



Welcome to Bear Lake County, Idaho

Geography

Topography:

Bear Lake County lies within the Rocky Mountains at an average elevation of 6,000 feet. The County is characterized by extensive mountainous areas, interspersed by the Bear Lake and Nounan Valleys on the west and central portion and the narrow, elongated Thomas Fork Valley on the extreme east side of the county. A relatively flat valley floor to steep rising mountain slopes, rising abruptly from 6,000 feet to 9,000 feet, characterizes them.

Elevation:

Elevation within the county ranges from a low of 5,810 feet above sea level (where the Bear River enters Caribou County) to Mead Peak at 9,957 feet located on the northeastern border with Caribou County.

Selected Communities	Elevation
Bloomington	5,980'
Dingle	5,925'
Geneva	6,170'
Georgetown	6,000'
Montpelier	5,950'
Paris	5,960'
St. Charles	5,960'

Land Area:

The County has 672,000 acres or 1,050 square miles of land. 48.7% of this land is private, 48.5% is Federally owned, and 2.8% is State owned.

There are two national forests - Cache National Forest has 136,253.62 acres within the county, and Caribou National Forest has 93,082 acres.

Other public land includes some 16,200 acres of State land; 30,190 acres of BLM land, and 17,600 acres in the Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

Rough mountainous lands not farmed, include the mountain ranges and larger hills. Ravines and stream courses, with relief too steep and unfavorable for cultivation generally dissect these areas. The soil is generally non-agricultural, although small areas favorable for cultivation are scattered through the mountains. These are generally inaccessible or too remote to be tilled, but are used for grazing.

Rivers and Lakes

Bear River, the county's only major river, winds its way through the center of the county and crosses the southeast end of the State of Idaho, and is the largest river in the United States which does not flow into the ocean. It empties in the Great Salt Lake. During its passage through Idaho, the Bear River doubles in size, from an annual flow of 300,000-acre feet to 640,000-acre feet. It drains 3,500 square miles and falls 1,500 feet while it is in the state. Since 1958, the Bear River compact, an agreement between Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah, has controlled the use of its water.

Straddling the state line between Idaho and Utah, at the extreme south end of Bear Lake Valley is Bear Lake. Lying between two mountain ranges and looking down over a wide valley, Bear Lake is among Idaho's most scenic bodies of water.

Bloomington Lake is a small glacial lake located approximately 10 miles up Bloomington Canyon. A short hike (1 1/2 miles) prepares most people for the beauty of the lake. Cliffs at one end of the lake also add majestic awe to the scenery.

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