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FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN /
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN)

ZION National Park • Utah

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ZION
National Park • Utah

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There is an eloquence in their form which stirs the imagination with a singular power and kindness in the mind. Nothing can exceed the wondrous beauty of Zion... in the nobility and beauty of the sculptures there is no comparison.'

Clarence Dutton 1880

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**FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN)**

**ZION NATIONAL PARK**

Washington, Iron, and Kane Counties, Utah

This Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement describes and analyzes a preferred alternative and three alternatives for managing and using Zion National Park. The plan is intended to provide a foundation to help park managers guide park programs and set priorities. The alternative that is finally chosen as the plan will guide the management of Zion National Park over the next 20 years.

The "no-action," or status quo, alternative provides a baseline for comparing the other three alternatives. Under this alternative, park managers would undertake no new construction projects or make any major changes in managing visitor use, except to implement the transportation system in the main canyon.

Three action alternatives would create zones within the park to protect resources and provide opportunities for a range of visitor experiences. All three action alternatives limit park visitation in some backcountry areas, although many of these areas are inaccessible anyway due to their steep topography. In addition, all of the action alternatives call for making adjustments to the park boundary.

The preferred alternative would emphasize proactive management to address impacts caused by increased visitor use. Under this alternative, a range of quality visitor experiences would continue to be provided but visitor numbers may be limited or reduced in parts of the recommended wilderness. A few new visitor facilities would be built in frontcountry areas. Alternative A would provide greater opportunities for increased use of Zion. Access would be improved inside the park by upgrading or building trails and designating new routes. Additional picnic areas, interpretive facilities, and backcountry campsites also would be provided. Alternative B emphasizes the additional protection of park resources while still providing opportunities for a range of visitor experiences. Under alternative B, the number and frequency of shuttles going from Zion Canyon Lodge to the Temple of Sinawava would be reduced, and the lodge would be converted to a research/environmental education center.

A wild and scenic river suitability eligiblility study is included in this document for all of the drainages in the park and several drainages on adjacent lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The three action alternatives recommend the inclusion of five drainages and their tributaries in the park and six river segments on BLM lands in the national wild and scenic rivers system. The joint wild and scenic river study conducted on public lands contiguous to the park considers an amendment to the BLM’s 1999 St. George Resource Management Plan.

This document also discusses the potential consequences of each alternative’s actions on natural resources, visitor use and experiences, and the socioeconomic environment. In general, the three action alternatives would better protect the park’s natural resources than the no-action alternative. Alternative A would provide for greater visitor use than today, but also would have the most negative impacts on natural resources. Alternative B would provide the greatest protection of natural resources, but would have the most negative impacts on visitor use. The preferred alternative would best protect the park’s natural resources while also maintaining a range of high-quality visitor experiences.

For questions about this document, contact the park planning coordinator, Darla Sidles, Zion National Park, Springdale, UT 84767-1099, or call 435-772-0211.

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United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
The “Introduction” explains why the plan is necessary and what the plan will accomplish. It provides background information about Zion National Park and describes the park’s purposes, significance, and mission goals. The Introduction also identifies the major issues and concerns of focus of this plan and describes National Park Service (NPS) policies and standard park practices that have guided, and continue to guide, the management of Zion National Park.

The “Alternatives, Including the Preferred Alternative” part presents alternatives for managing Zion National Park. The no-action alternative describes the present approach to managing Zion without the implementation of a new management plan. The preferred alternative describes the National Park Service’s preferred approach for managing the park. Alternatives A and B present other options for managing Zion.

The third major part is the “Affected Environment.” This part describes selected natural resources of the park and visitor experiences and uses. This part also describes the socioeconomic conditions in the region surrounding Zion. Information in the “Affected Environment” part provides the context for analyzing the impacts of the management alternatives.

The next part, “Environmental Consequences,” describes the effects each alternative would have on key park resources, visitor experiences and uses, and the socioeconomic environment in the region.

The last part, “Consultation and Coordination,” describes the process the planning team used to involve the public and consult with other agencies during the development of this plan. This part also includes a summary of the major changes that were made in the draft document, clarifications of commonly raised public concerns, and copies of the letters and responses to the comments.

The appendixes include a summary of the key legal mandates that affect management and planning for the park, a description of the relationship of the General Management Plan to other planning efforts, detailed definitions of the management zones, a summary of how this plan was developed, a detailed description of how the drainages in the park and adjacent BLM lands were evaluated for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system, and a summary of the proposed new research natural areas. An appendix also contains procedures to be followed by parties who wish to protest the Bureau of Land Management’s proposed decision and plan amendment regarding wild and scenic river eligibility and suitability on public land river segments addressed in this plan.
SUMMARY

The purpose of this conceptual plan is to describe the general path the National Park Service intends to follow in managing Zion National Park over the next 20 years. The approved plan will provide a framework for proactive decision making on such issues as visitor use, natural and cultural resource management, and park development, which will allow park managers to effectively address future problems and opportunities. In most cases, new development outside the park would take place to meet visitor needs.

ALTERNATIVES

The planning team developed four alternatives for managing visitor uses and resources in Zion National Park. Each alternative presents a different management approach for directing visitor use and resolving conflicts. The alternatives were based on the park's purposes and significance, the National Park Service mission, other legal mandates and policies, park issues, public views, and information on visitor use patterns and park resources.

The no-action alternative provides a baseline for evaluating the changes and impacts of the three Zion alternatives. Under this alternative, park managers would continue to manage Zion as it has in the past, relying on the 1977 master plan and related existing plans. No new construction or major changes would take place, except for already approved developments. All of the park's existing facilities would continue to be operated and maintained as they have in the past. Park managers would continue to limit visitor day use in the Left Fork of North Creek and the Narrows, and overnight use in the Narrows along the West Rim, and La Verkin Creek/Hop Valley.

The three existing research natural areas would be managed as they have been in the past. Parunuweap Canyon would continue to be a proposed research natural area and be closed to all recreational use. The riverbank armor and levees along the North Fork of the Virgin River in the main Zion Canyon would be maintained. Most of the park (90%) is recommended for wilderness designation and would continue to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

The preferred alternative is the plan the National Park Service is proposing to implement for Zion National Park over the next 20 years. Under this alternative, park managers would make several changes to proactively address impacts resulting from increased levels of visitor use. The park would be zoned to ensure that resources were protected and opportunities were provided for a range of quality visitor experiences. As in all of the alternatives, most of the park (90%) would continue to be recommended for wilderness designation and would be managed according to the provisions of the Wilderness Act. In the frontcountry, no new major visitor facilities would be provided; however, small visitor facilities, such as picnic sites and restrooms, could be built in several areas, including the Kolob Canyons and the east entrance. Voluntary visitor shuttles may run along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway to the east entrance. The Zion Canyon Lodge would continue to operate as it has in the past. Part of the North Fork of the Virgin River in the main Zion Canyon would be restored to a more natural condition.

In the backcountry several management actions would be taken. Three existing research natural areas (21% of the park) would be deauthorized, while new research natural areas covering 6% of the park would be designated. Interim group size limits and new interim group encounter rates would be instituted pending the completion of the wilderness management plan. Park managers may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on 12 trails and routes in the recommended wilderness, including part of the Narrows, Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, and La Verkin Creek. Only authorized research and NPS-guided educational groups would be allowed on 6,145 acres in remote backcountry areas due to their designation as research natural areas. However, under this alternative Parunuweap Canyon would be open to limited NPS or NPS-sanctioned guided interpretive trips along the river.

Alternative B focuses on providing increased protection for park resources while still providing opportunities for a range of visitor experiences. Like the preferred alternative, management zones would be applied throughout the front and backcountry to proactively manage visitor use. In the frontcountry a full-service visitor facility would be built near the east entrance, and a mandatory shuttle system would be implemented along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. Alternative B would keep other new development in the park to a minimum. In several areas trailheads would be removed and trailhead parking would be reduced. The Zion Canyon Lodge would be converted into a research/environmental education facility. Like the preferred alternative, part of the North Fork of the Virgin River in the main Zion Canyon would be restored to a more natural condition. In addition under this alternative the number and frequency of shuttles going from the Zion Canyon Lodge to the Temple of Sinawava would be reduced to decrease resource impacts and improve the quality of the visitor experience along the Zion Canyon scenic drive and in the Narrows.

As in all of the alternatives, most of the park (90%) would continue to be recommended for wilderness designation and would continue to be managed according to the provisions of the Wilderness Act. New research natural areas, covering about 4% of the park, would be designated, while the three existing research natural areas would be deauthorized. Interim group size limits and new interim encounter rates would be instituted in the backcountry. Park managers may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers in four areas in the recommended wilderness — part of the Narrows, Mystery Canyon, Orderville Canyon, and the La Verkin Creek trail. Only authorized research and NPS-guided educational groups would be allowed on 6,145 acres in remote backcountry areas due to their designation as research natural areas. However, under this alternative Parunuweap Canyon would be open to limited NPS or NPS-sanctioned guided interpretive trips along the river.
Parunuweap Canyon would be designated as research natural areas, while the three existing research natural areas would be deauthorized. Interim limits on group size and new interim limits on encounter rates would be instituted in the backcountry. Park managers may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on 17 trails and routes in the recommended wilderness, including Hop Valley, Taylor Creek, Orderville Canyon, Observation Point, and upper Emerald Pool. Only authorized research and NPS-guided educational groups would be allowed on 20,348 acres in remote backcountry areas due to their designation as research natural areas.

**Boundary Adjustments and Easements**

All three action alternatives call for adjusting the park boundary. The National Park Service would propose five Bureau of Land Management (BLM) areas, totaling approximately 950 acres, for transfer to the park. Nine access easements, totaling about 15 miles, and three conservation easements, totaling 2,270 acres, would be proposed on private lands outside the park. Congressional authorization would be required for all these actions.

**Wild and Scenic River Proposals**

All three action alternatives propose that five drainages and their tributaries in the park, and six tributaries on BLM lands adjacent to the park, be included in the national wild and scenic rivers system. The five drainages in the park are: the North Fork of the Virgin River above and below the Temple of Sinawava, the East Fork of the Virgin River, North Creek, La Verkin Creek, and Taylor Creek. The drainages partly on BLM lands are: Kolob Creek, Goose Creek, Shunes Creek, Willis Creek, Beartrap Canyon, and the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek. Congressional authorization would be required for inclusion of these drainages in the national wild and scenic rivers system.

**Environmental Consequences**

The planning team evaluated the potential consequences the actions of the alternatives would have on natural resources, visitor use and experiences, and the socioeconomic environment. It was determined that none of the alternatives would appreciably affect cultural resources.

Under the no-action alternative, most of the impacts on natural resources would likely be due to the increased use of the park. Moderate to major, long-term impairment of floodplain functions and processes would continue. The severity of impacts on microbiont soils would increase, with a moderate to major loss of soils in the most extensively developed and used areas. With existing river channelization measures and high levels of visitor use, Virgin spinedace habitat and the riparian community would also continue to degrade, accompanied by minor to major, long-term, negative effects. There would be a minor to moderate, long-term increase in human exposure to flood hazards along the North Fork of the Virgin River. Even with mitigation measures, minor damage or loss of hanging garden vegetation would likely continue.

The application of use restrictions in specific areas or times of year would prevent adverse impacts on the Mexican spotted owl population. Increased use of the park would likely lead to minor to moderate, negative impacts on desert bighorn sheep foraging areas and air and water quality in localized areas. There would be a moderate reduction in natural soundscapes from increased visitation and vehicle use in some areas.

**Summary**

Visitors would continue to have unrestricted access to many park resources and the opportunity to choose when they would like to visit these resources. However, the quality and range of visitor experiences within the park would continue to decrease gradually, especially in popular areas in both the front-country and backcountry. Crowding and traffic congestion would increase in front-country areas (excluding the main Zion Canyon), and opportunities for solitude and quiet would diminish in the backcountry. Overall, these activities would result in a long-term, minor to moderate, negative impact on the visitor experience.

The no-action alternative would have a positive, negligible effect on the local regional economy.

The preferred alternative would have both positive and negative effects on the park’s natural resources. Minor to moderate, localized, adverse impacts on air quality would occur from increased traffic on the park’s main roads, although if the use of vehicles were limited on the Kolob Canyons Road, a localized improvement of air quality would result. Minor to moderate, localized, short-term, adverse impacts on water quality would occur from increased use, construction, and river restoration activities. Restoring sections of the North Fork floodplain would have a major, beneficial effect on floodplain functions and values in that reach, and it would enhance spinedace habitat. It also would have a minor to moderate, long-term, beneficial impact on riparian communities. However, there would be a minor, long-term increase in the number of people exposed to flood hazards. Moderate to major impacts on microbiont soils would occur in localized areas, which would result in a major loss of soils in existing areas of extensive development and use, as well as in newly developed frontcountry areas.

The zoning and use restrictions of the preferred alternative would also avoid adverse impacts on the Mexican spotted owl population. The potential for minor damage or loss of vegetation in accessible hanging gardens would still exist, however. Disturbance from visitors in sheep foraging areas and from scientists in lambing areas would be negligible to minor; limiting use in Gifford Canyon would have a minor benefit. With mitigation and visitor management actions, this alternative would not likely adversely affect the southwestern willow flycatcher, which may result in long-term beneficial effects. Under this alternative, there would be a moderate reduction in natural soundscapes due to increased noise in areas with greater levels of visitation and vehicle use. If vehicle use was reduced on the Kolob Canyons Road this would lead to a minor reduction in noise levels. Instituting a voluntary shuttle system on the east side of the park also would lower noise levels.

Under the preferred alternative, the existing range of visitor experiences would be maintained. Zoning most of the park as pristine would help ensure that opportunities for experiencing solitude and natural soundscapes were available in most of the park. Providing a few new visitor facilities, such as picnic areas and restrooms, would have a minor, positive effect on some visitors’ experiences. New interim encounter rates would likely have a negligible effect on most visitors in the recommended wilderness area. Use levels on 12 trails and routes may be limited or reduced, and some visitors may feel that their choices and access were being curtailed in the recommended wilderness area. A few saddle stock users also may be adversely affected by the application of the zones in the recommended wilderness. Overall, there would be a minor, positive effect on most visitor experiences in Zion’s front and backcountry.
The preferred alternative would likely result in a positive, negligible change in the local/regional economy. Some individuals and firms may realize moderate to major, positive economic benefits.

**Alternative A** would result in many of the same positive and negative impacts on natural resources as those described under the preferred alternative. However, alternative A has a higher potential to impact the resources in certain areas than do the other alternatives. In particular, there would be a greater potential for impacts caused by increased visitor use within a large portion of the desert bighorn sheep range in canyons along the Zion-Mt Carmel Highway. The amount of new development proposed under alternative A also would cause the greatest loss of microbiotic soils associated with developed areas and areas with high visitor use (although from a parkwide perspective the impact would be minor).

Under alternative A, impacts on the visitor experience would be similar to those of the preferred alternative, except that driving and hiking opportunities in the frontcountry and hiking opportunities in the backcountry could be expanded under alternative A compared to existing opportunities. Opportunities for experiencing solitude and natural soundscapes would still be preserved, and visitors would have additional opportunities to enjoy the park's recommended wilderness, including Parunuweap. However, use levels may be limited or reduced in four areas. Overall, alternative A would likely have a moderate, positive impact on most visitor experiences in Zion's frontcountry, and moderate, positive and negative effects on visitor experiences in the backcountry.

The actions in alternative A would likely result in a negligible to minor, positive change in the local/regional economy. Some individuals and firms may realize moderate to major, positive economic benefits.

Under alternative B, restoring sections of the North Fork would have the same moderate to major, long-term, beneficial impacts as the other action alternatives. However, this alternative would likely result in many other beneficial effects on the park's natural resources. Decreased visitor use, particularly in portions of Zion Canyon, would generally have minor to moderate, long-term, beneficial effects on a number of natural resources, including riparian zones, mid-elevation soils, and desert bighorn sheep foraging areas. Additionally, this alternative would not be likely to adversely affect Mexican spotted owl and southwestern willow flycatcher populations. The removal of spring diversion structures within Zion Canyon and the subsequent restoration of the streams and riparian zones associated with the springs would have a minor, long-term, beneficial effect. Decreased use in portions of Zion Canyon would also result in a minor to moderate decrease in the number of people exposed to flood hazards.

Under alternative B, opportunities for experiencing solitude and natural soundscapes would be preserved in most of the park, and visitors seeking these experiences would be positively affected. Converting the Zion Canyon Lodge to an education/research center would positively affect the experiences of some visitors and school groups. However, fewer visitors would have the opportunity to stay overnight in the park and to ride horses. Use levels may be limited or reduced on 17 routes and trails, including several popular trails. Thus, fewer visitors would be able to go into the wilderness area with most of the park being zoned as pristine or research natural areas, although those people who do go in the wilderness area would have a high-quality experience. The mandatory Zion-Mt. Carmel shuttle would reduce personal choices in this part of the park. Overall, alternative B would have a moderate to major, negative impact on many visitor experiences in the frontcountry, and moderate, positive and negative impacts on visitors in the backcountry.

The concession business and their employees would also experience negative impacts, although other businesses and individuals would benefit from the actions in the alternative. Overall, the actions in alternative B would result in a negligible to minor, negative change in the local/regional economy.
Contents

Introduction 1

Purpose of and Need for a Plan 3
Planning Background 5
  Natural History 5
  Human History 8
Direction for the Plan — Purposes, Significance, and Mission Goals of Zion National Park 10

Primary Planning Issues and Concerns 12
  Increasing Visitor Use 12
  Future of Research Natural Areas (RNAs) 13
  Public Use of Parunuweap Canyon 13
  Future of Zion Canyon Lodge 14
  Wild and Scenic River Designation 14
  Management of the North Fork of the Virgin River 14
  Development and Uses adjacent to the Park 15

Other Issues to be Addressed in Future Plans 16
  Carrying Capacity 16
  Wilderness Management 16
  Climbing and Canyoneering 16
  River Recreation 16
  Natural Sounds, Noise, and Air Tours 17
  Guide Services 17
  Air Quality 18
  Water Quality and Quantity 18
  Night Sky 18
  Cultural Resources 18

Park Policies and Practices 19
  Ecosystem Management 19
  Relations with Private and Public Organizations, Adjacent Landowners, and Governmental Agencies 21
  Government to Government Relations between American Indian Tribes and Zion National Park 22
  Natural Resources (General) 23
  Air Quality 24
  Night Sky 25
  Water Quantity and Quality 25
  Natural Sounds 26
  Cultural Resources (General) 28
  Historic Structures 30
  Land Protection 31
  Park Accessibility 32
  Visitor Use and Experience 32
  Visitor Information, Orientation, Interpretation, and Environmental Education 33
  Management of the Recommended Wilderness Area 34
  Levels and Types of Park Development 35
  Utilities and Communications Facilities 36
  Sustainability 37

Alternatives, Including the Preferred Alternative 39

Introduction 41
  The Planning Process 41
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Management Zones 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives, Zones, and Actions Considered But Not Analyzed Further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-Action Alternative 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Management Strategies 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Park Management 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Boundary Adjustments and Easements 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for Wild and Scenic River Designation 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Preferred Alternative 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision for Frontcountry Areas 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision for Backcountry Areas 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Management Strategies 57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Capacity and Visitor Use Management Strategies 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone Allocations and Related Actions 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Boundary Adjustments and Easements 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Designation 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative A: Provide Additional Opportunities for Use and Access 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Management Strategies 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone Allocation and Related Actions 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Boundary Adjustments 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Designation 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative B: Resource Protection Emphasis 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Management Strategies 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone Allocation and Related Actions 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Boundary Adjustments 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Designation 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected Environment 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Fork of the Virgin River Floodplain 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian/Wetlands Communities/Hanging Gardens 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiotic Crusts 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEXICAN SPOTTED OWLS 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern Willow Flycatcher 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Spindlace 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert Bighorn Sheep 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Natural Soundscape 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Use 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to the Backcountry 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Visitor Activities and Experiences 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenic Resources Experiences 132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Environmental Consequences 145**

- Introduction 147
  - Impact Topics Considered in this Environmental Impact Statement 148
  - Impact Topics Considered But Not Analyzed in Detail 149
  - Methodology 155
- Impacts of the No-Action Alternative 157
  - Natural Resources 157
  - Visitor Experiences and Uses 164
  - Socioeconomic Environment 167
  - Conflicts with Land Use Plans 168
- Unavoidable Adverse Effects of the No-Action Alternative 169
  - Relationship of Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Maintenance 169
  - Environmental Changes 169
- Irreversible Adverse Changes of Commitments of Resources for the No-Action Alternative 169
- Impacts of the Preferred Alternative 170
  - Natural Resources 170
  - Visitor Experiences and Uses 178
  - The Socioeconomic Environment 184
  - Conflicts with Land Use Plans 185
- Unavoidable Adverse Effects of the Preferred Alternative 186
  - Relationship of Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Maintenance 186
  - Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity 186
- Irreversible and Irreversible Commitments of Resources of the Preferred Alternative 186
- Impacts of Alternative A: Provide Additional Opportunities for Use and Access 187
  - Natural Resources 187
  - Visitor Experiences and Uses 193
  - The Socioeconomic Environment 197
  - Conflicts with Land Use Plans 198
- Unavoidable Adverse Effects of Alternative A 199
  - Relationship of Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Maintenance 199
  - Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity 199
- Irreversible and Irreversible Commitments of 1 Resources for Alternative A 199
- Impacts of Alternative B: Resource Protection Emphasis 200
  - Natural Resources 200
  - Visitor Experiences and Uses 206
  - The Socioeconomic Environment 213
  - Conflicts with Land Use Plans 214
- Unavoidable Adverse Effects of Alternative B 215
  - Relationship of Short-Term Uses of the Environment and Maintenance 215
  - Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity 215
Contents

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources for Alternative B 215

Consultation and Coordination 217

Public Involvement on the Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement 219
Newsletters and Workbooks 219
Public and Agency Meetings 220
The Bureau of Land Management’s Land Use Plan Amendment Coordination and Consultation 222
List of Agencies and Organizations to Whom this Document Has Been Sent 223

Public Comments on the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Responses 226
Summary of the Public Meetings 227
Summary of Written Responses 227
Major Changes to the Draft General Management Plan 229
Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns 231
Responses to Individuals’ Substantive Comments 235

Appendices, Bibliography, Preparers, Index 379

Appendix A: Summary of Legislative History for Zion National Park 381
Appendix B: Summary of Key Legal Mandates 382
Appendix C: Relationship of Other Planning Efforts to this General Management Plan 384
Appendix D: Definitions of the Management Zones 387
Appendix E: Development of the Plan 397
Appendix F: Wild and Scenic River Evaluation — Eligibility, Classification, Suitability Report 403
Appendix G: Letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 430
Appendix H: Statement of Findings for the General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement, Zion National Park 432
Appendix I: Summary of Research Natural Areas 435
Appendix J: Bureau of Land Management Procedures for Plan Amendment Protest 440
Bibliography 442
Preparers 449
Index 451

Maps

Location 6
No-Action 49
Recommended Wilderness and Land Status 53
Preferred Alternative 67
Proposed Park Boundary Adjustments and Adjacent Landownership 77
Proposed Wild and Scenic Rivers 81
Alternative A 89
Alternative B 99
Areas of Relative Inaccessibility 129

Tables

1: Proposed Classification of Rivers in Zion National Park and on Adjacent BLM Lands 79
2: Relative Costs for Major Capital Construction and Annual Operations for the Preferred Alternative 85
3: Relative Costs for Major Capital Construction and Annual Operations for Alternative A 96
4: Relative Costs for Major Capital Construction and Annual Operations for Alternative B 108
5: Summary of the Management Alternatives 109
6: Comparison of the Management Zones and Wilderness Proposals in the Action Alternatives 113
7: Summary of the Impacts of the Alternatives 114
8: Measured Natural Ambient Sound Levels at Zion National Park 126
9: Overnight Stays, 1986-1997 134
10: Overnight Stays for 1997 135
11: Potential Recreational Use, 1996-2008 137
12: Top Three Industries in Terms of Earnings in 1995 142
13: Landownership in Southwest Utah 143

Figures

1: Annual Recreation and Nonrecreation Use, 1986 to 1997 134
2: Actual and Projected Recreational Use, 1986 to 2008 138
purpose of and need for a plan

The “Introduction” provides background information about the park and the planning process. This part describes why the National Park Service (NPS) has prepared this Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS) for Zion National Park and what the intent of the plan is. It also provides a brief description of Zion National Park; identifies the park’s purposes, significance, and mission goals; identifies the major issues and concerns of focus in this plan; and describes park policies and practices that guide management of Zion.

As one of 380 units in the national park system, Zion National Park is under the management of the National Park Service. The Park Service manages all park units in accordance with the mandate in its 1916 Organic Act and other legislation to conserve resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. To help achieve this mandate, the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 and NPS Management Policies require each national park unit to have a broad-scale general management plan (GMP).

The purpose of this General Management Plan is to describe the general path the National Park Service intends to follow in managing Zion National Park over the next 20 years. The plan will not provide specific and detailed answers to every issue or question facing Zion. However, the approved plan will provide a framework for proactive decision-making on such issues as visitor use, natural and cultural resource management, and park development, which will allow park managers to effectively address future problems and opportunities.

Zion National Park is currently operating under a master plan approved in 1977. In the 25 years since the National Park Service wrote the master plan, many changes have occurred in the park and surrounding area and in park management. In particular, park visitation has grown dramatically, with visitor use levels doubling between 1982 and 1997. This increase in use has affected park resources and the diversity of visitor experiences offered in Zion. The Zion Canyon shuttle system also has changed the visitor experience in the park. A new plan is essential for providing guidance to manage Zion’s visitors in the 21st century, and thus ensure the preservation of park resources and provision of opportunities for visitors to have quality park experiences.

Both the National Parks and Recreation Act and NPS policies require general management plans to address visitor carrying capacity. One of the primary purposes of this plan is to achieve this requirement. Carrying capacity is defined under the VERP framework (see box) as the type and level of visitor use a park can accommodate while sustaining

resource and social conditions that complement the purposes of the park and its management objectives. In other words, carrying capacity is a prescription for the levels of visitor use in relation to various natural resource conditions. To set up a framework for addressing carrying capacity, for this document, the planning team divided the entire park into zones that describe differing desired resource conditions and visitor experiences. (Note that to fully implement the VERP framework, a follow-up implementation plan is needed to identify key social and natural resource indicators to be monitored in each of the park’s zones, set standards [minimum acceptable conditions] for each indicator, and develop a monitoring program.)

In addition to meeting the requirements for addressing visitor use management, park managers need this new plan to address other issues and concerns that have arisen in the past two decades. These issues include those related to research natural areas (RNAs) (i.e., areas administratively designated by federal land management agencies for research and educational purposes or to maintain biological diversity), noise, and land uses adjacent to the park. (For a complete list of issues addressed in the plan, see “Planning Issues and Concerns.”) With most of Zion recommended for wilderness designation, the Park Service also needs this new plan to address how this designation will affect park management (e.g., changes in park zoning). Finally, a new plan presents an opportunity for park managers to explore and recommend other changes related to managing Zion, such as proposing boundary adjustments and wild and scenic river designations.

This Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement includes revisions that were made in the preferred alternative and the other alternatives in response to public comments on the draft document. A minimum of 30 days after this final environmental impact statement is published, the National Park Service will select and approve the final plan, and publish a record of decision in the Federal Register. The plan will then be implemented.
PLANING BACKGROUND

Note: The following sections, through “Natural History,” are adapted from Zion: Sanctuary In the Desert, by Nicky Leach, copyright 2000, Sierra Press.

It is one of those clarion spring mornings in Zion that comes close to earthly perfection. A red mackerel dawn sky has limned Renaissance blue in the full light of day. A whisper of a breeze ruffles the new-leaved cottonwoods along the Virgin River and sets the tall ponderosa pines creaking in their moorings in crevices high in the cliffs. Two red-tailed hawks circle lazily in the blue sky. Their long tails of brown and russet blend in the轮廓 of ponderosa pines growing in the Virgin Gorge. Two red-tailed hawks circle lazily in the blue sky. Their long tails of brown and russet blend in the contours of ponderosa pines growing in the Virgin Gorge. 

Above the valley, the domes, spires, and temples of Zion seem to raise great angular heads to the heavens, their time-worn, craggy faces streaked and etched by falling water and year-in, year-out exposure to the weather. “There is an eloquence to their forms which stirs the imagination with a singular power and kindles in the mind,” wrote geologist Clarence Dutton in 1880. “Nothing can exceed the wondrous beauty of Zion ... in the nobility and beauty of the sculptures there is no comparison.”

Although it gets all the press, Zion Canyon is just a fraction of a park that might better be described as a giant outdoor museum, preserving some of the world’s most extraordinary geological, archeological, and natural resources. The heart and soul of Zion, though, is the Virgin River, whose North Fork rises to the northeast near Cedar Breaks. The river eats its way through the southern Markagunt Plateau, then converges with the East Fork in Zion Canyon downstream from Parunuweap Canyon. From here, it continues down to Hurricane and out of Utah via the Virgin River Gorge, joining the Colorado River in Lake Mead for the last leg to the Gulf of California. The Southern Paiute call it Parus (“whirling water”), but its European name was given in 1776 by the Spanish Dominguez-Escalante Expedition, priests who understood firsthand the miracle of water in the desert.

Although only a tiny fraction of Utah is contained within the park, 85% of the state’s flora and fauna species are found here, including 800 plant species, 289 bird species, and 75 mammal species. This can partly be explained by the park’s 4,000- to 9,000-foot elevation span, which takes in low-desert scrub, mid-elevation chaparral, and subalpine evergreen forests. But there could never be so much life without the presence of water — and this, Zion has in spades. From the year-round flows of the Virgin River to the seeping sandstone cliffs of the canyon narrows, a remarkable number of living things set up shop and thrive. Some, like the pearl-sized Zion snail of the Zion Narrows, live nowhere else.

NATURAL HISTORY

Flora and fauna of four different life zones — desert, riparian, woodland, and coniferous forest — are found within the park. But with the Great Basin, Mojave, and Colorado Plateau deserts converging here and fluctuations of temperature, moisture, exposure, and soil type in the ... of Zion’s hugely diverse flora and fauna never cease to amaze naturalists.
At the lowest elevations, plants and animals have adapted to desert conditions in canyon-bottom meadows and rocky ledges. Waxy-coated pricklypear cactus nests beside woody sagebrush and rabbitbrush, tough-stemmed Indian paintbrush, and poisonous sacred datura, while several varieties of milkvetch and prince’s plume occupy sandy, selenium-rich soil pockets. Desert animals keep cool in burrows, dens, or among slickrock ledges in the daytime. Desert cottontails, jackrabbits, Montane kangaroo rats, and others become active at dusk or dawn, timing their movements to avoid coyotes, gray foxes, ringtails, and other predators. Most visible in the daytime are rock squirrels, pinyon jays, and the occasional whiptail lizard or other reptile disturbed by passing feet.

On mid-elevation slopes, between 3,900 feet and 5,500 feet, cooler conditions support pygmy forests of pinyon and juniper, as well as scrub oak, interspersed with shiny-barked manzanita, narrow- and broad-leaved yucca, fragrant cliffrose, and rugged serviceberry. Above 6,000 feet, stands of ponderosa pine and Gambel oak appear, wafting vanilla and piney scents on the warm breeze. Higher up, the pines are joined by groves or quaking aspens. On the upper Kolob Plateau, the dominant vegetation is subalpine fir, whose tall, umbrella shape shrugs off deep winter snows that cover the Markagunt Plateau. The highlands are the province of secretive mountain lions, which may travel up to 100 miles, pursuing mule deer, from rim top to canyon bottom.

The cliff tops, walls, ledges, and side canyons are ideal places to observe red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, white-throated swifts, endangered peregrine falcons, and young California condors, which were bred in captivity and released in the Vermilion Cliffs in the mid-1990s. Less visible are the unreconstructed bighorn sheep, which hide in side canyons and among ledges, and the 19 species of bat that drink from pools and hunt insects nightly.

Seeps, waterfalls, streams, and potholes are magnets for frogs, toads, and other amphibians that enjoy the dripping gookies and hanging gardens next to springs. For the riparian community, though, nothing beats the North and East Forks of the Virgin River and its tributaries. Here, dense communities of Fremont cottonwood, boxelder, maple, willow, and velvet ash share the river with beaver, gnatcatchers, water striders, and the native warm-water fish like the endemic Virgin spinelace and flannel-mouth sucker.

### Human History

The use of the Zion National Park landscape dates back to at least 6,000 B.C. Archeologists have divided this long span of human history into four cultural periods, each characterized by distinctive technological and social adaptations, that are briefly summarized here.

During the Archaic period (approximately 6000 B.C. - A.D. 500), small groups hunted game and collected wild plants, seeds, and nuts across the broad expanse of the Great Basin and western Colorado Plateau. This mobile lifestyle left few traces in the archeological record, with the exception of materials recovered from dry caves and a few deeply buried sites. In these protected settings, perishable artifacts, such as baskets, cordage nuts, and yucca fiber sandals, survived. The Archaic toolkits also included flaked knives, drills, and stemmed dart points. The dart points were hafted to wooden shafts and propelled by throwing devices called atlatls.

By about 300 B.C., some Archaic groups had begun to supplement wild foods in their diets by cultivating small patches of corn and squash along rivers and near springs. Archeologists have labeled these groups the “Basketmakers,” because of the abundance of coiled and twined baskets found in most of the Archaic sites. These early experiments with horticulture reduced group mobility and increased the need for food storage. Basketmaker sites often have grass or stone-lined storage cists and shallow, partially underground dwellings, called pithouses.

Within a few centuries, small-scale gardening had intensified into the full-time horticulture that typifies the Formative period (A.D.500-1300). Two distinctive horticultural groups, the ancestral Puebloan (known by archeologists as the Virgin Anasazi) and Parowan Fremont, appear in the archeological record of Zion National Park during this period. They established year-round habitation sites (often called “pueblos, the Spanish word for “village” or “community”) with pithouses, storage cists, and later, aboveground masonry room blocks. Grindstone (“ manos and metates”) signal the importance of corn in the diets of both groups. Sedentary life-styles encouraged the production of plain and painted ceramic vessels. These were used for storage, food preparation, and as trade goods across broad geographic areas. The new technology of the bow and arrow also gained widespread acceptance during the Formative period. The extent to which the ancestral Pueblos exploited wild plants and game is still unclear. Some researchers suggest that they were almost completely dependent on cultivated foods. By contrast, the Parowan Fremont may have continued to hunt and collect a broad spectrum of wild resources to supplement cultivated foods.
Ancestral Puebloan sites typically occur on river terraces along the Virgin River and its major tributaries, overlooking the fertile river bottoms where corn, squash, and other crops could be grown. There is evidence that hunting and collecting parties made forays to nearby upland areas, like the Kolob Plateau. Parowan Fremont sites are found along stream courses and near springs. They cultivated a drought and cold tolerant variety of corn (called Fremont Dent) that could be successfully grown at higher elevations. The ancestral Puebloan and Parowan Fremont appear to have interacted along cultural contact zones, such as the Kolob Plateau, during the last years of the Formative period.

Both the ancestral Puebloans and the Parowan Fremont disappear from the archeological record of southwestern Utah by about A.D. 1300. Extended droughts in the 11th and 12th centuries, interspersed with catastrophic flooding, may have made horticulture impossible in this arid region. Some researchers have suggested that the sedentary horticultural groups could not successfully compete for wild resources with the more mobile Numic language speakers (such as the Southern Paiute and Ute) who were in the region by at least A.D. 1100.

The time span between A.D. 1300 and the late 1700s has been described as the “Neo-Archaic” by some researchers, since the lifeways were reminiscent of the earlier adaptation. The Numic language speakers were the only occupants of the Zion landscape. They depended on a wide array of wild plants and animals, moving seasonally to hunt game or collect ripe seeds and nuts. This mobile lifestyle was reflected in their material possessions, which consisted of baskets, nets, and snares, as well as bows and arrows. Some, particularly the Southern Paiute, also planted fields of corn, sunflowers, and squash to supplement their collected wild foods. These more sedentary groups made brownware vessels that were used for storage and cooking.

The Historic period begins in the late 1700s, with the exploration and settlement of southern Utah by Euro-Americans. Initial explorations by traders from New Mexico blazed the Old Spanish Trail, which followed the Virgin River for a portion of its length. During the next century, American fur trappers and government surveyors added new overland travel routes across the region. In 1872 John Wesley Powell explored the areas around Zion Canyon, as part of western surveys conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey. The early pack trails soon became well-used wagon roads, connecting Santa Fe to the California markets.

In 1847, Brigham Young led members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) to Utah Territory, establishing settlements in the Great Salt Lake Valley.

Within a decade, Mormon pioneers were sent to settle the southern part of the territory and grow cotton in Utah’s “Dixie.” Towns like Shunesberg, Springdale, Grafton, Adventure, and Paradise sprang up along the upper Virgin River during the 1860s. In 1863 Issac Behunin built the first log cabin in Zion Canyon, near the location of the Zion Lodge. Soon the canyon was dotted with other homesteads, including that of William Crawford, near Oak Creek.

During the remainder of the century, the small communities and homesteads struggled to survive. Catastrophic flooding by the river, little arable land, and poor soils
made agriculture in the upper Virgin River a risky venture. Some of these settlements, including Shunesberg and Grafton, were ultimately abandoned for more favorable locations.

By the first decade of the 20th century, the scenic qualities of southern Utah, and Zion Canyon in particular, had been recognized as a potential destination for tourism. In 1909 a presidential Executive Order designated Mukuntuweap (Zion) National Monument, in Zion Canyon. The new monument was, however, virtually inaccessible to visitors, since the existing roads were in poor condition and the closest railroad a hundred miles away. The Utah State Road Commission, established in that year, began construction on a state highway system that would eventually improve access to the southern region. State officials also negotiated with the Union Pacific Railroad to develop rail and automobile links and tourism facilities in southern Utah. By the summer of 1917, touring cars could finally reach Wylie Camp, a tent camping resort that comprised the first visitor lodging in Zion Canyon.

In 1919 a congressional bill designating Zion National Park was signed into law. Visitation to the new national park increased steadily during the 1920s, particularly after the Union Pacific extended a spur rail line to Cedar City. The Utah Parks Company, a subsidiary of the Union Pacific, acquired the Wylie Camp in Zion, and offered ten day rail/bus tours to Zion, Bryce, Kaibab, and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Construction on the Zion Lodge complex, designed in "Rustic Style" by architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood, began in the mid-1920s. In 1930, the newly completed Zion-Mt Carmel highway allowed motorists to travel through Zion to Bryce and points east. This highway was a great engineering feat, requiring the construction of a 5,613-foot tunnel to negotiate the vertical sandstone cliffs of Zion.

Visitor numbers at Zion National Park have continued to increase over time, necessitating the construction of trails, campgrounds, and other facilities. The economic benefits of tourism now support the small communities surrounding the park, ensuring their survival into a new millennium of human history.

**DIRECTION FOR THE PLAN — PURPOSES, SIGNIFICANCE, AND MISSION GOALS OF ZION NATIONAL PARK**

The purposes, significance, and mission goals of Zion National Park are three of the key elements that shaped the development of the General Management Plan. These elements underlie how the park is managed. The purposes tell why the park was designated as a unit in the national park system. The significance of the park addresses what makes the area unique — why it is important enough to our natural and cultural heritage to warrant national park designation and how it differs from other parts of the country. Zion’s mission goals articulate the ideal future conditions the National Park Service is striving to attain. All of the alternatives and management prescriptions in this management plan should be and are consistent with and support the park’s purposes, significance, and mission goals.

Based on Zion’s enabling legislation, legislative history, agency management policies, and the knowledge and insights of park staff, the planning team identified the following purposes, significance statements, and mission goals for Zion National Park. The purposes of Zion National Park are to

- preserve the dynamic natural process of canyon formation as an extraordinary example of canyon erosion
- preserve and protect the scenic beauty and unique geologic features: the labyrinth of remarkable canyons, volcanic phenomena, fossiliferous deposits, brilliantly colored strata, and rare sedimentation
- preserve the archeological features that pertain to the prehistoric races of America and the ancestral Indian tribes
- preserve the entire area intact for the purpose of scientific research and the enjoyment and enlightenment of the public
- provide a variety of opportunities and a range of experiences, from solitude to high use, to assist visitors in learning about and enjoying park resources without degrading those resources

Zion National Park is significant for the following reasons:

- Zion’s stunning scenery features towering, brilliantly colored cliffs and associated vegetation highlighted by a backdrop of contrasting bright, southwestern skies.
- Zion is a geologic showcase with sheer sandstone cliffs among the highest in the world.
- The Virgin River — one of the last mostly free-flowing river systems on the Colorado Plateau — is responsible for the ongoing carving of this deeply incised landscape.

Because of its unique geographic location and variety of life zones, Zion is home to a large assemblage of plant and animal communities.

Zion preserves evidence of human occupation from prehistoric to modern times, including American Indian sites, remnants of Mormon homesteading, and engineering and architecture related to park establishment and early tourism.

The mission goals of Zion National Park are to

- provide park visitors educational and recreational opportunities that foster an appreciation of Zion and its resources
- ensure that visitor impacts do not impair resources
- maintain the resources, including plant and animal communities, at healthy and viable levels consistent with natural processes
- manage cultural and physical resources to ensure long-term integrity
- ensure that the built environment provides for safe visitor and staff uses in a sustainable and cost-effective manner
- ensure that the organization is responsive to employee needs, recognizing the contributions of each individual
- foster mutually supportive partnerships with private and public organizations and individuals to achieve visitor use and resource protection goals
PRIMARY PLANNING ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The planning team identified a number of key issues and concerns facing Zion National Park based on discussions with park staff, interested agencies and organizations, and the general public. Many of the issues revolve around the increasing number of visitors, the resulting impacts on park resources, and the quality of the visitor experience. The Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement provides a framework or strategy for addressing these issues. This section summarizes the key issues and concerns of this document.

This plan will not answer specific questions about the operation of the shuttle system in Zion Canyon, such as the number and types of shuttles, frequency of shuttles, shuttle operating times, and locations of most shuttle stops. Decisions regarding these elements were presented in the Zion Canyon Transportation System Environmental Assessment (NPS 1997a) and the subsequent “Finding of No Significant Impact.”

INCREASING VISITOR USE

Visitation to Zion has grown dramatically over the past two decades. The number of people camping in the backcountry has risen each year, from 7,807 users in 1986, to 21,002 users in 1999. The park’s campgrounds are generally full to capacity during the peak months from June through September. Increased visitation is resulting in resource impacts and crowding of some backcountry trails and frontcountry areas.

While most of the park’s resources are in good condition, in some areas visitors are inadvertently damaging natural and cultural resources by creating multiple social trails (i.e., unofficial trails formed by visitors).

The formation and use of these trails result in trampled vegetation, eroded soils, stirred up sediments in rivers and streams, and displaced and collected surface artifacts.

Although most visitors rate their experiences in Zion as high, they still express concern about some aspects of the visit. Some visitors feel there are too many people in some areas of the park. These visitors suggest limiting the use of the park based on established carrying capacities or other criteria. Another segment of the public wants Zion to continue to be available to all visitors and believes the way to address crowding is not through limits, but by increasing visitor facilities and access, or redistributing visitors to less used areas of the park.

About 90% of Zion is recommended for wilderness designation. The General Management Plan was largely shaped by this recommendation. Under NPS policy, this area must be managed as if it were established wilderness. This obligation carries with it certain expectations for visitors, such as the opportunity to experience solitude and quiet. But these opportunities cannot always be met in some areas of the backcountry due to the behavior and number of other visitors.

The National Park Service must determine the conditions (i.e., resource conditions, visitor experiences) for which Zion National Park should be managed. If park managers allow use levels to increase further, the potential for resource damage will increase and opportunities for quality experiences, such as solitude, will likely decline. If park managers regulate or restrict use levels, resources could be better protected, but visitors would have less freedom to go where and when they choose. If park managers limit use in one area and displace visitors there, other areas within or outside the park could receive higher use levels and resource impacts.

FUTURE OF RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS (RNAs)

Research natural areas are areas administratively designated by federal land management agencies for research and educational purposes and/or to maintain biological diversity. Research natural areas typically preserve examples of ecological communities that have been little disturbed in the past, and in which current natural processes are allowed to continue with minimal human intervention. Uses in research natural areas are restricted to research that samples but does not alter the existing condition, and educational activities that do not detract from the areas’ research values. Federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service, have established a national network of research natural areas.

Zion National Park currently has three areas designated as research natural areas: Bighorn (8,313 acres), West Rim-Phantom Valley (22,409 acres), and Kolob Mesas (279 acres). Bighorn and West Rim-Phantom Valley were designated as research natural areas in 1942, while Kolob Mesas was designated as a research natural area in 1966. Parunuweap Canyon also has been considered for designation. Park staff raised questions regarding the rationale for the three existing park research natural areas, which have not been consistently managed with the intent of the designation and NPS guidelines. Although recreational use is not generally allowed in research natural areas nationally, most of the currently designated Zion research natural areas are open to recreational use.

Park managers must determine whether the existing research natural areas meet park resource management goals or whether management of better defined research natural areas is needed. If these areas were managed as they were intended under NPS policy, then potential impacts on many of the park’s natural and cultural resources would be avoided, but much of the park would be closed to the public. If park managers establish a management designation that permits certain uses in research natural areas, potential impacts may result, and questions concerning how Zion’s research natural areas relate to the national system may arise.

PUBLIC USE OF PARUNUWEAP CANYON

In 1992, park managers closed Parunuweap Canyon for recreational use, pending completion of this planning effort. There are differing opinions on whether or not this area should be opened to the public. Some people want the canyon to be opened for unlimited recreational use, while others prefer the canyon to be opened only for strictly regulated recreational use. Still others support keeping the canyon permanently closed to recreational use to prevent impacts on sensitive cultural and natural resources.

Park managers must determine whether or not to open Parunuweap Canyon to the public. If the canyon remains closed, the special resources in this area would be protected, but visitors would not be able to access this area. If this area was open to the public, impacts on the canyon’s natural and cultural resources would increase. If the canyon was open to limited public use, park managers must answer questions regarding how many people should be allowed into the area, at what times, and at what points. Some people who want to see the area may not be able to do so at the time of their choosing.
FUTURE OF ZION CANYON LODGE

The Zion Canyon Lodge operation has been a traditional use in Zion for more than 80 years. It has enabled many visitors to stay in the park by providing overnight accommodations and food services. Although the lodge is the only place offering these visitor services within the park, other facilities and services are available in Springdale and nearby communities. Some people believe the lodge should continue to operate, arguing it is a special part of Zion’s history, and offers a unique visitor experience and services that add to visitors’ enjoyment of the park. Others argue that the lodge is inappropriate and unnecessary in a national park, that it encourages crowding and resource impacts. These people believe the lodge should be closed or converted to another more appropriate use.

The National Park Service must determine whether or not to continue the current operation of the Zion Canyon Lodge. If the lodge remains open as it is now, many people will continue to gain a special experience staying overnight in the park. However, resource impacts also would continue in the area, and the lodge would continue to take away potential customers from businesses in Springdale. If the lodge was closed, some resource impacts would decrease in the area and businesses in Springdale could benefit. However, a special visitor experience now offered in the park would be eliminated and adversely affect the lodge employees and the employer.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION

Both the public and park staff expressed concerns about maintaining the free-flowing condition and other outstanding values of rivers and streams in and adjacent to Zion, Other citizens are concerned that designating drainages in and adjacent to Zion as wild and scenic rivers would impact on visitor activities and freedoms. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires federal land managers to consider potential national wild, scenic, and recreational rivers in planning for water and land resources.

The National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management must determine whether or not to recommend that the drainages in and adjacent to Zion be designated as part of the wild and scenic rivers system. Making such a designation would provide additional protection to the park’s drainages and could attract additional visitors to the park. On the other hand, if increased use occurs, the designation could result in additional resource impacts in the drainages.

MANAGEMENT OF THE NORTH FORK OF THE VIRGIN RIVER

Recreational use of the North Fork of the Virgin River in Zion Canyon has dramatically increased in recent years. Visitors kayak the river in the spring, and swim and wade in the river during the summer. Concerned citizens have raised questions regarding how the Park Service should manage the North Fork in the future. These questions include:

- What types of recreational uses are appropriate for the river environment and the visitor experience?
- Should the upper portion of the North Fork in Zion Canyon continue to be channelized or should it be restored to more natural conditions?
- If part of the river is restored, what effect will it have on the Zion Lodge, the road, and use of the canyon?
- Park managers must determine the appropriate uses for the North Fork of the Virgin River and whether or not to restore the river channel and its floodplain. Limiting certain uses would reduce or eliminate resource and visitor impacts, but this would also reduce the diversity of experiences offered in the park.

Restoring part of the river’s floodplain would be consistent with the park purpose to preserve the dynamic processes that formed the canyon. The riparian forest community along channelized reaches of the river has lost viability as evidenced by the even-aged, decadent overstory with no recruitment of new trees. Similar occurrences have been documented throughout the West where there has been a loss of connectivity between rivers and floodplains due to channelization, channel entrenchment, or control of floods downstream of reservoirs. To reproduce most riparian tree and shrub species need the disturbance and watering provided by floods and channel migration. Historic photographs of Zion Canyon, and comparisons with similar river channels elsewhere, show a much more active channel and greater use of the floodplain. Surveys in Zion have shown that Virgin spinedace populations are much higher where the river has not been channelized than where it has.

River restoration would reestablish a natural morphology and riverine ecology and maintain or restore habitat for aquatic and floodplain species. The level of restoration would determine the extent of impacts on the park road, trails, and lodge; the level of visitation in Zion Canyon; and the degree to which visitors faced safety hazards when the river floods.

Although the Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement focuses on what types of recreational uses are appropriate for the river and whether or not the river floodplain should be restored, this plan will not answer detailed questions about the management of the river. Specifically, this plan will not answer questions regarding appropriate use levels, use management techniques, and the degree of restoration of the floodplain. A future detailed river management plan will address these questions.

DEVELOPMENT AND USES ADJACENT TO THE PARK

The population in the region around Zion National Park has been rapidly growing. As more people move into the area, residential and second-home development has been increasing on lands adjacent to the park. There most likely will be more development in the future, particularly near the park’s south entrance, the Kolob Canyons entrance, and on land east of the park. Private developments and management practices could affect the scenic views from the park, the night sky, ambient sound levels, opportunities for solitude, soil erosion, the composition of native plant and animal communities, and wildlife migration/habitat corridors. They can also restrict or close off visitor and staff access to parts of the park.

Park managers must determine how to manage park resources in light of the development that is occurring, or potentially could occur, adjacent to the park. If no actions were taken, park resources and the visitor experience would most likely degrade in parts of the park. Current access could be restricted or eliminated in some parts of the park.
OTHER ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN FUTURE PLANS

Several other issues are of concern to park managers and visitors at Zion National Park, which are summarized below. The General Management Plan provides some directions and lays the groundwork for addressing these issues. However, future implementation plans will provide specific directions and actions that deal with these issues. Opportunities for public input will be provided in developing these implementation plans.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Within the next five years carrying capacity studies will be completed for the park. These studies will serve as components for future plans such as the wilderness management plan. The 1978 Parks and Recreation Act requires parks to address carrying capacity, and it is essential in order to protect resources and provide a quality visitor experience. While the General Management Plan addresses carrying capacity qualitatively, a more scientific approach is needed to determine appropriate resource and visitor experience conditions. A VERP process or similar one will be used to collect additional data on visitor experiences and resource conditions, establish indicators and standards for each zone, and set up a monitoring program to determine whether conditions are acceptable or unacceptable. This process will allow management to take action to ensure resources and visitor experiences do not deteriorate to an unacceptable level. In the meantime, interim carrying capacities for the primitive and pristine zones have been established based on current levels of use and resource protection needs.

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

About 90% of the park is recommended wilderness and is managed as wilderness. It is essential that these areas be managed to protect the wilderness characteristics and values, both for the resource value itself as well as for the visitor’s wilderness experience. As backcountry use is expanding dramatically, it is increasingly difficult to protect resources and manage for solitude and primitive recreation. A comprehensive plan is needed to address wilderness management. The park staff will complete a wilderness management plan within five years. This plan will follow NPS policy, including the minimum requirement process, to determine appropriate uses and levels of use in wilderness. In addition to carrying capacity, the wilderness management plan will specifically address climbing/canyoneering, river recreation, and the potential for commercial guiding (see each description below).

CLIMBING AND CANYONEERING

Climbing and canyoneering are two activities that have dramatically risen in popularity in recent years. These activities have the potential to adversely affect park resources, defacing rock faces, disturbing cultural resources, disturbing sensitive species (e.g., peregrine falcons, spotted owls, and desert bighorn sheep), trampling vegetation, and forming social trails.

Climbing/canyoneering will be addressed in the wilderness management plan.

