County Resources – Agriculture

Agriculture

What is it?
Agriculture is the activity of converting natural resources into food and material goods.

Why does it matter?
Agriculture supports both regional and national economic production and is an activity fundamentally key to establishing food security.

Livestock and Grazing

What is it?
Livestock includes domestic animals, such as sheep, cattle, and horses that are raised for commercial and private use. Grazing refers to feeding livestock on growing grass, pasturage, or rangeland.

Why does it matter?
Livestock grazing is an important economic consideration.

Noxious Weeds

What is it?
Noxious and invasive weeds are plants considered harmful to livestock, agriculture, and wildlife, or otherwise negatively impact the landscape by (e.g., increase wildfire threat, reduced biodiversity). They are typically (but not always) nonnative species which spread rapidly at the expense of native vegetation.

Why does it matter?
Weeds create significant economic impacts that need to be considered in each county’s resource management plan. Economic losses in the United States from weeds was over $20 billion. It is estimated that without the use of herbicides revenue losses to the agricultural sector would increase about 500%.

Predator Control

What is it?
Predator control includes the strategies and practices to control the actions of or reduce the number of predator animals. In Utah the focus is on coyotes, as specified in two predator-related bills passed by the State Legislature in 2012.

Why does it matter?
Predator control helps reduce livestock losses and can improve the native herd populations including mule deer.

Irrigation

What is it?
Irrigation is the practice of supplemental application of water to land beyond that directly received from precipitation.

Why does it matter?
Irrigation expands agricultural output of cropland and sustains additional vegetation growth throughout the landscape.

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# County Resources – Water

## Ditches and Canals

**What is it?** Ditches and canals refer to manmade passageways to move water from one area to another.

**Why does it matter?** Ditches and canals have historically conveyed irrigation water making agriculture possible in Utah's dry climate. The change in land use from agricultural to other uses with new development may require rerouting of conveyance systems and conversion from open water channels to pipelines.

## Flood Plains and River Terraces

**What is it?** A floodplain is the low-lying ground adjacent to a river, stream or drainage subject to flooding. A river terrace is the bench or step that extends along the side of a valley and represents a former level of the valley floor.

**Why does it matter?** Flooding is a natural process that supports channel maintenance, ecological processes, and riparian vegetation. Nevertheless, floods can cause severe human impacts and therefore must be among resource planning considerations.

## Riparian Areas

**What is it?** Riparian areas are zones where terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems directly interact with each other. They occur around numerous types of waterbodies including rivers, lakes, and springs and are dominated by hydrophilic vegetation.

**Why does it matter?** They are one of the essential components of the region’s terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Riparian areas play a major role in moderating erosion processes by slowing water, trapping sediment, and stabilizing river banks.

## Water Quality and Hydrology

**What is it?** Water quality is the condition of water based on physical, chemical, and biological properties with respect to a specific purpose or use. Hydrology is the science of the properties, distribution, and effects of water.

**Why does it matter?** Water is critical to Utah’s economic and natural resource security. It is much more cost-effective to protect the water at its source and prevent contamination than to treat it in a wastewater treatment plant. “Nationally, every $1 spent on source water protection saves on average of $27 in wastewater treatment costs.”

## Water Rights

**What is it?** The legal right to make use of water from a stream, lake, canal, reservoir, or groundwater.

**Why does it matter?** Managing water rights is a complex task. Water reliability is usually a concern in western states given the nature of the region, and the prior appropriation system.

## Wetlands

**What is it?** Lands where saturation with water is the dominant factor determining the nature of soil development and the types of plant and animal communities living therein or on.

**Why does it matter?** Wetlands provide numerous benefits to society and are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rainforests and coral reefs. Wetlands have the ability to improve water quality by acting as filters. In addition, wetlands can lessen the effects of flooding by acting as stormwater and releasing it slowly with the potential to help replenish aquifers.

## Wild and Scenic Rivers

**What is it?** An administrative designation created under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 applied to preserve certain free flowing rivers that “possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fisheries and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values.”

**Why does it matter?** The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is intended for safeguarding the special character of rivers, while also recognizing the potential for their appropriate use and development. It encourages river management that crosses political boundaries and promotes public participation in developing goals for river protection.
County Resources – Natural / Cultural

Air Quality

What is it?
The term “air quality” refers to the degree to which ambient (outdoor) air is free of pollution.

