changes*

*Paleontological: includes the study of non-human fossils to determine organisms' evolution and interactions with each other and their environments.*

Cultural and historical resources are defined as the physical evidence or place of past human activity, such as a site, an object, a landscape, or a structure. Archaeological sites and historic built environments (such as buildings) are two of the most common types of cultural and historical resources.

Cultural and historical resources can be further defined as non-archaeological sites and non-structural sites (such as waterways, viewsheds, and resource procurement areas) that have been identified as important for traditional and/or ideological reasons by either Native American groups or other organizations with ancestral and/or present ties to an area. (Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).

### 4.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Recreation and Tourism

Land Use

Land Access

Energy

Law Enforcement

Mining and Mineral Resources

Energy

Air Quality

Water Quality and Hydrology

Agriculture

Livestock Grazing

John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area

Fire Management

Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area

### 4.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.3.1 In 2014, Dinosaur National Monument reported 250,625 visitors, which was an 8.7% decrease from the previous year. However, in 2015 there were 291,800 visitors to Dinosaur National Monument. According to the NPS website, visitors in 2015 spent \$17,079,100 in communities near the monument. This spending supported approximately 233 jobs in Uintah and Moffat counties.

- 4.3.2 “During the first nine months of FY15, the Utah Field House Museum of Natural History State Park reported 29,435 visitors (remained flat), Red Fleet State Park reported 12,738 visitors (down 10%) and Steinaker State Park reported 13,741 visitors (remained flat)” (Leaver 2016).
- 4.3.3 The value of cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological resources is difficult to quantify. However, there is intrinsic value to each resource for its contribution to the shaping of our current civilization, culture, economy, tourism and lifestyle. Cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological resources are often connected with tourism and recreation. For example, the Utah Geological Survey has created a GeoSites online interactive map to help people explore Utah’s geological sites.
- 4.3.4 Historic buildings and districts provide character, a sense of stability, and a unique marketing angle for businesses; thus, community planners can draw upon local historic resources to stimulate economic development.

## 4.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 4.4.1 Preserve the significant cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological heritage of the Uintah Basin.
- 4.4.2 Support the protection and study of significant cultural and historical resources that occur within the Uintah Basin, including the responsible stewardship of these resources through balancing resource protection with community values.
- 4.4.3 Provide for the protection of cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological resources through management decisions that are based on the quality and significance of each individual resource.
- 4.4.4 Allow for public education, visitation opportunities, and site protection for cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological resources (where appropriate).
- 4.4.5 Preserve and perpetuate the heritage and culture of the Uintah Basin for all communities.
- 4.4.6 Mitigate as practical all adverse effects to cultural, historical, and paleontological resources.
- 4.4.7 The county will participate in all management decisions regarding cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological resources.
- 4.4.8 Where significant prehistoric and historic sites and scientifically important resources can be protected, consider developing them for education and tourism (where appropriate).
- 4.4.9 Manage potential adverse effects to significant and scientifically important cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological resources to the extent possible through avoidance before other protections are considered (such as removal/excavation and mitigation).
- 4.4.10 All federal undertakings that could affect significant cultural values require, under NHPA, an archaeological review and inventory before they are implemented. Historic and cultural sites inventoried will be evaluated for significance by a qualified archaeologist in cooperation with the state historic preservation officer.
- 4.4.11 Additionally, state legislation such as Utah Code 9-8-401 states that “The Legislature determines and declares that the public has a vital interest in all antiquities, historic and prehistoric ruins, and historic sites, buildings, and objects which, when neglected, desecrated, destroyed or diminished in aesthetic value, result in an irreplaceable loss to the people of this state.” Cultural and historical resources that have been evaluated and determined to be significant (such as those listed on the NRHP) will have special consideration.
- 4.4.12 In accordance with Utah Code 63J-8-104 (i) regarding state land use planning and management, federal lands shall be managed “so as to protect prehistoric rock art, three-dimensional structures, and other artifacts and

sites recognized as culturally important and significant by the state historic preservation officer or each respective county by imposing reasonable and effective stipulations and conditions reached by agreement between the federal agency and the state authorized officer pursuant to the authority granted by the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 USC 470 et seq.”

- 4.4.13 Federal and state agencies must not jeopardize private property rights or existing land uses, such as oil and gas exploration, mining, logging and harvesting of forest products, road maintenance, and grazing, through the protection of cultural and archaeological sites. This can be accomplished by carefully assessing the sensitivity and importance of the site relative to the economic and cultural impacts associated with land management decisions based around cultural and archaeological sites in the Uintah Basin.
- 4.4.14 Consider a historic preservation committee for the purpose of protecting cultural resources.
- 4.4.15 Establish a county register of cultural and heritage resources to discover and describe the nature of cultural resources. Assess and rank resources according to need relevant to preservation and enhancement.
- 4.4.16 Give priority to the retention and display of locally collected artifacts within the Uintah Basin.
- 4.4.17 In the case of natural and built forms upon the land, and in accordance with the protocols and rankings set forth above, measures to stabilize and enhance historic sites and objects shall be an ongoing objective of the county and its historic preservation committee.
- 4.4.18 Many of the cultural and historical sites in the Uintah Basin represent a unique culture and are closely related to early settlements of the area. They continue to have historical significance and are held by many residents as reverent or consecrated sites. Preserve these sites and keep them accessible.
- 4.4.19 Any alteration of landforms, waterways, closure of roads, and other such matters shall be carried out only after full consideration of each county’s prehistoric and historical cultural heritage.
- 4.4.20 Develop mitigation measures and treatment options when it has been determined that a project will have an adverse effect on significant cultural and historical resources. Mitigation measures can range from preservation through avoidance to analysis and research through scientific study, although they should be project specific and tailored in such a way that each resource is specifically analyzed and dealt with.
- 4.4.21 Although this land use document addresses such issues as roadways and trails access, wildlife, water, timber and range use, it shall be referred to on all matters regarding the use of natural resources as part of cultural identity. Traditional ways of life such as harvesting cedar posts, running cattle on the open range, and agriculture shall be protected.
- 4.4.22 Preserve all remnants of prehistoric lifeforms, geological traces, and cultural elements in accordance with existing laws, and ensure that they remain within the county, either in appropriate museums or archives. These items shall be made available to the public in an appropriate setting of discovery and study.
- 4.4.23 Utah Code 79-3-501 through 79-3-510 state that paleontological resources are important and require the preservation of scientifically significant fossil resources on state lands. These code sections mandate that those removing or excavating critical fossils on state lands must be qualified and permitted under joint jurisdictional cooperation from the Utah Geological Survey, the Utah Museum of Natural History, and the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration. Additional state codes (Utah Code 53B-17-603, Utah Administrative Code R807-1) also require that important extracted fossils be curated by an approved and qualified institution. These mandates will be followed.
- 4.4.24 All scientifically important fossils found in the area should remain in each particular county. The County recognizes that vertebrate fossils may be collected from BLM-administered lands under a permit issued to qualified individuals and that such fossils remain the property of the federal government and must be placed in a suitable repository (such as a museum or university) identified at the time of permit issuance.

Additionally, the County recognizes that all scientifically significant fossils collected on Utah state lands must be curated with the Natural History Museum of Utah. Recreational collectors may collect and retain reasonable amounts of common invertebrate and plant fossils for personal, non-commercial use. No vertebrate fossils or associated trace fossils such as tracks, eggs, etc. may be collected without a permit. Any fossils collected on non-federal lands belong to the landowner.

- 4.4.25 Management plans must provide the opportunity for amateur collectors and students of natural resource-related sciences to study, explore, and collect related items as provided by law.
- 4.4.26 Public land management agencies should promote these resources with educational material, signage, and information centers where appropriate.
- 4.4.27 When designating locations for sites, trails and other public use spaces, consider the following for cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological resources: physical location and non-tangible elements (such as its sense of place or historical value).
- 4.4.28 The County will not support designations under the Antiquities Act unless it has been thoroughly vetted, and has local community support.
- 4.4.29 The John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area (JWPNCA) and Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area (AKNRGA) have historically been used--and are currently used--for grazing. The BLM and Forest Service shall maintain at least current levels of grazing use; the county supports increasing grazing uses where possible. The amount of land available for grazing should not decrease. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 4.4.30 Water resources, such as watering holes and water diversion activities, shall not be negatively affected by the JWPNCA and AKNRGA. This area's unique geography provides a historical land resource for those participating in such uses, and the JWPNCA and AKNRGA shall not decrease or impair such uses in any way. (Amended 8/12/2019)

## 5 DITCHES, CANALS, AND PIPELINES

---

### 5.1 OVERVIEW

Ditches, canals, and pipelines are used to convey diverted water from the source to the location where its beneficial use is taken. The term “conveyance” is used to describe the movement of water from source to application. Water pipelines are used to convey water when open channels are not desirable or suitable. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 5.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Land Use	Riparian and Wetland Areas
Land Access	Fisheries
Livestock and Grazing	Recreation and Tourism
Irrigation	Wild and Scenic Rivers
Agriculture	Wildlife
Water Rights	Fire Management
Water Quality and Hydrology	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

### 5.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.3.1 Ditches, canals, and pipelines are essential to agriculture in Uintah County.
- 5.3.2 Water deliveries are an essential component of agricultural production, and may also be relied upon for urban landscape watering and gardens. The shift from crop irrigation to landscape irrigation can help water rights holder maintain beneficial use and avoid forfeiture of water rights.
- 5.3.3 Piped water and enhanced irrigation systems can improve efficiency, but increase cost. “Traditional irrigation methods, such as flood or furrow, use gravity to disperse water over a field. These methods have low costs of adoption, but are also relatively inefficient with water use. Modern technologies such as micro-sprinkler or drip irrigation have higher adoption costs, but deliver the water directly to the crop, applying water in a more precise fashion than traditional technologies” (Schoengold and Zilberman 2007).

### 5.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 5.4.1 Continue to allow access, and increase access to public lands for canals and ditches and agricultural development in a manner that 1) satisfies local needs and provides for economical and environmentally sound water conveyance practices; and 2) is consistent with, and complementary to, the Uintah Basin’s lifestyle, culture, and economy.
- 5.4.2 Support special service districts and canal companies in maintaining and obtaining access through public lands for necessary water conveyance needs.

- 5.4.3 Establish cooperative relationships with irrigation companies, maintain open communication, and assist with resolving public safety concerns, and to facilitate resolution of potential conveyance issues that have (or will) result from development.
- 5.4.4 Establish long-term plans for integrating urbanization, which coordinates historic and future use of water rights.
- 5.4.5 Encourage the development and implementation of the most efficient irrigation systems, and the best technologies towards that end.
- 5.4.6 Support the creation of a secondary water system to give residents an alternative to irrigating with culinary water.
- 5.4.7 Establish a flood-protection strategy, which identifies high-risk features or areas.
- 5.4.8 Encourage canal companies to provide updated mapping information, and/or having a central repository of canal infrastructure to help with planning.
- 5.4.9 If canals are relied upon for flood or stormwater management, the county should work closely with irrigation companies to help assure canal maintenance and flow capacity.
- 5.4.10 The County recognizes and will protect the existence of all legal canals, laterals, pipelines, or ditch rights-of-way.

# 6 ENERGY

---

## 6.1 OVERVIEW

In the context of this plan, “energy” refers to the renewable or nonrenewable resources used to obtain energy. Public and private utilities draw upon Utah’s renewable and nonrenewable resources to provide electricity and fuel (natural gas, propane, oil, gasoline, coal) energy supplies. Uintah County has a great deal of economic potential because of the presence of its energy supplies. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 6.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Mining and Mineral Resources  
Cultural, Historical, Geological, and  
Paleontological  
Water Quality and Hydrology  
Water Rights  
Pipelines and Infrastructure

Utility Corridors  
Air Quality  
Land Use  
Land Access  
Wildlife

## 6.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.3.1 The energy industry is vital to the Uintah County economy. *(See the economic development section of the general plan).*
- 6.3.2 “Oil made the largest contribution to the value of Utah fuel production in 2014, with a value of \$3.2 billion, which was about \$265 million (9%) more than in 2013. About 96% of the oil produced in Utah during 2014 came from Duchesne, Uintah, San Juan, and Sevier Counties (in decreasing production order). The five largest producing oil fields in 2014, Monument Butte (Duchesne and Uintah), Altamont (Duchesne), Greater Aneth (San Juan), Bluebell (Duchesne and Uintah), and North Myton Bench (Duchesne), accounted for about 51% of Utah oil production” (Boden et al. 2014).
- 6.3.3 “Deflating natural gas prices in 2014 and 2015 decreased production, while dropping oil prices significantly reduced development by most conventional and unconventional oil producers. Well-servicing and drilling companies experienced the most immediate impacts, resulting in job losses and reduced workloads. However, many producing companies continue to maintain some level of production and have positioned themselves to handle low prices” (Rural Planning Group 2015).
- 6.3.4 Estimating the amount of oil and natural gas reserves within county boundaries can be difficult because plays are often uneven and extend under many borders. Additionally, as extraction technology improves, the amount of resources considered available will increase.
- 6.3.5 “Natural gas made the second-largest contribution to the value of fuel commodities produced in Utah during 2014, with an estimated value of \$2.4 billion (including natural gas liquids), a \$245 million (12%) increase from 2013. About 96% of the gas produced in Utah during 2014 came from Uintah, Carbon, Duchesne, and San Juan Counties (in decreasing production order). The five largest producing gas fields in 2014 were Natural Buttes

(Uintah), Drunkards Wash (Carbon), Brundage Canyon (Duchesne), Altamont (Duchesne), and Red Wash (Uintah). Together they accounted for 73% of the 2014 gas production. Notably, production from Natural Buttes accounted for more than half (57%) of the gas produced in Utah during 2014” (Boden et al. 2014).

- 6.3.6 “Employment directly related to energy produces earning at a rate almost twice that of other jobs in the state.” (Governor’s Office of Energy Development 2014).
- 6.3.7 “Federal lands comprise a large share of Uintah County, which can at times be challenging for state and local officials. For example, in March 2013 the Department of the Interior drastically reduced the amount of federal land available for oil shale projects and oil sands leasing in Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado. Uintah County Commission Chairman Mike McKee expressed concern about the decision, saying, ‘It is a tragedy for our state ... Why would the federal government want to put a stranglehold on this when information shows it is energy-rich communities that are doing the best in this country?’” (Yonk and Simmons 2013).
- 6.3.8 Additional economic considerations can be found in the Uintah County Resource Management Plan Appendix.

## 6.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 6.4.1 Support balanced and responsible natural-resource development that benefits the public and generates revenues for public service providers to help pay for public infrastructure improvements needed to achieve economic diversity.
- 6.4.2 Ensure federal recognition of the Uintah Minerals Management Plan.
- 6.4.3 Maintain federal lands available for oil and gas leasing and development with least restrictive stipulations while considering the impacts to other public land resources and uses.
- 6.4.4 Avoid unnecessary federal rules associated with hydraulic fracturing and master leasing plans.
- 6.4.5 Withhold county support for mineral development provisions within federal land management plans until the appropriate land management plan and environmental impact statement clearly demonstrate the following:
  - That the authorized planning agency has considered and evaluated the mineral and energy potential in all areas of the planning area as if the areas were open to mineral development under standard lease agreements.
  - That a baseline is established from which the effect of management prescriptions can be analyzed and evaluated for its impact on the area’s baseline mineral and energy potential.
  - That the development provisions do not unduly restrict access to public lands for energy exploration and development.
  - That the authorized planning agency has supported any closure of additional areas to mineral leasing and development or any increase of acres subject to NSO restrictions by adhering to the relevant provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 United States Code 1701 et seq.; other controlling mineral development laws; and the withdrawal and reporting procedures set forth in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 United States Code 1701 et seq.
  - That the authorized planning agency has evaluated whether to repeal any moratorium that may exist on the issuance of additional mining patents and oil and gas leases.
- 6.4.6 Continue to support Utah Department of Transportation’s (UDOT’s) 2015–2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan (UDOT 2015). With energy development comes the need for sufficient transportation facilities to support

the industries. This plan supports the widening of U.S. Highway 40 and the development of passing lanes in Duchesne and Uintah Counties.