RIVER RECREATION

Concerns have also been expressed about the impacts of river recreation. Visitors kayak and canoe on the North Fork of the Virgin River in the spring, and swim, wade, and hike portions of the river in the summer. There are concerns about the impacts of these activities on water quality (e.g., increased sedimentation and turbidity, spread of human waste), soil erosion, sensitive species, and the disturbance of other visitors, particularly in the Zion Narrows.

Concerns regarding the use and management of the North Fork will be addressed in a river management plan.

NATURAL SOUNDS, NOISE, AND AIR TOURS

Natural sounds (e.g., water flowing, wind blowing through trees, birds calling) are a resource that contribute to the visitor experience in all parts of the park. Natural sounds predominate in most of Zion; however, mechanical and other human-created sounds can be a problem in some areas. Noise from aircraft can be heard throughout the park. In the fronthcountry (Zion Canyon), some visitors complain that the sounds of automobiles and buses, generators, motorized equipment, and other people at times interfere with the natural sounds of the park. The intrusion of human-generated noise in the backcountry may negatively affect visitors' experiences. In particular, there is concern that the noise generated by an increase in low-flying aircraft or commercial jets would impair visitors' ability to hear natural sounds and detract from the experience of solitude.

Human-generated noise can also affect the behavior of some animals, depending on the type, frequency, and level of noise, especially during sensitive periods such as the breeding season.

Park managers must determine what activities produce, or could produce, unacceptable noise levels in the park.
AIR QUALITY

Long-range transport of air pollutants from industrial sources and large urbanized areas, increased numbers of visitors, and increased development in the region as well as near the park boundary have the potential to adversely affect Zion's air quality. Although the park’s shuttle system has helped to reduce air pollution in Zion Canyon, increased vehicular traffic in Springdale and other parts of the park could increase air pollution. Smoke from campfires in the summer and from residences with wood stoves in the winter is sometimes evident in the canyon in early mornings and evenings. Local trash burns, prescribed burns, and administrative maintenance burns can also produce temporary reductions in air quality.

Air quality issues will be addressed as part of the park’s resource management plan.

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY

A number of water resource issues exist in Zion, including water quality and flood hazards. Impacts on water quality have occurred in parts of the park due to recreational use and livestock grazing outside the park. Changes in water quality and water flows could have major effects on park resources and visitors. A parkwide water resource management plan will address these issues and other scientific and legal requirements to promote understanding and management of park waters.

NIGHT SKY

Viewing of the night sky is an important aspect of visitors’ experiences in Zion National Park. Outdoor lighting in developed areas of the park and in surrounding communities can negatively affect the night sky. As neighboring communities continue to grow, the potential for light pollution affecting the night sky will increase. Actions and strategies will be developed to mitigate or eliminate impacts of artificial lights as part of the resource management plan.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Unmanaged visitor use at archeological or historic period sites can impact the integrity and scientific value of these sites. The nature and extent of these impacts can be difficult to assess, since baseline data on site conditions are often unavailable or incomplete. In recent years, park staff has implemented site monitoring and site condition assessment programs to aid in developing long-term protective strategies for significant sites that could be impacted by visitors. Park managers must maintain historic buildings on an ongoing basis (i.e., cyclic maintenance and rehabilitation) to ensure that conditions are suitable for national register eligibility.

Cultural resources management will be addressed in the park’s resource management plan.

PARK POLICIES AND PRACTICES

A number of federal laws and NPS policies and practices guide the management of Zion National Park. Appendix B describes some of these key federal laws, such as the NPS Organic Act, which underpins much of what can and cannot be permitted in national parks and which distinguishes national parks from other public lands. This section focuses on park policies and standard park practices that affect the management of Zion. These policies and practices guide the actions taken by park staff on such topics as natural and cultural resource management, use of recommended wilderness areas, development of park facilities, and visitor use management.

These policies and practices would continue to guide park managers under all of the alternatives described in “Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action.” Park staff would continue to implement NPS policies and goals, as identified in NPS Management Policies (2001) and the NPS Strategic Plan (1997c); several existing formal agreements; and many standard park practices, as described in the “Zion National Park Compendium” (NPS n.d.).

The ongoing management policies and practices of Zion National Park are described below. For each topic discussed, there is a general statement that describes the National Park Service’s desired future condition or goal for Zion. The general strategies or actions taken (or that will be taken) by park staff to achieve the desired conditions are also discussed. Some of the strategies described below are not currently being implemented, but the strategies are consistent with NPS policy, are not believed to be controversial, and would require no additional analysis and documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The alternatives in this Plan/EA include additional desired conditions and strategies besides the ongoing park policies and practices described below. The combination of the ongoing park policies and practices in this part and the strategies specific to the alternative that is selected for implementation will form the complete General Management Plan for Zion National Park.

ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Zion National Park lies within an extensive landscape of human, biological, and physical dimensions. Park resources and their management are affected by natural processes and social circumstances, which often extend beyond park boundaries. Park visitors, local culture and traditions, adjacent land management, and economic considerations all affect park recreational and wilderness values, as well as the conservation of cultural and natural resources. For example, although the park staff manages a small portion of the upper Virgin River watershed, water quality in the park may depend upon actions taken upstream of the park on over 700,000 acres.

The park also is in a rapidly developing region of the United States. With the predicted population growth for Washington, Iron, and Kane Counties, lands adjacent to the park will be subject to increased development — a trend already apparent. Increased use of recreational lands and facilities, greater consumption of water and other resources, and fragmenting of sensitive species habitat will likely result. Because the park is part of this greater ecosystem, should this development impact resources and alter ecological processes, the ability of the park to sustain natural and cultural resources could be compromised.
Central to ecosystem management is long-term monitoring of the change in condition of cultural and natural resources and related human influences. Without a planned monitoring program, improvement or degradation of resources and visitor experience cannot be determined with any certainty. To protect, restore, and enhance park resources and to sustain visitor use and enjoyment within the park and the related landscape, park managers will

- initiate long-term monitoring of resources and visitor use, including use of the VERP process as appropriate.
- promote park-sponsored research to increase the understanding of park resources, natural processes, and human interactions with the environment.
- institute science-based decision-making, incorporating the results of resource monitoring and research into all aspects of park operations.
- identify lands external to the park where ecological processes, natural and cultural resources, and human use affect park resources or are closely related to park resource management considerations; initiate joint management actions, agreements, or partnerships to promote resource conservation.
- provide vigorous education and outreach programs to highlight conservation and management issues facing the park and related lands, and develop constituencies to assist in their resolution.

RELATIONS WITH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS, ADJACENT LANDOWNERS, AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

As noted above, Zion National Park is not an island — the park is part of a greater area, socially, politically, ecologically, and historically. The National Park Service must consider how its actions in Zion affect the surrounding environment and society. For instance, management of the park influences local economies through tourism expenditures, as well as the goods and services purchased by the Park Service to support park operations.

- Desired Conditions: The National Park Service manages Zion National Park holistically as part of a greater ecological, social, economic, and cultural system. Good relations are maintained with adjacent landowners, surrounding communities, and private and public groups that affect, and are affected by, the park. Zion is managed proactively to resolve external issues and concerns and ensure park values are not compromised.

- Strategies: Park staff would continue to establish and foster partnerships with public and private organizations to achieve the purposes and mission of the park. Partnerships would be sought for resource protection, research, education, and visitor enjoyment purposes. To foster a spirit of cooperation with neighbors and to encourage community groups, park staff would work with landowners, land managers, local governments, and the public informed about park management activities. Periodic consultations would occur with landowners and communities who were affected by, or potentially affected by park visitors and management actions. Park staff would respond promptly to conflicts that arose over their activities, visitor access, and

In the past many park units were managed in a way that did not adapt to natural or social change, or consider influences beyond park boundaries. Managing for a static environment in the human or natural dimension will not provide the means to meet the needs of future generations nor accommodate the change inherent to, and resulting from, natural processes.

In terms of biological, geological, and hydrologic resources, the management of Zion National Park's natural resources has begun to change from custodial management to that of allowing natural processes to shape the landscape, while also taking restoration actions to conserve native biological communities and species. For example, the condition of vegetation communities has declined on park and adjacent lands since the settlement period from erosion, weed infestations, and exclusion of natural fires. To reinstitute the natural fire process, park management of vegetation now includes the use of both management-ignited and naturally ignited fire under closely managed conditions. In concert with fire management, weed control and revegetation, using native plants as active restoration tools, are used to restore natural vegetation. To be most effective, application of these restoration activities must be conducted in concert with adjacent land managers because vegetation communities do not conform to political boundaries.

- Desired Conditions: The Park Service demonstrates leadership in resource stewardship and conservation of ecosystem values within and outside the park. Zion National Park is managed from an ecosystem perspective, where internal and external factors affecting visitor use, environmental quality, and resource stewardship goals are considered at a scale appropriate to their impact on affected resources. Park resources and visitors are managed considering the ecological and social conditions of the park and surrounding area. Park managers adapt to changing ecological and social conditions within and external to the park and continue as partners in regional planning and land management.

- Strategies: Park staff would continue to participate in and encourage ongoing partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies and organizations in programs that have importance within and beyond park boundaries. Partnerships important to the long-term viability of critical natural and cultural resources include:

1. Interagency Conservation Agreement for the Virgin Spinedace: provides for habitat improvement and population protection for the spinedace.
2. Virgin River Resource Management and Recovery Program: provides for conservation of riverine resources (specifically seven species of concern) throughout the Virgin River drainage, through habitat management, improved water quality and quantity, instream flow, floodplain protection, and other means.
3. Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement: protects stream and groundwater resources within and adjacent to the park and provides for federal reserved water rights (pending final adjudication) for the park.
4. Grafton Heritage Partnership Project: restores and stabilizes the extant structures and interpretation of the historic pioneer-era settlement of Grafton, as well as river channel restoration.
5. River channel and floodplain restoration of the North Fork of the Virgin River: restoration of natural floodplain and riverine processes in stretches of the river within and below the park.
INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service has developed several park policies based on legal mandates, such as the National Historic Preservation Act, Archaeological Resources Protection Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. The Park Service has written a formal park policy that exempts Southern Paiute tribal members from paying fees if they enter the park for nonrecreational activities (i.e., traditional religious, ceremonial, medicinal, or other customary activities). The Park Service and tribal governments of the Southern Paiute have also jointly developed a memorandum of understanding that allows under prescribed conditions, tribal members to gather plants found within the park that are used for traditional and customary purposes.

• Desired Conditions: The National Park Service and tribes culturally affiliated with Zion maintain positive, productive, government-to-government relationships. Park managers and staff respect the views, points, and needs of the tribes, continue to promptly address conflicts that occur, and consider American Indian values in park management and operation.

• Strategies: The National Park Service would continue to cooperate with tribes in conducting ethnographic studies to better understand which tribes are culturally affiliated with the park and identify culturally significant resources. Regular consultations would occur with affiliated tribes to continue to improve communications and resolve any problems or misunderstandings.

Park managers would continue to encourage the employment of American Indians on park staff to improve communications and working relationships, and encourage cultural diversity in the workplace.

GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT RELATIONS BETWEEN AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES AND ZION NATIONAL PARK

Several Southern Paiute tribes and bands view Zion National Park as part of their traditional homeland. These tribes and bands include the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah (which includes the Kanosh, Shiwit, Koosharem, Indian Peaks and Cedar Bands), the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, the Moapa Paiute Indian Tribe, and the San Juan Paiute Indian Tribe. The Hopi Tribe and other Puebloan groups also have expressed their close affiliation with Zion.

Culturally affiliated tribal values would be considered in efforts to improve overall management and park interpretation.

A joint monitoring program would be implemented to monitor plant-gathering sites for potential impacts, as called for in the memorandum of understanding with the Southern Paiute.

NATURAL RESOURCES (GENERAL)

Protection, study, and management of the park's natural resources and processes is essential for achieving the park's purposes and mission. The "Resource Management Plan" (NPS 1994a) provides details on the strategies and actions to address the park's most important resource management problems and research needs.

• Desired Conditions: Zion retains its ecological integrity, including its natural resources and processes. The natural features of the park, including the natural sound environment remain unimpaired. The park continues to be a dynamic, biodiverse environment. Park visitors and staff recognize and understand the value of the park's natural resources. Park staff uses the best available scientific information and technology to manage the park's natural resources. Park managers ensure that laboratory facilities are available to meet the needs of park staff and independent scientists engaged in fundamental physical, biological, and cultural studies and analyses. Zion is recognized and valued as an outstanding example of resource stewardship, conservation, education, and public use.

• General Strategies: Park staff and other scientists would continue to inventory park resources to quantify, locate, and document biotic and abiotic resources in the park and to assess their status and trends.

Park managers would encourage and support basic and applied research directly through various partnerships and agreements to enhance the understanding of park resources and processes, or to answer specific management questions.

Park staff and other scientists would continue the long-term systematic monitoring of resources and processes to discern natural and anthropogenically induced trends, document changes in species or communities, evaluate the effectiveness of management actions taken to protect and restore resources, and to mitigate impacts on resources.

The park staff would continue to expand the data management system, including a geographic information system (GIS), a research data base, and a literature data base, for analyzing, modeling, predicting, and testing trends in resource conditions.

Park staff would apply ecological principles to ensure that natural resources were maintained and not impaired. They would manage fire to maintain and/or restore ecosystem integrity and use integrated pest management procedures when necessary to control nonnative organisms or other pests. Habitats for threatened and endangered species would also be conserved and restored.

Park staff would apply mitigation techniques to minimize the impacts of construction and other activities on park resources (see the text box). Facilities would be built in previously disturbed areas or in carefully selected sites with as small a construction footprint as possible.

Park managers would restore disturbed lands as much as possible and determine on a site-by-site basis whether passive or active restoration was necessary. Park staff would carry out active restoration of proposed activities and developments on adjacent lands that could affect Zion. Park managers would seek agreements with landowners to encourage their lands to be managed in a manner compatible with park purposes. Park staff also would seek ways to provide landowners with technical and management assistance to address issues of mutual interest.
Introduction

Previously or newly disturbed areas using native genetic materials to regain maximum habitat value. Should facilities be removed, the disturbed lands would be rehabilitated to restore natural topography and soils, and revegetate the areas with native species. Under some circumstances, primarily in frontcountry developed areas, it may be appropriate and within policy to use nonnative plants in restoration efforts. Additionally, certain exotic plant species may be used to control other, morenoxious and invasive exotic plant species. These practices are intended for short-term use only, to achieve a long-term overall goal of native plant community integrity.

Park managers would continue to regularly update the park's resource management plan and prioritize actions needed to protect, manage, and study park resources.

Air Quality

Zion National Park is designated a class I area under the Clean Air Act. This designation allows air quality characteristics, including visibility, to be degraded the least, compared to other Clean Air Act designations.

- **Desired Conditions:** Zion's class I air quality is maintained or enhanced with no significant degradation. Nearly unimpaired views of the landscape both within and outside the park are present. Scenic views, which are integral to the visitor experience and have been identified in the park as per the Clean Air Act, are substantially unimpaired. For example, Mt. Trumbull and the Kaibab Plateau, both over 50 miles away in northern Arizona, can usually be seen from Lava Point. Park staff carry out prescribed fires to replicate ecological conditions and reduce dangerous fuel loading, in a manner that minimizes local effects to visibility from smoke production.

- **Strategies:** The National Park Service would continue to work with appropriate state and federal government agencies, industries, nearby communities, land managers, the Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC), the Utah Division of Air Quality, and the Western Regional Air Partnership to maintain park and regional air quality.

Any significant changes (improvement or deterioration) to Zion's airshed. This would include a complete inventory of in-park emission sources, as well as those in the immediate vicinity of the park.

The Park Service would review, comment on, and recommend actions to minimize or reduce emissions from sources being proposed within 64 miles (100 kilometers) of Zion.

Park managers also would attempt to minimize the effects of in-park pollution sources on air quality. For example, emissions from burning wood in campgrounds and residences may be reduced by establishing nonburn days or by banning wood-burning stoves.

Night Sky

NPS policy recognizes that Zion's night sky is a feature that significantly contributes to the visitor experience. The policy further states that the Park Service will seek to minimize the intrusion of artificial light into the night scene.

In natural areas, artificial outdoor lighting will be limited to meeting basic safety requirements and will be shielded when possible.

- **Desired Conditions:** Excellent opportunities to view the night sky are available. Artificial light sources both within and outside the park do not impair night sky viewing opportunities.

- **Strategies:** Park staff would continue to work with local communities to encourage protection of the night sky and would evaluate impacts on the night sky caused by facilities within Zion National Park. To the extent possible, the staff would work within a regional context to protect night sky quality.
floods, are substantially natural. All water withdrawals and appropriations are limited to authorized amounts. Zion’s water quality continues to reflect natural conditions and supports administrative and recreational uses, and adjacent communities.

- Strategies: With regard to water flows, the National Park Service would work cooperatively with the Utah Department of Natural Resources, Washington County Water Conservancy District, and Kane County Water Conservancy District to implement the Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement.

Park staff would strive to conserve water in all park operations. Examples of actions that could be taken include replacing irrigation ditches with pipes, reducing irrigated landscapes, and installing low flow fixtures such as toilets and showers.

Park personnel would document and monitor current water consumption in the park and monitor stream flows. Park managers would review all future projects for compliance with the provisions of the water rights agreement.

Visitor interpretive and education efforts would emphasize the hazards from flash flooding that exist in the park and appropriate responses when flooding occurs. Park staff would educate visitors in techniques to prevent water pollution and safely collect and treat drinking water from natural sources.

Park personnel would develop a program to manage human waste in all areas, particularly in riparian or riverine situations. This program may involve visitors carrying their own wastes out from certain areas.

Park managers also would work with adjacent landowners and the Utah Department of Natural Resources to prevent water pollution and minimize the risk of water-borne diseases stemming from livestock and other sources. Park managers would also participate in state or national water quality remediation and watershed planning programs.

A monitoring program would be established to regularly measure water quality and quantity, including physical, chemical, and biological properties.

NATURAL SOUNDS

NPS Management Policies require park managers to strive to preserve the natural soundscape (natural quiet) associated with the physical and biological resources (for example, the sounds of the wind in the trees). The concept of natural quiet was further defined in the Report on Effects of Aircraft Overflights on the National Park System (NPS 1995b):

What is natural quiet? Parks and wildernesses offer a variety of unique sounds not found in most urban or suburban environments. They also offer a complete absence of sounds that are found in such environments. Together, these two conditions provide a very special dimension to a park experience — quiet true. In the absence of any discernible source of sound (especially manmade), quiet is an important element of the feeling of solitude. Quiet also affords visitors an opportunity to hear faint or very distant sounds, such as animal activity and waterfalls. Such an experience provides an important perspective on the vastness of the environment in which the visitor is located, often beyond the visual boundaries determined by trees, terrain, and the like. In considering natural quiet as a resource, the ability to clearly hear the delicate and quieter intermittent sounds of nature, the ability to experience interludes of extreme quiet for their own sake, and the opportunity to do so for extended periods of time is what natural quiet is all about.

Aircraft flights over the park for sightseeing, photography, or filming purposes can adversely affect the natural soundscape. The potential exists for increases in air tours and associated noise impacts in the park. Land-based sources, such as motor vehicles, can also affect natural sounds.

- Desired Conditions: Natural sounds predominate in Zion. Visitors have opportunities throughout most of the park to experience natural sounds in an unimpaired condition. The sounds of civilization are generally confined to developed areas.

- Strategies: Park managers would continue to follow several policies and practices to minimize noise both from land and air sources.

With the passage of Public Law 106-181 (National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000), the park staff would develop an air tour management plan to provide guidance in managing this activity. The plan would conform to the above legislation.

As provided in the legislation, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) would grant interim operating authority for air tour operators to continue to operate as they have in the past, pending completion of an air tour management plan. If all parties, including the park superintendent, agree, an interim operating authority could be modified to further protect park resources, values, and/or visitor experiences.

Park managers would work with the FAA, tour operators, and all other interested parties in developing the air tour management plan. This plan would determine if commercial air tours would be appropriate for the park, and if so, under what conditions (e.g., if air tours are appropriate in some or all of the park, the plan could establish conditions such as routes, altitudes, times of day, maximum number of flights per unit of time, etc.).

The National Park Service would continue to work with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), tour operators, commercial businesses, and general aviation interests to minimize noise and visual impacts of aviation to the park. Aircraft would be encouraged to fly outside the park, especially for those flights where the presence of the park was incidental to the purpose of the flight (i.e., transit between two points). Actions that may be considered for encouraging pilots to fly outside park boundaries include identifying the park on route maps as a noise-sensitive area, educating pilots about the reasons for keeping a distance from the park, and encouraging pilots to fly in compliance with FAA regulations and advisory guidance, in a manner that minimizes noise and other impacts.

The National Park Service would work with the Department of Defense to develop a process to address the occasional problems that arise from military flights over Zion.

Park managers would follow several strategies to control existing and potential land-based noise sources:

- continue operating the shuttle system in Zion Canyon and eventually prohibit tour buses, which will reduce noise levels and eliminate the greatest source of noise in Zion Canyon
- continue to require bus tour companies in Zion to comply with regulations that reduce noise levels (e.g., turning off engines when buses are parked)
- encourage visitors to avoid the use of generators, thus reducing related noise
Park managers would minimize noise generated by park management activities by strictly regulating NPS and concession administrative use of noise-producing machinery such as aircraft and motorized equipment. Noise would be a consideration when procuring and using park equipment. In the recommended wilderness area, the use of motorized equipment would conform to the requirements of the Wilderness Act, "minimum requirements procedures," and related NPS policies (NPS Director's Order 41). Park managers also would prepare a soundscape preservation and noise management plan to provide guidance for managing all noise sources in the park, including buses, generators, NPS equipment, other aircraft, and external sources.

Cultural Resource Mitigation Measures

Park staff would continue to apply the following measures to ensure that impacts on sensitive cultural resources were avoided or minimized:

- consult a Utah state historical preservation officer and undertake an archeological survey, to determine the extent and significance of archeological resources in areas that were not surveyed, for actions that could involve ground disturbance or affect structures and/or landscapes that were either on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- where possible, site projects and facilities in previously disturbed or developed locations
- whenever possible, modify project design features to avoid effects to national register eligible or listed properties
- ensure that archeological monitors were present during all construction activities that could impact subsurface cultural deposits
- add signs and physical barriers to protect sites listed on the national register (or were eligible for listing) from visitor related impacts
- focus public education initiatives on class I and class II sites, as identified under the park's archeological site disclosure policy

Cultural Resources (General)

Zion's cultural resources, including its prehistoric, historic, and ethnographic resources, are an integral part of the park landscape. Protection of these resources is essential for understanding peoples' past, present, and future relationships with the park environment and expressions of America's cultural heritage. The Zion "Resource Management Plan" (NPS 1994a) provides details on the strategies and actions to address the park's most important cultural resource problems and research needs.

- Desired Conditions: Zion's cultural resources are protected and the integrity of the park's cultural resources is preserved unimpaired. Park visitors and employees recognize and understand the value of the park's cultural resources. Zion is recognized and valued as an example of resource stewardship, conservation, education, and public use.

- General Strategies: The National Park Service would support basic and applied research, directly and through various partnerships and agreements, to enhance the understanding of resources and processes or to solve specific management questions.

Park staff would use the best available scientific information and technology for making decisions on and managing the park's cultural resources.

Park staff and scientists would continue to collect information to fill gaps in the knowledge and understanding of Zion's cultural resources, to assess their status and trends and more effectively protect and manage the resources.

The National Park Service also would continue long-term monitoring of archeological sites to measure the deterioration from natural and human sources and to evaluate the effectiveness of management actions to protect resources and mitigate impacts.

To analyze, model, predict, and test trends in resource conditions, park managers would continue to use and expand a data management system, including a geographic information system (GIS).

To provide the public and park staff with optimum interpretive and resource management opportunities, park personnel would continue to research, document, and catalogue the museum collection. Museum objects and archival materials would be conserved by NPS and professional standards. The park's museum conservation program would continue to provide for the proper preservation and protection of the museum collection.

In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, park managers would continue to locate, identify, and evaluate park resources to determine if they were eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Visitor use management and construction mitigation techniques would continue to ensure that human activities were not impairing park resources. Park managers would rely on a variety of actions to minimize these impacts, including visitor education and interpretation, and use of foot patrols to enforce the Archeological Resources Protection Act. The park's archeological site disclosure policy would continue to be followed (see the archeological site disclosure text box).

Park managers would continue to regularly update the "Resource Management Plan" and prioritize actions needed to protect park resources.
PARK ACCESSIBILITY

The policy of the National Park Service is to maximize accessibility for people (visitors and staff) with disabilities. Guidance on this topic is provided by federal statutes and regulations. These regulations include the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; 28 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 36 and 43 CFR, Part 17; the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards of 1984; the U.S. Access Board Draft Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas of 1999; and NPS Management Policies and Director’s Orders.

- Desired Conditions: Zion National Park’s buildings, facilities, programs, and services are accessible to and usable by all people, including those with disabilities. All new and renovated buildings and facilities, including those provided by concessioners, are designed and constructed to provide access to people with disabilities. All services and programs, including those offered by concessioners, volunteers, cooperating associations, and interpreters, also are designed to be accessible by people with disabilities. There are opportunities for all people to access parts of the park’s backcountry.

- Strategies: Park staff would work with user groups, such as saddle stock groups and disabled people or their representatives, to provide opportunities for the disabled to access to the front and backcountry.

Existing buildings and facilities would be evaluated to determine the degree to which they are currently accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, and to identify barriers that limit access. Action plans would be developed identifying how barriers would be removed. Similarly, existing programs, activities, and services (including interpretation, telecommunications, media, and web pages) would be evaluated to determine the degree to which they are currently accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, and to identify barriers to access. Action plans would be developed identifying how barriers would be removed.

VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE

With the exception of commercial guided activities, visitors have had few restrictions on traditional activities in Zion until the past decade or so. However, over 2.5 million people now annually visit Zion and participate in a wide range of activities. Park managers are taking action to manage this use, minimize or avoid resource impacts, and ensure that visitors continue to have the opportunity for high quality experiences.

- Desired Conditions: Zion offers a variety of activities that are consistent with the park’s purposes and significance. The vast majority of visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities. Most visitors understand and appreciate the basic purposes and significance of the park and their stewardship role in preserving park features. They actively contribute to the park’s preservation through demonstrated appropriate use and behavior. Visitor use levels and activities are consistent with park purposes and desired resource conditions and visitor opportunities. Resource impacts and conflicts between users are minimal. Visitors have opportunities to experience the natural sound environment of the park in an unimpaired condition. They understand and support management actions that are taken to diminish or avoid resource impacts.

- Strategies: If it is necessary to take action to address visitor impacts, park managers would use the method that assures the most resource protection whenever possible. Methods that may be used in this regard include such techniques as providing ongoing visitor education and redesigning or “hardening” facilities (e.g., surfacing a trail or building a fence). More restrictive methods may include implementing a reservation system and requiring permits for certain uses or areas, placing limits on use, and closing areas including trails or campsites. Restrictions on visitor use would be based on a determination by the park superintendent that such measures were consistent with the park’s enabling legislation and were necessary to either prevent the degradation of the values and purposes for which the park was established, or to minimize visitor use conflicts.

Park managers would continue to use the transportation system to manage visitor use and distribution within Zion Canyon, according to the need to protect resources and provide quality visitor experiences. Visitor use of specific features or trails would continue to be managed or limited on a case-by-case basis to protect key visitor experiences.

Park staff would periodically conduct visitor surveys to determine visitor satisfaction with the shuttle system and to determine if congestion was occurring in other parts of the park. Park managers would emphasize visitor education, including pretrip planning regarding the need for and use of the shuttle system.

VISITOR INFORMATION, ORIENTA TION, INTERPRETATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The National Park Service uses a variety of methods to orient visitors to Zion, provide information about the park, and interpret the park’s resources for visitors. The ‘Zion National Park Interpretive Plans’ (NPS 1996) describes interpretation goals and objectives and interpretive themes. The interpretive plan specifies what park staff will do to provide visitors with information, orientation, and interpretation. The 1996 plan also addresses interpretive media, such as roadside exhibits, bulletin boards, and signs.

- Desired Conditions: The National Park Service makes pretrip information available to assist visitors in planning a rewarding visit to the park. Park staff use radio announcements, web sites, mailouts and reservation systems to assist visitors with preplanning. When visitors arrive at Zion, park staff provide information to orient them on what to do (and what not to do), attractions to see, and how to enjoy the park in a safe, low-impact way. Interpretive programs connect the visitor to the park’s resources, build a local and national constituency, and gain public support for protecting the park’s resources. Outreach programs through schools, organizations, and partnerships build emotional, intellectual, and recreational...
introduction

- Strategies: Park managers would continue to implement the park’s interpretive plan, with emphasis on providing information, orientation, and interpretive services in the most effective manner possible. Staff would use state-of-the-art technologies where appropriate.

- Park staff would stay informed of changing visitor demographics and desires to better tailor programs to visitor needs and desires. They would develop interpretive media supportive of the park purposes and significant resources.

Working with other federal agencies, the state of Utah, and local communities, park staff would take action to improve pretrip planning and provide enroute information and orientation for park visitors. Park staff would work with local communities and other entities to provide information/orientation and interpretive facilities outside park boundaries where appropriate. Park staff would also seek partnerships with other state and national parks, educational institutions, and other organizations to enrich interpretation and educational opportunities regionally and nationally.

The park evacuation plan and warning system for flash floods would remain in effect. Park staff would continue efforts to educate the public regarding flood hazards and place signage at all new facilities when appropriate to warn of flash flood hazards.

management of the recommended wilderness area

In 1978, the president recommended to Congress that 120,620 acres within Zion National Park be designated as wilderness and an additional 10,364 acres be identified as potential wilderness. The National Park Service is currently recommending that 132,615 acres (90% of the land under federal jurisdiction within Zion National Park) be designated as wilderness; 4,175 acres of private lands and water rights within the park boundary remain identified as potential wilderness additions. These adjustments to the 1978 acreage figures are due to (a) the acquisition of several inholdings, state surface and mineral rights, grazing rights, and water rights, (b) the use of geographic information system data, which more accurately delineates the original (recommended) wilderness boundary, and (c) the correction of an error regarding a preexisting private water right on Camp Creek.

- Desired Conditions: All of the lands within the recommended wilderness area retain their wilderness characteristics and values. Visitors continue to find opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation. Signs of people remain substantially unnoticeable. The area continues to be affected primarily by the forces of nature.

- Strategies: Within the next five years, park staff would complete a wilderness management plan, which would include the establishment of specific visitor carrying capacities. Components of the wilderness management plan would address climbing/canyoneering, river recreation, and the potential for commercial guide services. In the meantime, and in keeping with established NPS policies and Director’s Order 41 (“Wilderness Preservation and Management”), the park staff would continue to manage the area recommended for wilderness designation as wilderness.

The park’s wilderness committee would also apply a minimum requirement assessment, as defined in Director’s Order 41, to all activities affecting the wilderness resource and character. The minimum requirement assessment determines whether or not a proposed management action is appropriate or necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness. If the project was deemed appropriate or necessary, the management method selected would be that which causes the least amount of impact to the physical resources and experiential characteristics of the wilderness. The park staff would also continue to take appropriate action to limit visitor impacts on resources to maintain wilderness values (see also the “Visitor Use and Experience” section).

levels and types of park development

A variety of different types of development exist in Zion to transport, house, inform, and serve visitors and park staff. Most visitor and operational developments are concentrated at the south park entrance and in Zion Canyon. Some of these developments are adequate to meet visitor and park needs; other developments, such as some employee housing, do not meet NPS standards.

- Desired Conditions: Park development is the minimum necessary to serve visitor needs and provide for the protection of park resources. Visitor and management facilities at Zion and its concessioners meet sustainability standards, and are harmonious with park resources, compatible with natural processes and surrounding landscapes, aesthetically pleasing, and functional. The Park Service continues to provide access to and use of Zion’s facilities for physically and learning disabled visitors, in conformance with applicable laws, regulations, and NPS policies.

- General Strategies: Park staff would properly maintain and upgrade existing development using sustainability prin-

Park Policies and Practices
INTRODUCTION
The National Park Service also would continue to seek opportunities to build the
other management facilities called for in the Development Concept Plan. Zion
Canyon Headquarters (1994b) and the 1997 Canyon Transportation System
Environmental Assessment (NPS 1997a).

UTILITIES AND COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES
Basic utilities and related access are necessary within the park to support visitor services and
administrative operations and to provide for visitor and employee safety. Occasional
maintenance, upgrades, and minor route adjustments are carried out within existing
corridors.
Currently, a transmission line right-of-way and a road easement cross the park. The
transmission line provides electric power to Rockville, Springdale, and the park’s south
entrance and main Zion Canyon area. The road easement in effect, between Interstate
Highway 15 and the Kolob Canyons visitor center, provides access to a water tank on
private lands. This easement includes maintenance of an existing privately owned
water line buried in the road corridor.

- Desired Conditions: Utility and communications facilities support park
operations and public safety with a high degree of reliability, anticipate future
loads and needs, minimize impacts on park resources, and are jointly located
with other existing facilities and rights of
way to the greatest extent possible. Only
those communications facilities necessary
for public safety and administrative
efficiency are located in the park.
- Strategies: New or reconstructed utilities
and communications infrastructure would be
located in association with existing
structures and along roadways or other
established corridors in developed areas.
This would allow ready access for repair
and maintenance, thereby reducing
potential visual quality impacts and
resource disturbance from overland
transport of vehicles and equipment.

When utilities require reconstruction or
extension into developed areas not
currently serviced, park staff would select
routes that would minimize impacts on the
park’s natural, cultural, and visual
resources. Rights-of-way would continue
in effect or be established for service lines
to existing and planned park facilities
(including concessions facilities). Rights-
of-way would be granted for utilities,
water conveyance, or other facilities
within potential, proposed, or designated
wilderness areas except where valid
existing rights are established.

Utility lines would be placed underground
to the maximum extent possible.

In the southwest corner of the park, a
governmental right-of-way exists for a powerline serving
Rockville, Springdale, and the park. Due
to concerns regarding the use of the
infrastructure and growth in the communi-
cities, Utah Power and Light has
proposed to reconstruct a higher capacity
right-of-way between 2001 and 2003. The existing
right-of-way for the powerline on all maps
in this plan is shown as administrative. A
dependent environmental analysis would be
conducted to evaluate routes for the
proposed new powerline, including
alternatives within and/or outside the park.

Utilities and communications facilities
improved in association with existing
structures and along roadways or other
established corridors in developed areas.
This would allow ready access for repair
and maintenance, thereby reducing
potential visual quality impacts and
resource disturbance from overland
transport of vehicles and equipment.

There is potential for natural gas service to
the park, Springdale, and Rockville,
routed along State Highway 9. If this
possibility materializes, park staff would
work with the service company, local
communities, and the public to locate the
line in a manner that minimizes the effects
to park resources. A right-of-way would
be established for natural gas distribution
lines to NFS facilities within the main
Zion Canyon area.

Maintenance of the existing NFS radio
system would be continued with solar-
powered repeaters at existing sites.

Additional park communications equip-
ment is anticipated for the operation of the
Zion Canyon transportation system and
providing needed coverage along the
Kolob-Terrace Road. These are minimal
facilities, which would be located in
administrative areas or co-located with
existing radio facilities.

Commercial telecommunications applica-
tions (Telecommunications Act of 1996)
will be processed in accordance with NFS
policies (RM-53) and NEPA guidelines.
The primary tests for the applications will
be whether there is a documented public
safety need, whether or not there are
feasible alternatives, and whether a facility
would result in derogation of the re-
sources, values, and purposes for which
the park was established. For NFS and
commercial communications needs there
will be no facilities located within
potential, proposed, or designated
wilderness areas (Wilderness Act, 16 USC
S131), except as specifically provided by
law or policy.

SUSTAINABILITY
Sustainability can be described in this context
as the result achieved by conducting activities
in ways that do not compromise the environ-
ment or its capacity to provide for present and
future generations. Sustainable practices
minimize the short- and long-term environ-
mental impacts of developments and other
activities through resource conservation,
recycling, waste minimization, and the use of
energy efficient and ecologically responsible
materials and techniques.

Over the past several years, the federal
government has been placing more emphasis on
adopting sustainable practices. In particular,
Executive Order 12873 mandates federal
agency recycling and waste prevention, and
Executive Order 12902 mandates energy
efficiency and water conservation at federal
facilities.

- Desired Conditions: All decisions
regarding park operations, facilities
management, and development in Zion
from the initial concept through
design and construction reflect
principles of resource conservation.
Thus, all park developments and park
operations are sustainable to the
maximum degree possible and
practical. New developments and
existing facilities are located, built,
and modified according to the Guiding
Principles of Sustainable Design (NPS
1993) or other similar guidelines. The
park has state-of-the-art water systems
for conserving water, and energy
conservation technologies and
renewable energy sources whenever
possible. Biodegradable, nontoxic,
and durable materials are used in the park
whenever possible. Park personnel
promote the reduction, reuse, and
recycling of materials and avoid as
much as possible materials that are
nondurable, environmentally detri-
mental, or that require transportation
from great distances.
- Strategies: Park staff would work with experts both in and outside the agency to make Zion's facilities and programs sustainable.

Park managers would perform value analysis and value engineering, including life cycle analysis, to examine the energy, environmental, and economic implications of proposed park developments.

Park staff would support and encourage the service of suppliers, contractors, and concessioners that follow sustainable practices.

Park interpretive programs would address sustainable park and nonpark practices.

ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION
INTRODUCTION

This part describes the National Park Service’s proposed approach (the preferred alternative) and three alternative approaches for managing Zion National Park — two action alternatives and one no-action alternative. The alternatives and the assessment of the potential environmental consequences of the alternatives form the core of the Final Zion General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement. Alternatives in this plan describe different general visions for the future of the park. They are intended to enable managers, users, neighbors, and the public to consider different approaches to managing visitor use and resources, directing development, and resolving conflicts that may arise at Zion National Park.

This part describes the planning process used by the planning team. It also describes the assumptions made, management zones developed, and range of alternatives generated based on zone-management strategies. This part also describes alternatives, management zones, and actions the team considered but dropped from consideration. The part then describes the four current alternatives — the no-action alternative, which describes existing management in the park; the proposed plan for Zion National Park (the preferred alternative); and the two other action alternatives. The end of this part contains three tables (tables 5-7) that summarize the key differences between the alternatives and the key differences in the impacts that are presumed will result by implementing each alternative. The impacts table is based on the analysis in the subsequent “Environmental Consequences” part.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In formulating the alternatives, the planning team considered the park’s purposes and significance, the National Park Service identified a number of assumptions to guide development of the alternatives (see box). Appendix E describes in detail how the planning team developed the alternatives. Also, refer to the box with definitions of relevant planning terms.

Using all of the above information, the planning team developed seven potential management zones for guiding the use, development, preservation, and understanding of Zion National Park and its resources. These zones form the basis of the range of reasonable alternatives proposed by the planning team, and are described below. The zones are applied in varying combinations and locations in the three action alternatives. (Note: the zones do not apply to the no-action alternative.)

In October 1997, the planning team presented the initial alternatives and zone management strategies in a workbook for public review. Based on comments from the public as well as staff, the planning team then greatly revised the initial alternatives, dropped some alternatives and zones from consideration, and identified a preferred alternative.

Each of the action alternatives identified by the planning team consists of the following elements:

- an overall management concept
- a series of general management strategies and zone-specific management strategies (i.e., zone allocations and actions) that would be implemented
- proposals that require congressional action
- a discussion of priorities and funding necessary for implementing each alternative

Unless otherwise stated, all existing uses and facilities would continue to occur in the park under all of the alternatives.

Definitions of Planning Terms

The following terms are used throughout this document.

Desired conditions refer to the goals or end results park managers are striving to achieve. The NPS can set desired conditions for park resources, visitor experiences, management activities, and facilities. Desired conditions reflect the park’s purposes and mission goals, and ensure that the NPS preserves Zion’s resources and provides quality experiences.

General management strategies describe the general actions park managers intend to take to achieve the desired conditions. These strategies are not tied to management zones. They may apply parkwide (e.g., general visitor use management) or to specific geographic areas or facilities (e.g., Zion Canyon Lodge).

Management zones identify how different areas in the park will be managed to achieve a combination of desired conditions. Each zone prescribes a unique combination of physical, biological, social, and managerial conditions.

Zone-specific management strategies describe the actions that would, or could, be taken to achieve the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences for a given zone.

As noted in “Park Policies and Practices,” the National Park Service would continue to follow a number of strategies in Zion regardless of the alternatives considered in this plan. These strategies are not repeated in this part. However, there are other general management strategies that do differ among the alternatives. These alternative management strategies are organized in this part by topic area.

Several other points are important to keep in mind while reading the management alternatives. The alternatives are conceptual in nature, focusing on what resource conditions and visitor experiences should be in Zion rather than on details of how they should be achieved. Thus, the alternatives do not contain details on facility designs and locations or describe specific visitor use management techniques. The Park Service will require additional feasibility studies, more detailed...
planning, and appropriate environmental documentation before it can build any developments proposed in the alternatives. The implementation of any alternative also depends on future funding — this plan in no way guarantees that the money will be forthcoming. The Final General Management Plan establishes a vision of the future that will guide year-to-year management of Zion National Park, but full implementation of the plan could be many years in the future.

The three action alternatives propose actions that may be taken as a result of zoning requirements and restrictions. These possible actions are identified for specific areas of the park. Some of the actions are required to meet the desired zone conditions. Other actions are intended to improve visitor experiences and/or resource conditions in areas that presently satisfy zone conditions at some minimal level. The actions described are those the planning team believed to be the most likely to take place over the next 20 years in the park given the zone definitions, what already exists in the area, and the area's environmental constraints.

Finally, another important point to keep in mind is that Zion is an area where geologic and other natural forces are continuing to shape the landscape. It is not possible to plan for these changes during the life of the plan. However, if a major disaster occurs, such as a landslide or fire, the National Park Service will reconsider its goals for the affected area, including zone prescriptions, uses, and infrastructure, and amend the plan accordingly.

SUMMARY OF THE MANAGEMENT ZONES

Under the preferred alternative (and the other action alternatives), Zion would be divided into different zones. These zones identify how the different areas of the park would be managed to achieve desired resource and social conditions and to serve recreational needs. The zones are intended to protect park resources and make a range of quality activities available for visitors. The zones give visitors an understanding of where certain activities are and are not allowed. They also tell park managers where development can and cannot be added and the intensity of management that is appropriate in different parts of the park. Note that the no-action alternative would not follow a new zone-management strategy.

The key elements of the zones are summarized below. (Appendix D describes additional details on the zones.) It is important to note that three of the zones place interim limits on the number of people in the park — managing group sizes and encounters with other groups will affect how many people can go into different areas in the park. These limits would be re-examined in the carrying capacity studies and possibly modified in the subsequent wilderness management plan.

Frontcountry High Development Zone. This zone would provide visitors with highly structured opportunities to enjoy and learn about the park by means of motorized, primary roads. In essence, visitors would feel that they were in a pocket of civilization surrounded by the park's natural beauty.

- Both natural processes and the natural landscape would be highly modified.
- A wide array of visitor services and facilities would be available, including primary motorized roads, visitor centers, and developed campgrounds.
- Visitors would experience highly social conditions, although there would be some opportunities at certain times for solitude.
- Limits would only be placed on the numbers of people to address resource protection concerns or facility design capacities.

Frontcountry Low Development Zone. Visitors would have a fairly structured, rural experience oriented around motorized sightseeing on secondary roads, camping, picnicking, and taking short walks.

- Natural conditions would be unmodified in most of the zone.
- Basic facilities and services would be provided, but they would be fewer and less concentrated than in the frontcountry high development zone. Focused visitor facilities, secondary roads, picnic areas, and less developed campgrounds are examples of facilities that may be present.
- There may be opportunities to camp in campgrounds.
- There would be few opportunities for solitude, but the social environment would remain uncrowded.
- Limits would only be placed on the numbers of people to address resource protection concerns or facility design capacities.

Transition Zone. The main purpose of this zone would be to allow visitors to view or directly access many of the park's prime resources by means of nonmotorized, well-developed, high use trails.

- Natural processes and landscapes may be altered or manipulated in developed areas, but most of the landscape would be largely undisturbed and the resources protected.
- This would be a day-use zone. Only minimal facilities (e.g., trails) would be present. Park managers would concentrate visitor use within or near these facilities.
- During the peak season, there would be a low expectation of solitude due to the sights and sounds of other people. However, crowded levels would not keep visitors from reaching desired destinations or viewing outstanding park features.

- Limits would only be placed on day use to address resource protection concerns or facility design capacities.

Primate Zone. This zone would provide better opportunities for visitors to experience wildlands and solitude than the zones described above. However, compared to the pristine zone, access would be easier into this zone, there would be signs of people, and the area would feel less remote.

Definitions of NPS Visitor Facilities

The following types of NPS facilities are present in the development zones.

Full-service visitor centers provide a variety of services including: restrooms, orientation, interpretation (e.g., introduction to the park, themes, all manner of interpretative media), trip planning, item sales (interpretive and informational), and fee collection (e.g., as part of trip planning). Park staff would also issue permits at these centers, but would not provide food service. Full-service visitor centers would only be allowed in the frontcountry high development zones.

Focused visitor facilities focus on only a few functions. Unlike a full-service visitor center, these facilities provide interpretation related to resources at hand, and limited, if any, other services may be present. Focused visitor facilities may be provided in outdoor, and be somewhat uncrowded or unstaffed or unstaffed and depend on the need and the services provided. They may be found in both frontcountry low development and frontcountry high development zones.

Picnic sites have tables and could include grills, trash facilities, and restrooms. Water would be provided only if it was already present. In the frontcountry high development zone, many picnic sites could be added to a given area, but in the frontcountry low development zone, the number added could total a cumulative of 10 sites per area, such as at Lava Point. Picnic sites may be located in frontcountry high development, frontcountry low development, and transition zones.
The landscape would be largely undisturbed, with natural processes predominating. There would be very little development. Only narrow, unpaved trails and/or routes would be maintained. Other facilities related to protecting resources may be provided. Primitive camping may be permitted at large or in designated campsites, but camping facilities would not be provided. There would be a sense of being in a natural landscape with a moderate sense of solitude. Park personnel would manage the number of people in this zone. Hiker group sizes for day and overnight use would continue to be limited to 12 or fewer individuals. A maximum of six saddle stock and six people would be allowed per group. Hikers would generally encounter no more than 12 groups per day in the zone, while saddle stock groups would encounter no more than one other group per day (Note: All of the above limits are interim limits, which may change in the future).

Pristine Zone. The pristine zone would offer the feeling of being entirely alone in Zion's remote and isolated wildlands. Visitors would have a chance to experience a natural landscape.

- Natural conditions and processes would be largely undisturbed by people. Bolts on climbing routes may be present. Culturally significant resources also may be maintained.
- Routes and paths may be defined and maintained if necessary to prevent resource damage; no other visitor facilities would be provided.
- Visitors could camp throughout the zone, although in some cases, camping sites would be designated to protect resources.
- Opportunities for a high degree of solitude would be provided throughout the zone.
- Use of these areas would be limited. Saddle stock use would be prohibited. Hiker groups would continue to be limited to no more than 12 people. Visitors would usually not expect to encounter other groups in the zone (Note: The group sizes and encounter rates are interim limits, which may change in the future).

Research Natural Area Zone. A research natural area (RNA) is an administrative designation that federal land management agencies use to designate field ecological areas primarily for research and educational purposes and/or to maintain biological diversity. This zone applies the key conditions of research natural areas. Conducting baseline inventories and long-term ecological observations would be emphasized in this zone, with the primary purpose to create an ecologically/environmental benchmark over time. This zone would not be open to recreational uses, but may be opened to educational uses.

- Research natural areas would be areas with little to no human disturbance.
- No visitor facilities would be present. Trails and temporary research equipment may be permitted in limited instances.
- In general, camping would not be permitted, unless it was essential for meeting research goals and was consistent with other park policies.
- Group sizes for research, educational, and administrative activities would be limited to 12 or fewer individuals. (Note: The group size is an interim limit, which may change in the future.)

Administration Zone. The primary purpose of this zone would be to support the management and administration of the park. General visitation would not occur; although some visitors may need to access these facilities/areas to obtain staff assistance or to solve a problem.

- Natural processes and landscapes would be altered to support park operations.
- The type and level of development and core resource would vary as needed to provide for park operations.
- NPS staff, concession employee, and scientists may be provided with housing, but visitor camping would not be permitted.
- Parking would not encourage public visitation, although there would be no limits placed on the use of this zone.

ALTERNATIVES, ZONES, AND ACTIONS CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED FURTHER

The five alternatives initially presented in the October 1997 workbook formed the foundation for the alternatives included in this plan. Based on public input and further analysis of the five initial alternatives, the planning team revised these alternatives. The team dropped three of the original alternatives from consideration, although they incorporated key elements of these alternatives into the remaining alternatives. In addition, the team dropped two potential management zones—seminatural and resource reserve management areas. Appendix E explains the rationale for why the alternatives and management zones were dropped.

The planning team considered several actions during the planning process, but subsequently eliminated them from further analysis. These actions and the rationale for no longer considering them are described below.

Opening Parunuweap Canyon to Public Use

In several of the draft alternatives presented in the October 1997 alternatives workbook, the planning team zoned part or all of Parunuweap Canyon for pristine or primitive use. These zones would allow for limited, but independent, travel through the area by the public. The team determined, however, that such use would have too great a potential for disturbing or harming the highly sensitive resources within Parunuweap Canyon. Therefore, under the action alternatives, park managers would permit public visitation only for authorized activities described in the action alternatives.

Adding Frontcountry Camping Facilities

Although considered in some of the draft alternatives in the October 1997 alternatives workbook, the planning team decided not to add new camping facilities in Zion's frontcountry (with the exception of slightly expanding the Lava Point campground). The team believes that the private sector outside the park should and can provide these facilities. This belief is supported both by NPS Management Policies (2001), as well as by the fact that private interests are already developing new campsites at various locations outside the east entrance of the park.

Terminating the Zion Canyon Shuttle System at the Zion Canyon Lodge

One of the actions the planning team considered was terminating the Zion Canyon shuttles at the lodge. This action would mean motorized use north of the lodge would be prohibited, which would dramatically reduce visitor use levels at the Temple of Sinawava and the Narrows, reduce resource impacts, and provide the opportunity for high-quality experiences for those able to hike or bicycle up the canyon. The planning team dropped this action because it would prevent a large majority of people from enjoying one of the park's primary attractions.
NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

CONCEPT

This alternative provides a baseline for evaluating the changes and impacts of the other action alternatives. Under this alternative, the Park Service would continue to manage Zion as it has in the past, relying on existing plans. All existing visitor facilities would remain in place. The main Zion Canyon, Kolob Canyons, and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would continue to be the primary visitor attraction areas (see the No-Action Alternative map). No new construction would be authorized and no major changes would be made in managing the park.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In the no-action alternative, park staff would continue to follow all of the desired conditions and strategies described below and would likely place few additional limits on visitor use. Thus, visitation could continue to increase throughout most of the park. Park staff would continue to enforce the following existing use management policies:

- Groups in the backcountry would not exceed 12 people in the same drainage, route, or trail on the same day.
- The Left Fork of North Creek would continue to be a day-use only area. Park managers would continue to require a permit for all users, and there would be a limit of 50 people per day who can hike in the drainage.
- Visitors would still need to obtain permits to day hike from the top of the Zion Narrows (Chamberlain’s Ranch) to the Temple of Sinawava; a maximum of 80 people per day would be allowed to undertake this hike.
- Visitors would continue to need a permit to overnight hike through the Zion Narrows. The policy to allow only one-night stays would continue. Overnight hikers must start from Chamberlain’s Ranch and camp at designated campsites. A maximum of 12 parties (70 people) would be permitted to camp in the Narrows at any one time.

Visitor Use Management Strategies

Park managers would follow all of the policies and practices for managing visitor use that were identified in the "Park Policies and Practices" chapter. With the exception of the trail ride concessioner, commercially guided activities in the park would continue to be prohibited. Short NPS-guided hikes in the main canyon would continue to be provided and visitor center and campground programs would still be offered.

Aside from the existing visitor use management policies listed below, park managers would likely place additional limits on visitor use. Thus, visitation could continue to increase throughout most of the park. Park staff would continue to enforce the following existing use management policies:

- Group size in the backcountry would not exceed 12 people in the same drainage, route, or trail on the same day.
- The Left Fork of North Creek would continue to be a day-use only area. Park managers would continue to require a permit for all users, and there would be a limit of 50 people per day who can hike in the drainage.
- Visitors would still need to obtain permits to day hike from the top of the Zion Narrows (Chamberlain’s Ranch) to the Temple of Sinawava; a maximum of 80 people per day would be allowed to undertake this hike.
- Visitors would continue to need a permit to overnight hike through the Zion Narrows. The policy to allow only one-night stays would continue. Overnight hikers must start from Chamberlain’s Ranch and camp at designated campsites. A maximum of 12 parties (70 people) would be permitted to camp in the Narrows at any one time.

