

## CHAPTER SEVEN: WEST DESERT PLANNING DISTRICT



### **LAND USE**

The vast majority of the West Desert planning district is under federal control for the Utah Test and Training Range and Dugway Proving Grounds. The only non-federally controlled area of this planning district is located west of the Cedar Mountains and near the Dugway and Simpson Mountains. There is no population in this area. This district faces no population growth pressures, but may experience demands and impacts upon natural resources by increasing interest in recreational uses. The Pony Express route and related historical sites are features of this district.

There are no commercial or industrial areas in this district and there is not sufficient infrastructure and services to support development. In spite of development demands being at a low level, the General Goals of this Plan should be included in all land use and zoning considerations for this district.

### **ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC**

#### Demographic and Economic Summary

According to utility service records, there is no population in the West Desert Planning District and no economic activity. The Pony Express Trail traverses the area and presents the potential for tourism at historic watering stops (such as Simpson Springs).

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Access within this planning district is extremely limited due to the presence of large military reservations. Access on the reservations is restricted to military personnel only, and the military owns and operates their own transportation system. The only other public access road within the area is the Pony Express Road in the Simpson Mountain area. It is a graveled road that is maintained by the county, and provides access to Juab

County and the Ibapah-Gold Hill area. It is important that this access road be maintained because it is the only access road for a number of county residences. Also, this is an access route for visitors to historic Simpson Springs. No significant change to the existing transportation system is warranted at the present time.

There are some historic features that are related to transportation. The Lincoln Highway, the first intercontinental connecting road across the country, passes through the Dugway Proving Grounds. There are still remnants of historic structures such as the Lincoln Bridge, which is located within the military reservation. Because of their location on military land, the county has little control over the preservation of these historic structures. It is recommended that the county request that the military preserve and maintain these historic facilities until some future date when they could be developed for public use.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

There is no centralized infrastructure supporting this area. There are a number of outlying compounds within the Dugway Proving Grounds where centralized water, sewer and other services are provided.

Because there is no population within this planning district, it is unlikely that centralized water, sewer or other facilities will be required. The balance of this planning district is composed of test ranges operated by the military, and largely uninhabited areas, such as the Simpson Mountain Area.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

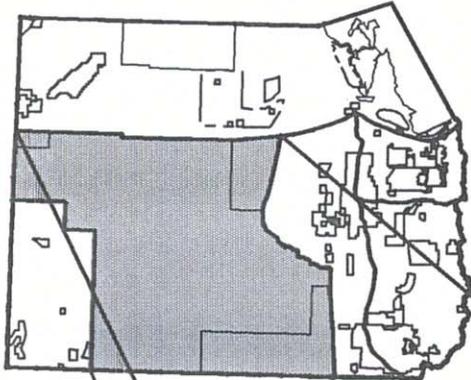
#### Natural Resources

Air quality is good with the potential for occasional pollution threats from Dugway Proving Ground activity. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) operates test sites west of the Great Salt Lake where