- 6.4.7 Support infrastructure that conveys energy resources such as pipeline development (e.g., pipeline from the Uintah Basin to existing railroads).
- 6.4.8 Encourage projects that would allow for the transport of crude oil.
- 6.4.9 Utilize and encourage the development of technology that would increase the extractability of energy resources.
- 6.4.10 Eliminate or reduce the amount of federal agency approval requirements for development to simplify and encourage investment in the area.
- 6.4.11 Promote all forms of energy development including renewables.
- 6.4.12 Support and encourage the development of a local refinery.
- 6.4.13 For generating electricity for sale or for use on-site, support the development of wind and solar energy at large and small scales on public and private lands throughout the county. The county will establish policies, guidelines, and/or goals to support the development of wind and solar energy resources on public and private lands in the county.
- 6.4.14 Support the development of technologies that will further the development of the vast oil shale and tar sands resources in the Uintah Basin.
- 6.4.15 Support the continued regulation of oil and gas production, including hydraulic fracturing, by the State of Utah, and oppose efforts by the federal government, such as federal fracking rules, that add unnecessary layers of bureaucracy and increased costs to producers.
- 6.4.16 Promote the efficient use of natural resources and the conservation of energy.
- 6.4.17 Object to the cancellation or withdrawal of existing lease rights, and uphold existing lease rights, and the intent of the original lease terms without modification or cancellation.
- 6.4.18 Extractable resource development should occur with science- based reclamation practices and responsible land stewardship.
- 6.4.19 Cooperation between water user groups, energy development companies, land use agencies, and citizens to both protect water rights and ensure opportunities for needed energy development.
- 6.4.20 The County should be involved in any initiative, mitigation or compensatory mitigation programs or studies.
- 6.4.21 Promote energy development through education, coordination and pooling of lands for more efficient development and landowner participation.
- 6.4.22 Support analysis of all fiscal and economic impacts to the minerals industry and the county from any proposed land management changes or natural-resource related plans.
- 6.4.23 Support agencies in providing opportunities for mineral exploration and development under the mining and mineral leasing laws subject to legal requirements to protect other resource values.
- 6.4.24 Open all federal lands shown to have reasonable mineral potential leasing with stipulations and conditions that will analyze resource values.
- 6.4.25 Call upon the federal agencies who administer lands within the Uintah Minerals Management Plan to do the following:

- Fully cooperate and coordinate with the county to develop, amend, and implement land and resource management plans and to implement management decisions that are consistent with the purposes, goals, and policies described in this plan to the maximum extent allowed under federal law.
  - Expedite the processing, granting, and streamlining of mineral and energy leases and applications to drill, extract, and otherwise develop all existing energy and mineral resources located within the Uintah Basin Energy Zone, including oil, natural gas, oil shale, oil sands, gilsonite, phosphate, gold, uranium, copper, solar, and wind resources.
  - Allow continued maintenance and increased development of roads, power lines, pipeline infrastructure, and other utilities necessary to achieve the goals, purposes, and policies described in this section.
  - Refrain from any planning decisions and management actions that will undermine, restrict, or diminish the goals, purposes, and policies for the Uintah Minerals Management Plan.
  - Refrain from implementing any policy that is contrary to the goals and purposes of the Uintah Minerals Management Plan.
- 6.4.26 The county calls upon U.S. Congress to establish an intergovernmental standing commission among federal, state, and local governments to guide and control planning decisions and management actions in the Uintah Basin Energy Zone in order to achieve and maintain the goals, purposes, and policies described in this resolution.
- 6.4.27 The decisions of the BLM Vernal ROD/RMP should remain in effect until they are amended so that projects are not held up for an undetermined amount of time while a decision is considered.
- 6.4.28 Support the State of Utah’s Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-grouse in Utah (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources 2013) as opposed to the BLM and U.S. Forest Service sage-grouse land use plan amendments.
- 6.4.29 Maintain open lands subject to moderate constraints and standard terms and conditions from the 2008 Vernal BLM Record of Decision.
- 6.4.30 Promote the development of infrastructure to more freely transport oil and gas raw or refined materials from the Uintah Basin to refineries and population centers.
- 6.4.31 Support and encourage the domestic use of natural gas and natural gas delivery throughout the county.
- 6.4.32 Encourage open communication between well drillers and private landowners.
- 6.4.33 Ensure plug and abandoned sites are reclaimed in a timely and appropriate manner, utilizing native seeds to ensure erosion control.” Ensure that county roads remain open for public access.
- 6.4.34 Promote the development of shale oil production technologies.
- 6.4.35 It is the goal of Uintah County to ensure our continued economic development through access to our own clean and low-cost energy resources.
- 6.4.36 Facilitate the expansion of responsible development of Uintah County’s energy resources, including traditional, alternative and renewable sources.
- 6.4.37 Support, promote, and Pursue opportunities to export fuels, electricity and technologies to regional and global markets.
- 6.4.38 Support and encourage continued natural gas development within the county.
- 6.4.39 Support and encourage the development of new technologies that will allow energy producers to access significant supplies of domestic natural gas from shale formations and other unconventional reservoirs.
- 6.4.40 Support and encourage advanced coal technologies.

- 6.4.41 Support and encourage the development of geothermal, solar, wind, hydropower, hydrogen, and any other energy resources and technologies.
- 6.4.42 The county supports the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service in leasing and selling parcels of land for the development of geothermal industries.
- 6.4.43 Encourage the retention or mitigation of the loss of Animal Unit Months (AUMs) for livestock grazing on public lands when solar farms are constructed.
- 6.4.44 Encourage the retention of prime agricultural lands in lieu of converting them into solar farms.
- 6.4.45 Encourage the utilization of natural gas peaker plants or other technologies to reduce intermittency and increase reliability of solar and wind energy generation and delivery.
- 6.4.46 Support and encourage viable wind energy projects when they are cost effective and compatible for land management practices including multiple-use activities.
- 6.4.47 Support and encourage the responsible development of wind energy infrastructure in areas proven by scientific research to provide consistent wind energy production along with the additional consideration of transmission infrastructure and capacity.
- 6.4.48 Maintain existing hydroelectric power infrastructure and seek out federal appropriations to avoid, delay, or defer decommissioning when feasible, and as determined by utility companies and local governments.
- 6.4.49 Support and encourage the addition of in-pipe hydroelectric systems in existing and new pipelines.
- 6.4.50 Support the research and development of hydrogen production, capture, and distribution infrastructure.
- 6.4.51 Explore opportunities for nuclear energy production within Uintah County.
- 6.4.52 Uintah County recognizes that the volatile global markets and a dearth of environmental health laws in developing or rogue nations demand that utilizing the mineral resources within the United States of America first, before turning to global markets. Further, it is asinine that the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would be tapped before domestic output would be increased.

# 7 FIRE MANAGEMENT

---

## 7.1 OVERVIEW

Fire management refers to the principles and actions to control, extinguish, use, or influence fire for the protection or enhancement of resources as it pertains to wildlands. It involves a multiple-objective approach strategy including ecosystem restoration, community preparedness, and wildfire response. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 7.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Recreation and Tourism	Forest Management
Land Use	Livestock Grazing
Land Access	Mining and Mineral Resources
Energy	Cultural, Historical, Geological and Paleontological Resources
Law Enforcement	John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area
Air Quality	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species
Water Quality and Hydrology	Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area
Wildlife	
Noxious Weeds	

## 7.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.3.1 Wildfires come with serious costs; the cost of fire suppression is only a fraction of the true, total costs associated with a wildfire event. Some of the costs associated with wildfire suppression include the direct costs (resources lost and structures burned, etc), rehabilitation costs (post-fire floods and land restoration), indirect costs (lost sales and county taxes), and additional costs (loss of life and damage to air quality). (Western Forestry Leadership Coalition 2009).

## 7.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 7.4.1 Use active and adaptive forest management to improve forest health and support multiple use and sustained yield with emphasis on employment, forest product production, open space, wildlife habitat, forage, recreation, and other social and economic benefits.
- 7.4.2 Encourage management of forest resources to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires, which cause unacceptable harm to resources and assets valued by society, including ecosystem and community health and resilience.
- 7.4.3 Encourage and support the expansion of the local forest product market at sustainable harvest levels.
- 7.4.4 Encourage the development of new markets for timber and forestry products that are available for harvest (e.g., use timber products for bracing in nearby coal mines or biofuels industry).
- 7.4.5 When sustainable and based on scientific knowledge and local data, increase grazing (allotments, AUMs, or seasonal use) to reduce fuel loads.

- 7.4.6 Identify and remove fire hazards on public lands.
- 7.4.7 Encourage State and Federal Land Managers to seek opportunities to use and harvest forest products that have been affected by wildfire or pests (e.g., beetle).
- 7.4.8 Encourage timely processing for National Environmental Policy Act projects associated with timber harvests so that economic benefits can be maximized.
- 7.4.9 Participate in the planning for and revision of USFS forest management plans and Bureau of Land Management resource management plans affecting forest management.
- 7.4.10 Encourage State and Federal Land Managers to open appropriate areas for commercial timber harvest.
- 7.4.11 Uintah County supports wild fire treatment operations within the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area. Wildfire treatments and prevention are essential parts of managing this area and preserving it for future generations. Multiple methods should be used to help reduce the risk of wildfires in the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area. Uintah County supports restoration projects and operations in the event of natural or man-made disasters. Access shall be allowed in order to perform restoration efforts. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 7.4.12 Responsible planning efforts should be made to protect the Ashley Karst Recreation and Geologic Area from wildfires. Fires can have severe negative effects on karst formations. Rapid soil erosion from runoff following a wildfire has the potential to clog subsurface water movement within the karst formations, which could be devastating to Ashley Valley's primary water sources. Therefore, plans for fuel reduction activities are encouraged which should help reduce the risk of wildfire, thus safeguarding the integrity of the Ashley Karst formations. Uintah County supports restoration projects and operations in the event of natural or manmade disasters. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 7.4.13 Wildfire treatment operations should be conducted in the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area to reduce the risk of wildfires within that area. (Amended 8/12/2019)

## 8 FISHERIES

---

### 8.1 OVERVIEW

A fishery is an aquatic system that includes a target organism, a community of species on which that organism depends, the habitat in which they reside, and the humans that affect or utilize the resource within the ecosystem. In the context of this plan, “fisheries” are also the places where fish breed and live, or where people hunt for fish. The term also includes game and nongame fish species. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 8.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines  
Irrigation  
Floodplains and River Terraces  
Riparian and Wetland Areas  
Water Quality and Hydrology  
Water Rights

Wild and Scenic Rivers  
Wildlife  
Recreation and Tourism  
Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area

### 8.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.3.1 “Recreational fishing provides a significant economic impact to the Utah economy and economic benefit to anglers” (Kim and Jakus 2013).
- 8.3.2 “Economic impacts or contributions are based on anglers’ expenditures associated with the fishing trips. Expenditures affect the local and regional economy through the interrelationships among different sectors of the economy. Input-output (IO) analysis of expenditure patterns traces the effects “upstream” and “downstream” through the economy, resulting in the multiplier effects. The angler survey, conducted in the months of March, April and May of 2012, revealed that a typical angler spent \$84 per trip on a fishing trip in Utah in 2011. Average expenditure to visit a BRF was estimated to be \$90 per trip” (Kim and Jakus 2013).
- 8.3.3 Fishing of over 78 species in Utah represents a significant sector of Utah’s tourism economy. Almost \$400 million was spent in association with fishing, hunting, and wildlife appreciation activities in 1985 (Powell 1994).

### 8.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 8.4.1 Support the Maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of sport fishing opportunities.
- 8.4.2 Encourage the protection and preservation of water quality and fish habitat while balancing the needs of other water users, including those holding water rights.
- 8.4.3 Enhance public access to fishing opportunities.
- 8.4.4 Support policies that help prevent the spread of invasive species or diseases that negatively affect fish populations.

- 8.4.5 Support economic development associated with fishing, including private businesses and facilities.
- 8.4.6 Support and encourage public land management agencies to provide and maintain sufficient opportunities for fishing on public lands through participation in planning efforts.
- 8.4.7 Support DWR's efforts to educate the recreating public about preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species and diseases.
- 8.4.8 Support efforts to protect water quality and the quality of the associated fisheries.
- 8.4.9 Support efforts to improve fish habitats while balancing the rights of adjacent landowners and holders of water rights.
- 8.4.10 Support tourism and associated businesses and commercial enterprises that are supported by local fisheries such as destination resorts and guide services.
- 8.4.11 Promote land uses that are compatible with maintaining healthy fisheries on lands adjacent to fish bearing streams, lakes, and reservoirs.
- 8.4.12 Continue coordination between the county and federal land management agencies on treatments, such as rotenone.
- 8.4.13 The State's management of fish and wildlife in the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geological Area shall not be affected in any way by the passage of the Dingell Act. (Amended 8/12/2019)

## 9 FLOODPLAINS AND RIVER TERRACES

---

### 9.1 OVERVIEW

Uintah County has a currently-adopted floodplain area. Floodplains are the low-lying, flood-prone areas adjacent to a river. River terraces are the bench or stepped areas that extend along river valleys. River terraces usually represent former levels and paths of floodplains of a stream or river. Rivers are dynamic systems. They can migrate laterally as a result of bank erosion and deposition, and move vertically as a result of bed aggradation or degradation. Floodplains and terraces are formed during these channel migration processes. Therefore, floodplains and terraces are essential parts of the river system. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 9.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Livestock and Grazing

Land Use

Noxious Weeds

Fisheries

Wildlife

Water Quality and Hydrology

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines

Irrigation

Riparian and Wetland Areas

Recreation and Tourism

Agriculture

### 9.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.3.1 Higher development costs to mitigate flood risks are the major economic consideration for floodplains. Flood-control costs may be passed on to municipal and county governments during emergencies. Another economic consideration is the cost of floodplain insurance to homeowners. Floods also have the potential to cause severe financial impacts in the form of damages to structures, transportation systems, and other infrastructure.

### 9.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 9.4.1 Restore floodplain connectivity for wildlife that rely on these locations in areas outside human habitation while preserving the health and safety of residents.
- 9.4.2 Encourage the restoration of floodplain connectivity for improved flood control in suitable areas.
- 9.4.3 Support Utah Division of Water Rights Dam Safety Program that assesses existing dam condition to prevent dam failure or uncontrolled release of water.
- 9.4.4 Develop floodplain ordinances and overlays as appropriate in an effort to coordinate with FEMA on floodplain mapping.

# 10 FOREST MANAGEMENT

---

## 10.1 OVERVIEW

Forest management consists of the principles and actions for the regeneration, use, and conservation of forests. Forests, woodlands, and urban forests add to the quality of life in Uintah County because of their ecological and recreational benefits. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 10.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Fire Management

Noxious Weeds

Wilderness

Wildlife

Water Quality and Hydrology

Livestock and Grazing

Recreation and Tourism

Agriculture

Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area

## 10.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.3.1 Visitors from around the world, together with Utah locals, enjoy Utah’s renowned forests that span from Canyonlands to the alpine zone. While Uintah is only 6% forested, these forests have high scenic, recreation, wildlife and other forest use values that make forest health very important (FFSL and USFS 2014).
- 10.3.2 The market for forest products is very small in Utah, but it does exist. Forest products may be sold by board feet, by volume, or by piecemeal depending upon the product and the buyer. A professional forester can assist the seller in choosing the correct unit of measure and in determining value of the product.
- 10.3.3 The non-extractive products and benefits that come from Uintah County’s forests, such as recreation, water quality, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics are important as economic functions. These contribute to the quality of life in Utah and should be considered valuable.

## 10.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 10.4.1 Use active and adaptive forest management to improve forest health and support multiple use and sustained yield with emphasis on employment, forest product production, open space, wildlife habitat, forage, recreation, and other social and economic benefits.
- 10.4.2 Manage forest resources to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires, which cause unacceptable harm to resources and assets valued by society, including ecosystem and community health and resilience.
- 10.4.3 Encourage and support the expansion of the local forest product market at sustainable harvest levels.
- 10.4.4 Develop new markets for timber and forestry products that are available for harvest (e.g., use timber products for bracing in nearby coal mines or biofuels industry).

- 10.4.5 When sustainable and based on scientific knowledge and local data, increase grazing to historic levels (allotments, AUMs, or seasonal use) to reduce fuel loads, support local economies, and support rural lifestyles for county residents.
- 10.4.6 Manage forest watersheds for optimal yield without compromising other resources.
- 10.4.7 Seek opportunities to use and harvest forest products that have been affected by wildfire or pests (e.g., beetle).
- 10.4.8 Reduce time required for National Environmental Policy Act processes associated with timber harvests so that economic benefits can be maximized.
- 10.4.9 Support best management practices that incorporate multiple use and sustained yield for all forest resources.
- 10.4.10 Participate in the planning for and revision of USFS forest management plans and Bureau of Land Management resource management plans affecting forest management.
- 10.4.11 Encourage USFS to open appropriate areas for commercial timber harvest.
- 10.4.12 Encourage USFS to find commercial uses for timber and forest products affected by wildfire or pests.
- 10.4.13 When revising or updating a forest plan, USFS should engage with the county in developing alternative management strategies and management policies.
- 10.4.14 Collect and provide data to USFS regarding appropriate forest management methodologies. Data may include published scientific literature, local case studies, inventories, or other pertinent information.
- 10.4.15 USFS forest plans should address commercial tree species selection, stocking levels, age class distribution, integrated pest management, and fuel loading. Additionally, areas for timber and non-timber product harvest and wildlife habitats shall be identified for the forest. Long- and short-term productive capacities and targets shall be established.
- 10.4.16 Removal of forest products shall be viewed as achievable and sustainable provided that appropriate science and technology are used.
- 10.4.17 Management programs must provide opportunities for citizens to harvest forest products for personal needs, economic value, and forest health. Sound economic approaches, considering both long- and short-term goals, shall be used when considering the harvesting of both wood and non-wood products, and appropriate social values shall be considered.
- 10.4.18 Forest management plans shall be written, and effective management techniques should be adopted to promote a stable forest economy and enhanced forest health, in accordance with the National Healthy Forest Initiative.
- 10.4.19 Grazing access on national forest land should be tied to historic levels and healthy forest conditions.
- 10.4.20 Manage forest watersheds for optimal yield without compromising other resources.
- 10.4.21 USFS forest plans should address commercial tree species selection, stocking levels, age class distribution, integrated pest management, and fuel loading. Additionally, areas for timber and non-timber product harvest and wildlife habitats shall be identified for the forest. Long- and short-term productive capacities and targets shall be established.
- 10.4.22 Removal of forest products shall be viewed as achievable and sustainable provided that appropriate science and technology are used.
- 10.4.23 Management programs must provide opportunities for citizens to harvest forest products for personal needs, economic value, and forest health. Sound economic approaches, considering both long- and short-term goals,

shall be used when considering the harvesting of both wood and non-wood products, and appropriate social values shall be considered.