A total of 23 parties would be permitted to camp overnight at designated sites along La Verkin Creek/Hop Valley trails.

- A total of nine parties would be permitted to camp overnight at designated sites along the West Rim trail.
- Excluding the concessioner operation on the Sandbench trail, a maximum of six saddle stock (of which no more than three could be without riders) and six people would be permitted in any single party traveling in the park. Saddle stock would continue to be confined to established trails in the recommended wilderness area, with four exceptions (lower Coalpits Wash, Huber Wash, Scooggins Wash, and Dalton Wash/Crater Hill). Overnight camping with saddle stock would continue to be limited to a Hop Valley campsite, and would be permitted for one night only. The main Zion Canyon trails from the rim down (with the exception of the Sandbench trail), the Timber Creek Overlook trail, and several areas in the recommended wilderness area (Kolob Arch trail, Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, the East Mesa trail between its junction with the Observation Point trail, the West Rim trail below the West Rim, and the Taylor Creek) would continue to be closed to saddle stock due to trail conditions and safety and resource concerns.

Definition of Saddle Stock

Saddle stock in Zion National Park are defined as horses, mules, and burros. Under the no-action alternative (and all other alternatives) llamas, goats, dogs, and all other animals would be excluded for use within the park.

Desired Conditions and Strategies for Zion Canyon Lodge

The lodge operation has been a traditional use in Zion for more than 80 years. It has enabled many visitors to stay in the canyon by providing overnight accommodations and food services. Although the lodge is the only place offering these visitor services inside the park, other facilities and services are available in Springdale and nearby communities.

- Desired Conditions: The Zion Lodge offers a unique historical visitor experience that adds to visitor enjoyment and is distinct from facilities provided in surrounding communities. The lodge continues to provide food services, a gift shop, and overnight accommodations. The lodge operation remains at a sustainable level, within the land assigned to the concessioner in their 1998 contract.

- Strategies: During periods of contract renewal or renewal of permit, the National Park Service would continue to include provisions to ensure that the lodge maintains the qualities of a "historic district" and provided opportunities for visitors to enjoy this historic resource. A subsequent commercial services plan for the park would describe these qualities more fully. The Park Service would retain the characteristics of the lodge as a "historic district," listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and would consider these characteristics in planning, managing, maintaining, and interpreting the entire complex.

Desired Conditions and Strategies for Management of the North Fork of the Virgin River

The North Fork of the Virgin River is one of the park's major visitor attractions.
Thousands of visitors come to the river to cool off, swim, wade, hike, and backpack, among other recreational activities. The river also has outstanding geologic value and provides important habitats for four native fish species, including the Virgin spinedace, and other aquatic organisms. Its riparian area also supports diverse wildlife and plant populations.

- Desired Conditions: The North Fork continues to provide high-quality experiences for visitors. Visitor use levels and activities are consistent with park purposes — visitors enjoy the river without degrading resources. Conflicts between users are minimal. The river’s water quality and natural biological community are improved or maintained and protected. No additional human-caused changes occur to the river’s floodplain.

- Strategies: Park managers would continue to enforce existing visitor use limits for day hikes and overnight camping in the Narrows. Interpretive displays and programs and ranger patrols would still be used to help minimize resource impacts and user conflicts. Under this alternative, no actions would be taken to restore the North Fork of the Virgin River. The existing riverbank armor and levees would remain.

**GENERAL PARK MANAGEMENT**

Under the no-action alternative, park managers would continue to manage three broad land use categories (not including the private inholdings within the park boundary): developed areas (or frontcountry), recommended wilderness, and natural areas. Developed areas cover about 740 acres and include lands with aggregations of visitor facilities and administrative facilities. The following facilities are in developed areas of the park:

- Kolob Canyons Road
- Kolob Canyons visitor center/maintenance/housing area
- Timber Creek Overlook picnic area and parking area
- Lava Point (including the campground, picnic area, ranger residence/visitor contact building, and trailhead)
- South entrance station/parking area
- South and Watchman campgrounds
- Old visitor center/headquarters
- New visitor center/transportation staging area
- Oak Creek residential and maintenance area
- Sammy’s Canyon shuttle maintenance facility
- Watchman and Pine Creek (superintendent) residential areas
- Birch Creek concession area and the water and storage facility
- Zion Canyon Lodge and related facilities
- Grotto picnic area
- Weeping Rock parking lot
- Temple of Sinawava parking lot and restrooms
- Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway
- Tunnel parking lot and trailhead
- East entrance station/housing area

As called for in the development concept plan for the Zion Canyon headquarters area (NPS 1994b), the National Park Service would build research facilities in the south entrance-main Zion Canyon area in association with existing and other planned facilities. The research facilities, consisting of a small laboratory and housing, would support resource monitoring and studies conducted by park staff and cooperators.

Most of the park would be within the wilderness land use category. The remainder of the park that did not fit in the developed areas or recommended wilderness categories would be managed as natural areas. The management of the natural areas would provide for environmentally compatible recreational activities based upon and protective of the natural environment. Park roads, dispersed recreational facilities, such as picnic areas, and interpretive facilities, may be present in these areas.

**Recommended Wilderness**

In 1974 the National Park Service completed an environmental impact statement that proposed that most of Zion National Park be designated as wilderness (NPS 1974). A wilderness recommendation for Zion was sent to Congress in 1978. Since the 1978 recommendation, minor adjustments have been made (see the Wilderness Recommendation and Land Status map). The wilderness recommendation now totals 132,615 acres due to the acquisition of several inholdings, state surface and mineral rights, grazing rights, and water rights, the use of more accurate geographic information system data (which more accurately delineates the original (recommended) wilderness boundary), and the correction for a preexisting private water right on Camp Creek (which was inadvertently overlooked in the original wilderness recommendation). An additional 4,175 acres (3% of the park) would continue to be administered as potential wilderness — lands that currently do not qualify for designation due to nonconforming or incompatible uses (e.g., private inholdings, private water rights) — in keeping with valid existing rights.

Until the Congress acts on the wilderness recommendation for Zion National Park, the National Park Service would continue to manage the recommended wilderness area in a manner consistent with the 1964 Wilderness Act, NPS management policies, and Director’s Order 41 (“Wilderness Preservation and Management”). Zion visitors would continue to be allowed to camp, hike, climb, and campers on established trails as well as cross-country (off-trail). Existing trails, routes, designated campsites, and other wilderness structures would be maintained at current standards.

Saddle stock would be confined to established trails in the recommended wilderness, with four exceptions: off-trail use of saddle stock would continue to be permitted in lower Coalpits Wash, Huber Wash, Sceggins Wash, and Dalton Wash/Crater Hill. Several areas (described in the Visitor Use Management Strategies’ section) would continue to be closed to saddle stock.

Under the no-action alternative Parunuweap Canyon would remain closed to public use.

**Research Natural Areas**

Zion currently has three designated research natural areas: Bighorn (8,313 acres), Phantom Valley (22,409 acres) and the Kolob Mesas (279 acres) (see the No-Action map). These areas are also in the recommended wilderness. Under the no-action alternative, park managers would continue to manage the three research natural areas as they have been in the past and continue to permit recreational users into these areas.

Parunuweap Canyon would continue to be a proposed research natural area and would be closed to recreational use.
PROPOSED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS AND EASEMENTS

No adjustments to Zion’s boundary would be made in this alternative, nor would any access or conservation easements be sought.

PROPOSALS FOR WILD AND SCENIC RIVER DESIGNATION

At the same time the planning team was developing this plan, a wild and scenic river suitability/eligibility study was being prepared. However, for purposes of comparing and analyzing the impacts of the alternatives in this environmental impact statement, under the no-action alternative no proposals would be submitted to Congress to designate any of the rivers and streams within or adjacent to Zion as wild and scenic rivers.

IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities and Funding

Park managers would continue to implement the management strategies described under this alternative and under the “Park Policies and Practices” chapter over the next 15 to 20 years as funding becomes available. The National Park Service could establish partnerships with other agencies or groups to implement these actions; however, management emphases and related staffing allocations would be retained as identified in approved documents, such as the Zion “Resource Management Plan.”

Cost Implications

Current costs of managing the park and costs of implementing any decisions made prior to this planning effort (such as implementing the transportation system in the main canyon) would not vary among the alternatives.

The no-action alternative would be the least expensive for the National Park Service to implement because it does not require any new actions, and thus the Park Service would not incur additional costs.
THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

CONCEPT

The preferred alternative, which the National Park Service plans to implement for Zion National Park over the next 20 years, is intended to safeguard the future integrity and diversity of park resources and provide for a range of quality visitor experiences within that context. This alternative would emphasize management of resources and visitors rather than providing new developments. Any proposed developments would be intended primarily to protect resources and secondarily to improve visitor experiences. Visitors would have opportunities to participate in a variety of park experiences, ranging from social to wilderness experiences. The alternative, unlike the no-action alternative, park managers would establish a framework to proactively address impacts that result from increased visitor use levels. For the first time, management zones would be applied throughout the park to identify desired resource and visitor experience conditions and to set the basis for determining visitor carrying capacities. With prescriptions for resource conditions and visitor experiences, managers can take actions, including setting limits, to ensure that Zion's resources are unimpaired for future visitors to enjoy.

VISION FOR FRONTCOUNTRY AREAS

The frontcountry experiences would vary dramatically throughout the park. Visitors to the Kolob Canyons area could expect to leave an intensive, high-speed feeling from travel on I-15 and be immersed almost immediately in the scenic grandeur of the Kolob Fingers, an especially inviting trip at sunset when the sandstone cliffs almost glow. The natural environment would be largely undisturbed, and visitor facilities would serve to assist in the transition and serve as an information source for the trails accessible along the scenic drive.

An even more rural experience would be gained by travel along the Kolob Terrace Road, connecting the town of Virgin to the pine-covered plateaus north of the park. A few small visitor facilities along the road and at Lava Point help commemorate the low intensity, remote nature of the park.

Visitors would be treated to a decoupservation zone, leaving I-15 traveling through small communities, and then along the scenic corridor where the sandstone formations of Zion and nearby BLM areas are protected from development. Visitors arrive via SR-9, the town of Springdale, which is nestled on three sides by Zion National Park. They would find that Springdale reflects the mood and feeling of being in the park. The streetscape would reflect the rustic architecture found in the park, and there would be a seamless effect provided by the transportation system shuttle stops. The emphasis on pedestrians would cause one to slow down mentally as well as physically. The visitor center located just inside the park boundary would simplify this relaxation approach, encouraging visitors to stroll through the facility gaining an appreciation for the park's resources and learning how best to use the transportation system.

A rural atmosphere would again be provided for those visitors entering the park from Mt. Carmel Junction along SR-9. Opportunities for park orientation may be developed along the way. Inside the park, the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would stay as it is, with opportunities for scenic viewing of the cross-bedded Navajo sandstone being the prime visitor experience on the park's eastside.

Natural processes and landscapes in the frontcountry would be unaltered, except within or directly adjacent to the limited developed sites. In these areas, alterations would blend in with the natural landscape.

VISION FOR BACKCOUNTRY AREAS

About 90% of the park has been recommended for designation as wilderness. Visitors entering this area would expect to find quiet and solitude and experience the Zion, where natural conditions prevail. The only sounds heard here would be natural sounds. Natural processes and the landscape would be unaltered, except for minimal developments such as designated campsites, trails, and routes in some areas.

Visitors to the backcountry would be exposed to the value of wilderness in its own right, as a part of the American heritage. This natural environment, away from social pressures, tension, and stimuli brought by civilization, would allow the visitors to experience the restorative and spiritual powers of wilderness.

These backcountry areas would also allow people to examine ecosystems as they have evolved outside significant human influence. They would provide a source of information for people to learn about natural processes, species diversity, and the importance of physical and biological systems.

In particular, land zoned pristine, primitive, research natural areas (RNA), and some portions of the transition zone would be managed for wilderness values. A large percentage of these areas in the backcountry of Zion are inaccessible due to steep topography (see Areas of Relative Inaccessibility map in the "Affected Environment" part). Existing trails and routes throughout the backcountry reflect the character of wilderness, and are managed to maintain the wilderness resource. In these areas visitor use would be managed to ensure these visitor experiences and resource conditions retained their wilderness character.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In this alternative, park managers would follow all of the desired conditions and strategies described in the "Park Policies and Practices" chapter, plus several additional management directions and strategies. These strategies relate to managing natural resources in general, supplying and conserving water, and managing visitor use and various levels and types of park development. New desired conditions and strategies for managing the North Fork of the Virgin River would also be implemented under this alternative.

General Natural Resource Management Strategy

Park managers would pursue one additional general natural resource management strategy under the preferred alternative compared to the no-action alternative. This strategy reflects the need to gather additional information on resources affected by visitor use:

- The Park Service would conduct long-term monitoring as part of the implementation of a carrying capacity process, and would implement the monitoring program upon approval of the proposed plan. (This strategy also relates to the strategy of developing indicators and standards, described below under "Park Carrying Capacity and Visitor Use Management Strategies.")
### Natural Resource Mitigation Measures

Under this alternative, the National Park Service would follow all of the natural resource mitigation measures described under “Park Policies and Practices.” In addition, park managers would apply the following measures to avoid or minimize impacts on natural resources:

- **Where possible, new developments would be built in previously disturbed sites.** New developments also would be built away from microtidal areas.
- **Prior to any construction in areas where spotted owls are known or suspected to occur, park managers would evaluate the specific locations for new developments, such as picnic areas and trails, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.** No new facilities would be built during the owl breeding/nesting season (March 1 - August 31).
- **No new designated camping sites would be located in Mexican spotted owl territories.** If survey results indicated that visitors were camping near nest or roost sites, restrictions would be placed on camping in those areas.
- **Park staff would survey proposed development sites for rare plants and would relocate new developments if rare plant populations were present.** Similarly, trails and routes would be located to avoid impacts on rare plants.
- **Site specific measures, such as the placement of silt fencing, retention and replacement of topsoil, revegetation of sites, and selective scheduling of construction activities, would be taken to reduce runoff from construction sites.** Workers also would be required to control dust, and all construction machinery would be required to meet air emission standards. Restoration efforts would be scheduled to minimize impacts on downstream water users and to avoid the Virgin spindacee spawning periods.
- **Wading and taking in streams with Virgin spindace would be managed to minimize impacts on the fish.**
- **To minimize impacts of trail erosion and social trail on microtidal crusts in developed areas, park staff would place barriers, erect signs, and rehabilitate damaged areas.**
- **To help minimize the spread of nonnative plants, park managers would allow only the use of weed-free materials and equipment for park operations and visitor use activities.**

### Water Supply and Conservation Strategies

In addition to the water quality and quantity strategies described in the “Park Policies and Practices” chapter, park managers would follow one other strategy under this alternative to maintain Zion’s water quality and improve water conservation in the park.

To evaluate the possibility of restoring springs in Zion Canyon and to explore water conservation techniques, the National Park Service would study water supply and treatment alternatives. This study would examine alternative ways for the National Park Service to obtain drinking water, including the procurement of treated water from Springdale. Any changes in the water supply system would be consistent with the Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement.

### Park Carrying Capacity and Visitor Use Management Strategies

The National Park Service has long recognized the need to apply the carrying capacity concept to areas under its jurisdiction. The National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-625) requires that general management plans establish a visitor carrying capacity for each national park system unit. This plan provides a basis for and a management framework to begin to address Zion’s carrying capacity.

The visitor experience and resource protection (VERP) framework addresses carrying capacity and visitor use impacts on park resources and visitor experiences (NPS 1997d). Under this approach carrying capacity is defined as the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining resource and social conditions that complement the purposes of a park and its management objectives. In other words, carrying capacity is interpreted as a prescription of natural and cultural resource and visitor experience (social) conditions. Under the VERP framework, the park staff, with public input, determines desired resource conditions and visitor experiences in different areas of the park. A monitoring program is established to measure changes in resource and social conditions. From monitoring results, management actions are initiated to maintain desired conditions.

To address carrying capacity, this General Management Plan describes desired resource conditions and visitor experiences by management zone. The management zone prescriptions can be seen as setting qualitative carrying capacities for the park — the zones prescribe the appropriate range of visitor uses, resource conditions, developments, and management in each area of the park. Howard, there are three more integral elements (described below) in the VERP framework, which will be addressed fully in the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies to be completed within five years (as described under the “Future Planning and Research Needs” section).

- For each zone indicators and standards are selected. Indicators are specific, measurable variables that can be monitored to determine the quality of natural and cultural resource conditions and visitor experiences. Standards identify the minimum acceptable conditions for each resource or social indicator — the standards indicate when management actions are merited.

• The next element of the framework is long-term monitoring of the indicators. The indicators are systematically monitored in the zones to determine the conditions of resources and visitor experiences. Effective monitoring of resource and social indicators provides the feedback and documentation needed to implement meaningful management action. Monitoring documents if and when a management action is needed to keep conditions within the standards. (Monitoring would be an ongoing task starting with the implementation of this plan. Monitoring needs would be further analyzed as part of the future wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies.)

• The final element is management action. Management action(s) are taken if resource conditions or visitor experiences are out of standard or monitoring indicates a downward trend in the condition of the resources or visitor experiences. (Proactive management action would be an ongoing task starting with the implementation of this plan. See the “Park Policies and Practices” chapter regarding methods that may be used.)

Resource indicators and standards have not yet been set for Zion. Although few formal studies exist documenting resource impacts and impairment in much of Zion due to visitor use, impacts such as soil compaction, erosion, and trampling of vegetation are frequently observed. In addition, other park resources, such as bighorn sheep, are known to be highly susceptible to disturbances. If use levels increase, there is concern that additional resource impacts may occur in the park. Thus, this alternative emphasizes monitoring in the front and backcountry to determine resource baseline and trends. The carrying capacity and wilderness management plans would

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The primitive and pristine zone carrying capacity numbers listed below are labeled as interim pending further research to determine if these limits are sufficient for protecting resources and ensuring quality visitor experiences in these zones. The future wilderness management plan will re-examine and modify these carrying capacities if appropriate. As with all of the other zones, additional limits could be imposed in specific areas or at certain times if necessary to protect resources.

- **Primitive Zone — Hikers.** The interim hiker group sizes for day and overnight use would be limited to 12 or fewer individuals. The interim encounter rate would be generally no more than 12 groups encountered per day on any one trail in the zone. These numbers are consistent with the zone prescription that calls for a moderate sense of solitude. Thirteen encounters per day is a somewhat higher limit than many wilderness areas in the West, but it is not inconsistent with encounter standards that have been set elsewhere (see Manning 1999). In addition, Zion’s rugged backcountry confines most use to existing trails and routes. The great majority of people in the recommended wilderness area use these trails, which would be zoned as primitive. Thus, higher encounter rates would be expected than might be the case in other wilderness areas where use is not as confined due to topography.

- **Primitive Zone — Saddle Stock.** Saddle stock would be limited to permitted designated trails. Off-trail use of saddle stock would continue to be permitted only in the lower Coalpits Wash. From the trailhead to the junction with Scoggins Wash, Scoggins Wash itself, and Huber Wash where the surrounding terrain confines use to the wash bottom. Overnight camping would be permitted only at the designated saddle stock site in Hop Valley, with a group permitted to stay one night. Excluding the trail ride concession, the interim saddle stock group size limit would be a maximum of six people per group with six saddle stock. These numbers are consistent with current park regulations. The interim encounter rate limit would not be set at no more than one other saddle stock group encountered per day. This would ensure that large numbers of saddle stock would not be present along any one trail at any one time and would therefore avoid impacts to resources and other users.

- **Pristine Zone — Hikers.** The interim hiker group size limit for day and overnight use would be 12 people. The interim encounter limit would be set at zero: visitors would usually not expect to encounter other groups in the zone. These numbers are consistent with the zone prescription, which calls for a high sense of solitude. Zero encounters is a relatively low limit compared to other wilderness areas, but it reflects the rugged, largely inaccessible terrain comprising this zone: one would not expect to find another group throughout a majority of Zion’s rugged and remote areas.

- **Pristine Zone — Saddle Stock.** Saddle stock would not be allowed within the pristine zone. With the exception of upper Coalpits Wash above the springs, this is consistent with park regulations, which are intended to prevent soil erosion, vegetation trampling and denudation, and to avoid impacts to sensitive resources such as microbiotic crusts, riparian habitat, and archeological sites.

**Carrying Capacity Data Needs.** Based on an indepth study of the park’s information (Vande Kamp 1998), the following are the highest carrying capacity social data needs for the park:

- The preferred alternative is not specified in the document.
These indicators are appropriate for Zion because the indicators respond rapidly to human disturbance and they measure impacts directly related to human disturbance. The wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies would establish a monitoring program and standards for some or all of these indicators in different areas of the park.

Other indicators and standards for key natural and cultural resources might be appropriate in Zion, but additional data would be necessary to determine if there are correlations between human activity and resource conditions. Some of the possible natural resource indicators include:

- Mexican spotted owl
- reactions to human activity in nesting areas
- Desert bighorn sheep reaction to human activity in key habitat
- a relationship between visitor river use and Virgin spinelace and aquatic invertebrates
- a relationship between visitor river use and water quality
- desert bighorn sheep reactions to human activity in key habitat
- a relationship between visitor river use and Virgin spinelace and aquatic invertebrates
- a relationship between visitor river use and water quality
- Peregrine falcon roosting and nesting activities in relation to rock climbing
- mountain lion behavior/activity in visitor
- visitor use areas

Zion Canyon Lodge Strategies

Under the preferred alternative, the National Park Service would follow the same desired conditions and strategies for the Zion Lodge as under the no-action alternative. Park managers would continue to work with the concessioner to ensure that the quality of the services appropriate to the historic experience was maintained. The commercial services implementation plan would provide more detailed guidance on operation and administration of the lodge, and thus ensure that management of the lodge was consistent with desired conditions for this area (see also the “Visitor Use Strategies”).

Desired Conditions and Strategies for the Management of the North Fork of the Virgin River

New desired conditions and strategies for the North Fork would apply under the preferred alternative, which differ from those described in the no-action alternative. In particular, the two alternatives differ in the

- quality of visitor experience relative to natural and human-generated sound levels
- the tolerance of Zion snails and hanging garden plants to human activity

Strategies for the Levels and Types of Park Development

All of the strategies described under the “Park Policies and Practices” chapter regarding development in the park would apply in the preferred alternative. The National Park Service would build the management facilities called for in the 1994 Development Concept Plan, Zion Canyon Headquarters (NPS 1994b). In addition, the Park Service would pursue several additional strategies regarding new development in the park. These strategies are intended to minimize new developments within the park, and encourage the construction of visitor facilities outside the park.

- No new camping facilities would be built in Zion’s frontline areas, including campgrounds, campsites, or infrastructure (e.g., roads, utilities, tables, fire rings). This includes areas in Zion Canyon, along the Kolob Canyons and Kolob-Terrace Roads, Lava Point, and along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. In addition, picnic areas would not be converted into campgrounds.
- New picnic sites might be built only in previously disturbed areas at selected trailheads or pullouts throughout the park and at the Kolob Canyons visitor center.
- No new food service buildings would be constructed in the park.
- No new lodging would be provided.
- No new roads would be built in the park, except possibly for short access roads to park facilities. The National Park Service would continue to coordinate and cooperate with the county with regard to maintenance of the Kolob-Terrace Road.
- Park workers would continue to staff collection stations and collect associated entrance fees on the south and east boundaries of the park (along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway), and at Kolob Canyons. In addition, the National Park Service would study the feasibility and advantages of establishing an entrance/fee collection Station along the Kolob-Terrace Road.
- The Park Service would work with adjacent landowners, Kane County, and other organizations to locate a space outside the east boundary of the park to provide information to visitors.
approaches to visitor use management and the restoration of the floodplain. Restoring parts of the river would be an important step in preserving the dynamic processes that formed Zion Canyon and would maintain and restore habitat for riverine and floodplain species.

- Desired Conditions: The North Fork continues to provide high quality experiences for visitors. Visitor use levels and activities are consistent with park purposes — visitors enjoy the river without impairing resources. Conflicts between users are minimal. The river’s water quality and natural biological community are enhanced or maintained. Portions of the channel of the North Fork, particularly in the vicinity of Zion Lodge, are restored to a more natural morphologic condition, considering such factors as width/depth ratios, gradients, riffle and pool structure, sinuosity, and hydrologic connection with its floodplain. Floodplain habitat conditions are also restored through additional measures, including management of exotic plants and wildlife, protection and planting of native flora, and education of visitors.

- Strategies: The National Park Service would develop a river management plan(s) to address important water resource issues in the park, including visitor uses and the restoration of sections of the North Fork’s floodplain. Actions would be consistent with management zoning and with the recommended classification of the river below the Temple of Sinawava as recreational under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The river management plan would examine different strategies and actions for managing river uses (e.g., use levels, timing of use, educational efforts) to

- protect riparian and riverine resources and ensure continued visitor enjoyment of the river. Actions considered as part of this plan could include designating river access points, allowing river recreation only at times when the potential for resource damage or safety hazards was low, and limiting the number of visitors.

Restoring part of the North Fork could be addressed in a river management plan. This plan would:

- identify objectives for any river restoration effort (e.g., the "natural" conditions that characterize a restored river, given its zoning and wild and scenic river status)
- indicate information needs (e.g., identification of the locations of all park infrastructure in or near the river floodplain, analysis of relocation and protection costs)
- identify and assess alternative approaches for restoring the river
- determine when, where, and how the river would be restored.

The plan would examine the removal of levees and riverbank-protection structures (revegetations) dating back to the 1920s that prevent the river from using the floodplain. These structures are primarily in place near the Zion Lodge. Park managers would evaluate alternative restoration approaches, ranging from allowing levees to slowly deteriorate over time to removing the levees, along with their effects on flood safety, floodplain resources, visitor use, and costs. Depending on the approach selected, the desired condition could be achieved in varying time spans.

Park managers would also evaluate other in-stream structures located between the

The Preferred Alternative

Temple of Sinawava and the southern park boundary, such as gabions, pipeline crossings, and cemented boulders, for their potential removal or replacement with more biologically, hydrologically, and aesthetically sensitive treatments. River diversion structures associated with the water rights of the National Park Service and Springdale would remain in place. The plan would need to include an examination of how restoration efforts could affect visitor access to the river and its floodplain and the potential impacts on the existing park infrastructure.

Visitor safety would be a primary consideration in planning any restoration of the North Fork. Since most park facilities are concentrated along the eastern edge of the floodplain, they can be protected while the river is allowed to use the remainder of the floodplain. In particular, the lodge and the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive would continue to be protected from flooding.

ZONE ALLOCATIONS AND RELATED ACTIONS

The Preferred Alternative map shows how the different management zones would be applied throughout the park. The map shows the zones as both large polygons and as narrow corridors that follow trails, routes, and drainages. It should be noted that this zoning map shows where private inholdings and other lands with private water and mineral rights within Zion National Park would be managed if they were acquired in the future. Until the private rights (as shown on the Wilderness Recommendation and Land Status map) were acquired or relinquished, the National Park Service would recognize that the inholdings were private lands and would respect the valid rights of the landowners and mineral and water right owners.

Pristine zones would cover most of Zion, about 81% of the park. Primitive areas would cover about 11% of the park, primarily in the Taylor Creek area, the area around Lava Point and Horse Pasture Plateau, the slopes of lower Zion Canyon, and the major trails in Zion’s backcountry. Although most of the park’s backcountry would be pristine, there are areas where use levels would be low, much of the backcountry is not accessible to most visitors due to the park’s steep topography (see the "Access to the Backcountry" section in the Affected Environmental Resources). These areas would be consistent with most of the park being recommended as wilderness and with use levels the backcountry is likely to receive in the future.

Under the preferred alternative, about 6% of the park would be research natural areas, including Goose Creek, Parunuweap, upper Shunes Creek, Crazy Quilt, the slickrock area adjacent to Gifford Canyon, the southeast corner of the park, and several isolated mesa tops and hanging gardens.

The transition, frontcountry, and administrative zones would be in readily accessible areas. Transition zones, covering about 1% of the park, would encompass the floor of Z. a Canyon adjacent to the scenic drive, Sand Bench trail, the Weeping Rock trail, Canyon Overlook and Watchman trails, Emerald Pools trail, Court of the Patriarchs trail, the Hidden Canyon trail up to the mouth of the canyon, and the West Rim trail from the canyon floor up to Scout Lookout, and Angels Landing. The Narrows from Orderville Canyon south to Mystery Canyon, Timber Creek Overlook trail, and Observation Point trail would be designated as special transition zones (see “Recommended Wilderness” section). Frontcountry high development zones, encompassing about
Front Country Areas

Kolob Canyons Road Area. The entrance area would be a front country high development zone. Actions that might be taken in this area include expanding the existing Kolob Canyons visitor center, adding parking, and possibly developing an outdoor exhibit area/plaza, an associated picnic area, and a nature trail.

The Kolob Canyons Road trail (the road corridor from the entrance gate to the Timber Creek Overlook) would be a front country low development zone. If traffic in this area increases in the future, park staff would take action to ensure that the opportunity for visitors to have a rural experience was maintained, such as by limiting the number of private vehicles or offering a shuttle to transport visitors. No expansion of facilities would occur along the road other than the possibility of installing restrooms. Parking spaces at the trailheads for the Middle and South Forks of Taylor Creek and the Lee Pass trails would have to be reduced to reflect trail-use capacities. (These trails are all zoned primitive.)

The Timber Creek Overlook trail would be managed as a special transition zone since it lies within the recommended wilderness area. It would be maintained to meet wilderness requirements but would allow higher use levels than the majority of the recommended wilderness (see the wilderness management section).

The area to the north of the entrance, which includes employee housing, a maintenance shed, and water collection tanks, would be an administrative zone. This would allow managers to make improvements to support the possible increase in visitor services and facilities in this area. Particular actions that park managers could take in this area include adding administrative offices and/or maintenance facilities.

Kolob-Terrace Road Area. The portion of the Kolob Terrace Road corridor within the park would be a front country low development zone. If visitor numbers increased, actions would be taken to ensure that opportunities for visitors to have a rural experience were still available, such as by limiting the number of private vehicles or offering a shuttle to transport visitors. Within the limited space available, existing trailheads could be improved (e.g., restrooms installed), but no new trailheads would be built. The improvements could include adding a few picnic sites in the already disturbed areas at the Hop Valley and Wildcat Canyon trailheads.

With the agreement of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Park Service would build a focused visitor facility/ranger residence/office and restrooms on BLM lands near the park boundary at North Creek. The staff at this facility would provide visitors with park information, visitors issue permits, possibly collect fees, and establish a Park Service presence on this side of the park. (Park managers would prepare a site plan and assessment of the environmental impacts of this facility at a later time.)

The existing Firepit Knoll administrative area and its associated access road would be a pristine zone. The ranger residence and road would not be consistent with the desired conditions of the pristine zone. Thus, once the new focused visitor facility/ranger residence on the Kolob-Terrace Road was built, the Firepit Knoll ranger residence and its access road would be removed and the area restored to natural conditions.

Northeast of Virgin, the Park Service would remove the existing Dalton Wash/Crater Hill parking area. This area needs to be removed because it lies within the 1978 wilderness recommendation.

Lava Point Area. Most of this area, which includes the Lava Point campground and picnic area, as well as the road to the West Rim trailhead, would be a front country low development zone. If visitor numbers increased, actions would be taken to ensure that opportunities for visitors to have a rural experience were still available, such as by limiting the number of private vehicles or offering a shuttle to transport visitors. The road east of the gate at the West Rim trailhead, including all three fords leading off private land, would be an administrative zone. This zoning would allow continued motorized access by administrative vehicles, the private landowners, and their guests. The area to the north of the entrance also would be an administrative zone to support management of this part of the park. The existing Lava Point ranger residence would be replaced with a new structure that met NPS standards.

South Entrance and the Main Zion Canyon Area. This area of the park would be a mix of frontcountry high development, primitive, pristine transition, and administrative zones.

The areas zoned frontcountry high development area and its associated access road would be a pristine zone. The ranger residence and road would not be consistent with the desired conditions of the pristine zone. Thus, once the new focused visitor facility/ranger residence on the Kolob-Terrace Road was built, the Firepit Knoll ranger residence and its access road would be removed and the area restored to natural conditions.

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Lava Point Area. Most of this area, which includes the Lava Point campground and
Formalizing parking and adding picnic sites and a restroom.

The Canyon Overlook trail would be a transition zone. Park staff would continue to prohibit bicycling and horses on this trail due to safety concerns. Actions that could be taken in this area include adding more interpretative signs along the trail and improving the parking area to address safety concerns.

Just outside the recommended wilderness, on the park's eastern boundary, the East Rim trailhead would be a frontcountry low development zone to provide for trailhead parking.

The existing employee housing area and water collection tank at the east entrance would be an administrative zone.

Recommended Wilderness

Under the preferred alternative, the park staff would continue to manage a total of 132,615 acres (about 90% of the park) as wilderness, the same as the no-action alternative (see the Recommended Wilderness and Land Status map on page 53). This is consistent with the 1978 wilderness recommendation, with a few changes that reflect the acquisition of inholdings, state surface ownership and mineral rights, grazing rights, and water rights since that time. (The acreage figures also differ from the 1978 figures due to the inclusion of a valid existing water right on Camp Canyon that had been overlooked in 1978, and due to the use of more accurate geographic information system maps.) In recognition of valid private rights, an additional 4,175 acres (3% of the park) would continue to be administered as potential wilderness lands that currently do not qualify for wilderness designation due to nonconforming or incompatible uses (e.g., private inholdings, private water rights). If and when these rights were relinquished or acquired, the potential wilderness would either become part of the wilderness recommendation or be included as designated wilderness.

Recommended wilderness would primarily be zoned as pristine, primitive, or research natural areas.

PrIMITIVE ZONES. The primitive zone would apply to 13,602 acres in the recommended wilderness, including numerous trails and routes. (An additional 18 acres of potential wilderness would be included in this zone.) To meet desired zone conditions, on occasion managers might need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on the Narrows route from the northern park boundary to the junction with Orderville Canyon, Orderville Canyon itself, the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, and Le Verkin Creek. In the future, managers may need to place limits on visitor use elsewhere in the primitive zone if visitor use levels increased to the point where desired conditions were not being met.

Visitor access may be improved in a few areas within the primitive zones. Visitor access could be improved in areas that were able to withstand increased human use (e.g., areas where there are no spotted owls or other sensitive species habitats). The topography of the areas adjacent to Lavahood and Wildcat Canyon, and on the Horse Pasture Plateau would be most conducive to improved access by the upgrading of existing trails and routes in these areas. Designated campers in areas outside protected activity centers could also be established. On the other hand, no new trails would be established along either side of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway due to the sensitivity of the resources in this area.
Summary of Interim Visitor Use Limits

Visitor use limits pertaining to hikers would not be imposed in the frontcountry high and low development zones and the transition zone, unless resource or visitor safety conditions warrant action or carrying capacity studies determine there is a need to protect resources or visitor experiences. (For saddle stock interim use limits, see the text box on page 73.) The primitive, pristine, and research natural area zone conditions would limit the number of people who could enter these areas.

In the primitive zone, interim group sizes for day and overnight use would be 12 or fewer individuals. No more than 12 groups generally would be encountered per day in the zone.

In the primitive zone, the interim group size would be limited to 12 people. Visitors would usually not expect to encounter other groups in the zone.

In the research natural area zone, the interim group size for authorized research and guided educational group sizes would be limited to no more than 12 people, and recreational use would be prohibited.

Pristine Zones. The Park Service would apply the pristine zone to 110,083 acres in the recommended wilderness, which would include a number of known routes. (An additional 4,023 acres of potential wilderness would be included in this zone.) In general, existing conditions already meet the undeveloped, very low use nature of this zone. However, to ensure the probability of encountering no other people, managers may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on sections of the following routes: Camp Creek, Willis Creek, Beatramp Canyon, Right Fork of North Creek, upper Coalpits Wash above the junction with the Chilnlee Trail, Dalton Wash, upper Hidden Canyon, and Mystery Canyon. In the future, managers might need to place limits on visitor use elsewhere in the pristine zones if visitor use levels increased to the point where desired conditions were not being met.

There may be areas zoned pristine under this alternative that do not meet desired conditions. In such cases, park managers would remove the evidence of human use and restore these areas to natural conditions when feasible. Bolts on climbing routes and either national register-eligible or listed resources, including historic structures, would remain. These areas would be restored either by letting the areas naturally recover or by taking active measures such as planting native vegetation.

Transition Zones. Ordinarily, transition zones would not be considered recommended wilderness. However, three areas within the 1978 recommended wilderness area all receive higher use levels than other trails in the recommended wilderness: the Timber Creek Overlook trail, the Observation Point trail, and the Narrows from Mystery Canyon to the mouth of Orderley Canyon. In recognition of their higher use levels, these three areas would be designated as special transition zones—the areas would be managed consistently with wilderness, but use levels would be permitted to be higher than in other zones in the recommended wilderness area.

Research Natural Areas

Research natural areas are integral to management and long-term monitoring of park resources. They serve as baseline reference areas to compare and assess the condition of more intensively used areas of the park. In addition, research natural areas protect significant examples of natural and cultural resources from impacts of recreational use and provide opportunities for long- and short-term research within areas mostly unaffected by human activities. As such, research natural areas serve as important sources of information for broader management decisions affecting park resources and visitor use.

Under the preferred alternative the three existing research natural areas would be deauthorized. These areas were poorly documented at the time they were established and do not specify the primary ecological components or processes to be studied and protected. Additionally, their boundaries were rather subjective and were poorly defined ecologically or administratively, making their management difficult. As a result, these research natural areas have been mostly ignored in park management since their designation. In some areas this resulted in uses that were inconsistent with their research natural area designations.

Because the planning team has determined that well-managed and ecologically defined research natural areas are essential to achieve the purposes of Zion National Park, new research natural areas would be designated in this alternative. (See the text box on page 74 for an explanation of how these areas were selected.) Several of the proposed research natural areas are more ecologically specific areas derived from the three existing research natural areas that would be deauthorized. The new areas also are more suitable and possess a greater variety of ecological communities than the currently designated research natural areas. These are areas that park staff could manage more consistently with the intent of the research natural area national network.

Under the preferred alternative the research natural area zone would be applied to the new research natural areas. The zone would cover 9,013 acres, which would make up about 6% of the park. Most of the research natural areas (1,993 acres) would be in the recommended wilderness; another 134 acres of potential wilderness would be included in this zone. These research natural areas in the preferred alternative would include undisturbed watersheds and riparian corridors (Parunuweap, Goose Creek, upper Shunes Creek), some isolated mesa tops (e.g., Burnt Summary of Saddle Stock Use Management

- Saddle stock are limited to horses, mules, and burros.
- All Zion Canyon trails from the rim down (with the exception of the Sandbench trail). Kolob Arch trail, Willis and Beatramp Canyons, the East Mesa trail below the junction with the Observation Point trail, the Taylor Creek trail, and Timber Creek Overlook trail would continue to be closed to all saddle stock.
- Saddle stock use on authorized backcountry trails in the primitive zone would continue to be prohibited during spring thaws, during unusually wet periods, and at other times when their use would cause undue trail damage.
- Off-trail use of saddle stock in the primitive zone would continue to be permitted only in the lower Coalpits Wash from the headtrail to the junction with Scoggins Wash. Scoggins Wash, and Huber Wash.
- In the primitive zone there would be an intern limit on group size: a maximum of six saddle stock and six people would be permitted per group.
- In the primitive zone there would be an intern encounter rate limit: no more than one other stock group could be encountered per day.
- In the primitive zone, overnight camping with saddle stock would be permitted only at one designated campsite in Hog Valley. A group would be permitted to stay at this campsite only one night.
- In the primitive zone no saddle stock would be allowed in order to avoid impacts to sensitive natural and cultural resources and other visitors.
National Park Service to consult with others on the proposal, to estimate the cost of acquisition, and to identify the relative priority for acquisition of each parcel. This plan does not address these legislative requirements; however, the legislative proposal and accompanying support materials that are submitted to Congress would address these requirements.

**BLM Land Transfers**

The National Park Service would propose four BLM wilderness study areas adjacent to Zion, totaling 640 acres, to be included in the park boundary (see the Proposed Park Boundary Adjustments and Adjacent Landownership map). These areas include: Watchman (480 acres); Middle Fork of Taylor Creek (40 acres); Beatrapp Canyon (40 acres); and the southern part of the Goose Creek area (80 acres).

These parcels are small, isolated areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The boundary changes would bring into the park the heads of canyons or incorporate complete drainages and other prominent features that visitors already associate with Zion. The changes also would enable park staff to manage all of the subject canyons, provide increased protection for other natural and cultural resources in the park (e.g., Mexican spotted owl habitat); provide visitors with additional challenging hiking opportunities, and promote more efficient management of the areas. These land transfers would be consistent with the recommendations in the Dixie Resource Area Resource Management Plan (BLM 1998).

It would be the intention of the National Park Service to administer and protect the proposed BLM wilderness study area acquisitions in keeping with NPS Management Policies and Director's Order 41 (Wilderness Preservation and Management).

**Acquisition of Access Easements**

An easement is an interest in property restricting certain uses of land or giving a right to another entity to make limited use of the land. An access easement gives the public a right to pass through a property owner's land. All current and future owners of the land would be legally bound to follow the provisions of the easement agreement.

The National Park Service would seek nine access easements, totaling approximately 15 miles, on lands outside the park boundary (see the Proposed Park Boundary Adjustments and Adjacent Landownership map). The easements include:

- the North Fork of the Virgin River/Virgin River Narrows (3 miles)
- Orderville Canyon (0.25 mile)
AlTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

- Ponderosa Ranch area (two separate easements, totaling 3 miles)
- Anasazi Plateau (1.3 miles)
- Camp Creek (1 mile)
- Horse Ranch Mountain area (three separate easements totaling 6.5 miles)

The Park Service believes the easements would ensure that visitors and park personnel continue to have access in perpetuity to relatively inaccessible parts of the park. Several of the easements provide access to existing trails and popular routes. Without these easements, visitor access could be severely restricted and park managers would not be able to adequately protect and preserve park resources or complete resource management projects and studies in remote parts of the park.

Acquisition of Conservation Easements on Adjacent Private Lands

As noted in "Affected Environment,” private lands abut Zion's boundary in many locations. Most of these areas are undeveloped, but several landowners are developing or are considering developments on their property. Developments or other uses on these parcels could adversely affect the scenic qualities of the park and visitor experiences. Three privately owned adjacent areas are of particular concern:

- the Kolob Terrace area south of Spendlove Knoll (1,500 acres)
- the Anasazi Plateau subdivision area east of the Rockville Bench (400 acres)
- parcels in the North Fork of the Virgin River near the northeast corner of the park (320 acres)

The National Park Service would seek legislative authority to acquire conservation easements for these areas and for other potential areas near the park on a willing-seller basis, or would encourage local governmental entities or nonprofit groups to acquire these easements. These easements would benefit the landowners and would not remove any privately owned land from the tax rolls. In some cases as with the Anasazi Plateau subdivision, the landowner is able to cluster the new homes in the development and dedicate the remaining portion to an open space conservation agreement as provided for by Springdale’s zoning ordinances.

PROPOSALS FOR WILD, SCENIC, AND RECREATIONAL RIVER DESIGNATION

As part of the planning process for Zion, a study was conducted to determine whether any of the rivers in the park and on six adjacent Bureau of Land Management river segments should be recommended for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system. Appendix F contains this wild and scenic river evaluation. The planning team determined that five rivers and their tributaries would be eligible and suitable for inclusion in the system:

- the North Fork of the Virgin River above and below the Temple of Sinawava (two segments)
- the East Fork of the Virgin River
- North Creek
- La Verkin Creek
- Taylor Creek

In addition all six BLM segments evaluated were found eligible and suitable, with the exception of the upstream 1.7-mile segment of Shunes Creek from the Kane County line to the dryfall. All of these rivers and their tributaries would be proposed for wild, scenic, and recreational river designation.

76 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>River</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>River</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Fork of the Virgin River, above the Temple of Sinawava</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>North Fork</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolob Creek (incl. BLM segment)</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Wildcat Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose Creek (incl. BLM segment)</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Right Fork</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iriny Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Left Fork</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orderville Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Grapevine Wash</td>
<td>Scenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Wolf Springs Wash</td>
<td>Scenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Pine Spring Wash</td>
<td>Scenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Fork of the Virgin River below the Temple of Sinawava</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Russell Gulch</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birch Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Little Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Creek (excluding the segment below the lowest switchback west of the tunnel on Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway)</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>La Verkin Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Creek (below the switchback to confluence with the North Fork Virgin)</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Creek</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Wills Creek (incl. BLM segment)</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaps Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Beartrap Canyon (incl. BLM segment)</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behunin Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Current Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echo Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Cane Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Creek</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Timber Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Fork of the Virgin River</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Hop Valley Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shunes Creek (incl. BLM segment), excluding the segment from the water diversion to the western park boundary</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Taylor Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shunes Creek from the western park boundary to the water diversion</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>North Fork</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Fork From east of the park boundary along the Kolob Canyons Road for 1 mile</td>
<td>Scenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The rest of the Middle Fork (including the BLM segment)</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Fork</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79 BEST COPY AVAILABLE
under the preferred alternative. Table 1 lists the proposed classifications for the rivers and their tributaries. (Tributaries are listed beneath the main stems.) See the Wild and Scenic Rivers map for locations of the rivers and their tributaries.

The Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement provides comprehensive protection of Zion National Park rivers. The National Park Service would support Wild and Scenic Rivers authorizing legislation that recognizes this Agreement as constituting the reserved water rights for the park and does not reserve more water for the park than is provided for in the Agreement. In this way the National Park Service can honor its commitments made in negotiating the Agreement.

IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities and Funding

The National Park Service would implement new developments and management actions proposed under this alternative over the next 20 years as funding became available. The Park Service would establish partnerships with other agencies or groups to implement several actions described in this alternative. The management emphasis would shift under the preferred alternative, requiring a reallocation of staff among the different park programs.

Given adequate funding, the highest priority would be given to implement actions that serve the following functions:

- address crucial resource protection needs
- address visitor and employee safety concerns
- remedy serious infrastructure concerns
- accommodate immediate interpretation or visitor uses needs

Priority actions also must be accomplished before subsequent steps are taken, and could be accomplished fairly quickly with relatively little time and money.

Future Planning and Research Needs

Park managers would prepare several “step-down” implementation plans and studies upon completion of the General Management Plan. These more detailed implementation plans would describe how the Park Service would achieve the desired conditions outlined in the General Management Plan by describing specific actions park managers intend to take in Zion to ensure that resources are protected, and visitors continued to have opportunities for high quality experiences. The Park Service would seek public input in preparing all of these plans and would prepare additional environmental documentation as needed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The highest priority implementation plan would be the wilderness management plan. Carrying capacity studies also would be done for the front and backcountry. (For details on the carrying capacity studies, see page 60.) These studies and plan would be completed within five years of the approval of the General Management Plan.

The wilderness management plan would address a variety of topics, either as plan components or stand-alone plans:

- carrying capacity: appropriate uses and use levels, including hikers and saddle stock use
- minimum requirement documentation: guidelines for the use of “minimum requirement” that apply to all administrative decisions within the recommended wilderness
- resource issues: other visitor and resource impacts, reservation systems, human
- waste, signs, resource monitoring, and fire management
- climbing/canyoneering: locations, use levels, and resource issues
- river management: strategies for managing water use in and from the park’s recommended wilderness
- commercial guiding: whether or not commercial guiding should be allowed in the recommended wilderness, and if so how it should be managed

In addition to these follow-up actions specific to the park’s recommended wilderness, there are other implementation plans that would be needed. These plans would include:

- river management: detailed strategies for managing the North Fork of the Virgin River
- water resources: parkwide water issues, including a water supply, treatment, and conservation study
- air tour management: protection of natural quiet and natural sounds
- soundscape management: preservation of the natural soundscapes and mitigation of intrusive noise from sources other than air tours
- commercial services: commercial services necessary and appropriate in the park’s frontcountry
- transportation plan: assess the need for expanding the current shuttle system

Congressional authorization would be sought for preparing a related land study in the next one to three years. The purpose of the study would be to identify key lands that are integral to maintaining ecological integrity and long-range conservation of critical natural and cultural resources. The study should encompass public lands that might be considered for inclusion in the national park, as well as public and private lands, which might be managed cooperatively with willing parties under easements, agreements or other means. The study should also consider the availability of adjacent lands for accommodating increased recreational use, include an analysis of the local economic impact of alternatives for managing the Zion National Park ecosystem, and determine the ecological boundaries necessary to ensure integrity of park resources and natural processes.

Cost Implications

The planning team prepared general estimates of the costs for the construction of new facilities, the removal of facilities, the rehabilitation/restore of areas, and other actions. The team also calculated one-time staff costs associated with implementing the alternative (primarily NPS employee costs associated with construction actions and implementation planning) and annual full-time employee costs (primarily associated with operating facilities, and conducting research and monitoring).

Table 2 displays the relative costs of implementing the preferred alternative in 1999 dollars. Administrative costs, such as design and compliance costs, are included in the bottom totals. However, the costs of acquiring easements are not identified. Costs also are not included for expanding shuttle systems outside of the Zion Canyon, such as along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. (Park managers would determine these costs in a future transportation plan.) The actual cost of implementing the preferred alternative would ultimately depend on funding by the National Park Service and Congress over the life of the plan.
The cost figures shown in table 2 (and in the other action alternatives) are only intended to give a very rough idea of the relative costs of the preferred alternative compared to the other alternatives. The estimates are general and should not be used for budgeting purposes. Actual costs to the National Park Service will vary depending on if and when the actions are implemented, the size and location of facilities, and contributions by partners and volunteers. Most of the specifics about the size and location of possible developments will be decided in subsequent, more detailed planning and design.

### Table 2: Relative Costs for Major Capital Construction and Annual Operations for the Preferred Alternative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area and Actions</th>
<th>Capital Costs/ Construction/ Restoration ($ of FTEs / cost)</th>
<th>One-Time Staff Costs ($ of FTEs / cost)</th>
<th>Annual Staff Costs ($ of FTEs / cost)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kolob Canyons Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify visitor facilities, and add maintenance and administrative offices</td>
<td>$515,000</td>
<td>1 FTE / $51,000</td>
<td>3 FTE / $153,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kolob Terrace Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build and staff a focused visitor facility/ ranger residence/ office on BLM land and remove and rehabilitate the Firepit Knoll area</td>
<td>$515,000</td>
<td>2 FTE / $87,000</td>
<td>3 FTE / $127,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lava Point Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace employee residence</td>
<td>$264,000</td>
<td>1 FTE / $29,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Zion Canyon</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore the North Fork Virgin River (low to high ranges)</td>
<td>$119,000 - $388,000</td>
<td>2 FTE / $70,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East Entrance &amp; The Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build/upgrade visitor facilities</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
<td>1 FTE / $29,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other General Actions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage backcountry areas, authorize current research natural areas and authorize new ones</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 FTE / $73,000</td>
<td>3 FTE / $122,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation Plans</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare plans and studies (e.g., wilderness, carrying capacity, air tour management, commercial services)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 FTEs / $560,000</td>
<td>7 FTE / $256,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
<td>$2,022,000 - $3,055,000</td>
<td>24 FTE / $1,088,000</td>
<td>16 FTE / $715,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table does not include costs for shuttle systems and easements.

1. FTE = full-time equivalent. One FTE is one person working 40 hours per week.
2. Administrative costs have been added to the total cost and FTE figures.
ALTERNATIVE A: PROVIDE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR USE AND ACCESS

CONCEPT

The emphasis of alternative A is on providing opportunities for more widespread and increased use of Zion, while still protecting resources and providing opportunities for wilderness experiences. Under this alternative, park managers would improve access inside the park by upgrading or building trails; designating new trail routes; and providing additional visitor facilities, including picnic areas, interpretive facilities, and backcountry campsites. As in the preferred alternative, the management zones would be applied throughout the park, which would limit visitor numbers in certain areas.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In addition to all of the desired conditions and strategies described in the “Park Policies and Practices” chapter, park managers would follow several other management directions and strategies under alternative A. These general management strategies would be the same as those described under the preferred alternative. That is, park managers would implement the same strategies for both alternatives with regard to general natural resource management, air quality, water supply and conservation, visitor use management, and levels and types of park development. They also would implement the same desired conditions and strategies under both alternatives for operating the Zion Canyon Lodge and managing the North Fork of the Virgin River. The same interim use limits for hikers and saddle stock also would be applied under this alternative.

Natural Resource Mitigation Measures

Under Alternative A, park staff would follow all of the natural resource mitigation measures described earlier under “Park Policies and Practices” and under the preferred alternative.

