

# Beaver County Profile

*Prepared for the:*  
**Dixie, Fishlake & Manti-La Sal National Forests  
Forest Plan Revision  
Social and Economic Assessment**

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## BEAVER COUNTY OVERVIEW



### County Land Ownership

68.8%—Bureau of Land Mgt.  
 12.6% — Private  
 9.4% — State Trust Lands  
 8.4% — Forest Service  
 0.7% — State Wildlife  
 0.1% — Other  
 0% — Wilderness Areas  
 0.6% — Wilderness Study Area  
 (within BLM total)

source: SITLA, 2003

### County Planned Uses

0.03%—Commercial-Industrial  
 0.2%—Residential  
 3.6%—Agriculture  
 0.2%—Agricultural-Industrial  
 0.07%—Multiple Use  
 95.9%—Multiple Use or  
 Municipal Zoning

source: Juab County

*This overview contains observations drawn from the maps, economic and demographic trend data, and a review of county plans contained in this profile. In addition, it contains comments and explanations of county leaders and residents, gathered at workshops conducted to review this assessment.*

### **Landscape**

While much of Beaver County can be described as a Basin and Range landscape, typical of western Utah, the forested peaks on the County's eastern side have a different character. These forested peaks, among the highest in the State, are primarily controlled by Fishlake National Forest. Overall, only one-eighth of the county's land is held privately. The maps illustrate the importance of National Forest lands—the majority of the residents live in relatively close proximity to the forest, and Beaver County estimates 90% of its recreation is based on forest lands. Activities include snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, skiing, and visiting summer homes. Use is on the rise and traffic counts on Highway 153 accessing the forest are rising.

### **Population**

Beaver County's population of approximately 6,000 residents makes it the sixth smallest county in the state. Workshop comments indicated that the State's projection of 1.1% annual county population growth seems conservative when compared to the County's projections and the 2.6% annual growth rate of the last decade. In addition, the county points out the trend of many young families moving to the county.

### **Economy**

The local economy traditionally depended on agriculture, grazing, with some share of mining and residents face the challenge of economic growth in an area based on more traditional industries. Agriculture and grazing is still important to the County, but currently relies less on family operations and more on large corporate farms, such as the Circle Four 4 Farm, which spurred an upswing in the economy in the 1990s. Mining activity is currently limited by global market conditions, but there is potential to develop resources such as kaolinite, clay, railroad ballast, and decorative stone. Today, government is the largest non-agricultural industry in Beaver County and is predicted to remain a major employer. Newer businesses, including services and recreation are continuing to grow. Power generation is becoming important with several geothermal plants and the county is exploring wind, natural gas, and coal energy generation opportunities as well. The county

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### Current Issues

*transportation*  
*economic development*  
*energy generation*  
*Circle Four Farms impact*  
*expanding tourism*  
*Elk Meadows expansion*  
*developing trailheads*

is trying to attract small- and medium-sized logistic firms to enhance their economy. Tourism and recreation are also seen as economic development opportunities. Further expansion of Elk Meadows ski resort and promotion of the Piute ATV Trail are some of the best prospects. Beaver County's location along Interstate 15 in close proximity to its juncture with Interstate 70, and at the midpoint between SLC and Las Vegas, is attractive to businesses seeking easy access along a major transportation and trade corridor. The county also has good rail transportation infrastructure and is considering developing an intermodal transportation center as an opportunity to increase trade. Union Pacific Railroad is reaching overload in Las Vegas and could look to Beaver County to expand. The county

### **Planning**

County plans show a concern with maintaining the rural character of the community and are interested in establishing an urban growth boundary to keep development close to existing cities and away from valuable agricultural resources. The County is currently undertaking a transportation planning effort, and will focus on the areas near the USFS holdings because the majority of recreation and summer homes are located near the Forest. The County would like to promote more recreational uses and increasingly wish to promote non-motorized recreation. Residents often feel disenfranchised from the land use actions of the federal and state agency lands that dominate their region. Planning documents reviewed for this assessment include:

*Beaver County, General Plan, 1998 (Amended)*  
*Five County AOG, Beaver County Fact Sheet, 1999*  
*Utah State Historical Society, Beehive History: Utah Counties. 1988*