National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Zion National Park

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Zion National Park Fire Management

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Zion Firefighters Receive Special Thanks for Their Efforts

Wildland firefighters commonly put in long hours in harsh and dangerous conditions helping to manage fires on public and private lands. Normally after these long days on the fireline they go home or to a fire camp and consider it just another days work. They are part of a large and dedicated family of firefighters scattered across the country. They don't seek fame or glory for the job they do. It is refreshing though when they are recognized for their efforts. That very thing recently happened when an engine crew from Zion National Park responded to the lightning caused Kolob Peak Fire, just outside of the park boundary on private lands on July 29, 2009. The following is a copy of an article that was printed on August 26, 2009, in the St. George, Utah newspaper, *The Spectrum*, by a local family who owned property near the fire.

"We do not know the name of the helicopter pilot that spotted the fire on the peak of the mountain and dowsed it with water to stop the spread. We do not know the names of the wonderful Park Service members that trudged through the mountain terrain to get to the fire and put themselves in jeopardy cutting a fire break and downing dead trees to make sure that the fire didn't spread. We don't know the names of the fire truck drivers that hauled that truck up the mountain to assist, but we do know what to call them: They are Dream Savers or the Zion Canyon Fire Department.

We all have dreams, and ours are simple. But they were very much about to be snuffed out by the lightening that hit Kolob Peak recently. We were called and told about the possibility of it burning, and we do know that someday it will, but that day was not the day, thanks to you.

We would like you all to be aware of what you did that day. You may think that you were just doing your job, but you were doing so much more. You see, my husband's father passed away a few years ago, and my husband inherited that piece of property and along with it great memories and dreams of his father. It is still hard missing him, but when you can drive just a few miles away and "feel" him everywhere, the pain is not as unbearable.

Everything we do on that mountain we do to make him proud, and that night all of that was seeming to fade away. Every weekend, when the weather permits (and sometimes when it doesn't) I can guarantee you that we are on that mountain. Building roads, teepees, mushrooms out of pieces of trees, our very own little, "Alice in Kolob Wonderland."

We have dreams of building and enjoying and creating something for generations yet to come. Something that our kids and grandkids, etc., will come to cherish as much as we do, and they will all know about the man who began it and the man who continued it and now the story of the brave men that saved it - a life of fun and love on that mountain so that all of our family can have the same wonderful memories of it that my husband has.

Because of your hard work our dreams can continue, at least for a little while longer.

We do not believe that there is any way that we can ever express our complete appreciation for you. We went to bed one night with visions of our dreams going "up in smoke" and the reality of it is that it almost did!

So the biggest "thanks" to the helicopter pilot with the eagle eye that spotted that fire and the ground crew that went into that area, both on foot and in the truck, just to "do their job."

You have done so very, very much more than that. Thank you for saving our dreams."

Gary and Michele Ballard
Hurricane, UT