## **DUCHESNE COUNTY, UTAH**

uchesne County is located in northeastern Utah approximately 120 miles east of Salt Lake City. Having a total surface area of 3, 266 square miles it is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest county in the state. Duchesne County occupies the western portion of an area known geologically as the Uintah Basin. The entire county lies within the drainage of the Green River, one of the primary tributaries of the Colorado River. Elevation within the county is extremely variable. It ranges from a low of 5,000 feet in the center of the basin, to a high of 13,500 feet along the crest of the Uinta Mountains.

ovement vehicle. artery, Extremes in north and south.

within and through the area is mainly by motor U.S. Highway 40 is the major transportation traversing the county in an east-west line. topography severely limit surface movement to the The county may be classified as rural agricultural.

Within the county limits are five incorporated municipalities; Altamont, Duchesne, Myton, Roosevelt, and Tabiona. The County seat is located in Duchesne City. In addition to the municipalities there are several unincorporated urbanized clusters scattered throughout the central farming are. The boundaries of the local school district are the same as those of the county.

he county is also included within the boundaries of the Central Utah Water Conservancy District. The Uinta Mountains, which occupy the northern one-third of Duchesne County, are the primary source for water which is to be diverted westward into the Great Basin as a part of the District's Central Utah Reclamation Project (a participating project of the Upper Colorado River Storage Project).

he Uintah Basin and Duchesne County have long been the home of the Native American. The first white men to visit the area came with the Escalante Expedition in 1776, which were looking for another route westward. Later Dominguez and other Spaniards came in search of gold. Next were trappers and explorers who were followed by homesteaders. Due to climate, physical barriers, and limited transportation capability, the Uintah Basin was overlooked during the early westward movement.



In the fall of 1861, President Lincoln proclaimed the major portion of the Western Uintah Basin, which at that time had a handful of settlers, as an Indian Reservation. It remained in that state until 1902 when President Theodore Roosevelt issued a counter-proclamation providing for the "opening" of certain reservation lands to homesteaders, and setting forth the procedure by which

this land would be allotted. The actual opening of the reservation land occurred in August, 1905.

A second proclamation by President Roosevelt provided for the location and establishment of three town sites within the Basin. Two of these, Duchesne, (originally designated as Theodore) and Myton, were situated on public ground. Roosevelt, the county's largest community, also had its beginning at the time of

the opening, however, it was established on homestead land as a private development, more or less in the same manner as a "subdivision" is today.

Speculation as the name "Duchesne" comes from differing stories--one stating that the name comes from a French trapper calling the chimney-like formation at the point of the Duchesne River's beginning-Duchesne. Another theory comes from the story of a Sister Duchesne, a Catholic nun who was the namesake.

uchesne County was created form the eastern portion of what was then Wasatch County. The (Duchesne) county seat was once located in Myton, east of Duchesne City, but due to public interest and debate the county seat matter was put to a vote. Duchesne City was established as the County Seat by popular vote.

ountains: The highest mountain in Utah is located in Duchesne County. Kings Peak, 13,493 feet above sea level, reserves that distinction. This towering snowcapped peak is said to have been named for Olaf King, a trapper, whose travels took him into this remote area. Other peaks rising above the 13,000 foot level are: Mt. Emmons, 13,449 feet; Gilbert Peak, 13,428 feet; Wilson Peak, 13,095 feet; and Mt. Lovenia, 13,227 feet. There are six peaks in the county within the 12,000 to 13,000 foot altitude. All of these peaks are in the northern part of the County and are located in the Uinta Mountain Range, named "Uinta" after the tribe that has occupied the area for hundreds of years. The Uinta Range is the only range in the United States that extends in an east west direction.

orests: Three National Forests extend into Duchesne County--Uintah National forest containing 179,649 acres; Wasatch National Forest, containing 180,623 acres, and Ashley national Forest, containing 378,781 acres.

akes: Throughout the High Uintas are thousands of freshwater lakes fed by melting snow and abounding with trout. The better known lakes are Mirror and Moon Lakes, which are accessible by auto. Grandaddy Lake, Mohawk, Governor Dern, Pine Island, Palisade, Clement, Kidney and many others are all high lakes (above 10,000 feet), which complement the mountain streams for excellent trout fishing. The high Uintas have been set aside by an act of Congress as a permanent Primitive Area, accessible only by foot or horseback.

