



Zion National Park Fire Management



Kolob Visitor Center Fuel Reduction Project

Zion National Park Fire Management recently completed the Kolob Visitor Center Fuels Reduction Project for the purpose of protecting park and surrounding private structures and resources in the event of a wildland fire.

The Kolob Visitor Center area is located the northwestern corner of the park, along Interstate 15. It consists of a visitor center, with a residential and maintenance area located just to the north. It is a very visible and easily accessed area of the park for travelers on the interstate. Because of this, threats from human-caused fire are greater than in most parts of the park.

Fire management personnel treated 52 acres of park land in the vicinity of the Kolob Visitor Center area by thinning trees and brush to create a zone of defensible space around park structures and along the park boundary. Threat of devastating loss to structures and valuable resources will be reduced with the reduction of fuels in this unit. Additionally, a defensible zone in and around the Kolob area could prevent the spread of wildfire into a private housing community located one mile to the north. Every effort was made to preserve cultural landscapes, minimize resource damage, and limit impacts to the public and park visitors. Treatments to the unit will continue in the future to maintain the defensible space.

Treatment of the unit consisted of mechanically thinning excess vegetation and then hand piling it. Burning of the piles took place during favorable weather conditions where wet/moist conditions reduced any chance of the fires escaping. Additional considerations such as smoke dispersal, safety and possible impacts to the public and park visitors were addressed prior to ignition of the burn piles.

This project was developed and funded through the Wildland Urban Interface Initiative in cooperation with the National Fire Plan. This plan, initiated by Congress after the severe fire season of 2000, stresses the importance of reducing hazardous fuels around structures to reduce the risk from wildfire. This is one of many such fire management projects planned for the future in Zion National Park.