

**Washington County Growth & Conservation Act of 2008**  
Summary of Highlights and Changes Made Since Introduction of Bill

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**Highlights of the Washington County Growth & Conservation Act of 2008 include:**

- Addition of 264,394 acres of land to the National Wilderness Preservation System. This will increase the percentage of wilderness acreage in the county from 3.5 percent to 20.5 percent.
- Designation of 165.5 miles of the Virgin River in and adjacent to Zion National Park under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the first such designation in Utah history.
- Creation of two National Conservation Areas in Washington County – Red Cliffs National Conservation Area and Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Area – to provide long-term protection for the desert tortoise and recreational opportunities on nearly 140,000 acres.
- Disposal of non-environmentally sensitive public land currently identified in the St. George Field Office Resource Management Plan, which represents less than 0.3 percent of lands in Washington County. This legislation authorizes an additional 5,000 acres, which could be sold only after being identified through the resource management plan process, with full public involvement, and in accordance with the Vision Dixie principles.
- Enhanced management of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use through a comprehensive travel management plan prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). As part of this comprehensive plan, BLM will designate the High Desert OHV Trail and identify alternatives for a northern transportation route.

**Changes to the bill from the 2006 version include:**

- Addition of more than 123,000 acres of permanently protected land.
- Removal of utility corridor designations including the Lake Powell pipeline and a northern transportation corridor.
- Reduction of land disposal from approximately 24,300 acres to 9,052 acres.
- Removal of rights-of-way designations, including Ft. Pearce and Cougar Canyon. The bill does not remove the two designations already identified in BLM's resource management plan.
- Development of a county-wide comprehensive travel plan prepared by BLM, which will require BLM to designate the High Desert OHV Trail and identify alternatives for a northern transportation route.