

# Summary of Washington County's Economic Strategies Workshop

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## **Introduction**

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 a two hour Economic Strategies Workshop was conducted to comply with BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook during the St. George Field Office's Resource Management Plan (RMP) process. The purpose of the workshop was to identify BLM management opportunities that further the social and economic goals of area communities. To further this goal, participants and BLM explored the existing role of BLM in the community and where community desired conditions could be supported during the RMP.

## **Workshop Process**

The agenda for the workshop covered the following topics:

1. BLM Land Use Planning Process
2. Overview of land use decisions to be made
3. Area social and economic conditions and trends
4. Group discussion of Visions of Success

After welcoming participants, covering logistical details, and introducing presenters the workshop started with a discussion of the BLM planning process and the St George Field Office's (SGFO) progress. This included a review of land use decisions to be made for relevant resource areas within the SGFO.

An overview of area social and economic trends and conditions were then presented in order to generate discussion of BLM influences in the area. The slides used during this discussion are included below in Appendix 1. The slides were generated using information from Headwater's Economic Profile System and are available to the public at the Headwater's website ([headwaterseconomics.org](http://headwaterseconomics.org)). This discussion focused on how BLM management might influence these trends and consequently prepared the audience for discussion of relevant desired conditions related to BLM.

After the discussion of area trends participants were then asked to share their visions of success related to the land use decisions to be made discussed under the second agenda item. An open dialogue between BLM and the public then focused on a list of resource areas to be covered under the RMP. This list was prioritized based on participant interest and sequentially covered the following topics:

- Recreation
- Access
- Rights-of-Way
- Special Designations
- Grazing

As participants brought up opportunities or concerns, BLM staff from the field office and presenters provided perspective on how the RMP process might foster opportunities or address their concerns. Notes taken during this discussion are included below in Appendix 2 and a summary is included below. After this discussion, presenters covered how the information elicited would be used during the planning process and within the social and economic analysis.

## **Summary of Public Input**

Recreation on BLM was noted as important part of the area economy and vital to area quality of life. Participant interest in recreation focused on route designation that suite a variety of recreation preferences (e.g., solitude for hiking, OHV, competitive recreation) and access to these routes. Incorporation of the High Desert Trail into the BLM route system was also suggested. Heritage tourism was noted to be an important recreation attraction as well. In addition, marketing and advertising of these routes and recreation opportunities of BLM was emphasized since local businesses depend on these opportunities and could benefit from further marketing. Awareness and education of routes and allowable uses was also discussed. The use of positive or signage portraying allowed uses was suggested. Education and awareness of different uses and routes was suggested as a means to address inherent user conflicts such as unauthorized camping and conflicts between non-motorized and motorized users. In addition, the effects to adjacent private land from inadvertent recreation uses on private land (camping) were noted as an important recreation consideration.

Access for other uses of BLM was noted of importance to the area. Particular emphasis was voiced for clarification of what is and is not allowed on each route. Access for grazing uses, mineral development and emergency uses (e.g., search and rescue, fire, etc.) was noted of importance. It was also suggested that BLM consider making decisions about trails and access in advance of private land development. Coordinating with the County, the city and private landowners to ensure access to trails was also noted.

Continued rights-of-way (ROW) across BLM for community uses were noted of importance to the area. It was noted that the availability of corridors established in the previous RMP have been maxed out. The need for ROWs specifically for water access and the ability to access scattered state, school trust, & other non-BLM lands was expressed. Participants suggested that ROW could be compatible with multiple uses such as recreation along with transmission, pipeline and other ROW types. Consideration of Dixie Metro Planning Organization traffic routes and other data was noted as relevant to ROW. In addition, the desire to prioritize ROW over wilderness protection was also expressed. Last but not least important, the effects to adjacent private land from ROW designation was noted as an important consideration of ROW designation.

Participants were concerned about the use of special designations, such as ACECs, as a backdoor approach to wilderness designation. However, the use of ACECs to promote and protect ecosystem services (e.g., water quality and biodiversity) was noted as important and compatible with multiple uses. In addition, interest was voiced in ACECs designation for wildlife habitat and cultural resources.

