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1. Basic Info about Rio Mesa Center

Website: riomesa.utah.edu

Contact: For updated conditions and questions contact the site manager at hau.truong@utah.edu

All visitors will receive a safety orientation from RMC staff upon arrival.

Located along almost three miles of Dolores River in the magnificent red-rock country of southeastern Utah, The University of Utah's Rio Mesa Center (RMC) provides opportunities for field-based interdisciplinary research, education, and other academic pursuits that emphasize ecology and the environment, human-environment interaction, or sustainable living on the Colorado Plateau. RMC is a real-world laboratory for integrated thinking about humans and their place in biologically complex, but fragile, systems. RMC promotes research, courses and professional training at the interface of history, anthropology, biology, art and human sustainability around the following themes:

- Water as the lifeblood of the West
- Human history and sustainability on the Colorado Plateau
- Solitude and inspiration

Our facilities are available for research, classes, workshops, and writers- and artists-in-residence.

1.1 Access: Driving a roughly 8 mile dirt road is required to get to RMC. Normally, careful driving with any passenger vehicle, such as a 2WD, low clearance sedan or van, will suffice. Wet conditions may render the road impassable to any but high clearance, 4WD vehicles. The road surface in any condition has sandy and rocky portions. We recommend visitors check that a full-sized spare tire, jack, lug wrench, and tire iron are all in good condition and in the vehicle. Be sure to check these items when doing the vehicle inspection at motorpool or your rental agency. Alerting field station staff of expected time of arrival provides an extra safety backup. Check in with the site manager for updated road conditions.

1.2 Safety: RMC is over an hour's travel from definitive medical care so a focus on preventative safety measures is especially important. Visitors with medical conditions should bring extra medication or equipment as needed and make the trip leader aware of the need for them. A focus on hydration and sun protection will mitigate most health issues.

As with any outdoor experience, the setting at RMC requires visitors to remain aware of their surroundings to ensure safety and comfort. Loose rocks, fast river currents, biting insects, and intense heat/cold are all common at the center.

1.3 Weather: RMC is a high desert setting, experiencing large seasonal and daily shifts in temperatures and frequently unpredictable weather. Weather conditions can change between hot and cold, or dry and wet multiple times in a single day. Check the weather before you come, but layered clothing options and a flexible activity itinerary are recommended for any time of year.

1.4 Communications: Cell phones do not work at RMC. A satellite phone and Personal Locator Beacon for 911 is available in case of severe emergencies. Limited internet connectivity is also available (see Guidelines while visiting).

1.5 Food: The closest grocery stores are in Moab, UT or Grand Junction, CO. Long term visitors should plan on occasional grocery runs. Short term visitors should plan out meals and bring all needed food. Visitors must store food in airtight/rodent-proof containers such as Rubbermaid tubs or coolers.

2. Accommodation Details

RMC has multiple types of accommodations depending on the type of group and length of stay. All specific facilities are available on a first come, first served basis. Images of the facilities can be found on the website.

2.1 East Side Campground

The campground is located about two miles beyond the RMC entrance gate. Campground facilities include:

- A bath-house with plumbing, including 2 indoor showers, 1 outdoor shower, 3 bathrooms, a single separate indoor hygiene sink, and electrical outlets. Toilet paper and trash bags are provided.
- An outdoor kitchen space, including 2 sinks, 2-burner propane camp stoves, a fully furnished supply of cooking and eating utensils. Dish soap, sponges, and trash bags provided.
- 8 wall tents with cots that can sleep up to 18 people
- Tent or car camping space available
- A yurt that provides indoor storage and classroom space with a projector system for presentations (please bring your own adaptor to VGA)
- A picnic pavilion/shade structure that has picnic tables and a large roof for shade.
- Fire pits, with wood provided from invasive tree species removal
- An overnight occupant capacity of 40 people
- Faucet water is potable

2.2 West Side Camping

- 2 wall tents with cots can sleep up to 4 people
- Some tent-camping space is possible, situation dependent
- Port-a-potties, or alternatively, sharing bathroom access with other occupants in houses, situation permitting
- Water is available for cooking/bathing, but bring your own drinking water

2.3 West Side House/Cabins

- Deck House has 4 beds in a shared room with a fully furnished kitchen, bathroom, and shared laundry machine. Electricity, limited wireless internet, a swamp cooler, and baseboard heaters are available. Long term researchers are given priority at Deck House.
- El Shack is a small cabin with a ground-floor level bed and a loft. Electricity, a window-mounted air conditioner, and space heaters are available. Plumbing and restroom facilities are available in nearby buildings.
- Water from faucets at any of the plumbed buildings is only for cleaning and bathing. Bring your own drinking water (or use water from the East side well)