- 10.4.24 Forest management plans shall be written, and effective management techniques should be adopted to promote a stable forest economy and enhanced forest health, in accordance with the National Healthy Forest Initiative.
- 10.4.25 Grazing access on national forest land should be tied to historic levels and healthy forest conditions.
- 10.4.26 All forested lands must be managed for sustained yield, multiple use and forest health.
- 10.4.27 Fire, timber harvesting, and treatment programs must be managed to prevent waste of forest products.
- 10.4.28 Management programs must provide for fuel load management and fire control to prevent catastrophic events and reduce fire potential at the urban interface.
- 10.4.29 Management and harvest programs must be designed to provide opportunities for local citizens and small businesses.
- 10.4.30 It is the County's policy to protect timber resources and promote the continuation of a sustainable wood products industry.
- 10.4.31 Sale sizes should provide opportunities for a wide spectrum of producers and allow for local entrepreneurship.
- 10.4.32 Commercial firewood harvesting is needed and could be a help in fuel load management and fire control.
- 10.4.33 Uintah County calls for the re-inventory, boundary adjustment, consolidation or deletion of the Inventoried Roadless Areas within or partially with in the county and their suggested future management classifications.
- 10.4.34 Uintah County supports efforts by the State of Utah to petition the Department of Agriculture and Congress to establish new management provisions for Inventoried Roadless Areas across the state.
- 10.4.35 Uintah County, along with its General Plan and Resource Management Plan, shall be directly involved in the development and implementation of the Management Plan for the USFS, particularly in regards to planning for the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area. Uintah County requires that the Secretary shares such plan with the county before it is finalized. (Amended 8/12/2019)

# 11 IRRIGATION

---

## 11.1 OVERVIEW

Irrigation is the practice of supplemental application of water to land beyond that directly received from precipitation. Irrigation expands agricultural output of cropland and sustains additional vegetation growth throughout the landscape. Irrigation is critical to the success of agriculture in the Uinta Basin environment. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 11.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Land Use	Forest Management
Agriculture	Predator Control
Water Quality and Hydrology	Noxious Weeds
Wilderness	Ditches, Canals and Pipelines
Water Rights	

## 11.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.3.1 Irrigation is vital to agriculture in Uintah County.
- 11.3.2 Irrigation companies service approximately 122,400 acres of agricultural land.

## 11.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 11.4.1 Work with irrigation managers to provide public safety by limiting access to dangerous structures, as well as training to practice safety and identify safety concerns.
- 11.4.2 Encourage agricultural irrigators to:
  - Modernize and provide resources to assist with upgrades such as pressurized pipe systems that reduce traditional flood irrigation and favor transitioning to sprinkle and drip application.
  - Practice sound irrigation strategy such as: “Deficit Irrigation” which balances water cost with the crop yield to achieve ideal economic outcomes; limit irrigation runoff and control pollution from that runoff.
- 11.4.3 Encourage measurement of all water usage to determine needs and where efficiency may be gained.
- 11.4.4 Encourage local public land managers to allow access, and increase access to public lands for irrigation development and maintenance in a manner that 1) satisfies local needs and provides for economical and environmentally sound agricultural and irrigation practices; and 2) is consistent with, and complementary to, the Uintah Basin’s lifestyle, culture, and economy.
- 11.4.5 Map existing irrigation lines that occur inside the County.
- 11.4.6 Explore the development of a secondary irrigation system and monitor the conversion of agriculture irrigation water to secondary water.

- 11.4.7 Require development proposals to identify potential impacts to existing irrigation systems.
- 11.4.8 Encourage participation in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program, as well as other programs, to improve irrigation management and water conservation.

## 12 LAND ACCESS

---

### 12.1 OVERVIEW

Land access refers to the ability to physically and legally access a given parcel of land. This typically has to do with roads, rights-of-way (ROWs) and property inholdings. Land access also concerns administrative restrictions on the methods or timing of land access, such as motorized vs. non-motorized access, and access that may be restricted at certain times. Finally, access can also refer to crossing or visiting lands via trails or other non-motorized methods. Common land access issues in Uintah County include private land surrounded by federal lands, private lands within designated wilderness areas, and public lands accessed by crossing through private property. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 12.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Recreation and Tourism  
Land Use  
Irrigation  
Livestock and Grazing  
Energy

Law Enforcement  
John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area  
Fire Management  
Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area

### 12.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.3.1 Uintah County's economy is closely tied to accessing public lands for resource development and recreation. Physical access via roadways, especially for motorized vehicles, is required for the development and utilization of energy, mineral, recreation areas, or other resources. Of special concern are state inholdings managed by SITLA, and private lands surrounded by BLM properties.

### 12.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 12.4.1 The County shall support recreation and tourism on state and federal lands and associated businesses in the County including activities ranging from motorized to non-motorized primitive outdoor activities on public lands.
- 12.4.2 Access to and across public lands is critical to the use, management, and development of those lands and adjoining lands. The county shall protect traditional and cultural access to public lands.
- 12.4.3 Strategically expand access to State, School & Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA), and federal lands to increase the value and enjoyment of parcels.
- 12.4.4 The County supports access to public lands for all users including the elderly and the physically impaired.
- 12.4.5 No roads, trails, rights-of-way, easements or other traditional access for the transportation of people, products, recreation, energy or livestock may be permanently or temporarily closed, abandoned, withdrawn,

or have a change of use without full consultation and coordination with the County and public disclosure and analysis.

- 12.4.6 Uintah County has a trails master plan that has been implemented.
- 12.4.7 County roads on public lands shall remain open unless it has been determined by the County that the subject road is no longer needed as part of the County's transportation system.
- 12.4.8 Encourage regular review of existing roadway infrastructure, planning documents, and policies to address future needs.
- 12.4.9 Motorized administrative access to all water related facilities such as dams, reservoirs, delivery systems, monitoring facilities, livestock water and handling facilities or other access needed for full enjoyment of property rights, permits, etc., must be provided. Access must be economically feasible with respect to the method and timing of such access.
- 12.4.10 Seasonal and wet weather closures will be based on calendar with exceptions allowed by current weather and road conditions.
- 12.4.11 Promote the use of existing roads and trails.
- 12.4.12 The County will support designation of future transportation and energy corridors between Uintah County and neighboring areas for the purpose of facilitating responsible transportation of local products, resources, or services, and to decrease dependence on external imports.
- 12.4.13 Work with state and federal land managers to upgrade certain roads in preparation for turning those roads into Class B County Roads.
- 12.4.14 The County does not support the closure of any more Forest Service roads. The County Supports re-opening of the closed Forest Service roads. The county would like to ensure access for forest management and stewardship projects.
- 12.4.15 Emergency access is exempt from OHV restrictions.
- 12.4.16 Maintain county infrastructure and encourage state and federal land managers to maintain infrastructure such as, structures, bridges, cattleguards, etc., to be structurally sound and safe for use.
- 12.4.17 State and federal agencies should recognize all roads on the currently adopted Uintah County Transportation System Map.
- 12.4.18 Uintah County will continue to assert and pursue the RS 2477 rights regarding the roads of Uintah County. Both state and federal agencies must recognize these rights.
- 12.4.19 Address public lands and resources in the County's land use plan. Involve relevant public land management agencies in plan development and implementation activities.
- 12.4.20 Will conduct public outreach efforts designed to educate the public and property owners regarding the pros and cons of developing recreational trails and public access corridors. Educate the public about the importance of public land access for multiple-use and sustainable yield purposes and activities.
- 12.4.21 Uintah County calls for the re-inventory, boundary adjustment, consolidation or deletion of the Inventoried Roadless Areas within or partially with in the county and their suggested future management classifications. Oppose new roadless areas and similar designations that limit access.
- 12.4.22 Uintah County supports efforts by the State of Utah to petition the Department of Agriculture and Congress to establish new management provisions for Inventoried Roadless Areas across the state.

- 12.4.23 The roads that the county has shown on Uintah County Transportation System Map shall remain open. The County supports and will apply for Title V Rights-of-way for these roads. Uintah County supports the use of these roads by motorized vehicles. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 12.4.24 Access to communication infrastructure for maintenance, repair and or upgrade shall be maintained and improved. State and Federal agencies shall not reduce or restrict access to communication infrastructure. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 12.4.25 Users of motorized vehicles are not discouraged from utilizing permitted roads and motorized routes which are designated in the Management Plan for the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area. Roads and routes not designated for motorized use under the Management Plan will remain unused. Such rules do not apply for emergency and management vehicles. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 12.4.26 Require proper maintenance of all roads which existed at the time of the passage of the Dingell Act. Although new roads and routes may not be created within the AKNRGA, the County should seek to maintain and preserve as much access to public land as legally possible. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 12.4.27 Access to land within the AKNRGA shall be preserved. If a road or trail becomes dangerous, impassible, or degraded, alternative routes shall be considered instead of closing said road. Lands that were accessible at the time of the creation of the Act shall continue to be accessible, even if a travel corridor must be rerouted in order to maintain access. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 12.4.28 Ensure access to emergency responders for fires, medical incidents, search and rescue and similar efforts. (Amended 11/26/2024)
- 12.4.29 It is the policy of Uintah County that the Bureau of Land Management must explore, in addition to all existing routes, opportunities for new routes to be opened so as to enhance recreational opportunities, tourism, or to advance the BLM's multiple use mission in any way as part of any resource management planning process or any implementation level planning process. (Amended 11/26/2024)
- 12.4.30 Uintah County has the policy and objective to prioritize public motorized uses of routes on federal land unless certain parcels are congressionally designated for non-motorized use. (Amended 11/26/2024)
- 12.4.31 It is the policy of Uintah County that there is a presumption that a purpose and need exists for each route on federal lands located within the county's boundaries. This presumption may only be rebutted if the federal government proves by clear and convincing evidence that there is no purpose or need for the route. The presumptive purpose and need of the routes in Uintah County include, but are not limited to, hunting, fishing, mineral exploration and extraction activities, fire breaks, search and rescue needs, scenic viewsheds, watershed management, wildlife management, vegetation management, livestock management, exploration, utility and infrastructure management, water management, staging areas for other uses such as OHV and biking, loop connectivity, having multiple entrance and egress points for safety, and recreation. (Amended 11/26/2024)
- 12.4.32 It is the policy of Uintah County to preserve existing roads and to authorize use thereof to promote recreational opportunities to those with physical disabilities and limitations. (Amended 11/26/2024)
- 12.4.33 It is the policy of Uintah County that any federal classification of a "redundant" route or a "spur" route is not a valid reason for route closures by any federal agency on public lands. On the contrary, such routes provide connectivity and access to different experiences for the public, offer a safer experience by offering alternative routes to common areas, and they serve all of the purposes mentioned in policy 12.4.29. (Amended 11/26/2024)
- 12.4.34 It is the policy of Uintah County that the BLM must recognize the State of Utah and Uintah County's vested property rights in our R.S. 2477 rights-of-way as part of any travel management planning process or resource management planning process. In *Kane Cnty v. U.S.*, 2:10-cv-01073-CW, Dkt. 792 (D. Utah Aug. 9, 2024), the federal district court held that the BLM must treat the State of Utah and counties as "holders" of vested title rights in these R.S. 2477 rights-of-way even if title has not been adjudicated or perfected in court. Therefore, Uintah County does not give the BLM any authority or right to close any R.S. 2477 rights of way that the County has an interest in. (Amended 11/26/2024)

# 13 LAND USE POLICY

---

## 13.1 OVERVIEW

For the purposes of the Uintah County Resource Management Plan, “land use policy” refers to the designation, modification and management of land for agricultural, environmental, industrial, recreational, residential, or any other purposes. The intent of this section is to outline the legal frameworks and county’s positions associated with resource management planning and public lands issues. This section of the County’s Resource Management Plan is intended to provide a broad outline of the parameters for influence and should not be considered an exhaustive dissertation of all possibilities. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 13.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Cultural, Historical, Geological, and  
Paleontological  
Wilderness  
Recreation and Tourism  
Energy  
Land Access

Wild and Scenic Rivers  
Law Enforcement  
Water Quality and Hydrology  
John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area  
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

## 13.3 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 13.3.1 Discourage or eliminate land use restrictions or special designations that restrict economic growth and activity, especially on federal lands.
- 13.3.2 Federal lands shall be available for disposal when lands are difficult to manage or lie in isolated tracts, when such disposal meets the important public objective of community expansion or economic development, or when the disposal would serve the public interest.
- 13.3.3 There shall be no net loss of the private lands within the county. No “net loss” shall be measured in acreage and in fair market value.
- 13.3.4 The county should be consulted prior to any state or federal land acquisition or disposal actions.
- 13.3.5 Lands must be made available for use under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1954 as amended. Lands should be made available for disposal in resource management plans and upon request by an appropriate entity.
- 13.3.6 The county shall encourage and participate in coordination and communication among various federal, state, tribal, and local land management authorities.
- 13.3.7 Federal land management policies and standards shall not interfere with the property rights of any private landowner to enjoy and engage in uses and activities on an individual's private property consistent with controlling county zoning and land use laws.
- 13.3.8 A private landowner or a guest or client of a private landowner should not be denied the right of motorized access to the private landowner's property consistent with past uses of the private property.

- 13.3.9 BLM and USFS should produce planning documents consistent with state and local land use plans to the maximum extent consistent with federal law and FLPMA's purposes, by incorporating the county's and state's land use planning and management program for the subject lands that preserve traditional multiple use and sustained yield management on the subject lands including but not limited to the following:
- Achieve and maintain in perpetuity a high-level annual or regular periodic output of agricultural, mineral, and various other resources from the subject lands.
  - Support valid existing transportation, mineral, and grazing privileges in the subject lands at the highest reasonably sustainable levels.
  - Produce and maintain the desired vegetation for watersheds, timber, food, fiber, livestock forage, wildlife forage, and minerals that are necessary to meet present needs and future economic growth and community expansion in each county where the subject lands are situated without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land.
  - Meet the needs of wildlife, provided that the respective forage needs of wildlife and livestock are balanced.
  - Protect against adverse effects to historic properties.
  - Provide for the protection of existing water rights and the reasonable development of additional water rights.
- 13.3.10 The county opposes the use of buffer zones beyond the scope and boundaries of the designations. Lands should only be managed as wilderness when they have been properly designated by congress or pending designation in a WSA. WSA's not recommended to be designated as wilderness should be dissolved.
- 13.3.11 In general, objectives of special designations can be met by well-planned and managed development of natural resources. For this reason, no special designations shall be proposed until the need has been determined and substantiated by verifiable scientific data available to the public. Furthermore, it must be demonstrated that protection cannot be provided by other means and that the area in question is truly unique compared to other area lands.
- 13.3.12 The County supports Utah Code 63J-4-401 (8)(c).
- 13.3.13 In accordance with Utah Code 63J-8-104(m), it is the policy of the county that a BLM VRM Class I or II rating is generally not compatible with the county's plan and policy for managing federal lands, but special cases may exist where such a rating is appropriate if jointly considered and created by state, local, and federal authorities as part of an economic development plan for a region of the state, with due regard for valid existing rights, school trust lands and private lands within the area.
- 13.3.14 Uses in the areas surrounding the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area shall not be affected by the conservation area, even when such uses can be seen or heard within the conservation area. Uintah County supports multiple use on all state and federal lands. (Amended 8/12/2019)

# 14 LAW ENFORCEMENT

---

## 14.1 OVERVIEW

The designated personnel group who has federal, state, or local authority within a jurisdiction to enforce the law or respond to an emergency. Law enforcement is concerned with the specific, and sometimes overlapping, jurisdictions of law enforcement, response personnel, and emergency management across Uintah County. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 14.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Recreation and Tourism  
Land Use  
Land Access

Fire Management  
Water Rights

## 14.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 14.3.1 An appropriate level of service for law enforcement is essential for all levels of government to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the County, which will in turn positively impact the local industry. Benefits are direct and indirect.
- 14.3.2 Annual operating costs for local law enforcement (County Sheriff’s departments) are influenced by public lands law enforcement activities, including coordination activities with state and federal law enforcement agencies. Costs associated with search and rescue operations are increasing in many areas of the state, particularly with increased recreation use of remote lands. Utah counties have the option to charge people who are rescued and/or can receive reimbursement through the state’s Search and Rescue Financial Assistance Program.
- 14.3.3 The Utah Search and Rescue Assistance Card (USARA Card) offers expense-paid rescue to individuals (hunters, hikers, other backcountry enthusiasts) for an annual fee. Money raised by the program will support the State’s Search and Rescue Financial Assistance Program. County Search and Rescue teams will receive reimbursement for equipment, training and rentals from the program. Such expenses are often borne by the counties.

## 14.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 14.4.1 Coordinate interagency law enforcement (civil, wildlife resources, and recreation public use regulations) between the County, cities, tribes, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, BLM, Forest Service, and the Utah Division of State Parks.
- 14.4.2 Maintain law and order [on public lands] to protect the health and safety of persons using the area.
- 14.4.3 Control litter, discourage vandalism, and perform search and rescue operations as appropriate.

- 14.4.4 Notify the county sheriff's office immediately when there is a life-threatening situation, criminal act, project structure failure, resource contamination, natural phenomenon (landslides and fire), cultural resource site(s) disturbance, and/or discovery of human remains.
- 14.4.5 Law enforcement agreements between State and Federal land agencies should be done as a benefit to the community.
- 14.4.6 Primary law enforcement will be under the jurisdiction of the County Sheriff.
- 14.4.7 Assess ways to financially support search and rescue operations in the county.

# 15 LIVESTOCK AND GRAZING

## 15.1 OVERVIEW

“Livestock” is domesticated animals raised in an agricultural setting to create food, fiber, labor, or other products. “Grazing” refers to a method of feeding whereby domestic livestock consumes plant material and then converts it into meat, milk and other products. Public lands are often used for livestock grazing in Uintah County. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 15.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Land use	Predator Control
Agriculture	John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area
Water Quality and Hydrology	Noxious Weeds
Wilderness	Ashley Karst National Recreation and
Water Rights	Geologic Area
Forest Management	

## 15.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 15.3.1 There has been a 25% increase in the number of farms in Uintah County and a 41% increase in the market value of products sold (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2007, 2012). See Table LG2 for more information.
- 15.3.2 The average per farm receiving payments has dramatically increased (269%). Uintah County has seen slight increases in each of 5% and 7%, respectively (see Table LG2).

