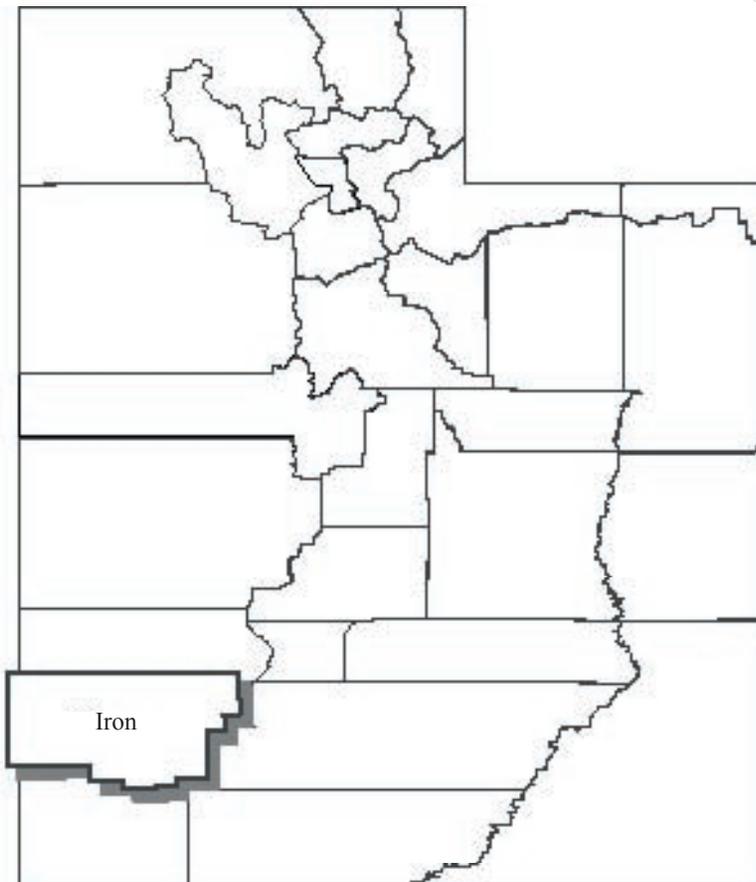


# Iron County Profile

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

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## IRON COUNTY OVERVIEW



### County Land Ownership

45.1%—Bureau of Land Mgt.  
 36.1% — Private  
 11.2% — Forest Service  
 6.4% — State Trust Lands  
 0.4%— Natl. Park/Monument  
 0.3% — State Wildlife  
 0.1%— Tribal  
 0.4% — Other  
 0.3% — Wilderness Area  
 0.2% —Wilderness Study Area  
 (within BLM total)

source: SITLA, 2003

### County Planned Uses

92.8% — Agriculture  
 3.9% — Commercial-Industrial  
 3.3% — Residential

source: Iron 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***

Iron County stretches from the arid West Desert to high mountain plateaus. The county has significant groundwater supplies and agricultural lands, even in its western reaches. Iron County has an unusually high proportion of private land for this region and many of private inholdings within USFS lands. The number of inholdings and their easy access heightens the importance of managing the urban/forest land interface for fire, insects, and other challenges.

### ***Population***

Iron County's population surged in the 1990's, posting the third-highest growth rate in Utah. The population is also becoming more diverse. The growth was influenced by expansion in the light manufacturing sector and the accreditation of Southern Utah State College, in 1991, which increased student numbers. The presence of the student population contributes to the County's high educational attainment levels. Workshop comments indicated that the State's projection of 1.6% annual county population growth seems conservative compared to the County's projections based on the current 6 % growth in school enrollment growth.

### ***Economy***

Iron County has a more balanced and broadly based economy than many other counties in southern Utah. Cedar City is a regionally trade center and supplier of services. The city is also home to Southern Utah State University, numerous government agencies, and a number of cultural festivals. It is also frequently regarded as the gateway to Southern Utah's National Parks and monuments, which are a notable factor in area's economy and current growth.

In the last thirty years, mining, agriculture, and the government sector shrank as a proportion of the economy while services and other business proprietors grew. Iron County has felt some of the effects of the growth near St. George, much of which can be attributed to people moving into the area for a high quality lifestyle. Second-home ownership has increased and many leaders are concerned with how this may change the county.

## IRON COUNTY OVERVIEW

### Current Issues

*water supply  
urban/forest interface for fire  
and weed plans  
absentee home ownership  
coordination with BLM  
transportation  
Farm Bureau policies  
protection of groundwater*

### *Planning*

High population and employment growth are expected to continue over the next twenty years. The County has developed an urban growth boundary to direct new growth to areas closest to cities in response. Water is an issue of significant concern as the county has endured several consecutive years of drought. Diminished water supplies and a lowered water table, coupled with the increase in population and irrigated croplands highlighted the need for better water management. In 1996, a water conservation district was established. Sound public lands management is also a concern, particularly with fire and noxious weed management. Cooperation, communication and coordination of local, county and area leaders is a stated goal of county planning and the County Plan makes it clear that they consider federal agencies to be “area leaders” with an influence on the future of their community. Planning documents reviewed, which were available at the time of this assessment, include:

*Iron County General Plan, 1995; Iron County Zoning Ordinance, 1998  
Central Iron County Water Conservancy District, Water Mgt Plan, 1999  
Five County Association of Governments, Iron County Fact Sheet, 1999  
Utah State Historical Society, Beehive History 14: Utah Counties. 1988.*