Zion

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Zion National Park

2022 Guide to Seasonal Raptor Closures

Guide to Zion Raptor Closures

National Park Service
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Zion National Park

How to Use This Guide

Confirming Closure Status

This guide contains all closures that go into effect on March 1st, 2022. As park staff and volunteers identify nests or as fledglings leave the nest, these cliffs will open to climbing and the closure will no longer be in effect. **If you wish to climb in a crag listed in this document, first check the park website to confirm the status of the closure.** If the website lists a cliff as "OPEN" then the closure listed in this guide does not apply. If the website lists a cliff as "CLOSED" then the boundary indicated in the guide applies. The list of active closures can be found at: https://www.nps.gov/zion/planyourvisit/climbing-closures.htm or by scanning the QR code below.

Interpreting the Guide

The photographic closure graphics in this guide are meant to serve as the legal indicator of closure boundaries while the maps are best approximations. Route overlays are only meant to serve as points of reference, and not as accurate as published guidebooks, information at the Wilderness desk, or other sources of beta. If you have any questions or suggestions for improving this information, please email ZION_Wildlife@nps.gov.

Background Information

The cliffs of Zion National Park provide both unique nesting habitat for raptors and recreational opportunities for climbers. Because the needs of sensitive Peregrine Falcons and California Condors are prioritized, limited areas of Zion are closed annually to climbers in the spring to allow raptors to nest. These closures are in areas that have historically been used as nest sites and are the most likely areas for human-wildlife conflict. Specific closure boundaries are designed based on our best understanding of raptor nesting behavior using the most current science.

Raptors are most sensitive when establishing their nests and disturbances can cause them to avoid an area or abandon a nest in progress. Climbers are perceived as predators by the birds and climbers above or below a potential nest site can cause the birds to abandon an area or behave aggressively toward climbers. Closures cover broad areas at the start of the season to give raptors first choice in selecting a suitable nest site. Park wildlife biologist, in partnership with park volunteers from the Zion Climbing Coalition, monitor these areas to locate nests. Once nesting is completed and raptors have finished using a nest site, that area can be reopened fully. This method helps species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, helps reduce aggressive behavior of raptors toward climbers, and ensures areas are opened as soon as possible to allow climbing.

Some raptors, such as the California Condor, have longer nesting seasons so it is possible for those nest areas to remain closed for longer periods. Other closures may also be established for reasons such as trail damage, park operations, etc. These other closures supersede the closures in this guide, so please check the Zion National Park website nps.gov for the most up-to-date information on closures.

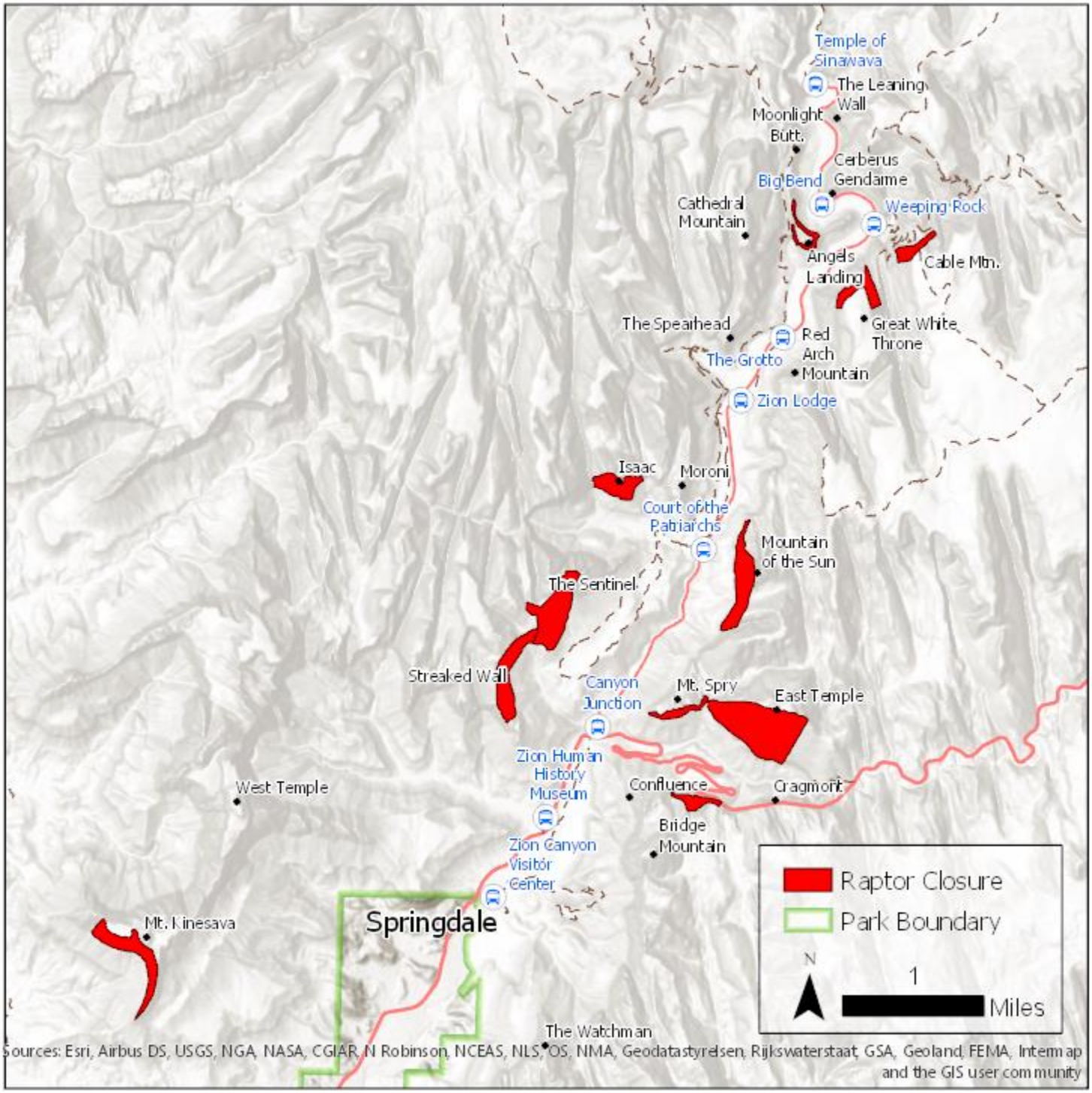
Check Status of Closures

Notes

Last updated *March 1st, 2022*. Check website for most updated version. All overnight climbs require a bivy permit which is available at the Wilderness Desk.

Seasonal Raptor Closure Overview Map

Below is an overview map of all possible raptor closures in the park. Closures go into effect on March 1st but as nest locations are identified, some cliffs are opened. **Please check the park website for a current listing of closed cliffs/crags.**



Note: All maps are approximations of closures. Please reference photos for accurate legal boundaries.

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Angels Landing Closures

Angels Landing in a unique closure territory. This area has been known to host both nesting peregrine falcons and California condors (endangered species). Because of this, three different closure scenarios are possible. *Check the park's website for the current closure status.* These possible statuses are as follows:

Peregrine Falcon Closure

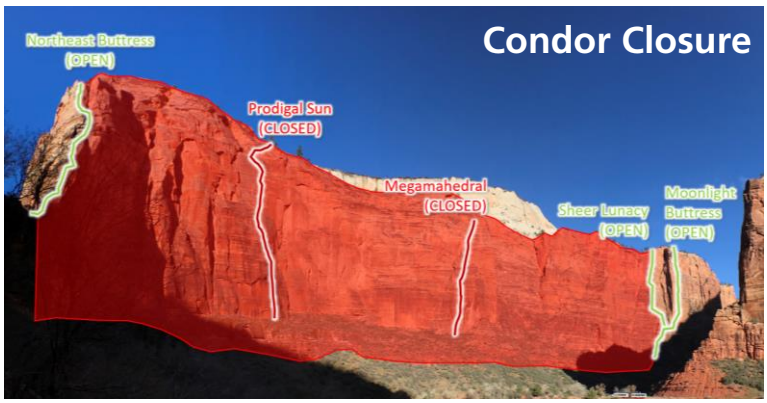
For this closure scenario, all routes on the south face, east face, and north face are closed except those routes on the organ or below the vegetated terrace beneath the east face. The closure extends up canyon to the climbing route Megamahedral on Minotaur Tower with that route being the first open route. Routes such as Sheer Lunacy, Suburban Blondes, and Moonlight Buttress are open. Northeast Buttress is closed as are all routes on the south face until you reach Megamahedral

Condor Closure

Routes on the south face are unaffected and remain open until you reach Northeast Buttress. Northeast Buttress is open, but all climbs up canyon of this route are closed until you reach Sheer Lunacy which is the first open route. This includes routes on Minotaur Tower. Moonlight Buttress and Lunar Ecstasy are also open.

Peregrine Falcon and Condor Closure

This closure extends from the south facing routes such as Apollyon, includes east facing routes such as NE Buttress, and continues across the north face until you reach Sheer Lunacy with Sheer Lunacy being the first open route. Northeast Buttress and Megamahedral are closed in this scenario.



The purpose of including all scenarios in this guide is to allow park staff to quickly open climbing without having the time delay of issuing a new guide. Please check the park website for the up-to-date closure status and reference the guide for the applicable boundaries.

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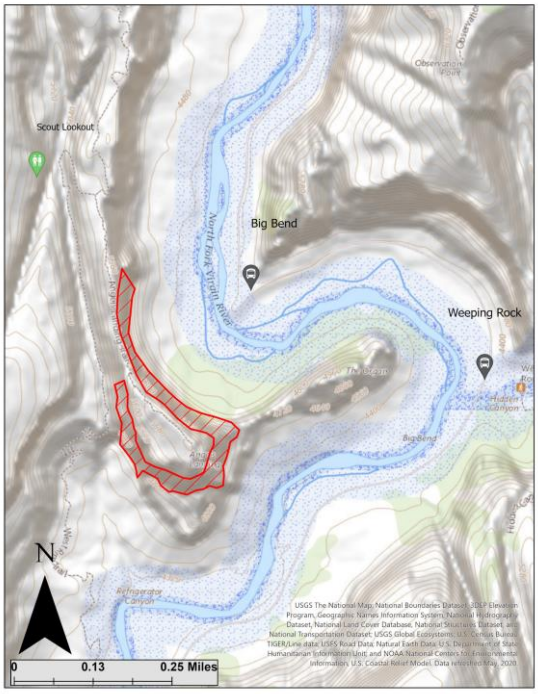
Angels Landing Closures – Peregrine Falcon Closure



Map of seasonal cliff closures for Angels Landing under a peregrine only closure.

If the park website states that only peregrine falcon closures are in effect, then the following boundaries are applicable. Please check the park website for current status.

North Face

Routes on the North Face of Angels Landing are closed from *Northeast Buttress* to *Megamahedral* with *Megamahedral* being the first open route. Up-canyon routes such as *Sheer Lunacy* and Moonlight Buttress remain open.

East Face

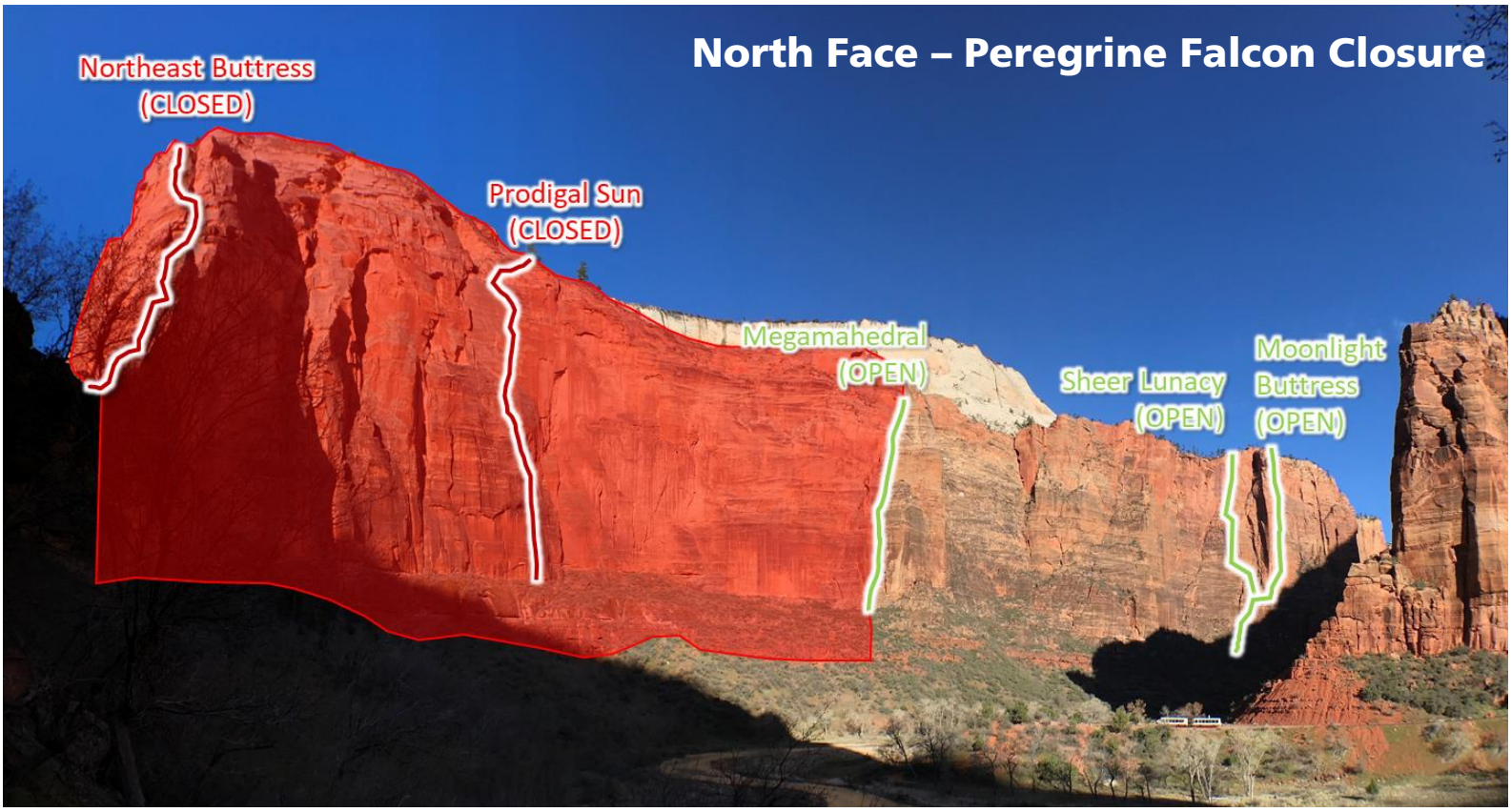
Routes on the East Face of Angels Landing are closed above the vegetated shelf/terrace. French Draper is open to the terrace but the *Unknown 5.10* is closed after pitch 3 where it meets the terrace.