Streams: the Uinta Range forms the headwaters of eight streams or rivers. Two have their beginnings in Wasatch County; Current Creek and the Strawberry River. These streams flow eastward and join the Duchesne River. The following begin in Duchesne County; Red Creek, the Duchesne River, Rock Creek, the Lake Fork, the Yellowstone, and Uinta Rivers. Water from melting snows in the higher mountains keeps these bodies of water flowing all year. During the spring run-off caused by thawing conditions, the streams and rivers are swollen and turbulent as they roar through their channels on their way to the Green and Colorado Rivers to the East.

rees: The high Alpine country grows thickly with Quaking Aspen whose leaves turn a golden yellow in the early fall. Conifers are abundant--Douglas Fir, Engleman Spruce, Norway Pine, Yellow Pine, Balsam and Juniper. IN lower elevations grow species of Alder, Birch, Cherry, Oak, Cottonwood, Poplar and Elm. Shrub type plants include Pinon, Mountain Mahogany, sage, Squawbush, and Sage Brush. Duchesne County is the location of the world's largest Pinon and Juniper Forest.

County. Cactus and Yucca form vivid colors to enhance the more barren desert areas. Utah's state flower, the Sego Lily, flourishes in desert climate at more than 5,000 foot level. White and blue columbine peek shyly to the sun in high woodland gardens beside lupine and foxglove, their neighbors. The desert evening primrose scents the cool night air with sweet odors. Wild hollyhocks paint the desert salmon-red with late spring blossoms. Indian paintbrush affords a splash of red among the drab gray sage, and purple violets cling to shady banks near sparkling streams.

nimals: Varied kinds of animals range from the high mountain peaks to the arid desert reaches of Duchesne County. The little pika that lives in the higher altitude and cuts hay in the summer for winter use is likely the heartiest. He will stack leaves, grass and moss in piles sometimes four feet high to use during the long winter months. He is sometimes called the rock rabbit. Marmots are also dwellers of the mountainous areas, but they hibernate during the winter. The ermine, whose summer color is dull brown on his back and yellow underneath, changes coats for winter to one of pure white except for the tip of his tail which is black. Mink, beaver and muskrats live near streams where they build their homes and search for food. Chipmunks, squirrels,

gray flying squirrels, pack rats, moles, kangaroo rats, prairie dogs, gophers, rabbits, hares, skunks, porcupines, lynx (bobcats), coyotes, foxes, ring-tailed cats, mountain lions, and badgers make their homes in Duchesne County. Even black bear are occasionally seen in the remote areas. Mule deer are abundant, ranging in the high country during the summer and in the foot hills, pinon and juniper forest in the winter.



Elk, moose, and antelope are present throughout the entire mountain area though they are not as abundant as deer.



Birds: Duchesne County and the Uintah Basin have a greater variety of bird species than any other section of the country. We have birds in the arid desert regions to the swamp lands, lake and high alpine country. Natural habitat is available for almost all types of birds from eagles to sparrow hawks, geese to teal, vultures to shrikes, crown to starling and jays, king birds to tiny hummingbirds, as well as game birds such as pheasant, quail, grouse, sage hens, and chukkar partridges.

inerals: Many known deposits of minerals are in Duchesne County. Elaterite (a hydrocarbon, the only known deposit in the United States), coal, silver, manganese, asphalt, iron phosphate, copper, bentonite and gilsonite. Large reserves of oil and gas have been discovered in the county with extremely high grade oil.

