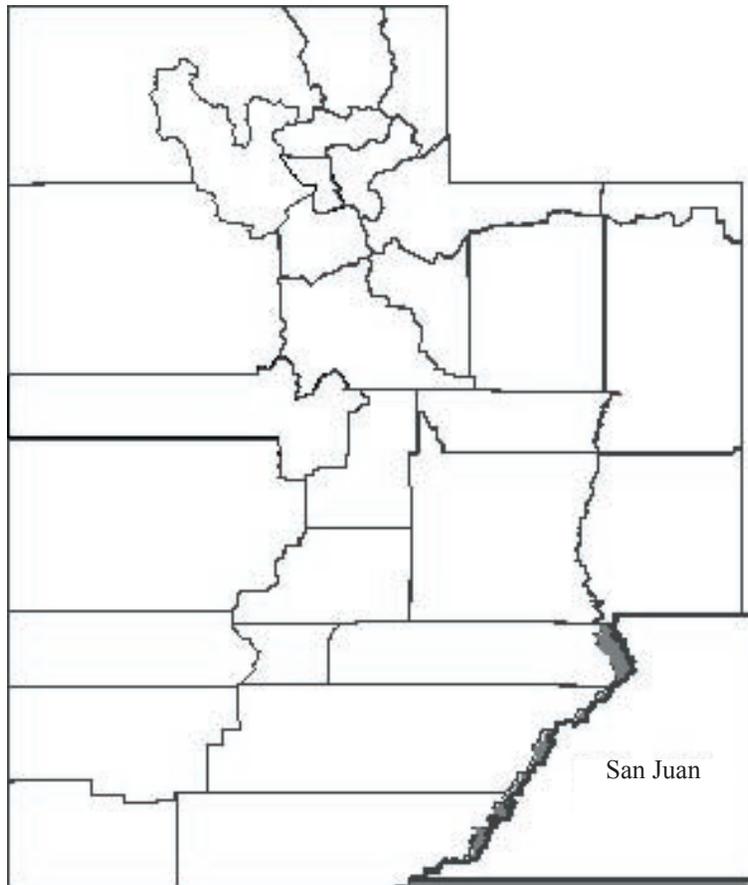


San Juan County Profile

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

Prepared by:
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SAN JUAN COUNTY OVERVIEW



County Land Ownership

- 41.2%—Bureau of Land Mgt.
- 25.3% — Tribal
- 8.1% — Private
- 8.0% — Forest Service
- 5.3% — Natl. Park/Monument
- 5.2% — Natl. Recreation Area
- 5.2% — State Trust Lands
- 1.5% — Water Bodies
- >0.1% — Other
- 0% — Wilderness Areas
- 8.0% — Wilderness Study Area
(within BLM total)

source: SITLA, 2003

County Planned Uses

- 36.2%—Multiple Use
- 36.0%—Agriculture
- 25.7%—Tribal Land
- 2.1%—Commercial-Industrial
- 0.2%—Rural Residential

source: San Juan 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

With approximately 5.2 million acres of land, San Juan County is the largest county in Utah, but has one of the smallest populations—approximately 14,000 residents. The county is located in the arid and rugged Colorado Plateau, but contains some of the most expansive agricultural areas in the state. Only 8% of this land is privately held. Over 25% of the county is held in tribal reservations, including the Navajo Reservation and White Mesa Ute lands. The Navajo Reservation is the largest American Indian reservation in the nation, extending south from the San Juan River into Arizona and New Mexico.

Population

San Juan County has grown steadily in recent decades and is expected to continue to grow at a rate of 1% per year. As much of the population lives in relatively rural locales, the population of the county's largest towns—Blanding, Bluff, and Monticello—totals only about a third of the county. Roughly one-half the county's population are members of the Navajo Nation, and their average social and economic conditions are dramatically different from the rest of the county's residents.

Economy

Agriculture formed the basis of San Juan County's economy for many years. Oil, gas and mining spurred economic booms, but this sector has decreased substantially over the last two decades, particularly with the closing of oil wells and uranium mills. Timber and minerals have also declined and are no longer being realized to their fullest potential. Most of the extractive industries are dependent on federal, state, local and tribal politics, which have slowed many plans in recent years.

While neighboring Grand County shifted to a tourism economy, San Juan County remained reliant on agriculture and other services. While residents would like to see agriculture, grazing, and timber preserved, the services, government, and non-farm proprietor sectors are now projected to create the most jobs in coming decades. With Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Canyonlands National Park, and three

SAN JUAN COUNTY OVERVIEW

Current Issues

*economic diversity and
opportunity
preserving agricultural
opportunities
developing water supplies
county-wide ATV plan*

National Monuments, most residents see tourism as the most promising economic resource. Much of the growth in government jobs has been attributed to education and social service programs addressing the poverty and education gap in the region. Economic development is a priority of all county residents.

Economic opportunities are the first priority of the Navajo and Ute, as they struggle with problems that plague many American Indian tribes—high unemployment, low educational achievement, and a health and wellness crises. These problems pose economic development challenges, but tribal representatives have expressed interest in developing industries and jobs based on natural resources and land, such as land management and cultural tourism. Protecting the sacredness of certain sites, such as Rainbow Bridge, while developing new opportunities, is a major concern.

Planning

New industrial, recreational, agricultural, or residential possibilities will be determined by water quality and availability. The county is working to develop water storage areas within its boundaries. There were a number of comments about County priorities that were not apparent in the documents reviewed, but which were expressed in the county workshops. There were comments regarding the need to manage wildlife, improve access, and promote a wide range of recreation uses for public lands. Other comments related to the preservation and promotion of the County’s cultural resources. Issues, priorities, and demographics of the Navajo population often differ from those of the rest of the county and cooperation between the two is essential to adequately and effectively address concerns and issues. Planning documents reviewed, which were available at the time of this assessment, include:

- San Juan County General Plan, 1996*
- San Juan County Visitor Services, 2003 Sales & Marketing Plan*
- A Photographic History of Vegetation and Stream Channel Changes in San Juan County, 2000*
- Review of the BLM Wilderness “Re-inventory in the State of Utah”*
- San Juan County Community Development, Business & Personal Relocation Information, 2003*
- Utah State Historical Society, Beehive History: Utah Counties. 1988.*