South Face

Routes below the terrace on the South Face of Angels Landing remain open including *South Face* and *Angels Box* but routes to the west of the terrace are closed such as *Apollyon*.

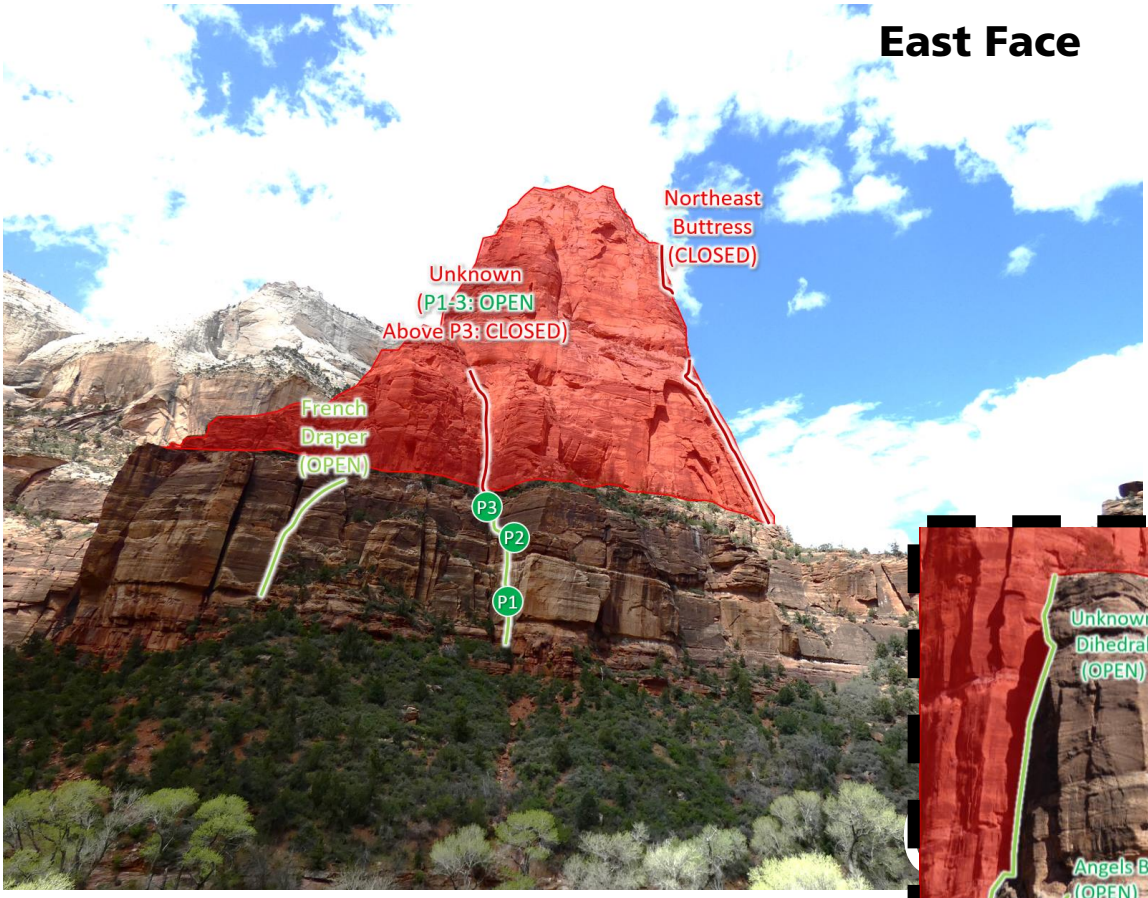
Organ

All routes on the Organ remain open east of where the East Buttress joins the Organ.

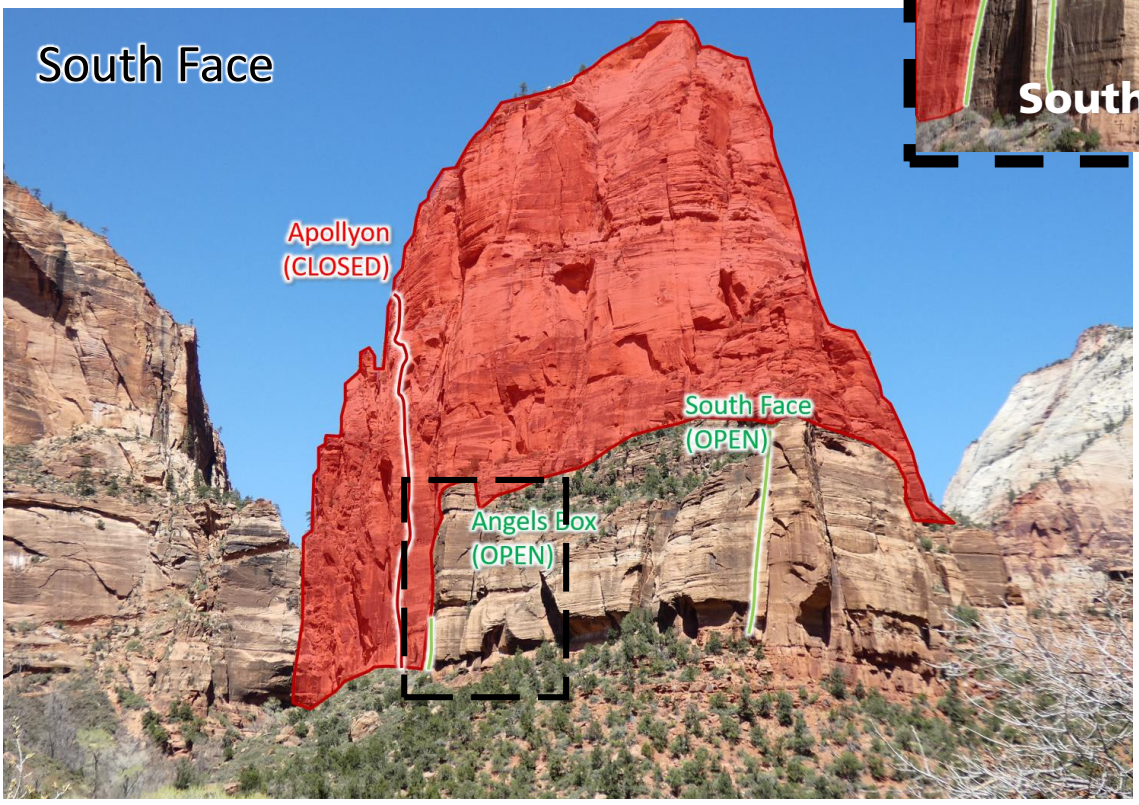


North Face of Angels Landing with a peregrine falcon closure in effect. Please check the park website for current status. The above image is only accurate if the Park website states, "Peregrine Falcon only closure in effect…".

Angels Landing Closures – Peregrine Falcon Closure (Cont.)



East Face of Angels Landing with current seasonal raptor closures. Routes on the East Face of Angels Landing are closed above the vegetated shelf/terrace. French Draper is open to the terrace but the *Unknown 5.10* is closed after pitch 3 where it meets the terrace. All routes on the **Organ** are open.



South Face of Angels Landing with current seasonal raptor closures. Routes below the terrace on the South Face of Angels Landing remain open including *South Face* and *Angels Box* but routes to the west of the terrace are closed such as *Apollyon*. The vegetated terrace itself is also closed.

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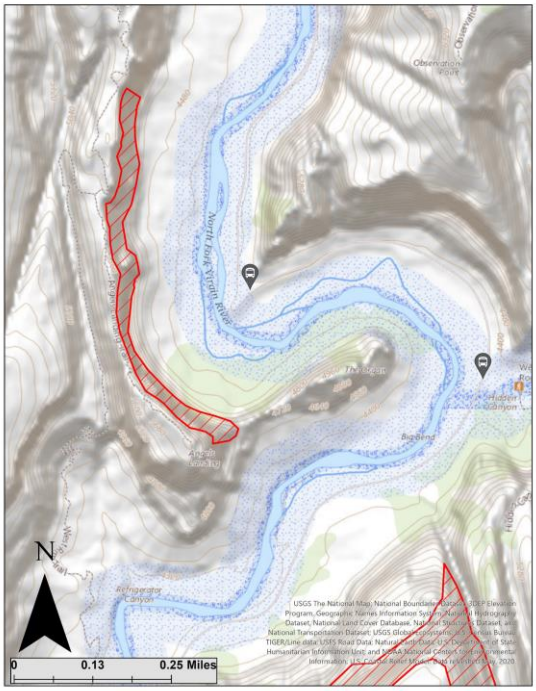
Angels Landing Closures – Condor Closure



Map of seasonal cliff closures for Angels Landing under a condor closure scenario.

If the park website states that only the condor closures is in effect, then the following boundaries are applicable. Please check the park website for current status.

North Face

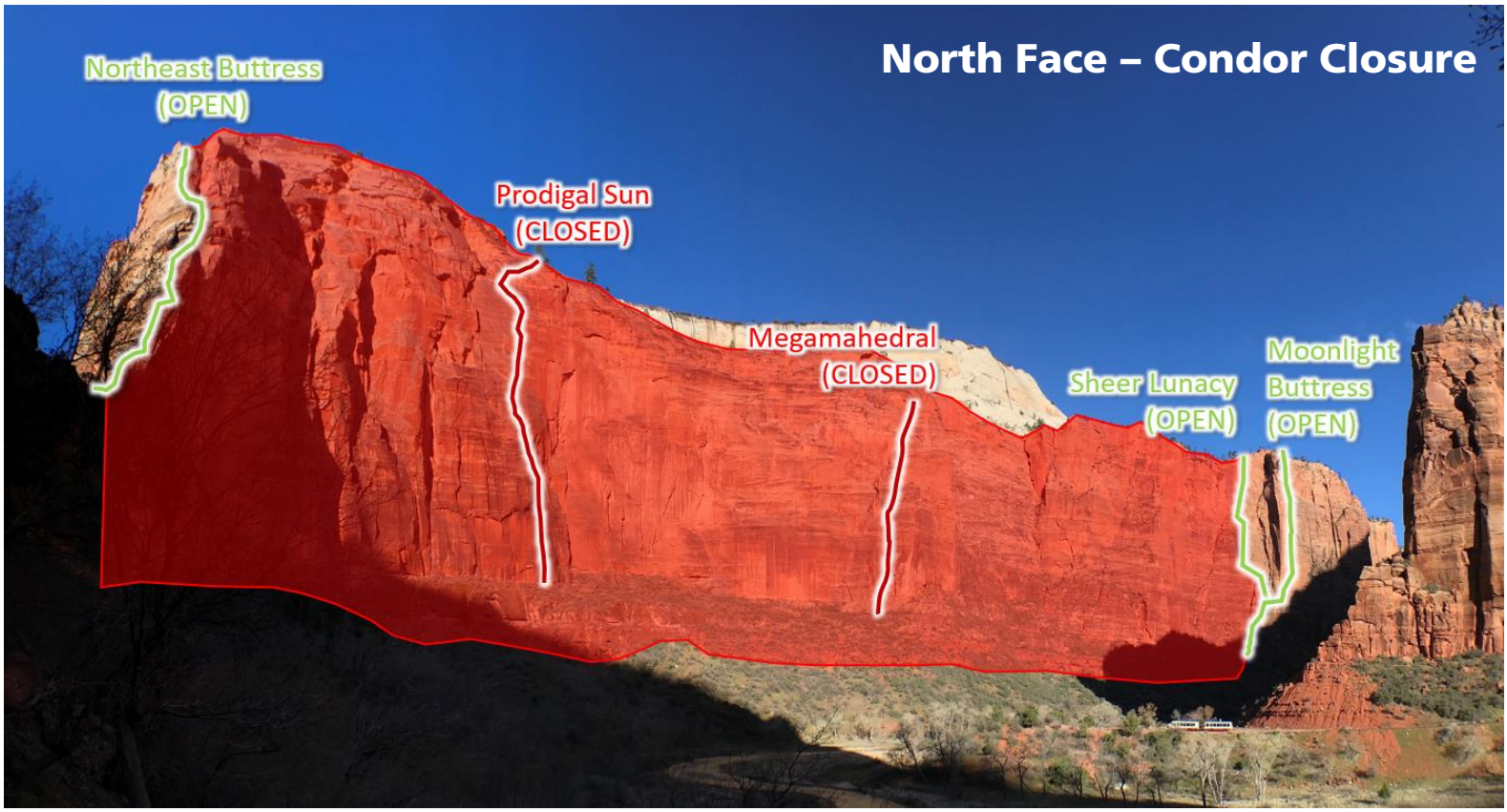
Routes on the North Face of Angels Landing are closed from *Northeast Buttress* to *Sheer Lunacy* with both routes being open. *Megamahedral* is closed as are all routes in Minotaur tower. Upcanyon routes, such as *Lunar Ecstasy* and *Moonlight Buttress* remain open.

