

# Defying Distance Education: Building a New Recreation Resource Management Program

Robyn L. Ceurvorst, *Ph.D.*

Department of Environment & Society

College of Natural Resources

Utah State University



# RRM in Moab

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- ▶ **Need for a new program**
  - Public land management, Economic outlook
  - Community assessment (Moab) – Why RRM?
- ▶ **Distance Delivery**
  - Campuses, Methods, Technology
  - Evaluation, Needed improvements
- ▶ **Plans for growth & future initiatives**
  - Facilitating a program which meets new education needs
  - Utah State University Moab – New Campus



# Background

- ▶ Scoping a need ([http://www.discovermoab.com/moab\\_videos.htm](http://www.discovermoab.com/moab_videos.htm))
- ▶ Finding support and faculty
- ▶ Building the plane while flying



# Utah Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

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- ▶ Tourism #1 industry worldwide
- ▶ Time of economic change in USA – period of industry growth followed by recession
- ▶ 2010 Utah Economic Report –
  - National and state park visitation increased
  - Ski industry 3<sup>rd</sup> best season in history
    - Infrastructure improvements, 3.9 million visitors
  - More weekend trips to local and regional areas
  - Increase in tourists driving rather than flying
  - Future tourism growth in Utah
    - Adventure and nature-based tourism
    - Family, cultural / historical tourism



# Utah Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

Utah Governor Gary Herbert endorses two primary tourism benefits:

1. Tourism tax revenues can offset costs for education and other important areas
2. Tourism can create a positive worldwide reputation to attract business development and jobs



# *Why is the RRM field great?*

- beautiful outdoor areas (desert, mountains)
- many jobs at many agencies & organizations
  - BLM, USFS, NPS, USGS, TNC
- always changing / new issues
- controversial issues & people are passionate
- interact with many people
- opportunities for innovative, exciting research
- affected by other resource issues & decisions



# What are Some Jobs?

- Naturalist / interpreter / ranger
- Park, wilderness, preserve, campground manager
- Director / advisor for federal, state, local agencies
- Environmental / recreation consultant
- Recreation planner / policy analyst
- Law enforcement officer
- Outdoor school director
- Resort / ski area employee
- Volunteer coordinator
- Museum specialist
- Historian
- Instructor / guide, company owner (raft, fishing)
- Outdoor writer / editor
- Instructor of outdoor activities
- Environmental educator
- Wildlife specialist / ecologist or biologist
- Rangeland technician
- Resource economics analyst
- Graduate student, teaching & research assistant
- University / college professor & researcher