Alternative A differs from the preferred alternative in that alternative A proposes a different zoning scheme, and park managers would follow different zone-specific management strategies.

ZONE ALLOCATION AND RELATED ACTIONS

As in the preferred alternative, under alternative A, the park would be divided into various zones. The same potential management zones would be applied as under the preferred alternative, but they would be applied in different configurations. (See appendix D for additional details on the zones.)

The map for Alternative A shows how the park would be zoned. The map shows the zones as both large polygons and as narrow corridors that follow trails, routes, and drainage lines. It should be noted that this zoning map shows how private holdings and other lands with private water and mineral rights within Zion National Park would be managed if they were acquired in the future. Until the private rights (as shown on the Wilderness Recommendation and Land Status map) were acquired or relinquished, the National Park Service would recognize that the holdings were private lands and would respect the valid rights of the landowners and mineral and water right owners.

Under this zoning scheme, the Park Service would include about 61% of the park in the primitive zone. The primitive zone would cover the second largest portion of the park (31%), and would include the East Fork of the Virgin River, the area surrounding and east of the three forks of Timber Creek, upper part of the Narrows, Orderville Canyon, a large area around the Watchman, several of the canyons north of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, and a large block of land west of Zion Canyon. Like the preferred alternative, the Park Service would include most of the park’s backcountry in primitive and primitive zones. The vast majority of these areas are not accessible to most visitors, however, due to the park’s steep topography (see Access to the Backcountry map in the Affected Environment part). These zones also would be consistent with most of the park being proposed as wilderness.

About 4% of the park would be zoned as research natural areas, including the slopes of Parunuwap Canyon and Shunesburg Mountain, the upper end of Coalpits Wash, upper part of Timber Creek, Cave and Current Creeks, and several isolated mesa tops and hanging gardens.

Frontcountry high and low development zones, transition, and administrative zones would be designated in readily accessible areas. Frontcountry low development zones, accounting for about 2% of the park, would be present at the east entrance along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, a large area along the Kolob-Terrace Road, and the Lava Point area. About 1% of the park would be in transition zones, including much of the floor of Zion Canyon, the Riverside Walk and lower end of the Narrows, Sand Bench, Weeping Rock/Hidden Canyon, Observation Point, and Emerald Pools trails, Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, and the Timber Creek Overlook. Frontcountry high development zones, encompassing about 1% of the park, would be located at the south park entrance, in Zion Canyon up to the Temple of Sinawava, along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, and along the Kolob Canyons Road. The administrative zone would cover about 0.2% of the park, primarily in Oak Creek, and near the entrances to Kolob Canyons and Lava Point.

The primitive, research, and natural areas would be managed the same way as the zones were managed in the recommended wilderness area.

Frontcountry Areas

Kolob Canyons Road Area. Under alternative A, the Kolob Canyons Road entrance area would be a frontcountry high development zone. The Kolob Canyons visitor center would be expanded and other actions would be taken similar to those of the preferred alternative. These actions include adding a picnic area and a nature trail.

The Park Service also would designate the entire road corridor to its terminus at the Timber Creek Overlook as a frontcountry high development zone. Under this alternative, park staff would allow visitor traffic on the road to substantially increase but would not operate a shuttle system. Managers could improve trailhead/parking areas and add interpretive facilities along the

Alternative A: Provide Additional Opportunities for Use and Access

Under this zoning scheme, the Park Service would include about 61% of the park in the primitive zone. The primitive zone would cover the second largest portion of the park (31%), and would include the East Fork of the Virgin River, the area surrounding and east of the three forks of Timber Creek, upper part of the Narrows, Orderville Canyon, a large area around the Watchman, several of the canyons north of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, and a large block of land west of Zion Canyon. Like the preferred alternative, the Park Service would include most of the park’s backcountry in primitive and primitive zones. The vast majority of these areas are not accessible to most visitors, however, due to the park’s steep topography (see Access to the Backcountry map in the Affected Environment part). These zones also would be consistent with most of the park being proposed as wilderness.

About 4% of the park would be zoned as research natural areas, including the slopes of Parunuwap Canyon and Shunesburg Mountain, the upper end of Coalpits Wash, upper part of Timber Creek, Cave and Current Creeks, and several isolated mesa tops and hanging gardens.

Frontcountry high and low development zones, transition, and administrative zones would be designated in readily accessible areas. Frontcountry low development zones, accounting for about 2% of the park, would be present at the east entrance along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, a large area along the Kolob-Terrace Road, and the Lava Point area. About 1% of the park would be in transition zones, including much of the floor of Zion Canyon, the Riverside Walk and lower end of the Narrows, Sand Bench, Weeping Rock/Hidden Canyon, Observation Point, and Emerald Pools trails, Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, and the Timber Creek Overlook. Frontcountry high development zones, encompassing about 1% of the park, would be located at the south park entrance, in Zion Canyon up to the Temple of Sinawava, along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, and along the Kolob Canyons Road. The administrative zone would cover about 0.2% of the park, primarily in Oak Creek, and near the entrances to Kolob Canyons and Lava Point.

The primitive, research, and natural areas would be managed the same way as the zones were managed in the recommended wilderness area.

Frontcountry Areas

Kolob Canyons Road Area. Under alternative A, the Kolob Canyons Road entrance area would be a frontcountry high development zone. The Kolob Canyons visitor center would be expanded and other actions would be taken similar to those of the preferred alternative. These actions include adding a picnic area and a nature trail.

The Park Service also would designate the entire road corridor to its terminus at the Timber Creek Overlook as a frontcountry high development zone. Under this alternative, park staff would allow visitor traffic on the road to substantially increase but would not operate a shuttle system. Managers could improve trailhead/parking areas and add interpretive facilities along the
road. In addition, picnic sites at the Timber Creek Overlook, the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, and the South Fork of Taylor Creek parking lots would be added. Trailhead parking areas also would be adjusted to meet desired conditions for the trails.

The Timber Creek Overlook trail and the trail along the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek would be managed as special transition zones because they lie within the recommended wilderness area. They would be maintained to meet wilderness requirements, but higher use levels would be allowed than on the majority of the recommended wilderness (see also the section on the recommended wilderness).

The area to the north of the entrance would be an administrative zone. Therefore, actions that could be taken in this zone would be the same as described in the preferred alternative (e.g., add administrative offices and maintenance facilities).

Kolob-Terrace Road Area. All of this area would be a frontcountry low development zone, including the portion of the Kolob-Terrace Road corridor within the park and most of the large nonwilderness area east and west of the road in the vicinity of Grapevine Wash. If visitor numbers in this area increased in the future, park staff would take action to ensure that a rural experience was maintained (e.g., they would offer a shuttle to transport visitors). Other actions that could be taken in this area would be to add picnic sites at the Hop Valley and Wildcat Canyon trailheads and add parking spaces and restrooms at existing trailheads. Because the zone is much larger in alternative A than the other alternatives, an additional possible action would be to build a bicycle trail paralleling the entire road from the proposed facility on BLM lands near North Creek (see below) to the Lava Point area and associated parking at existing or new trailheads within the park. (This would require cooperation with the county, the state, and possibly some private landowners on road segments that were not within park boundaries.)

As in the preferred alternative, with the agreement of the Bureau of Land Management, the Park Service would build a focused visitor facility/ranger residence/office and restrooms on BLM lands near the park boundary at North Creek. The staff at this facility would provide visitors with park information, issue permits, possibly collect fees, and establish a Park Service presence on this side of the park.

In alternative A the existing Firepit Knoll administrative area and its associated access road would be in a primitive zone. The ranger residence and road would not be consistent with the desired conditions of the primitive zone. Thus, once the new focused visitor facility/ranger residence on the Kolob-Terrace Road was built, the Firepit Knoll ranger residence and its access road would be removed and the area restored to natural conditions.

Lava Point Area. Most of this area, including the Lava Point campground and picnic area, would be a frontcountry low development zone. The following actions would be taken in this area:

- build a new focused visitor facility and adding nature trails
- expand the existing Lava Point campground by up to six sites (doubling the existing capacity) and possibly making water available
- add up to four new picnic sites (for a cumulative total of ten)

Also, if visitor numbers increased in this area, park managers would take action to ensure that the opportunity to experience a rural environment was maintained, such as limiting the number of private vehicles or offering a shuttle to transport visitors.

Unlike the preferred alternative, in alternative A, the roads leading east of Lava Point onto private land outside the park also would be frontcountry low development zones. To meet the desired zone conditions of allowing public access in a fairly structured rural environment, the roads east of the existing gate (at the West Rim trailhead) would be opened to public motorized use. Like the preferred alternative, the area to the north of the entrance would be an administrative zone, which would support the management of this part of the park. The existing ranger residence at Lava Point would be replaced with a new residence.

South Entrance and the Main Zion Canyon Area. Under alternative A, the Park Service would apply a mix of frontcountry high development, primitive transition, and administrative zones to this part of the park.

The location of the zones and the associated necessary or allowable actions generally would be the same as in the preferred alternative. However, in alternative A, all of Hidden Canyon (including the route through the canyon) would be in a transition zone.

The Observation Point trail, the Hidden Canyon trail (including the route through the canyon), and the lower Narrows from Orderville. Canyon south to Mystery Canyon, would be managed as special transition zones because they lie within the recommended wilderness area (see also the section on the recommended wilderness).

East Entrance and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway Area. The road corridor and east entrance area would be frontcountry high development zones. Like the preferred alternative, in alternative A a few picnic sites, restrooms, and associated parking spaces may be added along the road, pulloffs may be removed and rehabilitated, and a volunteer shuttle system may be initiated to better transport visitors to this area and reduce parking congestion. In addition, under alternative A park staff could provide focused visitor facilities and one or two short nature trails. As in the preferred alternative, the short access road to the East Rim trailhead and an area north of the east entrance would be frontcountry low development zones. Actions that could be taken here would be the same described for the preferred alternative (e.g., formalize parking, add picnic sites and a restroom).

The Canyon Overlook trail would be a transition zone. The actions that could be taken would be the same as those described in the preferred alternative (e.g., adding more interpretive signs, improving the parking area).

The existing administrative area at the east entrance would be an administrative zone. In this alternative administrative and/or maintenance facilities would be added to support the increase in visitor services and facilities in this area.

Outside the recommended wilderness, on the park's east boundary, the East Rim trailhead would be a frontcountry low development zone. This trailhead parking area would be improved to enhance visitor access to this area.
Recommended Wilderness

Under alternative A, the park staff would continue to manage a total of 132,615 acres (about 90% of the park) as wilderness, the same as the no-action alternative (see the Recommended Wilderness and Land Status map). This is consistent with the 1978 wilderness recommendation, with a few changes that reflect the acquisition of inholdings, state surface ownership and mineral rights, grazing rights, and water rights since that time. (The acreage figures also differ from the 1978 figures due to the inclusion of a valid existing water right on Camp Creek that had been overlooked in 1978, and due to the use of more accurate geographic information system maps.) In recognition of valid private rights, an additional 6,175 acres (13% of the park) would continue to be administered as potential wilderness — lands that currently do not qualify for wilderness designation due to nonconforming or incompatible uses (e.g., private inholdings, private water rights). If and when these rights were relinquished or acquired, the potential wilderness would either become part of the wilderness recommendation or be included as designated wilderness.

Like the preferred alternative, in alternative A the recommended wilderness area would be primarily zoned as pristine, primitive, or research natural areas. 

Primitive Zones. The primitive zone would be applied to 82,319 acres in the recommended wilderness, which would include several trails and routes. (An additional 3,994 acres of potential wilderness would be included in this zone.) On occasion managers may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on the Narrows route from the northern park boundary to Orderville Canyon, Orderville Canyon itself, and along the La Verkin Creek trail. The existing use limits for the Left Fork of North Creek and for camping along the West Rim and La Verkin Creek/Hop Valley trails would continue as interim limits, and would be reexamined in the carrying capacity studies and wilderness management plan. Managers may need to place limits on future visitor use elsewhere in the primitive zones, if visitor use levels increased to the point that desired conditions were not being met.

In several areas of the park managers could improve visitor access by adding some trails or clearly delineated routes in areas that were able to withstand increased human use (e.g., in areas where there are no spotted owls or other concerns regarding resources). There would be a greater potential for adding trails or routes in this alternative compared to the preferred alternative because more of the park would be zoned primitive as opposed to pristine. The topography in this area would be most conducive to improving access by:

- upgrading existing trails and routes in the area adjacent to Lava Point, Horse Pasture Plateau, and the three fingers of Timber Creek
- constructing additional narrow, unsurfaced trails or new routes in the above areas and in the Horse Ranch Mountain, Langston Mountain, Pine Spring, Checkerboard Mesa, and Cougar Mountain areas
- adding narrow unsurfaced trails in some of the lower reaches of the side canyons on either side of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway.

Designated campsites also could be established in the primitive zone, albeit outside sensitive resource areas. The numbers of potential new campsites would be greater in this alternative than under the preferred alternative due to the greater portion of the park that would be in primitive zones.

Pristine Zones. The pristine zone would be applied to 44,092 acres in the recommended wilderness, which would include several known routes. In general, existing conditions meet the undeveloped, low use nature of this zone. However, in order to ensure that visitors encounter few, if any other groups in the Mystery Canyon route, managers may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers (currently the route receives low to moderate use). In the future, managers may need to place limits on visitor use elsewhere in the pristine zones, as well, if visitor use levels increased to the point that desired conditions were not being met. Other actions that could be taken in the pristine zone would be the same as described in the preferred alternative (e.g., remove signs of human evidence and restore natural conditions in areas where necessary, as determined by park managers).

Under alternative A, a corridor following the Parunuweap Canyon following the river floodplain up Labyrinth Falls would be a pristine zone. This pristine zone would be managed differently from other pristine zones. Park managers would open this corridor to limited numbers of NPS or NPS-sanctioned guided interpretive trips. Public access into the canyon would be permitted only under the following conditions:

- The frequency and type of trips permitted in this area would depend on whether a reliable access route could be established across private land into the lower end of the canyon.
- All trips would be NPS or NPS-sanctioned guided interpretive trips.
- Day trips would be emphasized, and group size would be limited to no more than nine people, including the guide.
- Overnight use may be permitted, but camping would be allowed only in designated areas, and group size would be limited to five individuals, including the guide.

To ensure that riparian resources are protected, all groups would follow a designated trail, which would have river access points.

Public access would not be permitted from January 15 through June 15, which would cover the majority of the bighorn sheep lambing polygons. Southwest flycatcher nesting and Virgin spinedace spawning periods. Park staff may impose other closure periods based on other sensitive resources.

Transition Zones. Ordinarily, transition zones would not be compatible with recommended wilderness. However, five areas within the 1978 recommended wilderness area all receive higher use levels than other trails in the recommended wilderness: the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, Timber Creek Overlook trail, Observation Point trail, Hidden Canyon trail from the mouth of the slot canyon to the trail terminus, and the Narrows from Orderville Canyon south to Mystery Canyon. In recognition of their higher use levels, these five areas would be designated as special transition zones, the areas would be managed consistently with wilderness, but use levels would be permitted to be higher than in other zones in the recommended wilderness area.

Research Natural Areas

Like the preferred alternative, a 34,817-acre research natural area would be deauthorized. In alternative A the number of research natural areas and their acreage would be less than in the preferred alternative due to the emphasis in this alternative on recreational use and access. However, the units and acreage would still provide the basic components needed to form an effective set of research...
The research natural area zone would be applied to 6,145 acres, most of which would lie in the recommended wilderness. These areas are believed to be more suitable and possess a greater variety of ecological communities than those currently designated as research natural areas. They also could be managed more consistently with the intent of the research natural area national network. The research natural areas in alternative A would include a section of the existing Coldpits route (upper Coldpits Wash), most of Parunuweap Canyon (except for the river corridor included as a pristine zone, as noted above), the Shunesburg Mountain area, some isolated mesa tops (e.g., Burnt Mountain, Greatheart Mesa), selected hanging gardens in Zion and Parunuweap canyons (e.g., near Grotto spring, Weeping Rock, and North Menu Falls), and riparian corridors (upper Shunes, Cane and Current Creeks). (See appendix I for a list of all of the research natural areas that would be designated under alternative A, along with their resource attributes.) These areas would be open only to authorized research and NPS-guided educational trips — recreational use would be prohibited. Other actions that park managers could take would be the same as those described for the preferred alternative.

PROPOSED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

Under alternative A, the Park Service would propose the same drainage boundaries for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system as the preferred alternative: the North Fork of the Virgin River above and below the Temple of Sinawava, the East Fork of the Virgin River, North Creek, La Verkin Creek, and Taylor Creek, and their tributaries. In addition, all six BLM segments evaluated were found to be eligible and suitable, with the exception of the upstream 1.7 mile segment of Shunes Creek, from Kane County line to the dry fall. (See table 3 for the proposed classifications of the drainages.)

IMPLEMENTATION

Priorities and Funding

Like the preferred alternative, the Park Service would implement actions under alternative A over the next 20 years as funding became available. Park managers could establish partnerships with other agencies or groups to implement several of these actions, and would need to increase and reallocate staff within park programs to support the implementation of this alternative. Project priority would be based on the criteria listed under the preferred alternative.

Under alternative A, the Park Service also would prepare all of the “step-down” implementation plans and studies described under the preferred alternative (e.g., a wilderness management plan, carrying capacity studies, river management plan, and commercial services plan). The Park Service would seek public input in the preparation of all of these plans and prepare additional environmental documentation as needed to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Cost Implications

Table 3 displays the relative costs of implementing alternative A in 1999 dollars.
**TABLE 3: RELATIVE COSTS FOR MAJOR CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION AND ANNUAL OPERATIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area and Actions</th>
<th>Capital Costs/Construction ($M)</th>
<th>One-Time Staff Costs (# of FTEs / cost)</th>
<th>Annual Staff Costs (# of FTEs / cost)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kolob Canyons Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify visitor facilities, and add maintenance and administrative offices</td>
<td>$763,000</td>
<td>2 FTE / $80,000</td>
<td>4 FTE / $182,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kolob Terrace Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a focused visitor facility/ ranger station (offices located at the BLM)</td>
<td>$2,926,000</td>
<td>6 FTE / $229,000</td>
<td>4 FTE / $165,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lava Point Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add visitor facilities and replace employee residence</td>
<td>$368,000</td>
<td>4 FTE / $131,000</td>
<td>2 FTE / $75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Zion Canyon</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore the North Fork Virgin River (low to high ranges)</td>
<td>$119,000 - $884,000</td>
<td>2 FTE / $73,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East Entrance &amp; The Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build visitor, administrative, and maintenance facilities</td>
<td>$840,000</td>
<td>7 FTE / $251,000</td>
<td>6 FTE / $238,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other General Actions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage backcountry areas, conduct NPS-guided interpretive trips through Parunuweap, research natural areas and authorize new uses</td>
<td>$2,735,000</td>
<td>8 FTE / $335,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation Plans</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare plans and studies (e.g., parking, carrying capacity, air tour management, commercial services)</td>
<td>$6,772,000 - $7,804,000</td>
<td>30 FTE / $1,634,000</td>
<td>31 FTE / $1,376,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table does not include costs for shuttle systems and easements.

1. FTE = full-time equivalent. One FTE is one person working 40 hours per week.
2. Administrative costs have been added to the total cost figures.

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**ALTERNATIVE B: RESOURCE PROTECTION EMPHASIS**

**CONCEPT**

The emphasis of alternative B is on providing increased protection for park resources while still providing a range of visitor experiences. To protect park resources, strict limits would be imposed on the use of several trails and routes, and recreational use would be prohibited in several areas. There would be minimal new development in the park. As in the preferred alternative, management zones would be applied throughout the park, which would limit visitor numbers in more areas. (This alternative incorporates concepts from alternative C and D in the October 1997 "Alternatives Workbook").

Alternative B and the preferred alternative differ primarily in the zoning scheme and zone-specific actions that would be taken. The two alternatives also differ with regard to the strategy for operating the shuttle system, the desired conditions and strategies for the Zion Canyon Lodge, and the adjustments to the wilderness proposal.

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

**Natural Resource Mitigation Measures**

Under alternative B, the Park Service would follow all of the natural resource mitigation measures described earlier under "Park Policies and Practices" and under the preferred alternative.

In addition to the desired conditions and strategies described in the "Park Policies and Practices" chapter, the Park Service would follow several other management directions.

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**Zion Canyon Lodge**

Zion Canyon Lodge, currently owned by the National Park Service, has historically provided food and lodging to park visitors in a spectacular setting. Some believe it is not an appropriate facility in the park and that its services are duplicated outside of the park. Under alternative B, the Park Service would change the lodge facilities to meet specific visitor education and park research needs, rather than provide food service and lodging to the general visiting public. The lodge facilities would be an environmental education center offering for a variety of programs, much like the Grand Canyon Institute or the...
Yosemite Institute. It would provide opportunities to enhance science-based education for the visiting public through seminars, workshops, residential camps and similar programs. An essential element of this facility would be a center to support NPS, academic, and professional research in the cultural, natural, and social sciences. The planning team anticipates that under this alternative, private enterprises outside the park in nearby communities would meet visitor lodging and food service needs.

- Desired Condition: An internationally renowned, state-of-the-art facility supports research and science-based education through elementary, secondary and adult programs. With this facility, the public is actively engaged in the study of park natural, cultural, and recreational resources and park management.

- Strategies: The Park Service would convert Zion Lodge facilities to a science education center with an associated research station. The lodge would retain kitchen, dining, and lodging facilities to the extent necessary to support seminars, workshops, residential camps, and domiciled scientists. Existing structures would also house conference meeting rooms, and research and teaching laboratories, as well as storage and maintenance space. The Park Service would develop agreements to locate park-based, university research field stations at the lodge facilities. Support for the facility would be developed through a combination of private donations, donations to a newly established Zion-based nonprofit organization, fees associated with locating university field stations at Zion, and federal funds, as necessary. A nonprofit organization would be established to operate and maintain the facility under agreement with the National Park Service.

ZONE ALLOCATION AND RELATED ACTIONS

Like the preferred alternative, the Park Service would divide the park into various zones that identify how to manage different areas of the park to achieve desired resource and social conditions and to serve recreational needs. The same potential management zones described under the preferred alternative would be applied in alternative B. (See appendix D for additional details on the zones.)

The map for alternative B shows the park zones, both as large polygons and as narrow corridors that follow trails, routes, and drainages. It should be noted that this zoning map shows how private inholdings and other lands with private water and mineral rights within Zion National Park would be managed if they were acquired in the future. Until the private rights (as shown on the Wilderness Recommendation and Land Status map) were acquired or relinquished, the National Park Service would recognize that the inholdings were private lands and would respect the valid rights of the landowners and mineral and water right owners.

In alternative B, the Park Service would include most of Zion in pristine and research natural area zones. The pristine zone would be the largest zone, covering about 80% of the park. About 14% of the park would be research natural areas, including the southeast corner of the park, all of Parunuweap Canyon, most of Shunes Creek, Gifford Canyon, the Right Fork and most of the Left Fork of North Creek, Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, lower La Verkin Creek south of the La Verkin Creek trail, Dalton Wash, and several hanging gardens and isolated mesa tops. Although little use would occur in these zones, the majority of these areas are not accessible to most visitors due to the park’s steep topography (see “Access to the Backcountry” in the Affected Environment part). These zones also would be consistent with most of the park being proposed as wilderness.

Primitive areas would cover approximately 5% of the park, including much of the floor of Zion Canyon, a large area around Lava Point, the Narrows from the north park boundary down to Mystery Canyon, a travel corridor along the Left Fork of North Creek, much of the West Rim trail, the upper ends of the East Mesa and East Rim trails, Hidden Canyon, and Cable Mountain and Deertrap Mountain trails.

Like the previous two alternatives, frontcountry high and low development zones, as well as transition, and administrative zones, would be in areas that the public can readily access and outside the recommended wilderness area. About 0.6% of the park would be included in frontcountry low development zones, including the area along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, the Kolob-Terrace Road, Lava Point, and the Kolob Canyons Road. Frontcountry high development zones would cover about 0.2% of the park and would include the south park entrance, the Zion Lodge area, the east park entrance, and the Kolob Canyons entrance. Less than 0.1% of the park would be transitional zones, including the Canyon Overlook trail, the Hidden Canyon trail up to the mouth of the canyon, the Riverside Walk trail to the Upper Mystery Canyon, and the road from Lava Point ranger residence to the West Rim trailhead. The administrative zone would also comprise about 0.1% of the park.

The pristine, primitive, and research natural area zones would primarily lie within the recommended wilderness area. However, several of these zones, totaling 9,884 acres (about 7% of the park) would lie outside the recommended wilderness and potential areas. These areas include the land south of the powerline corridor in the Coalpits area; an area above Lava Point, north of the roads to the MIA camp, an area west of the Kolob Terrace Road by the Smith Mesa Road; and several areas near the Kolob Canyons, Kolob-Terrace, and Zion-Mt. Carmel Roads. These pristine, primitive, and research natural areas would be managed the same way as the zones are managed in the recommended wilderness area.

The remainder of this part describes how the Park Service would zone different areas of the park and the actions that could occur under alternative B. The actions are those the planning team believes would most likely occur over the next 20 years in the park, given the management alternative concept, zone definitions, and the park’s existing conditions and environmental constraints. All of the proposed new facilities would be built in already disturbed areas where possible. Mitigation measures would also be taken to avoid sensitive areas, such as threatened and endangered species habitat and archeological sites.

Frontcountry Areas

Kolob Canyons Road Area. Under alternative B, the entrance area would be a frontcountry high development zone.

However, in keeping with the philosophy of this alternative, the Park Service would only provide a few new developments (e.g., adding a picnic area and/or a nature trail).

The Kolob Canyons Road itself (the road corridor from the entrance gate to the Timber Creek Overlook trailhead) would be a frontcountry low development zone. The actions that could be taken to better meet zone conditions would be the same as in the preferred alternative (e.g., limit traffic, run shuttles, improve trailheads and interpretive facilities along the road), with one exception—the existing parking lot for the South Fork of Taylor Creek would be removed in alternative
Lava Point Area. The Park Service would apply the frontcountry low development zone to the entrance area, the road accessing the campground and picnic area, and the campground and picnic areas. New picnic sites could be added here. However, in keeping with the philosophy of alternative B, little or no other new development would occur.

The road from the ranger residence to the West Rim trailhead would be a transition zone. To meet desired conditions, the road by the ranger residence would be gated and closed to access by the motorized public beyond that point. (Park staff and owners and guests of the private property to which the roads lead would be allowed to use motor vehicles, as per the special exemptions described for the normally nonmotorized transition zone.) In addition, the West Rim trailhead would need to be relocated by the Lava Point ranger residence.

As in the preferred alternative, the road east of the gate at the West Rim trailhead, including all three forks leading onto private land outside of the park, would be an administrative zone. This would allow continued motorized access by administrative vehicles and the private landowners and their guests. An area north of the entrance also would be an administrative zone to support management of this part of the park. The existing ranger residence here would be replaced with a new residence.

South Entrance and the Main Zion Canyon Area. A mix of frontcountry high development, frontcountry low development, transition, primitive, pristine, and administrative zones would be applied to this part of the park.

The areas zoned frontcountry high development would include the following areas:
- the road corridor from the south entrance to junction with the main
- most of the south entrance area itself, including the campgrounds, the new visitor center/shuttle staging site, and the segments of the Pa'rus trail and the North Fork of the Virgin River running through the campgrounds
- most of the Zion Canyon Lodge area, including the parking areas, lodging facilities, and restrooms

In these areas a few picnic sites could be added in disturbed areas.

The frontcountry low development zone would be applied to the main Zion Canyon road corridor from its junction with the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway to its terminus at the Temple of Sinawava. To reduce resource impacts and improve the quality of the visitor experience along this segment of the road as well as in the Narrows, the number and frequency of shuttles going to the Narrows would be lowered in this alternative compared to the other alternatives.

The Park Service would apply the transition zone to the Grotto and the canyon bottom east of the road corridor, and to a small area across from the Zion Canyon Lodge that includes the North Fork of the Virgin River. Several trails also would be transition zones, including: the segment of the Pa'rus trail extending north of the campgrounds; the lower, middle, and upper Emerald Pools trails; a segment of the West Rim trail; the trail to Angel's Landing; the Hidden Canyon trail to the mouth of the canyon; and the Riverside Walk trail up to the junction with Mystery Canyon. No actions would be necessary to meet zone conditions in these areas.

The lower Narrows north of Mystery Canyon as far as Orderville Canyon would be managed as a special transition zone because it lies within the recommended wilderness area. It would be maintained to meet wilderness requirements, but higher use levels would be allowed than on the majority of the recommended wilderness (see also the section on the recommended wilderness).

Under this alternative, the road above the maintenance yard in Oak Creek would be zoned pristine. As a result, park managers would need to restore the area to natural conditions. This would include removing the road, the research camp (four tent pads), water storage and pipeline, boneyard items, maintenance equipment, and a nursery shed.

Also under alternative B, actions would need to be taken in primitive zones in the main Zion Canyon. Specifically, all of the water collection structures at the springs in the main Zion Canyon would need to be removed to meet the intent of the alternative. (A new water collection and treatment facility would be built near the south entrance of the park to continue supplying water to the park.)

Several areas would be administrative zones, including Sammy's Canyon (site of the shuttle maintenance facilities), the Watchman employee housing area, the old waste treatment plant, a portion of the existing Oak Creek employee housing and maintenance area, the Pine Creek housing area, the Birch Creek employee housing area, and concessions' support facilities around the Zion Canyon Lodge. No additional developments would be built under alternative B in these areas.

East Entrance and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway Area. An area north of the east entrance would be a frontcountry high development zone. If the Park Service could not locate a site outside the park boundary, this area would be used for a new full-service visitor center with shuttle staging, parking, and restrooms. The facility would be necessary to support a mandatory shuttle system along the Zion-Carmel Highway.
The road corridor (100 feet either side of the centerline) and the short access road to the East Rim trailhead would be a frontcountry low development zone. To meet the conditions of this zone, managers would need to significantly reduce vehicle traffic to levels resembling a more rural experience. The most reasonable way this could be achieved would be to implement a mandatory visitor shuttle system between the south and east entrances. (Nonrecreational commuter traffic — those who live on one side of the park and are rarely passing through — would still be allowed to use the highway.) The Park Service would need to purchase new shuttle vehicles since the ones to be used in the main Zion Canyon cannot drive up the grades on the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway.

With the mandatory shuttle, several other actions would be necessary. Since all of the pullouts along the road would no longer be needed, they would be removed and the areas rehabilitated. The parking areas along the road also would be redesigned as shuttle stops and several social trails would be rehabilitated. In addition, the new visitor center and staging area at the south entrance may need to be expanded to provide shuttle drivers with both a main Zion Canyon and the east entrance.

Park managers could take other actions to better meet the conditions of the frontcountry low development zone, such as to provide shorter nature trails at the east entrance and picnic sites along the road. However, the number of possible picnic sites would be limited to a total of ten along the whole road, as per the definition of a frontcountry low development zone.

The Canyon Overlook trail would be a transition zone. Actions that could be taken would be the same as described in the preferred alternative (e.g., adding more interpretive signs, improving the parking area).

Outside the recommended wilderness, on the park’s east boundary, the East Rim trailhead would be a frontcountry low development zone. This trailhead/parking area may be improved to enhance visitor access to this area.

Recommended Wilderness

Under alternative B, the park staff would continue to manage a total of 132,615 acres (about 90% of the park) as wilderness, the same as the no-action alternative (see the Recommended Wilderness and Land Status map). This is consistent with the 1978 wilderness recommendation, with a few changes that reflect the acquisition of inholdings, state surface ownership and mineral rights, grazing rights, and water rights since that time. (The acreage figures also differ from the 1978 figures due to the inclusion of a valid existing water right on Camp Creek that had been overlooked in 1978, and due to the use of more accurate geographic information system maps.) In recognition of valid private rights, an additional 4,175 acres (3% of the park) would continue to be administered as wilderness — lands that currently do not qualify for wilderness designation due to nonconforming or incompatable uses (e.g., private inholdings, private water rights). If and when these rights are relinquished or acquired, the potential wilderness would either become part of the wilderness recommended or be included as designated wilderness.

Like the preferred alternative, in alternative B the recommended wilderness area would be primarily zoned as pristine, primitive, or research natural areas.

Primitive Zones. The Park Service would apply the primitive zone to 4,655 acres in the recommended wilderness, primarily just along existing trails and routes. To meet desired zone conditions, park managers may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on the follow-

ing trails and routes: the Narrows from the northern park boundary to the junction with Mystery Canyon, the route up through Hidden Canyon, the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, La Verkin Creek trail, Upper Emerald Pool, Watchman trail, and Sand Bench trail. In addition, visitor numbers would need to be limited in the Lava Point area, and the existing concession horse operation on the Sand Bench trail would need to be eliminated, because this type of use would not be consistent with the primitive zone conditions. The existing use limits for the Left Fork of North Creek and for camping along the West Rim trail would continue as interim limits and be reexamined in the carrying capacity studies and wilderness management plan. In the future, managers may need to place limits on use elsewhere in the primitive zones, if visitor use levels increased to the point that desired conditions are not being met.

Under alternative B visitor access could be improved in the primitive zones by adding some trails or clearly delineated routes in areas that were able to withstand increased human use (e.g., in areas where there are no spotted owls or other sensitive species habitat). Zion National Park would likely offer fewer trails and designated campsites in alternative B than in the preferred alternative because much less of the park would be zoned primitive in alternative B. The topography in the primitive area adjacent to Lava Point and in the main Zion canyon, primarily near the river would be most conducive to improved access. In these areas, managers could upgrade existing trails and routes or provide additional narrow, unsurfaced trails or new routes.

Designated campsites also could be established in the primitive zones, albeit outside of sensitive resource areas. There would be fewer potential new campsites in this alternative than under the preferred alternative and alternative A because more of the park would be in primitive zones and less would be in primitive zones.

The primitive section of the North Fork of the Virgin River within the main canyon also would be restored. At a minimum, park staff would have to remove or modify all gabions, riprap, and other river structures inconsistent with the primitive zone structures (e.g., rebuild them in a manner that has less impact on natural river processes). The Park Service may make several exceptions to this requirement, however, to retain some structures that protect the main canyon road and retain the Springdale water diversion.

Pristine Zones. In this alternative 107,802 acres would be designated pristine zones in the recommended wilderness, which would include a number of trails and routes. (An additional 3,985 acres of potential wilderness would be included in this zone.) To ensure the probability of encountering no other people, managers may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on the following trails and routes: Camp Creek, North and South Forks of Taylor Creek, Hop Valley, the Connector trail, Northgate Peaks, part of Wildcat Canyon, Orderville Canyon, Mystery Canyon, and upper Coalpits Wash. If visitor use levels in other pristine areas caused desired conditions to be exceeded, managers may need to place limits on visitor use levels in these areas as well.

Because trails, clearly delineated routes (as opposed to faint routes or climbing bolts), and designated campsites are inconsistent with the desired conditions of the pristine zone, the above trails and routes, plus any designated campsites along them would be removed and the areas restored to natural conditions.

Some places under this alternative may be in pristine zones but have evidence of human use. For example, on either side of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway there are well-used routes, signs, obvious natural and cultural resource damage (e.g., trampled vegetation, eroded soils, vandalized cultural sites), and other evidence of people. In these areas park staff would use the evidence of human use
and recreate these areas to natural conditions when feasible. Bolts on climbing routes and either national register-eligible or listed resources, including historic structures, would remain.

**Transition Zones.** Ordinarily, transition zones, would not be compatible with recommended wilderness. However, two areas within the 1978 recommended wilderness area receive higher use levels than other trails in the recommended wilderness: the Timber Creek Overlook trail and the Narrows from the northern terminus of Riverside Walk to Mystery Canyon. In recognition of their higher use levels, these areas would be designated as special transition zones: the areas would be managed consistently with wilderness, but use levels would be permitted to be higher than in other zones in the recommended wilderness area.

**Research Natural Areas**

Like the preferred alternative, under alternative B the three existing research natural areas would be deauthorized. In alternative B the number of research natural areas and their acreage would be more than in the preferred alternative due to the emphasis in this alternative on resource protection.

The research natural area zone would be applied to 20,348 acres, most of which would lie in the recommended wilderness. This zone would apply to areas believed to be more suitable than those currently designated as research natural areas and that could be managed more consistently with the intent of the research natural area national network (see the no-action alternative). Research natural areas in alternative B would include several riparian corridors: Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, Goose Creek, upper La Verkin Creek, lower La Verkin Creek south of the La Verkin Creek trail (including Timber Creek south of the trail, and Cane and Currant Creeks), Cramer Hill/Dalton Wash area, the Right Fork of North Creek, the tributaries of the Left Fork of North Creek (including Wolf Springs Wash, Pine Spring Wash, and Little Creek), Gifford Canyon, Parunuweap, and most of Shunes Creek. Other research natural areas would cover all isolated mesa tops (including Timber Top, Burns Mountain, and Crazy Quill); a relict pinyon-juniper forest; and hanging gardens in Zion and Parunuweap canyons (e.g., near Grotto Spring, Weeping Rock, and North Menu Falls). (See Appendix I for a list of all of the research natural areas that would be designated under alternative B, along with their resource attributes.) Research natural areas would be open to authorized research and NPS-guided educational trips — recreational use would be prohibited. Other actions that park managers could take would be the same as those described for the preferred alternative.

**PROPOSED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS**

In alternative B, the Park Service would propose the same boundary adjustments as those described in the preferred alternative. A total of five land transfers with the Bureau of Land Management (totaling approximately 950 acres), nine access easements (totaling approximately 15.5 miles in length), and three conservation easements (totaling approximately 2,220 acres) would be proposed. The Park Service and Bureau of Land Management would enter into an interim memorandum of understanding for the Park Service to manage the Rockville Bench tract until if and when this proposed boundary adjustment is approved.

It would be the intention of the Park Service to administer and protect the proposed BLM wilderness study area acquisitions in keeping with NPS Management Policy and Director's Order 41 (Wilderness Preservation and Management). In keeping with established guidelines, the National Park Service would subsequently initiate the administrative process needed to finally recommend to Congress the addition of these units to the national wilderness preservation system as either NPS "designated" or "potential" wilderness.

**PROPOSALS FOR WILD, SCENIC, AND RECREATIONAL RIVER DESIGNATION**

Alternative B would propose the same drainages for inclusion in the national wild and scenic river system as the preferred alternative. The Park Service would propose the North Fork of the Virgin River above and below the Temple of Sinawava, the East Fork of the Virgin River, North Creek, La Verkin Creek, and Taylor Creek, and their tributaries for wild, scenic, and recreational river designation. In addition, all six BLM segments evaluated would be found to be eligible and suitable, with the exception of the 1.7-mile segment of Shunes Creek, from Kane County line to the dry fall. (See table 1 for the proposed classifications.)

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**Priorities and Funding**

Like the preferred alternative and alternative A, the Park Service would implement the actions under alternative B over the next 20 years as funding becomes available. Partnerships with other agencies or groups would be established to implement several of these actions. Staff increases and reallocations within park programs also would be necessary to support the implementation of this alternative. Project priorities would be based on the criteria listed under the preferred alternative.
## Table 4: Relative Costs for Major Capital Construction and Annual Operations for Alternative B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area and Actions</th>
<th>Capital Costs/Construction</th>
<th>One-Time Staff Costs (# of FTEs / cost)</th>
<th>Annual Staff Costs (# of FTEs / cost)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kolob Canyons Area</td>
<td>$315,000</td>
<td>2 FTE / $73,000</td>
<td>0.5 FTE / $18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify visitor facilities, and add maintenance and administrative offices</td>
<td>$315,000</td>
<td>2 FTE / $73,000</td>
<td>0.5 FTE / $18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolob Terrace Area</td>
<td>$556,000</td>
<td>3 FTE / $124,000</td>
<td>4 FTE / $142,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a focused visitor facility/ranger residence/office on BLM land, remove visitor facilities, and remove facilities and rehabilitate the Firepit Knoll area</td>
<td>$556,000</td>
<td>3 FTE / $124,000</td>
<td>4 FTE / $142,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lava Point Area</td>
<td>$224,000</td>
<td>1 FTE / $36,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace/add employee residences, relocate the West Rim trailhead</td>
<td>$224,000</td>
<td>1 FTE / $36,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Zion Canyon</td>
<td>$4,799,000 - 5,564,000</td>
<td>3 FTE / $127,000</td>
<td>7 FTE / $273,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore the North Fork Virgin River (low to high ranges), convert the lodge to a research/education facility, remove water collection structures, and build a new treatment facility.</td>
<td>$4,799,000 - 5,564,000</td>
<td>3 FTE / $127,000</td>
<td>7 FTE / $273,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>east Entrance &amp; The Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway</td>
<td>$2,660,000</td>
<td>10 FTE / $348,000</td>
<td>8 FTE / $295,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build visitor, administrative, and maintenance facilities</td>
<td>$2,660,000</td>
<td>10 FTE / $348,000</td>
<td>8 FTE / $295,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other General Actions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 FTE / $73,000</td>
<td>4 FTE / $166,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage backcountry areas: deauthorize current research natural areas, and authorize new ones</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 FTE / $73,000</td>
<td>4 FTE / $166,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Plans</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15 FTE / $505,000</td>
<td>7 FTE / $266,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare plans and studies (e.g., wilderness, carrying capacity, air tour management, commercial services)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15 FTE / $505,000</td>
<td>7 FTE / $266,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,548,000 - 12,581,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>40 FTE / $1,574,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.5 FTE / $1,276,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table does not include costs for shuttle systems and easements.

1. FTE = full-time equivalent. One FTE is one person working 40 hours per week.
2. Administrative costs have been added to the total cost figures.
3. An additional payment would need to be made for possessor interests to the lodge concessioner.
INTRODUCTION

The "Affected Environment" describes the existing environment of Zion and the surrounding region. The focus of this part is on key park resources, uses, facilities, and socioeconomic characteristics that have the potential to be affected by the alternatives they should be implemented. Some additional features are discussed because they provide context, and/or must be considered in environmental impact statements (e.g., floodplains, certain threatened and endangered species). For additional information on Zion's natural and human environment, see Connor and Vetter (1986), Crawford (1986, 1988), Euler (1966), Hamilton (1992), NPS (1994a), Schroeder (1955), Stoffle et al. (1995), Wauer (1965), Wauer and Carter (1965), and Welsh (1990).

NATURAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Zion National Park is designated a class I area under the Clean Air Act. This designation means that air quality characteristics, including visibility, can be degraded the least compared to other Clean Air Act designations. Current local sources of pollution include particulate matter from campfires and wood stoves and vehicle emissions. Long-distance transport of emissions to the park occurs from regional pollution sources, such as coal-fired generating plants and large urban areas. Wind and dust also create degraded visibility and air quality in and around the park. These sources of pollution affect visibility by introducing haze into the sky. There are no point-source pollution sources currently visible from the park.

WATER QUALITY

Water quality conditions in Zion National Park do not vary dramatically from source to source, though individual streams may vary considerably over time particularly in turbidity and suspended sediment. Springs from the base of the Navajo sandstone are moderately low in dissolved solids (specific conductance near 300 µhos/cm), while streams draining from higher or lower strata have higher concentrations. Of the major rivers in the park, La Verkin Creek and North Creek have the highest levels of mineralization (specific conductance near 1000 µhos/cm), while the North and East Forks of the Virgin River show somewhat lower levels (specific conductance of 600-800 µhos/cm). The presence of dissolved metals in drinking water in excess of drinking water standards has rarely occurred. Thus, these events appear to be anomalies rather than identifiable problems.

Sediment and turbidity are the most significant water quality characteristics of the rivers and streams in the park. While most streams are relatively clear during periods of low flow, high flows are accompanied by large increases in sediment transport and turbidity. Most of the sediment movement occurs during spring runoff, which may last several weeks, and during very brief runoff events following summer thunderstorms. The total sediment transport of the North Fork of the Virgin River is estimated to be 200,000 tons/year. Most of this appears to be natural, although it may be enhanced by roads and grazing on the watershed.

The greatest water quality concern for most visitors is contamination from fecal bacteria. Though analyses have been limited, bacterial levels have exceeded the standard for full-body contact recreation 20% to 30% of the time. No closures or advisories have been issued regarding bacterial contamination of waters in the park; however. Probable sources of fecal bacteria include residences, livestock and wildlife upstream of the park, recreational activity, and wastewater treatment systems. Visitors engaged in water play are at risk of ingesting contaminated water and becoming infected by enteric diseases. Natural turbidity as well as sediment stirred up by water play probably increase bacteria levels.

NORTH FORK OF THE VIRGIN RIVER FLOODPLAIN

The North Fork of the Virgin River is the main drainage through Zion Canyon. The river experiences wide fluctuations in flow with a seasonal snowmelt peak in the spring followed by generally low summer and fall flows. Occasional heavy storms, which can occur at any time of the year but are more
common in summer and early fall, produce the largest flows in the Virgin River system. These runoff events are usually of short duration and can occur suddenly. Floods in desert regions like Zion are often accompanied by large quantities of debris and sediment, increasing the impact of floods.

The morphology of Zion Canyon has been shaped by landslide activity. About 6,000 years ago, a very large landslide dammed the river, forming a lake that extended 4 to 5 miles upstream to the mouth of the Narrows. The sediments deposited in this lake form the relatively flat canyon floor. Prior to channelization, the Virgin River meandered across the canyon floodplain, spilling over its banks in roughly two out of three years. The geologic record, as interpreted by Hereford et al. (1995), shows that the river underwent cycles of down cutting and deposition, which were influenced by climate trends.

Through much of the lower Zion Canyon (i.e., from the park’s south boundary to the Canyon Junction bridge), the 100- and 500-year floodplains closely follow the banks of the Virgin River. An earthen levee system present along the rivershanks through the Watchman campground has altered the historic floodplains in this area. The probable maximum flood area flows out into open areas of the park, portions of the housing areas, campgrounds, and much of the valley floor. All of the existing park facilities near Oak Creek are within the probable maximum floodplain of that creek. The current visitor center parking area, resource management offices, and one historic residence are within the 100-year floodplain of Oak Creek; the visitor center, most other housing, and the maintenance area are within the 500-year floodplain; and two houses are outside of the 500-year floodplain. The water tank and corral at Birch Creek are within the probable maximum floodplain of the river.

The channel of the North Fork above Birch Creek was channelized in the 1920s and 1930s to protect the newly constructed Zion Lodge. The stream was confined to the westernmost portion of the 1,000-foot-wide floodplain by excavating the channel deeper and by building levees along the eastern side of the channel for about 4.5 miles. Some levees are armored with gabions (heavy wire baskets filled with rock). Although the wires along the bottom of many of the gabions have rusted away, the levees have been periodically repaired. They have remained effective in isolating the river from the floodplains for approximately 2 miles, even when large floods have occurred (up to 10,000 cubic feet per second).

RIPARIAN/WETLANDS COMMUNITIES/HANGING GARDENS

Riparian communities comprise an important segment of the park’s vegetation. These riparian areas are directly influenced by permanent water and include land and vegetation adjacent to rivers, streams, springs, and seeps. The riparian communities in Zion include nearly 25 miles of perennial streams. These communities tend to be rare, small, or linear locales, separated by vast expanses of more arid lands. The riparian areas support the richest flora and avian fauna in the park and are important wildlife habitats for many species. Due to their linear nature, the riparian areas serve as connectors between habitat types and provide travel routes for wildlife.

In many areas within Zion, riparian communities are relatively intact. As shady, cool, wet areas, they are disproportionately preferred by users over the surrounding arid lands. The North Fork of the Virgin River is one of the most popular destinations in the park during the warm summer months.

Some reaches of the North Fork have been channelized. Levees and constricted bridge crossings, among other factors, have caused downcutting of the channel, reducing the frequency of flooding and lowering alluvial ground water. This has resulted in a loss of wetland and riparian vegetation. Also, bank-proted structures along much of the North Fork have provided stable banks in areas that were formerly very dynamic. This unnaturally stable fluvial environment inhibits the regeneration of riparian vegetation, such as willow and cottonwood. Lack of an understory is evident, offering little replacement for the existing older, decadent overstory. Nonnative vegetation, such as ripgut brome and cheatgrass, also dominate previously disturbed areas and have replaced native riparian species.

Hanging gardens are a unique, diverse and important community in the Colorado Plateau and Zion National Park. They occur on vertical, shaded sandstone faces where water seeps from the rock. Moisture and shading from direct sun provide habitat for species requiring cooler, wetter conditions. The Zion snail is one such species. This snail is endemic to the park and has been found only within some hanging gardens along the North Fork of the Virgin River.

Weeping Rock is a primary visitor attraction, as are the hanging gardens at Emerald Pools. Other gardens line portions of the Narrows trail. A number of smaller gardens occur throughout the park where seeps and springs issue from the exposed sandstone. Some of the springs associated with hanging gardens, the Grotto, Temple of Sinawava, and Birch Creek, are used as park water sources.

Impacts on hanging gardens occur when people run their hands across the area, which removes vegetation and possibly rubs Zion snails, a rare, endemic species, off the surface. Trails and barriers already in place would continue to prevent contact with the gardens. The potential for damage or loss of vegetation based on increased visitation in fragile areas would be limited with the continuation of these mitigation measures.

MICROBIOTIC CRUSTS

Microbiotic crusts — an intricate network of cyanobacteria, algae, mosses, and fungi — contribute to many ecosystem functions, including soil stability, nitrogen fixation, nutrient contributions, seedling establishment, and plant-soil relationships. These crusts are extremely intolerant of disturbance; just one step can destroy the delicate sheaths and filaments that hold the soil together. Without continued disturbance, crusts will begin reestablishing immediately; however, it may be several decades before mature crusts with algae and fungi develop. Continued activities that disturb the upper soil layer will have an adverse impact on microbiotic crusts.

Zion National Park does not have detailed field surveys to determine the distribution of microbiotic crusts. These crusts are,
SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER

The federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii extimus) nests primarily in mid-to-low elevation riparian habitat along rivers, streams, or other wetlands where dense growth of willows or other plants are present. There was one confirmed sighting of this neotropical migrant in the park in 1994 along the East Fork of the Virgin River. A 1998 survey of the park’s riparian habitat that seemed capable of supporting flycatchers found no birds, though several pairs have been found downstream of the park along the Virgin River. One bird was located in the Birch Creek survey area in 1999.

VIRGIN SPINDEACE

The native fish community of the Virgin River has experienced population declines due to modification and loss of habitat, habitat fragmentation, and the introduction of nonnative species that compete with and prey on native species. This community is in relatively natural abundance only in Zion National Park and for a short distance downstream, as well as in a segment of the Santa Clara River. Native fish communities within the park are relatively intact, and include two minnows — the Virgin spindeace (Lepidomeda malpissini mollisspinis) and speckled dace (Rhinichthys osculus) — and two suckers — the flannelmouth sucker (Catosomas latipinnis) and desert sucker (Catosomas clarkii).

Virgin spindeace are typically found in clear, cool, swift streams that have interstream pools, runs, and riffles. They are primarily insectivorous, feeding on a wide range of insects and occasionally plant material and organic debris. Virgin spindeace feed on drifting prey in midwater and at the surface.

AFFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Because habitat for the Virgin spindeace has been altered throughout most of its range in the Virgin River, the major portion of the fish’s remaining population lives within the park. Virgin spindeace are found along the North Fork of the Virgin River, East Fork of the Virgin River, a portion of Shunes Creek, and a very short section of North Creek just inside the park boundary. Along the North Fork, Virgin spindeace occur from the park’s south boundary to the Temple of Sinawava and are suspected to occur at least as far upstream as Odererville Canyon, although this has not been confirmed (Valdez et al 1991). Their distribution along the East Fork is from the western end of Parunuweap Canyon to Parunuweap Falls.

The National Park Service is part of a coalition of federal and state agencies that signed a conservation agreement for the Virgin spindeace in 1995. The conservation agreement was developed to expedite conservation measures needed for the continued existence and recovery of the species.

DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP

Desert bighorn sheep were historically present in and around the park until the 1950s when they were extirpated due to hunting pressure, habitat loss, and disease. Transplanted bighorns were released in Parunuweap Canyon in 1973 and in lower Zion Canyon in 1978. The herd and its use are concentrated around lower Zion and Parunuweap Canyons, in the vicinity of their releases. Their range extends north, from Parunuweap Canyon to just north of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. Main lambing areas are within Parunuweap and Shunes Canyons. Bighorns tend to occupy habitat consisting of open cliffs and immediately adjacent steep, open hillsides with herbaceous vegetation. They escape predators best on steep, cliff terrain, they tend to avoid forested areas and low lying, flat terrain where they are vulnerable to predation.

There are no present threats to the sheep because very few uses are allowed within the sheep’s habitat. No use is allowed in the lambing areas of the park.