The importance of grazing in Washington County was noted as having direct economic impact on area families, extending back generations. The stewardship of area ranchers supporting a sustainable landscape (e.g., grazing as a wildfire deterrent) was noted as an important

consideration. Promoting education and mutual respect between various BLM land users was noted as important to grazing uses on BLM. Of concern was continued motorized access for maintenance of grazing improvements (e.g., salt rock and mineral transport). Adverse consequences grazing and associated practices were also expressed. In addition, a desire to distinguish between impacts from livestock grazing and impacts from wildlife grazing were noted as important.

# Appendix 1 – Area Social and Economic Conditions and Trends

**BLM Community Socioeconomic  
Workshop: Washington County,  
Utah**  
  
 February 8, 2011

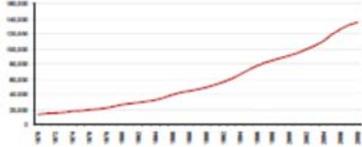


**BLM Resource Management Planning  
Considerations**

- What trends have you observed?
- What questions, issues, or concerns do you have about the data presented?
- Describe the county’s social and economic relationship to public lands.
- Proposals, initiatives, and trends that the audience foresees influencing BLM land uses and/or BLM land use decisions.

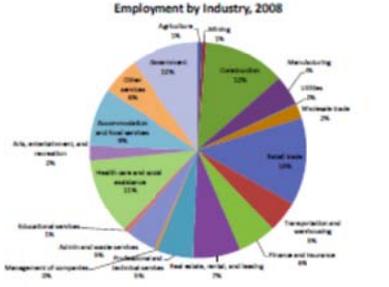


**Demographic Conditions and Trends**  
 Population Trends, Washington County, UT



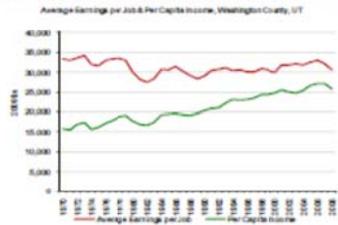
\* Between 1970 and 2008, Washington County’s population grew from 13,907 to 135,678 – an 876% increase.  
 \*The Utah Demographer’s Office predicts that Washington County’s population will exceed 250,000 by 2020 and half a million by 2040.  
 \* What factors do you think are driving the rapid population growth?

**Economic Conditions and Trends**  
 Employment by Industry, 2008



Industry	Percentage
Construction	13%
Retail Trade	12%
Accommodation and food services	11%
Health care and social assistance	11%
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	10%
Manufacturing	10%
Transportation and warehousing	10%
Other services	10%
Management of companies and enterprises	10%
Education services	10%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	10%
Information services	10%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	10%
Real estate and rental and leasing	10%
Utilities and infrastructure	10%
Food, beverage, and tobacco products	10%
Finance and insurance	10%
Other	10%

## Economic Conditions and Trends



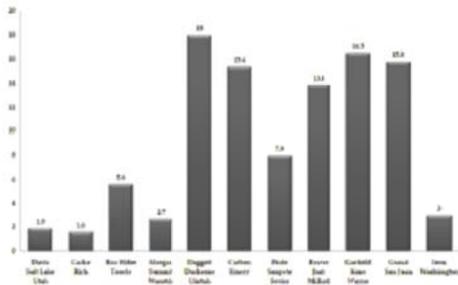
\*Since 1970, per capita income in Washington County has increased from \$15,815 to \$25,794 (inflation-adjusted). Over the same period, earnings per job decreased from \$33,372 to \$30,502 (inflation-adjusted).  
 \*This discrepancy may be explained by growth in non-labor income or higher labor force participation (e.g., women entering the work force). Other explanations?

## Economic Conditions and Trends



\*Like much of the US, the unemployment rate in Washington County spiked in 2008-2009.  
 \*Since 1990, the annual unemployment rate ranged from a low of 2.9% in 2007 to a high of 8.8% in 2009.