2.4 Suggested Packing List

General Supplies

- Tent (if you are camping)
- Sleeping bag and/or blankets
- Sleeping pad
- All personal toiletries (toilet paper provided)
- Water bottle capacity of at least 2 liters
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Flashlight/headlamp
- Pocket knife
- Day pack

Clothes

- Hat
- Jacket/windbreaker
- Rain gear
- Sunglasses
- Footwear for hiking and around camp

Other equipment

- GPS
- Binoculars
- Camera
- Books/acoustic instruments/other non-electrified entertainment
- Extra batteries

3. Guidelines While Visiting

RMC staff maintain the grounds and facilities to provide a safe environment and to promote sustainability and research opportunities. Visitors are expected to assist with these goals by adhering to these guidelines.

3.1 General Use Guidelines:

- Participate in an orientation upon-arrival
- Park vehicles in areas that leave roads clear
- Keep kitchen areas clean
- Keep food away from sleeping areas
- Pack out all trash
- Sort recyclables into provided bins
- Complete the cleaning checklist prior to departure
- Be cognizant of the needs of other visitors/groups
- Pets are not permitted

3.2 Internet Use Etiquette: Unlike most home or university internet connections, RMC is limited to a satellite internet connection that is metered, with a limited amount of data transfer available per month. The monthly internet allowance quickly disappears if it is subject to heavy use. Satellite internet is available at Deck House (the dorm-style guest house on the West side). To ensure that visitors and data-logging equipment have sufficient access to internet, we ask that:

- Short term visitors make plans to not use internet, except in emergency situations
- Unless required for work (such as research using mobile apps), mobile devices remain disconnected from the satellite network. Cloud update and notification settings on many mobile devices create a constant drain of internet resources.
- Refrain from downloading large files or streaming videos.
- Pause syncing of remote storage services such as Dropbox, Ubox, Google Drive, Microsoft Cloud, etc, or limit syncing to small documents or those needed for research/work purposes.
- Be aware that visiting webpages, downloading pdfs or other large files, or extended scrolling on social media may tax the limited internet resources

4. Driving Directions

4.1 From SLC:

1. I-15 South
2. Take exit 257 B-A for US 6E toward Price
3. Continue on US 6E until it reaches I-70 (127mi)
4. Merge onto I-70E
5. Continue past Green River and Crescent Junction (the exit for Moab) and take exit 204 for UT-128 toward Cisco. *Note, Thompson Springs is the last place to get gas.*
6. Take a right onto UT-128 towards Cisco after exiting I-70. Take the first paved right to stay on UT-128 towards Moab.
7. Follow UT-128 until you cross the Colorado River. You will see the old (now burned and derelict) Dewey Bridge. Make a left onto the dirt Entrada Ranch Rd after the river crossing.
8. Follow the dirt road directions below.

4.2 From Moab:

1. Drive 3 miles north of Moab on US-191N.
2. Turn right at the stoplight intersection with UT-128 (at Lions Park, right before US-191 crosses the Colorado River)
3. Continue on UT-128 for about 30 miles.
4. Turn right onto the Entrada Ranch Rd, a dirt road immediately before crossing the river. You will see the old (now burned and derelict) Dewey Bridge at this spot.
5. Follow dirt road directions below.

From here, it is 8.1 miles to RMC. There are pit toilets near where this dirt road meets the pavement. From this point, the road is entirely unpaved. See section 1.1 for details and follow the below mileage markers to navigate the rest of the way.

Mile 0	Dewey Bridge Site. Follow the road E-SE.
Mile 1.3	Go straight at this unsigned turnoff to Lake Bottom.
Mile 1.6	You will see a nice modern home on the bluff ahead.
Mile 1.8	Cross the sometimes water-filled Waring Canyon in a steep gulch.
Mile 1.9	Pass the private driveway to the home seen earlier.
Mile 3.3	A BLM campground before a steep uphill pitch and sharp right turn in the road
Mile 3.5	Keep on main road at unsigned turnoff to Cowskin Canyon
Mile 4.8	Signed turnoff to Top of the World trail. Follow the main road and the RMC sign left/NE
Mile 6.9	Road dips down to cross Cottonwood Canyon. Right before the wash, there is a wooden sign for RMC. Keep left here.
Mile 8.1	The Rio Mesa Center gate. Please move through the gate and leave it as you found it (open, closed, or closed and dummy-locked). If you are proceeding to the campground, continue to the right for another 2 miles. If you are staying at the houses, park in the gravel loop and check in with Hau Truong, the site manager.