



Zion National Park Fire Management

Rockville Bench Fuel Reduction Project

Fire Management Officials in Zion National Park recently completed the Rockville Bench Fuel Reduction Project as part of its ongoing program to reduce hazardous fuel levels. This contract project was intended to reduce fuel loading to manageable levels in order to protect park resources and private properties and structures along the park boundary in the event of a wildland fire.

The Rockville Bench Project Area is located in the southwest corner of the park near the communities of Rockville and Springdale. The project area covered a narrow strip along the park boundary that extended 1.4 linear miles. Fuels in the area consisted of black brush flats with scattered pinyon-juniper trees on the slopes. The project created an open 15-25 foot buffer (fuel break) along the park boundary. Every attempt was made to protect native grasses and forbs in the project area. The contract portion of the project was closely overseen and supervised by Zion Fire Management personnel.

A local contract crew utilized mechanical methods (chainsaws, pruners and other hand tools) to perform the fuel reduction. The debris was then piled in unvegetated spots in the project area. The piles were burned over the winter months by Zion Fire Management personnel when weather conditions reduced the chances of escape.

This project will provide Zion and adjacent private landowners with an area of reduced fuels along the boundary that will reduce the risks of wildland fire leaving and/or entering the park. It 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 ongoing fire management projects in Zion National Park.



Pile burning on Rockville Bench