National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Zion National Park

July 2010

Springdale, Utah 84767

435 772-3256 phone
435 772-3426 fax
www.nps.gov/zion

Zion National Park Fire Management

East Entrance Prescribed Fire Completed

In the spring of 2010, fire management personnel from Zion National Park, with cooperation from our interagency partners, completed implementation of the East Entrance Prescribed Fire (Rx). This burn unit is located along the park's eastern boundary, near the entrance station. Implementation on the burn unit began in 2009 but was not able to be completed due to weather conditions. The objectives of the Rx were to provide protection for surrounding property and structures, reduce fuel loading and restore fire to its natural role in the ecosystem. A total of 240 acres were treated in this final phase of the project.

Hand ignition of the burn unit was conducted slowly over a period of two weeks as weather conditions allowed. Firefighters worked closely with the park resource management staff to establish a mosaic pattern on the landscape to create both a buffer to wildfire while also leaving enough native plants to re-seed the burned areas. Smoke dispersal was very good during the burn due to favorable wind conditions and a high clearing index. Very few impacts were encountered during the burn, although there were some short traffic delays from smoke and emergency vehicles on the roadway. Firefighters were very sensitive to visitor safety during the project since the Rx was along side the main park road.

The East Entrance Rx will benefit both Zion National Park and the landowners and residents of the East Zion area. The burn will not only provide them with a lowered risk from wildland fire, but will also benefit the plants and animals of the area by providing a more diverse landscape. The policy of using fire as a management tool will help decrease risks to life, property, and resources and will help perpetuate the values for which Zion National Park was established.