East Face

Routes on the east face are open including *Northeast Buttress*.

South Face

All routes on the south face including *Apollyon* are open.



North Face of Angels Landing with a condor closure in effect. Please check the park website for current status. The above image is only accurate if the Park website states, “Condor only closure in effect…”.

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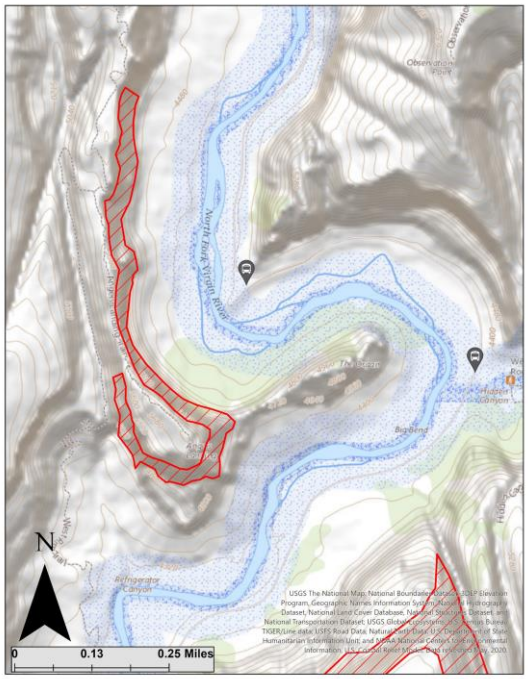
Angels Landing Closures – Peregrine Falcon and Condor Closure



Map of seasonal cliff closures for Angels Landing under a peregrine falcon AND condor closure scenario.

If the park website states that both the peregrine falcon and condor closures are in effect, then the following boundaries are applicable. Please check the park website for current status.

North Face

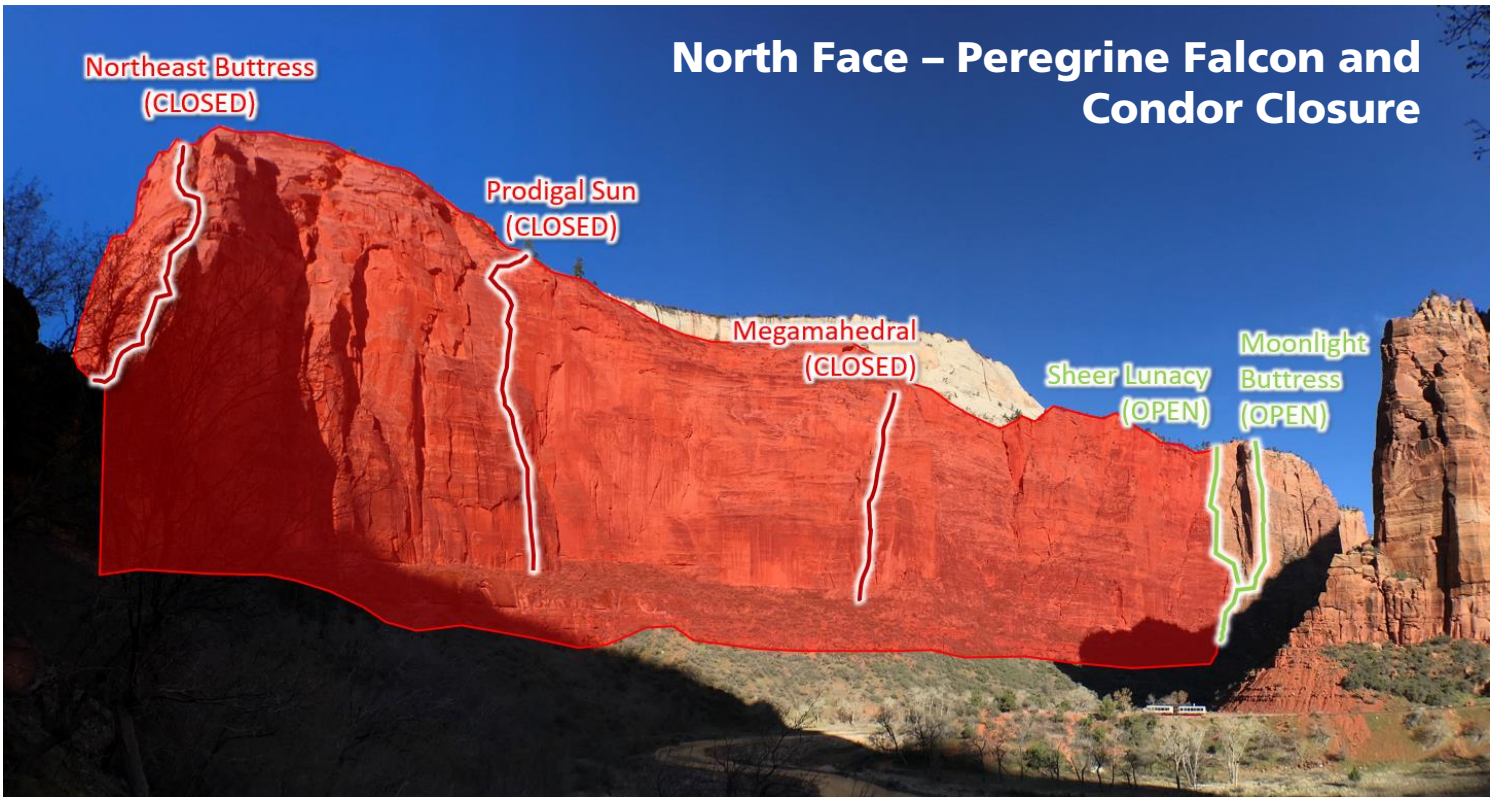
Routes on the North Face of Angels Landing are closed until *Sheer Lunacy* with *Sheer Lunacy* being open. *Megamahedral* is closed as are all routes in Minotaur tower. Upcanyon routes, such as *Lunar Ecstasy* and *Moonlight Buttress* remain open.

East Face (See photos in the Peregrine only section for boundaries)

Routes on the East Face of Angels Landing are closed above the vegetated shelf/terrace. French Draper is open to the terrace but the *Unknown 5.10* is closed after pitch 3 where it meets the terrace.

South Face (See photos in the Peregrine only section for boundaries)

Routes below the terrace on the South Face of Angels Landing remain open including *South Face* and *Angels Box* but routes to the west of the terrace are closed such as *Apollyon*.



North Face of Angels Landing with both a peregrine falcon and condor closure in effect. Please check the park website for current status. The above image is only accurate if the Park website states, "Peregrine Falcon and Condor closure in effect…".

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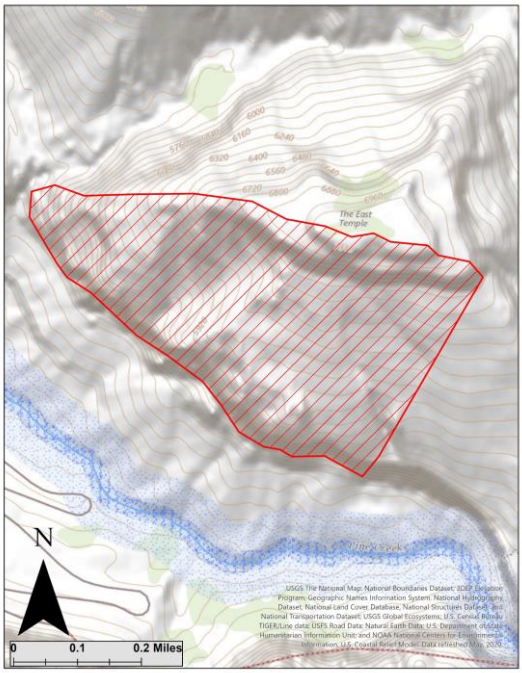
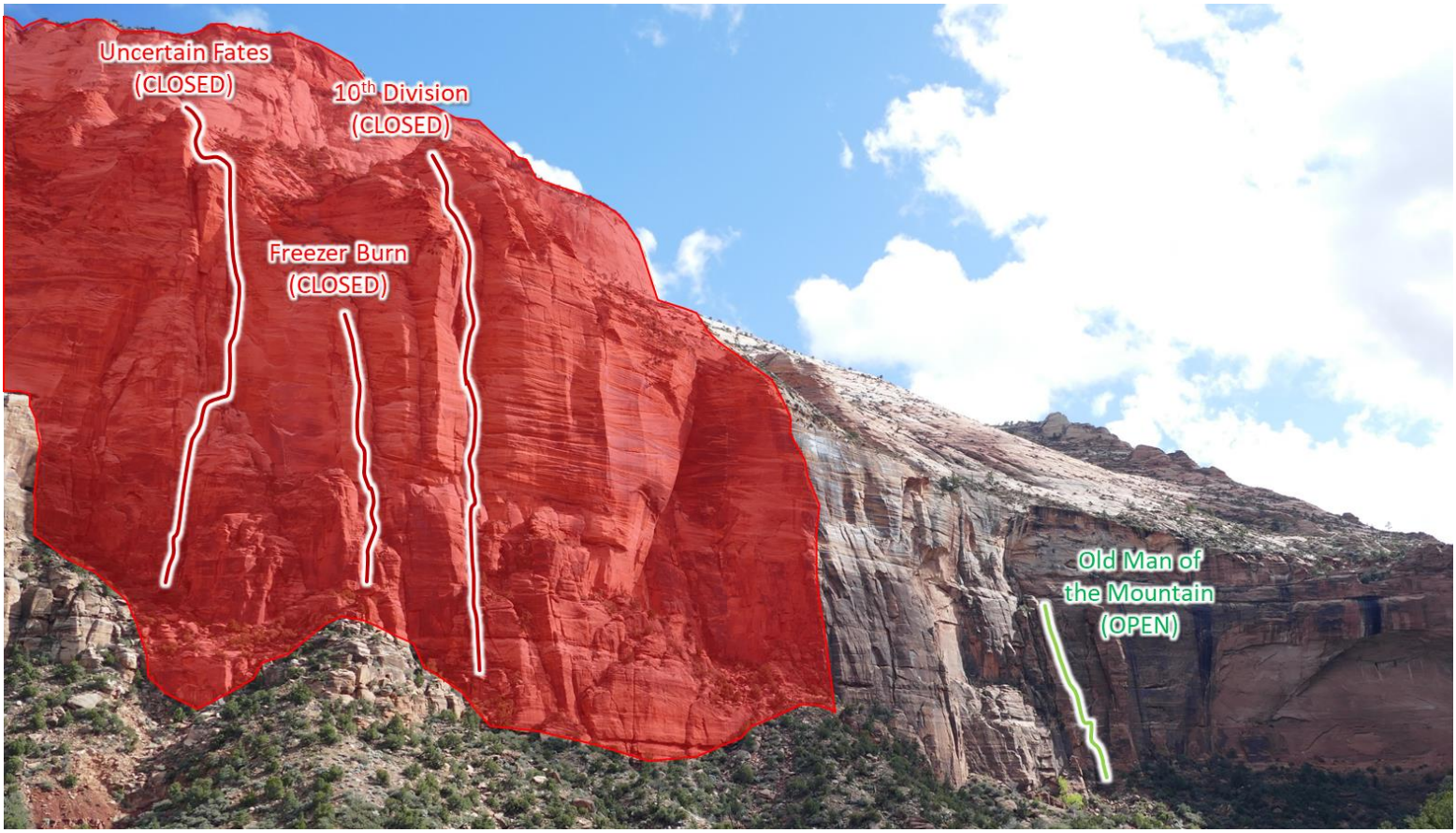
The East Temple Closure