THE NATURAL SOUNDSCAPE

An important resource at Zion National Park is the natural soundscape. Sometimes referred to as “natural quiet” and “natural ambient sounds,” the natural soundscape includes not only the quiet but the entire symphony of natural sounds found in the park, including silence, the songs of canyon wrens, dripping water at hanging gardens, echoing off the canyon walls, the call of a raven or pinto jay from a mile away, the rustle of wind in the trees, the buzz of insects, and the roar of river rapids.

In August/September 1995 and in October 1998, the natural ambient sound environment was measured at several locations in the park (HMMH, 1995 and 1998). The results are summarized in table 1, expressed in A-weighted decibels (dBA), a standard unit of measurement for sound tailored to normal human hearing, and the percentage of time when only natural ambient sounds were audible to an attentive observer. Each 10 dBA increase on the decibel scale represents an increase of 10 times the amount of sound energy, which is perceived by humans as a doubling of the loudness. As a point of reference, a conversation between two people would typically measure about 60 dBA, and typical suburban daytime readings would be in the 30-40 dBA range. Sound levels in the 20-30 dBA range would be found late at night inside a single family residence, with all windows closed, no internal noise sources operating (such as
heating or ventilating systems) and no local traffic in the vicinity.

The Lw is the median value of all the natural ambient levels measured, and the Ldn is the natural ambient level exceeded 90% of the time by other natural sounds. Past measurements in the parks have shown that the Lw is a good single number approximation of a park's natural ambient sound conditions. The lower the dBA number, the "quieter" the soundscape.

A single decibel value, however, does not provide much useful information about how audible a noise source might be in a given natural soundscape. This is because sound is composed of a complex pattern of sound energy levels that vary continuously and instantaneously across a spectrum of sound frequencies. The most important factors affecting audibility are the frequency-based sound levels of both the particular noise source and the ambient or "background" sound. Even in the presence of a very "loud" natural ambient sound source, such as a waterfall, a noise source with a much lower single decibel value may be clearly audible because it has higher energy levels than the ambient sound in a specific part of its frequency spectrum. The difference between the energy level of the noise source and the background sound (in this case, the natural ambient sound) in each of the many distinct frequency bands is what determines whether and how much the noise source will be audible. For these reasons, single decibel values provide useful comparisons of average total sound energy, but they do not relate well to audibility. In addition to the data shown in table 8, the park staff also possesses digital recordings and one-third octave band data for several of the sites from which audibility can be assessed.

Based upon the measurements summarized in table 8, the average natural ambient value is 22 dBA for the vast majority of Zion National Park, which indicates that Zion is generally a very quiet place. The vast majority of park lands are classified as having sparse/open vegetation (i.e., bare rock, grasslands, desert scrub, pinyon-juniper) with no influence from the sound of running water. Eight of the 11 sites shown in table 8 were in that vegetation class, and the average natural ambient decibel value for those sites was 22 dBA. Riparian sites generally have higher ambient sound levels, but because they represent less than 5% of the park's land area, they were not used in calculating the average natural ambient value. It should also be noted that the 1995 data was collected under wind conditions normal for the season, whereas the 1998 data was influenced by unusually strong winds. If all the data had been collected under typical wind conditions, it is likely that the average natural ambient decibel value would be even lower.

The opportunity to experience Zion's natural soundscape unimpaired by the sounds of human civilization is an important part of the overall visitor experience, especially as it contributes to the solitude and wilderness experience that is integral to much of the park.

Human sound sources, such as cars, buses, audio devices, generators, aircraft overflights, and peoples' voices, can have greater impacts in very low-amplitude-level natural soundscapes, like Zion, than would the same levels of noise in areas of higher-amplitude-level soundscapes, such as urban environments.
VISITOR USE

For many visitors, a visit to Zion is a stop on a visit to “the Grand Circle,” a region of spectacular scenery and diverse recreational opportunities, including several national parks, national forests, state park areas, and Indian reservations in northern Arizona and southern Utah. Most visitors (66%) spend less than a full day at Zion National Park.

ACCESS TO THE BACKCOUNTRY

Zion encompasses 148,016 acres; however, much of the park is inaccessible to the vast majority of visitors due to the park’s steep topography. The map on page 129 depicts areas within the park that are considered generally inaccessible. These areas are defined as slopes greater than 30 degrees (excluding trail or route corridors that traverse such slopes) and areas that are entirely surrounded by 30 degrees or greater slopes that have no trails or routes that would offer access to these isolated areas.

Approximately 83,336 acres or 56.3% of the park is accessible, even though many of these routes require advanced climbing and/or canyoneering skills. Thus for the average hiker, the areas of inaccessibility are much greater than depicted on the map, which shows a very conservative estimate of inaccessible areas.

RANGE OF VISITOR ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES

Zion’s spectacular scenery attracts people to both Zion Canyon and the Kolob Canyons. Both areas offer a variety of recreational opportunities and activities. The primary visitor activities in both areas include driving scenic roads, stopping at pulloffs, taking photographs, and taking short hikes. A typical visit to Zion includes a few hours spent in Zion Canyon, a stop at the visitor center, and a short hike on one of the trails in Zion Canyon. The 1992 visitor survey found the most common visitor activities at Zion were photography and painting or drawing (88% of total groups), stopping at scenic pullouts (87%), hiking less than two hours (50%), hiking more than two hours (29%), picnicking (28%), tubing or wading in the river (23%), and camping in a developed campground (20%). Ranger-led talks were attended by six percent of the groups responding to the survey and two percent of the responding groups attended a ranger-led walk. Visitor groups often participated in more than one activity.

While the majority of visitors do not participate in backcountry camping, canyoneering, horseback riding, or climbing, some visitors go to Zion specifically to participate in these activities. The park’s natural resources offer hiking experiences ranging from easy nature walks to moderate day hikes to strenuous multiday backpacking.
opportunities, and a variety of climbing and canyoneering opportunities. Horseback riding is allowed on certain trails in the park and a concessionaire provides guided horseback rides on the Saddle Bench trail during the summer. Bicycling is restricted at Zion to the Pa's Trail and paved roads. Other park activities include kayaking, picnicking, and swimming.

No commercially guided activities are permitted in the park. Park personnel provide short guided hikes in the main canyon and offer expert at the visitor center and camp ground through the summer season.

Visitation and backcountry use have been increasing at Zion National Park (see the following section on visitor use). This increase could be affecting the experiences of some visitors, although there is little data about the expectations of Zion visitors that would determine their perception of crowding or their actual experiences. Park staff have received comments indicating that some visitors feel that Zion is too crowded in certain areas and at certain times and that it is too difficult to experience solitude and quiet. The 1994 visitor survey found that 37% of visitors felt crowded in the park. The 1994 visitor study found that although visitors had serious concerns about parking and crowding, these concerns had a minimal impact upon the impressions of their experience. Apparently, some people do not seem to be bothered by the increased visitation.

The way that visitors experience Zion changed dramatically when the shuttle system in Zion Canyon became operational (see below). While the shuttle directly affects the way visitors experience Zion Canyon, it may also cause a redistribution of visitation within the whole park. For example, visitors who wish to access the park in their vehicles or vehicles who do not have the time or inclination to use the shuttle may choose to visit the Kolob Canyon area, the Kolob Terrace Road, or areas along the Zion-Mt Carmel Highway instead of or in addition to Zion Canyon. This could result in more visitation and possibly more crowding in those areas.

South Entrance and Main Zion Canyon Area

Zion Canyon is by far the most visited area of Zion National Park. The 1994 visitor study and the 1992 visitor survey found that the following percentages of Zion visitors went to these locations in Zion Canyon: Zion Canyon Road (76%), Zion Canyon visitor center (64-73%), Temple of Sinawava (56%), Zion Lodge (46-54%), the Riverside Walk (47%), and the West Rim trail (47%). During the peak season, visitors often can not visit some of the main attractions and trails in Zion Canyon because they can not find parking.

Approximately two-thirds of visitors in private vehicles and one-third of the visitors arriving in tour buses access Zion Canyon through the park's south entrance. Once in Zion Canyon, most visitors drive part or all of the road, stop at the visitor center and the lodge, and perhaps take a short hike. The North Fork of the Virgin River is another of Zion Canyon's major visitor attractions. This segment of the river is close enough to Zion to be cool off, swim, wade, or walk along the river. Some kayaking in the Virgin River occurs during spring runoff.

Visitors can stay overnight in Zion Canyon at the Zion Canyon Lodge or camp at one of two frontcountry campgrounds near the south entrance to the park. Some visitors consider an overnight stay in the park to be an integral part of their Zion experience. The lodge has been in operation for more than 80 years, and provides overnight accommodations, food services, and a gift shop. The lodge and the campgrounds are usually full during peak season. Picnicking is available in Zion Canyon at the Grotto.

As noted above, the way visitors experience Zion Canyon changed dramatically when the shuttles started operating. During the peak season, and eventually year-round, visitors park their vehicles at the south entrance to the park and use shuttle buses to travel around the canyon. Lodge guests continue to be able to use their private vehicles to access the lodge. A new transportation center, including a parking area, restrooms, interpretive exhibits, backcountry permit area, and a book sale area, provides visitors with an overview of park themes and help them plan their visit. The current visitor center will become a museum focusing on the park's human history. Several other new facilities support the shuttle system, including the new bus maintenance area in Sammy's Canyon, and several pullouts, trailheads with parking lots, shuttle stops along the Zion Canyon Road, and an emergency service facility.

The Zion Canyon Transportation System Environmental Assessment and "Finding of No Significant Impact" (NPS 1997a) analyzes the impact of the transportation system on the visitor experience. The shuttle's effect on the visitor experience largely depends on how the shuttle system operates and on visitor expectations and values. Park managers believe that the shuttle system has improved the visitor experience, reducing crowding, and improving opportunities for interpretation. It is anticipated that reduced traffic provides a more leisurely and safe visit to Zion Canyon with less noise and traffic. Some visitors may find the less crowded and quieter condition more appealing. For example, visitors stop at the main attractions of the canyon without having to compete for parking places.

On the other hand, some visitors may not be bothered by or may even prefer having many people around. The shuttle system has made the Zion Canyon visitor experience more structured, eliminating the opportunity for unprogrammed sightseeing stops. Visitors are not longer able to experience the freedom of movement associated with the use of a personal vehicle.
Colob Canyons Road Area

This area provides an opportunity for visitors to experience beautiful scenery from their vehicle or on foot, without the crowds typically experienced in Zion Canyon. A 5-mile scenic drive begins behind the small visitor center. Park lots and trailheads along the road provide access to the Middle and South Forks of Taylor Creek, the La Verkin/Colob Arch trail, and the Timber Creek overlook and picnic area. The 1992 visitor survey found that 19% of Zion visitors went to the Colob Canyons area. Visitation to this area tripled between 1984 and 1995 according to park statistics. Visitation may increase in the Colob Canyons area once the Zion Canyon shuttles begin operating. According to the 1992 visitor survey, the most common activities in the area were driving the scenic road (91%), visiting the Colob Canyons visitor center (64%), using the restrooms (61%), getting information (54%), and hiking (28%).

Colob-Terrace Road Area

The Colob-Terrace Road is a county road outside the park and is a link between Washington and Iron Counties. The road provides a scenic drive for visitors who want to get off the beaten path. Because the road has minimal traffic, this area provides a more rustic experience. It also provides access to trailheads serving the Hop Valley, Wildcat Canyon, Connector, Left Fork, and Grapevine trails. It provides opportunities for hiking and canyoneering in these areas. The road also provides access to the Lava Point campground.

Lava Point Area

Lava Point provides opportunities for primitive camping in a smaller more rustic campground than the campgrounds in Zion Canyon. It is used primarily by small groups of tent campers, and is a popular destination for local residents. During the summer, the campground is full every night. A small picnic area is located at Lava Point. The 1992 visitor survey found that 3% of park visitors went to Lava Point.

Recommended Wilderness

Most visitors do not stay overnight in the park and do not enter the Zion backcountry. However, some visitors come to Zion specifically to experience the Zion wilderness, seeking out opportunities to backpack, climb, horseback ride, and explore canyons. With the exceptions of the Narrows, the Left Fork of North Creek, the West Rim, and the Kolob area, and several areas where horses and saddle stock are restricted, visitors can generally experience the Zion backcountry without limits on where they can camp. But as backcountry use at Zion grows, visitors expecting solitude may not always get it in some areas due to the number of other visitors.

SCENIC RESOURCE EXPERIENCES

For many visitors, enjoying the views of Zion’s spectacular scenery without signs of modern development is part of a quality experience. Several park facilities — notably the visitor centers in Zion Canyon and in the Kolob Canyons district, the campgrounds, the roads, Zion Canyon Lodge, radio repeaters, and park housing — affect the visitor’s ability to experience scenic resources.

Besides facilities within the park, developments on private land outside the park have the potential to affect the views from Zion, and therefore the experiences of Zion visitors. Currently, the modern development outside the park that is visible from within the park is limited. Several notable exceptions include the town of Springdale, Highway 9 and developments along the road corridor, and Interstates 15. As population and development around Zion continue to increase, visual intrusions outside the park will likely increase.

ANNUAL AND MONTHLY VISITOR USE

Zion is open all year. The peak-use season runs from April through October, with the pattern of weekly visitor use peaking up and down on an annual basis. In 1997, more than 82.5% of the annual visitation occurred during the peak season. During August, the busiest month, park staff recorded an average of 11,839 recreational visits each day. In contrast, during December, daily visitor use averaged only 1,941 recreational visits.

Non-recreational use is reported as a constant 50 visits per day.

From 1986 through 1993, visitor use at the park, measured as recreational visits, rose each year (figure 1). The increase ranged from 0.17% to 5.76% per year, with the average increase being 4.71%. In 1992, park staff made several modifications to the counting and reporting procedures to make them consistent with accepted NPS standards. In addition to setting nonrecreational use at a fixed figure per day, the persons-per-vehicle multipliers were reduced somewhat. These changes resulted in a dramatic reduction in the amount of nonrecreational visits reported for the park. Park staff also recorded a corresponding reduction in the total number of visits. The changes did not significantly affect the annual amount of recreational use reported, however. Although the number of recreational visits declined from 1993 to 1994, the change in visits from 1993 to 1997 averaged a positive 0.92%.

OVERNIGHT VISITOR USE

Park staff measure overnight visitor use of the park as overnight stays. An overnight stay is considered to be one visitor spending one night within the park for recreational purposes. Table 9 lists overnight stays in the park from 1986 through 1997, table 10 details monthly overnight use for 1997. Overnight stays are counted separately from recreational visits, so they do not directly correspond to recreational visits.

The determination of overnight use is also based on the official NPS counting and reporting procedures for Zion National Park, which include the use of various multipliers to calculate some types of overnight use, such as tent, RV, and backcountry camping and concessioner lodging. The decline in overnight use from 1992 to 1993 was mostly the result of the changes that were made to Zion’s counting and reporting instructions by the NPS Public Use Statistics Program Center. Two more years of decline followed and then, in 1996, an increase in total overnight stays was reported. In 1997 overnight stays again declined.

Compared to the amount of recreational visits (2,445,534 in 1997), it is readily apparent that overnight use of the park (272,492 overnight stays in 1997) accounted for only a small portion of the park’s recreational use.

Overnight stays follow the same annual pattern as recreational visits. Relatively little overnight use occurs in the winter. Increased overnight use begins in March and stays relatively high from April through October.
The frontcountry areas provide developed facilities for overnight use. Zion Lodge has 40 cabins and 81 motel rooms available to the public. It is usually filled to near capacity during the summer. The lodge receives relatively low levels of use during the winter.

The Watchman and South campgrounds, both of which are near the south entrance to the park, offer recreational vehicle and tent camping (228 and 128 sites, respectively). These facilities provide fire grates, picnic tables, water, restrooms, and a sanitary dump station for trailers. Loop D of the Watchman campground also has electrical hookups. Showers are not available in either facility. Watchman campground is open year round, while South campground is open only in the summer. Group camping is available by reservation for groups of 9 to 40 people. There are seven group sites with a total capacity of 200 people. Camping in the frontcountry is limited to designated sites and to a maximum of 14 days at one site.

There is a primitive campground with six sites at Lava Point. Open from May to October, this campground has fire grates, tables, and toilets but no water.

Backpacking and camping in the backcountry is available throughout the park. Camping in the backcountry is limited to 14 days at one site. There are no designated campsites (except in the Narrows, along the La Verkin Creek/Hop Valley trails, and along the West Rim trail) and no facilities are provided.

**VISITOR USE PROFILE**
A scientifically valid and reliable visitor profile is not currently available for Zion. However, some insights into a profile for park’s visitors are available from the 1992 visitor survey conducted during July 12 to 18 (Littlejohn 1993). As noted previously, the small population size, the short time frame during which data were collected, and a lack of a representative sample of the primary visitor season (April through October), limit the conclusions that can be drawn about the general visitor population. Nevertheless, this is the best data available.
The results of the survey were that 67% of the respondents indicated that they were visiting the park as a family group. Group size was usually two (43% of respondents) or four (22% of respondents). About one-third (32%) of respondents were between 36 and 50 years old; 22% were 15 years old or younger. Most of the respondents (69%) were first time visitors to the park.

U.S. visitors came from 44 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. California provided 24% of the visitors, while Utah provided 13%; Nevada, 7%; and Arizona, 5%.

Visitors from foreign countries made up 21% of the total number of visitors responding to the 1992 survey. The highest percentages of foreign visitors were from Germany (38%), the Netherlands (13%), France (12%), and Switzerland (9%).

Regarding length-of-stay, two-thirds of the visitor groups surveyed were day-use visitors and spent less than one day in the park. Of these visitors, 22% were in the park for less than two hours, 35% spent three to four hours in the park, and 43% spent five or more hours. One-third of the visitor groups stayed for one to four days. Less than 1% stayed for five or more days.

Another source of visitor demographics is the 1994 visitor study (Shacklett 1995). Again, the short time frame for data collection (August 26 through August 28, 1994) and the lack of a representative sample limit the applicability of this study's results—the data collected allow inferences to be made about the study period only. However, the 433 surveys that were collected from visitors to both Zion and Kolob Canyons provide some information on who visited the park during the brief survey period.

This survey indicates that 24% of the visitors were with family groups, whereas the rest (76%) were unrelated adults. The average group size was 2.9 persons. Respondents were equally divided between first time visitors and repeat visitors.

The visitors responding to the survey came from west of the Mississippi (48% of the total), east of the Mississippi (25%) and from foreign countries (27%). Respondents indicated that they had or were planning to spend an average of 1.8 days visiting the park. The average length of stay was 3.4 hours for visitors who stopped within the park (57% of survey respondents) and only 42 minutes for those who simply drove through the park (13%).

PROJECTIONS OF POTENTIAL VISITOR USE

Park use is affected by a variety of factors. Forecasted use for Zion was based solely on past use, which was then projected forward over time. This method implies that whatever factors influenced visitation in the past will continue to do so in the future, and that any changes in those factors will follow historic patterns. The extrapolation of a past trend only forecasts a trend pattern, not the causes of the trend.

It is assumed that visitation to Zion National Park, if unmanaged, would increase over the long term, since this seems to be the general trend for most units within the national park system. The Park Service developed a forecast using a simple straight line projection based on two different historic trends. The forecast uses growth factors of 1%, 3%, and 5% to derive the low, medium, and high estimates of recreational visits. These rates of growth are based on historic growth observed prior to and after 1993. From 1986 to 1993 the average increase in recreational visits to the park was approximately 5%. Then after a change in the counting and reporting procedures in 1993, the average rate of growth was about 1%, even with a reported decline in visitation from 1993 to 1994. A middle ground rate for 1986 to 1996 approximates 3%. These growth factor rates provide a range of projected visitation figures that is considered reasonable over the next few years. The further out in time one projects, the greater the range between the high and low projections and the less reliability that can be ascribed to them.

Forecasting in this manner is subject to a high probability of error because the method used is simplistic; relatively little data are available, there is no cause and effect relationship between past and future use, and there is a potential for change in visitor use because of the shuttle system. The addition of another year's visitation figures (additional data) may affect the projections. For these reasons, a range of values was reported and caution is warranted when interpreting and using the results.

Table 11 and figure 2 present the projected visitation figures. At the high rate of growth of 5%, compounded annually, visitor use of the park would double in about 15 years. The medium growth rate of 3% projects an additional 500,000 recreational visits in 5 years and an increase of more than 1,200,000 recreational visits in 10 years. Such high levels of visitation could only be accommodated within the park through significant changes in park management. It is expected that managed visitation would reach a plateau, with some fluctuation, and then level off. In all likelihood, it would become necessary to manage visitor use at a level that is sustainable both in terms of protecting the resource and providing quality visitor experiences. Uncontrolled growth in visitor use would have serious negative impacts on the resources of the park and the quality of the visitor experience.

The human element contributes to the difficulty in projecting future recreational use. That is, visitor use patterns could change in response to the actions presented in the alternatives. For instance, as a response to either carrying capacity limits or crowded conditions during the peak season, some visitors could choose to visit the park during the shoulder seasons rather than during the summer. Alternatively, weekdays could become as popular as weekends during the peak use season. So even though limits on visitor use on any
Figure 2: Actual and Projected Recreational Use, 1986 to 2008

Source: National Park Service, Public Use Statistics Program Center, and Denver Service Center.

**Figure 2: Actual and Projected Recreational Use, 1986 to 2008**

**Actual Recreation Visits**

- **Low Projection 1%**
- **Medium Projection 3%**
- **High Projection 7%

**Year**

- 1986
- 1990
- 1994
- 1998
- 2002
- 2006
- 2010

**Recreation Visits**

- 0
- 500,000
- 1,000,000
- 1,500,000
- 2,000,000
- 2,500,000
- 3,000,000
- 3,500,000
- 4,000,000
- 4,500,000
- 5,000,000

**OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ADJACENT TO THE PARK**

Southwestern Utah has numerous and diverse outdoor recreational opportunities. Various government land agencies manage large recreational areas within a few hours drive of Zion. Varied topography and ecosystems, as well as extraordinary scenic qualities make this region attractive to tourists and outdoor recreation enthusiasts from all over the country. The following section briefly describes major recreational areas of the region.

**National Park Service**

**Capitol Reef National Park**

204 miles from Zion, is named for the reef-like cliffs capped by white sandstone formations resembling the U.S. Capitol. The park protects a portion of the Waterpocket Fold in addition to petroglyphs and the remains of an early Mormon pioneer settlement. Capitol Reef offers opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, camping, ranger-guided activities, scenic drives, and nature study.

**Bryce Canyon National Park**

is located 86 miles from Zion. It includes some of the earth’s most colorful rocks, sculpted by erosion into fantastic forms. Recreational activities include scenic drives, hiking, camping, ranger-guided activities, guided horseback riding tours, and nature study.

**Cedar Breaks National Monument**

is 76 miles northeast of Zion. This monument encompasses a multicolored limestone amphitheater eroded to depths of nearly 2,500 feet. Hiking, camping, and picnicking are popular activities. The road through the monument is not open during the winter.

**Pipe Spring National Monument**

is located 63 miles south of the park on the Kaibab-Paulete Indian Reservation in Arizona. A fort, built in the 1870s by Mormon pioneers, claimed one of the few natural springs in the area. The fort, several ranch buildings, living history demonstrations, and an interpretive trail offer a glimpse of American Indian and pioneer life in the Old West.

**Lake Mead National Recreation Area**

about 120 miles southwest of Zion, encompasses more than 1 million acres of rugged canyon country on the Colorado Plateau. Lake Powell stretches 186 miles behind Glen Canyon Dam and provides a variety of water-recreation activities.

**Glen Canyon National Recreation Area**

is approximately 120 miles east of the park, includes Lake Mead, formed by Hoover Dam, and Lake Mohave, by David Dam, and over 1 million acres of surrounding desert and mountains. Recreational activities include boating, swimming, fishing, hiking, and scenic driving.

**Bureau of Land Management**

**Grand Staircase of the Escalante National Monument**, established in 1996, encompasses 1.7 million acres in southwestern Utah. The majority of the monument is rugged, remote, and undeveloped. Opportunities exist for hiking, camping, backpacking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Guided activities include horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, fishing and hunting trips.

**U.S. Forest Service**

** Dixie National Forest**

covers 1,900,000 acres in southwestern Utah. Recreational opportunities include camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, viewing scenery, horseback riding, studying nature, picnicking, snowmobiling, and participating in water-based activities. A total
of 83,000 acres of the forest are designated wilderness.

State of Utah

Iron Mission State Park, approximately 60 miles north of Zion, provides a glimpse of what life was like for pioneers working an iron mine during the 1850s. The park’s museum houses a collection of wagons, machinery, pioneer tools, and housewares as well as a collection of services such as clothing and tools. The park has facilities for picnicking.

Gunlock State Park, located 57 miles west of Zion, offers opportunities for year-round water sports, boating, and fishing.

Snow Canyon State Park, located 51 miles west of Zion, protects unique and scenic geological features such as volcanic cones, sand dunes, sandstone cliffs, and lava caves. It provides opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, and camping.

Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park, located 36 miles southeast of Zion, is a wide-sweeping expanse of coral-colored sand. The park provides opportunities for picnicking, hiking, off-highway vehicle use, and camping.

Oual Creek Reservoir State Park, about 23 miles west of Zion, also offers year-round opportunities for camping, picnicking, boating, and fishing.

Zion National Park is in eastern Washington County, western Kane County, and eastern Iron County. Washington and Kane Counties are most closely linked economically (via tourism) to Zion National Park because the eastern and southern access points to the main visitor use areas of the park (Zion Canyon and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway) are located in these counties.

Population

Between 1980 and 1990 the United States’ population grew by approximately 9.8%, and from 1990 through 1995, by more than 5.4%. During these same time periods, the population of Utah grew at nearly double the national rates. An important characteristic of the three-county region within which Zion is situated has been its impressive growth. Since 1940 the three counties have experienced even higher population growth rates than either the state or national averages.

Specifically, Washington County, containing the city of St. George and most of Zion National Park, has experienced tremendous growth, expanding by more than 42,000 people (nearly 160%) in just 15 years — 1980 to 1995 (Bureau of Economic Analysis 1997). Most of this growth has centered on the St. George area of the county; the city has expanded by approximately 11,000 people from 1990 to 1994 (St. George Area Chamber of Commerce 1996). The mild climate, community facilities and services, and proximity to several national parks and other public lands offering a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities have all contributed to the area’s growth. The St. George area has been known as a retirement destination, but in recent years the area has attracted many new businesses and job seekers including young families.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Population growth is expected to continue in Washington County through the life of this plan.

ECONOMY

The primary economic sectors in terms of earnings are identified in table 12. Tourism is separated among services (such as lodging and restaurants) and retail trade (e.g., souvenir stores). The jobs provided by the service sector, especially tourism, typically are not high paying. Tourism also tends to be highly seasonal in nature. So while tourism may be an important aspect of the local economy in terms of total earnings and number of jobs, many individuals employed in this economic sector may not be particularly well off.

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS

Zion National Park is one of the many destination parks located in southern Utah and northern Arizona far from the major population centers of the country. However, tens of thousands of domestic and foreign visitors are undaunted by these distances and arrive by various types of motor vehicles every year. Interstate 15, running north to south, is the major highway connecting the southwestern corner of Utah with the rest of the nation. Via this route, Zion National Park is 42 miles from St. George, and St. George is connected with Salt Lake City to the north and Las Vegas, Nevada, to the south. Interstate 15 also intersects Interstate 70 two miles north of St. George, which in turn connects with Denver, Colorado, to the east. Access to the Kolob Canyons area of the park is directly off of Interstate 15. To get to the southern entrance of the park, visitors take Interstate 15 through St. George to Utah Route 9 and drive 42 miles to Springdale. To reach the eastern
The local (Zion Canyon) economy is based on tourism, ranching, fruit production, and the arts. Springdale has a chamber of commerce (Zion Canyon Chamber of Commerce), a medical clinic, and a town office. In addition to lodging and food establishments, there are many shops and galleries offering souvenirs and a variety of crafts and original art. Access to the east entrance of the park is through Kane County. Near this entrance, at Mt. Carmel Junction, three motels, two campgrounds, and a restaurant provide lodging and food services for visitors arriving via Utah Routes 89 and 9. Fewer visitors make use of the east entrance of the park as compared to the south entrance.

Southeast of the park, 17 miles from Mt. Carmel Junction, is Kanab—the largest town in Kane County, with a 1990 population of 3,209. Kanab is the county seat and serves as a recreational and commercial center for Kane County and the Arizona strip. A BLM visitor information center is located here. A range of commercial services, including lodging, automotive services, restaurants, and several local tourist attractions featuring Old West and Hollywood movie themes, is found in Kanab. The town has about two dozen lodging establishments and over twenty restaurants.

Cedar City is about 18 miles north of the Kolob Canyons entrance to the park. This city had a population of 13,443 in 1990. A wide variety of services are available in Cedar City —20 lodging establishments, 7 campgrounds, and close to 40 restaurants serve the public. Cedar City also has a visitor center and automotive and medical services.

### REGIONAL LANDOWNERSHIP AND USE

Zion National Park is surrounded by a mix of federal, state, and privately owned lands. The Bureau of Land Management manages national resource lands that lie along almost 57% of the park’s boundary. State owned school lands are found next to slightly less than 8.5% of Zion’s border. Privately owned lands surround approximately 34.5% of the park. The lands bordering the park are used for a variety of purposes, including grazing and ranching, recreation, private residences, and commercial uses. Table 13 indicates the general land ownership patterns of the three counties in which the park is located. A large area of each of these three counties is publicly owned, with the federal government managing the largest portions of each county. The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (Shoshone Indian Reservation) all manage federal lands within this three-county area. The state of Utah owns and manages numerous school section parcels throughout these counties. In addition, six state parks are located in the area. The amount of area in private ownership ranges from approximately one-third in Iron County to less than one-twentieth in Kane County.

The land within this corner of Utah is used for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, agriculture (i.e., farming, orchards, ranching, livestock grazing), mineral exploration and production (including coal, oil, and natural gas production), outdoor recreation of all types, timber production, watershed protection, wilderness, transportation (including roads, powerlines, and pipelines), wildlife and fish habitat, and urban and commercial uses. While traditional uses such as grazing, mining, and forest products are still important to the area’s economy, other uses that are tied to the land — especially outdoor recreation and tourism — are growing in importance. The relatively mild climate and varied and abundant recreational opportunities have encouraged the development of the region for commercial, residential, tourism and vacation, and retirement purposes.

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<th>State of Utah</th>
<th>Industry and Percent of Total Earnings</th>
<th>Industry and Percent of Total Earnings</th>
<th>Industry and Percent of Total Earnings</th>
<th>Total Earnings (Thousands of $)</th>
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**Source:** Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1995 data.

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<th>Washington County</th>
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*Source: Iron, Kane, and Washington County Governments.*
INTRODUCTION

The National Environmental Policy Act mandates that environmental impact statements disclose the environmental impacts of a proposed federal action. In this case, the proposed federal action is the implementation of the "General Management Plan for Zion National Park.

This part of the document analyzes the potential effects of the four management alternatives on resources, the visitor experience, and the socioeconomic environment of Zion National Park. These effects provide a basis for comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives.

The alternatives in this document provide broad management directions. Because of the general, conceptual nature of their potential consequences, the alternatives can only be analyzed in general terms. Thus, this environmental impact statement should be considered a programmatic analysis. Prior to undertaking specific developments or other actions as a result of the General Management Plan, park managers will determine whether or not they will need to prepare more detailed environmental documents, consistent with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act.

The "Environmental Consequences" part first identifies the impact topics the planning team chose to analyze and discuss in this document, the topics the team chose not to discuss, and the rationale for making these selections. The impact topics were divided into the following categories:
- natural resources
- visitor uses and experiences
- socioeconomic environment

This part next discusses the methodology the planning team used to identify impacts and includes definitions of terms. The alternatives are then analyzed in the order they appear in the "Alternatives, Including the Preferred Alternative." Each impact topic includes a description of the positive and negative effects of the alternative, a discussion of the cumulative effects, if any, and a conclusion statement.

At the end of the discussion for each alternative, there is a brief discussion of unavoidable adverse effects, effects from short-term uses and long-term productivity, and irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. (Table 7, which is included at the end of "Alternatives, Including the Preferred Alternative," compares and summarizes the impacts of each alternative.)

For the analyses, the planning team assumed that the Park Service would take the mitigation measures described in the alternatives, such as avoiding threatened and endangered species habitats. The planning team also assumed that the interim group size and encounter rate limits identified in the alternatives would continue through the life of the plan. If the limits change, a new environmental analysis would be prepared as part of the wilderness management plan.

Note that aside from evaluating the cumulative impacts for certain impact topics, the planning team did not reexamine decisions and impacts the Park Service identified in the Zion Canyon Transportation System Environmental Assessment (NPS 1997a) and the Development Concept Plan/Ecological Assessment, Zion Canyon Headquarters (NPS 1994b).

IMPACT TOPICS CONSIDERED IN THIS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

To focus the environmental impact statement, the planning team selected specific impacts for further analysis and eliminated others from evaluation. A brief rationale for the selection of the topics is given below.

Natural Resource Topics

The planning team selected ten natural resource impact topics for analysis based on the major values of issues the team identified early in the planning process, as well as applicable laws and executive orders (e.g., Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, Executive Order 1984 (Floodplain Management). The impact topics analyzed are as follows:
- air quality
- water quality
- North Fork of the Virgin River floodplain
- riparian/wetland communities
- hanging gardens
- microbiotic crusts
- Virgin spinedace
- Mexican spotted owl
- desert bighorn sheep

All of these resources have the potential to be appreciably affected under the alternatives evaluated. In addition, the team selected these topics because they are of special concern (e.g., Mexican spotted owl, Virgin spinedace), are sensitive to disturbance (e.g., hanging gardens, riparian communities, microbiotic
The implementation regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1502.16 (506.20)) require that this topic be evaluated in environmental impact statements.

**IMPACT TOPICS CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL**

Under NPS policies and Council on Environmental Quality regulations, environmental impact statements must address a number of impact topics. However, the planning team for the General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement, dismissed several irrelevant topics as well as topics that would remain unaffected by the alternatives. The team dismissed other topics because the potential for impacts under all of the alternatives would be negligible. These topics are addressed below.

### Natural Resource Topics

**Regional Air Quality**. Regional air quality and visibility issues would not be affected by actions in these alternatives. Air pollution from sources outside the park would be addressed through Clean Air Act authorities, and through cooperative efforts between the National Park Service and the Western Regional Air Partnership. However, the alternatives do have the potential to result in localized impacts on air quality. Thus, localized air quality impacts were analyzed.

**Floodplains (Other than the North Fork of the Virgin River)**. Backcountry trails and routes in other drainage bottoms of the park would subject visitors to flooding hazards. However, most of these drainages receive little use, compared to the North Fork, and the Park Service is not proposing any new developments other than trails or routes on these floodplains. Also, NPS floodplain guidelines anticipate the use of backcountry sites and trails. Park staff would continue to emphasize public education and awareness of flood hazards to minimize potentially hazardous conditions.

**Water Quantity**. The Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement of 1996 is the primary tool for maintaining and protecting stream flow, spring discharge, and groundwater. As a result of this agreement, no changes in surface or groundwater flows are anticipated that will be sufficient to be detected throughout the park.

### Introduction

**Threatened, Endangered, or Rare Species (Other than Mexican Spotted Owl and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher)**. This document does not include analyses on the environmental effects that the alternatives may have on several federal and state listed threatened and endangered species and rare plant species.

**Desert tortoise**. A small population of federally threatened desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) occurs in one limited area that encompasses both park land and adjacent Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. The Upper Virgin River recovery plan unit for the tortoise does not encompass lands within the park, and there is no critical habitat within the park. It is not suspected that this population was introduced to the site.

Access in the general area of the tortoise population is by one minimally marked BLM trail. Visitor use is limited in the vicinity and occurs mostly in the cooler months when tortoises are underground in dens.

Under all the action alternatives, the tortoise site will be a pristine zone; no new developments will be constructed in this area. Thus, no cumulative effects are expected to occur on tortoises under any of the alternatives presented in this document.

**Bald eagle**. Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), a federally threatened species, winter in the vicinity of the park, especially in the Sevier River Valley east of the park. Although they are commonly observed near the Blue Reservoir to the north, only a few bald eagles are observed each year in the park during the winter and early spring months, and birds occasionally entering the park perch along the North Fork of the Virgin River. Thus, eagle use in the park is sporadic, uncommon, and unpredictable. Large congregations do not occur, and there are no known, regularly used, winter perch sites or known roost sites within the park. Given the very limited and sporadic use by eagles in the park, no effect is expected on bald eagles.

**Peregrine falcon**. The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) was recently delisted as a federally endangered species. The population has been gradually increasing in the park since the 1970s. Much of the park is considered to be good habitat due to the prevalence of cliffs, which the birds use for nesting.

There are 15 known peregrine territories in the park and at least 2 more are suspected based on observation reports. A few of these territories include some of the most heavily used portions of the park in Zion Canyon. The peregrine falcons using these sites have habituated to the large numbers of people and noise generated from high traffic volumes in the canyon.

Park personnel currently monitor six peregrine falcon territories on an active basis during the breeding and nesting season (approximately February through July). These are the falcon territories that encompass popular cliff-climbing sites in the park. Each year on February 1, the cliffs faces that have historically harbored falcon nests are closed to climbing. As the birds select their nesting areas for the year, the cliffs not selected by the birds are reopened. The nesting cliffs remain closed until the young fledge. Closures are established upon need and are dependent upon continued monitoring by park personnel.

It is not expected that the birds would be disturbed by the increased use in the canyon and on other trails far below the cliffs used by these birds. Park managers would continue to close cliff-climbing supporting areas during the critical breeding and nesting periods. A climbing management plan (yet to be written) will address climbing routes in relation to peregrine nesting areas.
Peregrines are, however, known to be sensitive to disturbances such as human presence or aircraft noise above or near their nest site. Most trails and routes in the park follow drainage bottoms and not cliff edges, although two popular trails, Angels Landing and Cable Mountain, do allow access above several cliff faces the falcons have used for nesting. Peregrines have nested several times on Cable Mountain, but no nesting has been reported in recent years on Angels Landing, where peregrines have historically nested. These two potential nest sites would continue to be affected by continued or potentially increased human use in these areas.

To currently use low level aircraft in the park, pilots must obtain special permission from the superintendent. On rare occasions, park managers authorize the use of helicopters, for such activities as suppressing fires, maintaining repeaters, and conducting scientific studies. During the nesting/breeding season, air traffic is directed away from peregrine nesting areas in these circumstances. In a future aircraft management plan, the Park Service will consider the use of reducing conflicts between aircraft and peregrine falcons.

The alternatives are expected to have no effect on the overall peregrine population, given the continuing use of occupied territories in the park, the existence of extensive suitable habitat throughout the park, and the implementation of use restrictions near occupied nest sites, and the Park Service’s proposal that no new trails and routes would provide direct access to cliff faces above known nest sites.

**Utah prairie dog** — The Utah prairie dog (Cynomys parvidens), a federally threatened species, has not been recorded in nor is it believed to occur within the park. However, the southern tip of the prairie dog’s range is close enough to Zion’s northern border that the park may be within the species’ dispersal range. Open grasslands that provide cover plates in the northernmost portion of the park would be the most likely areas the prairie dog would colonize. The Park Service plans no development in these areas. Additionally, most use occurs in the canyon bottoms, not along the plateaus. Thus, no impacts are expected to occur on this species from any of the alternatives under consideration.

**Ferruginous hawk** — The state threatened ferruginous hawk nests at the interface of pinyon-juniper habitats and open sagebrush and grassland habitats in southwestern Utah. This habitat primarily occurs in backcountry areas. With restrictions on backcountry use as well as minimal new development along road corridors in hawk habitat, no impact on ferruginous hawks is expected.

**Yellow-billed cuckoo** — This state threatened species occurs in Springdale and likely in the park. Little suitable or marginally suitable habitat of gallery forests of cottonwood and willow exist in the park and this species has not been seen or heard in those habitats. It is unlikely that this species occurs in the park and no impacts from any of the alternatives is expected.

**Banded gila monster** — This state endangered species occurs in the park. This species was identified during the habitat survey in the Huber Wash area. Zoning of the Huber and Coopits Wash areas as primitive zone would allocate land to the park and prevent disturbance.

**Kunah amberinrail** — This state endangered species is a terrestrial species that is associated with soils wetted by springs and seeps at the base of sandstone cliffs. A recent survey for this species as well as the studies of other small species and hanging gardens have never found this species. No impacts would be expected.

**Rare plant species** — There are no federally listed plant species within Zion National Park.

**Introduction**

However, a number of plant species endemic to the park and/or considered rare in Utah do occur. In the late 1980s, the Park Service conducted a general parkwide survey that located numerous populations throughout the park. In 1998, detailed surveys and mapping of a few populations indicated that many of the rare plant species may be more abundant and have larger distributions than originally found. Two of the species are associated with hanging gardens. The others are scattered throughout the park, with many occurring on slick rock and mesas.

Visitor use near rare plant populations primarily occurs along trails or on bare rock; however, off-trail hiking or walking in slick rock areas can lead to inadvertent trampling of rare plants. Trails can be located and routes identified to avoid impacts to rare plants.

Mitigation measures can also be employed, such as erosion control or placement of barriers, in specific areas where necessary to control potential indirect effects on plants from trail erosion or social trampling.

Populations most vulnerable to visitor disturbance occur in slick rock areas that are fairly accessible and inviting along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. Current impacts on rare plants in this area are minimal, and impacts are expected to remain so under all the action alternatives because this area would be a primitive or private zone. Under all alternatives and in all zones, park staff would survey proposed development sites for rare plants and avoid populations.

Wildlife (General). Continued or increased visitor use of trails, routes, and other visitor facilities in all of the alternatives would disturb visitors. Special noise protection measures would be taken to reduce the disturbance from visitors to wildlife species. The construction of new facilities in previously disturbed areas would be avoided wherever possible to minimize disturbance to wildlife species. Some areas of the park have been designated as National Natural Landmarks; construction in these areas would not be allowed.

**Environmental Consequences**

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Vegetation (General). Under all the alternatives, localized vegetation damage and loss would continue to occur along trails and routes and near visitor facilities and park roads. Because new facilities would be built in previously disturbed sites, additional disturbance to vegetation would be minimized. In general, impacts on vegetation would be minor due to their localized nature and the expectation that local and regional populations would not be affected. To provide more focus to the impact analysis, the specific impact topic of riparian/wetland communities was evaluated based on the limited occurrence of riparian/wetland communities in the park and the proportionately higher visitor use these areas receive compared to surrounding arid lands.

Specialized Plant Communities. Several plant communities are unique in Zion, among them relict communities and rock crevice communities of riparian/wetland communities which occur in areas such as isolated mesa tops inaccessible to domestic grazing, represent undisturbed plant communities. Relict communities would not be subject to impacts from any of the alternatives. The majority of the rock crevice communities are inaccessible. Impacts from continuing or increased visitor use, particularly rock climbing or scrambling, would continue to be minor, due to the limited extent of the impacts relative to the widespread distribution of this community in the park.
species (Virgin spinedace, Mexican spotted owl, and desert bighorn sheep).

Wild and Scenic Rivers (Natural Resources). All actions within the action alternatives for the river segments proposed for wild, scenic, or recreational river designation would be consistent with the recommended river classifications. These designations would not be expected to substantially increase visitor use levels in the park or have substantial, if any, effects on the resources already protected in the park.

Prime and Unique Farmlands. There are no prime and unique farmlands within the park; no effect on these lands would occur.

Energy Requirements and Conservation Potential. None of the alternatives presented in this plan would result in a major change in energy consumption compared to current conditions. As noted in "Park Policies and Practices," the National Park Service would pursue sustainable practices whenever possible in all decisions regarding park operations, facilities management, and development in Zion. Whenever possible, the Park Service would use energy conservation technologies and renewable energy sources.

Natural or Depletable Resource Requirements and Conservation Potential. None of the alternatives would result in the extraction of resources from the park. As noted in "Park Policies and Practices," under all of the alternatives, park staff would apply ecological principles to ensure that the park's natural resources were maintained and not impaired.

Indian Trust Assets. No Indian trust assets were identified. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

Research Values. All of the alternatives would promote the protection and restoration of resources and ecological processes within the park and the related landscape. Establishment of research natural areas would particularly provide for areas with high value for baseline inventory and long-term ecological observation. Consequently, there would be no adverse impacts on research values.

Cultural Resource Topics

During the planning process, the planning team consulted the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. These agencies have concurred that they will consider the effects on cultural resources once the Park Service develops specific undertakings of the approved General Management Plan.

The following actions would take place under all of the alternatives:

- Park staff would comply with the mandates of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, and other laws, regulations, executive orders, and memoranda of agreement that pertain to the protection, preservation, and management of cultural resources.
- As per section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, park staff would continue to consult with the Utah State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, affiliated Indian tribes, and members of the affected public to identify eligible or listed properties on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Consider project-related effects on those properties.
- Develop appropriate measures to avoid effects or treatments that lessen adverse effects on eligible or listed national register properties.
- Where appropriate, new construction would continue to respect the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Environmental Consequences

(NPS 1997) in terms of design, scale, and materials to ensure compatibility with existing historic architectural design and contextual setting.

- In accordance with the provisions in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the National Park Service would continue to consult with affiliated Indian tribes if park personnel or visitors discovered burials containing human remains or funerary objects during any project-related activities. Park staff would cease all construction activities until consultation was complete.
- Park staff would apply the mitigation measures described under "Park Policies and Practices."

The above actions should minimize the potential for impacts on cultural resources. Therefore, the planning team has decided not to further analyze effects on cultural resources in this plan.

Visitor Use and Experience Topics

Rivers. The designation as wild, scenic, or recreational would have no effect on the way visitors experienced these rivers within Zion National Park. All of these rivers are currently being managed in ways that are consistent with their potential designation. As stated in the Wild and Scenic River Evaluation (appendix F), "wild and scenic designation would have little if any effect on uses within Zion National Park. The park is already administered for protecting the outstandingly remarkable resources, and building new dams is extremely unlikely. No uses would be foreclosed or curtailed that are not already occurring." Therefore, the designation of rivers as wild, scenic, or recreational would have a negligible effect on the experience of Zion visitors.

Some of the river segments studied for designation are on BLM land. The Bureau of Land Management currently manages all but three of the segments in ways that are consistent with this designation, and currently allows the use of off-highway vehicles and mountain bikes on the Willis Creek, Kolob Narrows, and Goose Creek segments. These uses would be prohibited if the segments were designated as wild rivers. However, the three areas receive almost no recreational use due to their isolation and difficult accessibility. Therefore designating these segments as wild and closing them to mountain bike and off-highway vehicle use would have a negligible impact on the visitor experiences for these segments.

Night Sky. Zion's night sky is a feature that contributes to the quality of the visitor experience. Current park policy states that the National Park Service will seek to minimize the intrusion of artificial light into the night scene by limiting artificial outdoor lighting to basic safety requirements, shielding the lights when possible, and using appropriate lamp styles.

There are few actions proposed in any of the alternatives that would affect the night sky. The construction of a visitor facility on the east side of the park, either within or outside the park boundaries, would necessitate some night-time lighting. However, the effects of this lighting would be minimized by the mitigation techniques described above.

Socioeconomic Topics

Environmental Justice. Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, requires all federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their
METHODOLOGY

The planning team based this impact analysis and the conclusions in this part largely on the review of existing literature and park studies. Further explanations and caveats of how the team analyzed the impacts for two natural resource impact topics follow below.

It is important to remember that all of the above assume that park managers will apply mitigation measures to minimize or avoid impacts. Increased visitor use generates the need for additional monitoring and the mitigation of impacts. If mitigation measures cited in this part and all the alternatives are not applied, the potential for resource impacts would increase and the magnitude of those impacts would rise.

Facilities and Resources on the North Fork of the Virgin River Floodplain

The focus of this impact assessment is on natural river processes and hazards associated with flooding. The analysis mentions the impacts on other ecological floodplain values, but assesses them further under riparian communities/ wetlands and native fish species sections. Potential hazards for specific existing facilities (i.e., Zion Lodge and associated buildings and the Birch Creek water tank and corral) and any new facilities proposed under the alternatives in relation to the 100-year, 500-year, and probable maximum floodplain were evaluated.
IMPACTS OF THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Air Quality

Analysis. In general, expected increases in visitation under this alternative, coupled with the retention of existing traffic patterns and vehicle use, would result in moderate increases in localized emissions. This potentially could reduce near-range visibility. The Kolob Canyons Road, Kolob-Terrace Road, and Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would likewise experience increased traffic, resulting in minor, short-term vehicle emissions and reduced near-range visibility.

Cumulative Effects. No other actions besides those noted above are known that would have a cumulative negative impact on the park’s air quality. Indeed, the implementation of the Zion Canyon transportation system, combined with actions being taken to minimize pollution sources in the park (e.g., encouraging campers to use gas stoves for cooking), would moderately reduce local emissions and improve near-range visibility.

Conclusion. The no-action alternative would result in minor to moderate, localized, adverse impacts on air quality.

Water Quality

Analysis. Increased use of facilities, parking areas, picnic areas, campsites, and trails would result in minor increases in suspended sediment, turbidity, and fuels in nearby streams. Increased turbidity would occur in localized areas, where visitors were eroding soils near streams, and along stream reaches, where visitor activities (wading, hiking, and fishing) directly disturbed stream bottom sediments. Water pollution would also continue to occur from trash or human wastes deposited in or near streams. With increased use along some streams within the park, particularly along the intensively used reaches of the North Fork of the Virgin River, some moderate localized decreases in water quality would likely occur. However, continued visitor management efforts (e.g., interpretive displays and programs, ranger patrols) would help minimize effects on water quality from increased use.

Cumulative Effects. Water pollution from sources outside of the park would be addressed through cooperative efforts between park staff, adjacent landowners, and the Utah Department of Natural Resources, as outlined under “Park Policies and Practices.” One effort would be National Park Service participation in the Virgin River Watershed Management Plan currently under development. Therefore, cumulative impacts are expected to be negligible.

Conclusion. Increased use under the no-action alternative would likely cause moderate, adverse effects on water quality.

North Fork of the Virgin River Floodplain

Analysis. The Zion Lodge and associated buildings would remain within the probable maximum floodplain under this alternative (and all of the other alternatives) due to a lack of other suitable sites on the narrow canyon bottom. Estimates of flood stage indicate that the existing road grade would protect this development and contain both the 100- and 500-year floods. An exception to this estimate is in the upstream reach adjacent to the main lodge building, where the 500-year flood would overtop the road and inundate a portion of the lawn area in front of the lodge. However, the flood depth would not reach the
channelization and overbank velocities would not likely exceed 2 feet per second. Even with failure of the road grade, neither of these design floods would reach the elevation of the bridge, since the foundation was estimated to be a minimum of three feet above the 100-year flood and one foot above the 500-year flood.

No floodplain mapping or flood stage estimates have been made for the support facilities (housing, water tank, and corrals) on the Birch Creek point. Based on the topography and river channel characteristics in this area, these facilities are likely elevated outside of the 100- and 500-year floodplains, but would be within the probable maximum floodplain.

Visitors would continue to recreate in flood hazard areas along the North Fork of the Virgin River and its tributaries because these areas would be unavoidable within the confines of the canyon walls. On average, dangerous floods would occur every year in slot canyons, and a few times a century in the broader canyon. The existing evacuation plan and warning system should provide adequate time for evacuation and would remain in effect. Park staff would also continue to emphasize public education and awareness of flood hazards and place signs at existing picnic facilities that warn of flash flood hazards and indicate evacuation areas. These measures would minimize potential hazardous conditions. Based on expected increased use level, in the canyon and up through the lower Narrows, there would be a moderate increase, long-term increase in the number of people exposed to flood hazards.

Floodplain functions in Zion Canyon would continue to be impaired for 4.5 miles (of the 9.5 miles from the bottom of the Narrows to the southern park boundary) due to past channelization. The existing river structures would maintain the current channelized floodplain conditions, which increase the river’s tendency to incise and further isolate the adjacent terraces from flood flows and alluvial ground water.

In these armored reaches, the river would continue to have little opportunity to develop the meandering, riffle-pool morphology typical of rivers in low-gradient alluvial valleys. Lack of an active floodplain would continue to negatively affect important hydrologic and ecological functions in the canyon, preventing conditions necessary for riparian vegetation growth, and to a lesser extent, slowing and storing flood flows for later release and increased groundwater levels. Associated river and floodplain resources, including riparian/wetland vegetation, Virgin spindace, flannel mouth sucker, and potential southwestern willow flycatcher habitat, would continue to be degraded. Because of the importance of these resources and their very limited occurrence in the park and region, the perpetuation of channelization would be a moderate to major long-term, adverse impact in the affected reaches.

