

**Sanpete County Resource Management Plan**  
(An appendix to the General Plan- Adopted 06/05/2012)

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## Section One: Introduction

This County Resource Management Plan has been created as a supplement to the Sanpete County General Plan, and is intended to specifically address the challenges which exist, and continually arise, as a result of the large area of state and federal lands which lie within the county boundaries. With 56% of the County owned by the federal or state government, the interface which exists between the federal lands and the private, commercial, and municipal lands is a constant overlying influence in any county planning decisions, countywide growth, and county economic activity.

As a result, Sanpete County has engaged in a *Comprehensive Land Use Planning Project* in an effort to address, in a very detailed manner, the many complicated issues which arise from the interrelationship between the public and the private lands. To accomplish this task, County leaders put together a collaborative Working Group, made up of individuals from many stakeholder perspectives, which met monthly and scrutinized every level of public land management, public land uses, and private land interface issues. The group identified conflicts, addressed future goals and objectives, and made recommendations for solutions to existing problems. Also at the table were the state and federal land managers in an advisory role, as well as many invited experts in resource-specific areas.

This County Resource Management Plan is a result of that effort, and while the position statements and the goals and objectives expressed in this Plan are those of Sanpete County, they are based on extensive collaboration and research in a genuine effort to represent the many perspectives of the users and stakeholders involved. This Plan is intended to be an on-going effort, with continued reviews, updates, and amendments as necessary. Some elements of this plan require further research, and will be completed as data becomes available.

Sanpete County has a responsibility to all the citizens within its boundaries to manage for the future, plan for best long-term benefit, and provide essential services in the best way possible. County leaders also recognize their role as key players in the management and use of the public lands within county borders, lands which are technically owned by all the citizens of the nation and are often of national interest. It is with this understanding that Sanpete County has created this Plan, based on best available information and formulated with collaborative input from state and federal land managers, Congressional Delegation representatives, local citizens, resource experts, and stakeholders from a large cross-section of users. This Plan will be a template for all public land-related decisions, allowing the County to measure future public land management problems and challenges against the policies and goals set forth in this document.

Summarily, this plan will be used in several ways:

First, as stated above, it will be used as a tool to weigh County policy against current and future land management decisions and management practices;

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Second, it will be a template for future County decisions regarding growth, Planning and Zoning issues, open space planning, resource development, and other matters relating to the growth of the County's population and its economic base;

Third, it will be a valuable aid in maintaining consistency in the effort to address the many public land management issues and planning partnership demands which face the County on a constant and urgent basis.

## Section Two: Economic Conditions

Sanpete County was the twelfth fastest growing county in Utah between 2000 and 2010, with a 22% increase in population. The County is above the national average for percentage of adults with at least a high school diploma, and slightly below the Utah average. The numbers change for adults with at least a bachelor's degree, with Sanpete County below both the state and the national levels.

Sanpete County's recent population growth has hardly been meteoric. In 2010, population estimates place the county's population at 27,886—a 1.4 percent increase from the previous year. While slower than the state average (1.5%) in 2010, the county grew faster than the state average in 2007 (2.9 %) and 2008 (2.5%) with rates of 3.2% and 4.3%, respectively. Furthermore, net in-migration has proved the rule (more people moving in than moving out) since 2000. In fact, since 1990, Sanpete County has displayed only one year of net out-migration. According to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, most of the growth is occurring in the larger towns—Ephraim, Manti, Mount Pleasant, and Gunnison in particular.

Although Sanpete County experienced very strong employment growth through most of the 1990s, it has struggled to regain that footing since 2000. Since that time, the county has either lost nonfarm jobs or shown very tepid employment expansion. Since 2008, Sanpete County has suffered through several years of job losses and in 2012 has an unemployment rate of 7.2%.

Sanpete County suffers from a perennially-low average monthly wage. In 2010, the county's monthly wage of \$2,117 ranked third lowest in the state. The combination of industry structure and an abundant, young labor supply at Snow College combined to keep wages low. In 2010, Sanpete County showed a 1.3-percent growth in the average monthly wage—a figure below the annual inflation rate. Furthermore, the county's average monthly wage measured only 65 percent of the statewide average in 2009.

Construction activity improved in 2006 as residential home permit values increased. Overall, the dollar amount of permits showed a 36-percent gain. In addition, gross taxable sales exhibited a significant 11-percent improvement. In 2009, however, residential home permit values decreased dramatically and fell to a 15 year low and gross taxable sales fell by approximately 8%.

Clearly, Sanpete County faces a difficult task in trying to maintain the rural atmosphere which is deeply valued by all citizens, and is certainly a draw to potential new residents, while at the same time attracting new businesses, increasing the number of job openings, and providing opportunities for residents to increase their overall standard of living. At least five core elements for growing Sanpete County's economy and increasing the tax base came to the forefront in the collaborative planning discussions. They are: 1) Increased water availability and storage capacity; 2) resolution of key transportation and shipping infrastructure challenges; 3) development of potential mineral resources to increase opportunities for higher paying jobs; 4) development of value-added agricultural products to increase profitability and expansion of that industry; and, 5) enhancement of tourism industry opportunities to capitalize

on proximity to beautiful public lands, especially in regards to linking historic Highway 89 with the Natural Resources of the County.

Sanpete County's objectives regarding these five areas will be addressed in the Resource Planning section of this document. Each of these elements is directly connected to the public lands within the County, and cannot be accomplished without appropriate public land management policies.

Sanpete County has a better ratio of private to public lands than many rural Utah counties, adequate water and agricultural lands in the Gunnison Valley, a thriving two-year community college, and potential mineral resources that could be developed over the long term. As a result, the County has some opportunity for increasing their economic viability. However, County planning efforts must coordinate and be complimentary to federal public land resource planning if Sanpete County has any hope of maximizing its economic potential.

An ongoing partnership between Snow College and the Forest Service is necessary for the success of the Great Basin Environmental Center (GBEEC), as well as the educational programs and the recreational opportunities connected with the center.

In 2012 Snow College is developing a Natural Resource program to provide custom fit training for private businesses and government agencies in the natural resource industry. Students will get training and experience in a wide variety of natural resources and be qualified to conduct environmental assessments. Employment opportunities for graduates include: consulting firms, agriculture, natural resource technicians, oil, gas, and mining. The development and use of public lands is crucial for the success of these industries.

### **Section Three: Legal Basis for County Resource Management Planning**

The authority for Sanpete County to make plans for the management of natural resources within the county is derived directly from state law. In addition to this authority, provisions of federal law allow counties to participate in and influence the natural resource and land management plans of federal agencies both through use of these duly adopted county plans and through cooperative participation in the planning efforts for the federal lands.

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#### **County Planning Authority**

**Section 17-27a-401** of the Utah Code provides that “each county shall prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-range general plan,” which addresses, among other provisions, the:

- (a) Present and future needs of the county; and
- (b) Growth and development of all or any part of the land within the unincorporated portions of the county.

The plan may also provide for:

- (a) Health, general welfare, safety, energy conservation, transportation, prosperity, civic activities, aesthetics, and recreational, educational, and cultural opportunities;
- (b) The efficient and economical use, conservation, and production of the supply of: (i) food and water; and (ii) drainage, sanitary, and other facilities and resources;
- (c) The use of energy conservation and solar and renewable energy resources;
- (d) The protection of urban development;
- (e) The protection or promotion of moderate income housing;
- (f) The protection and promotion of air quality;
- (g) Historic preservation;
- (h) Identifying future uses of land that are likely to require an expansion or significant modification of services or facilities provided by each affected entity; and
- (i) An official map.

In addition, the law provides that the plan may define the local customs, local culture, and the components necessary for the county's economic stability. (Utah Code §17-27a-401(4)) Moreover, a county may get access to certain data gathered and held by state agencies that may be of assistance in the county's planning process. (Utah Code §17-27a-402) However, the authority to plan does not give the county any direct jurisdiction over lands owned by the state or federal governments. (Utah Code §17-27a-304)

## Federal Land and Natural Resource Planning

Two of the major federal landowners in Utah, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service, are required to engage in land and natural resource planning processes, which can affect the use and development of natural resources, and can have an impact on surrounding private lands, especially in rural areas. The Bureau of Land Management is required by Section 202 of the **Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)** to “develop, maintain, and ... revise land use plans which provide by tracts or areas for the use of the [BLM] lands.” Similarly, the Forest Service is required to “develop, maintain, and ... revise land and resource management plans for units of the National Forest System.” (16 U.S.C. §1604(a))

## Coordination and Consistency with State, Local and Tribal Government Plans

Both the BLM and the Forest Service are required to coordinate their land and natural resource planning efforts with those of state, local and tribal jurisdictions. For example, the BLM is required to:

1. Become apprised of State, local and tribal land use plans;
2. Assure that consideration is given to those State, local and tribal plans that are germane to ... plans for public lands;
3. Assist in resolving ... inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal Government plans. (43 U.S.C. 1712(b)(9))

Specifically, state and local officials are “*authorized to furnish advice to the [BLM] with respect to the development and revision of land use plans, ...guidelines, ... rules and ... regulations for the public lands.*” (43 U.S.C. §1712 (b)(9)) This is significant because land use plans adopted by the BLM are required to “**be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent consistent with Federal law and the purposes of (FLPMA).**” (43 U.S.C. §1712(b)(9)) The duly adopted regulations of the BLM further define this consistency requirement by requiring that the BLM's resource management plans shall be “consistent with officially approved or adopted resource related plans, and the policies and programs contained therein, of ... State and local governments and Indian tribes, so long as the guidance and resource management plans are also consistent with the purposes, policies and programs of Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands.” (43 C.F.R. §1610.3- 2(a)) The term “consistent” is defined to mean that the duly adopted BLM plans for the natural resources within the county “will adhere to the terms, conditions, and decisions of officially approved and adopted resource related plans” of local and state governments. (43 C.F.R. §1610.3-1)

The BLM regulations also provide that “in the absence of officially approved or adopted resource management plans of ... State and local governments ... [Federal] resource management plans shall, to the maximum extent practical, be consistent with officially approved and adopted resource related policies and programs of ... State and local governments.” However, as before, this consistency only applies to the extent the policies and

programs are “consistent with the policies, programs and provisions of Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands.” (43 C.F.R. §1610.3-2(b))