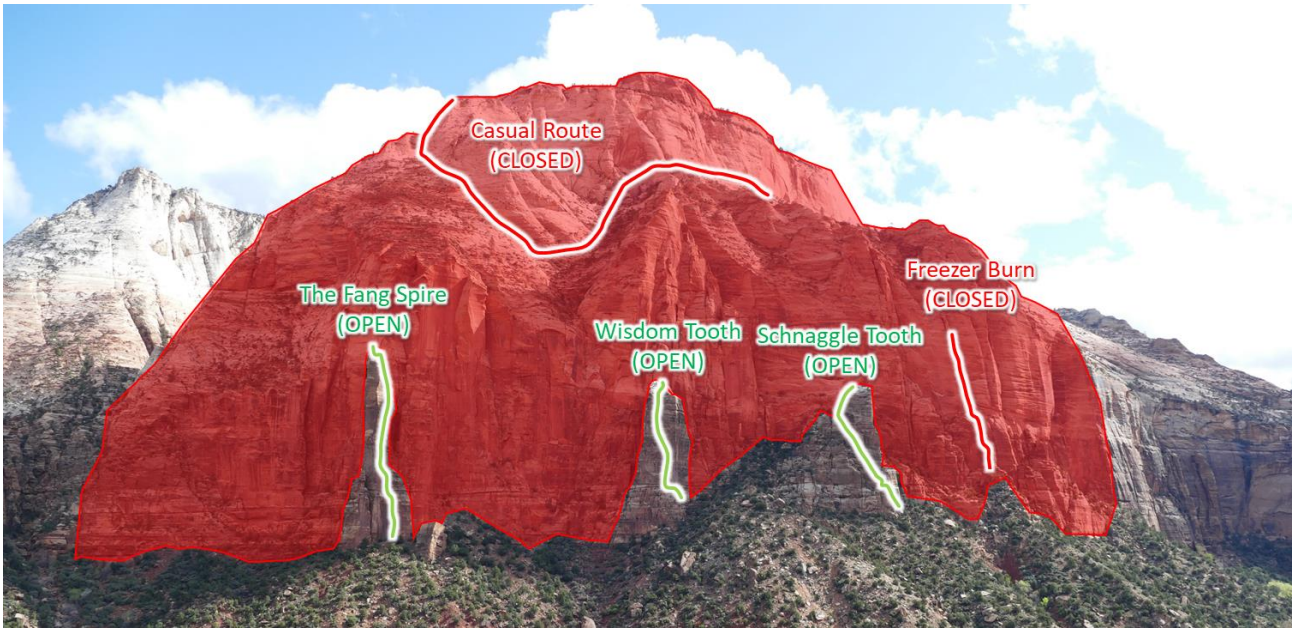
Map of cliff closures for the East Temple.

Routes on the South Face of the East Temple are closed from the apex of the prominent varnished buttress east of *10th Division*, west to the ridge above Spry Canyon. This includes the *Casual Route* up to the summit. Routes on adjacent towers remain **OPEN**. This includes the routes *Fang Spire*, *Schnaggle Tooth*, and the *Wisdom Tooth* and any other routes that may be on these formations. Routes east along the face past the buttress, such as *Old Man of the Mountain*, remain open.

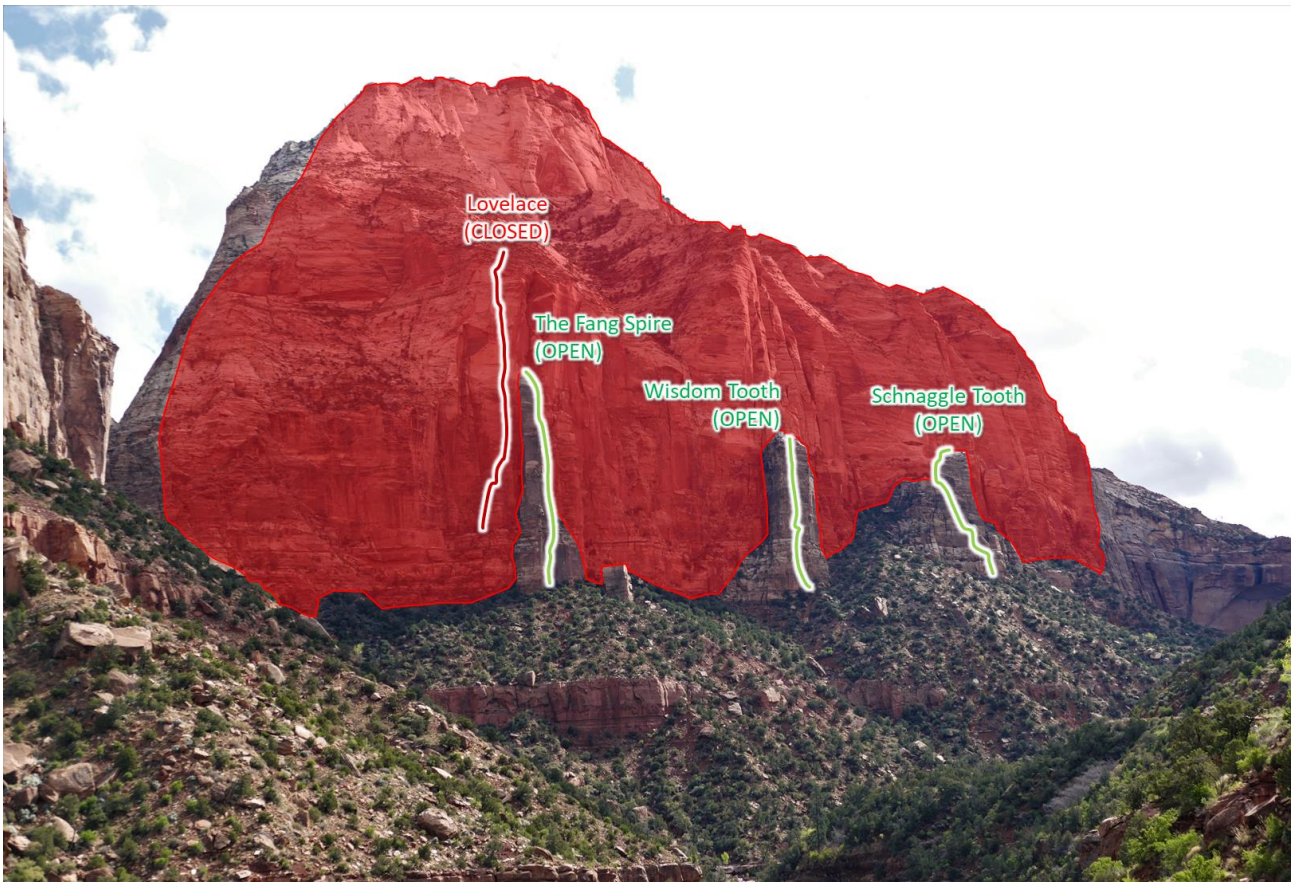


Eastern boundary of the East Temple Closure. The apex of the varnished buttress designates the eastern most boundary of the closure.

The East Temple Closure (Cont.)



South Face of the East Temple closure. The *Casual Route* up to the summit is closed as are all face routes. Tower routes not touching the main face remain open.



Western boundary of the East Temple closure. The west ridgeline to the summit denotes the western boundary of the closure. Routes such as *Lovelace* and *Mobius* (not pictured) are closed. Please note that the Mt. Spry closure is not indicated in this photo.

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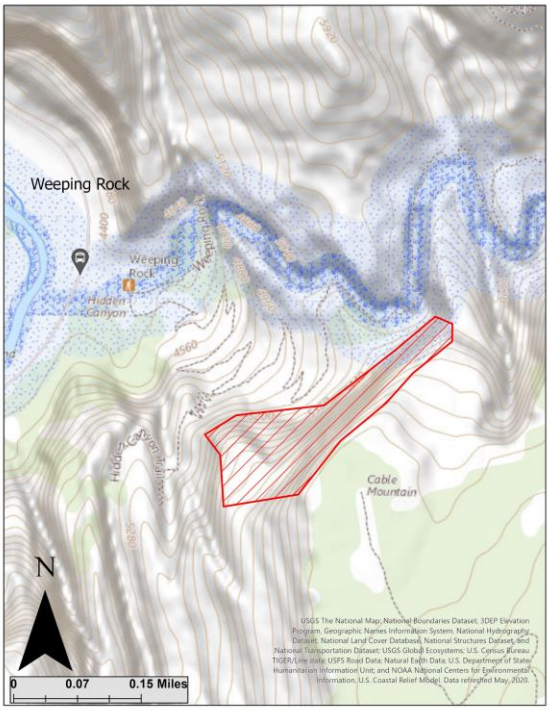
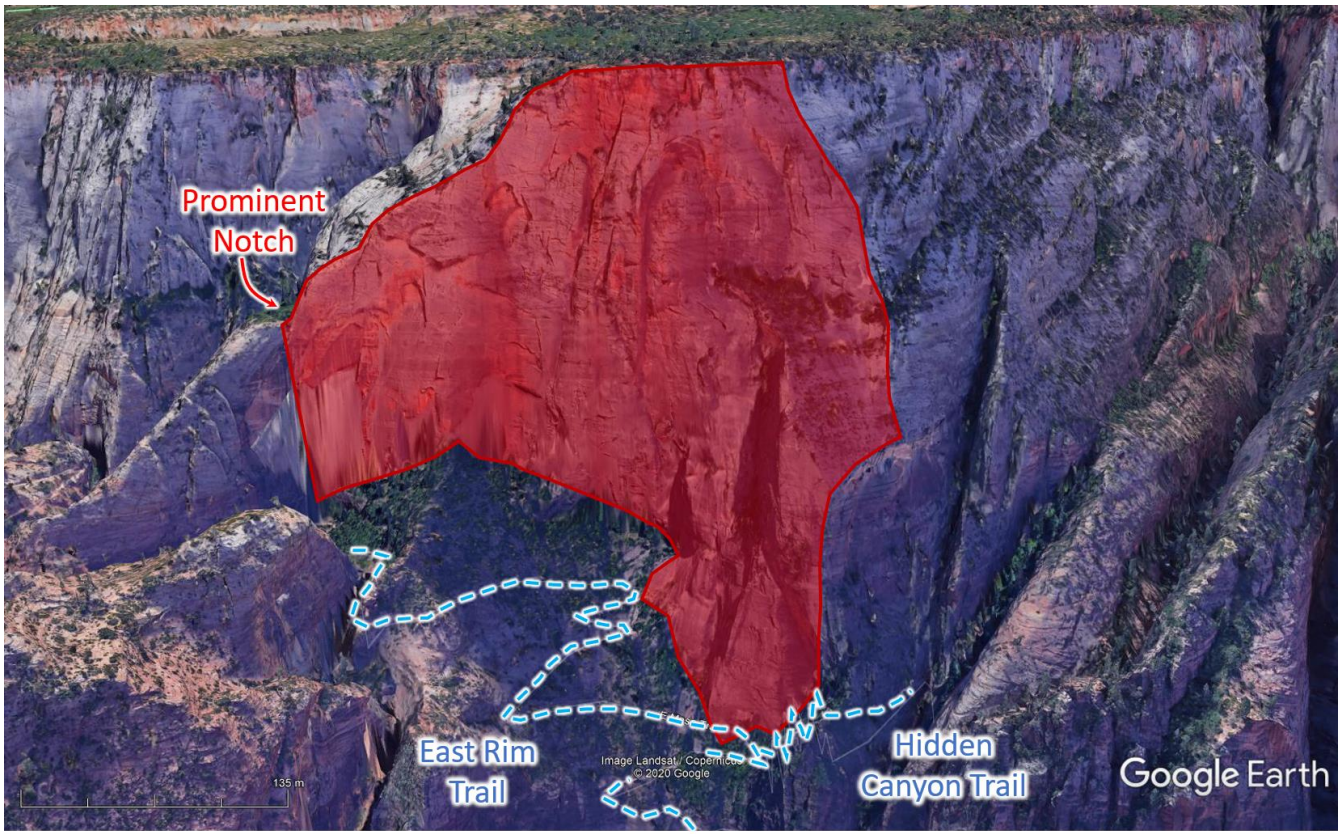
Cable Mountain Closures



Map of seasonal cliff closures for Cable Mtn.

Routes on the main, Northwest, face of Cable Mountain are closed to climbing. The eastern boundary begins above the highest switchback on the Hidden Canyon trail where the trail gains the ridge line. It extends upward to a vegetated slope above a roof. This vegetated slope is included in the closure as it is visible to previous nest sites. The western boundary continues down the ridgeline to the prominent vegetated notch then continues in a plumb line to the ground. *Hammer and Sickle* located in the middle of this face is closed. An extremely large rock fall occurred in 2019 burying the East Rim Trail. **Check current trail conditions to confirm if the trail is open.**



Digital view of Cable Mountain. Prominent features of note are the prominent vegetated notch on the northern edge of the closure and the switch backs of Hidden Canyon Trail which marks the southern boundary.

