WASHINGTON COUNTY
WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

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WASHINGTON COUNTY RESERVOIRS
MORE THAN POPULAR RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Sand Hollow and Quail Creek reservoirs welcomed nearly 300,000 visitors during fiscal year 2015 earning them placement as two of the state's most popular parks. The reservoirs offer countless recreational opportunities to visitors while supporting thousands of jobs and contributing millions of dollars to the state economy every year. "These benefits are significant, but they are secondary to the primary purpose of the reservoirs – to store water for our growing population and economy," said Ron Thompson, general manager of Washington County Water Conservancy District. "Reservoirs exist to store water. If you don't have water, nothing else matters."

Water storage has become increasingly critical in Washington County given the area's nationally ranked population growth accompanied with continued drought conditions. As of July 1, the water availability index for the Virgin River was 42 percent. Reservoir storage in southwestern Utah was 54 percent and seasonal precipitation was 76 percent of average.

"Those are pretty bleak conditions, but most of our residents will not be affected by the low water year because of our reservoir storage," said Thompson. "Irrigators, on the other hand, are experiencing drastic restrictions because they are solely dependent on the river's flow and the water simply isn't there."

Both Sand Hollow and Quail Creek are off-stream reservoirs that receive water diverted from the Virgin River via an underground pipeline network. Combined, the reservoirs have an average annual yield of approximately 25,000 acre feet.

Water stored in Sand Hollow and Quail Creek is delivered by the district to its municipal customers. "If we did not have Sand Hollow and Quail Creek reservoirs to augment our municipal water supply, we would be implementing drastic watering restrictions in St. George," said Scott Taylor, water services director for the City of St. George. "The reservoirs are essential to our operations and the overall stability of our local water supply."

Quail Creek was the county's first culinary water storage project, completed in 1985 at a cost of $23.5 million. Sand Hollow was completed in 2002 at a cost of $37.2 million. Sand Hollow is uniquely located on a natural Navajo sandstone aquifer with an underground storage capacity in excess of 300,000 acre feet. The aquifer has never reached capacity given only 4,500 to 11,000 acre feet seep into the underground storage area annually.

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The district also owns and operates other reservoirs throughout Washington County, including Ivins, Kolob and Gunlock. Visit wcwcd.org for more information on the district's reservoirs.

About Washington County Water Conservancy District

Washington County Water Conservancy District, a not-for-profit public agency, was established in 1962 to manage Southern Utah's regional water needs. The district oversees the development, stabilization, management, acquisition and conservation of water resources in Washington County in an ongoing effort to provide a safe, sustainable water supply for current and future generations. Visit www.wcwcd.org for more information.

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Photo Captions:

CRW 9373: Sand Hollow is Washington County's largest water storage reservoir and one of the Utah's most popular state parks. The reservoir attracts boating, skiing, wakeboarding and off-highway vehicle enthusiasts who enjoy the blue waters set against a 15,000-acre red sand dune.

Off-stream Reservoir diagram: The majority of Washington County's water is collected from the Virgin River at the Quail Creek Diversion Dam and transported via pipeline to the district's largest storage reservoirs: Quail Creek and Sand Hollow. Both of these reservoirs are off-stream, meaning they are not located directly on the river. Water is supplied to the reservoirs from a pipeline.