The Forest Service is required to coordinate “with the land and resource management planning processes of State and local governments.” (16 U.S.C. §1604(a)) The Forest Service’s planning regulations state that “the Responsible [Forest Service] Official must provide opportunities for the coordination of Forest Service planning efforts...with those of other resource management agencies.” Furthermore, the agency’s planning regulations provide that “the Responsible Official should seek assistance, where appropriate, from other state and local governments...to help address management issues or opportunities.” (36 C.F.R. 219.9) Although there is no explicit parallel requirement for consistency of Forest Service plans with plans of state, local and tribal governments as that contained within FLPMA for the BLM Resource Management Plans, the Forest Service is required to “discuss any inconsistency” between the proposed plan’s provision and “any approved State or local plan and laws.” Further, if any inconsistencies exist, the plan must “describe the extent to which the [Forest Service] would reconcile its proposed action with the plan or law.” (40 C.F.R. §1506.2(d))

### **Federal Planning Criteria**

*Counties may use duly adopted plans, programs or policies to directly influence federal natural resource and land planning efforts by informing the federal agencies of the plans and their provisions. As part of these plans, counties may want to make known their interpretation of the criteria the federal planning agencies must consider as land and resource management plans are developed. **This could, for example, be used to define, among other things, the desired future conditions for the county’s economy, lifestyle, or recreational needs of the citizens, and the necessary use of the federal natural resources to achieve these desired future conditions.***

### **Forest Service**

The National Forests were originally set aside to provide a continuous supply of timber and for the protection of water sources for local communities and agricultural needs. Later, through the adoption of the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, Congress determined that the forests should be “administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes,” which purposes were declared to be “supplemental to, but not in derogation of” the original purposes. (16 U.S.C. §528)

The Forest Service is required to “use a systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic, and other sciences” in its land and resource plans. The Forest Service must assure that the plans “provide for multiple use and sustained yield of the products and services obtained there-from in accordance with the Multiple-Use Sustained- Yield Act of 1960, and, in particular, include coordination of outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, and wilderness.” The plans must “determine forest management systems, harvesting levels [of timber] and procedures” based upon all of the uses mentioned above, the definitions of multiple use and sustained yield as



laid out in the law, and the availability of lands and their suitability for resource management. (16 U.S.C. §1604(b) and (e))

The regulations of the Forest Service specifically define principles of planning for the Forest Service's natural resources. (36 C.F.R. §219.3)

a) Land management planning is an adaptive management process that includes social, economic, and ecological evaluation; plan development, plan amendment, and plan revision; and monitoring. The overall aim of planning is to produce responsible land management for the National Forest System based on useful and current information and guidance. Land management planning guides the Forest Service in fulfilling its responsibilities for stewardship of the National Forest System to best meet the needs of the American people. (36 C.F.R. §219.3(a))

*The Forest Service is also required, as part of the development and interpretation of information for plans, to consider and incorporate the concept and conditions of sustainability. “Sustainability...has three interrelated and interdependent elements: social, economic, and ecological.” (36 C.F.R. §219.10)*

a) *The overall goal of the social and economic elements of sustainability is to contribute to sustaining social and economic systems within the plan area. To understand the social and economic contributions that National Forest System lands presently make, and may make in the future, the [Forest Service] must evaluate relevant economic and social conditions and trends as appropriate during plan development... (36 C.F.R. §219.10 (a))*

Expectations for ecological sustainability as well as ecosystem and species diversity are also provided.

## **Bureau of Land Management**

FLPMA provides that the BLM must manage the lands under its jurisdiction (called “public” lands) “in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values,” and will provide for, among other things, “outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use,” and “food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals.” However, the BLM must specifically manage the public lands “in a manner which recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands.” (43 U.S.C. §1701(8) and (12))

The BLM is required to “use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield” and, just as the Forest Service must, “use a systematic interdisciplinary approach to achieve integrated consideration of physical, biological, economic and other sciences” in the preparation of its plans. (43 U.S.C. §1712(c)(1) and (2)) The BLM must also “consider present and potential uses of the public lands” and “provide for compliance with applicable pollution control laws, including State and Federal air, water, noise, or other pollution standards or implementation plans.” (43 U.S.C. §1712(c)(5) and (8))

## **Multiple-Use and Sustained Yield**

Both the Forest Service and the BLM are required to manage the lands under their jurisdiction pursuant to the principles of “multiple use” and “sustained yield.” These terms have been defined within the provisions of FLPMA for the BLM and within the provisions of the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 for the Forest Service. Both definitions are lengthy and worthy of careful study. Yet it is apparent that the definitions are not crystal clear, leading to differing interpretations concerning development or preservation of the natural resources and the environment.

The definitions do state, however, that multiple use is to be considered in the context of the best combination of land uses that meet the present and future needs of the nation with respect to “recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural, scenic, scientific, and historical values.” Furthermore, they state that these resources are to be managed in a “harmonious and coordinated” manner that does not lead to “permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment.” Finally, multiple use does not, by definition, mean the “greatest economic return or the greatest unit output” for the natural resources. (43 U.S.C. §1702(c). See also (16 U.S.C. §531(a)) For the Forest Service, the “establishment and maintenance of areas of wilderness” is specifically determined to be consistent with the principle of multiple use. (16 U.S.C. 529.)

The term “sustained yield” is defined to mean the achievement of “a high level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use.” (43 U.S.C. §1702(h). See also 16 U.S.C. §531 (b))

## **National Environmental Policy Act and Cooperating Agency Status**

Preparation of land and natural resource management plans by the BLM and the Forest Service is a major federal action requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the provisions of the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**. (42 U.S.C. §4231 *et. seq.* ) NEPA requires federal agencies to fully disclose the nature and condition of the environment within the area of interest. Under NEPA, agencies must formulate various alternatives for proposed management and to compare those alternatives to a “no-action” alternative of continuing the current management scheme. NEPA specifically requires the agency preparing the EIS to seek decisions that, among other things, “attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation,” “preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage,” and “achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities.” (42 U.S.C. 4331(b))

The development of an EIS by a federal agency as part of the process to decide upon a land and resource management plan or proposed project has a number of well-established steps. Each of these steps provides an opportunity for comment by local government based upon their own plans and policies. These steps, in general, are:

- the “Scoping” of the issues;
- preparation of an “Analysis of the Management Situation;”
- preparation of the various “Alternatives” with the associated necessary management scenarios and conditions;
- issuance of a “Draft EIS” for public comment;
- issuance of a Final EIS and the “Proposed Record of Decision,” which lays out the proposed final decision including the terms and conditions for management of the lands and natural resources for the life of the plan or for that specific project.

Issuance of the Proposed Record of Decision is followed by a period for protest by interested parties, which, upon resolution of the protests, is followed by adoption of the Record of Decision and implementation of the plan.

For plans of the BLM, ***the Governor of the state is given an opportunity for a “consistency review” immediately following the issuance of the Proposed Record of Decision. BLM is required to “identify any known inconsistencies with State or local plans, policies, or programs,” and to “assist in resolving, to the extent practical, inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal Government plans.”*** The Governor is given 60 days to “identify inconsistencies and provide recommendations in writing” in response. The BLM must accept the recommendations of the Governor if the BLM State Director determines that the recommendations “provide for a reasonable balance between the national interest and the State’s interest.” (43 U.S.C §1712(b)(9) and 43 C.F.R. §1610.3-2(e). See also 40 C.F.R. \_ 1506.2(d))

The federal Council on Environmental Quality has issued regulations related to the implementation of NEPA. One of these regulations provides for the elimination of duplication with state and local processes. The regulation requires federal agencies to “cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible to reduce duplication between NEPA and State and local requirements.” This cooperation specifically includes:

- (1) Joint planning processes.
- (2) Joint environmental research and studies.
- (3) Joint public hearings
- (4) Joint environmental assessments. (40 C.F.R. §1506.2(b))

The Council on Environmental Quality has also supported an invitation to state and local governments to become “cooperating agencies” in the preparation of federal land and natural resource management plans and associated EISs. *The invitation to become a cooperating agency is not based on the fact that state or local governments are entities that may be affected by the outcome of the process. Instead, cooperating agency status is specifically based upon state or local government’s position as professionals having jurisdiction by law in the planning area or professionals holding special expertise in an issue that will be addressed in the analysis or decision* (memo from James Connaughton, Chairman of the CEQ). This status does not relieve the federal agency of the responsibility as the decision-maker, and does not guarantee a decision that the cooperating agency may necessarily favor. *Cooperating agency status does allow the cooperators to participate in the scoping process, the inventory*

*of data and analysis of current situation process, the preparation of alternatives, the impact analysis, and in the preparation of the draft and final EISs.* Participation as a cooperating agency in federal planning efforts will specifically require the cooperators to respect the timing and confidentiality inherent in the federal process. Failure to adhere to these conditions may lead to revocation of cooperating agency status. BLM has proposed a regulatory rule change that would solidify the cooperating agency concept in BLM planning, stating that a “cooperating agency relationship” would complement the requirement under FLPMA to coordinate with state and local government. (69 F.R. 43378.)

## **State Planning Coordinator Responsibilities**

The State Planning Coordinator is authorized to prepare plans, programs and policies for the state that, among other things:

- “incorporate the plans, policies, programs, processes, and desired outcomes of the counties where the federal lands or natural resources are located, to the maximum extent consistent with state and federal law...;”
- “develop, research, and use factual information, legal analysis, and statements of desired future condition” for regions of the state, “as necessary to support the plans, policies, programs, processes, and desired outcomes of the state and counties where the federal lands or natural resources are located;”
- “establish and coordinate agreements with federal agencies that facilitate state and local participation in the development, revision and implementation of federal plans.” (Utah Code §63-38d-401)

The state law continues by establishing findings that shall be considered by state and local governments as they interact with the federal agencies in the preparation of federal land and natural resource management plans. These findings provide the framework for the necessary considerations of state and local plans and policies, which the federal agencies are required to consider as part of their planning efforts. The findings include a definition of multiple use that emphasizes support for state and local plans that are designed to produce and provide the watersheds, timber, food, fiber, livestock and wildlife forage, and minerals necessary to meet present needs and future economic growth and community expansion, as well as meet the recreational needs and the personal and business related transportation needs, of the citizens of the state without impairing the productivity of the land.

The findings also indicate, for example, that: the federal government must seek water rights within the state appropriation system; federal agencies must support the purposes of the school trust lands compact in their land management decisions; development of the solid, fluid and gaseous minerals of the state is important to the state economy; wildlife is an important part of the recreational opportunity within the state and the economy; and that transportation and access routes are vital to the state's economy. Furthermore, the findings indicate parameters for state and local government's support or opposition to specific federal land planning issues such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wild and Scenic River

studies, exchanges of land, agricultural production and open space, management of forests in a healthy manner, off-highway vehicle use, and predator control. (See Utah Code §63-38d-401(6) and (7) for the complete listing of findings.)