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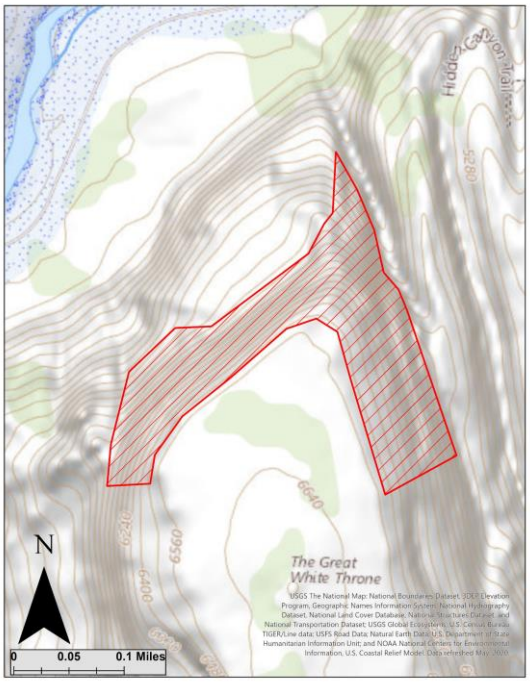
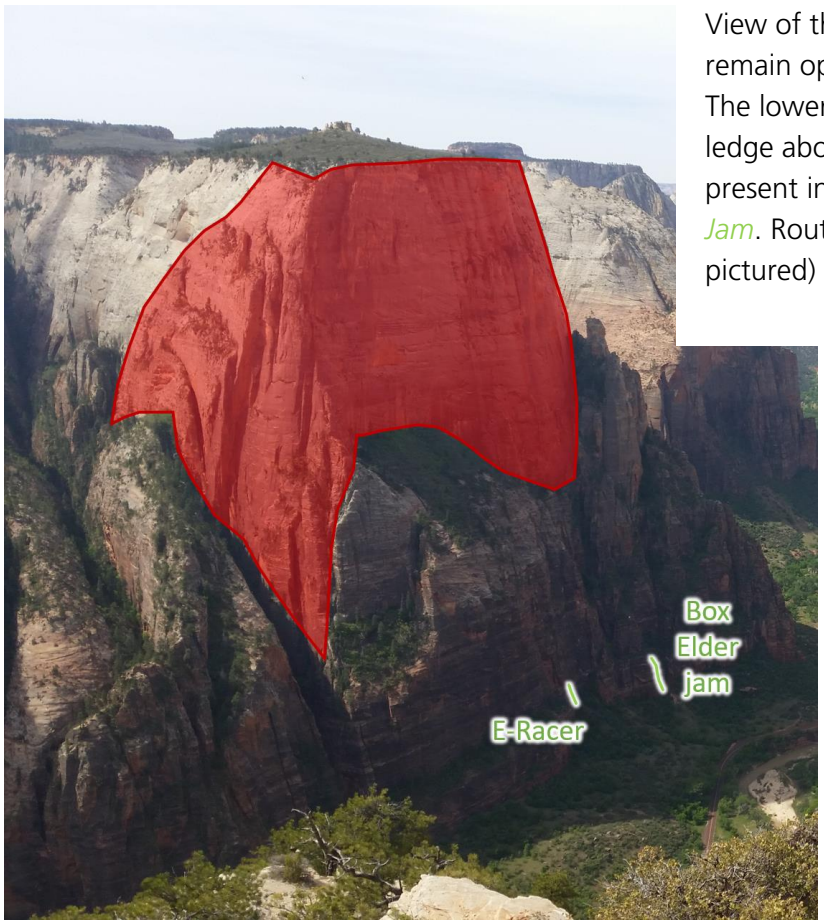
Great White Throne Closures



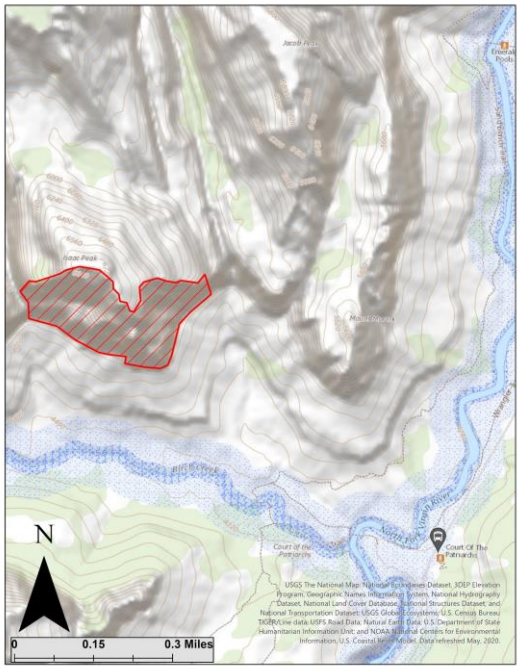
Map of seasonal cliff closures for the Great White Throne

Routes on the upper portion of the Northwest face as well as portions of the east face are closed. This does not affect all lower routes such as *E-Racer*, *Rain*, and *Box Elder Jam* which all remain open. The pillars on the NW shoulder of the Great White Throne are also open. None of the routes on the southwest face are affected by the closure and remain open including all routes from *Nemesis* to *Second Sun*. The southeastern edge of the boundary begins above the notch in the rib above Hidden Canyon and extends up to the plateau rim. The downcanyon boundary is marked by the prominent towers and the NE arete of the formation. The towers are open, but from the notch where they meet the main face up to the plateau top is closed.



View of the closure for Great White Throne. All lower routes remain open including everything from *E-racer* to *Second Sun*. The lower left corner of the closure starts in the notch of the ledge above Hidden Canyon. The towers which are open are present in the right edge of the photo, well above *Box Elder Jam*. Routes on the South Face of the Great White Throne (not pictured) remain open to climbing and are unaffected.

Isaac Peak Closures



Map of seasonal cliff closures for Isaac Peak.

Routes on the south face of Isaac are closed from Jacob Canyon to Isaac Canyon. This includes but is not limited to the following routes: *Tricks of the Trade*, *Freeloader*, and *Iron Like a Lion in Zion.* Both Isaac and Jacob Canyon may be descended and are not included in this closure.

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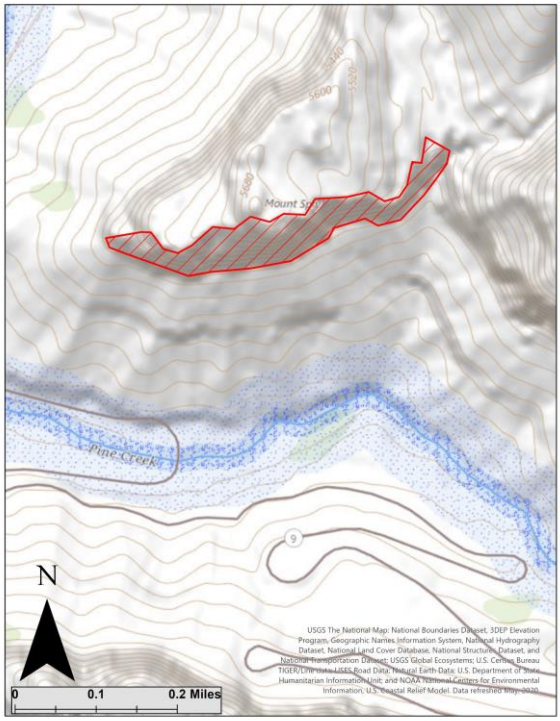
Mt. Spry Closures

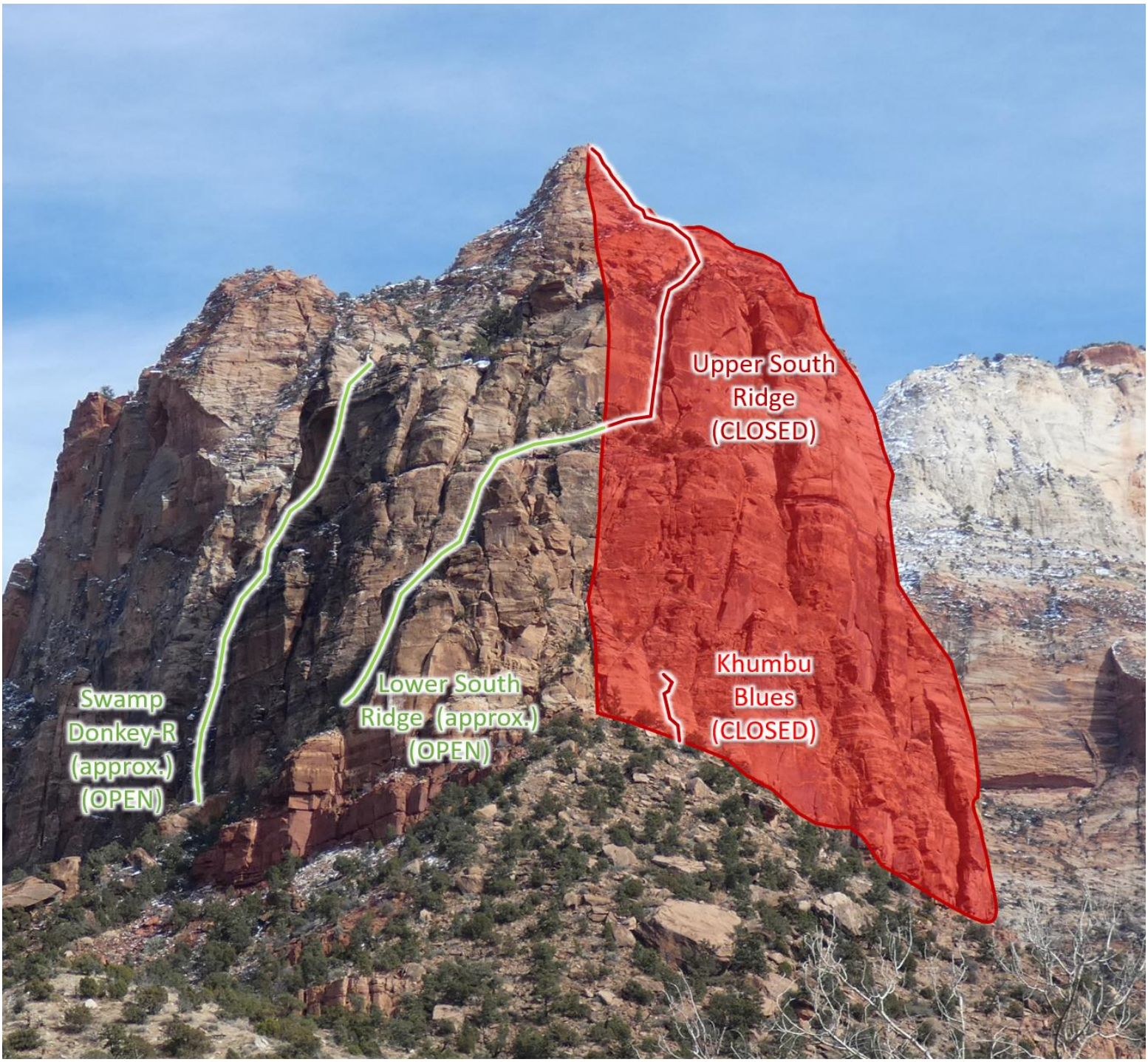


Map of seasonal cliff closures for Mt. Spry

Routes on the South face of Mt. Spry are closed to climbing. The eastern boundary begins at the notch of Spry Canyon and extends west to the upper portion of the southwest ridge (indicated in guidebooks as *South Ridge*). Routes on the south face such as *Hintersands* are closed but routes on the Northwest face such as *Swamp Donkey R/L* and *The Holy Roller* remain open. Climbers on *Swamp Donkey* should rappel the route rather than descending the *South Ridge* which is closed for most of the route. The single pitch routes at the base of the southwest ridge of Mt. Spry such as *Khumbu Blues* and *Sunny Side Up R/L* are closed.

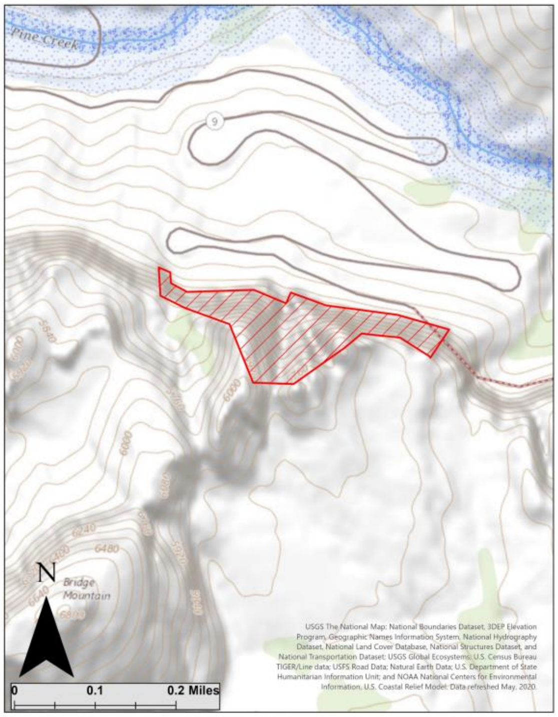
Boundary of the Mt. Spry closure extending from Spry Canyon to the Southwest Ridge. This includes the upper portion of the *South Ridge* and all south facing routes such as *Hintersands* and *Khumbu Blues*.

Mt. Spry Closures (Cont.)