Industries: because much of the county is federally owned, one of the principal industries is raising livestock which graze on government leased lands. Cattle range the valleys and canyons near water sources while sheep feed on the more arid parts of the higher areas. Crops grown include wheat, oats, barley, corn, potatoes, alpha hay and alfalfa seed. Alfalfa fields reserved for seed production in the Myton area have averaged as much as 1,000 pounds of seed per acre. The county is famous for its sweet clover honey, much of which is produced in alfalfa fields. Orchards are not successful in the county due to the severe weather and short growing season. Garden produce tends to be more flavorsome and naturally sweet than that grown in lower elevations.

rops are grown with the aid of irrigation. Water supply for irrigation is from the numerous streams and reservoirs. Thousands of board feet of lumber are produced annually from the forests growing on the high slopes. This timber harvest boosts the economy of the county materially as it affords employment for a number of men on a part-time basis, to supplement the income from small farms and ranches. The juniper



and pinion growths in the county provide a supply for wood for fireplaces in the area as well as those on the Wasatch Front.

nother productive industry in the area is the oil industry. There are pipeline systems transporting crude from the county to refineries on the Wasatch Front, and there is also a refinery in the county to produce locally needed oil products. Many tanker trucks also haul crude to other constant financial areas. The oil industry provides a steady and influx into the local economy. Geologists label the Uintah the nation's leading oil fields.

ourists and Sightseeing Attractions: Northeastern Utah's Uinta Mountain Range beckons to those who desire the cool clear beauty of the dense timber, trout-laden lake lakes, and restful seclusion. Back-packing or pack-training into the Ashley National Forest or the High Uinta Primitive Area is a popular and rewarding experience. Camp

Primitive Area is a popular and rewarding experience. Camp have ever walked and fish in dozens of snow-fed lakes where line splashing in the water shatters the silence. There are emerald-green lakes, tumbling streams, water falls, formations, monstrous palisades, monoliths, and rugged

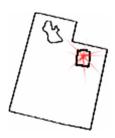
the sound of your thousands of varicolored rock canyons. For the

geologist, dinosaur fossils, petrified wood and numerous geodes and other unusual rock formations make for grand exploring. The historians and archeologists will enjoy the explorations of the many Indian ruins, ancient pictographs and hieroglyphics as well as the enactment of many of the Indian ceremonies such as the Bear Dance.

he Starvation Reservoir opens many possibilities for boating, fishing and water skiing. An observation point near Duchesne City permits visitors to overlook the huge earth-filled dam which catches the surplus flows of both the Strawberry and Duchesne Rivers, and holds over 167,000 acre feet of water. A part of the Bonneville Unit of the Central Utah Project, Starvation Reservoir was the first stage of this vital water storage project. This project increased the size of existing Strawberry Reservoir near Heber City to almost three times its former size. The entire Central Utah Project, when completed, will cost an approximate 1.5 billion dollars and create extensive new recreational benefits for the people of Utah, as well as insure a plentiful supply of water for municipal, irrigation and industrial purposes for entire state.

Two other great fishing lakes are Midview Reservoir near Bridgeland and the Big Sand Wash Reservoir near Altamont. Duchesne County's rivers and streams offer some of the greatest fishing in the world.

## WE ARE LOCATED IN NORTHEASTERN UTAH



## COME EXPLORE, AND SEE THE SIGHTS!

For other scenic attractions in the area: to the west in Wasatch County is Strawberry Reservoir; to the east ins Vernal (Uintah County), Flaming Gorge Recreation Area, Steinaker Reservoir, Dinosaur National Monument, Dinosaur Quarry, and for a look at truly unspoiled beauty, take a trip to the White Rocks Cave five miles from White Rocks. The caves are equal to the beauty and preservation in the Timpanogas Cave above American Fork. You must make reservations with the forest service at Vernal. They will take groups of 15 or more.