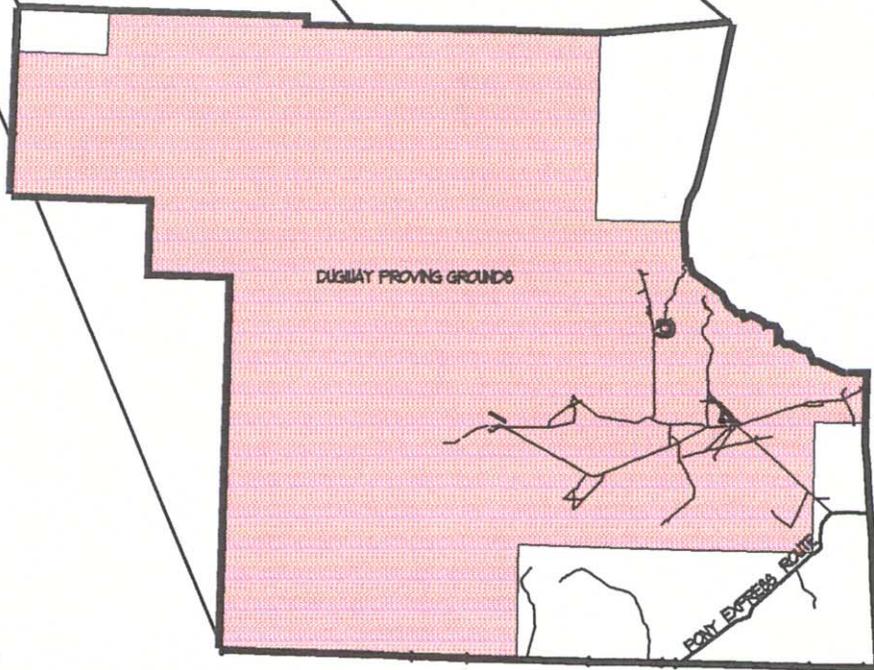
# TOOELE COUNTY PLANNING DISTRICT

## WEST DESERT



### LAND USE

-  MULTI-USE
-  FEDERAL



AS OF: DECEMBER 1995



rocket and other motors are destroyed by burning and a bombing range where conventional weapons are used and tested. These sites were developed prior to the establishment of NAAQS and operate under a variance issued by DAQ. The new federal Clean Air Act of 1990 will require operating permits under Title V but specific requirements have not yet been promulgated. Dugway Proving Ground in the past has conducted outdoor tests of munitions, equipment and, in some cases, chemical and biological weapon simulants. There are no further open air chemical tests permitted, but conventional weapons and equipment are still tested at open air sites. The state is attempting to establish accepted test means and methods and develop regulations for tests conducted by the DOD.

This district has been appreciated by the military for its testing and training. Therefore, while regular resources demanded by human population are at low levels, this district continues to be attractive for uses which should be far removed from areas of human population.

#### Mountainsides, Vegetation and Wildlife

Vegetation in this district includes wasteland and sand, saltgrass, pickleweed, shadscale, greasewood, cheatgrass and dropseed in the salt desert, Utah Juniper in the Cedar Mountains, and sagebrush and horsebrush in the Dugway Range. The mountainsides of the Cedar and Dugway Ranges are valuable as scenic and recreation areas, and are especially valuable as wildlife habitats. Wildlife in these two areas are pronghorn antelope, chukars and raptors.

### **RECREATION**

#### Recreation Resources

Recreation opportunities are available on BLM lands at Simpson Springs, and the Simpson and Dugway Mountains. There has been some interest in rockhounding in Death Canyon.

Recreation resources in this district are limited to the Cedar, Simpson, and Dugway Mountain Ranges due to the Dugway Proving Grounds. Recreation travel shown with the shaded arrow is likely to follow the

Pony Express Route which is shown by the line arrow. Rockhounding is a popular activity in this area. Any recreation users in this area should bring plenty of water, as there is essentially no water available.

#### Recreation Designation

The Cedar Mountains in the northeast corner of the district also provide recreational opportunities. The Cedar Mountains, proposed for a recreation area designation by this plan, are also a Wilderness Study Area being considered for Congressional Wilderness designation. These two areas of the district provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. (See Proposed Recreation Corridor map in Chapter Three - Recreation.)

### **CULTURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES**

#### Historic Sites

This area is similar in appearance to when the Pony Express and Overland Stage took this route in the last century. The Pony Express stations in the West Desert planning district from east to west are:

- Simpson Springs Station - It is located across Skull Valley from Lookout Pass (but just inside the West Desert planning district). The fresh springs were discovered by railroad route surveyor, J.H. Simpson. The springs provided water for riders and stages and a stone building from the station still stands. The area is noted by a Daughters of the Utah Pioneers (D.U.P.) monument.
- Riverbed Station - It is located almost on the Tooele - Juab County line, on a riverbed which may have once connected the Sevier and Great Salt lakes. This station provided little shelter, no food nor water, but was used to rest horse teams. As it was so desolate and exposed it was often the site of attacks from Indians or bandits.

For many years travelers through Utah took the Lincoln Highway through the salt desert. The Lincoln Highway Bridge, listed on the National Register of Historic



Places, is on Dugway Proving Grounds. Please refer to the Historic Sites map at the end of Chapter Two.