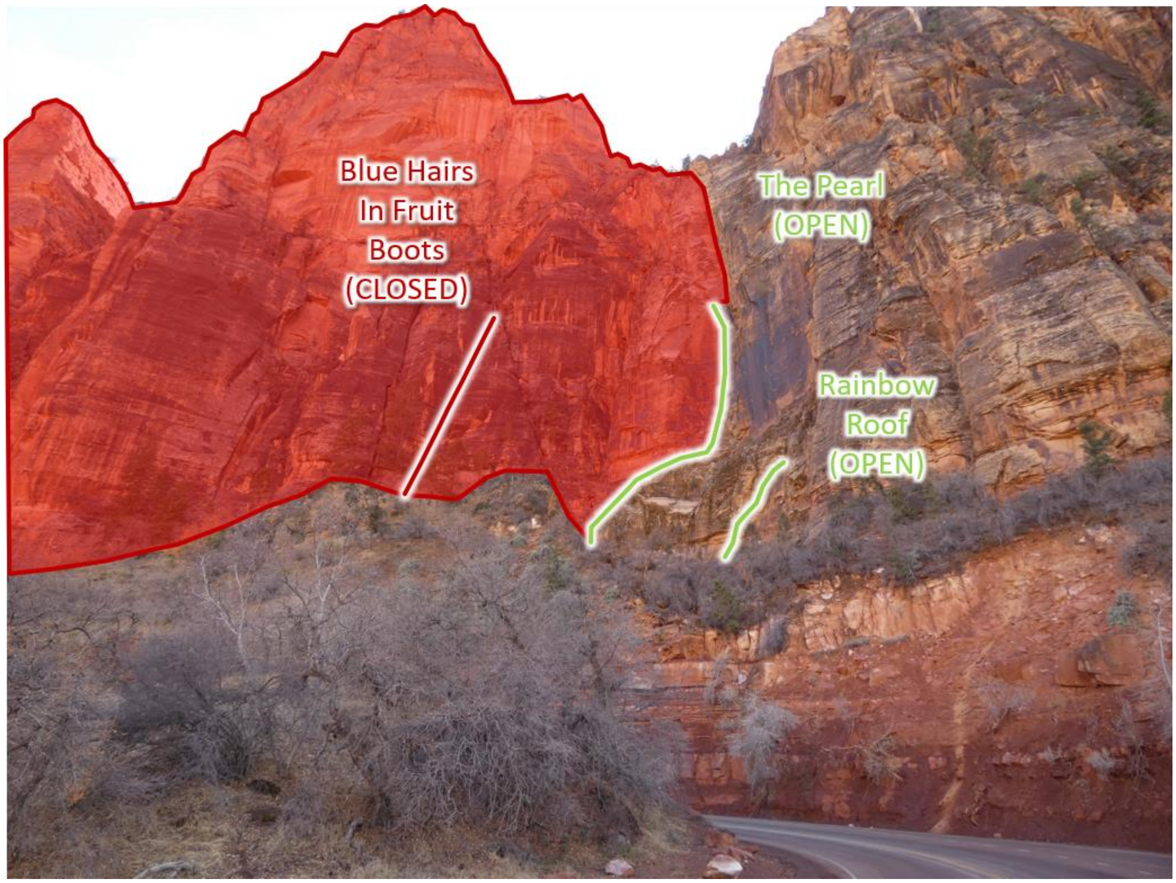
Southeastern edge of the closure boundary. The routes *Khumbu Blues*, *Unknown 5.9*, and *Sunny Side Up L/R* are all closed. South Ridge is open below and NE of the vegetated ledge. Swamp Donkey and all other NW face routes are open.

Tunnel Wall Closures



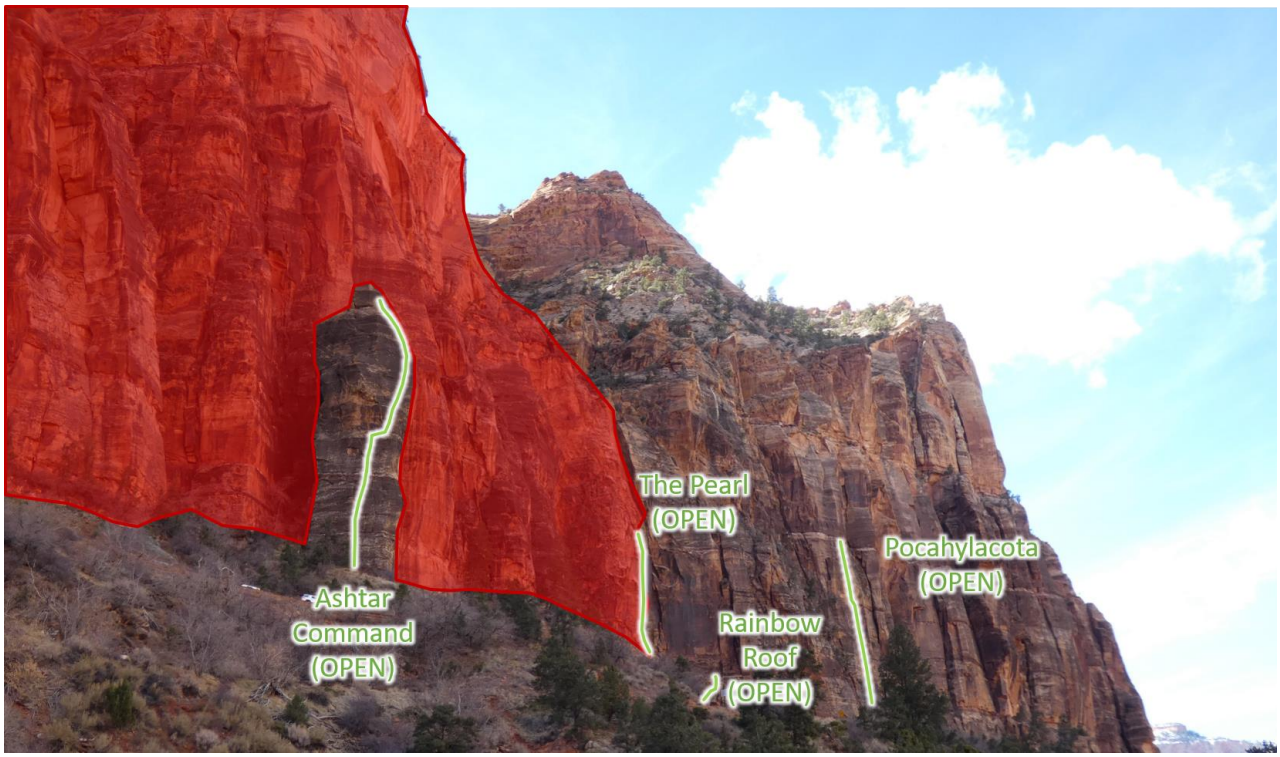
Map of seasonal cliff closures for the Tunnel Wall

Routes on the Tunnel Wall are closed from the last switchback to the west tunnel entrance. However, all routes on the stand-alone Ataxia Tower such as *Ashtar Command*, *Woods Route*, *Feeling Minnesota*, and *Ground Control* are all open. The western boundary of the closure extends to *The Pearl* with *The Peal* being open. *Pocahylacota* and all routes in Kung Fu Theater are open. Tunnel wall routes including *Excedrin*, *Boring Crack*, and *Wheels on Fire* are closed. The eastern boundary follows the prominent dihedral above the tunnel entrance. *The Headache*, *Migraine*, and all routes in Cragmont are OPEN. Routes on *Man Eater Tower* are closed.



Western boundary of the closure looking up from the last switchback. *The Pearl* forms the western boundary of the closure. Although *The Pearl* is open, all terrain above the route is closed following the crack approximately 10’ right of the route up to the cliff edge.

Tunnel Wall Closures (cont.)



View of the western boundary of the closure including Ataxia Tower. *Ashtar Command* and all routes on Ataxia Tower are open as this tower is separated from the main wall.

View of the eastern boundary of the closure. *The Man Eater* is closed as are all face routes to the tunnel entrance. The large dihedral climbers right of *The Headache* forms the eastern boundary.

Tunnel Wall Closures (cont.)

An aerial view of the eastern boundary of the closure. The dihedral above the tunnel entrance forms the boundary. Routes such as *The Headache* and *Migraine* are open as are all routes in Cragmont.

The view from the switchback below *The Headache* of the eastern boundary of the closure. The dihedral above the tunnel entrance forms the boundary. Routes such as *The Headache* and *Never Again* are open as are all routes in Cragmont.

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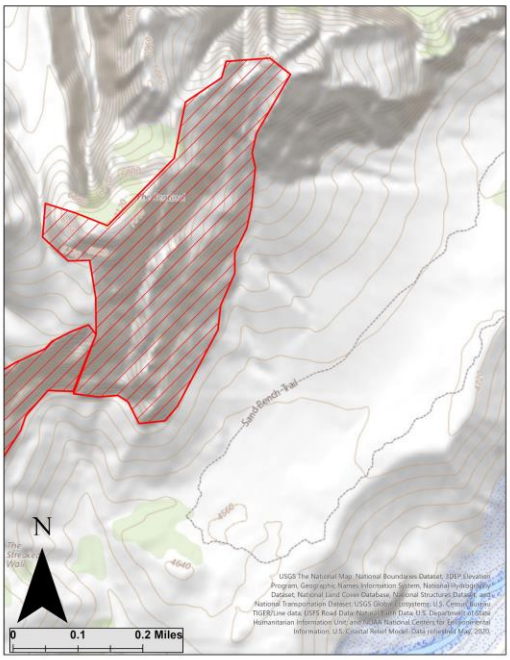
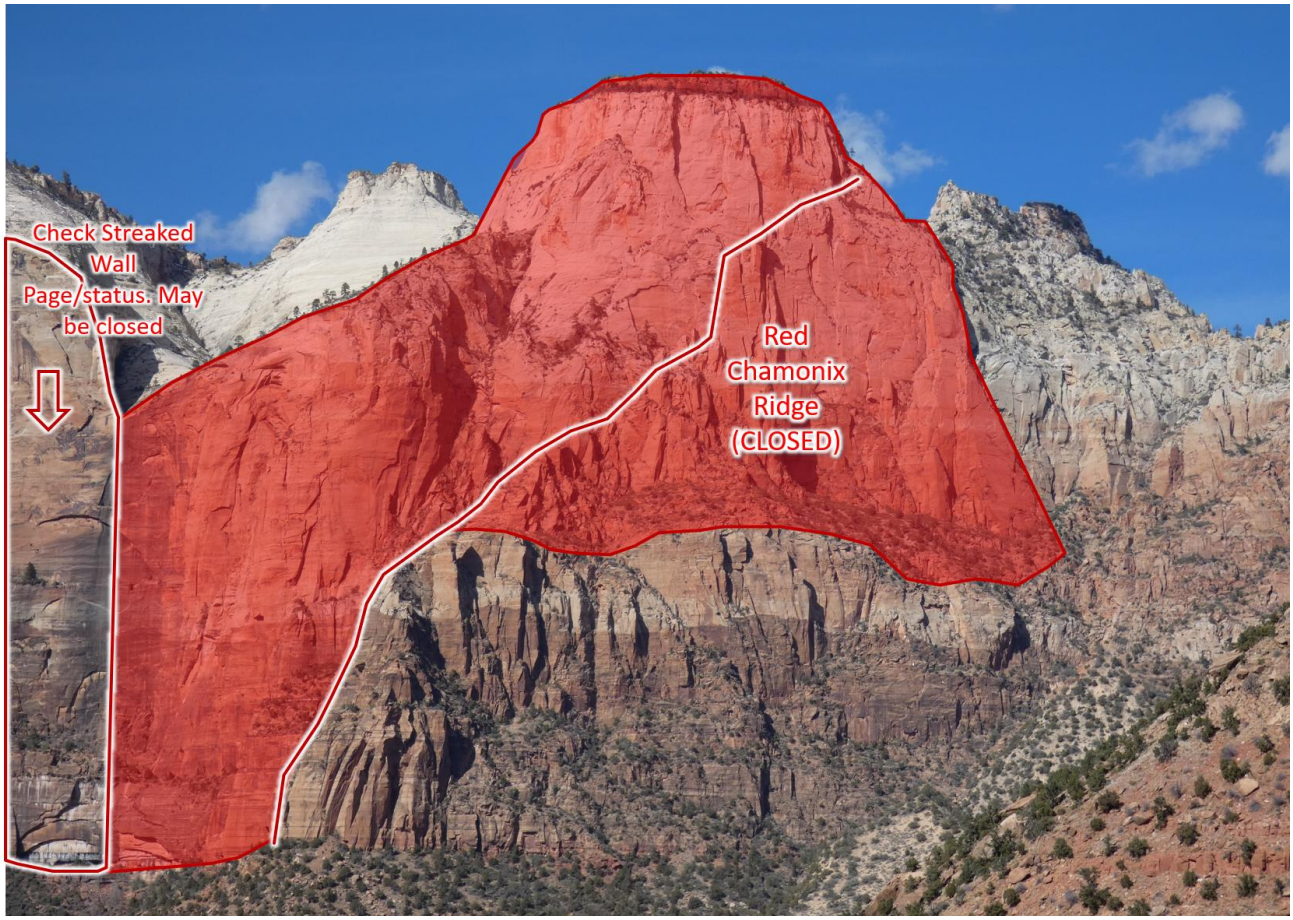
The Sentinel Closures



Map of seasonal cliff closures for The Sentinel.

