

USGS Participates in Washington County Conservation Workshop – During the week of April 23, USGS ecologist Mark Miller will join representatives of local, state, and federal agencies and several conservation organizations in a week-long workshop to discuss conservation challenges associated with rapid urbanization in Washington County, Utah. Population in the greater St. George area in Washington County has increased by about 40 percent since 2000, making it the fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States. Rapid growth is posing challenges for the conservation of numerous rare plant and animal species in the region, including three federally listed plants. During the workshop, Miller will present information on research needs associated with the endangered dwarf bear-poppy (*Arctomecon humilis*) and will present an update on USGS research efforts focusing on the endangered Shivwits milk-vetch (*Astragalus ampullarioides*). USGS research on the Shivwits milk-vetch supports the Shivwits Band of the Paiute Tribe, the Bureau of Land Management, Zion National Park, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in their efforts to conserve this species. (Contact: Mark Miller, SBSC, Kanab, Utah, 435.644.4325)

Vegetation Databases for National Parks: Ecologists Kathryn Thomas, US Geological Survey SBSC, and Monica Hansen, Northern Arizona University, will meet with resource management staff at Mesa Verde National Park on April 24th to work on finalizing classification schemes for a map database of the Park vegetation. A comprehensive classification and description of the Park's vegetation at multiple resolutions, fine floristic and structural/physiognomic, has been developed by a team of scientists and GIS professionals in a project that began in mid 2003. The map database was requested and funded by the Southern Colorado Plateau Park Network and the USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program, and is one of three park vegetation classification and description projects within the Southern Colorado Plateau Park Network that Thomas and Hansen are currently overseeing. On May 17th, Thomas and Hansen will meet with staff of Canyon de Chelly and Petrified Forest NP to finalize the classification schemes for those parks. The project reports and digital data products for all three parks are expected to be publicly available in the fall of 2007. (Contact: Kathryn Thomas, SBSC, Flagstaff, AZ Kathryn_a_Thomas@usgs.gov)