

WRI- Local Nature

Washington County Ecosystems

Due to the great variation in elevation and topography in the region, Washington County and the surrounding area have a wide range of ecosystems. Washington County is located along the boundary of three distinct physiographic regions: the Colorado Plateau, the Mojave Desert, and the Great Basin. The plants, animals and geographic features of each can be found in different areas in the basin and mixed throughout the basin. Following is a brief description of the different ecosystems in Washington County and some information to help you explore the area.

High Mountains

- Locations: Cedar Mountains (all), Pine Valley Campground & Summit Trails, Oak Grove Campground & Summit Trails, Kaibab National Forest
- Climate: Harsh winters with lots of snow, cool summers
- Outdoor Opportunities: winter- all types of snow recreation; summer- hiking, mountain biking & 4-wheelers, camping, fishing, boating / canoeing
- Communities: Pine Valley, Brian Head, Duck Creek Village
- Ecosystem: Pine & aspen forests, deer (Idaho type environs)
- Lakes: Navajo Lake
- Preserves: Cedar Breaks National Monument, Dixie National Forest, North Rim of the Grand Canyon
- Campgrounds: Navajo Lake, Duck Creek, Deer Haven, Pine Valley, Oak Grove, Jacob Lake, DeMotte & North Rim

High Plateaus

- Locations: Kolob Reservoir Area, Upper Zion National Park, Mount Carmel Junction
- Climate: Strong winters with fair snow fall, mild summers
- Outdoor Opportunities: winter- snow mobiling, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing; summer- hiking, mountain biking & 4-wheelers, camping, fishing, boating / canoeing
- Communities: Kolob Reservoir, Mount Carmel Junction
- Ecosystem: Pine & Aspen forests, Juniper & Piñon forests (transitional between low & high)
- Lakes: Kolob Reservoir, Blue Springs Reservoir
- Preserves: Zion National Park
- Campgrounds: Lava Point

Low Mountains & Mountain Valleys

- Locations: I-15 corridor from New Harmony to Parowan, northern Pine Valley backcountry, Enterprise Area, Pine Valley foothills, Road to Oak Grove, Seegmiller Peak, Little Creek Mountain
- Climate: Fair winter with light but regular snow fall, warm summer
- Outdoor Opportunities: hiking, mountain biking & 4-wheelers, camping, fishing
- Communities: Parowan, Cedar City, Kanarraville, New Harmony, Central, Enterprise, Pinto
- Ecosystem: Junipers, Piñon Pine, Scrub Oak



-Lakes: Little Salt Lake, Ash Creek Reservoir, Baker Dam Reservoir, Upper & Lower Enterprise Reservoir

-Preserves: Dixie National Forest

-Campgrounds: Enterprise Reservoir

Upper Cliffs, Cliff Sides

-Locations: Red Cliffs, Sand Mountain, Red Mountain, Snow Canyon canyon hikes, Coral Pink Sand Dunes, Smith Mesa, Zion National Park main canyon, Fingers of Kolob, Kanarraville Fold, Hurricane Cliff

-Climate: Fair winter with light but regular snow fall, warm summer

-Outdoor Opportunities: hiking, rock climbing, repelling, camping, wading

-Communities: Springdale, Leeds, Dammeron Valley, Veyo, Gunlock

-Ecosystem: sandstone cliffs (mostly Navajo Sandstone) with scattered Junipers, Piñon & Scrub Oak

-Lakes: Emerald Pools

-Preserves: Zion National Park, Snow Canyon State Park, Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park

-Campgrounds: Red Cliff Recreation Area, Snow Canyon, Coral Pink Sand Dunes, Zion National Park

Open Desert

-Locations: St. George & surrounding communities, Arizona Strip, Sand Hollow area, Mesquite area, Valley of Fire, Snow Canyon valley floor, Warner Valley

-Climate: Cool winters with little snow (1-2 snowfalls per year); hot, dry summers

-Outdoor Opportunities: hiking, mountain biking & 4-wheelers, water skiing, cliff diving, fossil hunting, Indian sites, spelunking, city walking trails

-Communities: St. George, Santa Clara, Ivins, Kayenta, Washington, Hurricane, Virgin, Colorado City, Kanab, Mesquite, Bunkerville

-Ecosystem: cacti, sage brush, sand dunes, cottonwoods along river courses

-Lakes: Sand Hollow Reservoir, Quail Creek Reservoir, Gunlock Reservoir, Lake Mead

-Preserves: Sand Hollow State Park, Snow Canyon State Park, Valley of Fire State Park

-Campgrounds: Snow Canyon, Valley of Fire, Quail Creek Reservoir, Sand Hollow State Park

Lower Cliffs / Gorges

-Locations: Virgin River Gorge, Grand Canyon

-Climate: Cool winters with little snow; hot, dry summers

-Outdoor Opportunities: River rafting, hiking

-Communities: NA

-Ecosystem: cliffs and deep canyons, desert river system environments

-Lakes: Lake Mead

-Preserves: Grand Canyon National Park

-Campgrounds: Cedar Pockets