Routes on the east face of The Sentinel are closed. This includes the *Red Chamonix Ridge*, *Belly of the Buddah*, and *Birdbeak Spire* above the vegetated ledge 1/3 up the face. The southern boundary is the prominent black streak between the Streaked Wall and the Sentinel. The north boundary extends from the temple cap down the ridge into the gulley below. No routes on the north face are affected by the closure such as *Brown Eyed Girl*, *Red Dawn*, or *The Big Easy* and all these routes are open. All climbing below the vegetated ledge and north of the cockscomb ridge is open (see photo below). The ledge itself however is closed and parties should descend after topping out on the ledge.



View of the East Face of The Sentinel from the switchbacks. Note: The Streaked Wall Closure is not represented in this image.

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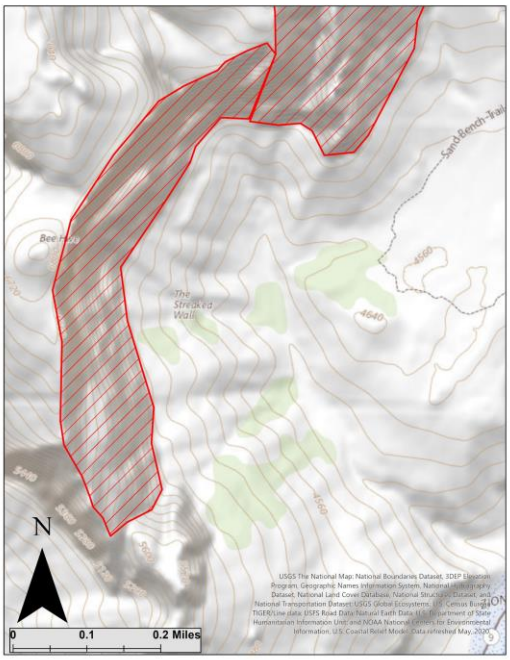
Streaked Wall Closures



Map of seasonal cliff closures for the Streaked Wall with closures for The Sentinel also visible.

Routes on the east face of the Streaked Wall are closed. This includes but is not limited to *Tale of the Scorpion*, *Latitudes*, and *Rodeo Queen*. The route *Wet Stone Wall* is closed above the point where it crosses the middle of the black streak. Parties should check the closures for The Sentinel as the lower portion of the route may be closed as part of The Sentinel closure. The northern boundary is indicated by the center of the black streak. The southern boundary continues near ridge to the gulley but does not include the small crag of pillars or the descent for Angelino Wall.

View of the East Face of the Streaked Wall closures. Boundaries include the black streak and gulley above the small crag containing multiple small towers and pillars.

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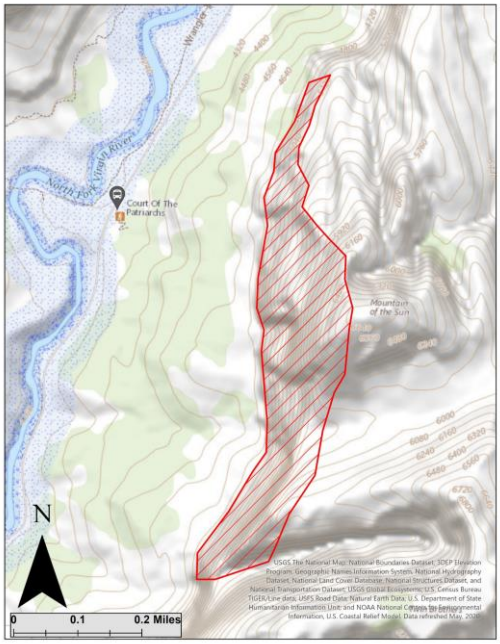
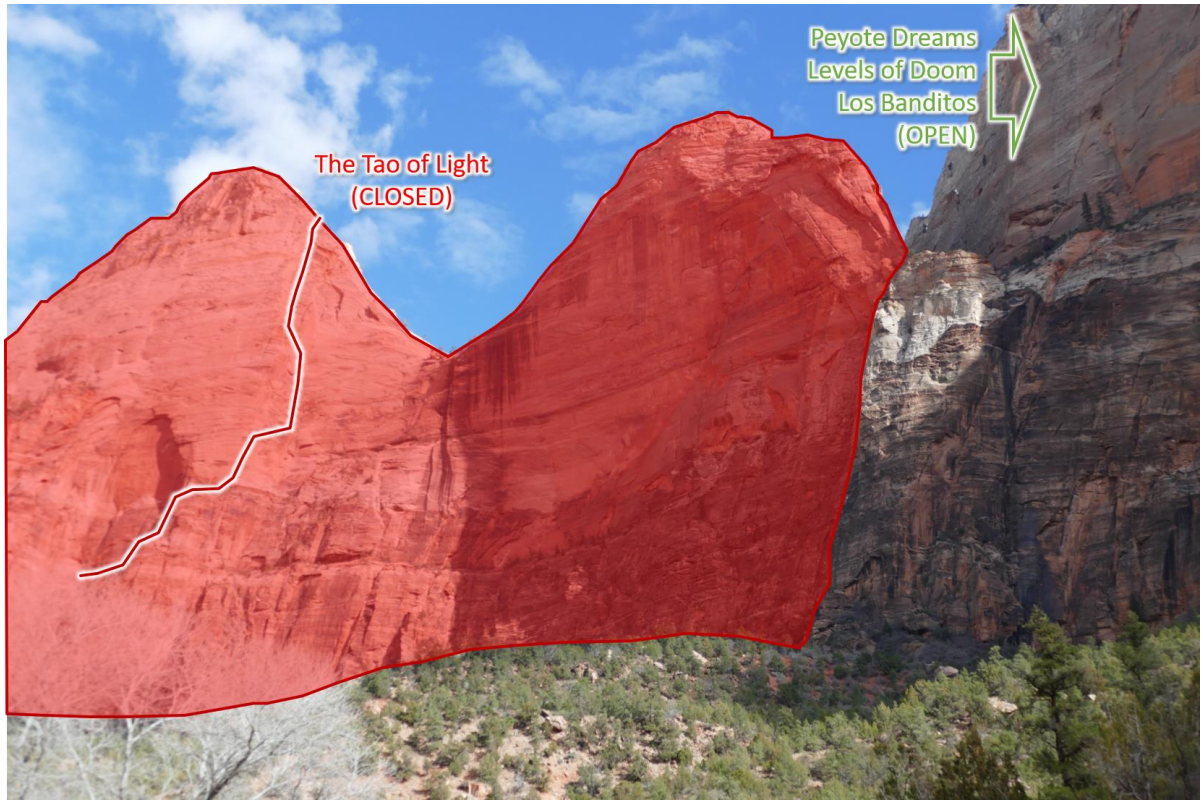
Zion National Park

Mountain of the Sun/ North Twin Brother Closures



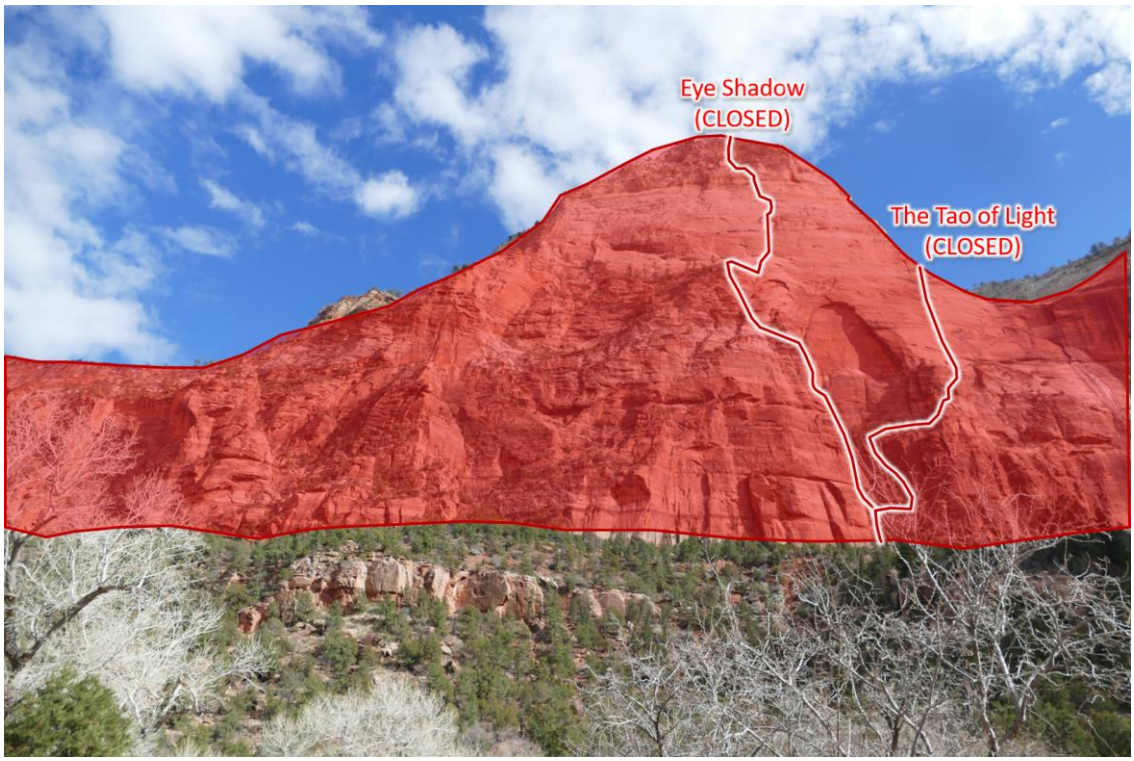
Map of seasonal closures for Mountain of the Sun and North Twin Brother.

Routes on the west face of Mountain of the Sun and North Twin Brother are closed. This includes routes such as *The Tao of Light* and *Eye Shadow* which are both closed. Routes on South Twin Brother such as *Peyote Dreams* and *Levels of Doom* remain open and unaffected. Mountaineering routes such as the *South Face* of South Twin Brother and the scrambling route up the east face of Mountain of the Sun are open. *Northwest ridge aka Golden Spur* is also closed as this is within the boundary. Additionally, the route *96 Degree Wall* is also closed. Routes on the Springdale Band such as those at Practice Cliffs remain open, but climbers should heed all archaeology related closures which are signed at the base of these climbs.

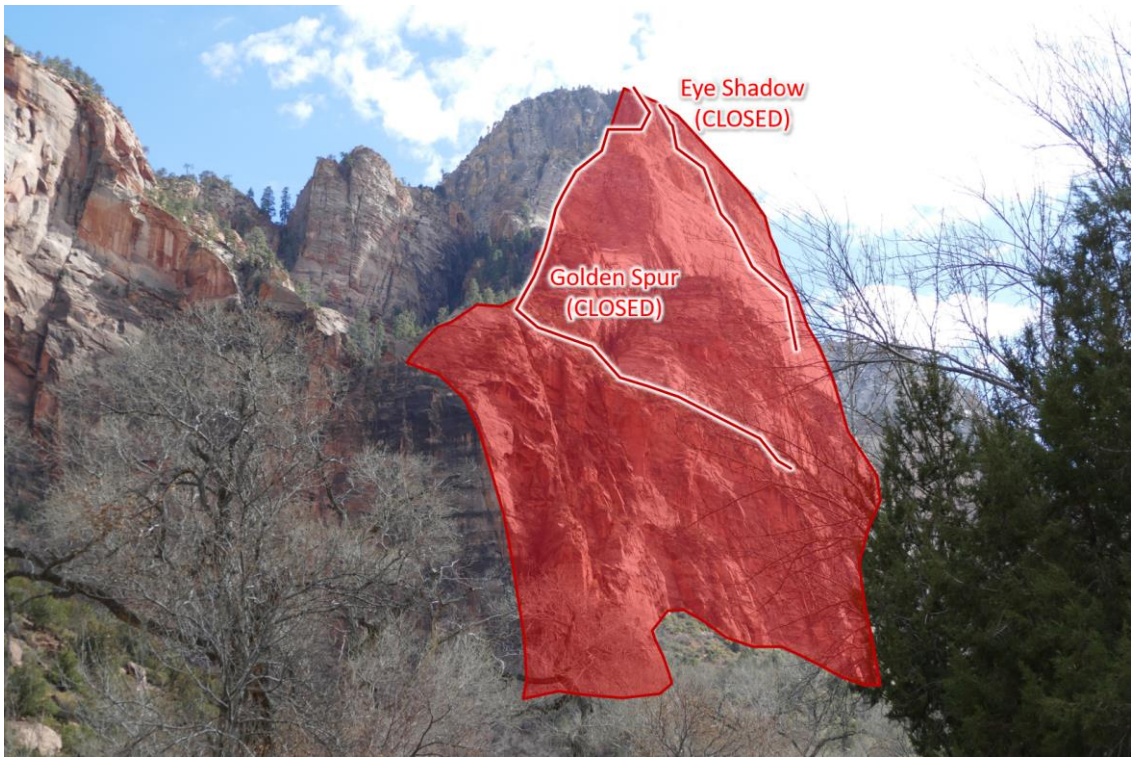


View of the southern boundary of the closure. The boundary is formed by the north arete of the pillar located between North and South Twin Brother. Routes on South Twin remain open such as *Peyote Dreams* and *Los Banditos*.