### **Federal Advisory Committee Act**

The **Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA)** was enacted to formalize and stabilize the process by which federal agencies receive advice from interested parties. It establishes conditions under which federal agencies may establish such committees; how they must be composed and chartered, and requires meetings and activities to be open to the public. FACA does not affect the requirement under FLPMA to coordinate with state and local governments, nor does it affect the establishment of a cooperating agency relationship. **FACA also does not apply to any state or local committee or other group established to make recommendations to state or local governments about any issue, including land and natural resource utilization issues. (5 U.S.C. Appendix)**

## Section Four: Statement on Current Management Condition

### Sanpete County Resource Assessment

Sanpete County is located in central Utah about 90 miles south of Salt Lake City. The San Pitch River begins on the Wasatch Plateau north of Fairview and flows through the east branch of Sanpete Valley. The Sanpete valley floor has an area of about 240 square miles.

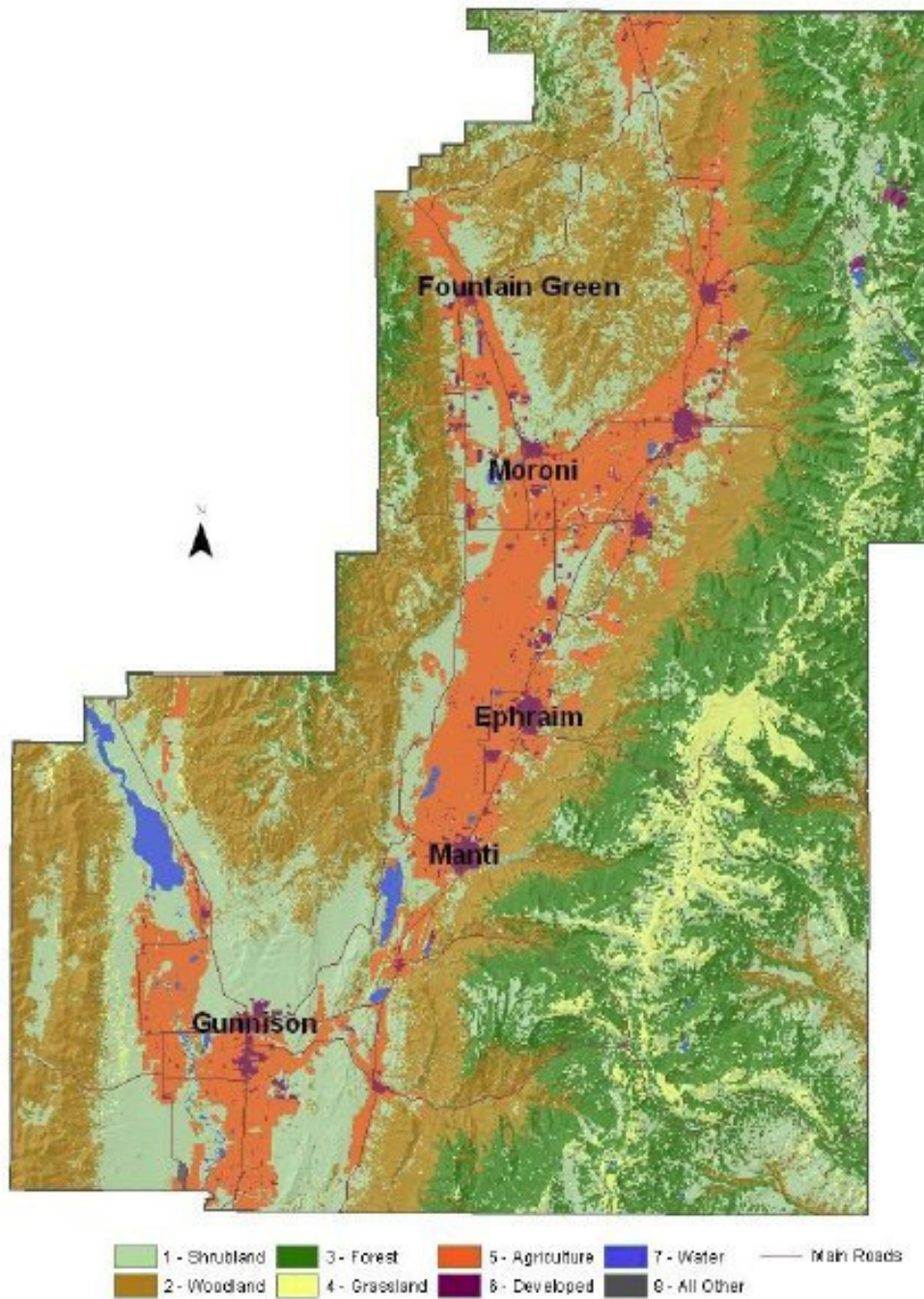
The climate of Sanpete County is influenced by the large variations in topography. The elevation of the Sanpete valley floor ranges from 5,040 to 7,400 feet above sea level and the adjacent mountains rise to over 10,000 feet. The Sanpete Valley climate is semi-arid despite its high elevation. The average annual precipitation ranges from approximately 8 inches in the lower valley to more than 30 inches in the higher mountains. Most of the precipitation in Sanpete County falls as snow in the mountains, particularly the Wasatch Plateau, from November to April.

### Summary Assessment - Land Use Statistics

Land Use	Acres
Forest	390,889
Grain Crops	57,000
Conservation Reserve Program	0
Grass/Pasture/Hay lands	429,200
Row Crops	25
Shrub/Rangeland	180,700
Water	2,500
Wetlands	6,521
Developed	12,700
<b>County Total</b>	<b>1,079,535</b>

Source: US Dept of Agriculture

# SANPETE COUNTY LAND USE SUMMARY MAP



## Issues of Resource Management Concern

**Partnerships:** The County recognizes the efforts that some management agencies have made to inform the County of planning processes underway or decisions that have been made, but we believe that more effort needs to be made to create what we would consider to be a true partnership. Given the County's responsibility to all county residents, as well as the County's overall responsibility for the welfare of visitors to the area whether they are on private or public lands, it follows that the partnership between the managing agencies and the County should be more than simple cooperating agency status. What the County does impacts the public lands, and what the agencies do impact citizens of the County, therefore every effort should be made to coordinate activities, jointly plan as much as possible, and cooperate fully on all levels. Sanpete County believes that this relationship, while improving, needs much more work.

**Planning Timelines:** The County's input is usually gathered in response to a problem, often after significant planning has already occurred. Sanpete County would prefer to be included in the earliest stages on planning and problem resolution.

**Consistency:** Sanpete County enjoys a generally positive relationship with all the agencies that manage the federal and state lands. Our association with the various managing agencies during the comprehensive planning process which led to this Plan has also helped to establish and improve relationships on all levels. However, as relates to consistency, the County is often asked to participate with multiple planning efforts simultaneously, and while this is appreciated, it creates a great strain on our limited administrative resources. As previously stated, the County's input is often gathered in response to a problem, or after significant planning has already occurred. The result is that the County is sometimes not able to effectively meet its responsibilities and expectations as a planning partner. To address this concern, it is the intent of the County to maintain an ongoing Public Lands Council to assist in addressing all the many fronts of public land management matters. The County will also continually update this County Resource Management Plan in an effort to more efficiently address the many public land issues that arise, and more fully meet the needs of all the many stakeholders for whom it has responsibility. Please see section Eight, *County Goals and Objectives*, for the County's objectives regarding a Public Lands Council.

**Local Social and Economic Impact:** Sanpete County is deeply concerned that insufficient weight is given to economic impacts when considering public land management practices. There have been many changes in management philosophy over the past three decades, much of it due to Congressional rules and regulations. Often, local land managers must work within very narrow parameters to solve complex and difficult land use problems. This is further complicated by intense pressure from various advocacy groups, individuals who have had long-standing access to public lands in ways which are now somewhat limited by changing philosophies, and ever-expanding numbers of people who use the lands. Sanpete County's concern is that, in light of all these factors, socio-economic impacts become the last consideration in the planning processes and management decisions. This concern is two-fold. First, while the County gives substantial weight to certain subjective values, such as Sense of Community, Rural Atmosphere, Historic Relevance, and Local Culture and Custom when



planning, the managing agencies seem somewhat limited within their planning processes in their ability to give adequate consideration to such concepts. Second, there is some difference between what the County would consider “economically feasible”, and what the agencies deem to have economic value in their evaluation process. Such concepts are clearly open to much interpretation, given the many ways to evaluate, assess, and balance potential values, both real and conceptual, in any planning process. However, Sanpete County cannot overstate the importance of giving sufficient weight to *all* potential socio-economic impacts when public land management decisions are made. The County encourages Federal and state agencies to fully consider the social, cultural, and economic needs of the County when developing plans and making recommendations that affect the custom and culture of the County. This important concept is further discussed in other sections of this plan.

Another important example of underestimating economic impacts by federal agencies is in the area of transportation and RS 2477 rights of way. The recreation community is widespread and growing, and generally the impact on communities is very positive. Several extensive and connecting trails systems run throughout the area, and the benefit to the County from recreational activities is very substantial. And yet, it seems that management practices are more focused on controlling these activities than in enhancing appropriate opportunities.

Sanpete County is also concerned about the continual pressure to close mineral rich lands, as well as the increasingly difficult burden in obtaining permits to explore and extract our much-needed natural resources. In a nation facing impossibly high fuel prices and a deteriorating national infrastructure, our mineral resources should be made accessible to every degree possible. The County has extensive mineral resources, many of which are not economically viable at this time. It is the County’s concern that when conditions create opportunity to extract these mineral resources, the permitting process will have become so burdensome as to make extraction impossible. This seems to be an unfortunate situation given the nation’s desperate need for energy independence. The County believes that minerals should be extracted with great care for the environment, but the good of the environment should not be used as a tool to systematically close public lands to mineral extraction. There should be a good balance, and due consideration should be given to the economic importance of our natural resources on public lands to the County’s overall economic health.