*Table LG2. Number of Farms, Market Value, Government Payments, and Average Per Farm Receiving Payments for Uintah County, Years 2007 and 2012*

Uintah County	2007	2012	Percentage Change
Number of farms	981	1,231	+25
Market value of products sold	\$33,147,000	\$46,627,000	+41
Crop sales = 46%, livestock sales = 54%			
Government payments	\$620,000	\$653,000	+5
Average per farm receiving payments	\$7,560	\$8,064	+7

*Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (2012).*

- 15.3.3 According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, the top livestock inventory items in Uintah County are cattle and calves, sheep and lambs, and horses and ponies. The market value of livestock sales in

the County was over \$25 million in 2012, accounting for 54% of all agricultural products sold. The average market value of products sold per farm (including crop sales) was \$37,877 in 2012.

## 15.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 15.4.1 Maintain cattle and sheep grazing on BLM and U.S. Forest Service lands at historic levels and historic seasons of use.
- 15.4.2 Cooperate with state and federal land managers to address the transmission of disease from domestic sheep to wild sheep.
- 15.4.3 Manage lands to maintain or increase forage allocation for livestock grazing. Require annual checking and verification that lands are still up to standard.
- 15.4.4 Public land agencies should not decrease livestock grazing permits and grazing allocations below present levels considering the impacts of fire and drought.
- 15.4.5 The county does not support retirement of any grazing units through purchase or conversion of permits.
- 15.4.6 Public land agencies should properly notify permit-holders of any changes to their permits.
- 15.4.7 Uintah County supports efforts to manage nuisance species that are detrimental to rangelands (i.e. Mormon Crickets).
- 15.4.8 Support good monitoring and allotment management plans. Encourage third-party data collection for allotment management plans. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food should be involved in areas of dispute regarding range conditions.
- 15.4.9 The county opposes the reduction, relinquishment, or retirement of grazing AUMs in favor of conservation, wildlife, and other uses.
- 15.4.10 The county expects the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to participate in managing forage and grazing allotments in relation to wildlife populations.
- 15.4.11 Wildlife populations should not be increased nor should new species be introduced until forage allocations have been provided and until an impact analysis has been completed for the effects on other wildlife species and livestock.
- 15.4.12 Reduction in forage allocation resulting from forage studies, drought, or other natural disasters will be shared proportionately by wildlife, livestock, and other uses.
- 15.4.13 Increases in forage allocation resulting from improved range conditions should be shared proportionally by wildlife, livestock, and other uses.
- 15.4.14 Wildlife target levels and/or populations must not exceed the forage assigned in the resource management plan forage allocations. Revise allocations as appropriate using recent forage data.
- 15.4.15 Land management plans, programs, and initiatives should provide the amount of domestic livestock forage, expressed in AUMs, for permitted, active use as well as the wildlife forage included in that amount, be no less than the maximum number of AUMs sustainable by range conditions in grazing allotments and districts, based on an on-the-ground and scientific analysis.
- 15.4.16 The county favors the best management practices that are jointly sponsored by cattlemen's, sportsmen's, and wildlife management groups such as chaining, logging, seeding, burning, and other direct soil and vegetation prescriptions that are demonstrated to restore forest and rangeland health, increase forage, and improve watersheds in grazing districts and allotments for the mutual benefit of domestic livestock and wildlife. When

the practices described above increase a grazing allotment's forage beyond the total permitted forage use that was allocated to that allotment in the last federal land use plan or allotment management plan still in existence as of January 1, 2005, a reasonable and fair portion of the increase in forage beyond the previously allocated total permitted use should be allocated to livestock as recommended by a joint, evenly balanced committee of livestock and wildlife representatives that is appointed and constituted by the governor for that purpose. The county favors quickly and effectively adjusting wildlife population goals and population census numbers in response to variations in the amount of available forage caused by drought or other climatic adjustments, and state agencies responsible for managing wildlife population goals and population census numbers will give due regard to both the needs of the livestock industry and the need to prevent the decline of species to a point where listing under the terms of the Endangered Species Act is possible, when making such adjustments.

- 15.4.17 The county recognizes grazing permits on public lands as an asset, which may be transferred by the permit owner. Such transactions must be processed by the land management agency promptly after proper notification. Any reduction in the size of the permit or forage allocation as a result of the transaction shall not be made without a specific scientific justification.
- 15.4.18 When grazing permits are withdrawn from a livestock operator because of grazing violations, the permit should not be reallocated to other uses and should be made available for continued livestock use as soon as possible.
- 15.4.19 Motorized access to public rangeland is vital to the permit holders and the land management agency for planning, management, and development. Motorized access should be maintained as open and improved as management needs require. Valid existing rights should be maintained.
- 15.4.20 The permit holder should be compensated for the remaining value of improvements made by the permit holder on reduced allotments, unless the permit was canceled for non-compliance with grazing regulations.
- 15.4.21 Uintah County adopts House Report No. 101-405 (February 21, 1990) which was implemented by Congress under the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 (H.R. 2570), as follows:
- Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Wilderness Act states: "the grazing of livestock, where established prior to the effective date of this Act, shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable regulations as are deemed necessary by the Secretary of Agriculture".
  - The legislative history of this language is very clear in its intent that livestock grazing, and activities and the necessary facilities to support a livestock grazing program, will be permitted to continue in National Forest wilderness areas, when such grazing was established prior to classification of an area as wilderness.
  - Including those areas designated in 1964 by the Wilderness Act, Congress has designated a large number of wilderness areas, including areas which are managed the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management. A number of these areas contain active grazing program, which are conducted pursuant to existing authorities. In all such cases, when enacting legislation classifying an area as wilderness, it has been the intent of the Congress that the cited language of the Wilderness Act would apply to grazing within wilderness areas administered by all Federal agencies.
- 15.4.22 These guidelines and policies should be promptly, fully, and diligently implemented and made available to all federal agencies with land management responsibilities with Uintah County and to all holders of permits for grazing in the wilderness areas designated by Congress. The guidelines and policies are as follows:
- There shall be no curtailments of grazing in wilderness areas simply because an area is, or has been designated as wilderness, nor should wilderness designations be used as an excuse by administrators to slowly "phase out" grazing. Any adjustments in the numbers of livestock permitted to graze in wilderness areas should be made as a result of revisions in the normal grazing and land management planning and

policy setting process, giving consideration to legal mandates, range condition, and the protection of the range resource from deterioration.

- Uintah County agrees that it has been the intent of congress that the number of livestock permitted to graze in wilderness would remain at the approximate levels at the time an area enters the wilderness system. If land management plans reveal conclusively that increased livestock numbers or animal unit months (AUMs) could be made available with no adverse impact on wilderness values such as plant communities, primitive recreation, and wildlife populations or habitat, some increases in AUMs may be permissible. This is not to imply, however, that wilderness lends itself to AUM or livestock increases and construction of substantial new facilities that might be appropriate for intensive grazing management in nonwilderness areas.
- The maintenance of supporting facilities, existing in an area prior to its classification as wilderness (including fences, line cabins, water wells and lines, stock tanks, etc.), is permissible in wilderness. Where practical alternatives do not exist, maintenance or other activities may be accomplished through the occasional use of motorized equipment. This may include, for example, the use of backhoes to maintain stock ponds, pickup trucks for major fence repairs, or specialized equipment to repair stock watering facilities. Such occasional use of motorized equipment should be expressly authorized in the grazing permits for the area involved. The use of motorized equipment should be based on a rule of practical necessity and reasonableness. For example, motorized equipment need not be allowed for the placement of small quantities of salt or other activities where such activities can reasonably and practically be accomplished on horseback or foot. On the other hand, it may be appropriate to permit the occasional use of motorized equipment to haul large quantities of salt to distribution points. Moreover, under the rule of reasonableness, occasional use of motorized equipment should be permitted where practical alternatives are not available and such use would not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment. Such motorized equipment uses will normally only be permitted in those portions of a wilderness area where they had occurred prior to the area's designation as wilderness or are established by prior agreement.
- The replacement or reconstruction of deteriorated facilities or improvements should not be required to be accomplished using "natural materials", unless the material and labor costs of using natural materials are such that their use would not impose unreasonable additional costs on grazing permittees.
- The construction or new improvements or replacement of deteriorated facilities in wilderness is permissible if in accordance with these guidelines and management plans governing the area involved. However, the construction of new improvements should be primarily for the purpose of resource protection and the more effective management of these resources rather than to accommodate increased numbers of livestock.
- The use of motorized equipment for emergency purposes such as rescuing sick animals or the placement of feed in emergency situations is also permissible. This privilege is to be exercised only in true emergencies, and should not be abused by permittees.

15.4.23 In summary, subject to the conditions and policies outlined in this report, the general rule of thumb on grazing management in wilderness should be that activities or facilities established prior to the date of an area's designation as wilderness should be allowed to remain in place and may be replaced when necessary for the permittee to properly administer the grazing program. Thus, if livestock grazing activities and facilities were established in an area at the time Congress determined that the area was suitable for wilderness and placed the specific area in the wilderness system, they should be allowed to continue. With respect to areas designated as wilderness prior to the date of this Act, these guidelines shall not be considered as a direction to reestablish uses where such uses have been discontinued.

- 15.4.24 Grazing uses shall not be diminished or impaired in the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area. The act specifically states that grazing activities which were established before the date of the act shall be allowed to continue. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 15.4.25 Reasonable access shall be allowed for grazing operations within the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area and the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 15.4.26 Many parts of the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area (AKNRGA) have historically been used--and are currently used--for grazing. The US Forest Service shall maintain at least current levels of grazing use. Water resources, such as watering holes and water diversion activities, shall not be adversely affected by the AKNRGA. This area's unique geography provides a historical land resource for those participating in such uses, and the AKNRGA should not decrease or impair such uses in any way. In no way shall the Act impair or diminish current or future grazing uses. The act specifically states that grazing activities which were established before the date of the act shall be allowed to continue. Grazing is an important resource to Uintah County, and the county encourages the USFS to follow guidelines set forth in H.R. 5487 of the 96th congress when writing the Management Plan. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 15.4.27 Grazing is an important resource to Uintah County, and the county encourages the BLM to follow guidelines set forth in H.R. 2570 of the 101st congress when writing the Management Plan. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 15.4.28 Grazing is a historical use in Uintah County. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 15.4.29 Grazing is an important cultural resource in Uintah County. (Amended 8/12/2019)

# 16 MINING AND MINERAL RESOURCES

---

## 16.1 OVERVIEW

In the context of this plan, “mining” is the process or industry of extracting minerals or other geological materials from a mine or other extractive process, and “mineral resources” are the natural resources in the form of minerals (solid inorganic substances). Mineral development (mining) is regulated and managed depending on the extracted resource, and are grouped into three categories: locatable, leasable, and saleable. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 16.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Water Rights	Energy
Land Use	Cultural, Historical, Geological, and
Air Quality	Paleontological
Water Quality and Hydrology	Land Access

## 16.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 16.3.1 Mineral resources have a large impact on our economy. State and Federal Government have control over the majority of these minerals, so how they manage them can affect the economy.
- 16.3.2 Mining made up 4.2% of Utah’s GDP in 2012. In 2014, Utah produced 1.8% of the coal in the United States, 30% of that production was shipped out of the state. Employment in mining especially has changed in recent years; as of March 2016, 9,500 miners are employed in Utah, this is down 12.8% from March 2015 (U.S. Energy Information Administration).
- 16.3.3 In Uintah County, mining constituted almost 16% of all county employment in 2015, with almost all of those jobs in the oil/gas industry.

## 16.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 16.4.1 Continue to allow access, and increase access to public lands for mining and mineral resource development in a manner that 1) satisfies local and national needs and provides for economical and environmentally sound exploration, extraction, and reclamation practices; and 2) is consistent with, and complementary to, the Uintah Basin’s lifestyle, character, and economy.
- 16.4.2 Mining and mineral resource exploration and development are consistent with the multiple use philosophy for management of public lands. These activities constitute a temporary use of the land that will not impair its use for other purposes in the future. All mineral resource exploration activities shall comply with appropriate laws and regulations.
- 16.4.3 Those portions of the Uintah Basin shown to have reasonable mineral potential should be open to leasing and other access with reasonable stipulations and conditions, including mitigation, reclamation, and bonding

measures where necessary, that will protect the lands against unnecessary and undue damage to other significant resource values.

- 16.4.4 Any existing lease restrictions in the Uintah Basin that are no longer necessary or effective should be modified or removed.
- 16.4.5 Any moratorium that may exist against the issuance of qualified mining patents in the Uintah Basin, and any barriers that may exist against developing unpatented mining claims and filing for new claims, should be carefully evaluated for removal.
- 16.4.6 Permanent withdrawals of land from mineral exploration and development should be avoided.
- 16.4.7 Protecting culinary water is a priority. The Ashley Springs Protection Zone is not conducive to mining or mineral resource extraction.
- 16.4.8 The development of mining and mineral resources should be conducted in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts to water quality in accordance with local, state, and federal standards.
- 16.4.9 The development of mining and mineral resources should be conducted in a manner that uses water in accordance with terms set forth by the Utah Division of Water Rights and the State Engineer, county zoning ordinances, and is in compliance with other applicable laws and regulations.
- 16.4.10 Provide, as appropriate, incentives to encourage economic development and stimulate natural resource-based business recruitment, retention, and expansion activities.
- 16.4.11 Support and encourage a broad spectrum of educational and vocational programs relating to natural resource use and development.
- 16.4.12 All mining permits and applications should be processed on a timely basis, provided that the applicant follows proper procedures and submits all required information at the time of application.
- 16.4.13 There are no known critical minerals in Uintah County all though Uintah County Supports the Research and Exploration of critical minerals should they be found.

# 17 NOXIOUS WEEDS

---

## 17.1 OVERVIEW

Noxious weeds are plants that are considered harmful to agricultural or horticultural crops, natural habitats, ecosystems, humans or livestock. Often times they are non-native species, which spread rapidly due to habitat disruption or poor land management. In Uintah County, they are typically (but not always) nonnative species that spread rapidly at the expense of native vegetation. Noxious weeds have significant economic considerations because of their impacts on rangeland health, increased wildfire, and direct control costs such as weed removal, crop and seed contamination, and equipment cleaning costs. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 17.2 RELATED RESOURCES

- Forest Management
- Fire Management
- Agriculture
- Livestock and Grazing
- Riparian and Wetland Areas

## 17.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 17.3.1 “The invasion of non-native plant species not only produces various ecological modifications, but also results in substantial socioeconomic impacts, particularly to the livestock industry and land management agencies responsible for fire suppression. Invasive plant species cause more economic loss on rangeland than all other pests combined. Invasive plants reduce the carrying capacity for livestock by lowering the forage yield. Consequently, the costs of managing and producing livestock increase” (Utah State University 2009).
- 17.3.2 “The importance of herbicides in modern weed management is underscored by estimates that losses in the agricultural sector would increase about 500% from \$4.1 billion to \$20 billion per year without the use of herbicides” (Whitesides 2004).
- 17.3.3 “The implementation of one control method is rarely effective in achieving the desired results for curtailing the spread of invasive plants. Successful long-term and cost effective management programs should integrate a variety of mechanical, chemical, biological, and cultural control techniques. Integrated management involves the deliberate selection, combination, and implementation of effective invasive plant management strategies with due consideration of economic, ecological, and sociological consequences... Presently, there are several examples of integrated strategies used to manage invasive plants and improve rangeland communities. Much attention has been focused on the integration of targeted or prescription grazing with other control methods, as the incorporation of grazing management is an essential component in successfully addressing invasive plant problems” (Utah State University 2009).

## 17.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 17.4.1 Reduce or eliminate noxious weed infestations and minimize the establishment of new weed species across jurisdictional boundaries using adaptive management and integrated weed management approaches.
- 17.4.2 Accomplish weed control without adverse human, grazing, and environmental effects.
- 17.4.3 In areas where weeds have been treated, revegetate and restore with desirable native plant species.
- 17.4.4 Manage noxious weeds to enhance wildlife habitat and farmland.
- 17.4.5 Support Early Detection and Rapid Response of new weed infestations.
- 17.4.6 Comply with existing state, county, and federal rules, regulations, ordinances, and directives pertaining to noxious weeds and the application of herbicides.
- 17.4.7 Work cooperatively with other agencies and entities to reduce or eliminate noxious weed species and minimize or prevent the establishment of new infestations and new weed species.
- 17.4.8 Implement weed monitoring programs in addition to county weed mapping programs.
- 17.4.9 Create noxious weed awareness and education programs to teach people about the economic and environmental impacts of weeds.
- 17.4.10 Employ a variety of (integrated) weed management techniques including prevention, biological controls, chemical controls, and mechanical controls.
- 17.4.11 Work with all landowners and managers to ensure a well-funded and coordinated effort in prevention as well as an attack against already established weeds.
- 17.4.12 Continue support for the County's noxious weed program and participation in the Cooperative Weed Management Association.

# 18 PREDATOR CONTROL

---

## 18.1 OVERVIEW

Predator and prey populations require balance to avoid adverse impacts from either population. Predator control is primarily a function of the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) and the US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). In addition to predators control, DWR and APHIS work to manage nuisance animals, which are native and introduced species of wildlife that thrive in urban environments and have become problematic. In Uintah County, the APHIS program and DWR coordinate efforts to resolve wildlife conflicts on public and private lands. Conflicts can occur for many reasons, including the following: (1) predators injuring or killing livestock, (2) wildlife damaging farm crops or raiding livestock feed stocks, and (3) wildlife populations becoming problematic in residential areas. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 18.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Agriculture	Wildlife
Livestock and Grazing	Land Use
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species	

## 18.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 18.3.1 Losses due to predation can be significant. According to the APHIS (USDA 2015), in Utah, 5,200 sheep and 12,100 lambs were killed by predators for a total value loss of nearly \$3 million
- 18.3.2 Coyotes were by far the largest contributor to predation deaths (2,800 sheep and 8,500 lambs), bears were second (1,100 sheep and 1,700 lambs), and mountain lions third (700 sheep and 900 lambs).
- 18.3.3 Utah cattle are also killed by predators, though not in as many numbers. According to the APHIS (USDA 2011), in Utah, 300 head of cattle and 2,300 calves were killed by predators for a total value loss of \$1.1 million
- 18.3.4 Coyotes are responsible for the majority of cattle predation, including 58% of calf losses and 44% of cows.
- 18.3.5 Bears were responsible for 43% of the cow losses.