Cumulative Effects. Many of the existing developments, and virtually all of the approved transportation system developments, would be within the North Fork probable maximum floodplain. These facilities do not affect the natural floodplain values, except for minor effects on groundwater recharge from impervious surfaces. Diversion structures for the Flannigan and Crawford Gulch ditches and the concrete apron at the Temple of Sinawava would remain. These structures probably impede, but do not block, native fish movements. The concrete apron protects a water pipeline crossing at Birch Creek also would remain, continuing to impact river processes and detract from the natural appearance of the river. It may also impede but not block the movement of aquatic species. Overall, all of these structures would continue to have a moderate to major, negative cumulative impact on the river’s morphology and associated values.

Past channelization throughout the North Fork floodplain, along with other past agricultural and grazing impacts, have all contributed to a more narrow, incised, less meandering channel, with minimal overflow capacities. Use and development activities have also altered much of the North Fork’s floodplain and associated natural values south of the park. Based on the extent of the modifications to the river and the associated floodplain values, the no-action alternative would have a moderate, long-term, cumulative impact; the alternative would perpetuate highly modified conditions in the affected reaches within the park, which would contribute to the overall altered character of the North Fork.

Conclusion. There would be no increase in the level of development in the floodplains under the no-action alternative. Zion Lodge and the facilities at Birch Creek would remain within the probable maximum floodplain of the North Fork. There would likely be a minor to moderate increase in the number of people within the floodplain, but flood warnings and public awareness efforts would reduce flood risks to people. If use continued to increase in the canyon, a major to moderate, long-term increase in the number of people exposed to flood hazards would be likely.

Past channelization would continue to impair floodplain functions in Zion Canyon for 4.5 miles. The no-action alternative would have a moderate to major, long-term, adverse effect on the North Fork’s natural river processes and other natural floodplain values within the park.

Riparian/Wetland Communities

Analysis. Existing levees and other control structures have changed and would continue to change the shape of the North Fork’s natural river channel, erosion processes, and flow patterns. As a result, there would continue to be decreased inundation, decreased channel movement, and decreased sediment deposition along approximately 2 miles of the North Fork floodplain. Confining and straightening the channel have also caused it to incise three to five feet, further isolating the floodplain and making it more arid.

Under the no-action alternative, these processes would continue to directly contribute to reduced riparian area or reduced potential for natural riparian development along the river corridor. Riparian vegetation such as cottonwoods and willows depend upon newly deposited floodplain sediments to propagate. As the selenicence of the existing older overstory species proceeded, the lack of propagation would result in the long-term loss of riparian vegetation in channelized reaches of the river near the ledge and campgrounds. Plants better adapted to more stable and arid conditions would become established. The appearance of a riparian system might be partly maintained through plantings, irrigation, and other artificial means, but this arrangement would lack many of the attributes of a natural riparian community.

Recreational use along the North Fork is currently quite high and would likely increase. Trampling and localized loss of riparian vegetation, primarily near the developed areas and head of the canyon would continue. Methods to help mitigate damage might include exclusions from particular areas, barriers, or designated river access/crossing points.

Overall, this loss of riparian habitat along the North Fork from channelization and recreational use would be a moderate to major, long-term, adverse impact, with the greatest impact occurring along the channelized and heavily used sections of the river.

Riparian communities elsewhere in the park are relatively intact. Impacts from continued or increased use in canyons in the less accessible backcountry would be minor. Increased use of popular areas that already had...
high use levels (e.g., Left Fork, La Verkin/ Kolob Arch, Middle Fork of Taylor Creek) would result in greater impacts on riparian understory vegetation in localized areas along the creeks. The mitigation of impacts might include on-site reclamation, visitor education, improvements to trails, or the regulation of use levels through the permitting system.

Cumulative Effects. Riparian communities along the North Fork are also negatively affected by the invasion of exotic-species (e.g., tamarisk, cheatgrass, ripgut broom) and browsing by a high population of male deer that use the canyon. These conditions also contribute to the overall modified environment, which cumulatively result in minor to moderate, long-term, adverse impacts.

Riparian areas within the park represent only a small portion of those found regionally. Large scale loss and modification of riparian habitat in the southwestern United States have occurred from urban and agricultural development, water diversion and impoundment, channelization, livestock grazing, off-road vehicle and other recreational uses, and hydrological changes associated from these and other land uses. The park represents a significant portion of the upper Virgin River watershed. Continued loss of riparian habitat in the park would have a cumulative negative impact on riparian areas within the watershed, which would contribute to the major loss of riparian areas that has already occurred.

Conclusion. As a result of the isolation of the North Fork from the floodplain in portions of Zion Canyon, the riparian system along 4.5 miles of the river would continue to decline and become more and impacts. Impacts on riparian communities within the park would be moderate to major, with the greatest impact occurring along the channelized and heavily used sections of the North Fork. This loss would be relatively small from a regional perspective, but it would contribute to the continuing major loss of riparian areas within the Virgin River watershed. In other riparian areas within the park, impacts such as trampling would be minor with mitigation.

Hanging Gardens

Analysis. Impacts on hanging gardens occur primarily when people run their hands across the area, inadvertently removing vegetation and possibly rubbing Zion snails (a rare, endemic species) off the surface. However, the Zion snail may retreat into rock crevices during certain times of the year, leaving them less susceptible to direct impacts. Hanging gardens within Zion Canyon, including the Narrows, would continue to be most susceptible to potential impacts from visitor use. To prevent human contact with the plants and subsequent damage or loss of vegetation from increased visitor use in the canyon, park managers would continue to use mitigation measures, such as trails and barriers. In particular, these measures would be implemented in one hanging garden along the Riverside Walk that has lost vegetation. Thus, mitigation would limit damage or loss of vegetation, resulting in minor, short-term, adverse impacts on gardens.

Cumulative Effects. Past human impacts on several hanging gardens have been substantial, but have been mitigated with the use of trails and barriers that prevent contact with the gardens. Consequently, although several hanging gardens have been readily accessible, loss of vegetation has been minimal. With continued application of mitigation measures, adverse cumulative impacts on hanging gardens would be minor and short term.

Conclusion. Under the no-action alternative, there would continue to be the potential for development of the meandering, riffle-pool morphology typical of rivers in low-gradient alluvial valleys. Consequently, riverine ecology would continue to be radically altered, and few deep pools would be available to spinedace or other fish. Lack of an active floodplain would negatively affect the propagation of riparian vegetation, which in turn would directly affect the spinedace. That is, the riparian vegetation moderates water temperatures, stabilizes stream banks (which reduces stream siltation), provides hiding cover, and provides biomass input for the aquatic environment that support invertebrates and habitat for insects that are food sources for fish. Thus, the existing river stabilization measures would continue to have a long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impact on spinedace habitat due to diminished pool/riffle habitat and riparian vegetation in portions of the North Fork.

A recent study indicated that, within Zion Canyon, river recreational use is affecting the distribution, abundance, and community structure of native fish. In areas with high levels of recreational use, there was lower community diversity and abundance of species, particularly for younger fish (Sappington 1998). Although this study did not find a difference in food availability in the form of aquatic insects and algae, a separate study indicated that areas of high recreational use show decreased invertebrate biomass (Shakarian and Stanford 1998). Abundance of larval fish in shallow waters along the river margin was lower in high recreational use areas, suggesting that recreational use may reduce the supply of new recruits for adult populations in these areas.

Even moderate flash floods appear to reconfigure stream channel habitats altered by recreationists and redistribute fish throughout the river. However, an important factor in fish community recovery after disturbance is the presence of nearby colonizing populations. With continued high levels of recreational use, primarily in existing popular locations between the campgrounds and southern park boundary and in the Narrows, it is likely that minor additional impacts on the population would occur. The ability of the spinedace to feed in high recreational use areas also would...
be affected due to turbidity. Should high levels of recreational use occupy an increasing greater proportion of the river, a major, long-term impact to the population may occur.

Negligible impacts on other spinaceae populations in the park also are expected under the no-action alternative. Panuremunea Canyon and Shunes Creek would continue to be closed to public use. Depending on the structures used to divert water from Shunes Creek under an existing private water right, spinaceae populations there could be temporarily negatively impacted. The Park Service is assessing the impacts of this action in a separate environmental assessment. Spinaceae extend for only a few potential routes into the park along North Creek, where large increases in public use are not likely because there are no existing trails or routes in that reach.

Cumulative Effects. The implementation of the conservation strategy outlined in the interagency agreement for this species would reduce significant threats to Virgin spinaceae and protect/enhance specific reaches of occupied and unoccupied historic habitat throughout the watershed. Continued prohibition of occupied habitat along the North Fork within the park would support the objectives of the agreement. Because the native fish community of the Virgin River drainage (including spinaceae) occurs in historic levels of abundance only in the park and for a short distance downstream (Gregory and Deacon 1994; Valdez et al. 1990), minimizing further disturbance in this area is important (Williams and Deacon 1998). It is not likely that current high use levels will cause long-term effects on the spinaceae and other native fish populations. However, if recreational use occurs in an increasingly greater proportion of the river and decreases the supply of nearby colonizing fish, there would be a major, long-term, adverse cumulative effect.

The Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement of 1996 would protect against changes in flow and thermal regimes caused by upstream water developments that could affect native fish species. Land use upstream of the park may affect the water chemistry/sediment load in the North and East Forks, although upstream perturbations apparently have not had serious adverse effects on the fish community in the park. Substantial changes in land use or the alteration of the landscape (e.g., widespread logging or mineral extraction) are not anticipated. Park staff would work with other agencies and private landowners to minimize effects on park resources. A long-term water quality monitoring program would also allow for the early detection of potential impacts.

Conclusion. Along the North Fork, the abundance of larval fish and the ability of fish to feed would continue to be negatively affected in high recreational use areas of the river. Pools and riffles, and riparian vegetation would remain at diminished levels due to the presence of river stabilization structures. Recreational use and river channelization would continue to negatively affect the spinaceae population and habitat to a minor to moderate degree. Should high levels of recreational use occupy an increasing greater proportion of the river, a major, long-term impact to the population may occur.

Mexican Spotted Owls

Analysis. Under this alternative, the Park Service would not construct any new facilities (i.e., buildings, roads, parking areas, campgrounds, or picnic areas) within any currently known spotted owl territory located in Zion National Park. Owls may be disturbed by the presence of people or human activities, but little is known about recreational use impacts on Mexican spotted owls. Spotted owls are difficult to study or monitor, particularly so in Zion National Park, because of the rugged topography. Park managers have begun to monitor owl nesting activity and productivity in territories where impacts might be expected.

Very popular trails traverse through three owl territories associated with side canyons off of the main Zion Canyon, below the Temple of Sinawava. The Park Service expects the use of these trails to increase over existing levels. The results of recreational impact monitoring may warrant the Park Service to close portions of the trails where the owls are typically found or place signs requiring that people stay on the trail and out of side canyons frequented by owls during their breeding/nesting period (i.e., March 1 - August 31). Park personnel would enforce these closures. These measures would mitigate potential effects from increased visitation in these areas.

Under the no-action alternative, there would be an increased potential to adversely affect some of the known owl territories in the park backcountry. The planning team expects recreational use in the backcountry to increase. Even low levels of use may affect owl behavior. Two specific owl territories are most vulnerable to increased visitor disturbance. These territories include canyons along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway that are fairly accessible and inviting, although no designated trails or routes access these canyons. The Park Service would continue to monitor owl nesting activity and productivity to assess potential impacts. If necessary, visitor use also would be restricted to mitigate impacts on spotted owls based on increased backcountry use. This alternative is not likely to adversely affect the productivity of known territories.

Cumulative Effects. As part of the Zion Canyon transportation system planning process, the potential effects of implementing a canyon shuttle system and constructing shuttle stops, with the associated increased use of trails through side canyons that support owl territories, were evaluated. The implementa- tion of the trail closures noted above were identified as part of that process to mitigate effects of increased use. No cumulative effects are expected.

Conclusion. This alternative is not likely to adversely affect the productivity of known territories. Park personnel would enforce trail closures and signing for side canyons off of the main Zion Canyon. Should increases in use occur in some backcountry owl territories, the Park Service would develop use restrictions.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

Analysis. Willow flycatcher habitat in Panuremunea Canyon would not likely be adversely affected because there would be no development or recreational use through the canyon. There would also not likely be adverse affects on willow flycatcher habitat in Birch Creek because there would be no new development or recreational use through Birch Creek.

The isolation of the North Fork from its floodplain in portions of Zion Canyon would continue to contribute to reduced riparian area or reduced potential for natural riparian development along the river corridor. Recreational use along the North Fork and other popular backcountry areas (e.g., Left Fork, La Verkin/ Kolob Arch, Middle Fork of Taylor Creek) would likely increase. Trampling and localized riparian vegetation would continue, although measures to mitigate damage would be implemented. This loss of riparian habitat would reduce potential flycatcher habitat, although there are no records that document this species along the North Fork or other backcountry areas.

Continued Park Service surveys for flycatchers would also aid management in avoiding or minimizing impacts to flycatcher habitat.
Cumulative Effects. The southwestern willow flycatcher has been adversely affected by the conversion or destruction of native riparian habitats. The park represents a significant portion of the upper Virgin River watershed. Continued loss of riparian habitat in the park, primarily along the North Fork, would have a negative cumulative impact on riparian areas within the watershed, which would contribute to the reduction of potential flycatcher habitat.

Conclusion. This alternative might affect, but would not likely adversely affect, the southwestern willow flycatcher. Although potential impacts might occur, with implementation of mitigation measures the impacts would not likely adversely affect the species. The loss of riparian areas within the park would be relatively small from a regional perspective but would contribute to the major loss of riparian areas and potential flycatcher habitat within the Virgin River watershed.

Desert Bighorn Sheep

Analysis. The Park Service would continue to prohibit public recreational use of Parunuweap Canyon and Shunes Creek, which encompasses nearly one third of the sheep’s range in the park. This would protect the sheep’s range and lambing areas year-round, especially in the fall when sheep use the East Fork as a water source. The increased use and proliferation of informal pullouts/social trails along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway could inadvertently disrupt sheep crossings. However, sheep would likely habituate to this human activity, and therefore only minor impacts would be expected.

Sheep would also be vulnerable to increased visitor use and exploration of side canyons off this highway, particularly if use increased substantially south of the road in Gifford Canyon and/or Crawford Wash (both of which are frequented by sheep). Increased use could occur here because these areas are fairly accessible and no use limits would be in effect. Depending on the levels and locations of visitor use, the sheep could potentially be displaced from a portion of their range. Resulting in minor to moderate impacts. Should sheep be displaced from key portions of their range, this would be a major impact.

Cumulative Effects. There would be no cumulative impacts on this species under this alternative. The sheep may potentially be affected if air tours occur over their range in the park. The Park Service would prepare an air tour management plan to address use and potential impacts on sensitive wildlife such as sheep.

Conclusion. Impacts on desert bighorn sheep would be minor to moderate due to the potential for unlimited visitor use in portions of the range the sheep frequently use for foraging. Displacement of sheep from key portions of their range would be a major impact.

VISITOR EXPERIENCES AND USES

Natural Sounds

Analysis. With increased use levels, the Kolob Canyons Road, Kolob-Terrace Road, and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would likely experience increased vehicular traffic, resulting in moderate increases in noise. However, the natural soundscape in these areas is already impacted due to existing traffic. In the backcountry, higher use levels also would tend to result in more noise (talking, shouting) masking natural sounds. Even with mitigation measures, the opportunity to experience the natural soundscape would decrease in popular areas and trails.

Cumulative Effects. The implementation of the Zion Canyon transportation system would moderately reduce mechanical noises from vehicular traffic. This action, in combination with the reduction of some other noise sources in the canyon, would result in a moderate, long-term, positive effect. On the other hand, if aircraft overflights increased over the park, the noise of the aircraft in combination with the noise from increased vehicle use on the three roads and use of the backcountry would have a moderate, long-term, negative effect.

Conclusion. Overall, there would be - minor to moderate increase in noise impacts in the park from increased use and the retention of existing visitor pattern and vehicle use. Mitigation would reduce noise from some noise sources, particularly in Zion Canyon, but there likely would be a minor to moderate, long-term, increase in noise, which would mask natural sounds.

Range of Visitor Experiences and Activities

Analysis. Under the no-action alternative, current conditions and management directions would remain the same and visitor numbers would most likely increase over time. In general, crowding and noise associated with increased visitation would increase, and opportunities for visitors to experience solitude, natural soundscapes, and the feeling of being immersed in a remote wildland would diminish in areas that were not closely managed. In several areas of the park, managers would take action to protect resources and key visitor experiences, which would help mitigate the decline in opportunities to experience solitude and natural soundscapes. But since there would be no proactive limits on use, the quality and range of visitor experiences available would diminish, particularly during the peak season and at popular locations. This would have a moderate to major, adverse impact on visitors seeking those types of experiences. An unknown number of people seeking certain experiences may be displaced to other less crowded areas.

In those areas with visitor use limits, the visitors who obtained permits would have a positive experience enjoying the resources and solitude. Visitors who could not obtain permits at their preferred time would be negatively affected by the restrictions.

Those visitors wishing to mountain bike, participate in commercially guided climbing or backpacking, or ride their horses in certain areas would need to go to other nearby recreation areas for these activities. The no-action alternative thus would have a moderate, negative impact on those who valued those activities. Visitors who valued being able to experience Zion’s trails without sharing them with bicyclists, horseback riders, and guided groups, would have a moderate, positive impact from this alternative.
such as the Temple of Sinawava and Weeping Rock. However, the shuttle system would manage the amount of visitor use and distribution within Zion Canyon depending upon the need to protect resources and provide quality visitor experiences. The extent of positive and negative impacts on the visitor experience would depend on how the Park Service managed the transportation system (for example, the frequency of buses); these impacts can not be addressed at this time.

Recommended Wilderness — The Park Service would continue to manage the areas recommended for wilderness as wilderness. As backcountry use continued to increase, backcountry users would have more encounters with other visitors. Larger groups also may go into the recommended wilderness, particularly on trails in popular areas where visitor numbers are not being managed. As a result, visitors would find it more difficult to experience solitude and quiet, particularly during the peak season. Some visitors may experience a minor to moderate, negative impact if group sizes or encounter rates exceeded their wilderness experience expectations. Visitors also could begin to experience park resources in a less pristine state. For example, visitors might see eroded trails, damaged vegetation, more social trails, or increased litter. While actions would continue to be taken to limit visitor impacts on resources and maintain wilderness values, these actions would be reactive and occur on a case-by-case basis. Overall, with increased use, there would likely be a gradual decrease in opportunities to experience solitude, natural soundscapes, and pristine park resources in popular areas (e.g., La Verkin Creek, the West Rim trail), which would have a moderate, negative impact on those visitors who expected or desired those experiences. An unknown number of people may be displaced to other less crowded areas.

Visitors would continue to be able to use the recommended wilderness in a relatively unrestricted fashion, although they would still need permits for overnight use and face the same restrictions on day use in the Left Fork of North Creek and the Narrows and the use of horses.

Visitors would continue to be able to choose where to hike, climb, or camp in most of the recommended wilderness. For some visitors, unrestricted access is a defining characteristic of a wilderness experience. This alternative would continue to have a moderate, positive impact on those visitors who valued personal choice, unrestricted access, and personal convenience.

Research Natural Areas — The Park Service would take no actions that would affect visitor use in the existing research natural areas. The difficulty in accessing most of these areas would likely prevent the use of these areas from increasing appreciably.

The Park Service would continue to manage Parunweap Canyon as a proposed research natural area and keep it closed to recreational use. Thus, the no-action alternative would continue to have a negative impact on those visitors who sought to enter this area and experience its resources. For the majority of the park’s visitors, the closure would have no effect on their experience because they are not familiar with Parunweap.

Scenic Views — Most of the park’s views would continue to appear natural to most visitors. Visual intrusions would likely continue to increase as development outside the park increased, particularly in the Springdale area. While park staff would continue to work with neighboring landowners to reduce the impacts of development, in several areas, the opportunities for visitors to look out from the park and see a natural landscape with no modern intrusions on the visual scene would likely gradually decrease over time. This would have a minor to moderate, adverse impact on the experiences of park visitors.

Cumulative Effects. Under the no-action alternative, increased use levels would likely occur in frontcountry areas, including the Kolob Canyons Road, Kolob-Terrace Road, and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. The operation of the Zion Canyon shuttles also may result in more visitors going to these areas rather than the main canyon. As overall park visitation increases, visitors may experience more crowding and noise and observe more resource impacts at the facilities and trails in these areas. The changes would occur slowly, but would eventually have a moderate, negative cumulative impact on those visitors wishing to experience solitude, quiet, or a “rustic” park experience.

Conclusion. Under the no-action alternative, the quality and range of visitor experiences would gradually decrease in popular areas if visitation increased and the Park Service took no management actions. Although most visitors would likely continue to have what they consider to be a “good” park experience, opportunities for experiencing solitude and quiet would continue to diminish in areas that park personnel were not closely managing. Crowding and traffic congestion would likely increase in frontcountry areas other than the main Zion Canyon. Some people might be displaced to otherwise crowded areas. On the other hand, visitors would continue to have unrestricted access to many park resources. Overall, if use levels continued to increase, the no-action alternative would likely have a minor to moderate, negative impact on visitors’ experiences in Zion.

Visitor Experiences at Other Recreational Areas Near the Park

Analysis. As visitation increased in the park and opportunities to experience quiet and solitude decreased, visitors desiring quiet and solitude might choose to go to other public land areas. This would have a minor negative impact on visitors’ experiences at other nearby attractions.

Cumulative Effects. Relatively few people would likely be displaced to other state and federal recreational lands and facilities as a result of the actions (or nonactions) of this alternative. More people may be displaced with the operation of the shuttle system — people may not have the time to take the shuttle or they may not want to leave their personal vehicles. Some of these people may choose not to come to Zion or decide to cut their trips short, but they still would be visiting these other recreational areas as part of their “Grand Circle” vacations. Thus, the no-action alternative would have a negligible cumulative effect on visitor experiences in other recreational areas.

Conclusion. If visitation continued to increase and the Park Service took no other management actions, some people might be displaced from Zion to other nearby recreational areas. This would likely have a negligible to minor, negative effect on the experiences provided at these areas.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Analysis. Since the no-action alternative would mean that current management directions and conditions would remain essentially the same, little change in the short- or long-term socioeconomic conditions related to the park’s impact on the local region would likely occur. The park would continue to be a part of the local socioeconomic environment, and the National Park Service’s expenditures for goods, services, and staff would continue to benefit the area. The park would still attract visitors, and their spending would continue to contribute to the regional economy.

With continued increase in use levels, some business activity in the local area may increase, resulting in some minor to moderate,
positive, benefits for some firms and/or individuals. These benefits may be long term as well as short term, depending upon whether or not the potential increases in business activity are sustainable.

Increased levels of visitors to the park and their concurrent demands for goods and services has caused the private sector outside the park to respond with increased levels of development and economic activity. In particular, the gateway community of Springdale would likely continue to experience further development and more frequent traffic congestion, with associated increased demands upon local infrastructure and public services (e.g., roads, water and sewer, police and fire protection, emergency medical services). Other gateway communities would experience similar impacts.

Cumulative Effects. Zion National Park has been a protected area since 1909. As a result of increased visitation to the park, business and residential development have increased. This growth trend has had a moderate to major, positive impact on the local/regional economy. For example, in Springdale, a theater/shopping complex and new motels were built in the 1990s, which have provided long-term employment opportunities for local residents. The planning team expected the positive effects of the growth trend on the local and regional economy to continue, but does not expect this alternative to change the ongoing trend. The implementation of the Zion Canyon shuttle system would result in additional NPS expenditures and would have a positive, long-term benefit on the local and regional economy. Overall, the no-action alternative would likely have a long-term, negligible to minor, positive cumulative effect on the local and regional economy.

Conclusion. The park would continue to contribute to the local economy in the short and long term. Some individuals and/or firms may be positively affected, depending upon individual circumstances. However, the no-action alternative would result in a negligible, positive change to the park’s overall contribution to the local/regional socioeconomic environment.

CONFLICTS WITH LAND USE PLANS

Analysis. Zion National Park is within the boundaries of Iron, Washington, and Kane Counties. All three counties have a general plan as required by enabling legislation passed by the Utah state legislature and reflected in section 17-27-301 of the Utah code. Portions of the Iron County general plan relating to national park areas focus on Cedar Breaks National Monument, with Zion being mentioned primarily for its impacts related to tourism and recreational opportunities.

The portions of the Washington County and Kane County General Plans relating to federal government coordination emphasizes the mandates of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and do not recognize the separate mandates applicable to the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service. For example, the Washington County Plan provides that this plan is to be used by federal land managing agencies in developing land use plans required by section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and 43 CFR, subpart 1601. Similarly, the Kane County General Plan recognizes “that federal law mandates multiple use of federally managed land..." and cites the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 U.S.C. as the guiding legislation. In both cases, these provisions apply only to BLM and do not apply to either the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service, each having its own organic acts and policies for land use planning (see also “Clarifications of Commonly Raised Public Concerns,” concern 14).

The Washington County General Plan’s recommendation that park land within Washington County not be managed as wilderness conflicts with NPS policy. According to NPS Management Policies, land that has been recommended to Congress as recommended wilderness must be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

All three plans emphasize the need for coordination and communication with federal land managing agencies. Many of the concerns that have surfaced have been because of inadequate communication and coordination.

Cumulative Effects. There would be no cumulative effects.

Conclusion. The 1978 wilderness recommendation identified in the General Management Plan would be in conflict with the Washington County General Plan.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

No major adverse natural resource impacts are expected.

If the National Park Service took no additional visitor management actions, and use levels continued to increase, the quality of the visitor experience would likely diminish in some popular frontcountry areas and in day use areas in the recommended wilderness.

Increased crowding and congestion and fewer opportunities for solitude and quiet in areas like the side canyons off the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would be unavoidable adverse effects of this alternative.

RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Maintaining channeline4 sections of the North Fork of the Virgin River would result in the continued long-term loss of productivity of the biological resources associated with the river and its floodplain.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRREVOCABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES FOR THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE

There would be no irreversible or irrevocable commitments of resources under the no-action alternative.
IMPACTS OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Air Quality

Analysis. Similar to the no-action alternative, increased visitation and associated increased vehicle use would create moderate increases in localized emissions and the reduction in near-range visibility. However, park personnel may need to restrict the number of vehicles along the Kolob Canyons Road in the future, to fulfill zone prescriptions. This action would reduce vehicle emissions and improve near-range visibility to a minor degree, as compared to the no-action alternative.

There would be some short-term, localized, minor impacts on air quality resulting from particulates and machinery fumes generated during the construction, removal, and improvement of facilities. Park personnel would apply water or other palliatives to control dust, and machinery would have to meet emission standards.

Cumulative Effects. No other actions are known that would have a cumulative negative impact on the park’s air quality. The implementation of the voluntary Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway shuttle, combined with the Zion Canyon transportation system and actions taken to minimize pollution sources in the park (e.g., encouraging campers to use gas stoves for cooking), would moderately reduce local emissions and improve near-range visibility.

Conclusion. Parkwide, little change would be likely in the park’s air quality based on the preferred alternative. There would be a moderate increase in vehicle emissions and decrease in near-range visibility along roads.

However, if vehicle use along the Kolob Canyons Road were restricted, there would be a minor localized reduction in vehicle emissions and improvement in near-range visibility. Construction activities also would result in a minor, short-term decrease in local air quality.

Water Quality

Analysis. The construction or improvement of parking areas/trailheads, picnic areas, campsites, trails, and the expansion of the Kolob Canyons Visitor Center could result in minor increases in suspended sediment, turbidity, and petroleum residues in nearby streams. Construction impacts would be temporary and mitigated by placing silt fencing, retaining and replacing topsoil, revegetating areas, selectively scheduling project work, or applying other site-specific measures that would reduce runoff from construction sites. Increased turbidity would occur in facilities areas where visitors eroded soils along stream banks and along reaches where visitor activities (e.g., wading, hiking, fishing) directly disturbed bottom sediments. Water pollution would also continue to occur from trash or human wastes deposited in or near streams. With increased use along some streams within the park, particularly along the intensively used reaches of the North Fork of the Virgin River, some localized decreases in water quality would likely occur. However, increased use would likely lead to only minor adverse effects on water quality, due to increased visitor management efforts in this area, such as designating water access points, regulating use levels, and timing use, as well as applying other mitigation measures (e.g., increased visitor education, improved disposal of backcountry human wastes, placement of sanitation facilities, and the possible revegetation of portions of the area). The actions would be minor, localized, and short-term increases in turbidity and sedimentation would occur during construction, but these impacts could be mitigated through accepted construction practices.

Conclusion. Minor impacts on water quality, such as increased turbidity, sedimentation, and bacterial contamination, would likely occur in localized areas with increased use. Minor short-term increases in turbidity and sedimentation would occur during construction, but these impacts could be mitigated through accepted construction practices. Moderate short-term increases in turbidity would occur during river manipulation activities. Occasional short-term increases in turbidity from river restoration measures may occur for several years.

The North Fork of the Virgin River Floodplain

Analysis. Hazards related to flooding would be similar to those of the no-action alternative, except that new picnic areas could be added in the canyon, most likely outside of the 100- and 500-year floodplains, but not outside of the probable maximum floodplains. For the existing evasive plan and warning system should provide adequate time for evacuation.

Park staff would also continue to emphasize public education and awareness of flood hazards and would add signs to the new and existing picnic facilities to warn of flash flood hazards and evacuation areas. These measures would minimize potential hazardous conditions. Assuming that user visitation continued to increase in the canyon, there would be a minor, long-term increase in the number of people exposed to flood hazards.

Maintaining the Zion Lodge and Birch Creek developments would have minimal effect on natural floodplain values.

River restoration actions could include removing the levee and riverbank protection structures along portions of the North Fork or allowing the structures to deteriorate. These actions would eventually subject the existing infrastructure in the fluvially active zone to greater risks. The road would become the new limit to lateral migration of the river. From time to time, the river would approach and threaten the road and riverside trails, which would periodically require the armoring of the road and trails with natural materials to preserve riparian function and aesthetic values. Park personnel would need to relocate some water and sewer lines. At some point, the river also would threaten the footbridges for the Grotto and Emerald Pools trails, and park managers would need to evaluate alternative means of access to these trails.

The restoration of the natural river morpho-
ymology along portions of the river would allow flood waters to overflow onto the adjacent floodplain. Overbank flows serve important hydrologic and ecological functions, such as providing conditions necessary for riparian vegetation growth, slowing and storing flood flows for later release, and raising ground-water levels. The river would have the opportunity to develop the meandering, riffle-pool morphology typical of rivers in low-gradient alluvial valleys. Associated river and flood-
plain resources including riparian/wetland vegetation, floodplain forests, Virgin spinedace and other native fishes, and potentially southwestern willow flycatcher habitat would also benefit. Because of the importance of these resources and their very limited occurrence in the park, river restoration would be a major, long-term, beneficial effect.

Cumulative Effects. Many of the existing facilities and virtually all of the approved transportation system developments would be within the probable maximum floodplain. These facilities do not affect the natural floodplain values, except for minor effects on groundwater recharge from impervious surfaces. Past channelization throughout the North Fork floodplain, along with other past agricultural and grazing impacts, have all contributed to a more narrow, incised, less meandering channel, with minimal overflow capacities. Use and development activities south of the park also have altered much of the North Fork’s floodplain and associated natural values. Because of past modifications to the river, the measures to restore floodplain processes and associated natural values to portions of the river would create a moderate, long-term, beneficial cumulative effect to the North Fork.

Conclusion. There would be a minor increase in the level of development (addition of picnic sites) in the probable maximum floodplain and a minor increase in the number of people within the floodplains. The flood warning system and public awareness efforts would reduce flood risks to people. If use continued to increase in the canyon, there would be a minor, long-term increase in the number of people exposed to flood hazards.

The preferred alternative would have a moderate to major, long-term, beneficial effect on natural river processes and other natural floodplain values within the park and along the lower North Fork.

The planning team has prepared a statement of findings for the preferred alternative, which is included in appendix H. This statement is in accordance with National Park Service guidelines for compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management). The NPS guidelines call for preserving floodplain values and minimizing potentially hazardous conditions associated with flooding.

Riparian/Wetland Communities

Analysis. The restoration of dynamic floodplain processes along portions of the North Fork in Zion Canyon would reduce overbank flows that deposit sediments and provide disturbance necessary for the reproduction of cottonwoods and other riparian vegetation. These flows would support the establishment of vegetation that could replace the current aging overstory. Over the long-term, multi-aged and more structurally diverse tree stands would be present, which would be a moderate, long-term, beneficial effect for plant and animal riparian communities along the North Fork.

Recreational use along the North Fork is currently quite high and would likely increase. Trampling and localized loss of riparian vegetation would occur, primarily near the developed areas and head of the canyon and the Narrows. With increased visitor management efforts developed as part of the river management plan (such as increasing visitor education, designating water access points, regulating use levels, and timing use) and the possible revegetation of portions of the banks and floodplain in the North Fork, only minor effects on riparian vegetation would likely occur from increased use.

Riparian communities elsewhere in the park are relatively intact. Impacts on riparian understory vegetation in localized areas along the creeks from continued or increased use in canyons in the backcountry would be negligible to minor. Limiting use through the permitting system and taking other management actions (e.g., developing standards to further protect resources) to maintain zone conditions would minimize the potential for greater, widespread impacts. Other mitigation would include on-site reclamation, visitor education, and improvements to trails.

Cumulative Effects. The management plan for the North Fork would address the specific strategies for protecting and restoring the river and its associated floodplain. These strategies include actions to address the invasion of exotic species and browsing by a large population of mule deer (which could inhibit regeneration of riparian vegetation).

In the southeastern United States, large-scale loss and modification of riparian habitat have occurred due to urban and agricultural development, water diversion and impoundment, channelization, livestock grazing, off-road vehicle and other recreational uses, and hydrological changes resulting from these and other land uses. The park represents a significant portion of the upper riparian zone along the United States (National Park Service, 1988 (Floodplain Management)). The protection and improvement of riparian habitat in the park would have a positive, long-term, moderate cumulative impact on riparian areas within the watershed.

Conclusion. Overall impacts on riparian communities within the park from recreational use would be negligible to minor. The restoration of riparian habitat along the North Fork would be a moderate, long-term, beneficial impact. Incrementally increasing riparian acreage in the park also would be a moderate beneficial effect on riparian areas within the watershed.

Hanging Gardens

Analysis. As in the no-action alternative, some hanging gardens within Zion Canyon, such as along the Riverside Walk, would continue to be susceptible to potential impacts from visitation. Impacts on hanging gardens occur primarily when people use their hands across the area, inadvertently removing vegetation. Visitors also may rub Zion snails off the surface of the hanging gardens during certain times of the year. With mitigation (e.g., barriers, placement of trails, visitor education), damage or loss of vegetation would be limited, resulting in minor, short-term, adverse impacts on the gardens.

In the preferred alternative, hanging gardens in five locations would be in research natural area zones. This design would afford additional protection to the gardens in that very few people would have access to them.

Cumulative Effects. Past human impacts on several hanging gardens have been substantial, but have been mitigated with the use of trails and barriers that prevent contact with the gardens. Consequently, although several hanging gardens have been readily accessible, loss of vegetation has been minor. With continued use of mitigation measures, cumulative adverse impacts on hanging gardens would be minor and short-term.

Conclusion. The preferred alternative would have a long-term, positive effect by zoning five locations that contain hanging gardens as research natural areas. There would continue to be the potential for visitors to adversely affect other hanging gardens, but with mitigation measures, damage or loss of vegetation would be limited to minor, short-term, adverse impacts.

Microbiotic Crusts

Analysis. Continued or increased use and the construction of picnic areas and trails in microbiotic crusts would result in the long-term loss of soils or disturbance from erosion and soil compaction. Development would remove microbiotic crusts where they
occurred, and once compacted and eroded, microbiotic crusts would be damaged and difficult to reestablish. In general, trails provide sufficient direction, and people tend to remain on them, as long as the trails adequately support the number of people using them at one time (i.e., by people wanting to walk side by side, pass slower hikers, or pass oncoming hikers) and direct people to popular viewing areas. Even with adequate trails, a small percentage of people would walk off of them resulting in damage to soils.

- Soil disturbances and extensive loss of microbiotic crusts from development and people walking on bare rock would be greatest in the areas that are zoned frontcountry high development, front country low development, transition, and administrative. These zones allow higher levels of use and more concentrated development than pristina, primitive, or research natural area zones. To minimize impacts, the Park Service would locate new developments in previously disturbed areas or away from microbiotic crusts where possible. Monitoring and mitigation measures, such as erosion controls, placement of barriers, signage, or rehabilitation efforts, would help to minimize disturbance to crusts from trail erosion or social trailing in specific areas. However, even with mitigation measures, moderate to major, localized disturbance to soils would still occur in areas with developments and high use levels — primarily along the east entrance and Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, Kolob-Terrace Road, Kolob Canyons Road, and lower Zion Canyon. But most park lands likely supporting microbiotic soils would not be subject to disturbance. Because of the limited and localized extent of new impacts, this alternative would have a minor, adverse cumulative impact.

- Conclusion. Localized, moderate to major, long-term impacts on microbiotic crusts would be likely in areas of extensive development and use. Additional areas would be impacted from new development in some frontcountry areas, primarily along the east entrance and Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, Kolob-Terrace Road, Kolob Canyons Road, and lower Zion Canyon. But most park lands likely supporting microbiotic soils would not be subject to disturbance. From a parkwide perspective, impacts on microbiotic crusts would be minor, based on the limited and localized extent of the impacts in relation to the widespread occurrence of these crusts in the park as a whole.

Virgin Spinedace

Analysis. Restoring portions of the North Fork below the Temple of Sinawava would allow the river to develop a meandering, riffle-pool morphology. These conditions would be typical of natural river conditions with which Virgin spinedace and other native fishes have evolved. More and deeper pools would be available to fishes. Shoreline habitat improvement could create new larval nursery areas. Overbank flows would contribute to conditions necessary for riparian vegetation growth, in turn providing nutrients, cover, and water temperature regulation, which benefit the aquatic environment for fishes. There would be a minor to moderate, long-term improvement to habitat along portions of the North Fork.

River restoration measures that involve physical manipulation or disturbance to the riverbanks or bed would result in short-term increases in turbidity and sedimentation. Spinedace do survive periods of increased turbidity that may last several days to weeks. However, being sight feeders, they would likely be negatively affected by extended periods of high turbidity. The sedimentation of spawning beds could also be a problem. Time limitations on instream disturbance activity and avoidance of spawning periods would keep restoration impacts at negligible levels. Erosion of exposed banks during restoration would likely occur during flood events when sediment loads and turbidity levels were naturally high. The revegetation of banks would mitigate any long-term erosion.

A recent study indicated that river recreational use was disturbing fish communities within Zion Canyon (Sappington 1998). The study showed that there was less community diversity and abundance of species, particularly for younger fish, within areas with high levels of recreational use. A separate study showed that areas of high recreational use had increased invertebrate biomass (Stanford and Shakrajan 1998). The ability of the spinedace to feed would continue to be affected by turbidity in high recreational use areas within the transition zone.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

Even moderate flash floods appear to reconfigure stream channel habitats altered by recreationists and redistribute fish throughout the river. However, an important factor in community recovery after disturbance is the presence of nearby colonizing populations. An increase in the extent of recreational disturbance would potentially have major long-term effects on the population. Increased visitor management efforts developed as part of the river management plan (such as increasing visitor education, designating water access points, regulating use levels and timing use, and restricting high use areas to present locations) would minimize the potential for new impacts and potentially enhance the population within disturbed areas. For example, restricting recreational use during spring spawning season could enhance reproductive success. Adapting downstream to shallow water nursery areas could enhance survival of larval fish. Consequently, increased visitor management would likely be a problem in minor to moderate, long-term benefits to the North Fork spinedace population, depending on the extent and type of management measures implemented.

Negligible to minor impacts on spinedace populations are likely to occur elsewhere in the park. Along North Creek, potential indirect effects from trampling riparian vegetation or increasing turbidity during creek crossings would be negligible because of the low levels of use allowed in the pristine zone. No recreational use would be likely in Parumacoom and Shunes Creek due to their designation as research natural areas, although negligible to minor impacts from research and educational use would occur. Depending on the structures that divert water from Shunes Creek under an existing private water right, spinedace populations could be temporarily negatively impacted. The Park Service is assessing impacts of this action in a separate environmental assessment.

Cumulative Effects. The implementation of the Virgin spinedace interagency conservation agreement would reduce significant threats to the species and protect/enhance specific reaches of occupied and unoccupied historic habitat throughout the watershed. The improvement of occupied habitat along the North Fork within the park would support the
objectives of the agreement. Because the native fish community of the Virgin River drainage (including spinedace) occurs in historic levels of abundance only in the park and a short distance downstream (Gregory and Deacon 1994, Valdez et al. 1990), it is important to minimize further disturbance in this area (Williams and Deacon 1998). Consequently, minimizing impacts through greater management of recreational use, as well as improving habitats through river restoration (as part of the river management plan), would provide increased protection to the North Fork population. This would be a major, long-term, beneficial effect.

The Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement of 1996 protects native fish species against changes in flow and thermal regimes caused by upstream water developments. Land use upstream of the park also may affect the water chemistry/sediment load in the North and East Forks. However, upstream perturbations apparently have not had serious adverse effects on the fish community in the park, and substantial changes in land uses or alteration of the landscape (e.g., widespread logging or mineral extraction) are not imminent. Park staff would work with other agencies and private landowners to minimize effects on park resources. A long-term water quality monitoring program also would allow for the early detection of potential impacts.

Conclusion. Although turbidity would continue to affect spinedace feeding in high recreational use areas along the North Fork, increased visitor management would minimize the potential for new impacts. River restoration measures could result in some negligible, short-term increases in turbidity, but in the long term, the river restoration measures would potentially enhance the spinedace population within disturbed areas. Therefore, the preferred alternative would have a minor to moderate, long-term benefit to the North Fork population. Impacts on spinedace populations elsewhere in the park would be negligible to minor due to low or restrictive use levels. There would be a major, long-term cumulative benefit due to further protection and potential enhancement of the park’s spinedace population.

Mexican Spotted Owls
Analysis. As noted above, the no-action alternative, if implemented, may be disturbed by the presence of people or human activities. Little is known about recreational use impacts on spotted owls. Additionally, spotted owls are difficult to study or monitor, particularly so in Zion National Park, because of the rugged topography. Park managers have begun monitoring owl nesting activity and productivity in territories where impacts would more likely occur.

Under the preferred alternative, no new visitor facilities, with the possible exception of picnic sites and restrooms along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, would be built in owl territories. Park managers have not yet determined specific locations for these developments but would locate picnic areas in previously disturbed sites along the road. Some of these existing pullouts are within two owl territories. To avoid impacts on these owls, park personnel would evaluate specific locations on a case-by-case basis prior to construction, in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Facilities would be located to discourage visitation into the canyons owls are known to use and would not be built during the breeding/nesting season (March 1 – August 31). Designating the canyons near the road that were used by owls as primitive zones and the rest of the area north of the road as primitive or primitive zones and taking appropriate management actions to maintain zone conditions would keep visitor numbers at very low to low levels.

Very popular trails pass through three owl territories associated with side canyons off the main Zion Canyon, below the Temple of Sinawava. Increased use of these trails over existing levels is likely. If the results of monitoring recreational impacts warrant, portions of these trails where owls typically were found would be closed or signs would be added to keep people on the trail and out of side canyons frequented by owls during the spotted owl breeding/nesting period, March 1 – August 31. Park personnel would enforce closures. These measures would mitigate potential effects from increased visitation in these areas.

All of the other known spotted owl territories, are in areas zoned as research natural areas, pristine areas, or primitive areas. These zones allow only limited educational or research use, or very low to low levels of recreational use. Interim group size in these zones would be 12 or fewer; hiking would typically occur during the day and take people in and out of an owl’s presence relatively quickly.

Low levels of use may affect the behavior of some owls, but most spotted owls appear to be relatively undisturbed by small groups (12 or fewer people) passing nearby (USFWS 1995). A more serious threat of disturbance probably arises where there is steady hiking traffic.

Limitations on use levels and groups encountered per day in the pristine zone (12 or primitive zone (12 or fewer) would indirectly serve to limit frequency of use and avoid steady hiking traffic. No new designated camping sites would be located in owl territories, although dispersed camping in pristine and primitive zones would continue to be allowed. Assuming that a variety of locations would be used for dispersed camping, there would be a low probability of repeated camping in locations near a nest or roost site.

If future surveys indicated that visitors were camping near identified nest or roost sites, camping would be restricted in these locations. Monitoring of owl nesting activity and productivity would continue to assess potential impacts. If necessary, park staff would restrict visitor use to mitigate visitor impacts on spotted owls.

Cumulative Effects. The Zion Canyon shuttle system would be the only action that potentially could result in a cumulative impact. The Zion Canyon transportation system planning process evaluated the implementation of a canyon shuttle system and the construction of shuttle stops, with the associated increased use of trails through side canyons supporting owl territories. That process identified trail closures, noted above, as a way to mitigate the effects of increased use. No cumulative effects are likely.

Conclusion. With close consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the application of mitigation measures, the preferred alternative would not likely adversely affect the productivity of known spotted owl territories.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher
Analysis. Willow flycatcher habitat in Parunuweap Canyon would not likely be adversely affected because although there would be limited research related use, there would be no development or recreational use through the canyon. There would also not likely be adverse effects on willow flycatcher habitat in Birch Creek because there would be no new development or recreational use along Birch Creek.

Impacts to riparian areas from restoration of portions of the North Fork of the Virgin River would be short-term. The restoration would improve riparian habitat and potentially willow flycatcher habitat. However, no records exist that document the occurrence of this species there. The river management planning process would address the specific strategies and methods for restoring the river and managing visitor use. That plan would more closely evaluate impacts of the North Fork restoration.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

effort, including potential benefits to flycatchers.

Impacts from increased recreational use on riparian areas along the North Fork and elsewhere in the park would be negligible to minor with the implementation of increased visitor management efforts, mitigation measures such as on-site reclamation or trail improvements, and continued Park Service flycatcher surveys that would help manage avoid or minimize impacts to flycatcher habitat.

Cumulative Effects. The southwestern willow flycatcher has been adversely affected by the conversion or destruction of native riparian habitats. The park represents a significant portion of the upper Virgin River watershed. The protection and improvement of riparian habitat in the park would have a positive, long-term, moderate cumulative impact on riparian areas within the watershed, which could benefit flycatchers.

Conclusion. The preferred alternative might affect, but would not likely adversely affect, the southwestern willow flycatcher. Although potential impacts might occur, with implementation of mitigation measures and visitor management actions, the impacts would not likely adversely affect the species. Restoration of riparian habitat along the North Fork might result in long-term beneficial effects.

Desert Bighorn Sheep

Analysis. Zoning Parunuweep Canyon and upper Shunes Creek as research natural areas would preclude recreational use and thus provide continued protection to sheep range and lambing areas. Negligible to minor impacts from research activities could occur. Similarly, zoning riparian and floodplain areas of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway as research natural areas and riparian areas, including important foraging areas in Gifford Canyon, would provide further protection to sheep range. These actions would reduce visitor use from already relatively low levels, which would be a minor, long-term, beneficial effect.

Cumulative Effects. There would be no cumulative impacts on this species. They may potentially be affected, should air tours occur over sheep range in the park. The Park Service would prepare an air tour management plan to address this use and potential impacts on sensitive wildlife such as sheep.

Conclusion. Negligible to minor impacts on lambing areas from research activities could occur. Visitor disturbance to foraging areas would be negligible to minor because the pristine and research natural area zones would allow only very low levels of use. There would be a minor benefit to sheep from limiting and reducing use in Gifford Canyon, an important sheep use area.

VISITOR EXPERIENCES AND USES

Natural Sounds

Analysis. Noise impacts under the preferred alternative would be similar to the impacts in the no-action alternative with the following exception: restrictions on the number of vehicles along the Kolob Canyons Road might take place in the future to fulfill zone prescriptions. The voluntary shuttle system on the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway also would reduce vehicular traffic. These actions would reduce noise impacts to a minor degree compared to the actions of the no-action alternative, depending on the amount of reduction in vehicular traffic achieved.

Cumulative Effects. The operation of the Zion Canyon transportation system would substantially reduce mechanical noises from vehicular traffic in Zion Canyon. This reduction in noise in combination with the reduction of some other noise sources would result in an overall moderate, long-term, positive effect in Zion Canyon. If aircraft flights increased over the park, the noise of the aircraft in combination with increased use levels in front-country areas could result in negative cumulative impacts on the natural soundscape, especially in undeveloped areas of the park where solitude and natural soundscapes are zoned for the most protection.

Conclusion. There would be little change in the soundscape compared to the no-action alternative. If use levels continued to increase, there would be a moderate increase in noise impacts, which would mask natural sounds in the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway and the Kolob Canyons and Kolob-Terrace frontcountry areas. If vehicle use decreased on the Kolob Canyons Road, there would be a minor reduction in noise levels. The operation of the shuttles on the east side of the park also could result in a minor reduction in noise levels.

Range of Visitor Experiences and Activities

Analysis. Under this alternative, seven different management zones would be applied to the park, which would help maintain the range of visitor experiences now offered at Zion. Applying zones to the park should have a positive effect on the visitor experience by managing use to achieve the desired experience. Consequently, even if use levels continued to increase, visitors who sought solitude and natural soundscapes should be able to find remote wildlands to enjoy, while other visitors who sought a more social and developed experience should be able to find opportunities in the frontcountry.

With most of the park zoned pristine, visitors would have opportunities for a high-quality wilderness experience. Most visitors who ventured into these areas would be seeking this type of experience and would likely have a positive experience: they would see few or no people, have excellent opportunities for solitude and natural soundscapes, and see a natural landscape.

Most visitor use would continue to be focused in the park's frontcountry. The preferred alternative does not restrict people from using these areas (although the future carrying capacity studies may propose limits on use of some areas, and a future visitor management plan would examine the need for visitor use management on the North Fork). The development of a few visitor facilities, such as restrooms and picnic sites, would have a positive, minor effect on some visitors, improving their experiences in the frontcountry.

Access into the park also affects the range of visitor experiences. Acquiring access easements would ensure that visitors could continue to use several popular, planned routes that passed through private land. If these access routes were closed to the general public, visitors would not be able to visit some of these areas and would have to travel longer distances to access other areas. This circumstance would decrease the likelihood that visitors would use those routes and would decrease visitors' appreciation and enjoyment of park resources. Thus, the acquisition of access easements would have a major, positive impact on visitors using those routes.

Kolob Canyons Road — Under the preferred alternative, visitors would experience slightly more opportunities for hiking, interpretation, and picnicking in the Kolob Canyons area. For example, park personnel could install restrooms, or expand the visitor center. These changes would also help visitors locate and use facilities more easily and potentially encourage more and longer visitation of the Kolob Canyons area. For those visitors who valued a more structured experience with basic facilities and services, these changes would have a minor, positive impact on their experience. For those visitors who preferred more rustic and
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Primitive facilities, these changes would have a minor, negative impact on their experience of the area.

Reducing parking spaces at the Middle and South Forks of Taylor Creek and the Lee Pass trailheads would have a moderate, positive impact on those visitors who were able to find parking spaces, ensuring that they would find opportunities for a high-quality wilderness experience along those trails. But for visitors who were not able to find a parking space, this action would have a moderate, negative impact. An unknown number of visitors would be displaced to other areas or would change their plans and come back to these trails at different times. If use levels continued to increase, congestion would likely increase at these parking areas, particularly at peak times.

If visitation to the Kolob Canyons area increased or if visitors stayed longer, crowding and noise levels associated with visitation could increase (e.g., voices, car noises). The degradation of park resources also may occur, such as increased litter and erosion and the formation of more social trails. These changes would have a minor, negative impact on those visitors who value natural soundscapes, solitude, and viewing park resources in a natural state.

If visitation increased substantially, park managers could limit the number of vehicles allowed on the road (and concomitantly on the trails). This action could inconvenience visitors by limiting when they could access the road in their vehicles. On the other hand, visitors would be assured of a more rural experience, and crowding and noise would be moderated.

Kolob-Terrace Road and LaVerkin Point - Visitors would experience a slightly more formalized park experience. Some degradation would be experienced by those visitors who valued a more primitive and rustic experience, these changes would have a minor, negative impact. For those visitors who valued a more primitive and rustic experience, these changes would have a minor, negative impact.

If visitation to the Kolob-Terrace Road and LaVerkin Point area increased or if visitors stayed longer, noise levels associated with visitation, such as voices and car noises, could increase, and there would be less opportunities to experience solitude. Some degradation of park resources also may occur. This would have a minor negative impact for those visitors who valued natural soundscapes and solitude, and viewing park resources in a natural state.