**Relative Impacts:** The County acknowledges that public lands belong to the national public as a whole. However, this does not diminish the fact that the County is more directly affected by local management decisions than those who live outside the County or the state. *Sanpete County is directly impacted by decisions regarding public lands, and personally accountable, and therefore should have a much greater role in the management decisions made regarding public lands within its boundaries.* There are many stakeholder and advocacy groups with seemingly endless proposals for management of the public lands in Sanpete County. However, the County asserts that *all* stakeholder interests in the care and use of our public lands are “special”, and no single interest should rise above others nor sway federal managers from their decision-making process. Sanpete County supports managing timber resources, utilizing insect killed timber, and improving wildlife habitat and watershed conditions. The County also supports preserving the “Pastoral Scene” and maintaining AUMs for agriculture, a long-term use, to support the local economy. But, there is concern that, while more and more

historically used activities are under increased scrutiny, the standards for identifying potential wilderness and other special-use lands are becoming increasingly liberal. Consequently, lands proposed for this type of virtual non-management continually migrate into areas where conflict with existing uses is unavoidable, putting undo pressure on federal managing agencies to justify their management decisions, and often causing them to spend large resources of time and money defending those decisions in court. The County's position on designation of special management areas is addressed in the Policy section of this plan.

It is of deep concern to the County that local land managers seem to have constantly increasing pressures which limit their ability to manage for the best good of the resource and the public. National scrutiny of every action, combined with continual litigation over every decision, creates a management nightmare to a large extent, and limits the ability of those who are closest to the land to make decisions which are best for the land. Sanpete County believes this is an unfortunate byproduct of increased special interest advocacy, rapidly growing use, and ballooning national interest in public land management issues, as well as a number of other factors. It is not a healthy atmosphere for managing our public lands. It is the County's hope that cooperative efforts such as this will assist the federal and state managers in their process of making management decisions, and in defending those decisions, with the result being a healthier environment for the resource as well as the user.

## **Section Five: Statement on Desired Future Management Condition**

Sanpete County seeks an ideal blend of purpose and vision, shared by the various federal and state land managers and County leaders, in an ongoing effort to protect and conserve our natural resources while working to accommodate growth, planning appropriately for an increased interface between public and private lands, and preserving important historic activities, while also working for increased, beneficial economic development.

This blend of vision will require certain steps to be taken by both Sanpete County and the public land managers. While the County's relationship with the managing agencies is basically good, there are elements of the process, on both sides of the equation, which need improvement.

Due to the interface between private and public lands in Sanpete County, land use policies are generally influenced by adjacent public land management policies. Consequently, the goals of the County regarding future land use are directly tied to state and federal, land management practices. The collaborative process from which this plan is created led to a number of very specific objectives regarding future land use planning.

### **Desired Future Management Setting**

Sanpete County has an excellent mix of rural, business, and recreational opportunities due to its unique features and the mix of private and public lands. The County would like to continue to support orderly agricultural, commercial, and industrial growth. Development should occur in an orderly manner, and in locations that enhance and preserve the socio-economic well-being of the residents while also contributing to the economic stability of the County. As part of this orderly growth, the County will work to identify and preserve appropriate agricultural areas, open spaces, connecting trail systems, and transportation infrastructure, as well as potential commercial and industrial areas. Sanpete County would like to help develop and sustain vibrant communities, productive farms, and valuable natural and cultural resources. The County desires to build upon its image as an appealing place to live, work, and visit, enhance and maintain farms and forests as working resources, and offer a range of economic opportunities, together with a viable travel industry, a healthy environment and effective public services for all citizens.

In order to preserve vital recreational opportunities, protect the rural lifestyle of its residents, preserve historic agricultural activities, and maintain and provide adequate services, the County will encourage growth to take place adjacent to existing communities and infrastructure as much as possible. All future planning, zoning, and growth must take into account the values important to the residents of Sanpete County as identified by the collaborative process. Due to the proximity of large areas of public lands, Sanpete County will work to enhance opportunities provided by the variety of public lands in the County, while also working to minimize the potential impacts from those same lands. In all future planning, the County will remain sensitive to private landowner rights, and will work to balance those rights with the public interest.

## **Basic Future Management Principles**

Federal lands should be managed in a way that protects and improves the health, safety, environment, and well being of the County's residents, and improves the performance of the economy without imposing unacceptable or unreasonable costs or impacts to local social structure. Sanpete County recognizes that the private sector and private markets are the best engines for economic growth; that regulatory policies should respect the role of state and local governments; and public lands policies and regulations should be effective, consistent, sensible, and understandable. Public land management practices should work to accomplish the following:

- Protect the integrity of environmental systems and natural resources;
- Preserve resource-based industries;
- Promote a robust, diverse and stable economy;
- Minimize conflicts between land uses;
- Protect public health, safety and welfare;
- Preserve culture, customs, heritage, and economic diversity; and
- Recognize and protect private rights and privileges relating to federal and state land resources including rights-of-way, grazing permits, water rights, special use permits, leases, contracts, and recreation use permits and licenses. For purposes of land use planning efforts and management decisions on federal lands in Sanpete County, federal and state agencies shall develop and maintain cooperating agency status for all major federal land management actions.

## **Cooperative Conservation**

Sanpete County supports federal land management that is based on cooperative conservation; meaning actions that relate to use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources, protection of the environment, or both, and that involve collaborative activity among federal, state, and local governments, private for profit and nonprofit institutions, other non-governmental entities and individuals. Federal land management must facilitate cooperative conservation by fully involving local governmental entities, including the Sanpete County Commission; taking appropriate account of, and respecting the interests of, persons with ownership or other legally recognized interests in land and other natural resources; properly accommodating local participation in federal decision making; and provide that the programs, projects, and activities are consistent with protecting public health, safety and welfare. Sanpete County will not support projects where the federal agency has excluded local government entities and landowners.

## **Sanpete County Public Land Management Priorities**

### **Custom and Heritage**

Major land uses on federal and state lands in Sanpete County include livestock grazing; harvesting of forest products; oil and gas exploration and production and associated development; mineral production; and recreation, which includes a broad spectrum from

primitive use to developed-area recreation, both motorized and non-motorized. It is largely this myriad of land uses that form the custom and culture of the citizens of the county. *The traditions of its citizens are based on continuing these land uses.* Maintaining Sanpete County's custom and heritage will also include preserving historic agricultural activities; maintaining a rural atmosphere; creating innovative economic development opportunities; and continuing strong support of the recreational opportunities available in adjacent public lands.

Other important components of federal and state lands which are part of Sanpete County's custom and heritage include the land's inherent value as open space available for use by the public at large; providing habitat for flora and fauna; and its role as a vessel for historical and cultural values associated with human use of the land throughout history.

Sanpete County will support the maintenance and enhancement of the custom and heritage of the county, especially as it relates to the surrounding public lands, and oppose any change in land use that does not evaluate, mitigate, and minimize impacts to custom and culture and the economic stability of the county. Federal land managers shall incorporate the social, cultural, and economic needs of the county when developing plans or projects and making recommendations that affect the custom and heritage of the county. Furthermore, the consideration process used to assess impacts to county custom and heritage shall be cited in federal and state land management plans and the steps taken to incorporate protection of the county's custom, culture and heritage into each plan and project will be identified.

Sanpete County will review federal and state land use and planning issues impacting the county's custom and heritage and make recommendations pertinent to the issue in question. Responsible use of federal lands is use that benefits the custom, culture, heritage and economic base of the county. Federal and state agencies shall notify Sanpete County of any actions, proposals, policies, or regulations which may impact the custom and heritage of Sanpete County; and Sanpete County will review and comment on federal or state actions which impact the custom and heritage of the County. Local governmental agencies (including county, towns, school districts, public health care providers, and other local agencies) have important and useful data and other information regarding economic and cultural trends that may not be available from state or federal data sources. It is Sanpete County's policy that federal and state land managers seek out and take into full account data and information available from local sources when developing plans and/or making recommendations.

Management of federal lands will recognize valid existing rights and interests in federal land. Livestock grazing rights established by permit and preference, mineral leases, mining claims, recreation permits and concessionaire contracts, and rights-of-way form the backbone of the County's communities. *It is important that these values, as defined by the County's custom, culture, and heritage, be recognized as a resource as important as any other resource relating to public lands. Rural communities, and the public lands surrounding them, are deeply interconnected and custom and heritage must be recognized as a vital resource to be protected, enhanced, and managed in the same manner as any other important natural resource.*

All public land management plans and policy making must take into account these community values, and must always reconcile any differences between this plan and federal or state management planning documents.

Sanpete County seeks a balance of objectives with all stakeholders while avoiding conflicting interests that serve no useful purpose. This balance can only be obtained when collaboration is involved at every level of planning and policymaking, and when all stakeholders have a role in developing management policy from the ground up.

Sanpete County's Desired Future Condition would include:

- An expansion of available agricultural lands and corresponding improvement of the agriculture, sheep, and cattle industry in the County, with the associated benefits to the base economy;
- An expansion of the tourism and recreation industry, in an effort to capitalize on the many recreational opportunities on the adjacent public lands within the County, with accompanying infrastructure;
- An increase in the development of the natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, so abundant in Sanpete County's public lands; expanding the natural resource industry, with an emphasis on sources of energy so vital to the nation's economy at this time.

## Section Six: Planning Guidelines and Policy Statements

The following *policy and position statements* represent the basis for the elements of Sanpete County's ***Desired Future Condition***, Section Five. The substance of these policy statements is the result of the comprehensive planning process, combined with the basic responsibility the Commissioners carry for the welfare of all the citizens of the County.

### **Multiple Use, Sustained Yield:**

Gifford Pinchot once said, *“Conservation is the foresighted utilization, preservation and/or renewal of forests, waters, lands, and minerals, for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time.”*

Sanpete County agrees with this statement. The County supports “Multiple use, sustained yield” management of federal and state lands, and will work with the various agencies to maintain an appropriate balance among users and uses. Maintaining multiple use management practices on federal and state lands is a high County priority. Maintaining adequate public access to federal and state lands and the accompanying natural resources is also a County priority.

The County acknowledges that the terms “multiple-use” and “sustained yield” may be interpreted many different ways. The County defines multiple-use as the consumptive and non-consumptive uses historically and traditionally allowed to occur on federal and state lands within the County. These uses include, but are not limited to, the following: livestock grazing; mining and mineral exploration and extraction; recreation, both primitive and non-primitive; wildlife habitat management; telecommunications facilities; water resource use, protection, and development; and timber/woodland products. For purposes of this Plan, the County defines sustained-yield as the management of resources in a manner that will support a consistent level of use on a year-to-year basis.

Sanpete County asserts that the above uses, as well as many others, are compatible in most management situations, and that true multiple-use management creates opportunities for the land to be used for many purposes simultaneously. The County does not define “multiple-use” as allowing all uses, in all areas, all the time. The County encourages responsible use of federal and state resources, and will support and participate in efforts designed to identify appropriate uses and locations for those uses.