## 18.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 18.4.1 While ravens cannot currently be controlled due to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, crows can, and should, be controlled to protect sage grouse in the County.
- 18.4.2 Include both lethal and nonlethal methods in predator control. Nonlethal methods focus on physically separating livestock from predators, employing techniques to repel predators, or disrupting mating and reproductive cycles to reduce the number of predators born each year. Lethal methods seek to reduce predator numbers by killing them.
- 18.4.3 Support the Utah Predator Control Program, which provides a cash bounty for coyotes killed in the state.

- 18.4.4 Uintah County supports a change of state law and policy to move money and authority to allow for local predator control programs.
- 18.4.5 Chemical control where legal and properly managed is a safe and effective predator control and should be utilized.
- 18.4.6 Trapping is a historic and scientifically proven method of controlling predatory animals and should be maintained.
- 18.4.7 Predator numbers must be controlled at a level that protects livestock, private property and other wildlife species from loss or damage.

# 19 RECREATION AND TOURISM

---

## 19.1 OVERVIEW

Recreation is an activity done for enjoyment. Tourism is the social, cultural, and economic phenomenon of visiting places for pleasure. Outdoor recreation is a significant and growing part of Uintah County’s economy. Tourism is beneficial to the County’s economy by bringing in sales tax and transient room tax revenue. Uintah County’s public lands provide a variety of recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors. Popular activities include camping, fishing, climbing, picnicking, OHV use, horseback-riding, snowmobiling, hunting, and photography. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 19.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Land Access	Wilderness
Land Use	Ashley Karst National Recreation and
John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area	Geologic Area
Cultural, Historical, Geological, and	
Paleontological	

## 19.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 19.3.1 Between 2010 and 2014, statewide leisure and hospitality employment grew 16%, whereas all other employment grew at a lesser rate of 10%. (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute 2015). Approximately 10% of jobs in eastern Utah (defined as Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah, Carbon, and Emery Counties) were in the leisure and hospitality sector. This is the lowest of all the regions analyzed in Utah.
- 19.3.2 “Total tourism related tax revenue decreased in 2015, except for restaurant tax revenue which remained flat. Overall, total taxable sales in the leisure and hospitality sector decreased 14.3%. However, leisure and hospitality jobs in Uintah County increased 1.7%. Since 2010, every spring/summer season leisure and hospitality jobs have increased 11% from fall/winter – or by an average of 120 jobs – with summer as the peak tourist season” (Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute 2015).
- 19.3.3 The County can influence recreation by providing adequate recreation infrastructure, opportunities and advertising recreation resources. The County will continue to support new travel and tourism events in our area.
- 19.3.4 In 2016, the lottery for public high-season boating permits for the Green and Yampa Rivers in Dinosaur National Monument saw a record number of applications for the 300 available launches (this number did not include the ongoing permits for commercial guides and outfitters). A total of 7,447 applications (up 724 from the previous year) were submitted from all 49 states, three Canadian Provinces, and four foreign countries. This equated to approximately 7,500 visitors.

## 19.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 19.4.1 Support outdoor recreation as part of a balanced plan of economic growth and quality of life.

- 19.4.2 Leverage federal and state recreation areas, parks, and sites as county-based scenic and recreation economic assets.
- 19.4.3 Coordinate county recreation and economic development efforts and activities with federal, state, local, and private interests, e.g., destination resorts and private facilities.
- 19.4.4 Identify and preserve locally important recreation resources (amenities, viewsheds, etc) for future generations.
- 19.4.5 Support active management of conflicting recreational uses so that multiple users, e.g., motorized and non-motorized user groups, are accommodated to the greatest extent practicable.
- 19.4.6 State and federal land managers must coordinate and closely consult with county and municipal governments who are conducting inventories related to recreation resources and opportunities or scenic values. Public land agencies must evaluate proposed plans and actions for impacts on existing recreational resources and activities and potential future activities. This should be coordinated with county and municipal governments. Management plans and decisions must provide opportunities to meet the increased demand for dispersed and developed recreational opportunities. Plan and manage recreational activities to be compatible with resource development. Resource development, recreation, and tourism are compatible when properly managed.
- 19.4.7 County land use plans and regulations will support expanding recreation opportunities and the protection and enhancement of traditional recreation areas and sites.
- 19.4.8 BLM or U.S. Forest Service must coordinate and consult closely with county and municipal governments on any proposals for special designations (Special Recreation Management Areas, wilderness, etc.) that may affect current and future recreation use.
- 19.4.9 During land use planning processes, the county will identify potential locations of desired recreational facilities.
- 19.4.10 County-identified public recreation areas and lands with unique natural features may be preserved through easements or other common open space preservation strategies.
- 19.4.11 Federal and state land management should support recreation and tourism and associated businesses in the county, including the broad range of activities from off-road vehicle use to primitive outdoor activities.
- 19.4.12 Management decisions should provide for the continuation or expansion of outfitting and lodge operations. They are an important part of local history and tradition and they contribute substantially to the local economy.
- 19.4.13 Encourage recreation-oriented entrepreneurial and economic development activities that are consistent with the Uintah Basin's character and lifestyle.
- 19.4.14 State and federal land management agencies shall achieve and maintain traditional access to outdoor recreational opportunities available on federal lands as follows:
  - Hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, camping, rock hounding, OHV travel, biking, geological exploring, pioneering, recreational vehicle camping, and sightseeing are activities that are important to the traditions, customs, and character of the county and should be allowed to continue.
  - Wildlife hunting, trapping, and fishing should continue at levels determined by the Utah Wildlife Board and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Traditional levels of group camping, group day use, and other traditional forms of outdoor recreation, both motorized and non-motorized, should be allowed to continue.

- The broad spectrum of outdoor recreational activities available on the subject lands should be available to citizens for whom a primitive, non-motorized, outdoor experience is not preferred, affordable, or physically achievable.
- 19.4.15 Recreation resource protection and management must provide for continued and reasonable access to and development of property rights within the area and provide for full use and enjoyment of these rights.
- 19.4.16 Existing levels of motorized public access to traditional outdoor recreational designations in the county must be continued, including both snow machine and OHV use.
- 19.4.17 OHV loops should be provided to connect communities with the region. Open area riding as well as looped and stacked trail systems should be offered, with a variety of levels of trail difficulty.
- 19.4.18 Group camping and day use sites and availability must be continued and expanded to meet demand.
- 19.4.19 With respect to regional recreational trails and open spaces, Uintah County will work with the Uintah Recreation District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS), Dino Trails Committee, communities, and other relevant interests and agencies to develop a Uintah County trails plan. Once identified, these corridors should be included in the County's land use map.
- 19.4.20 Permitted recreational activities which existed at the time of the passage of the Dingell Act shall be permitted to continue in the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area (AKNRGA). The AKNRGA contains opportunities for various types of remote outdoor recreation, and Uintah County will actively promote tourism so people can enjoy the unique landscape, geology, and topography of the AKNRGA. (Amended 8/12/2019)

## 20 RIPARIAN AND WETLAND AREAS

---

### 20.1 OVERVIEW

Riparian areas are ecosystems that occur along watercourses or water bodies. They are distinctly different from the surrounding lands because of unique soil and vegetation characteristics that are strongly influenced by free or unbound water in the soil. Riparian ecosystems occupy the transitional area between the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Similar to wetlands, riparian areas provide benefits to Uintah County, including wildlife habitat area, hydrologic recharge areas, and water quality improvements. A wetland is a land area that is saturated with water, permanently or seasonally, such that it takes on the characteristics of a distinct ecosystem. The US Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA are the agencies that have legal jurisdiction over wetlands, including wetlands on private property. Wetlands provide numerous benefits to society a few of the most important of these include wildlife habitat area, hydrologic recharge areas, and water quality improvements. The County desires to maintain and improve wetlands found on public lands for the benefit of its watershed, water quality, flood control, and wildlife habitat. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 20.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Livestock and Grazing  
Wild and Scenic Rivers  
Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines  
Irrigation  
Agriculture  
Water Rights  
Water Quality and Hydrology

Floodplains and River Terraces  
Wildlife  
Noxious Weeds  
Fisheries  
Recreation and Tourism  
Fire Management  
Land Use

### 20.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 20.3.1 It is difficult to quantify the economic benefits of riparian areas. They are intertwined with nonmarket ecosystems and services like clean water, wildlife habitat, recreation, and tourism. Pre- or post-water treatment methods that utilize passive bioengineering techniques, including riparian area management, can significantly reduce water treatment costs, thereby avoiding some of the costs associated with engineered water treatment plants, which are extremely expensive.
- 20.3.2 Wetlands provide recreational value as well as ecological, social or economic value.
- 20.3.3 Possibly the most significant economic and social benefit of wetlands is flood control, but wetlands also provide essential functions in filtering water/improving water quality and providing habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife (World Wildlife Fund 2004). Wetlands also recharge aquifers.
- 20.3.4 From a regulatory standpoint, certain bodies of water and associated wetlands are regulated by the EPA and the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), even on private property. Activities that involve excavation or placement of fill in jurisdictional waters or wetlands require a permit issued by the Corps and may be reviewed by EPA. The extent of jurisdiction is determined on a project-by-project basis in consultation with the Corps.
- 20.3.5 Permitting processes take significant time and have real economic costs.

## 20.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 20.4.1 Inventory and map riparian areas so that appropriate measures can be taken to protect or avoid impacts to them, when possible.
- 20.4.2 Conserve and protect riparian areas through application of best management practices.
- 20.4.3 Participate in state, federal and local riparian planning opportunities.
- 20.4.4 Support the eradication of invasive species, e.g., Phragmites, tamarisk, and Russian olive, which can degrade habitat value and impact groundwater levels.
- 20.4.5 Use naturalized flow management regimes from dams or other impoundments to enhance aquatic and riparian habitat along waterways, where appropriate, and not in conflict with human habitation.
- 20.4.6 Use guzzlers, reservoirs, and wells to attract livestock and wildlife away from riparian areas, which can help decrease soil disturbance and impacts to aquatic resources.
- 20.4.7 Use scientific methodology, e.g., proper functioning condition or multiple indicator monitoring, to guide management decisions in riparian areas.
- 20.4.8 Use riparian overlays at local levels to guide protection of riparian zones.
- 20.4.9 Consider releasing northern tamarisk beetle (*Diorhabda carinulata*) as a biological control of tamarisk, an invasive plant species. Follow release with revegetation treatments to re-establish riparian area, stabilize streambanks, and protect water quality. Support for biological control and restoration is available from organizations like the Tamarisk Coalition out of Grand Junction, Colorado.
- 20.4.10 Support application of aquatic-approved herbicides to remove undesired vegetation.
- 20.4.11 Modify grazing use to avoid overgrazing if appropriate.
- 20.4.12 Encourage efforts to enhance streambeds and control erosion. Increase coverage and composition of vegetation.
- 20.4.13 Identify high-priority or ecologically sensitive wetland areas.
- 20.4.14 Track proposed changes and provide comments regarding federal regulations that affect wetland jurisdiction and permitting to avoid overreach by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- 20.4.15 Support wetland management through planning.
- 20.4.16 Support the eradication of invasive species, e.g., Phragmites, tamarisk, and Russian olive, which can degrade habitat value and impact groundwater levels.
- 20.4.17 Participate in federal, tribal, state, and local wetland conservation planning processes.
- 20.4.18 Support use of scientific methodology, e.g., proper functioning condition, to guide management decisions regarding recreation and grazing exclusions in wetlands.
- 20.4.19 Consider release of northern tamarisk beetle (*Diorhabda carinulata*) as a biological control of tamarisk, an invasive plant species.
- 20.4.20 Cooperate with Natural Resources Conservation Service, Utah State University Extension, and other entities responsible for integrated weed management in wetland areas.

# 21 THREATENED, ENDANGERED AND SENSITIVE SPECIES

---

## 21.1 OVERVIEW

Species of plants, animals, and other living organisms which are, to some degree, threatened by extinction. Critically imperiled plant and animal species are federally listed according to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Under the ESA the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is responsible for conservation of terrestrial and freshwater aquatic species that are endangered or threatened with extinction due to loss of habitat, overutilization, disease, predation, inadequate protection, and other factors both human-made and natural. For sensitive species in Utah that are not protected by the ESA, the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is tasked with conservation. Utah’s primary objective for managing sensitive species is to maintain wildlife and wildlife habitat well enough to prevent federal designation. Once a species is federally listed, the state loses primacy for the management of that species. This implies federal regulation of activities on state and private lands that may directly threaten listed species or that species’ habitat. From state and local perspectives, federal designation of endangered species means less local control of land use issues, which might cause harm to the designated species. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 21.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Wildlife  
Land Use  
Fisheries  
Livestock and Grazing

Noxious Weeds  
John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area  
Fire Management

## 21.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 21.3.1 Much of the funding for conservation activities comes from hunter and angler license fees and habitat stamps, as well as federal excise taxes on shooting, boating, and fishing equipment. These sources may indirectly benefit some “non-game” species, but in general funding is harder to come by for these species (DWR 2015).
- 21.3.2 In 1997, as part of the state water tax, the Utah Legislature created the Endangered Species Mitigation Fund (ESMF) which significantly expanded the funding base for conservation of wildlife species which are designated as Utah Sensitive Species or are ESA-listed. The purpose of this fund is to avoid, reduce, and/or mitigate impacts of ESA listings on the people of Utah.
- 21.3.3 The ESA prohibits consideration of economic impacts when determining whether to list a species, but it does require consideration of economic impacts when designating critical habitat.
- 21.3.4 In 2013 the USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a final rule regarding how and when these agencies evaluate the economic impacts of critical habitat designation.

## 21.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 21.4.1 Delist species and designated critical habitats that were erroneously listed (e.g., listed based on incorrect data or assumptions) and/or that are no longer threatened and endangered species or sensitive based on criteria established by USFWS, or the State of Utah. The county believes that some species may have been erroneously listed or maintained under the ESA. For example:
- Pariette cactus (*Sclerocactus brevispinus*)
  - Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*)
- 21.4.2 Delist the white-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys leucurus*) from the BLM Vernal Field Office's sensitive species list. The County believes this species is included primarily to protect the Black Footed Ferret, which is an experimental population.
- 21.4.3 Reduce the impacts of endangered and sensitive species listings on private and public lands. Listings typically include land use restrictions and hamper multiple use of public lands.
- 21.4.4 Do not support special management of lands and associated land use restrictions associated with reintroduction of large predators that are listed as threatened or endangered (e.g., wolf, wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), and Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*).
- 21.4.5 Oppose reintroduction of large predators that are listed as threatened or endangered unless there are no land use restrictions.
- 21.4.6 Ensure federal agencies accurately inventory threatened, endangered, and sensitive species across all state, federal, and tribal lands.
- 21.4.7 Support efforts to update and modernize the ESA, such as those undertaken by the Western Governors' Association, to address issues, including the following:
- Improve the process for delisting species.
  - The use of the ESA by special interest groups in efforts to influence land use decisions by petitioning USFWS to list large groups of species as threatened or endangered.
- 21.4.8 Support alternatives to listing under the ESA, including conservation plans, initiatives, or agreements to address threats to species and their habitats. Examples of successful collaborative conservation agreements include the Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Graham's beardtongue (*Penstemon grahamii*) and White River beardtongue (*P. scariosus* var. *albifluvis*) (SWCA 2014) and the State of Utah's Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-Grouse in Utah (DWR 2013).
- 21.4.9 Implement recommendations from the Utah Wildlife Action Plan 2015–2025 (DWR 2015b).
- 21.4.10 Do not support actions to list any species as a threatened or endangered species or designation of critical habitat under the ESA or actions to add any species to the State of Utah's sensitive species list until verifiable scientific data have been available to the public that demonstrate the need for the designation; that protections cannot be provided by other methods, and that the area in question is truly unique compared to other area lands.
- 21.4.11 Focus necessary conservation efforts on species identified on the State of Utah's sensitive species list.
- 21.4.12 Recovery plans, reintroduction plans, guidelines, and protocols for species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA should be developed with full public disclosure and in coordination with private property owners and local governments that will be affected by the recovery plan. Recovery plans must contain indicators of effectiveness and recovery progression, identifiers of recovery completion, self-terminating provisions upon successful recovery, and management provisions after the plan is terminated.

