

**Fiscal Year:** 2014  
**State:** Utah  
**Agency:** National Park Service  
**Theme:** Fire Adapted Communities

## **Park Completes South Campground Prescribed Burn Zion National Park, Utah Cohesive Strategy – Fire Adapted Communities**

In mid-January of 2014, Zion National Park Fire Management completed a prescribed burn (Rx) in South Campground, near the main park entrance, to help reduce the fire hazard and provide a greater safety factor for park visitors, adjacent landowners and park staff. This 30 acre Rx is an annual burn conducted in the park. Fire management works very closely with the park maintenance and resource staffs in the planning and preparation for the burn.



During most of the year, Zion's South Campground is very busy, with full capacity of its 128 sites reached on most days. Recent years have brought an aggressive invasion of exotic grasses, especially cheatgrass, into the campground area. Once these grasses dry, they are very easily ignited and have led to numerous small fires in the campground. Campfires are normally allowed in the campground unless the fire danger reaches levels where fire restrictions are put into place. Even with fire restrictions, fires have occurred due to human carelessness. Though no major fires have occurred in the campground, the possibility is there. These fires could present a real danger to campers due to the amount of hazardous fuels available and the confined nature of the campground.

This annual Rx is conducted to reduce the amount of cured, exotic fuels that has accumulated from the previous year and thus reduce the risk of an uncontrolled wildfire. The burn is accomplished during the winter season when the campground is closed. Once the hazardous fuels are ready to burn and the campground prepped, fire management staff ignites the pockets of fuel using hand-held drip torches. The project usually takes one to two days to complete depending on weather conditions and availability of firefighting resources. The burn generally does not create much smoke due to the nature of the fuels and there is very little disruption to park activities.

The process of fuel reduction in the campground will reduce the risks from wildland fire and human caused fire and will provide a greater safety factor for visitors, firefighters and park staff.

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