### **Special Land Designations:**

Special land designations refer to tracts of land with distinctive and uniquely recognized use characteristics. As per this Land Use Plan, commonly used land designations in Sanpete County include, but are not limited to: national monuments, national forests, wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, wildlife refuges, national recreation areas, areas of critical environmental concern, National Parks, etc. As per this land Use plan, multiple use is not a special land designation, rather it is a concept and management practice for most lands in Sanpete County not assigned to a special land designation.

In general, the County opposes the designation of certain lands as wilderness, or for other single use purposes that permanently remove those lands from multiple use management. Such decisions should be carefully considered and based on good science and research and supported by public land management law. There should also be a clear and defensible demonstration that such designations and resulting management strategies are best for the long term well-being of the resource. Further, the County does not believe BLM has the authority to create a special management criteria based solely on wilderness characteristics. We believe that the authority governing the inventory and management of lands with wilderness characteristics was passed to BLM through section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and that section 603 has now expired by its own terms. And, while BLM *may* have authority to inventory its lands for various purposes, it still requires Congressional authorization to manage for wilderness.

Sanpete County is aware of proposals by different interest groups to implement special land designations in order to achieve specific goals from the various groups that propose the designation. Sanpete County is concerned that many of these proposals do not consider the economic impact to the County, communities, and agencies which special use designations will affect. In addition, the wilderness area designation proposals made by environmental groups have not included input from local government, communities, nor citizens of Sanpete County. These proposals have had no public process outside the members of the particular groups involved. The County strongly opposes blanket proposals which do not involve local input.

Sanpete County strongly urges collaboration between all stakeholders on all levels of public land policy-making. The County will take the lead by developing a Public Lands Council, and through that Council, engaging all possible stakeholders in an ongoing collaborative effort. These discussions should be solution oriented, and designed to focus on common interests and goals.

Sanpete County will only support special designations which have received substantial local input and support, and have sound scientifically-based research to support the designation. Sanpete County supports special land designations that coincide rather than conflict with multiple-use concepts, and compliment the custom and culture of Sanpete County. Special designations, such as wilderness areas, should never be created for the purpose of resolving land use conflicts. Rather, such designations should only be considered for areas where conflicts do not exist.

Similarly, Forest Service roadless areas are of concern to Sanpete County. This management designation prohibits new road construction and reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands and prohibits cutting, sale, and removal of timber in inventoried roadless areas. The County is deeply concerned about the interpretation and management of these areas of the forest, and the impact on traditional uses. Road-less designation and correlating management practices should only occur where there has been significant coordination with Sanpete County, and where good, scientific evidence exists to warrant such management. Further, no roads should be closed without consultation with the County.



**Water Resources:**

Water is the life-blood of Sanpete County. Water quality and availability will determine the level, type, and location of future growth. The County encourages and supports the efficient management and use of its water resources. The County also supports the development, adoption, and implementation of water collection, storage, and distribution, as well as the development of conservation plans by municipalities, the Water Conservancy District, and water companies. The County also encourages continued cooperation among all water managers and users as water management decisions are made.

Sanpete County supports management practices which protect vital watersheds. It also supports policies and practices which allow for the future expansion and development of water distribution and storage facilities. The County strongly asserts the right to seek and manipulate its water resources. The future of the County is completely dependent on available water, and any management practices which thwart the County's ability to access water resources are strongly opposed.

Of particular concern to the County are potential wild and scenic river designations. In suitability findings on sections where there are substantial water rights above or below the subject area, the potential conflict with federally reserved water rights is troubling. While federally reserved water rights are not asserted prior to actual designation, those stream areas found suitable are typically managed as if designated. This management approach has the potential of causing managers to behave as though a *de facto* federal water right exists for those areas, thus creating an impact on the future development and utilization of those water rights above or below the subject area. Sanpete County cannot support the creation of wild and scenic river segments in areas where the potential for disruption of use, development, and distribution of water resources is substantial.

The process to acquire, prove and protect water rights should remain vested in the State of Utah. Federal entities currently are required to follow state water rights law, which should continue. Proposals to increase federal authority over non-navigable waters of the state are not in the best interest of the State of Utah, Sanpete County and its cities or citizens.

In the near future, Sanpete County intends to begin construction on a small dam and water storage reservoir. Called the Narrows, this project will be located about two miles east of Fairview Canyon on Gooseberry Creek.

The Narrows has been discussed for nearly 80 years. When complete, it will provide a means of storing water that runs out of the mountains to our east for use as mid and late summer irrigation and culinary water. It is the County's position that this vital water source must be protected and wisely developed for the long term beneficial use of its residents. The Narrows Project, and the water it will provide, is essential to the County's future well-being.

**Transportation:**

Transportation is also vital to Sanpete County's ability to thrive. The County believes that proper access to public lands is essential, and is an inherent right of every citizen. It is the

County's position that no access should be closed except in situations of duplication, danger to the public, or serious threat to the resource, and then only with public input and in consultation with the County. The County further believes that no closure should occur on any of its RS 2477 rights of way assertions without express consent of the County Commissioners. The County supports the transportation plan as identified in the BLM's current Resource Management Plan.

Sanpete County also supports general public access through private lands as historically provided and allowed. The County will continue to work with individual land owners as necessary to maintain these traditional thoroughfares while also protecting private rights.

Addressing other transportation needs is also a priority with the County. Highway 89, while an important Heritage Corridor and of great value to the County in other ways, is unsuitable as a shipping and transportation route for new commercial interests. Existing coal truck traffic already stretches the limited vehicle capacity on some areas of the highway, and any future oil or gas exploration and extraction would require significant improvement of existing roads on both private and public lands. It is the County's position that new and expanded transportation systems, including but not limited to a new railway spur, must be developed to accommodate growth and expansion in the future.

**Public Land Consolidation:**

Sanpete County supports any effort to sell, exchange, or consolidate state and federal lands within the County if doing so improves manageability of these lands, benefits County residents, supports the County economic base, or addresses the problem with checkerboard ownership. Specifically, the County will work to identify and consolidate areas and resources that promote economic growth, allow additional or improved resource development, protect watersheds, reduce access problems, and/or improve management. The County, through the County Commission, will actively participate in all exchange or consolidation discussions.

Sanpete County supports any increase in private land holdings in the County, and cannot support any net loss of private land for any purposes. The County believes that it is appropriate to transfer from federal ownership, through sale or exchange, certain lands to private ownership if such a transaction will benefit the County's economic base. If private to public land transactions occur, the County will work with the federal agencies to assure that an equivalent acreage and value of public lands are made available for transfer to private ownership.

**Partnerships:**

It is the County's policy to partner with public land management agencies in planning and management processes. The County's participation and responsibilities will be guaranteed by, and contingent upon, a formal cooperative agreement. Any formal County cooperative agreements shall be contingent upon County involvement at the earliest stage of the proposed process. Sanpete County would like to see increased coordination among Sanpete County, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, the Utah Department of Natural Resources, and other land management agencies. It is the County's belief that all land use decisions must

be based on sound principles of consensus building and consideration to local interests and local custom, history, and culture.

**Local Economic Impact:**

The position of the County is to support only those public land plans and decisions that result in a sustainable net benefit to the County's local economy. Federal land management planning should include provisions for a quantitative estimate of the economic effects of all proposed management decisions. These estimates should be generated in consultation with the County. Further, it is the policy of Sanpete County that all decisions regarding land use management must take into account the history, culture, and customs of the County. The custom and culture of Sanpete County is defined by the activities and values that residents of the County, in the past, present, and future, depend upon for well-being and subsistence. Custom and culture are defined as the activities and resources which make Sanpete County unique. The County cannot support management decisions that will adversely impact the custom and culture of Sanpete County.

Sanpete County supports efforts to maintain or improve the overall economic base of the county through the judicious use and enjoyment of federal and state lands in the county. It is Sanpete County's policy that economic diversity and long-term stability are beneficial to the welfare of county residents. Sanpete County will not support federal and state agencies on land management decisions when economics is not carefully considered in the decision. In such cases, Sanpete County may be forced to appeal or seek other relief.

Any proposed change in land use must evaluate, mitigate, and minimize impacts to custom and culture and the economic stability of the county. The prioritizing of any one multiple use should only occur after the impacts to other multiple uses are fully quantified and mitigated. Any proposal to close the federal lands to a multiple use must be approved by Sanpete County after a public hearing.

**Relative Impacts:**

The position of the County is that the weight given to public comment and opinion should be directly proportional to the geographic and economic impact of the decision. The County's policy is to provide clear and timely comments, and encourage its residents to do the same.

**Consistency:**

The County has limited administrative resources available to dedicate to the public lands planning and management processes. Nevertheless, the County will make every effort to participate in such efforts, and it is the County's preference that the managing agencies coordinate with the County at the earliest level on all planning, problem resolution, and data sharing. The County's limited resources should not create a disadvantage in its ability to influence public land management decisions. Every effort must be made by federal land managers to obtain and evaluate Sanpete County's input on all pending management decisions.

**Wildlife Management:**

Of all the management issues on public lands, wildlife management has the potential to impact the County in the most substantial manner. Wildlife management can not only impact public land use and access, but can also affect private land uses, often leading to restrictions and even takings.

Sanpete County's policy on wildlife management is influenced by three factors. First, the influence of the Endangered Species Act; second, loss of habitat due to numerous factors; and third, wildlife populations maintained at numbers above what has been determined to be healthy for the species as well as for the habitat.

Sanpete County will be an active participant in the recovery of any threatened or endangered species, provided that it is accomplished through improvement of habitat, good, accurate science, especially in counting methods, and involves no loss of private lands. With a relatively small part of its land base privately owned, Sanpete County cannot afford a loss of private lands for habitat, and cannot support any effort that does not involve improvement of available public lands rather than use of private lands.

The County also believes that much more should be done to improve wildlife habitat, and that the agencies should use every tool available to improve existing grasslands, increase grassland acres, protect watersheds, and improve other habitat areas on public lands.

It is Sanpete County's policy that federal and state agencies must hold wildlife populations to scientifically determined and practical levels, and that these populations must not damage agricultural activities and must be beneficial to the local economy.

It is also Sanpete County's policy that no transplanting of wildlife into or out of the County should occur without consultation with the County and must have a clearly definable need with supporting science and field research.

**Sage Grouse:**

Sanpete County is concerned about the future management strategy of the Sage Grouse, which is an indicator species. Its status greatly impacts the ability of local residents to utilize natural resources on our public lands. We are very concerned that the ruling by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in March of 2010 has caused the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to initiate this planning process, which we believe to be premature and politically motivated by conflict oriented activists.

In a recent Six County Natural Resource Committee meeting, the SCAOG invited a Sage Grouse Conservation Specialist from Utah State University Extension (USU) to educate regional officials about the Sage Grouse, its habitat and management requirements for sustained and increased population growth. We were impressed by the many years of extensive research and data collection on the Sage Grouse that USU has compiled.