- 21.4.13 Recovery plans for species listed as threatened or endangered should clearly identify the parties responsible for collecting data to monitor species recovery and how that data will be collected. Funding adequate to collect the data required to monitor progress toward recovery must be included in federal agencies budgets at the time of listing.
- 21.4.14 Do not support buffer zones around habitat for the protection of threatened and endangered species.
- 21.4.15 USFWS shall avoid economic damage when designating critical habitat. USFWS shall involve local and county government representatives in their assessment of the economic impact of critical habitat designations.
- 21.4.16 When developing recovery plans for species listed as threatened or endangered, it is not necessary to restore a species to all habitats once occupied by the species to achieve a population that is not at risk of extinction. Recovery plans should establish objectives that restore and preserve only the amount of habitat and population size needed to protect the species from extinction.
- 21.4.17 Do not support the creation or expansion of grizzly bear, wolf, wolverine, and Canada lynx populations or the protection of their habitats, ranges, or migration corridors within the county.
- 21.4.18 Do not support designation of critical habitats for threatened and endangered species. Reintroductions must not be allowed to grow beyond the originally intended physical boundaries and scope.
- 21.4.19 Uintah County supports conservation projects for Sage Grouse within the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area in accordance with State and Federal Sage Grouse Plans. Projects may include vegetation management by natural or mechanical means. (Amended 8/12/2019)

## 22 WATER QUALITY AND HYDROLOGY

---

### 22.1 OVERVIEW

In the context of this plan, “water quality” is the condition of water based on biological, chemical, and physical properties, and “hydrology” is the science of the distribution, effects, and properties of water. Water quality is highly affected by flow and timing (the poorest water quality usually occurs during periods of low flow). Maintaining high water quality standards has economic benefits because it requires less treatment for drinking. Good water quality can have positive cascading benefits to other resources such as recreation and tourism, wetlands, wildlife, fisheries, and agriculture. The County desires to maintain and/or improve watersheds and water quality to maintain public water supply and provide stable and productive riparian and aquatic ecosystems and groundwater resources on public lands. The county also desires to reduce pollutant loads entering waterways to improve water quality. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 22.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Agriculture	Riparian and Wetland Areas
Land Use	Recreation and Tourism
Fire Management	Fisheries
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Threatened Endangered and Sensitive Species
Water Rights	Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area
Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines	
Irrigation	
Livestock and Grazing	

### 22.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 22.3.1 Water is essential for life. Recreation, culinary water, agriculture and ecology are impacted by water quality.
- 22.3.2 It is more cost effective to protect the water resource at its source and prevent contamination than to treat it in a wastewater treatment plant. The Utah DEQ estimates that nationwide, every \$1 spent on source water protection saves an average of \$27 in wastewater treatment costs.
- 22.3.3 Prepare60, a center established by four water conservancy districts in Utah, published a 2014 report illustrating that \$17.9 billion spent on water infrastructure maintenance alone enables \$5.4 trillion in ongoing economic activity. An investment in water resources of \$15 billion would create 930,000 new jobs, \$93 billion in incremental economic output, and \$71 billion in additional personal income.

### 22.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 22.4.1 Maintain or improve water quality to protect the health and well-being of county residents and the desirability of the county as a place to visit and recreate.

- 22.4.2 Balance water resource allocation among beneficial uses, e.g., agricultural, recognizing that growing populations will require larger portions of municipal and industrial water and an increased interest in water-based recreation.
- 22.4.3 Support ongoing water quality and quantity monitoring to inform water and land management activities that protect surface water and groundwater.
- 22.4.4 Manage state and federal lands and watersheds for optimal water yield.
- 22.4.5 Integrate multiple strategies for meeting future water demands not limited to conservation, conversion, water transfers, water development, conjunctive use of surface and ground water, aquifer storage and recovery, secondary irrigation systems, cooperative agreements (arrangements with other water suppliers to share/lease their excess supplies), and water reuse (recycling wastewater effluent).
- 22.4.6 Take an active role in state and federal water resource management processes, including revisions to the definition of waters of the U.S. and groundwater management.
- 22.4.7 Adhere to state-developed water quality standards.
- 22.4.8 Support ongoing water quality monitoring to establish baseline conditions to track potential surface and groundwater contamination that could result from changes in land use, e.g., oil shale and oil sands development.
- 22.4.9 Recognize that natural conditions and processes may affect achievement of state water quality standards and might not be indicative of impairment.
- 22.4.10 Adhere to Division of Water Quality standards and those mitigation strategies outlined for nonpoint and point sources in local total maximum daily load documents.
- 22.4.11 Water quality studies undertaken by or on behalf of the public land management must be coordinated with the counties.
- 22.4.12 Support the creation of water source protection areas and plans, e.g., Ashley Springs Protection Zone.
- 22.4.13 Support projects that improve water quality and increase quantity and dependability of water supply.
- 22.4.14 Work toward recognition of industrial applications, e.g., mining processes, as a beneficial use.
- 22.4.15 Participate in integrated water resource management processes that seek to coordinate development and management of water, land, and related resources in order to maximize economic and social welfare without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.
- 22.4.16 Use the best available water resource data when conducting planning activities.
- 22.4.17 Support maintenance of existing water quantity measurement equipment, e.g., U.S. Geological Survey gauges and SNOTEL, to document water resource availability.
- 22.4.18 Protect property rights associated with implementation of state and federal water development projects.
- 22.4.19 Decreases in consumptive and non-consumptive water rights downstream of the Ashley National Forest are not supported.
- 22.4.20 Incorporate a watershed approach for water quality protection and restoration that supports current and potential future uses.
- 22.4.21 Encourage and support local water management planning that addresses water supply and demand for agriculture, industry, recreation, culinary, ecosystem, and other uses and coordinate with local water conservancy districts and DWR plans (or planning processes) that currently extend into the future.
- 22.4.22 Use existing local water resource knowledge and develop future knowledge through education.

- 22.4.23 Coordinate with county landowners, e.g., public, tribal, and private, to assess potential water storage sites to meet increased demands for water.
- 22.4.24 Direct water development for livestock outside of sensitive riparian, stream, and wetland areas.
- 22.4.25 Encourage participation in the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program, as well as other programs, to improve irrigation management and water conservation.
- 22.4.26 Increase education efforts in training water managers, producers, public representatives, and the public on water storage needs, water delivery systems, and water conservation efforts.
- 22.4.27 The primary purpose for the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area is to conserve and protect the water shed for Ashley Valley. Uintah County gives precedence to uses that are not detrimental to the water shed. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 22.4.28 Water for Uintah County flows through a natural karst system which acts as a natural filter. This karst system shall be preserved. Any land use which may harm the natural karst formations shall be prohibited. Land uses which create significant soil disturbance or seismic disturbance shall be prohibited. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 22.4.29 Due to the sensitive nature of the county's karst water system within the AKNRGA, the county requests that alternative plans be made in the case that the karst system is impaired, damaged, or dries up. Such plans should become cooperative agreements with the Secretary, which allow for motorized access to water infrastructure facilities, which include White Rocks Reservoir and other important water resources. (Amended 8/12/2019)

## 23 WATER RIGHTS

---

### 23.1 OVERVIEW

Water is a renewable natural resource, available in finite supply, and subject to competition between stakeholders as annual supplies vary. The demand to supply water to Utah’s various interests is expected to be a continually complex issue for stakeholders to coordinate. “Water rights” are the legal right to make use of water from a stream, lake, canal, impoundment, or groundwater. The County has a legitimate interest in seeing that all reasonable steps are taken to preserve, maintain, and enhance water resources for the public. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 23.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Water Quality and Hydrology  
Agriculture  
Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines

John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area  
Irrigation  
Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area

### 23.3 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 23.3.1 Balance water resource allocation among beneficial uses, e.g., agricultural, recognizing that growing populations will require larger portions of municipal and industrial water and an increased interest in water-based recreation.
- 23.3.2 Support state jurisdiction over water rights.
- 23.3.3 Integrate multiple strategies for meeting future water demands not limited to conservation, conversion, water transfers, water development, conjunctive use of surface and ground water, aquifer storage and recovery, secondary irrigation systems, cooperative agreements (arrangements with other water suppliers to share/lease their excess supplies), and water reuse (recycling wastewater effluent).
- 23.3.4 Water rights held by federal entities must be obtained through the state water appropriation process and will not infringe upon downstream water rights.
- 23.3.5 Establish reasonable water conservation objectives as one way to meet future water demands. Use and adapt water conservation education strategies developed by the state and other entities that focus on water supply and demand and on diverse strategies for meeting demand.
- 23.3.6 Assess potential water storage sites to meet increased demands for water.
- 23.3.7 Protect water rights and interests. It is the County’s position that water available to the County and citizens should be used within the County.
- 23.3.8 Water is an important resource for grazing, agriculture, and drinking water. Properly permitted users within the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area (AKNRGA) shall be able to continue to utilize water resources and infrastructure facilities. The operation and access to such resources shall not be negatively affected by the USFS Management Plan. Motorized access shall be allowed to White Rocks Reservoir. Water rights within the AKNRGA are an important resource for Uintah County, and should not be negatively affected in any way. (Amended 8/12/2019)

## 24 WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

---

### 24.1 OVERVIEW

An administrative designation created under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 applied to preserve certain free-flowing rivers that “possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values”. Wild and scenic rivers are designated by the US Congress after federal land managers recommend specific river or stream segments for designation. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue’s background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 24.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Recreation and Tourism

Land Use

Livestock and Grazing

Irrigation

Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines

Water Rights

Water Quality and Hydrology

Floodplains and River Terraces

Riparian and Wetland Areas

Fisheries

Wildlife

Threatened Endangered Sensitive Species

### 24.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 24.3.1 At present the economic implications of Wild and Scenic River designation are not quantifiable. The tradeoff between increases in recreation and tourism sectors and the potential economic loss of future river development should be considered. An analysis of Wild and Scenic River designation done by Utah State University, made some observations: primary impacts of designation relate to a reduction in the grazing in riparian areas; and other impacts include further regulations on adjacent public and private land uses which would impact the natural resource extraction industry.

### 24.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 24.4.1 Avoid designating rivers as wild and scenic if the designation would adversely affect the economic interests of the county, including enjoyment of private property rights, mineral extraction, timber harvest, agriculture, water rights, water storage, or water delivery.
- 24.4.2 The county will be actively involved in all studies, plans or legislation that may consider or evaluate eligibility or may recommend inclusion of rivers in the National Wild and Scenic River System.
- 24.4.3 Potential reservoir sites should be protected from designation as wild and scenic rivers.
- 24.4.4 Through consultation with the County support may be given for recreation designations on river segments.
- 24.4.5 Any instream water right created by the designation of wild and scenic rivers is junior to all absolute and conditional water rights existing before the special designation is finalized.

- 24.4.6 US Congress should act on recommended wild and scenic river designations within five (5) years or the river should be released.
- 24.4.7 County support for the addition of a river segment to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System or its management to protect wild and scenic values while awaiting congressional action shall be withheld until the requirements of Utah Code 63J-4-401 are complied with.

# 25 WILDERNESS

---

## 25.1 OVERVIEW

According to the Wilderness Act of 1964, federal lands must have specific characteristics to be considered by Congress for wilderness preservation:

- Generally, appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.
- They must have outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.
- Has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.
- They may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, scenic, or historical value.

*(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

## 25.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Recreation and Tourism  
Land Use  
Livestock and Grazing  
Fire Management

Noxious Weeds  
Water Quality and Hydrology  
Forest Management

## 25.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

26.3.1 Economic considerations of wilderness designation should include:

- Mineral and energy development potential
- Logging and forest products
- Grazing management - grazing is allowed in wilderness areas but must meet wilderness guidelines. (see Livestock and Grazing Chapter)
- Private and state land inholdings
- Land transfers
- Motorized recreational uses
- Water management
- Vegetation management
- Recreation

## 25.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 25.4.1 The County does not support designation of additional areas within the County as federally designated wilderness.
- 25.4.2 The County does not support management of any additional federal lands within the county as non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, natural areas, inventoried roadless areas, or similarly intentioned management regimes.
- 25.4.3 The County supports removal of management provisions from federal lands that promote their management for wilderness characteristics and roadless qualities over other uses consistent with the multiple-use and sustained-yield management standard.
- 25.4.4 The county's support for any recommendations made under a statutory requirement to examine the wilderness option during the revision of land and resource management plans or other methods will be withheld until the following are clearly demonstrated:
- The adopted transportation plans of the state and county or counties within the federal land management agency's planning area (National Forest or BLM land) are fully and completely incorporated into the baseline inventory or information from which plan provisions are derived.
  - Valid state or local roads and rights-of-way are recognized and not impaired in any way by the recommendations.
  - The possibility of future development of mineral resources by underground mining or oil and gas extraction by directional or horizontal drilling or other non-surface disturbing methods are not affected by the recommendations.
  - The need for additional administrative or public roads necessary for the full utility of the various multiple uses, including recreation, mineral exploration and development, forest health activities, operation and maintenance of water facilities, and grazing operations on adjacent land, or on subject lands for grand-fathered uses, are not impaired by the recommendations.
  - Minimization criteria is applied in proposed areas.
  - The analysis compares the full benefit of multiple-use management to the recreational, forest health, and economic needs of the state and the county to the benefits of the requirements of wilderness management.
- 25.4.5 Public lands that were determined to lack wilderness character during previous wilderness review processes cannot be managed as if they were wilderness based on new or revised views of wilderness character.
- 25.4.6 Any proposed wilderness designations in the county forwarded to U.S. Congress for consideration must be based on a collaborative process in which support for the wilderness designation is unanimous among federal, state, and local officials.
- 25.4.7 Winter Ridge WSA must be released and allow multiple use and sustained yield. The management plans must be amended in a timely manner to reflect changes in status. The county defines a "timely manner" as not to exceed 2 years.
- 25.4.8 Wilderness management must provide for continued and reasonable access to and development of valid, existing rights within the area and provide for full use and enjoyment of these rights.
- 25.4.9 BLM inventories for the presence of wilderness characteristics must be closely coordinated with inventories for those characteristics conducted by state and local governments, and they should reflect a consensus among those governmental agencies about the existence of wilderness characteristics, as follows:

- Any inventory of wilderness characteristics should reflect all of the criteria identified in the Wilderness Act of 1964, including a size of 5,000 acres or more, containing no visible roads and the presence of naturalness, the opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation, and the opportunity for solitude.
- Geographic areas found to contain the presence of naturalness must appear pristine to the average viewer and must not contain any of the implements, artifacts, or effects of human presence (including visible roads, whether maintained or not) and must not contain human-made features such as vehicle bridges, fire breaks, fisheries, enhancement facilities, fire rings, historic mining, and other properties, including tailings piles, commercial radio and communication repeater sites, fencing, spring developments, linear disturbances, stock ponds, visible drill pads, pipeline and transmission line rights-of-way, and other similar features.
- Factors, such as the following, though not necessarily conclusive, should weigh against a determination that a land area has the presence of naturalness, the area is or once was the subject of mining and drilling activities, mineral and hard rock mining leases exist in the area, and the area is in a grazing district with active grazing allotments and visible range improvements.
- Geographic areas found to contain the presence of solitude should convey the sense of solitude within the entire geographic area identified, otherwise boundary adjustments should be performed.
- Geographic areas found to contain the presence of an opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation must find these features within the entire area and provide analysis about the effect of the number of visitors to the geographic area upon the presence of primitive or unconfined recreation, otherwise boundary adjustments should be performed.
- In addition to the actions required by the review for roads pursuant to the definitions of roads contained in BLM Manual H 6301, or any similar authority, BLM should, pursuant to its authority to inventory, identify and list all roads or routes identified as part of a local or state governmental transportation system, and consider those routes or roads as qualifying as roads within the definition of the Wilderness Act of 1964.
- BLM should adjust the boundaries for a geographic area to exclude areas that do not meet the criteria of lacking roads, offering solitude, and offering primitive and unconfined recreation, and the boundaries should be redrawn to reflect an area that clearly meets the criteria above, and which does not employ minor adjustments to simply exclude small areas with human intrusions; specifically, the boundaries of a proposed geographic area containing lands with wilderness characteristics should not be drawn around roads, rights-of-way, and intrusions; and lands located between individual human impacts that do not meet the requirements for lands with wilderness characteristics should be excluded.

25.4.10 It is the policy of the county that federal land management agencies shall comply with Utah Code 63J-8-104 as it pertains to wilderness.

25.4.11 Recognize that even if BLM were to properly inventory an area for the presence of wilderness characteristics, BLM still lacks authority to make or alter project level decisions to automatically avoid impairment of any wilderness characteristics without express congressional authority to do so.

25.4.12 Management of WSAs must provide for continued and reasonable access to and development of property rights within the area and provide for full use and enjoyment of these rights.

## 26 WILDLIFE

---

### 26.1 OVERVIEW

Undomesticated animals usually living in a natural environment, including both game and nongame species. The County enjoys a diverse and abundant wildlife population, which contributes to a productive natural environment. Wildlife also yield important social and economic resources including recreation opportunities such as photography, wildlife observation, and hunting. Uintah County seeks to maintain healthy wildlife populations. *(Refer to the Appendix of this plan for more findings on this issue's background, custom and culture, as well as relevant data sources).*

### 26.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species  
Predator Control  
Agriculture  
Livestock and Grazing  
Land Use  
Fisheries

Forest Management  
John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area  
Recreation and Tourism  
Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area

### 26.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 28.3.1 Revenue from hunting and other wildlife recreation is generated for Uintah County through harvest permits, pursuit permits, guide fees and gas, motel, restaurant and grocery expenditures.
- 28.3.2 Greater Sage-grouse habitat and management may impact other land uses and development.

### 26.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 26.4.1 Encourage the WRI to focus on projects that include private landowner involvement by having county representatives attend meetings of the WRI regional teams, expressing their views, advising the WRI to involve private land owners, and advocating for the kinds of watershed restoration efforts they feel are most important.
- 26.4.2 Maintain healthy populations of mule deer while minimizing negative impacts from winter migration, including vehicle collisions and residential and commercial vegetation damage.
- 26.4.3 It is the policy of Uintah County that Greater Sage-grouse shall be managed in accordance with the Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage-grouse in Utah, as implemented by the State of Utah, with the map of the Uintah Sage-Grouse Management Area, included in the appendix, and incorporated by reference, as it applies to those portions of the Uintah Sage-grouse Management Area within Uintah County.
- 26.4.4 Ensure that BLM keeps the Bonanza area free of wild horses.
- 26.4.5 Support BLM decision to zero out Hill Creek and Winter Ridge Herd Areas.
- 26.4.6 Avoid damage caused by cranes by any legal means including the use of chemical repellents that have low toxicity and low environmental impact.