Percentage of respondents reporting recreational account owned to BLM permitted activities.



## Socioeconomic Data

- All of the data used in this presentation are available from public sources
- The Economic Profile System-Human Dimensions Toolkit (EPS-HDT) is a joint project of Headwaters Economics, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service
- EPS-HDT allows users to produce free, detailed socioeconomic profiles at a variety of geographic scales
- To learn more, or to download the toolkit, visit: <http://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/eps-hdt>



## Appendix 2 – Notes of workshop discussion

### Recreation

- Ensure routes are identified
- Offer routes for users with varied recreation preferences (e.g., solitude for hiking)
- Ensure that routes access areas for tourists – work with local outlets to advertize routes
- Keep existing OHV routes
- Cooperative efforts with private enterprises to publish routes (e.g., CoC, retailers)
- Use positive (allowed uses) rather than negative (disallowed) signage
- Improve use designation and enforcement
- Improve signage (maintain signs)
- Expedite process to connect routes and include way to amend
- Include heritage tourism and analyze cultural resources in the recreation section
- Include language to identify possibility of change within plan (does not only apply to recreation) – need flexibility to address current concerns (not five years in advance)
- Recreation is key to economy in Washington County – BLM is critical component of this (building is not only economic engine in County)
- Address user conflicts – many travel plans promote user conflicts rather than working to solve them
- Sometimes separation is important; make sure to educate users on available routes for different types of recreation (e.g., motorized and non-motorized)
- Uses on public lands likely to increase, and much of this will happen on BLM
- Increased uses places additional stresses on places to camp – may lead to camping on areas not authorized for that use
- Competitive recreation events need to be allowed
- High Desert Trail should be recognized and incorporated in routes
- Problems with unauthorized camping

### Access

- Administrative routes create conflict and misunderstanding
- Grandfathered routes may also create conflict
- Be clear about what is and is not allowed on each route
- RS2477 routes should be recognized and granted to counties
- Access for unforeseen mineral development
- Private land mixed with public land – BLM should consider making decisions about trails and access in advance of private land development
- Make trailhead improvements similar to Red Mountain trailhead
- Coordinate with County and city to ensure access to trails
- Clarify access for emergency uses (e.g., search and rescue, fire, etc.)

### Rights-of-Way

- Work with private landowners to ensure that trail access is not interrupted
- Multipurpose ROWs for recreation use with transmission, pipeline, etc. ROWs
- Corridors that were established in previous RMP are maxing out

- Dixie Metro Planning Organization (DMPO) is developing traffic routes and other data relevant to ROW designation and travel planning
- Need ROWs for water access
- 3310 wildlands issues need to be closely managed – don't interpret to manage all lands as wilderness
- Ability to access scattered state, school trust, & other non-BLM lands
- At interface of public and private land, can be disregard for private land and privacy (e.g., camping on private lands)

### **Special Designations**

- ACECs backdoor approach to wilderness
- Congressional bill said no more wilderness in Washington County
- Use ACECs to promote ecosystem service values (e.g., water quality and biodiversity) – find places where multiple values can be promoted
- BLM has already determined which areas merit ACECs
- Landscape -ACECs for wildlife habitat
- ACECs for cultural resources

### **Grazing**

- Important to Washington County that grazing continues
- Consider fragility of land and quality of resources in the context of impacts from grazing
- Grazing is one of best deterrents for wildfire
- Grazing has direct economic impact – families involved in grazing for generations
- Ranchers are very familiar with land and likely to use it sustainably – involve ranchers in decision-making process
- Promote mutual respect between various BLM land users – stress education for all users (explain why the rules are the way they are), include these details in outreach and promotional materials
- Cease chaining in areas with cultural resources/archaeological remains
- Chaining may help to preserve archaeological sites
- Distinguish between impacts from livestock grazing and impacts from wildlife grazing
- Ranchers require four-wheeler access for maintenance and salt rock and mineral transport for livestock