From this training, we gained a greater appreciation for the factual realization that a Sage Grouse population flourishes when the following are managed properly: 1) Sage Brush – It is evident and we understand that new growth on sagebrush is their primary food source and is

critical to a thriving Sage Grouse population. Research data has demonstrated that vegetation management practices that stimulate new growth or re-growth of sage brush are responsible, in part, for dramatic increase in grouse population. We request that this condition be attained through grazing, where possible, and with other mechanical or chemical methods as alternatives for old growth sagebrush. 2) Predator Control - Management of predators is a must in maintaining a healthy Sage Grouse population. We request that a more aggressive predator control program be initiated in Sage Grouse Populated areas. 3) "One Size Fits All" – Finally, but perhaps most importantly, is we believe that each Sage Grouse Lek and associated area of habitat must be managed individually for their unique needs and deficiencies. We believe that an across the board approach to Sage Grouse management will compromise the overall goals and objectives of the Planning Strategy and have a significant negative impact on multiple land uses.

Sanpete County is greatly concerned about the general health of Sage Grouse population in that it has critical impacts in obtaining utilization of natural resources including grazing, mining, oil extraction, timber cutting, recreation, and etc., which is vitally important to our County and Region. We ask that the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy mandate an "active" rather than "passive" management approach to vegetation and predators, which includes involvement of local officials.

Utah developed an effective, collaborative statewide management plan in 2009 that needs to be given a chance to succeed. Also, due consideration must be given to what has been learned and accomplished by the collaborative local working groups.

### **Recreation:**

Activities which traditionally define recreation and tourism in Sanpete County include but are not limited to: Off-road vehicle use, big game hunting, trapping, fishing, mountain biking, hiking, camping, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, river rafting, kayaking, and etc. A majority of these opportunities are found on public lands. Visitors to these areas directly impact the County by drawing on County-provided infrastructure such as, law enforcement, emergency-medical, and waste disposal services. Sanpete County outfitters, store owners, restaurants, hotels and motels, and many more interests depend on seasonal recreation and tourism for their livelihoods.

It is Sanpete County's position that federal and state managers should do everything possible to enhance recreational opportunities on public lands, and that such management should be compatible with the principles of multiple-use, sustained yield. Any management decisions which restrict recreational activities or access to recreation areas must be done in consultation with the County and must be based on best scientific information.

### **Dispersed Camping:**

Sanpete County believes it is in the best interest of the forest, forest users (specifically the citizens of Sanpete County) to retain a diverse and adequate distribution of dispersed camp sites. An abundance of sites reduces the impact on any one individual site, mitigates the need for hardened and developed sites, limits the need for maintenance, reduces budget

requirements and provides users with what they want. Sanpete County desires that dispersed camping be encouraged, maintained and even expanded where sensible on the forest.

**Custom and Heritage:**

The residents of Sanpete County have traditionally and will likely continue to earn their livelihoods from activities associated with Sanpete County's custom and heritage. Sanpete County's economy is, and will continue to be dependent upon these activities. Since the County is directly dependent upon its natural resources, management decisions affecting public land directly impacts and potentially changes Sanpete County's custom and heritage. Therefore, a critical tie exists between the use of private, federal, and state natural resources and the economic stability of Sanpete County. It is imperative that the County, stakeholders, and informed representatives review natural resource issues as they occur, to assure public land management decisions do not negatively impact Sanpete County's custom and heritage. During the public process to update this plan, residents consistently expressed strong desire to empower the County to promote sustainability of its custom and heritage.

Sanpete County will oppose any change in land use that does not evaluate, mitigate, and minimize impacts to custom and heritage and the economic stability of the County. Federal and state agencies shall consider the social, cultural, and economic needs of the County when developing plans and making recommendations that affect the custom and heritage of the County. Sanpete County recommends federal and state agencies enhance opportunities for responsible use of public lands, which benefit the custom and heritage and economic base of the County. Federal and state agencies shall notify the County of any actions or regulations which may impact the custom and heritage of Sanpete County.

**Vegetation:**

Sanpete County supports efforts to conduct plant surveys to validate existing data and add new plant inventory data. Recovery planning efforts for sensitive, threatened, and endangered plant species shall evaluate, mitigate, and support the county's custom and culture and economic viability. Sanpete County supports locally driven efforts to identify desired plant communities that do not compromise the custom and culture and the economy of the county.

**Visual:**

Sanpete County recognizes that different levels of scenic values on federal lands in the county require different levels of management. While management of an area with high scenic value might be focused on preserving the existing character of the landscape, management of an area with little scenic value might allow for major modifications to the landscape. Federal land management agencies shall conduct assessments of visual impacts in determining how an area should be managed, with the goal of protecting the visual resource while not burdening authorized land uses and maintaining economic stability.

Federal land management should provide for a wide array of visual resource management objectives on federal lands in the county, including: preserving the existing character of the landscape with very low levels of change; retaining the existing character of the landscape; partial retention of the existing character of the landscape, with moderate levels of change; and major modification of the existing character of the landscape, with high levels of change

acceptable. It is Sanpete County's policy that in considering visual resource management objectives, federal and state land management agencies shall recognize the importance of communications sites to the security, health and welfare of Sanpete County's residents.

**Weed and Pest:**

Federal and state land management agencies shall participate in cooperative efforts with federal, state, county and private land managers to enhance cooperative weed management efforts in Sanpete County. Early detection and control of noxious weed and insect infestations are essential to the public health, welfare and economy of the citizens of Sanpete County. Mosquito control on federal and state lands in the county should be permitted in order to reduce the risk of transmission of West Nile Virus and other diseases that pose a threat to the health of humans, livestock and wildlife.

**Wildland Fire:**

Fire management strategies shall consider firefighter and public safety and protects human life, property and communities, as well as watersheds, wildlife and its habitat, and recreational resources. Agencies shall cooperate with the county, firefighter organizations, residents, and developers where federal and state lands are near or within Home Ignition Zones to reduce risk, consistent with Firewise (NFPA) principles, through forestry practices and fire management strategies. There shall be a high level of cooperation between agencies and firefighter organizations in the county.

Federal agencies will incorporate local fire department plans and policies into fire suppression and control plans. Federal and state agencies shall organize and support educational efforts in communities aimed at informing citizens, both residents and visitors, concerning wildland fire, forest management, Firewise (NFPA) principles, and Home Ignition Zone issues.

**Forestry:**

The private use of timber products from federal and state lands in Sanpete County for fuel, lumber, posts and poles, Christmas trees, etc., shall be continued as an allowable use. A sustainable wood products industry on federal and state lands in the county is an important aspect of economic diversity. Fire, timber harvesting, and treatment programs are managed in a way to promote forest health, reduce disease and insect infestation and prevent waste of forest products while providing opportunities for local businesses. Conservation forestry conclusions and proposals for action should be consistent with the following:

- (1) avoid management scenarios that result in a static forest condition;
- (2) not restrict management actions to a particular size or age of wood material;
- (3) concentrate activities on current condition as compared to desired condition;
- (4) contain an aggressive time table for management implementation;
- (5) use a systemic, diagnostic approach to anticipate forest health problem;
- (6) work with and not against nature;
- (7) accurately account for forest health costs through the use of long term risk analysis;
- (8) prepare the forest for inevitable periods of drought and encourages research into climate/forest health relationships and the aforementioned forest management scenarios,

- (9) protecting, consistent with Firewise (NFPA) principles, the Home Ignition Zone(s) associated with private properties in close proximity with federal and state lands..

**Lands and Realty:**

Federal land management agencies shall make suitable lands available for disposal under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act and special uses authorizations in resource management plans and upon request by an appropriate entity in accordance with the acts. Federal lands shall be available for disposal when such disposal meets the important public objective of community expansion or economic development, or when the disposal would serve the public interest. The design and development of all federal land disposals, including land adjustments and exchanges, shall be carried out to the benefit of the citizens of Sanpete County in an expeditious manner. Federal and state land management agencies shall consider local government needs for local resources such as rock, gravel, road base, etc.

There shall be no net loss of private lands in Sanpete County. Federal land management agencies shall not acquire any private lands or rights in private lands in Sanpete County without first ensuring: that at a minimum, parity in land ownership is maintained; and that private property interests are protected and enhanced. Net loss shall be measured in acreage and fair market value. Federally managed lands that are difficult to manage or which lie in isolated tracts shall be targeted for disposal.

Sanpete County shall be notified of, consulted with, and otherwise involved in all federal and state land adjustments in Sanpete County. Sanpete County's concurrence shall be required prior to such adjustments.

**Law Enforcement:**

Sanpete County and the State of Utah have primary jurisdiction for law enforcement throughout Sanpete County. All federal law enforcement activities will be fully coordinated with the Sanpete County Sheriff's Office.

Sanpete County will maximize the use of a cooperative law enforcement program to improve protection of persons and their property when visiting federal and state lands, and to utilize the opportunity to cooperate with land management agencies in carrying out their specific responsibilities related to the land management.

It is Sanpete County's policy to provide protection to the public and their property through cooperation with other law enforcement agencies. Sanpete County will maximize the use of a cooperative law enforcement program, to improve protection of persons and their property when visiting federal and state lands, and to utilize the opportunity to cooperate with land management agencies in carrying out their specific responsibilities related to the land management. Federal and state land management agencies will make available sites for the strategic location of communications towers to aid in law enforcement activities.

**Livestock Grazing:**

Livestock grazing on federal and state lands in the county shall continue, at levels consistent with local customs and heritage and proper stewardship of the resource. The continued



viability of livestock operations and the livestock industry should be supported on the federal and state lands within the county by management of land and forage resources, by the proper optimization of animal unit months (AUMs) for livestock, in accordance with supportable science and the multiple use provisions of federal and state law.

Federal land management agencies will not permit the relinquishment, transfer or retirement of livestock grazing AUMs in favor of conservation, wildlife or other uses besides livestock grazing.

Federal land management agencies will promote public respect for private structures (corrals, fences, water development, etc.) on federal land in an effort to reduce vandalism, educate land users, and promote the multiple-use concept.

AUMs should not be placed in a suspended use category unless there is a rational and scientific determination that the condition of the rangeland allotment or district in question will not sustain the animal unit months proposed to be placed in suspended use. Any grazing AUMs that are placed in a suspended use category must be returned to active use when range conditions improve. State of the art monitoring data should be the basis for grazing management decisions on BLM and Forest Service grazing allotments.