The construction of a focused visitor facility on BLM lands along the Kolob-Terrace Road would have a minor to moderate positive effect on the visitor experience. Visitors would have opportunities they do not currently have to see exhibits, talk with park staff, and learn about the park and its resources. The focused visitor facility could increase resource education and protection and increase visitor awareness of park significance. The facility also would be far more convenient for visitors who needed permits - visitors could get permits here rather than having to drive to the visitor center in the main Zion Canyon. The office also would enable park personnel to react faster to emergencies in this part of the park.

South Entrance and the Main Zion Canyon - The implementation of the actions in this alternative and the shuttle system would create a more formalized visitor experience in Zion Canyon. For example, park managers could improve most of the Zion Canyon trails (zoned transition) and develop more interpretive opportunities. In turn, visitors would be able to find and use trails more easily and would have more opportunities to learn about park resources and park significance. Thus, the preferred alternative would have a moderate, positive impact on those visitors who valued a slightly more formalized park experience and comfortable access to park resources.

The possible addition of more picnic areas in the canyon would provide more opportunities for picnicking in Zion Canyon. Because picnic facilities already exist in the canyon, this action would have a minor, positive impact on those visitors who wished to picnic in Zion Canyon.

The restoration of portions of the North Fork of the Virgin River would provide visitors a chance to experience these portions of the river in a more natural state. However, during the restoration work, visitors might not be able to do their activity of choice (e.g., hike, wade or swim) in the location and time of their choice. The extent and intensity of these effects would depend on the river restoration methods. These potential impacts will be analyzed at a later time as part of the river management plan.

East Entrance and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway - If a space is located outside the park to provide information to visitors, this would improve orientation and facilitate trip planning for visitors arriving at Zion National Park from the east. These visitors would be less likely to miss park destinations and attractions because of a lack of information. Visitors also may be able to get backcountry permits and would gain an understanding of the Zion Canyon shuttle system. Visitors also would have additional opportunities to learn about Zion's significant resources and primary interpretive themes before driving through the park to the south entrance and transportation center. Better education about the park's resources would lead to increased visitor understanding and enjoyment of the park and enhanced protection of the resources. This would have a moderate, positive impact on the experiences of visitors entering through the east entrance.

Because the area around the east entrance and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway itself would be zoned frontcountry high and low development, visitors potentially would have more opportunities for and improved access to interpretation, picnicking, and learning about park resources in this area of the park. Increased contact with park resources and additional interpretive opportunities could increase visitor understanding of, appreciation for, and enjoyment of those resources. Unlike Zion Canyon, these opportunities would be accessible with a private vehicle. This would have a moderate, positive impact on the experience of park visitors, particularly those interested in accessing facilities without having to use shuttles.

Under this alternative a few picnic sites and restrooms could be added along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. This would provide additional opportunities for visitors to use this area, which would likely have a minor, positive effect on some visitors' experiences in this part of the park.

Although the operation of the Zion Canyon shuttle could increase traffic on the park's east side, the initiation of a shuttle service along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would provide visitors with another option for reaching attractions on the east side. The shuttles might reduce traffic on the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, compared to the no-action alternative, providing a less crowded, quieter, and safer experience for visitors driving or biking on the road. If traffic were reduced, it would allow visitors hiking in the vicinity of the highway to experience quieter conditions. The shuttle also would provide a convenient service for visitors who wanted to do one-way hikes to or from the eastern part of the park, or for groups of visitors who wanted to split up. Overall, the operation of this voluntary shuttle would have a minor, positive impact on visitors utilizing the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway.
Most saddle stock users would not be affected by the alternative because they don't use these areas. A few saddle stock users would be displaced, but there are other destinations in the park they could visit. Thus, this action would be expected to have a minor negative impact on saddle stock users.

As noted in the alternative, the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies would determine if guided activities "could be permitted in Zion's backcountry. If permitted, areas that could be open for guided activities would be very limited due to zoning. The impacts of guided activities would be assessed as part of the wilderness management plan.

Research Natural Areas—Approximately 8,893 acres of Zion’s recommended wilderness would be research natural area zones and therefore open only to authorized research and NPS-guided educational trips. These areas currently receive little or no recreational use. As a result, managing these areas as research natural areas (and therefore prohibiting public recreational use) would have a negligible impact on most visitors’ experiences. Some visitors who would like to visit research natural areas but were turned away may feel this is a distraction from their park experience. But these people could find other suitable areas in the park to visit.

Scenic Views—As in the no-action alternative, most of the park’s viewshed would continue to appear natural to most visitors. Acquiring conservation easements outside the park, and thereby limiting the amount and kinds of development that could occur, would ensure the preservation of the scenic resources of the areas involved. Visitors could continue to experience views of these areas without scenic impairments. This would have a moderate, positive impact on visitors who experience these views.

Several new facilities potentially developed within Zion National Park could affect scenic views, including an expansion of the Kolob Canyons visitor center, new picnic sites and restrooms, and improved parking areas. It was assumed that the impacts of these developments on views would be minimized through appropriate facility design and landscaping. Still, these developments would have a minor, negative impact on the experiences of visitors who valued a less developed visual scene.

Cumulative Effects. The increased management of backcountry use and the potential restrictions of private vehicles on the Kolob Canyons Road, taken in conjunction with the operation of the Zion Canyon shuttles, would create a more structured visitor experience at Zion National Park. Visitors would have fewer personal choices to go when and where they want. However, the shuttles would also ensure that visitors could stop at major attractions in the Zion Canyon without having to compete for parking spaces. The extent of the impacts on visitors would depend on the decisions of several subsequent plans including the wilderness management plan, the river management plan, and the transportation plan.

The new developments proposed in this alternative, together with the operation of the Zion Canyon shuttles, are likely to result in increased use levels over time in other frontcountry areas, including the Kolob Canyons Road, Kolob-Terrace Road, and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. As overall park visitation increases, visitors may experience more crowding and noise and observe more resource impacts at the facilities and trails in these frontcountry areas. The changes would likely occur slowly, but would eventually have a moderate, negative cumulative impact on those visitors who wished to experience solitude, quiet, or a "rustic" park experience in frontcountry areas. There is also the potential for increased day use of trails going into the wilderness area from these roads. Although the Park Service would limit use levels in the primitive and pristine zones, some unauthorized day use may occur in these areas.

Conclusion. Under the preferred alternative the existing range of visitor experiences would be maintained. Zioning most of the park as a pristine would help ensure that visitors have many opportunities to experience solitude, quiet, and a feeling of being immersed in pristine resources throughout the recommended wilderness. Visitors would continue to have opportunities to have contact with and learn about park resources in the frontcountry. Providing a few new restrooms and picnic areas would have a minor, positive effect on some visitors’ experiences. The new interim encounter rate limits would likely have a negligible effect on some visitors’ experiences. The new interim encounter rate limits would likely have a negligible effect on most visitors in the recommended wilderness area. In some popular areas the limits would have a moderate to highly positive effect by avoiding potential impacts due to increases in use. On the other hand, if visitors use on several trails and park resource areas are limited or reduced, some visitors would be negatively affected and have to change their trip plans. A few saddle stock groups would be adversely affected to a minor degree by the application of the new rules in the recommended wilderness. Some visitors may feel their personal choices and access to park resources were being somewhat curtailed in the recommended wilderness area, which would have a moderate, negative impact on their experiences.

Overall, the preferred alternative would be expected to have minor, positive effect on visitors’ experiences in the backcountry.
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Visitor Experiences on Other Recreational Areas Near the Park

Analysis. Visitors who could not access the area of their choice at Zion might choose to go to other recreational areas. Similarly, if park managers restrict private vehicles on the Kolob Canyons Road, visitors might choose to visit other areas instead of Zion. This would likely have a negligible impact on the visitation at other nearby recreational areas because not very many people would tend to be displaced.

Cumulative Effects. Although some people would likely be displaced to other state and federal recreational areas as a result of the actions taken in this alternative, the overall number of displaced people is not likely to be large. Even if many of these people chose not to go to Zion or decided to cut their trips short, many of the displaced visitors would still be visiting these other recreational areas as part of their "Grand Circle" vacations. Thus, the preferred alternative would have a minor, negative cumulative effect on visitors' experiences in other nearby recreational areas.

Conclusion. With increased visitor use management, visitors would likely be displaced from Zion to other nearby recreational areas. The number of displaced visitors would not be expected to be large, however. Thus, the preferred alternative would likely have a minor, negative effect on the experiences provided at nearby recreational areas.

THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Analysis. Under the preferred alternative, visitor use would likely continue to increase in line with recent experience at the park. With increased visitor use, some business activity in the local area may increase. This would result in increased positive benefits of a moderate to major degree for a small number of firms and/or individuals for the short and long term (if the increased business activity could be sustained).

In addition, during the life of this plan, new developments would or could occur, which would provide some more'create to major, positive, short-term, economic benefits for a limited number of individuals and the enterprises involved with the developments. These recommended improvements would not all occur at one location or at the same time. The distribution of these developments through time and space would spread out the overall beneficial, economic impacts of these projects.

Economic opportunities within the park would be guided by a commercial services plan. These activities would create a moderate to positive, short- and long-term economic benefits for a few persons and firms. The park would continue to provide the basis for the local tourism industry served by the private sector situated outside of the park. The effect on the local economy in terms of population, employment, income, etc., would be a negligible to minor, positive impact due to the relatively large size of the local economy compared to the actions in this alternative.

The preferred alternative seeks access easements totaling approximately 15 miles on lands outside the park and conservation easements on three privately owned parcels totaling 2,220 acres. The acquisition of some easement rights may require the exchange of federal, and the National Park Service would obtain a minor to moderate, positive benefit by receiving public money, and the National Park Service would obtain a minor to moderate, positive benefit by acquiring the sought after easements. After the exchange, the value of the lands could be altered, with the value of some lands decreasing and the value of other adjacent lands increasing. However, the net change in local tax revenue is likely to be negligible.

As in the no-action alternative, increased levels of visitors going to the park and their concurrent demands for goods and services has led the private sector outside the park to increase levels of development and economic activity. It is expected that the gateway community of Springdale will experience further development. While the built environment of this area would continue to evolve, the small town "pioneer heritage" image would be found well into the future. Local land use plan and zoning regulations. Continued increases in visitor use of the park would likely result in more frequent congestion and associated increases in the demands placed on local infrastructure and public services (e.g., roads, water and sewer, police and fire protection, and emergency medical services) in the gateway communities, especially Springdale. However, when comparing the impacts of this alternative to those of the no-action alternative, the amount of change due to this alternative would tend to be negligible.

Cumulative Effects. Zion National Park has been a protected area since 1909. As a result of increased visitation to the park, business and residential development have increased. This growth trend has had a moderate to major, positive impact on the local/regional economy. For example, a theater/shopping complex and new motel were built in Springdale in the 1990s, providing long-term employment opportunities for Springdale residents. It is expected that the positive effects of the growth trend on the local and regional economy will continue and that this alternative will not change the ongoing trend.

The operation of the Zion Canyon shuttle system has resulted in additional NPS expenditures, which likely has had a positive, long-term benefit on the local and regional economy. Overall, the preferred alternative would be expected to have a long-term, negligible to minor, positive cumulative effect on the local and regional economy.

As in the no-action alternative, increased visitation may result in major economic benefits of a moderate to major degree for a small number of firms and/or individuals over both the short and long term. Various development projects would provide a few individuals and firms with short-term economic benefits that would be moderate to major (for those directly affected), depending on the level of involvement that occurred. However, in terms of the overall economy, the positive effects of the action alternative would be negligible to minor. Changes in cumulative impacts as compared to the impacts of the no-action alternative would be negligible. The gateway communities would likely continue to change, but they would only be negligibly different from the changes created by the no-action alternative. Overall, the preferred alternative would tend to have a long-term, negligible, positive change in the local/regional economy.

CONFLICTS WITH LAND USE PLANS

Analysis. Zion National Park is within the boundaries of Iron, Washington, and Kane Counties. All three counties have a general plan as required by enabling legislation passed by the Utah state legislature and reflected in Section 17-27-301 of the Utah code. Portions of the Iron County general plan relating to national park areas focus on Cedar Breaks National Monument, with Zion being mentioned primarily for its impacts related to tourism and recreational opportunities.

The portions of the Washington County and Kane County General Plans relating to federal government coordination emphasizes the mandates of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and do not recognize the separate mandates applicable to the U.S. Forest Service on the National Park. For example, the Washington County Plan provides that this plan be used by federal land managing agencies in developing land use plans required...
by section 202 of the Federal land Policy and Management Act and 43 CFR, subpart 1601. Similarly, the Kane County General Plan recognizes "that federal law mandates multiple use of federally managed land..." and cites the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 U.S.C. as the guiding legislation. In both cases, these provisions apply only to BLM and do not apply to either the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service, each having its own organic acts and policies for land use planning (see also "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 14).

The Washington County General Plan's recommendation that park land within Washington County not be managed as wilderness conflicts with NPS policy. According to NPS Management Policies, land that has been recommended to Congress as recommended wilderness must be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

All three plans emphasize the need for coordination and communication with federal land managing agencies. Many of the concerns that have surfaced have been because of inadequate communication and coordination.

Cumulative Effects. There would be no cumulative effects.

Conclusion. The 1978 wilderness recommendation identified in the General Management Plan would be in conflict with the Washington County General Plan.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Major, localized, adverse impacts on biotic soil crusts would continue to occur in areas with extensive development and use. Unavoidable losses of microbiotic crusts also would tend to occur in areas with new developments, primarily along the east entrance and Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, Kolob-Terrace Road, Lava Point, Kolob Canyons Road, and the lower Zion Canyon.

The imposition of limits on backcountry use would have an unavoidable adverse impact on those visitors who might not be able to hike or camp in the backcountry area of their choice. If the number of private vehicles was limited on the Kolob Canyons Road, visitors would be inconvenienced or would potentially be unable to experience those areas. Some people would consider any limits on visitor choice to be an unavoidable adverse effect.

RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The restoration of natural processes along portions of the North Fork of the Virgin River would enhance long-term productivity of the biological resources associated with the river and its floodplain.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVALE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Because it takes so long to form soil, the loss of soil due to the construction of new facilities (e.g., picnic areas and trails) would be an irreversible commitment of resources. No other irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources under the preferred alternative are known.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Air Quality

Analysis. Air quality impacts under alternative A would be similar to the potential impacts of the no-action alternative. In general, this alternative provides opportunities for more widespread and increased visitor use of Zion. Improving access to the park and within the park could result in a moderate increase in vehicle emissions and a moderate reduction in near-range visibility.

The construction, removal, and improvement of facilities would generate particulates and machinery fumes that would result in some short-term, localized, minor impacts on air quality. Construction personnel would control dust by applying water or other palliatives; machinery would be required to meet emission standards.

Cumulative Effects. The planning team is not aware of any other actions that would have a negative cumulative impact on the park's air quality. As in the preferred alternative, the implementation of the voluntary Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway shuttle, combined with the Zion Canyon transportation system and other actions that minimize pollution sources in the park, would moderately reduce local emissions and improve near-range visibility.

Conclusion. Parkwide, little change would be expected in the park's air quality based on the actions in alternative A. There would be a moderate increase in vehicle emissions and decrease in near-range visibility along roads. Construction activities would result in minor, short-term, decreases in local air quality.

Water Quality

Analysis. Impacts under alternative A would be similar to the impacts of the preferred alternative. The construction and use of focused visitor facilities, parking areas, trails, picnic areas, roads, and trails could result in minor increases in suspended sediment, turbidity, and petroleum residues in near-streams. Construction activities and trails would occur in localized areas where visitors eroded soils along stream banks and disturbed stream bottom sediments. Water pollution would also continue to occur from trash or human wastes deposited in or near streams. With increased use along some streams within the park, particularly along the intensively used reaches of the North Fork of the Virgin River, some localized decreases in water quality would likely occur. In addition to the efforts of the preferred alternative, with increased visitor management and the application of other mitigation measures, increased use would likely only lead to minor reductions in water quality.

The same effects described under the preferred alternative regarding river restoration activities would also apply to alternative A. Physical manipulation of the riverbanks or bed would result in moderate, short-term increases in turbidity. Increased sediment discharge would continue to occur intermittently for a few years, depending on the modifications made to the channel. However, the vast majority of this discharge would occur during flood events when the river was naturally very turbid.

Cumulative Effects. As in the previous alternatives, water pollution sources would...
Conclusion. Localized, moderate to major, long-term impacts on microbiotic crusts would occur in areas of extensive development and use. Areas most likely to be impacted from new development include the east entrance and Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, Kolob Terrace Road including the bike trail paralleling the roads, Kolob Canyons Road including picnic sites along the road, and lower Zion Canyon. Most of the park lands likely supporting microbiotic soils would not be subject to disturbance, however. From a parkwide perspective, the negative impacts on microbiotic soils would be minor, based on the limited and localized extent of the impacts in relation to the widespread occurrence of the crusts in the park as a whole.

Virgin Spinedace

Analysis. Impacts would be similar to those of the preferred alternative. The restoration of the natural river morphology in portions of the North Fork below the Temple of Sinawava would create new larval nursery areas and support the regeneration of riparian vegetation. This would result in a minor to moderate, long-term improvement to habitat along portions of the North Fork.

River recreation measures that involve physical manipulation or disturbance to the riverbanks or bed would result in short-term increases in turbidity and sedimentation. Setting time limitations on in-stream disturbance activity and avoiding spawning periods would keep restoration impacts at negligible levels.

Increased visitor management efforts developed as part of the river management plan would minimize the potential for new impacts and potentially enhance the spinedace populations within disturbed areas. Depending on the extent and type of management measures implemented by park personnel, increased visitor management would result in minor to moderate, long-term benefits to the North Fork spinedace population.

Negligible to minor impacts would occur on spinedace populations elsewhere in the park. Allowing public use within Parunuweep Canyon would likely have negligible adverse effects on the East Fork spinedace population because of the low levels and high regulation of use. Very low levels of research and educational use would occur in the Shunes Creek research natural area, which also would result in negligible to minor impacts on spinedace populations. Depending on the structures used to divert water from Shunes Creek under an existing private water right, spinedace populations in those areas could be temporarily negatively impacted. Park managers are assessing the impacts of this action in a separate environmental assessment.

Although North Creek would be a primitive zone under alternative A, which would allow increased levels of use, spinedace extend for only a very short distance into the park along North Creek. No large increases in public use are likely in this reach because no designated trails or routes are located here, and visitors would continue to be inclined to travel further upstream into the park. Thus, impacts also would be negligible on this spinedace population.

Cumulative Effects. Cumulative effects would be similar to the preferred alternative. The minimization of impacts through greater management of recreational use and improvements to habitat from river restoration would provide increased protection to the North Fork spinedace population. This would be a major, long-term, beneficial effect.

Conclusion. Although turbidity would continue to affect spinedace that fed in high recreation use areas along the North Fork, increased visitor management would minimize the potential for new impacts. Some negligible, short-term increases in turbidity would occur due to river restoration measures, but in the long term, these measures would potentially enhance the population within disturbed areas. Therefore, there would be a minor to moderate, long-term benefit to the North Fork population. Impacts on other spinedace populations in the park would be negligible to minor due to very low and/or restricted recreational use levels. There would be a major, long-term, cumulative benefit due to further protection and potential enhancement of the park's spinedace population.

Mexican Spotted Owls

Analysis. Like in the preferred alternative, most of the proposed new focused visitor facilities, parking areas, campgrounds, and picnic areas would be located outside of the park's known owl territories. However, picnic sites and short nature trails could be built in owl territories along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway and nature trails could be added to the lower parts of canyons, north of the road that the owls are known to use. The specific locations for these developments have not been determined, so picnic areas would be located in previously disturbed sites along the road. Some of these existing pullouts are within two owl territories.

To avoid impacts on the owls, park managers would evaluate specific picnic area and trail locations on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They would locate the picnic areas and trails in such a way as to discourage visitation into the canyons the owls are known to use, and would build these picnic areas and trails during the breeding/nesting season. Zoning the lower canyons north of the road that were used by owls as primitive and the upper portions of the canyons as primitive, and taking appropriate management actions to maintain zone conditions, also would keep visitor numbers at low to very low levels.

As in the other alternatives, very popular trails pass through three owl territories associated with side canyons off of the main Zion Canyon, below the Temple of Sinawava. If warranted by recreational impact monitoring data, portions of the trails where owls were typically found would be closed or signs would be added to the areas to keep people on the trails and out of the side canyons frequented by the owls. These actions would mitigate the potential effects from increased visitation in these areas.

All of the other known owl territories are in research natural areas, primitive areas, or primitive-terraces. These zones allow only limited educational or research use, or allow only very low levels of recreational use. The zone conditions regarding group sizes and encounter levels would further limit impacts on these zones. Hiking would typically occur during the day, and people would travel in and out of an owl's presence relatively quickly. Park managers would not locate any new designated camp areas in owl territories. Dispersed camping would continue in the primitive and primitive zones, but assuming that visitors used a variety of locations, there would be a low probability of repeated camping in locations near a nest or roost site. Future surveys indicated that visitors were camping near identified nests or roost sites, park personnel would restrict camping at these locations. Low levels of use may affect the behavior of some owls. Park personnel would continue to monitor owl nesting activity and productivity to assess potential impacts, and would implement visitor use restrictions if necessary.

Cumulative Effects. The Zion Canyon shuttle system would be the only action that potentially could result in a cumulative impact. As part of the Zion Canyon transportation system planning process, the implementation of a canyon shuttle system and the construction of shuttle stops, with the associated increased use of trails through the side canyons that support
by the conversion or destruction of native riparian habitats. The park represents a significant portion of the upper Virgin River watershed. The protection and improvement of riparian habitat in the park would have a positive, long-term, moderate cumulative impact on riparian areas within the watershed, which could benefit flycatchers.

Conclusion. Alternative B might affect, but would not likely adversely affect the southwestern willow flycatcher. Although potential impacts might occur, with implementation of mitigation measures and visitor management actions, the impacts would not likely adversely affect the species. Restoration of riparian habitat along the North Fork might result in long-term beneficial effects.

Desert Bighorn Sheep

Analysis. In this alternative park managers would allow low levels of visitor use along the drainage bottom of Parunuweap Canyon (a pristine zone) and limited educational or research use along Shunes Creek (a research natural area). In addition, under alternative B, the sides of Parunuweap Canyon would be included in a research natural area zone. With the proposed closure periods, only negligible to minor impacts from research activities would occur within lambing areas.

With regard to sheep foraging areas, negligible disturbance would occur in Shunes Creek due to its zoning. Allowing visitor use within Parunuweap Canyon and adding trails or routes in canyons north and south of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would be negligible to minor due to zone conditions. Visitor disturbance in foraging areas would be negligible to minor due to zone conditions (i.e., allowance of only very low levels of use), seasonal closures, and other use restrictions. Impacts on sheep would be minor to moderate in sheep habitat located within canyons along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway due to increased visitor use occurring over a large portion of the sheep’s range on either side of the highway. It would be a major impact if sheep were displaced from key portions of their range.

Conclusion. Research activities could cause negligible to minor impacts on lambing areas. Visitor disturbance in foraging areas would be negligible to minor due to zone conditions (i.e., allowance of only very low levels of use), seasonal closures, and other use restrictions. Impacts on sheep would be minor to moderate in sheep habitat located within canyons along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway due to increased visitor use occurring over a large portion of the sheep’s range on either side of the highway. It would be a major impact if sheep were displaced from key portions of their range.

because the upper portions of the canyons and slopes (including important habitat in Gifford Canyon) would be within a primitive zone, where increased use levels of up to 100 people per day would be allowed.

In alternative A park personnel could build picnic sites and short nature trails along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. Adding these new developments in areas along the road that are currently used or disturbed would negligibly affect sheep in the vicinity of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway or sheep road crossings.

The potential increase in visitor use over a large portion of the sheep’s range on either side of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would be a minor to moderate, short-term disturbance to sheep foraging areas. It would be a major impact if the sheep were displaced from key portions of their range.

Cumulative Effects. There would be no cumulative impacts on this species. The sheep may be affected if air tours occur over sheep range in the park. An air tour management plan would be prepared to address this use and the potential impacts on sensitive wildlife such as sheep.

Conclusion. Research activities could cause negligible to minor impacts on lambing areas. Visitor disturbance in foraging areas would be negligible to minor due to zone conditions (i.e., allowance of only very low levels of use), seasonal closures, and other use restrictions. Impacts on sheep would be minor to moderate in sheep habitat located within canyons along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway due to increased visitor use occurring over a large portion of the sheep’s range on either side of the highway. It would be a major impact if sheep were displaced from key portions of their range.

Range of Visitor Experiences and Activities

Analysis. Alternative B generally would have the same type of effects on visitor experiences and uses as the preferred alternative. The new management zones would have a positive effect, helping to maintain the existing range of visitor experiences. Even if use levels continued to increase, visitors seeking solitude and natural soundscapes should be able to find remote wildlands to enjoy, while other visitors seeking a more social and developed exper-
environmental consequences

once should be able to find opportunities for
these types of experiences in the frontcountry.

Under alternative A, most visitors would
continue to spend their time in the park's
frontcountry, staying in or near the developed
areas. The future carrying capacity studies and
river management plan may propose limits on
use of some areas. (The impacts of these
actions would be assessed if and when the
actions are proposed.) However, the develop-
ment of short nature trails and visitor facilities
would provide new opportunities for a greater
number of visitors to enjoy more of the park
than they can now. Thus, this alternative
would have a positive, moderate impact on
visitors in the frontcountry.

Acquiring access easements would have the
same effects as those described under the
preferred alternative — the easements would
ensure that visitors could still access several
popular trails and routes that currently passed
through private land. Thus, this action would
have a major, positive impact on visitors who
used those routes.

The visitor use and experience impacts of
alternative A in the south entrance and main
Zion Canyon would be the same as those
described for the preferred alternative. The
effects of the proposed boundary adjustments
also would be the same.

Kolob Canyons Road — Alternative A would
have similar positive impacts as those of the
preferred alternative regarding increased
opportunities for hiking, interpretation, and
picnicking. However, unlike the preferred
alternative, there would be no limits on the
number of vehicles or shuttles allowed under
this alternative. If visitation increased,
crowding, noise levels, and the degradation of
park resources may occur (e.g., increased litter,
more social trails), which would have a
minor, negative impact on visitors who valued
natural soundscapes, solitude, and the
opportunity to view the park in a natural state.

Kolob-Terrace Road and LaVoy Point —
Alternative A would provide a greater number
of opportunities than currently exists for
picnicking, additional interpretive services,
better parking facilities, more campsites at
LaVoy Point, and easier access to trailheads.
These changes would have a minor, positive
impact on those visitors who valued a more
structured experience, and a minor, negative
impact on those visitors who valued a more
primitive and rustic experience. Any increase
in use as a result of the above actions could
result in resource impacts that would
negatively affect the experience of some
visitors. Limiting traffic or providing shuttles
would reduce or eliminate these impacts, but
some visitors would be adversely affected if
they could not experience the LaVoy Point area.

Building a focused visitor facility on BLM
lands along the Kolob-Terrace Road would
have the same minor, positive effects on the
visitor experience as the effects discussed
under the preferred alternative. The facility
would provide information to enhance
visitors' understanding of the park and a more
convenient place to obtain permits, as well as
improve the park staff's response time for
assisting visitors in need of search and rescue.

Under this alternative, a bicycle trail along the
Kolob-Terrace Road to LaVoy Point could be
developed. This trail would provide a safe,
long-distance bicycling experience currently
unavailable at Zion, which might encourage
more bicycle riders to explore the park, enjoy
its resources, and understand its significance.
This action thus would have a moderate,
positive impact on those visitors who rode
bicycles at Zion.

Also under alternative A, the opening of the
road to the east of the West Rim trailhead
would provide visitors with an additional
opportunity for scenic driving, during which
they could come into contact with park
resources. This change would have a minor,
positive impact for visitors who valued
opportunities for motorized sightseeing, but a
minor, negative impact for visitors seeking a
more rustic experience.

East Entrance and Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway
— The effects of this alternative would be
very similar to those described in the preferred
alternative. However, in alternative A there
may be additional focused visitor facilities and
a couple of nature trails. As a result visitors
would potentially have more interpretive
opportunities and opportunities to hike in this
part of the park. This would have a minor,
positive effect on visitors who use the Zion-
Mt. Carmel Highway.

Recommended Wilderness — Under alterna-
tive A, the majority of the recommended
wilderness would be a primitive zone, with a
smaller portion being a pristine zone. This
zoning structure would provide greater oppor-
tunities for hiking on trails and utilizing des-
ignated backcountry campgrounds than are avail-
able today, but fewer opportunities for experi-
cing solitude that are now available. With
the upgrading of some trails and the addition
of several new primitive trails and routes in
the recommended wilderness, more visitors
could see and experience parts of the recom-
mended wilderness area they likely would not
have otherwise visited. This would have a
moderate, positive impact for those visitors
who valued hiking on trails in a wildlife
setting.

Under alternative A, park managers would
open the East Fork of the Virgin River in
Parunuweap Canyon to small numbers of
visitors, under certain conditions. This action
would provide a new high-quality educational
visitor experience and result in a moderate,
positive impact on the experiences of those
visitors who were permitted to enter
Parunuweap.

Like the preferred alternative, the new interm
encounter rate limits would likely have a
negligible effect on most backcountry users —
in most areas people would continue to find
opportunities for solitude and natural
soundscapes, and the new interim limits would
not affect them. In a few popular areas, such
as the Narrows above Orderville Canyon, the
encounter limits would help ensure that use
levels did not increase substantially, thus
avoiding potential visitor experience impacts.
For those visitors who would be seeking a
wilderness experience at Zion and were
willing and able to be flexible, the encounter
limits likely would have a minor to moderate,
positive impact, compared to the no-action
alternative.

Alternative A would have some negative ef-
fact on visitors in the recommended wilder-
ness. Any restrictions that affect personal
choice and access would be seen by some as
detracting from their park visit. Some visitors
may experience a minor to moderate, negative
impact of group sizes or encounter rates
exceed their wilderness experience expecta-
tions. For those visitors who sought a less-
crowded experience in areas with no trails, the
addition of trails or routes in previously
untouched areas could have moderate, negative
effects. Some visitors would potentially be
inconvenienced before entering the recom-
mended wilderness (e.g., by getting permits,
making reservations).

Compared to existing conditions, visitor
numbers may need to be limited or reduced in
four areas — the Narrows above Orderville
Canyon, Orderville Canyon, Mystery Canyon,
and La Verkin Creek trail. While the effect
on backcountry use would probably be
negligible to minor, some redistribution of use
among trails and routes would likely occur.
The new encounter rate limits might mean that
some visitors would have to change their
destination, or the timing of their trip. For
those visitors who valued being able to visit
chased destinations when and how they


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want to, alternative A would likely have a minor, negative impact.

Alternative A would have the same effect on saddle stock groups as the preferred alternative: saddle stock groups would continue to find the same opportunities to ride in the park as they do now, except that they would no longer be permitted to ride in the upper Coalpit Wash and Dalton Wash/ Crater Hill areas. This action would have a minor effect on opportunities for saddle stock groups.

As noted in the alternative, the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies would determine if guided activities should be expanded in Zion National Park. If it were determined that guided activities were appropriate, under alternative A much of the recommended wilderness would be zoned primitive and could be open to commercial guiding. The impact on users would vary depending on such factors as where the guides would be permitted to operate, at what times they could operate, and how many guides (if any) would be operating. These potential impacts would be further analyzed as part of the environmental documentation for the wilderness management plan.

Research Natural Areas — Approximately 6,310 acres of Zion’s recommended wilderness would be in research natural area zones and therefore only open to NPS-guided educational trips and research. With the exception of the upper Coalpit Wash, these areas currently receive little or no recreational use. As a result, managing these areas as research natural areas (and therefore prohibiting public recreational use) would have a negligible impact on most visitors’ experiences. A few visitors who wished to visit the research natural areas but were turned away could feel this is a detractor from their park experience. Also, designating upper Coalpit Wash as a research natural area would displace a few visitors, but they probably could find other destinations in the park to visit.

Scenic Views — Alternative A would have many of the same effects on the park’s views as the preferred alternative. In both alternatives the park’s views would continue to appear natural to most visitors. Acquiring the conservation easements also would have a moderate, positive impact, ensuring that visitors would continue to experience views of the park without scenic impairments.

In this alternative several additional facilities besides those in the preferred alternative would be built in the park, including focused visitor facilities, interpretive facilities, a new bicycle trail, and expansion of the Lava Point campground. With proper siting, facility design, and landscaping, it is expected that the impacts of these new facilities on the visual landscape would be minimized. The developments would likely have a minor, negative impact on the experiences of visitors who valued a less-developed visual scene.

Cumulative Effects. Alternative A would have the same potential for cumulative effects as in the preferred alternative. The increased management of backcountry use in conjunction with the operation of the Zion Canyon shuttles would mean that visitors would have less personal choice than they do today. However, the shuttle would also ensure that visitors could stop at major attractions in the Zion Canyon without having to compete for parking spaces. The extent of the impacts on visitors would depend on the decisions park managers made in several subsequent implementation plans.

The new developments proposed in alternative A, together with the operation of the Zion Canyon shuttles, are likely to result in increased use levels over time in other frontcountry areas, including the Kolob Canyons Road, Kolob-Terrace Road, and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. As overall park visitation increased, visitors could experience more crowding and noise and observe more resource impacts at the facilities and trails in these frontcountry areas. The changes would likely occur slowly over time, but would eventually have a moderate, negative cumulative impact on those visitors who wished to experience solitude, quiet, or a “rustic” park experience in the frontcountry. There is also the potential for increased day use of trails going into the wilderness area from these roads. Although park managers would limit use levels in the primitive and pristine zones, some unauthorized day use may occur in these areas.

Conclusion. Under alternative A, park managers would maintain the existing range of visitor experiences. In the frontcountry, there would be enhanced opportunities for visitors to have contact with and learn about park resources. Opportunities for experiencing solitude, quiet, and the feeling of being immersed in pristine park resources would still be available in the recommended wilderness area. Visitors would have a number of additional opportunities to experience the park’s recommended wilderness, including Parunu­ weap Canyons, through primitive trails and routes. This would have a moderate, positive impact on visitors desiring those experiences.

On the other hand, the new trails and routes may result in higher encounter levels with people, which would have a moderate impact on other visitors. There may be a reduction in levels of use on a few routes. Some visitors may feel their personal choices and access to park resources are being somewhat curtailed, particularly in the recommended wilderness area, which would have a moderate, negative impact on their experience. Overall, altern­ tive A would be expected to have moderate, positive effects on the range and quality of visitor experiences in Zion’s frontcountry, and moderate, positive and negative effects on visitor experiences in the backcountry.

Visitor Experiences in Other Recreational Areas Near the Park

Analysis. Alternative A would have the same effects on other nearby recreational areas as the effects of the preferred alternative. If park personnel restrict private vehicles on the Kolob Canyons Road, visitors might choose to visit other areas instead of Zion. This action would tend to have a negligible impact on the visitation at other nearby recreational areas because not very many people would likely be displaced.

Cumulative Effects. Like in the preferred alternative, alternative A would have the potential for a minor cumulative effect on the visitor experience in other recreational areas. The overall number of people who would be displaced from Zion to other state and federal areas as a result of this alternative would not likely be large. Even if visitors spent less time at Zion or chose not to visit Zion at all, many of these visitors would still be visiting these other recreational areas as part of their “Grand Canyon” vacations.

Conclusion. With increased visitor use management, some but not many visitors would likely be displaced from Zion to other nearby recreational areas. Thus, the preferred alternative would likely have a negligible to minor, negative effect on the experiences provided at nearby recreational areas.

The Socioeconomic Environment

Analysis. Alternative A encourages increased visitor use in some areas of the park. With increased use, some business activity in the local area may increase, resulting in increased positive benefits of a moderate to major degree for a small number of firms and/or individuals involved with the activities. These benefits could occur over both the short and long term. In addition, various development projects would provide a few individuals and
firms with positive, short-term economic benefits. Depending on the level of development that occurs, these benefits would be moderate to major, with the individuals and firms more directly involved with the developments experiencing greater effects. While some individuals may benefit, the overall impact on the local economy in terms of population, employment, income, and the like, would be a negligible to minor, positive impact, due to the relatively large size of the local economy compared to the actions of alternative A.

As in the no-action alternative, the increased numbers of visitors to the park and their consequent demands for goods and services has caused the private sector outside the park to increase development and economic activity. It is likely that the gateway community of Springdale would continue to experience further development. While the built environment of this area would continue to evolve, the small town “pioneer heritage” image would be protected and fostered by the local land use plan and zoning regulations. Continued increases in visitor use of the park would likely result in more frequent congestion and associated increases in the demands placed on local infrastructure and public services (e.g., roads, water and sewer, police and fire protection, and emergency medical services) at the gateway communities, especially Springdale. However, when comparing these impacts to those of the no-action alternative, the amount of change due to this alternative would tend to be negligible, even though the pace of development may be somewhat faster as a result of the actions of alternative A.

Cumulative Effects. Zion National Park has been a protected area since 1909. As a result of increased visitation to the park, business and residential development have increased. This growth trend has had a positive impact on the local/regional economy, which is likely to continue in the future and not change based on the actions of this alternative. The operation of the Zion Canyon shuttle system has resulted in additional NPS expenditures, which also likely has had a positive, long-term benefit on the local and regional economy. Overall, the planning team expects alternative A to have a long-term, negligible to minor, positive cumulative effect on the local and regional economy.

Conclusion. The park would continue to contribute to the local economy in the short and long run. Some individuals and firms within the region may receive moderate to major, positive, short-term economic benefits as a result of alternative A; however, in terms of the overall economy, these positive effects would be negligible to minor in scope. It is likely that development within the gateway communities would proceed at a faster pace under alternative A, although the development would have an overall negligible effect. In general, alternative A would likely result in a negligible to minor, positive change in the local/regional economy.

CONFLICTS WITH LAND USE PLANS

Analysis. Zion National Park is within the boundaries of Iron, Washington, and Kane Counties. All three counties have a general land use plan as required by enabling legislation passed by the Utah state legislature and reflected in section 17-27-301 of the Utah code. Portions of the In re County general plan relating to national park areas focus on Cedar Breaks National Monument, with Zion being mentioned primarily for its impacts related to tourism and recreational opportunities.

The portions of the Washington County and Kane County General Plans relating to federal government coordination emphasize the mandates of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and do not recognize the separate mandates applicable to the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service. For example, the Washington County Plan provides that this plan is to be used by federal land managing agencies in developing land use plans required by section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and 43 CFR, subpart 1601. Similarly, the Kane County General Plan recognizes “that federal land mandates multiple use of federally managed land…” and cites the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 U.S.C., as the guiding legislation. In both cases, these provisions apply only to BLM and do not apply to either the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service, each having its own organic acts and policies for land use planning.

The Washington County General Plan’s recommendation that park land within Washington County not be managed as wilderness conflicts with NPS policy. According to NPS Management Policies, land that has been recommended to Congress as recommended wilderness must be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness Act. All three plans emphasize the need for coordination and communication with federal land managing agencies. Many of the concerns that have surfaced have been because of inadequate communication and coordination.

Cumulative Effects. There would be no cumulative effects.

Conclusion. The 1978 wilderness recommendation identified in the General Management Plan would be in conflict with the Washington County General Plan.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE A

Alternative A would have similar unavoidable impacts on the park’s microbiotic soil crusts as the impacts of the preferred alternative. Major, localized adverse impacts on microbiotic soil crusts would continue to occur in areas with extensive development and use. Unavoidable losses of microbiotic crusts also would tend to occur in areas with new developments, primarily along the east entrance and Zion Mt. Carmel Highway, Kolob Terrace Road, Lava Point, Kolob Canyons Road, and the lower Zion Canyon. With regard to visitor experiences, alternative A would have about the same potential for unavoidable adverse effects as the preferred alternative. The imposition of use restrictions in the recommended wilderness area would have an unavoidable adverse impact on those visitors who were not able to hike or camp in the area of their choice. Some individuals would consider any limitations on visitor choice to be an unavoidable adverse effect.

RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The restoration of natural processes along portions of the North Fork of the Virgin River would enhance long-term productivity of the biological resources associated with the river and its floodplain.

IRREVERSIBLE AND UNRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES FOR ALTERNATIVE A

Because it takes so long to form soil, the loss of soil due to construction of new focused visitor facilities, picnic areas, and trails would be an irreversible commitment of resources. The planning team is not aware of any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would occur under alternative A.
beneficial effect that would incrementally increase the amount of riparian habitat in the park.

With increased visitor management efforts, developed as part of the river management plan and possible revegetation of portions of the North Fork, impacts on vegetation would be further minimized. Thus, alternative B would have a minor to moderate cumulative effect with the greatest benefits occurring in sections with present channelization and heavy use.

Riparian communities elsewhere in the park would remain relatively intact. With a high proportion of the park being pristine and research natural areas, this alternative would result in increased use and fewer impacts in most of the backcountry trails and roads in canyon bottoms. Most impacts on riparian communities due to trafficking would be negligible.

Cumulative Effects. Cumulative impacts of alternative B would be similar to those of the preferred alternative. The protection and improvement of riparian habitat in the park would have a moderate, positive cumulative impact on riparian areas within the Virgin River watershed.

Conclusion. Under alternative B, overall impacts on riparian communities within the park, from recreational use would be negligible. The designation of the flow of six springs would result in a minor, long-term increase in the riparian zone along the small streams supported by these springs. The restoration of riparian habitat along the North Fork would result in a moderate, long-term, beneficial, localized impact. From a watershed perspective, these actions would have a moderate beneficial effect.

Hanging Gardens

Analysis. Five hanging gardens located within Zion National Park and Parowan Peak Canyon would be in research natural areas zones. This designation would afford additional protection to the plants in this area, few people would have access to them. With continued applications of mitigation measures, damage to or loss of vegetation would be limited, resulting in minimal adverse impacts.

Cumulative Effects. Past human impacts on several hanging gardens have been substantial, but they have mitigated by building trails and barriers that prevent contact with the plants. Consequences although several hanging gardens have been made accessible, loss of vegetation has been minor. Cumulative mitigation, coupled with reduced use levels, would result in a moderate, long-term, beneficial cumulative impact on hanging gardens.

Conclusion. Alternative B would have the same cumulative impact on hanging gardens as that of the preferred alternative.

Microblicous Crusts

Analysis. As in all of the alternatives, moderate to minor, localized disturbance to soils in dugout and high use areas would continue to occur primarily along the east entrance and Zion-Mt. Carmel Highways Kolob Terrace Road and Kolob Canyons Road. For example, soil disturbances and loss of microblicous crusts would continue from people walking out of trails in from the high development, high-consumers low development, and transition zones. The construction of some new developments, such as the east side visitor center, could also result in the long-term loss of soils or disturbance on erosion and soil compaction. To minimize these impacts, new developments would be located in previously disturbed areas or away from microblicous crusts where possible.

Unlike the other alternatives, in alternative B there would be a decrease in visitor use and the removal of many visitor facilities, including trails, trailheads and parking spaces, due to zoning requirements. The decrease in visitor use and the reduction of road use along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would lead to minor to moderate localized reductions in soil compaction and erosion.

Conclusion. Alternative B would have a minor, long-term, positive impact on microblicous crusts.

Virgin Spadecake

Analysis. As under the preferred alternative, under alternative B river restoration efforts and increased visitor management would result in a long-term improvement to adverse impacts along portions of the North Fork and potentially to the entire population. River restoration efforts could have a minor, long-term increase in turbidity, but these impacts would be negligible if the restoration efforts were not being conducted in a minor, long-term, positive impact on the North Fork.

Conclusion. Alternative B would have a minor, long-term, positive impact on the North Fork.

Impact of Alternative B on Recreation: Potential

reduction in soil compaction and erosion, primarily along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway and in much of the lower Zion Canyon. From a park-wide perspective, with reduced use levels and fewer developments, alternative B would have a minor, long-term, positive impact on microblicous crusts.
increase protection to the North Fork population. This protection would be a major, long-term, beneficial effect.

**Conclusion.** Increasing visitor management and restoring the river would protect and potentially enhance the spinedace population, creating a minor to moderate, long-term benefit to the North Fork population of this species. Impacts on spinedace populations elsewhere in the park would be negligible to minor due to very low and/or restricted recreational use levels. Overall, there would be a major, long-term, cumulative benefit to spinedace based on further protection and potential enhancement of the park’s population.

**Mexican Spotted Owls**

*Analysis.* Under this alternative, no facilities would be built in any known owl territory in the park, with the exception of picnic sites along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. Specific locations for the new picnic sites have not been determined, but they would be located in previously disturbed sites along the road. Some of these existing pullouts are located within two owl territories. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, careful siting of the picnic areas in locations that would not encourage visitors to go into canyons used by owls, and the construction of the facilities outside of the breeding/nesting season, should avoid impacts on the owls. Zoning all the canyons north of the highway that are used by owls as pristite areas would also help to ensure that only very low use levels occurred in these areas.

As in the other alternatives, very popular trails pass through three owl territories associated with side canyons off of the main Zion Canyon, below the Temple of Sinawava. If the results of recreational impact monitoring warranted it, park managers would close portions of these trails where owls were typically found or add signs to keep people on the trail and out of side canyons frequented by owls. These actions would mitigate potential effects from increased visitation in these areas.

All of the other known owl territories are in primitive, pristine, and research natural areas. With this zoning, very low levels of use would occur in the owl territories. Hiking would typically occur during the day and take people in and out of an owl’s presence relatively quickly. The zone criteria regarding group sizes and encounter levels would further limit impacts on owls. Additionally, park managers would not locate any new designated camping sites in owl territories. Dispersed camping would continue in the pristine zones, but assuming a variety of locations were used, there would be a low probability of n, restricted camping in locations near a nest or roost site. If future surveys indicated that visitors were camping near identified nest or roost sites, camping would be restricted in these locations.

Very low levels of use may affect the behavior of some spotted owls. Park personnel would continue to monitor owl nesting activity and productivity to assess potential impacts and would restrict visitor use if necessary to mitigate these impacts.

**Cumulative Effects.** The Zion Canyon shuttle system would be the only action that potentially could result in a cumulative impact. The Zion Canyon transportation system planning process evaluated the implementation of a canyon shuttle system and the construction of shuttle stops, with the associated increased use of trails through side canyons supporting owl territories. That process identified trail closures, noted above, as a way to mitigate effects of increased use. No cumulative effects are expected.

**Conclusion.** Alternative B is not likely to adversely affect the productivity of known spotted owl territories. Of all the alternatives of this plan, alternative B would have the least potential for affecting owls, due to the predominant occurrence of owl territories within research natural areas and pristine zones, which are most prevalent in alternative B.

**Southwestern Willow Flycatcher**

*Analysis.* Like in the preferred alternative, willow flycatcher habitat in Parunuweap Canyon would not likely be adversely affected because there would be limited research related use, there would be no development or recreational use through the canyon. There would also not likely be adverse effects on willow flycatcher habitat in Birch Creek because there would be no new development or recreational use along Birch Creek.

Impacts to riparian areas from restoration of portions of the North Fork of the Virgin River would be short term. The restoration would improve riparian habitat and potentially flycatcher habitat. However, no records exist that document the occurrence of this species there. The river management planning process would address the specific strategies and methods for restoring the river and managing visitor use. That plan would more closely evaluate impacts of the North Fork restoration effort, including potential benefits to flycatchers.

Impacts from increased recreational use on riparian areas along the North Fork and elsewhere in the park would be negligible to minor with the implementation of increased visitor management efforts, mitigation measures such as on-site reclamation or trail improvements, and continued Park Service flycatcher surveys that would help management avoid or minimize impacts to flycatcher habitat.

**Cumulative Effects.** The southwestern willow flycatcher has been adversely affected by the conversion or destruction of native riparian habitats. The park represents a significant portion of the upper Virgin River watershed. The protection and improvement of riparian habitat in the park would have a positive, long-term, moderate cumulative impact on riparian areas within the watershed that could benefit flycatchers.

**Conclusion.** Alternative B might affect, but would not likely adversely affect, the southwestern willow flycatcher. Although potential impacts might occur, the implementation of mitigation measures and visitor management actions, the impacts would not likely adversely affect the species. And restoration of riparian habitat along the North Fork might result in long-term beneficial effects.

**Desert Bighorn Sheep**

*Analysis.* Zoning Parunuweap Canyon and Shunes Canyon as research natural areas would preclude recreational use and thus provide continued protection to sheep range and lambing areas. Negligible to minor impacts from research activities would occur. Similarly, zoning canyons and slopes south of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway as research natural areas and pristine areas, including important foraging areas in Gifford Canyon and Crawford Wash, would provide further protection to sheep range. These actions would reduce visitor use from already relatively low levels, which would be a minor, long-term, beneficial effect. The addition of picnic sites and short nature trails at existing pullouts/trailheads would negligibly affect sheep use or sheep road crossings.

**Cumulative Effects.** There would be no cumulative impacts on this species. The sheep may potentially be affected if air tours
Environmental Consequences

occur over sheep range in the park. An air

tour management plan would be prepared to

address this use and the potential impacts on

sensitive wildlife such as sheep.

Conclusion. Prohibiting recreational use

would prevent impacts on lambing areas, al-

though negligible to minor impacts from

research activities could occur. Prohibiting

or slightly reducing visitor use in most of the

sheep’s range, primarily Parunuweap and

Shunes Canyons and other areas south of the

Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, would create a

minor benefit to sheep, compared to existing

conditions.

Visitor Experiences and Uses

Natural Sounds

Analysis. This alternative reduces the num-

ber of park facilities and visitor use levels,

which would result in minor to moderate

reductions in noise impacts throughout the

park. With fewer people visiting the upper

Zion Canyon, due to the termination of the

shuttle system at the Zion Lodge, there

would be a moderate decrease in impacts on

the natural soundscape in the upper canyon.

The shuttle system operating on the Zion-Mt.

Carmel Highway would reduce traffic, which

would result in a moderate reduction of noise

impacts. Restricting the number of vehicles

along the Kolob Canyons Road and Kolob-

Terrace Road may be required in the future to

fulfill zone prescriptions. This action would

reduce noise impacts to a minor degree com-

pared to the no-action alternative.

Cumulative Effects. The operation of the

Zion Canyon transportation system in com-

bination with the reduction of some other

noise sources in the canyon, would result in

an overall moderate, long-term, positive effect.

If aircraft flights increased, there could be a

negative cumulative impact on the natural

soundscape, especially in the

undeveloped areas of the park where solitude

and natural soundscape are valued for the

most protection.

Conclusions. With a substantial decrease in

visitor use in alternative B, there would be a

moderate reduction in noise in the park. The

most positive effects would be attributed to

the reduction of vehicles along the Zion-Mt.

Carmel Highway and the reduction in visitor

numbers from the lodge to the Temple of

Sinawava.

Range of Visitor Experiences and

Activities

Analysis. Like in all of the action alterna-
tives, the new management zones in alterna-
tive B would help maintain a range of visitor

experiences, from solitude and natural

soundscapes to more social and developed

experiences. However, alternative B would

provide fewer opportunities for visitors to

view parts of the park than the other

alternatives.

Like the preferred alternative, under alterna-
tive B, most of the park would be in pristine

zones. Visitors would have opportunities for

high-quality wilderness experiences, and

most visitors who were permitted to go into

these areas would have a positive experi-

ence.

As in all of the alternatives, most visitors

would continue to spend their time in the

park’s frontcountry, staying in or near the

devolved areas. The future carrying capaci-
ty studies and river management plan may

propose limits on use of some areas. It is not

possible here to evaluate the effect of these

potential actions — they would be assessed

if and when the actions are proposed.

Several actions under alternative B would

reduce visitor use and significantly alter the

recreational opportunities provided in the

upper part of the main Zion Canyon. Specifi-
cally, closing Zion Lodge to general public

use, removing all food service in the canyon,

eliminating the horseback riding operation

on the Sand Bench trail, and reducing the

number and frequency of shuttles going to

the Temple of Sinawava would have a

major, negative effect on use of the park (see

below).

Acquiring access easements would have

the same effects as those described under the

preferred alternative. These easements would

ensure that visitors could continue to access

several popular trails and routes that

currently go through private land. Thus, this

action would have a major, positive impact

on visitors using those routes.

Kolob Canyons Road — Under alternative B,

park managers may add a few new visitor

developments at the entrance area and

provide additional interpretive facilities

along the road, which would have a minor,

positive effect on the visitor experience.

However, removing the parking area at the

South Fork of Taylor Creek would have a

moderate, negative impact on visitors,

because it would eliminate the opportunity

for people to stop and view this area and

would displace visitors who hiked here.

Although use levels in much of the Kolob

Canyons area would decrease under this

alternative, it is likely that use would still

increase along this road because of restric-
tions in the rest of the park and because this

road would be one of the few that visitors

could still drive on in their own vehicles. If

visitation to the Kolob Canyons area in-

creased or if visitors stayed longer in this

area, crowding and noise levels associated

with visitation could increase (e.g., voices,
car noises). The degradation of park re-

sources also may occur, such as increased

litter and erosion, and the formation of more

social trails. These changes would have a

minor to moderate, negative impact on those

visitors who valued natural soundscapes,
solitude, and viewing park resources in a

natural state.