Mountain of the Sun/ North Twin Brother Closures (cont.)



View of the middle of the closure with Mountain of the Sun centered in the photo. This closure includes all routes on the west face of Mountain of the Sun such as *Eye Shadow* and *The Tao of Light*.



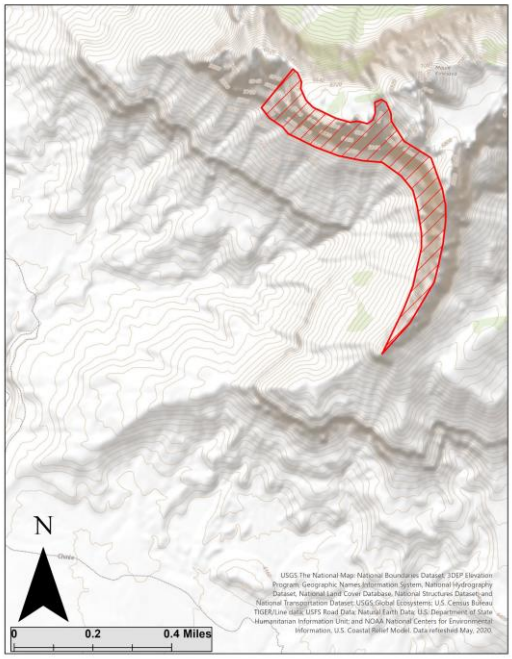
View of the northern boundary of the closure. The *Northwest ridge aka Golden Spur* forms up upper boundary and is closed. The arete where the aspect changes and the cliff runs east to west indicates the lower portion of the boundary.

Guide to Zion Raptor Closures

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

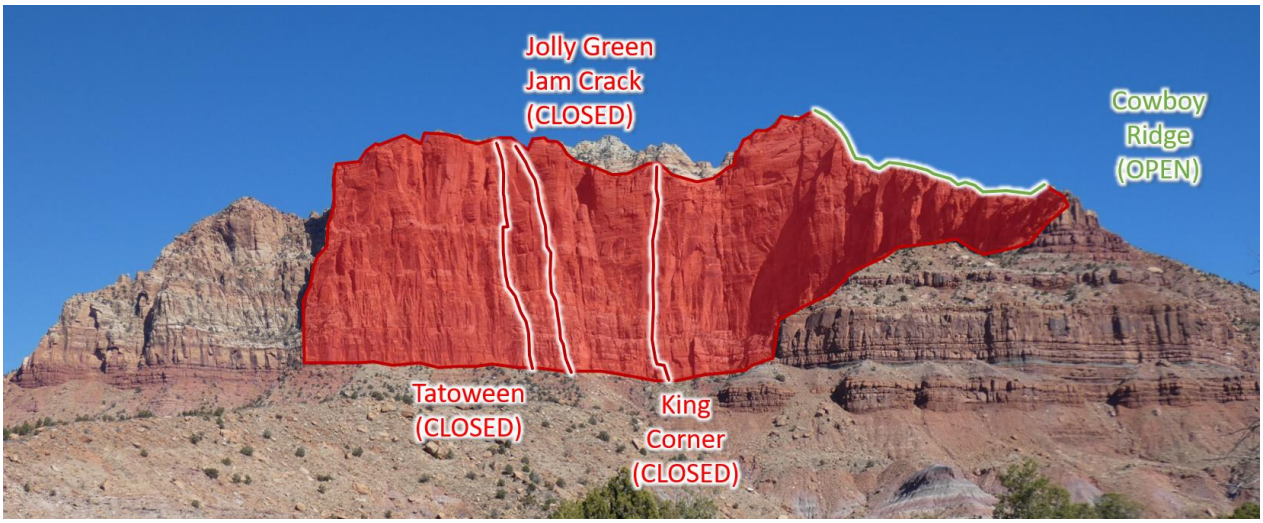
Zion National Park

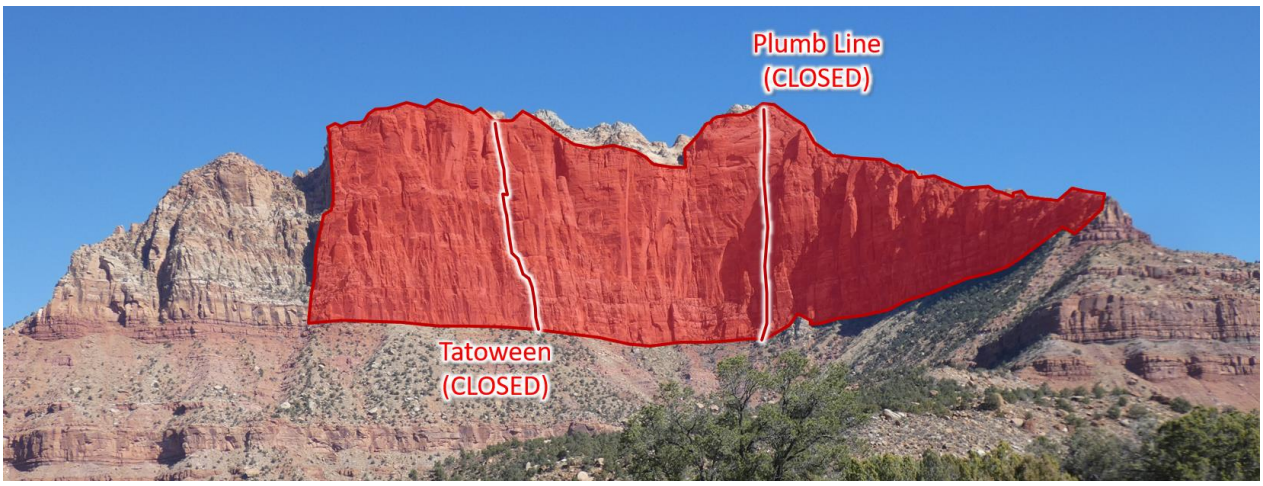
Mt. Kinesava Closures



Map of seasonal cliff closures for Mt. Kinesava

Routes on the SW face of Mt. Kinesava are closed. This includes routes on the western edge of this face such as *Tatoween* and *Jolly Green Jam Crack* which are closed. This does not affect routes on other faces or the route *Cowboy Ridge* which remains OPEN. The south ridge marks the eastern edge of the boundary. The gulley where aspect changes and rock quality decreases marks the western edge of the boundary. The descent/hikers' route up the east face of Kinesava remains open. The scramble up the true summit of Kinesava remains open.





View of the southwest face of Mt. Kinesava from the Chinle Trail. Routes on this face including *King Corner*, *Plumb Line*, and *Tatoween* are closed. *Cowboy Ridge* remains open, and all climbers should descend via the non-technical hike off the east face.

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if I don't follow the closures? *Not following the closures can, first and foremost, lead to negative consequences for our raptors. Interference with their nesting areas will cause them unnecessary stress, it could lead to conflict between raptors and climbers, and it could even cause the raptors to abandon an area. Nest failures due to closure violators could force additional scrutiny and restrictions. Additionally, closure violators may face legal consequences.*

Why are peregrine falcons being protected if they are no longer on the endangered species list? *Peregrine Falcons are no longer on the endangered species list partly because they have been able to successfully nest in places like Zion. Peregrine Falcons are still protected by law under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act which makes it illegal to harm birds and their nests. Additionally, the National Park Service mission prioritizes the preservation of natural resources, including wildlife.*

How soon will the Park know where the birds are nesting? *Locating nests can be very challenging and takes considerable time and effort, but we hope to identify nests by mid-May. Zion staff are especially grateful for the assistance of volunteers who are committed to conservation and help locate nests in order to reopen cliffs.*

When do the closures typically end for cliffs where the birds are nesting? *Closures end in stages based on the behavior of the birds. Closures begin on March 1 covering large areas and allowing raptors their choice of nesting cliffs. Once a nest is located in an area, adjacent areas may immediately be reopened. The nest area itself will remain closed until the birds finish breeding and either the chicks leave the nest, or the nest fails without time for a second nest attempt in the season. Typically, chicks in Zion have left their nest area sometime in mid-July to early August with closures being lifted immediately after.*

What should I do if I encounter a raptor outside a closure? *Raptors can nest anywhere in Zion, including in many places where people climb. If a raptor behaves aggressively toward you, it is common sense as well as your legal obligation to retreat and not to harm the raptor or its nest. Most raptors will give you ample warning and an opportunity to back away. If you hear a raptor loudly screaming and diving at you in an aggressive way, reevaluate your plans and bail if safe to do so.*

We would also encourage you to share your experience with other climbers by emailing zionclimbingcoalition@gmail.com and we'd be interested in hearing about it as well at Zion_Wildlife@nps.gov. Much more common in Zion are reports of climbers who experience a close encounter with a curious raptor high on a cliff wall. If a condor soars past you or you witness a falcon catch and kill its prey near you, enjoy!

Who is managing the closures, are they climbers? *Ultimately the closures are managed by Zion National Park's Wildlife Biologist who is a climber. Closures are monitored by Zion staff and volunteers from the Zion Climbers Coalition (501(c)(3)).*

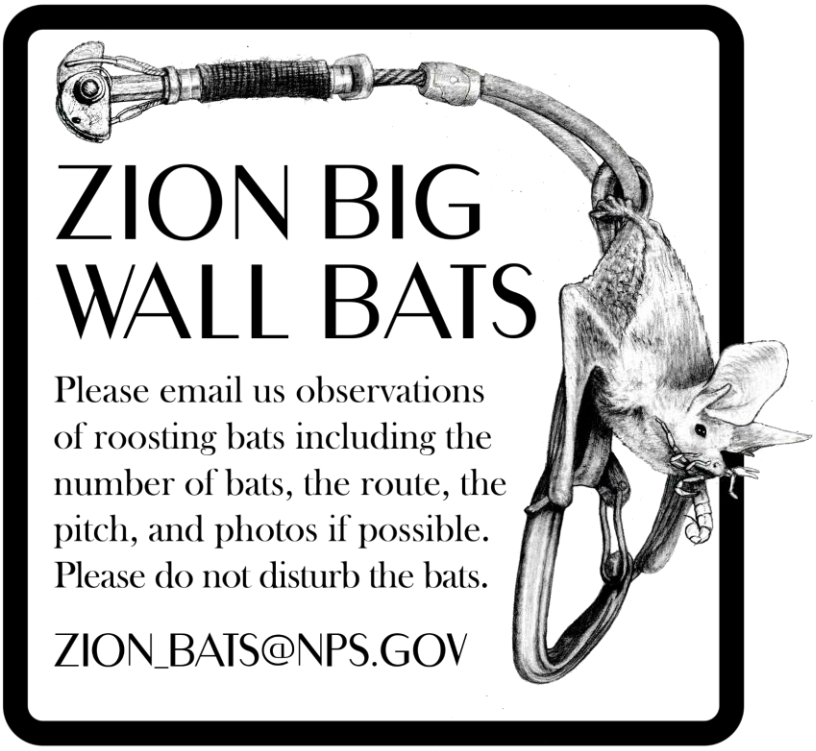
How do I volunteer to help with the monitoring? *Our volunteers help us through a collaboration with our local climbing organization, the Zion Climbers Coalition (501(c)(3)). Send them an email at zionclimbingcoalition@gmail.com to volunteer.*

What determines the closure boundary on cliffs where some routes are still open? *Wildlife staff maps the locations of previous nest sites and then determines what terrain on that cliff is visible to the previous nests. This is called viewshed analysis and it helps predict areas that are most impactful to peregrine falcons. Areas or routes that remain open on an otherwise closed cliff are open because they are not visible from historic nesting sites.*

Zion's Big Wall Bats

Zion's splitter cracks, deep chimneys, and heinous offwidths are home to more than just climbers. Multiple bat species also call these cliffs home. During winter, bats hibernate in deep chimneys and cracks. These features provide stable environments for sleeping bats when temperatures are cold, and resources are scarce. In the summer, cracks provide shelter from predators while the bats raise their young, called pups. Healthy cliff ecosystems are critical for maintaining strong populations of bats. A healthy bat population in turn helps people by providing free pest control by eating important agricultural pests. This reduces pesticide use, saving Americans billions of dollars a year. Unfortunately, our bats are threatened by an invasive fungus which is killing hibernating bats by the millions. To track the spread of this fungus, park biologists need to know where bats roost. This is how you can help!

Climbers, please let us know if you find roosting bats while exploring Zion. If you see a roosting bat while climbing, send us the name/location of the climb, what pitch and where on the pitch, how many you saw, and try to get a photo if it is safe and doesn't disturb the bats further. Our bat biologist and cliff ecology team will then visit the roost, test for presence of the disease, and collect important roost data to help our team find other roosts. All observations can be sent to **Zion_Bats@nps.gov**



Artwork by @DJJacksonArt