- 26.4.7 The County does not support the introduction of additional prairie dogs. Support local land owner in managing prairie dogs on private property.
- 26.4.8 Minimize the loss or fragmentation of habitats and disturbance during sensitive periods.
- 26.4.9 Wildlife management agencies, public land management agencies, and the county shall work together to manage and conserve big-game populations and their habitats, identify their migration corridors, and seek to remove barriers along those corridors in a manner that respects private property rights.
- 26.4.10 Wildlife agencies shall find effective ways to mitigate and compensate landowners for damage caused by big-game animals on private property. The county recognizes that DWR is mandated by Utah Code to mitigate damage to agricultural crops, equipment, and improvements and that a process to do so is in place.
- 26.4.11 Wildlife populations shall not be increased nor shall new species be introduced until forage allocations have been provided and an impact analysis that includes participation and concurrence by the county, wildlife management agencies, public land management agencies, and private landowners is completed for the effects on other wildlife species and livestock.
- 26.4.12 Reduction in forage allocation resulting from forage studies, drought, or other natural disasters will be shared proportionately by wildlife, livestock, and other uses.
- 26.4.13 Increases in forage allocation resulting from improved range conditions shall be shared proportionally by wildlife, livestock, and other uses.
- 26.4.14 Wildlife populations shall be consistent with the forage assigned in the resource management plan forage allocations.
- 26.4.15 Livestock, other private property, and habitat of wildlife species will be protected by controlling predator and wildlife numbers.
- 26.4.16 Federal land management decisions should be coordinated with state wildlife management agencies and should support state-sponsored initiatives or programs designed to stabilize wildlife populations that may be experiencing a scientifically proven decline in numbers.
- 26.4.17 It is the policy of the county to support the efforts of the DWR to maintain a healthy population of pronghorn in the area described above, provided that the rights of farmers, ranchers, and mineral owners are protected.
- 26.4.18 It is the policy of the county to oppose any future proposals to introduce bison into the county.
- 26.4.19 The management of wild horses shall conform with the BLM's 2008 Resource Management Plan's Record of Decision as it pertains to the Bonanza, Winter Ridge, and Hill Creek herd areas.
- 26.4.20 All feral horses found roaming on public lands in the county are trespassing and shall be removed.
- 26.4.21 It is the policy of the county to support efforts by DWR to manage bighorn sheep populations for recreational purposes such as hunting and viewing and to ensure their contribution to ecosystems, provided that such management can be accomplished in coordination with the domestic sheep industry in a manner that does not force domestic sheep operators from their ranges or force them out of business.
- 26.4.22 All federal or state wildlife management agencies shall coordinate with the county before establishing regulatory measures associated with wildlife that could impact energy development.
- 26.4.23 It is the policy of the county that wildlife shall be managed on public and private lands in a manner that keeps water resources from being degraded below state or federal standards.
- 26.4.24 Uintah County recognizes the use of the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area for Sage Grouse habitat. (Amended 8/12/2019)

- 26.4.25 Uintah County supports water projects for livestock and wildlife in order to further the development of the resources in the John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area. (Amended 8/12/2019)
- 26.4.26 Wildlife water projects, including guzzlers, should be allowed to take place within the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area. (Amended 8/12/2019)

## 27 **ASHLEY KARST NATIONAL RECREATION AND GEOLOGIC AREA** (added 8/12/2019)

---

### 27.1 **OVERVIEW**

The Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area (AKNRGA) was created for the primary purpose of protecting Ashley Valley’s sensitive watershed resources, as well as geological, recreational, wildlife, scenic, natural, cultural, and historic resources (Dingell Act, sec. 1117). This tract of land was designated by S. 47, the “John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act” on March 12, 2019. The AKNRGA area covers approximately 173,475 acres, and is located in the northwestern corner of Uintah County. The Act establishes specific guidelines for land-use and planning in regards to recreation and development which will help promote responsible use of the land within the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area. Uintah County has many important resources within the area, and it is in the best interest of the county to protect and preserve such resources, particularly the watershed and underground karst system.

### 27.2 **RELATED RESOURCES**

Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species	Forest Management
Predator Control	Recreation and Tourism
Agriculture	Cultural, Historical, Geological, and
Livestock and Grazing	Paleontological Resources
Land Use	Water Quality and Hydrology
Land Access	Water Rights
Fisheries	Wildlife

### 27.3 **ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS**

- 27.3.1 Revenue from hunting and other wildlife recreation is generated for Uintah County through harvest permits, pursuit permits, guide fees and gas, motel, restaurant and grocery expenditures.
- 27.3.2 Greater Sage-grouse habitat and management may impact other land uses and development.

### 27.4 **OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

- 27.4.1 Encourage the WRI to focus on projects that include private landowner involvement by having county representatives attend meetings of the WRI regional teams, expressing their views, advising the WRI to involve private land owners, and advocating for the kinds of watershed restoration efforts they feel are most important.
- 27.4.2
- 27.4.3 The primary purpose for the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area is to conserve and protect the water shed for Ashley Valley. Uintah County gives precedence to uses that are not detrimental to the watershed.

- 27.4.4 Water for Uintah County flows through a natural karst system which acts as a natural filter. This karst system shall be preserved. Any land use which may harm the natural karst formations shall be prohibited. Land uses which create significant soil disturbance or seismic disturbance shall be prohibited.
- 27.4.5 Permitted recreational activities which existed at the time of the passage of the Dingell Act shall be permitted to continue. The AKNRGA contains opportunities for various types of remote outdoor recreation, and Uintah County will actively promote tourism so people can enjoy the unique landscape, geology, and topography of the AKNRGA.
- 27.4.6 Require Forest Service efforts to maintain existing levels of wildlife resources within the area. Support legal hunting and fishing within the AKNRGA.
- 27.4.7 Management of scenic resources shall be consistent with the act.
- 27.4.8 Require that the US Forest Service maintain existing levels of logging permits and look for additional opportunities for logging where such use is consistent with the purposes of the AKNRGA. Mining shall not be allowed in the Recreation Area.
- 27.4.9 Cultural resources in the Recreation Area include, but are not limited to: grazing and watering livestock, logging, motorized/non-motorized recreation, and equestrian recreation.
- 27.4.10 Many parts of the AKNRGA have historically been used--and are currently used--for grazing. The US Forest Service shall maintain at least current levels of grazing use. Water resources, such as watering holes and water diversion activities, shall not be negatively affected by the AKNRGA. This area's unique geography provides a historical land resource for those participating in such uses, and the AKNRGA should not decrease or impair such uses in any way. In no way shall the Act impair or diminish current or future grazing uses. The Act specifically states that grazing activities which were established before the date of the Act shall be allowed to continue. Grazing is an important resource to Uintah County, and the county encourages the USFS to follow guidelines set forth in H.R. 5487 of the 96<sup>th</sup> congress when writing the Management Plan.
- 27.4.11 Require the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a map and legal description as soon as possible.
- 27.4.12 The Secretary shall administer the area in accordance with laws generally applicable to the national forest system, including the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources and Planning Act of 1974, and the Lands Bill 2019 S1044.
- 27.4.13 Require the Secretary to finalize the Management Plan as soon as possible, but no longer than two years from the date of approval of the Act.
- 27.4.14 Uintah County, along with its General Plan and Resource Management Plan, shall be directly involved in the development and implementation of the Management Plan for the USFS, particularly in regards to planning for the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area. Uintah County requires that the Secretary shares such plan with the county before it is finalized.
- 27.4.15 Allowed uses shall include those which are listed in the county's zoning ordinance for all areas within the recreation area. Any use which may harm the watershed or karst formations shall not be allowed and must be discontinued as soon as possible.
- 27.4.16 Users of motorized vehicles are not discouraged from utilizing permitted roads and motorized routes which are designated in the Management Plan for the Ashley Karst National Recreation and Geologic Area. Roads and routes not designated for motorized use under the Management Plan will remain unused. Such rules do not apply for emergency and management vehicles
- 27.4.17 Require proper maintenance of all roads which existed at the time of the passage of the Dingell Act. Although new roads and routes may not be created within the AKNRGA, the County should seek to maintain and preserve as much access to public land as legally possible.

- 27.4.18 Access to land shall be preserved. If a road or trail becomes dangerous, impassible, or degraded, alternative routes shall be considered instead of closing said road. Lands that were accessible at the time of the creation of the Act shall continue to be accessible, even if a travel corridor must be rerouted in order to maintain access.
- 27.4.19 Encourage snowmobile and other over the snow vehicle use within the recreation area. The county supports trail grooming activities for such uses.
- 27.4.20 Recreation planning shall be done in coordination with Uintah County. The county mandates that the USFS complete a Winter Recreation Plan within two years from the date of the Act. Such recreation plan shall include the use of snowmobiles and other over the snow vehicles.
- 27.4.21 Water is an important resource for grazing, agriculture, and drinking water. Properly permitted users shall be able to continue to utilizing water resources and infrastructure facilities. The operation and access to such resources shall not be negatively affected by the Management Plan. Motorized access shall be allowed to White Rocks Reservoir. Water rights within the AKNRGA are an important resource for Uintah County, and should not be negatively affected in any way. Any changes to water resource rights should be made in direct consultation with Uintah County.
- 27.4.22 Due to the sensitive nature of the county's karst water system within the AKNRGA, the county requests that alternative plans be made in the case that the karst system is impaired, damaged, or dries up. Such plans should become cooperative agreements with the Secretary which allow for motorized access to water infrastructure facilities, which include White Rocks Reservoir and other important water resources. The water districts' source protection plans shall be consulted when creating alternative plans for water protection.
- 27.4.23 In no way shall the Act impair or diminish current or future grazing uses. The act specifically states that grazing activities which were established before the date of the act should be allowed to continue. Grazing is an important resource to Uintah County, and the county encourages the USFS to follow guidelines set forth in H.R. 5487 of the 96th congress when writing the Management Plan.
- 27.4.24 The State's management of fish and wildlife shall not be affected in any way by the creation of this Act.
- 27.4.25 Wildlife water projects, including guzzlers, should be allowed to take place within the AKNRGA.
- 27.4.26 Water rights within the AKNRGA are an important resource for Uintah County, and should not be adversely affected in any way. Any changes to water resource rights should be made in direct consultation with Uintah County.
- 27.4.27 Land established by the AKNRGA will not be used for mining, geothermal activities, or any other activities which may harm the karst formations. In addition the county supports the withdrawal of this land from all forms of entry, appropriation, and disposal under public land laws. Disposal of land within the Recreation Area should be done in consultation with Uintah County. If disposal is to occur, Uintah County maintains an interest in obtaining such land from the Forest Service for the purpose of protecting the Ashley Springs watershed. The county discourages transfer of lands within the Recreation Area to any other public or private entities apart from the county itself.
- 27.4.28 Responsible planning efforts should be made to protect the Ashley Karst Recreation and Geologic Area from wildfires. Fires can have severe negative effects on karst formations. Rapid soil erosion from runoff following a wildfire has the potential to clog subsurface water movement within the karst formations, which could be devastating to Ashley Valley's primary water sources. Therefore, plans for fuel reduction activities are encouraged which should help reduce the risk of wildfire, thus safeguarding the integrity of the Ashley Karst formations. Uintah County supports restoration projects and operations in the event of natural or manmade disasters.
- 27.4.29 Wildfire treatment operations should be conducted to reduce the risk of wildfires within the Recreation Area.

- 27.4.30 Entrance fees shouldn't be charged for the Recreation Area. Fees may only be charged for improved campgrounds.
- 27.4.31 Access to communication infrastructure should not be inhibited by the Act, but applicable authorization and permits must be obtained prior to disturbing the land for access and/or construction.
- 27.4.32 Non-federal lands within the Recreation Area should not be affected in any way by the Act.
- 27.4.33 Non-federal lands and interests within the Recreation Area should be provided with reasonable access. Permitting processes for such access should not impose an unnecessary burden on non-federal land owners.
- 27.4.34 The Recreation Area is an important resource for tourism in Uintah County. The county supports commercial outfitting and guide services in utilizing land within the Recreation Area. Tourism activities should maintain and protect the wild nature of the land for all future recreation activities, and all applicable laws and regulations should be followed when expanding recreational uses.

# 28 JOHN WESLEY POWELL NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

(added 8/12/2019)

---

## 28.1 OVERVIEW

The John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area (JWPNCA) was created as part of S.47 “John Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act”, or the Dingell Act, which was signed by the President on March 12, 2019. The Dingell Act set apart approximately 29,868 acres of land in northeastern Uintah County to “conserve, protect, and enhance for the benefit of present and future generations the nationally significant historic, cultural, natural, scientific, scenic, recreational, archaeological, educational, and wildlife resources of the National Conservation Area” (Dingell Act, sec. 1118).

## 28.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Cultural, Historical, Geological and Paleontological Resources  
Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species  
Wildlife  
Water Rights

Livestock and Grazing  
Land Use  
Land Access  
Fire Management  
Recreation and Tourism

## 28.3 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 28.3.1 The JWPNCA has historically been used--and is currently used--for grazing. The BLM shall maintain current levels of grazing permits. Water resources, such as watering holes and water diversion activities, shall not be adversely affected by the JWPNCA. This area's unique geography provides a historical land resource for those participating in such uses, and the JWPNCA shall not decrease or impair such uses in any way.
- 28.3.2 Uintah County encourages the protection and development of significant cultural resources.
- 28.3.3 Uintah County encourages the protection and development of significant natural resources.
- 28.3.4 Uintah County supports the use of funds from the National Landscape Conservation System Research Support Program for scientific research within the JWPNCA.
- 28.3.5 Uintah County encourages the protection and development of significant scenic resources.
- 28.3.6 Uintah County encourages the protection and development of significant recreational resources.
- 28.3.7 Uintah County encourages the protection and development of significant archeological resources.
- 28.3.8 Uintah County encourages the protection and development of significant cultural resources.
- 28.3.9 Uintah County encourages the protection and development of significant wildlife resources. Uintah County encourages the use of this area for Sage Grouse habitat in accordance with State and Federal Sage Grouse Management Plans.
- 28.3.10 Uintah County encourages and supports the management of the JWPNCA in a manner that protects and enhances the many resources contained in this area.
- 28.3.11 The area shall be managed in accordance with Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1973, the Lands Bill, and any other applicable law.

- 28.3.12 The area shall be managed as a component of the National Landscape Conservation System.
- 28.3.13 A management plan shall be prepared within 2 years.
- 28.3.14 Uintah County, along with its General Plan, and Resource Management Plan should be directly involved in the implementation and creation of the Management Plan. The BLM shall consult with the county and any affected Indian Tribes in all stages and aspects of planning. Uintah County encourages the Secretary to share such plan with the county before it is finalized.
- 28.3.15 Public input shall be provided for during the drafting of the Management Plan.
- 28.3.16 The uses allowed in the JWPNCA should be developed and managed in a way that preserves and protects the purposes for which the area was established.
- 28.3.17 Uintah County supports the acquisition of private and state lands within the conservation area. Uintah County encourages SITLA to request an exchange of lands with the BLM.
- 28.3.18 Land acquired shall be added to and administered as part of the conservation area.
- 28.3.19 Uintah County supports the acquisition of state lands within the Conservation area. Uintah County encourages SITLA to request an exchange of lands with the BLM.
- 28.3.20 The roads that the county has shown on Uintah County Transportation System Map shall remain open. The County supports and will apply for Title V Rights-of-way for these roads. Uintah County supports the use of these roads by motorized vehicles.
- 28.3.21 Prior to completion of the Management Plan motorized vehicles shall be permitted in accordance with the BLM Resource Management Plan.
- 28.3.22 In no way should the Act impair or diminish current or future grazing uses. The act specifically states that grazing activities which were established before the date of the act shall be allowed to continue. Grazing is an important resource to Uintah County, and the county encourages the BLM to follow guidelines set forth in H.R. 2570 of the 101st congress when writing the Management Plan. Grazing is a historical use in Uintah County. Grazing is an important cultural resource in Uintah County. Reasonable access shall be allowed for grazing operations within the conservation area.
- 28.3.23 The Dingell Act does not affect the jurisdiction of the State with respect to the management of fish and wildlife on Federal lands in the State.
- 28.3.24 Uintah County supports water projects for livestock and wildlife in order to further the development of the resources in the JWPNCA.
- 28.3.25 Uintah County supports conservation projects for Sage Grouse within the JWPNCA in accordance with State and Federal Sage Grouse Plans. Projects may include vegetation management by natural or mechanical means.
- 28.3.26 The Dingell Act does not affect water rights, use or allocation or interstate water compacts.
- 28.3.27 Uintah County is opposed to the creation of a "buffer zone" around the JWPNCA or Dinosaur National Monument.
- 28.3.28 Uses in the areas surrounding the JWPNCA shall not be affected by the conservation area, even when such uses can be seen or heard within the conservation area. Uintah County supports multiple use on all state and federal lands.
- 28.3.29 Uintah County supports the management of vegetation in the JWPNCA. Vegetation management shall be done in accordance with the purposes for which the conservation area was created. Vegetation management shall be done to help reduce the risk of wild fires and to improve water quality.

- 28.3.30 Uintah County supports wild fire treatment operations within the JWPNCA. Wild fire treatments and prevention are essential parts of managing this area and preserving it for future generations. Multiple methods should be used to help reduce the risk of wild fires in the JWPNCA. Uintah County supports restoration projects and operations in the event of natural or man-made disasters. Access shall be allowed in order to perform restoration efforts.
- 28.3.31 Uintah County supports and encourages the use of the land within the JWPNCA at no cost to users.
- 28.3.32 Access to communication infrastructure for maintenance, repair and or upgrade shall be maintained and improved. The BLM shall not reduce or restrict access to communication infrastructure.
- 28.3.33 Nonfederal land located within the JWPNCA is not and shall not be affected by the designation of the conservation area.
- 28.3.34 Uintah County has rights of way across SITLA lands within the JWPNCA. Access to these rights of way shall be maintained and kept open to motorized vehicles. Uintah County Supports and should apply for Title V rights-of-way for roads shown on the Uintah County Transportation System Map that are within the conservation area. Uintah County encourages the BLM to grant Title V rights of way for the roads shown on the Uintah County Transportation System Map.
- 28.3.35 Uintah County supports public and private partnerships for projects to further the purposes for which the conservation area was created. Reasonable access shall be allowed for these projects.