Why does it matter?
Air pollutants are those substances present in ambient air that negatively affect human health and welfare, animal and plant life, property, and the enjoyment of life or use of property.

Cultural, Historical, Geological, Paleo.

What is it?
This topic for county resource planning is concerned with resources that have intrinsic value based on their age, heritage, scientific importance, or other intangible significance. However, these resources also highlight the unique character of the local setting and may contribute toward attracting businesses and tourism.

Why does it matter?
Cultural, historical, geological, and paleontological resources are often connected with tourism, recreation, and economic development.

Fire Management

What is it?
Fire management refers to the principles and actions to control, extinguish, use, or influence fire for the protection or enhancement of resources as it pertains to wildlands.

Why does it matter?
Response to fire incidents rely on proper oversight, guidance, and partnership among a variety of trained professional organizations. Establishing a fire management system is a critical step in protecting communities both urban and rural.

Fisheries

What is it?
The term fisheries generally implies resource use and management actions, such as harvest and/or stocking, to meet specific management objectives for a given waterbody.

Why does it matter?
Fishing and supporting activities have a large positive economic impact on local communities.

Forest Management

What is it?
Forest management consists of the principles and actions for the regeneration, use, and conservation of forests.

Why does it matter?
Good forest management benefits recreation, aesthetics, clean water, forest products (such as lumber, firewood, Christmas trees, etc.), and wildlife habitat.

T & E and Sensitive Species

What is it?
Threatened, endangered, and sensitive species refers to plant, animal, and other living organisms which are, to some level, threatened by extinction.

Why does it matter?
Federal and State governments have management responsibility to protect and restore imperiled species and the critical habitat which supports them.

Wilderness

What is it?
The term wilderness is an administrative designation created under the Wilderness Act of 1964 applied to specific parcels of public lands.

Why does it matter?
The wilderness designation enables preservation and protection of “Federal lands retaining primitive character and influence.” Designating wilderness areas can benefit tourism, wildlife habitat, drinking water source protection, and watershed protection.

Wildlife

What is it?
Wildlife is the population of undomesticated animals, usually living in a natural environment, including both game and nongame species.

Why does it matter?
Wildlife are an important component of the ecological system as well as a significant benefit to Utah’s economy. A national survey conducted of the year 2011 by the US Fish & Wildlife Service found that Utah residents and non-residents spent over $1.5 billion dollars that year in Utah for wildlife associated recreation activities.
What is it?
Public and private utilities draw upon renewable and nonrenewable resources to provide electricity and fuel (natural gas, propane, oil, gasoline) energy supplies.

Why does it matter?
The energy sector in Utah has significant economic benefits. In 2013 energy employment generated $2.853 billion in wages. The energy sector generated state and local taxes, fees, and royalties of $656 Million.

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What is it?
Land access refers to the ability to physically and legally access a given parcel of land, typically in the context of roads, right-of-ways (ROWs) and property inholdings. The term “access” also conveys administrative restrictions on the methods or timing of land access, as in non-motorized or seasonal.

Why does it matter?
County governments have a responsibility to facilitate land access regardless of land ownership. This is accomplished by acquiring and maintaining ROWs or easements across property.

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What is it?
Land use refers to an administrative decision that specifies the appropriate or designated types of use for a given piece of land.

Why does it matter?
Appropriate and allowable uses for lands are defined through planning processes specific to the agency or government that has jurisdiction over the lands. The best land use decisions are made through planning processes, which include open public participation and take into consideration potential impacts to the social, economic, and natural environment.

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What is it?
Mining refers to the process or industry of obtaining mineral and geothermal resources from a mine, well, or other extractive process.

Why does it matter?
In developing county resource management plans, counties may want to consider the economic significance of mining, the importance of mining heritage, and potential resource conflicts to be resolved such as recreation, water quality, and sensitive species concerns. Mining made up 4.2% of Utah’s GDP in 2012.

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What is it?
Recreation consists of activities that are pursued for enjoyment. Tourism is the social, cultural, and economic phenomenon of visiting places for pleasure.

Why does it matter?
Outdoor recreation is a significant and growing part of Utah’s economy. Tourists and travelers spent a record $7.8 billion in the Utah economy during 2014, and the tourism industry supported an estimated 127,000 jobs.