#### **Minerals:**

Sanpete County supports future mineral exploration, extraction and development that is conducted in an environmentally responsible manner (taking into consideration land, air, and water quality and quantity, as well as other resource values) and utilizing public involvement.

Sanpete County encourages extraction industry companies to conduct science based research applicable to mineral and mining industry expansion and new development. Federal and state land managers should provide consideration to the needs of public and private enterprises relative to gravel, rock for stabilization projects, and other material resources. New gravel pit excavation possibilities should be available on federal and state lands dispersed throughout the county, as well as opportunities for year-round gravel crushing and screening operations in areas where the materials are needed and where it is economically feasible to extract them.

Federal and state agencies shall consider the potential economic impact of any proposed land management changes or natural-resource related plans to the minerals industry, and on the residents of the county, through in-depth economic impact descriptions in planning documents. Federal lands shown to have reasonable mineral potential should be open to oil and gas leasing with stipulations and conditions that will protect the lands against undue and unnecessary degradation to other significant resource values. This should include reasonable and effective mitigation and reclamation measures and bonding for such where necessary.

Under current economic conditions and considering the energy needs of the United States at this time, failure to wisely utilize and make available our oil, gas, coal, oil shale, geothermal, wind, solar, and other natural resources which are abundantly available on our public lands is bad policy. Sanpete County cannot support closing public lands to leasing of appropriate

lands, and access to those lands, unless there is substantial, scientifically verifiable evidence that doing so is necessary for the particular area and resource. Federal and state agencies shall analyze and consider all fiscal and economic impacts to the minerals industry, the county and other local governments, and to the residents of the county from any proposed land management changes or natural-resource related plans. Planning shall consider up-to-date mineral potential reports

**Transmission Line and Utility Corridors:**

Sanpete County supports new transmission lines and utilities within the county for the beneficial use of its residences and for future growth. All new transmission lines and utility corridors transecting Sanpete County shall align with existing utilities and affect the least number of residences, agricultural operations, scenic areas, and future Resource Development Areas referred to in this management plan. Including: The Huntington-Eccles Scenic Byway, the Narrows dam area, and water collection and containment areas located within the county.

The preferred location for transmission lines entering the county from the north is the west side of the Indianola Valley.

**Information Quality:**

Federal land managers shall take into account the best available unbiased science in planning efforts by:

- Documenting how high quality data was considered in the planning process within the context of the issues being considered;
- Evaluating and disclosing substantial uncertainties in the science utilized;
- Evaluating and disclosing substantial risks associated with plan components based on that science; and
- Documenting that the science was appropriately interpreted and applied.

**Consultation, Coordination and Cooperation:**

It is Sanpete County's policy that federal land management agencies shall:

- Establish effective government-to-government relationships with Sanpete County.
- Identify a county relations liaison to serve as the first point of contact with Sanpete County Commission and as the person who will generally initiate agency contact with the County.
- Implement federal land management programs and activities consistent with and respecting the County's rights and fulfilling the federal government's legally mandated coordination responsibility with the county.
- Manage federal lands and resources in coordination with the County.
- Work to reduce or remove legal or administrative program impediments that inhibit the agency's and the County's capacity to work directly and effectively with each other.
- Consult with the County on matters that may affect the public's rights and interests.
- Promptly notify Sanpete County at the earliest opportunity of proposed policy, plans, projects or actions that may affect the public's rights or interests in order to provide

Sanpete County an opportunity for meaningful dialogue on potential implications and effects.

- Develop, in consultation and collaboration with Sanpete County, agreements and statements of relationships with the county that help clarify the County's rights and interests and set forth procedures and protocols for consultation, including the points of contact. Involve designated County representatives, including staff, consultants and technical representatives, in the consultation process, including development of proposed policies, plans, projects, or actions, where appropriate.
- Involve the County early in planning process in the preparation of in-depth socio-economic information.
- Fully consider recommendations by Sanpete County to address county concerns on proposed decisions.
- Inform Sanpete County how its information and recommendations were considered in public land management decisions, including explanations particularly in the event that County input was not adopted or incorporated.
- Document the process and actions taken to consult with Sanpete County, the results of those actions, and how the public land manager's final decision was communicated to the County. This consultation review and monitoring process shall involve Sanpete County officials and representatives.
- Participate in current and future "cooperator working groups," as needed, which would focus on implementation of planning decisions on public lands.
- Conduct annual planning meetings for specific projects that include participation by livestock permittees, affected adjacent landowners, and other multiple use interests in affected areas, as well as Sanpete County representatives.

## Section Seven: County Goals and Objectives

### Coordination

#### **Goals:**

Establish a Sanpete County Public Lands Council.

#### **Purposes:**

To expand the capacity of the County Commissioners to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to all public land management issues in the best interest of the County.

To establish ongoing partnerships with all agencies that do business on public lands within Sanpete County, as well as with a representative section of stakeholders.

#### **Objectives:**

Create a Public Lands Council with 8-15 members, including the County Commissioners, and drawing from the following stakeholder groups:

County Commissioners	City/County Growth
Managing Agencies	Power and Transportation
Delegation Representatives	Water Resources
Mining/Gravel	Mineral Resources
Wildlife	Wildlife
Cattle and Grazing	State of Utah
Recreation	Outdoor Industry
Hiking/Biking	Tourism
OHV	Wilderness Groups
Economic Development	Mayor's Association
State Legislature	SITLA
Cultural Resources	

Create formal Memorandums of Understanding with all agencies that do business on public lands within the County.

Meet at least quarterly in a publicly advertised meeting. Address imminent public land issues; receive reports from all managing agency partners.

Assist the County Commission in all appropriate policy formulation, responses to management issues, and continued County land planning

Update and amend this document as necessary to reflect current needs and County policy changes

### Citizen Participation

#### **Goals:**

Involve Sanpete County residents in an ongoing effort to acquaint them with public land issues and to solicit their input on matters pertaining to their particular interests.

Continually review this County Resource Management Plan which will occasionally be updated to reflect current needs and philosophies based on citizen input and coordination with all partners.

**Purposes:**

To provide the citizens of the County with pertinent planning data, in an understandable form, in order to facilitate intelligent land use decision making and policy formulation.

To provide convenient and frequent opportunity for citizens to voice their ideas and concerns throughout the planning process.

To create an opportunity for interaction between the residents of Sanpete County and all public land management partners and stakeholders giving residents a voice in County public land management policy development.

To equip the County to base its land use decisions on sound principles of consensus building and consideration to local interests and control.

**Objectives:**

Advertise all Public Land Council meetings; invite the public to attend and provide opportunities for input when appropriate

Through the Public Lands Council, actively seek citizen and stakeholder input on important County public land issues

**Social and Economic Preservation and Development**

**Goals:**

Preserve and develop Sanpete County's customs and cultures.

Expand Sanpete County's current economic base.

**Purposes:**

To stop or reverse the erosion of Sanpete County's economic base due to increased restrictions and limitations on the use of public lands in Sanpete County.

To capitalize more efficiently on the recreational opportunities, natural resources, and other assets in surrounding public lands

**Objectives:**

Encourage and support existing economic endeavors as well as encourage development of new ones.

Promote solid growth of historical economic pursuits in Sanpete County, especially those associated with recreation, hunting, fishing, ranching, farming, timbering, mining, and other multiple-use activities on public and private lands.

Work with federal and state regulatory agencies to reduce costs in both time and material in complying with regulations and permitting processes, including recreational permitting.

## **Agricultural Lands**

### **Goal:**

To protect and preserve agriculturally productive land both public and private for continued agricultural purposes.

### **Purpose:**

Prevent undo intrusion onto historic agricultural lands by development and growth.

Maintain a strong agricultural base in the County, as an essential part of Sanpete County's custom and heritage.

### **Objectives:**

Take a proactive role in sustaining or expanding agricultural uses on public and private lands.

Encourage, and promote the continuation of irrigated land uses.

Provide economic incentives to retain production and harvest of agricultural products.

Working with federal and state land managers, open new lands to agricultural activities through transference, trade, or sale of public lands

## **Natural Resources**

### **Goal:**

Facilitate prudent development, use, and conservation of natural and renewable resources, in such a way as to ensure their continued availability for future generations.

### **Objectives:**

Facilitate development of natural resources such as coal, oil, natural gas, and other minerals using common sense and good stewardship.

Identify suitable public land areas for the development of renewable energy such as solar and wind power.

Provide a proactive approach to land use policy and implementation decisions at the local level in order to create sustainable yields of our natural resources.

Work with federal and state managers to expedite the permitting process, allowing potential developers more streamlined access to available resources

### **Scenic Areas and Historic Sites**

**Goal:**

Preserve, protect, and enhance scenic areas, historic sites, and cultural sites in Sanpete County.

**Objectives:**

Identify and delineate areas which a majority of Sanpete County residents believe have outstanding qualities.

Identify, preserve, restore, and protect significant historical and cultural sites, buildings, and locations.

### **Wildlife**

**Goal:**

Develop and maintain healthy wildlife populations on public lands within Sanpete County.

**Purpose:**

The management of wildlife is dependent upon the protection of water and the proper maintenance of public lands.

Healthy wildlife populations are critical to the recreational uses of public lands, and are integral to the County's vision of its custom and heritage.

**Objectives:**

Provide incentives to landowners providing critical wildlife winter habitat.

All development within rural areas shall take wildlife into consideration and all proposed subdivision plats shall be evaluated for their effect on wildlife and neighboring agricultural and adjacent uses.

Agencies will hold wildlife populations to objective levels that would not damage agriculture. Work to assure that objective wildlife levels benefit the local economy as well as fit the overall principles of multiple-use.

### **Recreation**

**Goals:**

Support and create quality recreational opportunities for county residents and visitors.

Provide an opportunity to benefit more fully from the unique rural characteristics of Sanpete County's communities, their custom and culture.

Create an opportunity to more appropriately benefit from the many recreational opportunities in Sanpete County's public lands.

**Objectives:**

Upgrade or expand picnic and camping areas.

Improve access to public lands and recreation sites with no net loss of access as recognized in the County's Comprehensive Planning Process as identified by participating stakeholders.

Encourage development of increased opportunities for year round recreation.

**Wildland/Urban Interface**

**Goal:**

Reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire in the wildland-urban interface.

**Purpose:**

Sanpete County is faced with an ever-increasing problem with unincorporated communities within the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI). The potential for catastrophic fire is increasing, with little progress made towards addressing this potentially devastating problem.

**Objectives:**

Major developments and subdivisions in the wildland-urban interface shall provide forest stewardship, fuels mitigation plans, and property maintenance covenants that incorporate the principles of defensible and survivable space. For development in the wildland-urban interface, the use of Firewise landscaping and construction design and materials is encouraged.

