Trip Planning Guide

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1. Basic Info About Bonderman Field Station at Rio Mesa

Website: bonderman-station.utah.edu
Contact: For updated conditions and questions, contact the site manager at **hau.truong@utah.edu**.

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

Located along a three-mile stretch of the Dolores River in the magnificent red-rock country of southeastern Utah, Bonderman Field Station at Rio Mesa 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. Bonderman Field Station is a real-world laboratory for integrated thinking about humans and their place in biologically complex, but fragile, systems. The station promotes environmental scholarship at the interface of history, anthropology, biology, art, and human sustainability, while emphasizing the following themes:

- Water is 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 an 8-mile dirt road is required to get to Bonderman Field Station. 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 sections. We recommend visitors check that a full-sized spare tire, jack, lug wrench, and tire iron are all in good condition and in their vehicles. Be sure to check these items when doing the vehicle inspection at your rental agency. Alerting field station staff to your expected time of arrival provides an extra safety backup. Check in with the site manager for updated road conditions.

1.2 Safety: Bonderman Field Station 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 Rio Mesa 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 station.

1.3 Weather: Bonderman Field Station is a high desert setting with large shifts in seasonal and daily temperatures and often unpredictable weather. Weather conditions can change between hot and cold, or dry and wet, multiple times in a single day. While checking the weather can help you prepare for your trip, layered clothing options and a flexible itinerary are recommended for any time of year.

1.4 Communications: Cell phones do not work at the station. Emergency calls can be made through our local Internet. See staff for access.

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 storage tubs or coolers.

2. Accommodations

Bonderman Field Station has multiple facilities that can accommodate groups of varying sizes. All are available on a first come, first served basis. Images of the facilities can be found on the website.

2.1 East End Group Campground

Located two miles beyond the station entrance gate, this off-grid group site has an overnight capacity of 40 people. Campground facilities include:

- A solar-powered bath house with 2 indoor showers, 1 outdoor shower, 3 bathrooms, and electrical outlets. Toilet paper and trash bags are provided.
- Fully equipped cooking facilities, including a pantry with a refrigerator, cookware, and utensils; and an outdoor kitchen with potable water, 2-burner propane camp stoves, and 2 sinks. Dish soap, sponges, and trash bags are provided.
- 10 small cabins with bunk-style cots that can sleep up to 36 people.
- Available tent or car camping spaces
- A yurt that provides indoor storage and classroom space with a projector system for presentations (please bring your own adaptor)
- A pavilion with picnic tables and a large roof for shade.
- Fire pit with wood provided

2.2 West End Housing

- Deck House has 4 beds in a shared room with a fully furnished kitchen, bathroom, and shared laundry machine. Electricity, Wi-Fi, 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 bunk bed that can sleep up to 2 people. 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)

2.3 West End Camping

- Some tent-camping space is possible, situation dependent
- Access to porta potties or, situation permitting, sharing bathrooms with occupants in houses
- Water is available for cooking/bathing, but bring your own drinking water

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

- Sunhat and knit cap
- Windbreaker/puffy
- Rain gear
- Cold-weather layers
- Sun protective clothing, such as a light long-sleeve shirt and pants
- 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

Bonderman Field Station staff maintain the grounds and facilities to promote sustainability, support research activities, and provide a safe environment. Visitors are expected to assist with these goals by adhering to the following 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 and 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
- Internet is available to researchers, educators, and in emergencies only.

4. Driving Directions

4.1 From SLC:

1. Get on 1-15 South
2. Take exit 257 B-A for US 6E toward Price
3. Continue on US 6E for 127 miles until it reaches 1-70
4. Merge onto I-70E for 45 miles
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 1-70. 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-191 N.
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 8.5 miles to Bonderman Field Station. 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 signed turnoff to the Dolores River / Robert's Bottom.
Mile 3.6	Sign for Cowskin Campground before a steep uphill pitch. Keep on main road.
Mile 5.3	Signed turnoff to Top of the World trail. Follow the main road to the left.
Mile 7.5	Road dips down to cross Cottonwood Canyon. Right before the wash, there is a wooden sign for Bonderman Field Station. Keep left here.
Mile 8.5	The field station gate. Please move through the gate and close it behind you as you found it. If you are heading for the group campground, continue on the road to the right for another 2 miles. If you are staying at one of the west-end houses, park in the gravel loop and check in with Hau Truong, the site manager.