# Some Management Agencies...



*Local stakeholders*



# Utah State Parks



In 2009, Utah State Parks hosted 4,822,847 visitors

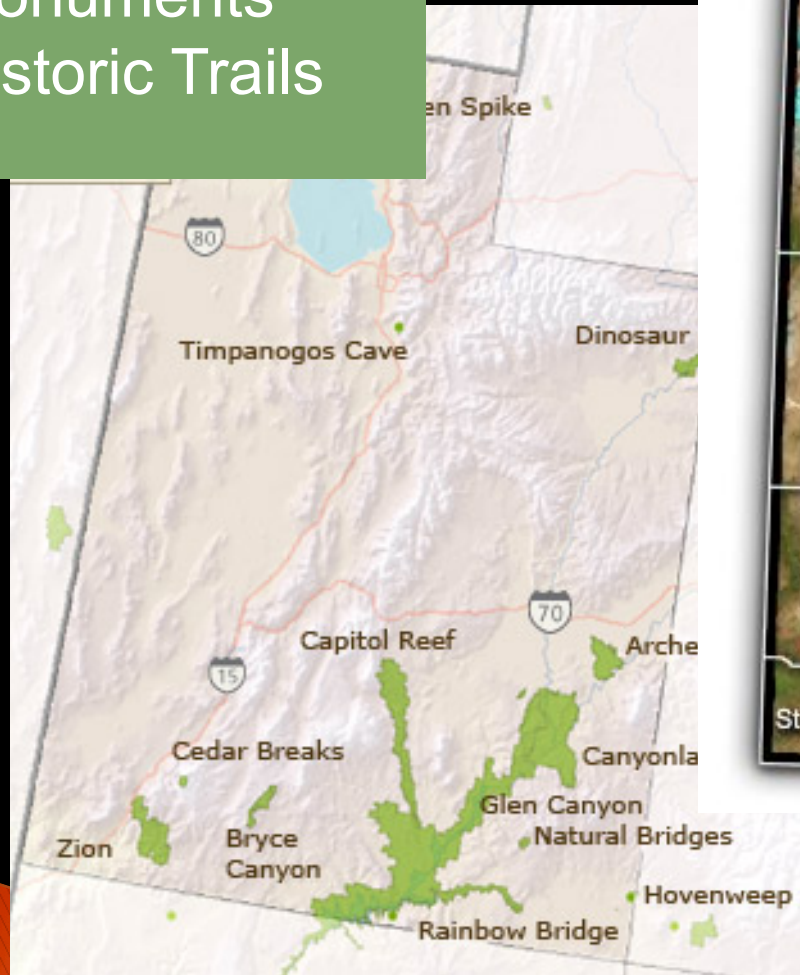


Approx. 180,000 visitors to Dead Horse Point State Park in 2009

# Federal Lands & Waters

## NPS in Utah

- National Parks
- Monuments
- Historic Trails



## USFS in Utah

- National Forests
- National Rec Areas
- Wilderness areas



## Utah BLM

- 22.9 million acres
- 42% of Utah

# Distance Education

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- ▶ **Increases accessibility of higher education**
  - Utah communities (e.g., all UT counties)
  - In the future... national? worldwide?
- ▶ **Accommodates busy schedules & diverse lifestyles**
  - working professionals, students with family commitments
  - interactive broadcasts and face-to-face courses
- ▶ **Add courses relevant to current needs and issues**
  - Quantitative Assessment Field Course
  - Resource and training ground for current professionals

# Distance RRM Program

- ▶ **Education** – Growth Opportunities

[http://distance.usu.edu/degree\\_programs/?searchType=location](http://distance.usu.edu/degree_programs/?searchType=location)

- ▶ **Research** – Canyonlands Research Center

<http://canyonlandsresearchcenter.org/>

- ▶ **Service** – Outreach, Collaboration

<http://www.cnr.usu.edu/envs/htm/undergraduate-programs>

- ▶ **Extension** – Institute for Outdoor Rec & Tourism

<http://extension.usu.edu/iort/>



# RRM Course Delivery Methods

- ▶ Classroom-based experience
  - ▶ Face-to-face, interactive
- ▶ Experiential / Field courses
  - ▶ Outdoor education & interpretation
  - ▶ On-site, hands-on & industry involvement
- ▶ Distance education
  - Remote broadcasting (IVC)
  - Online learning and resources
  - Hybrid delivery – combination of any above



# Distance Coursework

Examples...

ENVS 3300 Intro to RRM

ENVS 4000 Natural Resources Policy

ENVS 4130 Recreation Policy & Planning

ENVS 4500 Wildland Recreation Behavior

ENVS 4600 Natural Resources Interpretation

ENVS 4920 Special Projects in RRM

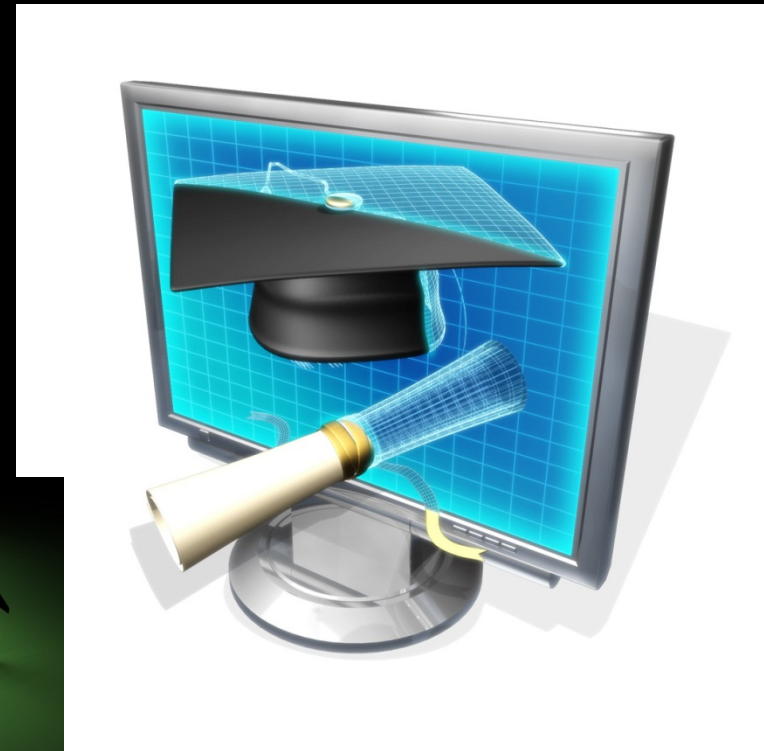
ENVS 4550 Recreation Monitoring & Assessment

Also, Wildlife Management, Intro to GIS, etc.!!



# RRM Program Evaluation

- ▶ **Diversify Education** – meet changing needs
- ▶ **Methods & Technology** –
  - Engage students through various resources
  - Increase communication
  - New hybrid pedagogies!



# Future Initiatives to Meet Needs

- ▶ Been doing – Currently doing – Keep doing
- ▶ **Marketing efforts, enrollment & funding**
  - Recruiting events – Natural Resources Sustainability Week
  - Local communities & stakeholder involvement/promotion
  - Creative funding opportunities – grant writing, research
- ▶ **Engaging students in the community and industry**
  - Internships, co-ops, student worker programs & projects
  - Mutually beneficial training, networking, knowledge

## ▶ **NEW CAMPUS!!**





# Future Initiatives...

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**Transparent Technology** – meet learning needs (e.g., podcasts, online, field experience), evaluation

**Marketing Program** – increase program enrollment  
Interdisciplinary and collaborative goals, projects, meetings, other interactions – training, research projects, funding, conferences



# Questions & Comments?

