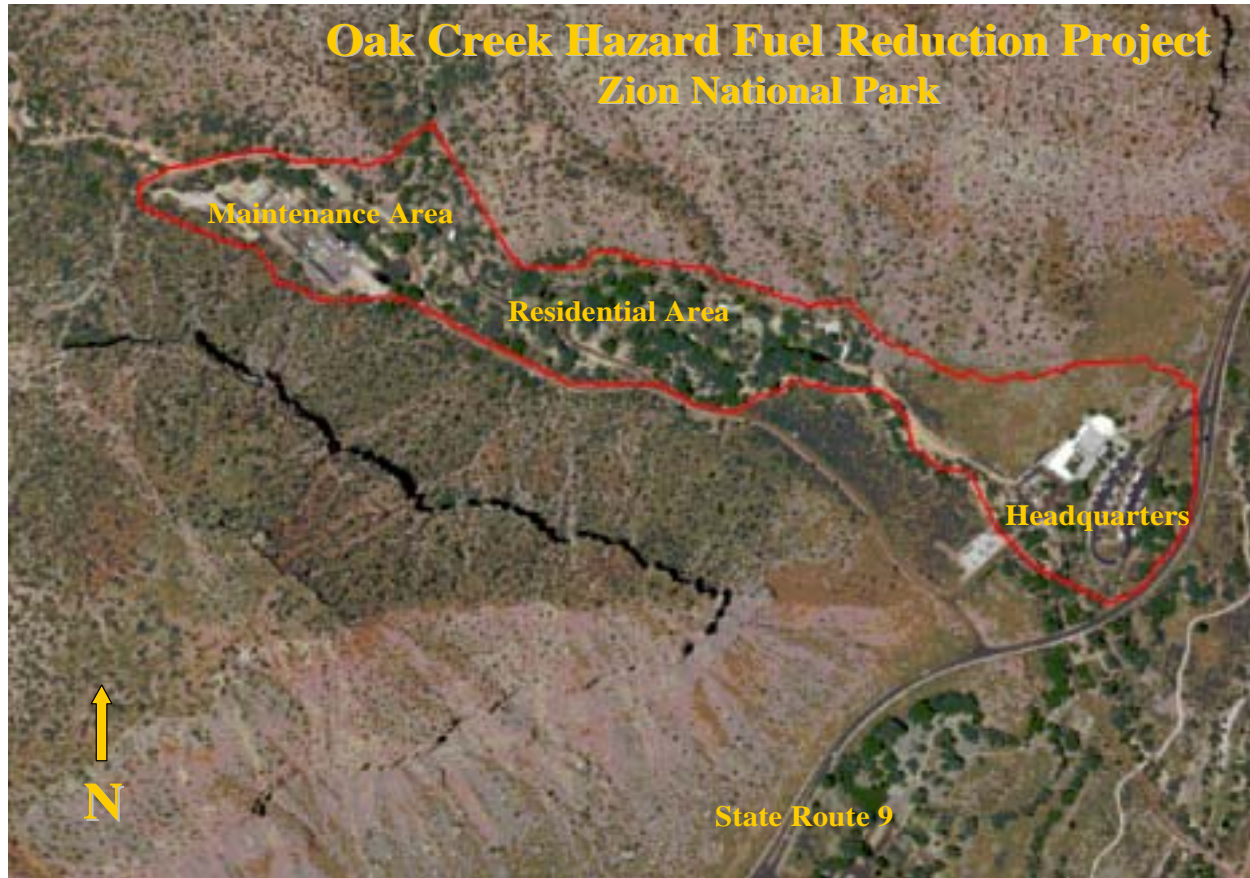




## Zion National Park Fire Management



### Oak Creek Hazard Fuel Reduction Project

Most of the fuels treatment work taking place in Zion this year has focused on the wildland-urban interface along the park's boundary. While these projects are justifiably considered priorities (some of them being identified as "focus areas" by fire management officials), the park cannot lose sight of interface areas within its own boundaries. Fire management personnel at Zion addressed this issue by recently completing a hazard fuels reduction project within the Oak Creek developed area of the park.

The 37-acre Oak Creek Hazard Fuels Reduction Project consisted of the mechanical removal of material in and around park structures (many considered historical) that could pose a significant fire risk in the case of a wildland fire. The Oak Creek area consists of a residential area and the park maintenance and administrative areas. This project is developed and funded under the wildland-urban interface initiative (WUI) program, in cooperation with the National Fire Plan. The objective of this project is to create and maintain a defensible fuel break in and around park infrastructure within the Oak Creek developed area. This project will not only aid the wildland fire crew in their efforts to manage wildland fires, but also the structural fire crew in their efforts to protect park buildings. The Oak Creek Project is just one of several similar treatments planned for the next few years in areas of the park's interface.

Wildland fire personnel began work on the project in early July 2002 and completed it in October of the same year. All residents were notified in advance of the project and the crew worked closely with them to try to accommodate any special needs/desires that they may have, while still achieving the stated objectives of the project. Project treatments included; removing litter buildup on roofs and gutters, removing or limbing trees touching structures, clearing fire-prone brush species from within 30 feet of structures, remove leaf litter and other dead material within 50 feet of structures, limb/thin ladder fuels to a height of 6-10 feet and clear a 15 foot swath under powerlines. Treatments were accomplished so as to preserve the cultural landscape of the Oak Creek Historic District as much as safely possible.

Small material removed from the project area were either piled away from the structures for future burning or taken to a local disposal site. Over 30 dump truck loads of materials were removed from the treatment area during the project. Larger material was cut into firewood sized lengths and stacked on site for park residents use. Follow-up treatments will be necessary to maintain the desired fuels level.

With the recent push to treat more acres in the wildland-urban interface, some parks may be overlooking their own interface issues. These interface areas, and the structures within them, are vital to the operation of the parks and to the millions of visitors who utilize them. Plans must be made to address these park interface areas and insure that they too are protected from the continuing wildland fire threats that are facing our country.



**Before fuels treatment**



**After fuels treatment**



**Burning of removed vegetation**