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## Zion National Park News Release

May 10, 2012

For Immediate Release

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### Zion National Park to Ignite Clear Trap Prescribed Fire

Zion National Park Superintendent Jock Whitworth announced that Park Fire Management Officials plan to ignite 654 acres of the Clear Trap Prescribed Burn Unit (Rx) on **Saturday, May 12, 2012**. The burn unit totals approximately 4,400 acres. Ignition will depend on weather and fuel conditions and the availability of firefighting resources. This prescribed fire project is located along the eastern boundary of the park, adjacent to the Zion Ponderosa Ranch. The objectives of the prescribed fire are to provide protection for surrounding property and structures by reducing the fire hazard along the park boundary and to restore fire to its natural role in ecosystem. This Rx was originally scheduled for last month, but was postponed due to unfavorable fuel and weather conditions.

This second entry burn (the area was last burned in the fall of 2004) will begin with a hand-ignited blacklining operation along the park's boundary to create a buffer zone and reduce the chances for the fire to cross control lines. The remaining portion of the 654 acres will then be ignited by using hand ignition or aerial techniques. Once ignited, the fire will actively burn for 3-5 days and then smolder for several more days. The fire will be closely monitored until declared out. Numerous interagency resources will be on scene to implement the Rx including firefighters, wildland engines, a water tender and helicopter.

Short-term impacts include smoky conditions possible for 3-5 days and the temporary closure of trails in the vicinity of the burn area. Forecasted weather conditions should provide good smoke dispersal, but there is potential for smoke in the valleys during the nights and early mornings. During ignition, the East Rim Trail system will be closed from the East Entrance to the Observation Point Trail. This closure includes the Deertrap Mountain and Cable Mountain Trails. The Observation Point Trail will remain open. No overnight camping will be allowed along the East Rim Trail during this closure. The trail system will reopen once it is safe for park visitors to use it.

The East Zion Focus Zone, which incorporates the area around the Clear Trap Burn Unit, has been identified by state and federal land management agency administrators as one of six Wildland/Urban Interface Focus Areas requiring priority fuels treatment in the Color Country Interagency Fire Management Area. This area covers all of southwest Utah and northwest Arizona.

For more information about this or other prescribed fire projects in Zion, call 435-772-7811 or visit our website at [www.nps.gov/zion/naturescience/fire-management-homepage.htm](http://www.nps.gov/zion/naturescience/fire-management-homepage.htm).

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