# 29 UTILITY CORRIDORS

(added 10/31/2022)

---

## 29.1 OVERVIEW

Utility corridors are linear tracts of land set aside for the placement of the above and below-ground infrastructure that transports and conveys raw materials, processed materials, and energy. Utility corridors include the areas necessary for the maintenance and access of utilities infrastructure. When utility corridors are constructed on federal land in Uintah County, it's most often on land administered by the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or US Forest Service (USFS), because these agencies administer large land tracts and are governed by the most-accommodating land-use regulations. Utility corridors are also constructed on land managed by the State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) or on Tribal Lands.

## 29.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Air Quality	Livestock and Grazing
Cultural, Historical, Geological and Paleontological Resources	Noxious Weeds
Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines	Riparian and Wetland Areas
Fire Management	Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species
Land Access	Wildlife
	Pipelines and Infrastructure

## 29.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 29.3.1 Power generation in the western United States is being supplemented by renewable energy. The power plant in Uintah County still uses coal to supply a most of the energy generation in our area, the amount of wind and solar power generated is increasing every year. Additionally, policies to increase the component of renewable energy coming from the federal, and state governments, are likely to increase the demand of renewable energy over the coming decade.
- 29.3.2 Uintah County has abundant potential for renewable energy generation, as identified in the Utah Renewable Energy Zone study. However, these resources are not always near existing transmission infrastructure. As power generators move to develop these resources, there is a need to simultaneously develop the transmission infrastructure needed to convey power to the electric grid. PacifiCorp has plans to invest over \$1 billion to build additional transmission lines to strengthen the high-capacity transmission backbone across their service area (Cox 2021). However, additional corridors for lower-voltage transmission will still be needed to connect local renewable projects to the primary electric grid.
- 29.3.3 Primary economic consideration for utility corridors is the lengthy time periods and high costs required to navigate the federal permitting and compliance processes to place utilities on federal lands. The recent experience of PacifiCorps' development of the Gateway South transmission project (which crossed federal lands both within and outside of Section 368 energy corridors) took over 10 years to complete (Cox 2021). Such long time periods reduce the ability of utility companies to respond to rapidly changing energy policies.
- 29.3.4 The challenging nature of placing utilities across federal lands has economic implications for Uintah County. Increasing the capacity within an existing utility corridor to provide for growing communities is problematic. Also, attempts to provide redundant utilities to increase robustness and reliability of a given service can be hampered by the lack of multiple utility corridors to connect infrastructure.

## 29.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 29.4.1 Proactively plan, coordinate, and provide for the maintenance of existing corridors and future development of new utility corridors across federal, state, and tribal lands to meet projected growth and demand.
- 29.4.2 Meet often with utility companies, cooperatives, and applicable state and federal agencies to coordinate efforts related to existing and future utility corridors.
- 29.4.3 Protect access for utility companies to maintain and improve infrastructure and corridors.
- 29.4.4 Encourage federal, state, and tribal agencies to expedite and improve approval processes and policies for the development and maintenance of utility corridors and new construction projects.
- 29.4.5 Support Bureau of Land Management instruction memorandums (e.g. Utah IM-2021-004) that allows utility companies to have additional flexibility to access infrastructure and utility corridors for maintenance purposes and to reduce the risk of wildfire impacts on the utility.
- 29.4.6 Maintain and update wildland fire protection plans to reduce the risk of wildfire in utility corridors.
- 29.4.7 Minimize, and mitigate challenges that utility corridors may present to cultural resources and threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.
- 29.4.8 Support and encourage redundancy and physical separation for utility facilities needed to serve all areas of Uintah County.
- 29.4.9 Work with federal and state agencies and tribes to identify utility corridors needed to access and deliver to foreign or domestic markets, all forms of traditional mineral resources, critical minerals, and renewable energy resources.
- 29.4.10 Coordinate various needs and demands with respect to the limited disturbance caps in Greater sage grouse management areas.
- 29.4.11 Work with federal and state agencies to identify opportunities to increase disturbance caps and seek out additional mitigation opportunities related to threatened, endangered, and sensitive species by providing proactive management and habitat improvements.
- 29.4.12 Ensure that sufficient utility corridors are available to provide essential utilities to Uintah County residence and businesses including areas with current or future federal designations (e.g. national monuments and roadless areas).
- 29.4.13 Encourage, promote, and participate in feasibility studies for different types of utility transmission, distribution, and collection infrastructure.
- 29.4.14 Support innovation to make existing and future utility corridor infrastructure more efficient, reliable, safe, and sustainable.
- 29.4.15 Support a network of utility corridors for the distribution of crude and refined petroleum products to domestic and foreign markets.
- 29.4.16 Support and promote the development of rail systems where gaps in service exist.
- 29.4.17 Support and promote access to fiber optic resources in rural areas of Uintah County and Tribal communities.
- 29.4.18 Ensure that needed water resources are capable of being delivered through existing and future utility corridors in order to meet the needs of county citizens.
- 29.4.19 Preserve the ability to provide a supply of hydrogen to highway arteries; potentially via natural gas pipelines.
- 29.4.20 Explore opportunities for distribution and production of commercial products like ice and dry ice from CO2.

- 29.4.21 Uintah County supports the development and implementation of all energy resources and utility corridors must be preserved and developed to transport the complete range of energy resources.
- 29.4.22 Uintah County supports expedited corridor planning and approvals to address critical infrastructure needs.
- 29.4.23 Support development of utility corridors to accommodate pipelines for natural gas and crude oil to refineries, export facilities or to other transportation networks.
- 29.4.24 Federal agencies shall recognize and aid utilities in implementing wildland fire protection plans required of qualified utilities under Title 54-24-201 of the Utah Code.
- 29.4.25 Interstate transmission lines should provide access for utilization of energy by citizens of the Uintah County, or supply significant and continual incentives that benefit our citizens.
- 29.4.26 Utility corridors are needed in Uintah County to maintain affordable, reliable, abundant, and dispatchable energy at all times.
- 29.4.27 Support minimizing impacts to prime and unique soils and irrigable acres to the maximum extent possible when new utility corridors are being considered.
- 29.4.28 Every effort should be made to ensure that wildland fires are not caused by utility providers.
- 29.4.29 Support the development and maintenance of effective rail system corridors to support efficient commercial material and energy distribution to markets and to diversify economies.
- 29.4.30 Uintah County seeks to maintain itself as a net energy exporter by protecting utility corridors, distribution networks and access to domestic and international markets.
- 29.4.31 Uintah County recognizes the economic and educational importance of reliable internet access.
- 29.4.32 Uintah County recognizes that utility infrastructure within established corridors and along major highways is congested and new areas need to be analyzed and established as corridors to facilitate future growth and demand.
- 29.4.33 While Uintah County supports the placement of utility corridors and infrastructure, it does not support the outsourcing of environmental impacts from declining States into Utah for unsustainable “green energy” projects.

## 30 PIPELINES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

(added 10/31/2022)

---

### 30.1 OVERVIEW

Pipelines are extremely important to help our country function. In fact, there are roughly 2.4 million miles of pipe in this vast transportation system. Last year alone, American’s consumed 34 percent of natural gas and 35 percent of oil as part of our total energy consumption. As energy demand is on the rise, more transmission, gathering and distribution lines will need to be constructed or updated.

Pipelines and the products they carry help provide economic growth for our community. Not only are people employed to maintain current and existing pipelines, direct and spin-off jobs are created when new pipelines are built or need servicing. There is also a myriad of ancillary and supply chain jobs that are created through production and end-use demand that helps our country sustain a steady energy supply.

Other infrastructure such as roads and railroads are also an important part of moving good to and from Uintah County. The Vernal area is one of the largest populations in the US that does not have rail service. Uintah County supports the construction of the Uinta Basin Railroad. The railroad will give us the opportunity to diversify our economy and expand the market for goods grown or created here.

### 30.2 RELATED RESOURCES

Air Quality	Livestock and Grazing
Cultural, Historical, Geological and Paleontological Resources	Noxious Weeds
Ditches, Canals, and Pipelines	Riparian and Wetland Areas
Fire Management	Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Species
Land Access	Wildlife
	Utility Corridors

### 30.3 ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

#### 30.3.1 Electrical Transmission

Rocky Mountain Power and its parent company PacifiCorp employs more than 1,800 people in Utah.

Lack of sufficient generation resources during peak demand puts utilities and customers at risk of high prices from the energy market during emergencies. This happened in Texas during February 2021, during which a winter storm and freezing temperatures disrupted one third of Texas’s power generation capacity, resulting in astronomical power costs over just two days (Hersher 2021). A robust transmission system can reduce the potential for this kind of problem because transmission connects multiple generation sources across large regions.

#### 30.3.2 Natural Gas Pipelines

Natural-gas distribution companies employ as many as 700 employees in Utah (DWS 2021) with Dominion Energy being the largest natural gas company in the state.

There are several natural gas pipelines in Uintah County that transport natural gas across the country. The companies that operate these pipelines employ hundreds of local residents and have a significant impact on our tax base.

### 30.3.3 Oil Pipelines

Sinclair Oil in Salt Lake City employs 1,200 people (Kolmar 2021).

### 30.3.4 Hydrogen Pipelines

Hydrogen has only limited use within Utah. This may change in the future if hydrogen is adopted as a transportation fuel or as a large-scale component of utility-scale electricity generation.

### 30.3.5 Water Pipelines

According to the 2020 [Statewide Water Infrastructure Plan](#), over the next 50 years, the State of Utah and municipal water providers will need to spend \$20.6 billion to repair and replace existing infrastructure and another \$17.6 billion for new infrastructure and to develop new water supplies for future growth (BRWCD et al. 2020).

### 30.3.6 Telecommunications

The Utah Broadband Advisory Council considers broadband essential to economic success (UBAC 2020). Broadband is essential for Utah businesses because it allows them to be nationally and internationally competitive. The technology also promotes entrepreneurship, attracts investments, and supports state and municipal governments. The partnerships developed through the UDOT Fiber Program have saved the state an estimated \$105.8 million while connecting many parts of Utah to high-speed Internet service.

STRATA Networks employs close to 300 people and provides a variety of technologically advanced services. This technology has helped revitalize the local economy and revolutionize industry for Uintah Basin residents. STRATA is a community-based business which helps keep money local and employs local people. They strive to support efforts that are most important to their members. STRATA is spending millions of dollars per year to expand high-speed internet to all county residents.

### 30.3.7 Other Infrastructure

According to a [recent study](#) by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, the present value of existing wastewater treatment facilities in Utah is estimated to be \$4 billion (Reclaim 60 ND). However, wastewater conveyance and treatment facilities must be maintained to operate effectively. Utah faces an additional cost of \$5.3 billion for infrastructure renewal and replacement, and another \$1.3 billion for upgrades to meet future regulatory requirements. New infrastructure required to meet the needs of population growth across Utah is expected to cost \$2.1 billion. Over the next 40 years, the total cost for wastewater treatment has been estimated to be \$8.7 billion (Reclaim 60 ND).

In addition to wastewater treatment facility costs, other infrastructure must be replaced or upgraded over the next 40 years. Wastewater pipelines represent a cost of \$4.3 billion, sewer lagoons are expected to cost \$432 million, and stormwater-collection systems are estimated to cost \$1.3 billion (Reclaim 60 ND).

### 30.3.8 Transportation Infrastructure

The Unified Plan determined a total of \$108.5 billion would be needed between 2019 and 2050 to fund the maintenance of current infrastructure, to expand capacity of existing roads, and to build new roads. This estimate also includes funds for upgrading transit and railway infrastructure (UDOT et al. 2021). Funding for the construction and maintenance of major highway infrastructure is provided by federal and state funds, which are generated from fuel taxes, vehicle registrations, and general funds.

The Uinta Basin Railway provides new infrastructure that will solve the long-standing freight transportation challenges in Uintah and Duchesne Counties by connecting to the national railway network.

This common-carrier railway will move goods in a safe and cost-effective way to enable economic stability, sustainable communities and enriched quality of life. Private industry will pay an anticipated \$1.2-\$1.5 billion for construction, operation and maintenance of the railway. This financing will be paid through contracts and service fees for use of the

railway. The Uinta Basin Railway is expected to add 100 new railway jobs in Carbon, Duchesne and Uintah counties and up to 300 additional indirect and induced jobs. We anticipate the Uinta Basin Railway will increase opportunities and competitiveness for agriculture and livestock producers, landowners, contractors, miners and oil and gas producers.

## 30.4 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

- 30.4.1 The need for storage and transportation of reliable water, energy, and critical resources and related infrastructure is ever increasing. Therefore, to ensure Uintah County's ongoing drought resilience, energy security, and to provide for current and future needs, the county supports efforts to build and invest in necessary infrastructure, including additional pipelines, dams, reservoirs, above and below-ground storage facilities, transportation facilities, and other feasible infrastructure.
- 30.4.2 Provide countywide economic opportunities and resilience for our communities and residence.
- 30.4.3 Develop and allow pipelines and sufficient infrastructure to meet current and future needs.
- 30.4.4 Ensure that project continuity issues on public lands do not inhibit project implementation.
- 30.4.5 Explore opportunities for above and below-ground water storage at different scales, finalize projects that have been proposed and vetted, and complete projects that were never constructed.
- 30.4.6 Encourage and support feasibility studies to prioritize water storage and pipeline projects and become proactive in order to capitalize on high water flows during flood years.
- 30.4.7 Help to identify and improve techniques and the utilization of aquifer storage and recovery.
- 30.4.8 Support innovative and proven technologies to line earthen and concrete canals in order to reduce water loss and increase transportation efficiency.
- 30.4.9 Support water districts and water conservancy districts in applying for grants to improve water delivery systems.
- 30.4.10 There may be a future need to supply hydrogen along major highway arteries. There are several different methods of utilizing hydrogen opportunities that need to be further studied and strategically implemented.
- 30.4.11 Encourage the Development of infrastructure projects aimed at recharging depleted aquifers.
- 30.4.12 Increase watershed yields through active management of forests and other vegetated areas.
- 30.4.13 Support programs like Shared Stewardship and the Watershed Restoration Initiative to enhance water yields.
- 30.4.14 Encourage the use of silt traps and other mechanisms to trap silt upstream and keep it from entering water treatment plants and downstream reservoirs that will ultimately need to be dredged when their storage capacity is reduced.
- 30.4.15 Support innovation to make existing and future water storage and delivery systems more efficient, reliable, and safe.
- 30.4.16 Support a network for the distribution of natural gas, crude oil, and refined petroleum products to domestic and foreign markets.
- 30.4.17 Develop agreements with federal agencies to make it possible to maintain and improve dams, impoundments, and other facilities on federal lands with limited access in a timely and economically feasible manner. It is not economically feasible to transport equipment and supplies by helicopter.

- 30.4.18 Encourage the use of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) to quickly identify water leaks reducing wasted water. The technology also allows remote monitoring and manipulation (valves, flow rates, pressure, etc.) of water conveyance infrastructure.
- 30.4.19 The County supports coordinated efforts across all agencies, governments, tribal nations, and other land ownerships on infrastructure projects to minimize delays.
- 30.4.20 Support and encourage federal appropriations for water infrastructure, including pipelines, water storage, and aquifer recharge.
- 30.4.21 Support and encourage active forest management to decrease water quality issues from wildfire, flooding, etc., which impacts water storage, water treatment, and water delivery systems.
- 30.4.22 Encourage water conservation measures, education, and incentives.
- 30.4.23 Support maintaining access to water in the Colorado River and its tributaries and its access to state and county owned shares that have not been fully exercised as a result of access and transportation limitations.
- 30.4.24 Encourage and support the development of pipelines from the natural gas and crude oil producing areas to refineries, export terminals, or to other associated transportation systems.
- 30.4.25 Encourage and support the creation of hydrogen through natural gas, coal, and other sources.
- 30.4.26 Encourage and support the maintenance and development of pipelines and infrastructure that improve the County's market share and improve the quality of life for county residents.
- 30.4.27 Oppose the creation of pipelines and infrastructure to remove water resources from the county in order to transport it to other counties or states.
- 30.4.28 The county expects pass-through pipelines, utility lines, and associated infrastructure to continually benefit county citizens and communities.
- 30.4.29 Encourage and support unimpeded and timely access to water storage facilities on federal lands to feasibly improve and maintain infrastructure in an effort to address water storage needs.
- 30.4.30 Encourage and support the completion of the Central Utah Project as originally proposed to fulfill all promises made to Uintah Basin counties to mitigate for the transfer of water to the Wasatch Front.
- 30.4.31 Encourage and support the preservation of existing hydroelectric facilities and construction of new facilities, including in-pipe hydro systems and other innovative technologies.
- 30.4.32 Encourage and support the construction and operation of pipelines and other infrastructure to enable the production and transportation of mineral resources from federal lands.

**31 RESOURCE MAPS**

---

## 32 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

### **County Commission**

Bill Stringer

Brad Horrocks

Duane Shepherd

Mike McKee- Former Commissioner

Mark Raymond- Former Commissioner

### **Planning Commission**

Troy Ostler, Chair

Robert Jolley

Marilyn Wallis, Vice Chair

Mike Maguire

Kenn Shields

Troy Allred

Jim Lekas

Guy Collett

Jeremey LeBeau

### **County Planning Staff**

Matt Cazier, Community Development Director

Robert Barnhill, Planner

Tammy McKee- Administrative Assistant

### **Consulting Team**

#### **Rural Community Consultants, LLC**

Mike Hansen, Shannon Ellsworth, Isaac Hansen

[www.rural-community.com](http://www.rural-community.com)

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:

#### **Planning and Development Services, LLC**

Bruce Parker, AICP

[pds@utahplanning.com](mailto:pds@utahplanning.com)





**UINTAH COUNTY  
GENERAL PLAN, 2017**