When considering development projects in or near the wildland-urban interface, the County encourages property owners and developers to consult with forest managers, land-management agencies, the WUI Officer, and the County Fire Warden in developing fire mitigation plans to ensure compatibility.

Limit, through the rezoning process, the increase in housing density outside fire districts and in areas where roadways are substandard. Include the appropriate fire district and municipal fire agencies in the review of development proposals and assist the fire districts and municipal fire agencies in communicating their concerns to developers.

Consider the inclusion of fire-service standards or design requirements in its development regulations.

Regularly update the County's wildfire management plan.

Encourage fire sprinklers in single family residences in a wildland interface areas.



## Section Eight: Monitoring

**Desired Future Management Condition:** Progress toward the Desired Resource Management setting will be measured by working towards, and ultimately achieving, the Goals and Objectives as set forth in this County Resource Management Plan. Quarterly progress reports will be made to the County Commission by the Public Lands Council regarding progress towards the Desired Management Setting and accomplishment of the Goals and Objectives. At these updates, or at any other time determined necessary by the Council, the Public Lands Council may recommend changes to the Plan's desired management setting, associated policies and positions, as well as the specific goals and objectives.

**Partnerships:** Progress regarding partnerships, as outlined in the previous sections, will be monitored by the Public Lands Committee through regular meetings with all partners who have committed to a long-term collaborative process and who have signed the MOU. The County Commission shall have a representative on the Public Lands Committee. Concerns regarding partnership issues shall be addressed by the Public Lands Committee in their regular collaborative meetings with all partners.

**Planning Timelines:** A County appointed liaison, along with the Public Lands Committee, will monitor various federal planning efforts on a continual basis, and report to the County Commission regarding all response timelines, issues of concern, and federal management policy changes which could affect County policy and practice.

**Local Social and Economic Impacts:** Of particular concern are management changes which could affect the economic well-being of the County residents. Since much of the County's employment is linked directly to the adjacent public lands, any policy changes or management decisions which may impact the County's custom and culture, or affect its overall economic well-being, must be addressed immediately. The Public Lands Council will monitor any such activities through their normal partnership meetings and report any concerns to the County Commission. The Public Lands Council will assist the County Commission in appropriately addressing potential social and economic impacts.

**Goals and Objectives:** Progress in regards to the Goals and Objectives set forth in this document should be reviewed by the Public Lands Committee each time they meet. Steps toward achieving each of the Goals and Objectives should be identified by the County Commission, in conjunction with the Public Lands Committee, and assignments made for achieving those identified Goals and Objectives.

## Section Nine: Resource Specific Goals

### Recreation: Tourism and Recreation

Consistent with this Resource Management Plan, Sanpete County has established specific goals which will enhance recreational opportunities and remain compatible with its custom and culture. Specifically, the following objectives have been identified as being critical to Sanpete County's Desired Future Management Condition:

Objective One: The headwaters area of Fairview Canyon, adjacent to Utah Scenic Byway 31, has become a popular snowboarding destination in winter months. No defined area has been established, and parking and staging for drop off and pick up is problematic. This creates significant safety hazards to both pedestrians and vehicle travel. The County desires to establish a defined use area as well as designated off-highway drop off and pick up points.

Objective Two: Sanpete County has long been known for its world class snowmobiling on the Manti-LaSal Forest. Significant trailhead infrastructure exists off Highway 31; however other popular access roads do not have developed trailheads to properly support the use. The County desires to develop suitable trailhead parking areas for snowmobile users and their rigs in Ephraim Canyon, Manti Canyon and 12 Mile Canyon.

Objective Three: Horses have been an integral part of Sanpete County's agricultural heritage and today play an important part in the county's recreational and pleasure activities. No equestrian-specific facilities exist on forest lands for the recreational user. The County desires an equestrian-compatible campground/trailhead be established on the forest.

Objective Four: Towne Reservoir in 12 Mile Canyon has long been a popular recreation and fishing location. The forest has identified concerns with the dam which threatens the reservoir's existence. Sanpete County desires to see the issue addressed in a manner which will allow the reservoir to remain. Draining the reservoir as a solution to a lack of integrity in the dam is not an acceptable solution. Funding should be sought to repair the dam, thus allowing the continued use of this popular recreational site.

Objective Five: Snow Lake, located by Skyline Drive, is a popular fishing location. The east dugway allows access to the lake but is not passable for trucks to stock the lake with fish. Sanpete County desires that the dugway be adequately repaired and made passable not only for public access, but also for safe stocking of the lake with fish.

These goals are not all-inclusive, but rather represent those that have current focus and priority. As new or additional goals are identified they will be added and, as with all goals, specific plans must be developed in cooperation with the land management agencies to establish action and implementation.

**Transportation:** The county-wide transportation plan will identify the county's desired public transportation system. This plan will incorporate several specific transportation goals listed

below, and reflects the values identified in the County's Comprehensive Land Use Planning process.

Objective One: Access to public lands is necessary to provide public land benefits to the citizens of Sanpete County and the nation. Traditional access has been restricted or closed to both BLM and Forest lands in the county. There are several locations where this has occurred and re-establishment of access, through collaboration with the agencies and the stakeholders, is the county's desire. These locations are:

- BLM lands north and east of Fountain Green
- BLM lands east of Yuba Reservoir
- Forest Service lands east of Mt. Pleasant in the Aspen Hills area
- BLM and State of Utah lands north of Mayfield and south of Nine Mile

Objective Two: Skyline Drive has been shown on highway maps, travel plans, recreational brochures, and forest information as a scenic route and attracts many tourists every year. Sanpete County believes it should be improved and maintained to accommodate standard clearance passenger type vehicles in a manner similar to the recent improvements to the first several miles of the road south of Utah Highway 31.

Objective Three: The Ephraim Canyon road has been improved to accommodate most vehicles to Skyline Drive. Due to road conditions, access from Skyline Drive to the north, south or east is limited to high clearance type vehicles. Sanpete County supports the improvement of Skyline Drive to the Orangeville road, and the Orangeville road to Joe's Valley Reservoir, in a manner similar to the Ephraim Canyon Road.

Objective Four: Wagon Road Ridge was used by early settlers before the Manti-LaSal Forest was established and set aside by Congress. The County continues to assert its RS2477 rights to this road, and believes that proposals to re-link this road with the road on Elkhorn Flat may have merit. The County would like to pursue the potential linking of these two historic roads.

**Biomass Production:** Biomass production and utilization on federal lands can have great economic effects on the citizens of Sanpete County and great ecological effect on the natural resources utilized by the citizens of Sanpete County. Biomass can be defined as renewable energy sources derived from biological material such as plant matter (trees, brush, and grasses). A large amount of Biomass is produced on the forest lands in Sanpete County. The main concern is the Pinion/Juniper (PJ) forests. Pinyon-Juniper (PJ) woodlands are prevalent in central Utah. Many years of fire suppression policies have led to extremely dense woodlands. As a consequence, biodiversity and water retention have been reduced while prevalence of cheat grass understory has been increased. This contributes to exceedingly hot wild fires that sterilize the soil and leads to soil erosion, air quality concerns and unproductive lands. Pinyon-Juniper wood has little economic value due to the small irregular shape of the main trunk. These trees have minimal use as fence posts and fire wood. However, PJ wood is one of the best sources of energy as stated in "Pinyon-Juniper Biomass Utilization Study For Lincoln County, Nevada 2004".

“The amount of energy that is produced per unit mass depends on the type and water content of the particular biomass material being converted. Dried pinyon and juniper wood can produce more BTUs per pound than most western tree species (between 274,000 and 289,000 BTU/cubic foot) (Barger and Folliott, 1972).”

Finding viable uses of biomass such as PJ forest wood and other forest products to benefit the local communities energy needs while increasing bio-diversity and water retention must be a high priority. Sanpete County would like to participate in a collaborative effort, involving the federal agencies and various stakeholder groups, to identify a process to better utilize the biomass resources in the County, thus benefitting the County’s economic base while also increasing the health of the federally managed lands.

**Water Resources:** Sanpete County has long asserted the need for the development of water in the Narrows area as essential to the County’s future well-being. While there are many factors affecting the ultimate beneficial development of these water resources, it is the County’s position that this vital water source must be fairly adjudicated and wisely developed for the long term beneficial use of Sanpete County residents.

**Wildland/Urban Interface:** Due to the high number of major developments and subdivisions in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) within Sanpete County, it is necessary to establish a plan of safety for all current and future developments. In order to gain control of the current situation, which is critical, and in order to prevent further expansion of the problem, the County will work with Sanpete County Planning and Zoning, as well as incorporated and unincorporated communities within the County to establish and introduce standards for property owners within the WUI. Those standards will be specifically designed to reduce the threat of catastrophic fire, and should include the following policies:

1. Major developments and subdivisions in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) shall provide forest stewardship, fuels mitigation plans, and property maintenance covenants that incorporate the principles of defensible and survivable space along with reduced potential for home ignition. These principles are described in scientific information available from multiple sources, including Firewise (NFPA).
2. When considering development projects in or near the Wildland- Urban Interface (WUI), the County encourages property owners and developers to consult with forest managers, land-management agencies, the WUI Officer, the County Fire Warden, and resources such as Firewise (NFPA) in developing fire mitigation plans to ensure compatibility.
3. Include the appropriate fire district and municipal fire agencies in the review of development proposals and assist the fire districts and municipal fire agencies in communicating their concerns to developers.
4. Limit the increase in housing density through the rezoning process; (a) outside fire districts, (b) in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas, and (c) in areas where roadways are substandard.

5. Consider the inclusion of fire-service standards or design requirements in the Sanpete County development regulations.
6. For development in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), the use of Firewise (NFPA), or equivalent, landscaping and construction design and materials is encouraged. For new construction, it shall be required. New construction shall be defined to include both remodeling of existing structures and additions to existing structures.
7. Encourage fire sprinklers in single-family residences in the Wildland- Urban Interface (WUI) areas. For new construction, it shall be required. New construction shall be defined to include both remodeling of existing structures and additions to existing structures.
8. Organize periodic information and public-participation events in communities, civic and commercial institutions, schools, churches, and homes, in order to educate citizens, both residents and visitors of all ages, on the Firewise (NFPA) or equivalent principles and strategies related to living in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI).
9. Regularly communicate educational and preventive messages through the airwaves, newspapers, and posters placed in public access locations. Youth organizations, such as Boy Scouts of America, 4-H, and others, may be invited to implement this campaign.
10. Regularly update the County's Wildfire Management Plan.