If visitation increased substantially, park

managers may place limits on the number of

vehicles allowed on the road or institute a

shuttle system. This could inconvenience

visitors, limiting when visitors could access

the road in their vehicles. However, visitors

would be assured of a more rural experience

crowding and noise would be

moderated.

Kolob-Terrace Road and Lava Point —

Under this alternative, several trailheads and

parking areas would be removed (e.g., Hop

Valley, the Right Fork, Wildcat Canyon,

Connector trail) along the Kolob-Terrace

Road. This action would have a minor to

moderate, negative impact on some visitors’

experiences because it would reduce their

hiking opportunities and reduce

opportunities to have contact with park

resources.

Visitors would no longer be able to drive

past the Lava Point entrance area, near the

ranger residence. As a result, visitors would

have to walk about a mile to reach the West

Rim trail. This would have a minor to mod-

erate, negative impact on visitors who en-

joyed accessing Zion’s resources in their

vehicles, slightly reducing their opportunities
to enjoy Zion’s resources. For other visitors,

adding one mile onto the length of the trail

could add to their enjoyment. However, it is

likely that this action would have a negligi-

ble impact on the experiences of trail users.

Due to restrictions in other parts of the park,

the Kolob-Terrace Road would be one of

two major roads visitors could still use to

drive into the park. Consequently, visitation
could increase here over time.

If visitation to the Kolob-Terrace Road and

Lava Point area increased or if visitors

stayed longer, noise levels associated with
visitation could increase (e.g., voices, car noises) and there would be fewer opportunities for visitors to experience solitude. Some degradation of park resources also may occur. This would have a minor, negative impact for those visitors who valued natural soundscapes and solitude and viewing park resources in a natural state. If park managers limited traffic or provided shuttles to Lava Point, these impacts would be reduced or eliminated. Some visitors would be adversely affected if they could not experience the Lava Point area, however.

South Entrance and the Main Zion Canyon — As noted above, several of the actions under alternative B would have a major, negative effect on recreational use in the main Zion Canyon. Reducing the number and frequency of shuttles running past the lodge would reduce the number of visitors who could experience the last few miles of Zion Canyon, the Temple of Sinawava, and the Narrows. Visitors who were able to get on the shuttles would have opportunities to come into contact with and enjoy some of Zion’s most spectacular resources. A number of people also have environmental education center and then hike or bike approximately 3 miles to the upper end of the canyon. With less people, noise, and of other people, most visitors who went past the ‘lodge would likely have a positive experience.

The reduction in the number of shuttles going past the former lodge also would have negative impacts. During high use periods, visitors would likely wait in long lines to board the shuttles at the south entrance transportation center, which would detract from their park experience. (A reservation system would reduce the lines but would involve other costs for visitors and park managers.) Visitors with time constraints may forego this experience, just visit the lodge area and nearby trails, or go elsewhere either within or outside of the park. Visitors returning from the upper canyon to the park entrance probably would have to wait again to board shuttles. Additionally, visitors who took a shuttle to the upper canyon and then went hiking, and visitors who hiked from elsewhere in the park and ended their trips at the Temple of Sinawava, could have to wait to take shuttles back, especially at the end of the day.

Compared to the other alternatives, reducing the number and frequency of shuttles would reduce the number of visitors who hiked the popular trails at the upper end of the canyon, including the East and West Rim trails, Weeping Rock, and the Riverside Walk. This could have a negative or positive effect on the experience of many visitors, depending on how often the shuttles ran.

Under alternative B, visitors would no longer have the opportunity to take concession-operated horseback rides on the Sand Bench trail. This would be a major, adverse impact on visitors who wanted to horseback ride in the canyon. However, it would be a positive impact on visitors who wished to hike the Sand Bench trail without the presence of horses.

Visitors would no longer have the opportunity to stay overnight at the Zion Canyon Lodge. These visitors would need to find lodging outside the park, which would be inconvenient and might reduce the time they spent in the park and the contact they had with park resources. For visitors who valued being able to stay overnight in Zion Canyon but did not wish to camp, this action would have a major, adverse impact on their experience.

Visitors would still experience the former Zion Canyon Lodge as a center of activity because it would function as an environmental education center and the terminus for many shuttles. This would be a moderate to major, positive impact on people who sought environmental education opportunities. Depending on how park managers operated the center and the shuttle bus stop, noise, crowding, and congestion could increase or decrease in the vicinity of the former lodge.

Because food service would no longer be available in the park, visitors may curtail their stay to dine outside of the park, thus reducing their contact with park resources. Other visitors would simply be inconvenienced. This action would have a moderate, adverse impact on those visitors who wanted to or were expecting to dine in the canyon.

Some visitors and school groups would have increased opportunities to learn about park resources and interact with scientists at the environmental education center. This would allow them to better understand Zion’s significance, increase their enjoyment of the park, and increase the protection of park resources. The center would have a positive impact on the experiences of Zion visitors, but the degree of these impacts would depend on how the education center was managed. Criteria such as who could use the center, how long the groups could visit, how many people could participate would all affect visitors’ experiences. The extent of these impacts cannot be evaluated at this time.

East Entrance and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway — The development of a visitor center near the east entrance would improve orientation and facilitate trip planning for visitors who arrived at Zion National Park from the east. The facilities would provide conveniences for visitors, such as restrooms, a place to obtain backcountry permits, and information about the Zion Canyon shuttle system. Visitors would have additional opportunities to learn about the park’s significant resources and primary interpretive themes of Zion before they drove through the park to the south entrance and transportation center. Better education about resources would lead to increased visitor understanding and enjoyment and better protection of park resources. This action would have a moderate, positive impact on the experiences of visitors who arrived through the east entrance.

Because the area around the east entrance and the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway itself would be a frontcountry high development zone, visitors potentially would have greater opportunities for and improved access to interpretation, picnicking, hiking, and information about park resources in this area of the park. Increased contact with park resources and additional interpretive opportunities could increase visitor understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of those resources.

Under alternative B, visitors would be required to take a shuttle along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway. This requirement would severely inconvenience park visitors and tourists who used the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway as a way to get across southwestern Utah. Some people would be deterred from visiting the east side of the park, while others (particularly travelers from points east) might be completely deterred from entering Zion. This would have a major, negative impact on visitors’ enjoyment and understanding of Zion’s significance.

Visitors who took the shuttle would have a more structured experience with less opportunity for unplanned stops to view wildlife, take photographs, or go exploring. This would have a moderate, adverse impact on visitors who valued personal choice and unrestricted access.

Noise levels associated with shuttle buses, parking lots, and people would increase around the east entrance facility and staging area. This would have a moderate, but
localized, adverse impact on the experiences of visitors who valued natural soundscapes.

As noted in the alternative, local residents who traveled through the park for commuting purposes would be considered through traffic and allowed to use the highway. Thus, this alternative should not affect these drivers.

The shuttle system would have some positive effects, as well. Visitors who used the shuttles would experience the road with less traffic and under safer conditions. They would be able to enjoy the scenery without worrying about driving. Because traffic on the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would be reduced, visitors hiking in the vicinity would have increased opportunities to enjoy natural soundscapes. In addition, the shuttles would provide a convenient service for visitors who wanted to do one-way hikes to or from the eastern part of the park, or for groups of visitors who wanted to split up. This would have a minor, positive impact on the experiences of visitors who valued quiet and reduced traffic congestion.

Recommended Wilderness — Alternative B would have positive benefits for those visitors who were able to go into the recommended wilderness area. Once visitors entered the recommended wilderness area, they would most likely have a quality experience appropriate for a wilderness area (e.g., the experience of natural soundscapes and solitude). Thus, this alternative would result in a positive experience for those visitors who desired a wilderness experience in the park and were willing to be flexible in their plans.

Like the preferred alternative, the new interim encounter rate limits would likely have a negligible effect on most backcountry users — in most areas people could continue to find opportunities for solitude and natural soundscapes, and the new interim limits would not affect them. In a few popular areas, such as Taylor Creek, the encounter limits would help ensure that use levels do not increase undesirably, thus avoiding potential visitor experience impacts. For those visitors who are seeking a wilderness experience at Zion and were willing and able to be flexible, the encounter limits likely would have a minor to moderate, positive impact, compared to the no-action alternative.

Alternative B would have several negative impacts on visitors. Some visitors might experience a minor to moderate, negative impact if group sizes or encounter rates exceed their wilderness experience expectations. Compared to existing conditions and the other two alternatives, alternative B would provide substantially fewer opportunities for hiking on trails and camping at designated campsites (i.e., primitive zone experiences). Compared to existing conditions, alternative B may result in the reduction of use levels on 17 trails and routes, including several popular trails. Most visitors would no longer have the opportunity to go to certain popular features, trails, and routes, including Observation Point, La Verkin Creek, Hop Valley, Taylor Creek, and upper Emerald Pool, due to these visitation limits. Use of the recommended wilderness area probably would decline by a moderate to major amount, depending on the area and the redistribution of use among trails. Overall, it is likely that the use limits would have a moderate to major, adverse impact on visitors who could not enter the recommended wilderness area and for those visitors who valued the option of choosing where they wanted to go and when. These use limits could also discourage some potential visitors from visiting Zion.

In addition, there probably would be inconveniences for visitors prior to entering the recommended wilderness, such as obtaining permits, making reservations, or potentially changing the dates or destinations of their trip.

With 94% of the park being in pristine and research natural area zones under alternative B, park managers would prohibit some saddle stock use in areas where this activity is currently permitted. In particular, this alternative would eliminate horseback riding areas along the Hop Valley trail, Scoggins Wash, Dalua Wash/Crater Hill, and upper Coalpits Wash. Some horseback riders would find other areas in the park to ride horses, such as the Coalpits Wash-Chinle loop, while other horseback riders would likely be displaced to areas outside the park. Although a relatively few horseback riders use these areas, the Hop Valley trail is the only area where saddle stock groups can camp in the park. Thus, eliminating horseback use along the Hop Valley trail would have a moderate to major negative impact on those saddle stock groups who use this area.

As noted in the other alternatives, a wilderness management plan would determine if guided activities should be permitted in Zion’s backcountry areas. However, under alternative B, areas that could be opened to commercial guiding would be very limited. Thus, the alternative would foreclose some potential new experiences. If guided activities were to be permitted in Zion, the impacts of these activities would be assessed as part of the wilderness management plan.

Research Natural Areas — Under alternative B, approximately 20,348 acres of Zion’s recommended wilderness would be research natural areas and therefore opened only to NPS-guided educational trips and research. Many of these areas currently receive little recreational use. Therefore, managing these areas as research natural areas and restricting public use would have a negligible impact on the experiences of most visitors. However, a few visitors would be displaced from areas such lower La Verkin Creek, the Right Fork of North Creek, and Dalton Wash. Some of these visitors would be able to find substitute destinations, but others may not be able to do so. Thus, this alternative would likely have a moderate to major, negative impact on a few visitors who wished to visit these areas.

Scenic Views — Under alternative B, park managers could develop several new facilities and programs that would reduce traffic congestion (e.g., new facilities at the east entrance). Even with appropriate facility design and landscaping to minimize visual impacts, these developments would have a minor, negative impact on the experiences of visitors who valued a less developed visual scene.

On the other hand, this alternative would require the removal of several facilities, including parking areas along the Kolob Canyons and the Kolob-Terrace Roads, and administrative facilities in Zion Canyon. These actions would have visitors who wished to experience Zion’s scenic resources without the intrusion of these modern facilities, providing a minor, positive impact on the experiences of visitors who valued a visual scene that was less developed in character.

Cumulative Effects. The many management actions proposed under alternative B (e.g., closing trails, eliminating opportunities for horseback riding and staying overnight at the Zion Lodge, reducing in the number and frequency of shuttle trips going to the Temple of Sinawava, and operating the mandatory Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway shuttles), taken in conjunction with the Zion Canyon shuttles, would limit access to many park resources and create a much more structured visitor experience than the opportunities presently available. In most areas of the park, visitors would have substantially fewer personal choices regarding where they wanted to visit and when. Thus, alternative B has the
Conclusion. For visitors who valued opportunities to experience solitude, quiet, and pristine landscapes, alternative B would have a moderate to major, positive impact. Most visitors who are able to enter the recommended wilderness area would have a positive experience. The new education/research center would also provide positive experiences for many visitors and school groups. The mandatory shuttle on the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would also have a positive impact on some visitors, reducing traffic and providing an opportunity to hike one-way on trails.

But for many visitors, alternative B would have a major to moderate, negative impact on their experience in much of the park. Compared to all of the other alternatives, fewer visitors would experience Zion Canyon above the Zion Lodge or have the opportunity to stay overnight and ride horses in the park. The reduction in the number and frequency of shuttles going past the Zion Lodge would likely be a positive effect on visitors who traveled beyond the lodge and a negative effect on visitors who had to wait or were displaced. The mandatory shuttle on the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would further reduce personal choices and access to the park's resources. In the recommended wilderness area there may be a reduction in use levels on many popular trails and routes, which would negatively affect visitors wanting to use these areas. New use limits would reduce opportunities for those visitors who wanted to see and experience the Zion backcountry and most of the park's resources.

Taken as a whole, all of the above actions would have a moderate to major, negative impact on visitors in the frontcountry and moderate, positive and negative impacts on visitors in the backcountry.

Visitor Experiences in Other Nearby Recreational Areas

Although most potential visitors would still be interested in experiencing Zion, alternative B would have the potential to displace many individuals. A few visitors would not go to Zion if they could not stay overnight in the park, could not see the upper end of the main Zion Canyon, or had to take shuttles to see much of the park. Individuals who could not access the Zion backcountry due to limits on visitor numbers, or those who wanted to experience a backcountry with a larger group, also might visit other state and federal recreational areas rather than Zion. The impact of these displaced visitors on other state and federal areas would depend on the specific areas affected, the number of visitors actually displaced, and the times when they were displaced. For most areas, it is likely that increased visitation resulting from the actions in alternative B would have a minor, negative impact on the visitor experiences in those other areas.

Cumulative Effects. Although people would likely be displaced to other recreational areas as a result of the actions taken in alternative B, the operation of the Zion Canyon shuttle system would prevent the overall number of people who were displaced from Zion to other state and federal areas from being too large. Even if many of these potential visitors chose not to go to Zion or chose to shorten their Zion trips, many of the displaced visitors would still be visiting these other recreational areas as part of their "Grand Circle" vacations. Thus, alternative B would have a minor cumulative effect on the experiences of visitors in other recreational areas.

Conclusion. The actions taken under alternative B would likely result in the displacement of visitors from Zion to other nearby state and federal recreational areas. Thus, alternative B would likely have a minor, negative effect on the experiences provided at these other areas. The mandatory shuttle on the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway would also have a positive impact on some visitors, reducing traffic and providing an opportunity to hike one-way on trails.

THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Analysis. The conversion of the lodge to an educational facility and the removal of the horseback riding operation and food and gift sales would result in a major, long-term, negative impact on concessioner businesses and their employees within the park. However, some businesses outside the park may actually benefit from the reduction of commercial services within the park because of reduced competition.

A general reduction in visitor use levels could negatively affect some area businesses or individuals from a minor to major degree. Use levels may no longer support some businesses. Conversely, a reduction in visitor numbers in the park would result in less crowded conditions that may entice some visitors to stay longer, which in turn may encourage more spending within the local communities. Fewer visitors who stayed longer (and perhaps spent more) and the lack of competition from businesses located outside the park may actually benefit the local gateway economies to a minor to moderate degree. These impacts are likely to be long term in duration. In addition, a few individuals and firms would receive short-term, positive, minor to moderate benefits due to increased opportunities to provide goods and services related to removing, converting, and constructing facilities within the park. These projects would occur at different times and would be spread throughout the park, which would serve to distribute the overall benefits.

Past increases in visitor use levels and the concurrent demands for goods and services have led the private sector outside of the park to increase development and economic activity. Long-term reductions in visitor use levels would reduce the current rate and intensity of development within the gateway community of Springdale and environs. This development would likely continue at a slower pace and may eventually level off as the long-term, sustainable commercial and residential potential of the area is satiated. While the built environment of this area would continue to evolve, the small town "pioneer heritage" image would be fostered and protected by the local land use plan and zoning regulations.

The park would continue to provide the basis for the local tourism industry served by the private sector outside of the park. The effect on the local economy in terms of population, employment, income, and the like, could be either positive or negative. In either case, the effect of alternative B would likely have a major degree due to the relatively large size of the local economy compared to the actions of alternative B.

Cumulative Effects. Zion National Park has been a protected area since 1909. As a result of increased visitation to the park, local businesses and residential development have increased. This growth trend has had a positive impact on the local/regional economy. The actions in alternative B would affect use of the park's backcountry areas, but would not likely diminish the growth trend in the park's frontcountry areas. The operation of the Zion Canyon shuttle system also has resulted in additional NPS expenditures which likely had a positive, long-term benefit on the local and regional economy. Overall, alternative B would likely have a long-term,
negligible, negative cumulative effect on the local and regional economy.

Conclusion. Reduced visitor use and the removal of commercial activity from within the park would negatively impact some businesses and individuals from a minor to major degree within the gateway communities, especially Springdale. However, the elimination of competition from the park could actually benefit some of these same businesses. So the overall effect (positive or negative) is indeterminate, but probably would be minor to moderate for most affected entities.

Concessioner businesses and their employees would be affected by the loss of their contracts and jobs. These impacts could be moderate to major depending upon the individual situations. In addition, some development projects would provide a few individuals and firms with short-term economic benefits that would be moderate to major (for those directly affected) depending upon the level of involvement that occurred. Thus, while some firms and individuals would experience a moderate to major effect, overall, alternative B would result in a negligible to minor, negative change in the local/regional economy.

CONFLICTS WITH LAND USE PLANS

Analysis. Zion National Park is within the boundaries of Iron, Washington, and Kane Counties. All three counties have a general plan as required by enabling legislation passed by the Utah state legislature and reflected in section 17-27-301 of the Utah code. Portions of the Iron County general plan relating to national park areas focus on Cedar Breaks National Monument, with Zion being mentioned primarily for its impacts related to tourism and recreational opportunities.

The portions of the Washington County and Kane County General Plans relating to federal government coordination emphasizes the mandates of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and do not recognize the separate mandates applicable to the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service. For example, the Washington County Plan provides that this plan is to be used by federal land managing agencies in developing land use plans required by section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and 43 CFR, subpart 1601. Similarly, the Kane County General Plan recognizes that “federal law mandates multiple use of federally managed land...” and cites the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 43 U.S.C. as the guiding legislation. In both cases, these provisions apply only to BLM and do not apply to either the U.S. Forest Service or the National Park Service, each having its own organic acts and policies for land use planning.

The Washington County General Plan’s recommendation that park land within Washington County not be managed as wilderness conflicts with NPS policy. According to NPS Management Policies, land that has been recommended to Congress as recommended wilderness must be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness Act.

All three plans emphasize the need for coordination and communication with federal land managing agencies. Many of the concerns that have surfaced have been because of inadequate communication and coordination.

Cumulative Effects. There would be no cumulative effects.

Conclusion. The 1978 wilderness recommendation identified in the General Plan would be in conflict with the Washington County General Plan.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE B

As in the other alternatives, major, localized, adverse impacts on microbiotic soil crusts would continue to occur in areas with extensive development and use. Unavoidable losses of microbiotic crusts also would be likely in areas with new developments, primarily along the east entrance and ZIon Mt. Carmel Highway and the lower Zion Canyon.

With regard to visitor experiences, the elimination of the horseback riding operation in Zion Canyon would be considered by some to be an unavoidable adverse effect. The implementation of a mandatory shuttle on the Zion Mt. Carmel Highway would have a major, adverse impact on visitor experience by inconveniencing visitors or leading them to decide not visit the park at all. Many would view increasing the number and frequency of the shuttles going up to the Temple of Sinawava as an unavoidable adverse effect that prevented people from seeing and enjoying the upper part of the main canyon. The termination of lodge operations would have a major, negative impact on visitors who wished to stay overnight in Zion but did not wish to camp.

RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Restoring natural processes along portions of the North Fork of the Virgin River would enhance long-term productivity of the biological resources associated with the river and its floodplain.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES FOR ALTERNATIVE B

Like in the other action alternatives, the loss of soil due to construction of new visitor facilities would be an irreversible commitment of resources. The planning team is not aware of any other irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would occur under alternative B.
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ON THE FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Consultation and coordination among the governmental agencies and the public were vitally important throughout the planning process for the Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement. Interested citizens had several opportunities to share their views and concerns during this process.

The scoping process for this plan was initiated on December 11, 1996, when the Federal Register published a "notice of intent" to prepare an environmental impact statement. Subsequent scoping efforts included the distribution of a letter to the public and public agencies soliciting input regarding the issues and concerns the plan should address (see below).

NEWSLETTERS AND WORKBOOKS

The planning team primarily used newsletters and workbooks to involve the public in developing the plan. During the planning process, the team compiled a mailing list consisting of over 1,000 names. The list included members of planning teams from other state and federal governmental agencies (38), state and federal legislators (6), Indian tribal governments (4), local and regional governments (39), businesses and organizations (32), and interested citizens.

During the course of the planning process, the team published and mailed six newsletters and one workbook to the public. The first newsletter was published in October 1996 and was sent to about 850 people and organizations. Newsletter #1 alerted people about the beginning of the planning process and included information on the park's purposes and significance, its mission goal statements, why a new approach was being taken for this plan, and how the new plan would help the park. In the newsletter, the planning team also asked the public to comment on a vision for the park and on what issues the plan should address.

The planning team received forty-seven responses to the first newsletter. The most frequently expressed vision for Zion's future was for the continued preservation and protection of the park's scenic and natural resources. Another popular vision was for the availability of more recreational opportunities for visitors. The public also identified a variety of issues and concerns on topics such as commercial guided services, congestion, aircraft overflights, development pressures outside the park, and the impacts of increased use.

Based on the responses to the newsletter, the planning team held focus groups to receive public input on aircraft overflights, river recreation, and climbing in canyon areas. Newsletter #2, published in February 1997, announced that focus group meetings would be held in March 1997, and provided an update on the status of the planning effort. This newsletter did not include a response form.

In April 1997, the planning team distributed the third newsletter. Newsletter #3 summarized the public comments received from newsletter #1, as well as the results of the focus group meetings. This newsletter also did not include a response form.

In May 1997, the planning team distributed newsletter #4 to about 900 people and organizations. This newsletter described 7 potential management zones developed by the planning team, identified 6 possible alternative concepts for managing Zion, and discussed 12 major issues and concerns the plan would address. A response form asked for comments on the management zones and the alternative concepts.

By the end of the comment period for newsletter #4, the planning team received 26 responses. Most people were supportive of the planning effort to date. Several respondents liked the range of management zones. Almost all of the respondents stated that the range of alternative concepts was appropriate. Again, the respondents expressed a variety of concerns, covering such topics as operating the shuttle system, reducing the number of visitors in the park, ensuring the freedom of visitors, and prohibiting some uses.

In October 1997, the planning team published a 16-page alternatives workbook, which was distributed to approximately 1,800 individuals and organizations. The workbook summarized comments received on the May newsletter, described the development of the preliminary alternatives, summarized descriptions of the potential management zones, identified actions that would be common to all of the alternatives, and provided descriptions of six preliminary alternatives for managing Zion. The descriptions of the alternatives highlighted key actions and noted the implications of each alternative.

The workbook included a response form, which asked people to identify their preferred alternative, explain why they prefer the alternative, and make suggestions for improving the alternatives. Another question asked respondents to identify rivers with regionally outstanding natural, cultural, or recreational values. A table in the workbook listed actions that could be taken to reduce the potential implementing in Zion. Respondents identified the actions they would like to see implemented by circling the preferred actions on the table.

About 270 respondents replied to the response form. Most of the respondents did not support any specific alternative as described, but rather suggested revising the alternatives to better reflect their views. People generally preferred an alternative because it protected the park's resources and maintained or increased visitor use. Most of the respondents focused on the actions that would be taken under the alternatives, rather than on how the park would be zoned. Few individuals responded to the question regarding rivers with regionally outstanding values. Those who did respond to this question identified 12 drainages with outstanding values.

In June 1998, the planning team issued a brief update newsletter (#5). The newsletter summarized the comments submitted on the alternatives workbook and identified changes the planning team had made to the management zones and alternatives. Newsletter #5 did not include a response form.

Finally, in December 1998, the planning team distributed another brief newsletter update (#6). This newsletter noted the status of the planning effort and reported that the team had dropped one alternative from consideration. Newsletter #6 also included instructions on how to receive a copy of the draft document, to which the planning team received 212 responses.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY MEETINGS

The planning team held several meetings during the course of the planning process. Two meetings were held with the Springdale Planning Commission; one on November 17, 1998, and the other on June 29, 1999. One meeting was held with the Springdale town council on July 1, 1999. Six briefings were held in St. George with the Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC), to advise the various land management agencies on the status of the planning effort. These briefings took place: April 9, 1996; August 13, 1996; March 17,
1997; September 2, 1997; January 6, 1998; and September 8, 1999. Similar meetings were held with the Five County Association of Governments, one in Cedar City, on October 8, 1997; one in Panguitch, on May 13, 1998; and one in St. George, on November 18, 1998. Meetings were held on June 15, 1999, in Salt Lake City, with the Natural Resource Coordinating Committee, and on September 1999, with the Utah Rural Summit.

As noted above, the planning team held three focus group meetings to discuss the appropriateness and management of aircraft overflights, river recreation, and climbing/ canyoneering. The meetings were held in the park on March 25, 26, and 27, 1997. The planning team also accepted written comments. The April 1997 newsletter (#3) includes a summary of the meetings.

In addition to these meetings, members of the planning team consulted with and sought the views of several agencies and governments during the planning process. On February 26, 1997, in St. George, representatives of the Kaibah Paiute Indian Tribe, Mosap Indian Tribe, and Paute Indian Tribe of Utah met with park staff to discuss the plan. The tribes were also updated on the planning effort at a May 14, 1997, meeting in St. George.

In November 1996, the planning team initiated informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the presence of federally listed threatened and endangered species in Zion National Park. A copy of the Fish and Wildlife Service response to this consultation is included in appendix G. The planning team subsequently contacted the Fish and Wildlife Service in November 1998, to update this list.

Consultation also was initiated with the Utah state historic preservation officer in February 1999, regarding a determination of effect of the plan on cultural resources.

In February 1998, staff from the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Dixie Field Office and Zion National Park entered into a memorandum of understanding concerning wild and scenic studies of five specific tracts of public land on the north border of the park and the inclusion of these tracts into the national wild and scenic rivers system. On April 2, 1998, this memorandum of understanding was amended to include public land encompassing Shanes Creek, a tributary to the East Fork of the Virgin River, contiguous to the southeast border of the park.

On February 17, 1998, a Federal Register notice announced the new planning amendment for the Dixie Field Office and solicited public scoping on the preferred alternative. In addition, in February, a BLM news release was sent to newspapers, radio stations, and television stations throughout Utah, Arizona, and Nevada. The St. George Field Office also sent out a "Dixie Dispatch" in February and September 1998, to the hundreds of agencies, companies, and individuals on the office’s planning mailing list. This dispatch was intended to keep the public informed of the planning amendment. The Proposed Dixie Resource Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement, which was released to the public in September 1998, also included a discussion of the planning amendment.

Two meetings took place with the Wild and Scenic River Coordination Group, on March 6 and April 2, 1998, to discuss, among other things, coordination of this planning effort. The coordination group consisted of members of the Utah state government, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and affected local agencies. The group was formed under a memorandum of understanding to establish a cooperative relationship among the agencies for conducting wild and scenic river studies of Utah rivers.
LIST OF AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WHOM THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN SENT

There are approximately 500 entries on the mailing list for this plan. All persons on the list were given an opportunity to review the document. The National Park Service circulated the Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement to the agencies and organizations listed below. Those who responded to the Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement are noted with an asterisk (*). A complete list of individuals who received copies of the document is on file at the park headquarters.

Federal Agencies


Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region VIII Utah Congressional Delegation Representative Cannon Rep. James V. Hansen Sen. Robert F. Bennett Sen. Orrin Hatch Utah State Agencies Department of Agriculture Department of Environmental Quality Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife Resources Division of Water Resources Division of Water Rights Department of Tourism Department of Transportation School Trust Lands Administration Office of the Governor Governor Mike Leavitt *Office of Planning and Budget State Clearinghouse *Utah Division of State History Utah State University College of Natural Resources Department of Forest Resources Utah Legislative Delegation Rep. Demar "Bud" Bowman Rep. Bill Hickman *Rep. Wayne Harper Other State Agencies Arizona Office of Tourism Nevada Office of Tourism

LIST OF AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WHOM THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN SENT

Indian Tribal Governments Hopi Tribe Kaibab Paiute Tribe Moapa Band Paiute Tribe Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah Regional, County, Local, and City/Township Governments City manager, Cedar City, UT City manager, Mesquite, NV City of Page, AZ *Five County Association of Governments Iron County Commissioners *Kane County Commissioners Kane County Office of Tourism *Kane County Water Conservancy District Mayor of Alton, UT Mayor of Brianhead, UT Mayor of Cedar City, UT Mayor of Colorado City, AZ Mayor of Enoch, UT Mayor of Enterprise, UT Mayor of Flagstaff, AZ Mayor of Fremont, AZ Mayor of Hildale UT Mayor of Hurricane, UT Mayor of Ivins, UT *Mayor of Kanab, UT Mayor of Kanarraville, UT Mayor of Laverkin, UT Mayor of Leeds, UT Mayor of Mesquite, NV Mayor of New Harmony, UT Mayor of Oederville, UT Mayor of Paragonah, UT Mayor of Panguitch, UT Mayor of Parowan, UT *Mayor of Rockville, UT Mayor of St. George, UT Mayor of Santa Clara, UT Mayor of Springdale, UT *Mayor of Virgin, UT Mayor of Washington, UT Mohave County Board of Supervisors, AZ Springdale Planning Commission *Washington County Commissioners

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

*Washington County Water Conservancy District

Organizations and Businesses

Wilderness Watch
World Wildlife Fund
Zion Canyon Chamber of Commerce
Zion Canyon Cinemax
Zion Lodge
Zion Natural History Association

Local Libraries
State Library (Salt Lake City)
Kanab
Springdale
Hurricane
St. George
Las Vegas
Panguitch
Salt Lake City Public Library (Government Documents)
University of Utah
Utah State University Library
Harold E. Lee Library. Brigham Young University
Southern Utah University Library

Media
AM Park Network
Associated Press
Daily Spectrum
Dixie Datebook
Environmental News Network
Garfield County News
Grand Canyon Report
Las Vegas Review-Journal
MB Broadcasting
Off the Beaten Path
Salt Lake Tribune
Southern Utah Sportsman Magazine
Southwest Utah Magazine
Thompson Newspapers
PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND RESPONSES

This section addresses the oral and written public comments received on the Draft Zion General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement. The comment period on the draft plan initially ran from December 6, 1999, through February 11, 2000. A notice of availability of the document was published in the December 6, 1999, Federal Register. After several requests were received, the comment period was extended to February 29, 2000. Comments postmarked after February 29 were not accepted.

The National Park Service received over 500 comment letters and numerous verbal comments at public meetings held in Utah. All comments were reviewed and considered by the planning team in preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, consistent with the requirements of 40 CFR 1503. The comments allow the planning team, NPS decision-makers, and other interested parties to review and assess the views of other agencies, organizations, and individuals regarding the preferred alternative, the other alternatives, and their potential impacts. It is important to note that the selection and revision of the preferred alternative is not based solely on how many people support a particular alternative or action.

The section begins with summaries of the public meetings and written comments. A summary of the major changes made in the preferred alternative is then provided, followed by a clarification of several concerns that were commonly raised in the public comments. Next, comment letters from all federal, state, and local agencies, and private organizations are reproduced and responses are included for all substantive comments. In addition, responses are provided for other agency and organization comments the planning team believed merited a response (e.g., comments that reflected confusion, misinformation or misperceptions or that were commonly stated). Where appropriate, the text in the Final Environmental Impact Statement has been revised to address the comments. These changes are identified in the NPS responses. No response was given to comments simply expressing preference for an alternative or any actions within the alternatives. All page number citations in the responses refer to the draft document.

As defined in NPS-12: NEPA Compliance Guideline (NPS 1983), comments are considered substantive when they:

(a) question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the environmental impact statement
(b) question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of environmental analysis
(c) present reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the environmental impact statement
(d) cause changes or revisions in the proposal

Because of the volume of written comments received, no individuals’ comment letters have been printed. However, with one exception, the planning team believes that the agency and organization letters cover all of the substantive comments raised in individuals’ letters and oral comments. A substantive comment from one individual is summarized and a response is provided before the comment letters.

SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Zion planning team held five public meetings on the draft environmental impact statement. The meetings were in Cedar City (January 6, 2000); Springdale (January 10); Kanab (January 11); St. George (January 12) and Salt Lake City (January 13). A total of 200 people attended the public meetings. The largest number of people (63) attended the Springdale meeting, followed by Kanab (55); St. George (53), Cedar City (17); and Salt Lake City (12). At most of the meetings the public was given opportunities to make oral presentations, limited to 3-4 minutes, which were recorded on tape. At two of the meetings there were question and answer periods in which the planning team answered questions from the audience. Participants also could record their comments on flip charts and write comments on a response form. Several organizations were represented at the meetings, including the Virgin River Runners, the Washington County Backcountry Horsemen, People for the USA, the Boy Scouts of America, the Washington County Commissioners, and the mayors of Virgin and Kanab.

Most of the people who spoke at the meetings were concerned with the following major issues in the draft plan:

- the perception that the Park Service was restricting horse use in the park and eventually would be eliminating this use
- setting group sizes in the pristine and primitive zones, which would prevent people from using much of the park
- adding the Rockville Bench to the park, which would eliminate a mountain bike trail
- a lack of coordination with local and county governments in developing the plan

Other concerns that were expressed covered a wide range of topics, including the impacts of prescribed burning; ensuring that kayakers and others have access to the river, permitting commercial guiding in the park (some supported this and others opposed it); providing opportunities for more access into the park rather than limiting use; the negative effects of protecting the microbiotic crusts; the effects of the wild and scenic river designations; the effect of the United Nations approach to management of the park; operation of the shuttle system; the need to devote more effort to trail maintenance and to providing new trails so people can disperse in the park; and the need to protect the park's soundscape.

Most people who spoke did not say which alternative they favored. However, most people recognized the special qualities of the park and wanted to preserve the area’s sources. On the other hand, there was a lot of concern expressed about the limits and restrictions in the preferred alternative and the reasons for these actions. A few people supported the preferred alternative; others supported the no-action or a modified alternative.

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN RESPONSES

The Zion planning team received 518 separate written responses during the comment period, including written letters, comment forms that were filled out and either mailed or given to park staff, and e-mail comments. Several of the responses were written by the same individual. Of the 518 responses, 33 were from agencies and organizations, including two federal agencies, two state agencies, and nine local and regional governments and agencies. (Two of the responses from local government were copies of one response).
Consultation and Coordination

Governments and three of the responses from organizations were form letters noted below. One response was received from a state representative. The other 485 responses were from private individuals and businesses. Three form letters were received, which accounted for 321 of the individuals' responses. The majority of the private individual responses came from Utah, with St. George, Kanab, Hurricane, and Springdale accounting for the largest number of responses. Responses were received from individuals in 16 other states, with Nevada accounting for the great majority, followed by Arizona.

The written comments from individuals included a much larger range of opinions than the oral comments. The vast majority of people who wrote responses did not say which alternative they favored. Of those who did, 18 people or organizations favored the preferred alternative, 13 favored alternative B, and two favored alternative A. Several individuals and organizations supported the preferred alternative and alternative B with changes. One group, Friends of Zion, proposed a brand new alternative.

The three topics/issues and organizations most commonly commented on were:

- restrictions on horse use, including trail closures, and group sizes
- the proposed group size limits in the backcountry (primitive and prismatic zones)
- including the Rockville Bench Slick Rock Swamp Trail in the park

Of those who commented on these topics, most people were opposed to these proposed changes. A few commentors supported the proposed restrictions on horse use, the tighter group size limits, and the inclusion of the Rockville Bench into the park.

Other topics/issues that were frequently addressed by the commentors included:

- the perceived closure of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway to public use
- whether or not Parunuweap Canyon should be opened up to more public use or designated as a research natural area
- wilderness management and proposed changes to the original wilderness recommendation
- the proposals to add new developments on the east side of the park, Lava Point, and the Kolob Canyons
- perceived restrictions on the rights of adjacent private landowners and wilderness
- a lack of opportunities for the public and local governments to participate in the development of the plan
- whether or not to provide additional access into the backcountry
- use of the Zion Lodge
- whether or not to permit commercial guiding in the park

Most of the commentors opposed what they believed to be a closure of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, changes to the original wilderness recommendation, and any actions that would infringe on the rights of landowners. Many people wanted opportunities for more access into the park (e.g., more trails), but others opposed additional access and the proposals for new developments on the east side, Lava Point, and Kolob Canyons. Most people supported the current use of the Zion Lodge, although some urged that it be closed and others that it be partially converted to an environmental education/research facility. Many people were dissatisfied with the planning process and the opportunities the had to participate in the process. Views were split on the future of Parunuweap, with some supporting the preferred alternative, some arguing for increased access, and some supporting the designation of the canyon as a research natural area. Views were also sharply split on whether or not to permit commercial guiding in the park.

Many other issues were raised in the comment letters, including designation and management of the research natural areas; the ban on inner tubing in the park; snowmobile use; opportunities for the disabled and elderly to access the backcountry; the economic impact of the plan on local communities; microbiotic crusts and the need for visitor restrictions; air pollution from controlled burns in the park; recommendations for wild and scenic river designations; concerns regarding restrictions on climbing; the use of science (or lack of science) in the planning process; a lack of rationale in the plan for many of the decisions being proposed; need to provide further attention to noise pollution; air tours and overflights of aircraft; lack of discussion of ecosystem management; and the operation of the shuttles in the main canyon and elsewhere in the park.

MAJOR CHANGES TO THE DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Numerous changes were made to the draft plan based on the comments the planning team received. Listed below are the major changes that were made between the draft and final plans. This list does not include all the changes that were made to clarify points, provide additional rationale for decisions, or correct minor errors or omissions.

- A new section on ecosystem management has been added to the "Park Policies and Practices."
- The prismatic zone description has been rewritten to note that routes and paths may be defined and maintained if necessary to prevent damage to resources. The zone description also now states that saddle stock use would be prohibited.
- The section on wilderness management in "Park Policies and Practices" has been expanded to note the minimum requirements process for wilderness.
- The section on land protection in "Park Policies and Practices" has been expanded to discuss how inholdings are managed in the park.
- The intent of the preferred alternative has been clarified. The emphasis of this alternative is on better resource and visitor management rather than on adding new facilities to the park's infrastructure. New developments would be intended to protect resources, and secondarily to improve the visitor experience.
- The preferred alternative now provides a vision for how the frontcountry and the backcountry areas of the park would be managed.
- The preferred alternative now provides a commitment to complete a wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies within the next five years.
- The treatment of saddle stock in the three action alternatives has revised. In the primitive zone, the interim saddle stock group size would be a maximum of six saddle stock and six people. The interim encounter rate would be set at no more than one other saddle stock group encountered per day. Overnight camping would be permitted only at the designated site in Hop Valley, with a maximum stay of one night. Within the primitive zone, some designated areas within the park (e.g., Kolob Arch trail and Taylor Creek trail) would continue to be closed to saddle and saddle stock. Off-trail use of saddle stock would be permitted only in...
The preferred alternative now provides an expanded discussion of visitor carrying capacity. It states that the hiker and saddle stock group size and encounter limits in the primitive zone, and hiker group size and encounter rates in the primitive zone are interim limits. The interim hiker group size for the primitive and pristine zones also has been changed to no more than 12 people per group in both zones. (See page 60 for the rationale for this change.)

Revisions to the 1978 wilderness recommendation that were proposed in the alternatives have been dropped. A few minor changes have been made to the 1978 wilderness recommendation to reflect the acquisition of holdings and water rights and to more accurately delineate the recommended wilderness boundary.

The draft plan wilderness maps incorrectly showed the southwest area of the park as potential wilderness. The 1978 recommendation to Congress depicted this area as nonwilderness. The wilderness map in the final plan accurately identifies the wilderness boundary consistent with the 1978 wilderness recommendation.

In the three action alternatives, the parking area at Dalton Wash would be removed because it falls within the revised amended wilderness area.

In the preferred alternative, three areas designated as transition zones—the Timber Creek overlook, the Narrows from Mystery Canyon to the north of Orderville Canyon, and the Observation Point trail—lie within the recommended wilderness area. The revised preferred alternative states that management in these areas would be consistent with wilderness, although use levels would be permitted to be higher than in other zones in wilderness area (i.e., primitive and pristine zones). Also, overnight camping would not be permitted in the transition zone.

Additional text has been included that provides the rationale for deauthorizing the existing research natural areas and for designating new research natural areas.

A new appendix has been added that identifies the resource attributes of the new research natural areas.

Parunuweap and upper Shunes Creek above the diversion would be designated as a research natural area in the preferred alternative. Authorized NPS-led educational groups may be permitted in this and other research natural areas.

In the preferred alternative Huber Wash has been rezoned as a primitive zone.

The Shunes Creek and Camp Creek administrative zones in the alternative maps are not shown in the zones they would be in if and when the National Park Service acquires the water rights to these areas. This is consistent with how the inholdings are treated in the maps.

Building a full-service visitor center inside the park on the east side is no longer included in the preferred alternative. Instead, the preferred alternative states that the Park Service would work with adjacent landowners, Kane County, and other organizations to locate a space outside the park to provide park orientation and information to visitors.

The options of building new short nature trails along the Zion-Mt. Carmel highway, expanding the campground and picnic areas at Lava Point, and building a new water treatment plant inside the park have been dropped in the preferred alternative. The text now states that no new trails would be built along the Zion-Mt. Carmel highway. Also, no additional visitor developments would be provided along the Kolob Scenic Drive.

The relative capital costs/construction costs for the preferred alternative have been reduced based on the above changes.

The bibliography has been expanded to include sources that were used during the planning process, or provide support for the actions being taken in the plan.

CLARIFICATIONS OF COMMONLY RAISED PUBLIC CONCERNS

Several views on the draft plan were commonly stated in the public comments, which reflected inaccurate information, misperceptions, or confusion. This section clarifies what the draft plan did and did not state.

Concern 1: The General Management Plan is proposing to restrict local residents' use of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway.

None of the alternatives in the draft document proposed this action. The National Park Service recognizes the importance of this road for visitors, through-traffic, and businesses, and under all of the alternatives local residents would continue to be able to use the road like they do today. The preferred alternative recommends considerations be given to operating a voluntary shuttle for visitors serving the east side of the park, but this would not affect through-traffic or use by local residents.

Concern 2: The Park Service is proposing to limit access on the Kolob-Terrace Road.

None of the alternatives in the draft document proposed this action. Portions of the Kolob-Terrace Road are a county road, which the National Park Service has limited authority to manage. Under all alternatives local residents would continue to be able to drive the road like they do today. The preferred alternative notes that if visitor numbers increase in the future, action may be needed to ensure that a rural setting is maintained, such as offering a shuttle to transport visitors. But this would not affect through-traffic or use by local residents.

Concern 3: The Park Service is proposing to restrict what adjacent private landowners and inholders can do on their properties.

No such action was proposed in the Draft General Management Plan. Instead, the draft plan recognized the importance of maintaining good relations with adjacent landowners and stated that the park staff would keep landowners informed about park management activities (see pages 15-16). The text further stated that park managers would seek voluntary agreements with landowners to encourage their lands be managed in a manner compatible with park purposes. In addition, park staff would seek ways to provide landowners with technical and management assistance to address issues of mutual concern.

With regard to inholders, the draft plan noted that the National Park Service recognizes inholdings are private lands and respects the rights of these landowners (see page 24). The draft also recognizes a desired condition that the inholdings be managed in a manner compatible with the purposes and mission of the park as defined in the 1984 Land Protection Plan.

Concern 4: The Park Service is planning to acquire private lands and take them off the tax rolls.

None of the alternatives in the draft document proposed this action. Portions of the Kolob-Terrace Road are a county road, which the National Park Service has limited authority to manage. Under all alternatives local residents would continue to be able to drive the road like they do today. The preferred alternative notes that if visitor numbers increase in the future, action may be needed to ensure that a rural setting is maintained, such as offering a shuttle to transport visitors. But this would not affect through-traffic or use by local residents.
This is not true. The draft plan does not propose the addition of any private adjacent lands to the park (see pages 63-64). The plan does propose a transfer of five contiguous BLM parcels to the park. It also calls for the acquisition of conservation easements and access easements on private lands. But these would be sought only on a willing-seller basis. If the easements are acquired, the lands would continue to be in private ownership and on the tax rolls.

Concern 5: Private inholdings are being proposed for wilderness designation. No private inholdings are in the recommended wilderness area. However, these lands are identified as potential wilderness in the 1978 wilderness recommendation to Congress, which recognizes that there are nonconforming uses that preclude them from being designated as wilderness. Only if and when the federal government acquires the inholdings from willing sellers would they become part of the wilderness area.

Concern 6: The Park Service has no right to propose a management zone in the recommended Zion wilderness area — the pristine zone — which is more restrictive than the Wilderness Act.

The Wilderness Act recognizes that wilderness areas may differ in their values and that special provisions may be applied to certain areas. The Act further defines wilderness areas as lands that are "untrammeled by man," that retain their "primeval character and influence," where the imprint of man's work are "substantially unnoticeable," and have "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation." The pristine zone is consistent with this definition. The zone will help ensure that there continue to be areas in Zion where one can have the feeling of being entirely alone in Zion's remote and isolated wildlands. Although the Wilderness Act does not specify appropriate group sizes and encounter limits, which the zone does, these actions are taken in wilderness areas throughout the country to ensure that wilderness values are protected. Finally, the NPS Management Policies provides that "... restrictions may be imposed on any authorized activities in the interest of preserving wilderness character and resources...."

Concern 7: The Park Service has decided to prohibit commercially guided use in the park, or it has decided to permit commercially guided use. No such decisions were made in the draft plan. As noted on pages 13-14, there are many questions and concerns regarding whether or not to permit commercial guiding in Zion. This is an issue that will be addressed in future implementation plans (i.e., the wilderness management plan). The draft plan did state that NPS-sanctioned guided interpretive trips may be permitted in Parunuweep Canyon, which may have generated some confusion. However, the preferred alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement has eliminated this language.

Concern 8: The Park Service is prohibiting inner tubing in the park for no apparent reason. The draft plan did not specifically mention inner tubing because a decision had already been made by the park staff to ban this use on the North Fork of the Virgin River (although tubing still occurs south of the park on the North Fork). This decision was made in response to the dramatic increase in the use of commercial tubing and the resulting negative impacts to the stream bank and bed, aquatic/fish habitat resources, and visitor experience. Visitor safety concerns were also a consideration.

Concern 9: The Park Service is discriminating against bicycling by not providing opportunities for people to bicycle in the park.

The General Management Plan would not change where bicycling is currently permitted. The plan states that bicycling would continue to be permitted on roads and designated trails in the frontcountry high development and low development zones. However, bicycling is prohibited in most of the park because it is not permitted in designated or recommended wilderness areas. In other areas, bicycling is prohibited due to the potential for conflicts with other users and because of safety concerns. The transportation system that began operation in May 2000 provides increased opportunities for bicycling in an environment that is much safer and conducive to family riding. The shuttle vehicles are also equipped with bicycle racks to facilitate bicycle use in the main canyon.

Concern 10: The plan would severely restrict use of the park for no apparent reasons. Much of the park would be zoned pristine and primitive under the preferred alternative. However, visitors would continue to have opportunities to enjoy Zion's backcountry, subject to limitations imposed by the park's rugged terrain (which concentrates use on certain trails and routes), NPS wilderness policies, and the zone prescriptions (which are intended to protect park resources and ensure high quality visitor experiences).

The group size limits in the primitive and pristine zones, which were changed in the final plan, would not affect most groups. In both zones the current backcountry group size limit of 12, which has been in place since about 1955, would continue as an interim limit until the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies are completed. While a substantial body of scientific literature exists regarding the effects of group size on resources and visitor experiences (see Manning (1999) and Hammitt and Cole (1998)), information specific to Zion is limited. Information collected during the development of the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies should assist park managers in setting appropriate group size limits for the primitive and pristine zones. It may be necessary to impose stricter group size limits than the current limit in order to meet the desired future conditions for the two zones as described in this plan.

With regard to visitor encounters, the continued growth in backcountry use requires some proactive action now to ensure that resource integrity and the quality of visitor experiences are maintained. Limiting group encounters is one way to ensure that desired conditions for the primitive and pristine zones are met. The encounter limits proposed in the plan are within the range of other wilderness areas across the country. Like the group size limits, the encounter rates are labeled as interim limits because additional research, specific to Zion, is needed to determine if these limits are sufficient for protecting resources and ensuring quality visitor experiences in the primitive and pristine zones. The future wilderness management plan would reexamine the encounter rates and modify them if appropriate.

It should be noted that prior to the completion of the wilderness management plan, park managers may institute other interim group sizes or encounter rates in specific areas to address resource damage or visitor safety concerns. Also, use limits have been established and enforced for several years in parts of the park, such as in the Narrows, the Left Fork of North Creek, and the West Rim trail.
Concern 11: The Park Service is prohibiting or substantially reducing horse use in the park.

This is not true. The plan recognizes that saddle stock use is a traditional activity and specifies that saddle stock use would continue to be permitted as it is now on designated trails and at designated times. Zion National Park has had use limits regarding horseback riding for many years. Saddle stock use has been limited to avoid impacts to sensitive natural and cultural resources and to other visitors. The preferred alternative would make only minor changes to where saddle stock are permitted in the park. In the upper Coyote and Dalton Wash/lnner Hill areas, where trails are being restored to natural conditions, off-trail saddle stock use would not be allowed. However, these areas receive very little saddle stock use. Most saddle stock groups stay on park trails and would not be affected by this action. Although off-trail use would be limited in two areas (upper Coyote and Dalton Wash/lnner Hill), the preferred alternative would not affect the vast majority of horse use in the park.

Concern 12: Designating research natural areas will prevent the public from visiting these areas.

Research natural areas (RNAs) are areas administratively designated by federal land management agencies for research and educational purposes. Research natural areas typically preserve examples of ecological communities that have been little disturbed in the past, and in which current natural processes are allowed to continue with minimal human intervention. Uses in research natural areas are restricted to research, education, and other activities that do not detract from the area's research values. Under NPS guidelines, essentially disruptive recreational activities, including hiking, are not permitted in research natural areas because of the likelihood of impacts on research efforts. However, authorized NPS led educational groups may be permitted into some of these areas, so long as they do not harm the integrity of the site in any way or interfere with scientific studies.

Concern 13: The Park Service is using an inappropriate administrative procedure to propose boundary changes to a wilderness recommendation.

There are specific legislative procedural requirements that must be met to revise a wilderness recommendation that has been sent to Congress. These requirements have not been met by this general management planning process. Thus, the draft plan incorrectly proposed several modifications to the 1978 wilderness recommendation. This error has been corrected in the Final General Management Plan: none of the current alternatives are proposing changes to the 1978 wilderness recommendation boundary, except for a few minor adjustments that reflect the acquisition of several inholdings and state surface. mineral, grazing, and water rights.

Concern 14: The National Park Service manages their lands, resources, and visitors differently and more restrictively than other agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management or the U.S. Forest Service.

The most important general direction for NPS management is provided by the interrelated provisions of the NPS Organic Act of 1916 and the General Authority Act of 1975 (including amendments to the latter law enacted in 1978). These acts establish a mandate to conserve park resources and values (see the full description of the Organic Act in the appendix).

In contrast, other federal land management agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), are managed under different legislation specific to their agency’s mission. Multiple use mandates are carried out for the BLM under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the USFS under the National Forest Management Act, as amended. Each agency has its own unique purposes and values and their differing legislation and mandates serve to manage these resources and values accordingly.

RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUALS’ SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS

There was one substantive comment from an individual that was not covered in the above responses or in the responses to concerns at the beginning of this part. Vic Vierra stated that the planning team failed to assess the impacts of the alternatives on overall research values and monitoring values. He thought this needed to be added as a new impact topic in the environmental impact statement. The document was revised to include this as an impact topic considered but not analyzed in detail because all of the alternatives would promote the protection and restoration of resources and ecological processes within the park and related landscape. Establishing research natural areas would particularly provide for areas with high value for baseline inventory and long-term ecological observation. Consequently, there would be no adverse impacts on research values.
Environmental Protection Agency

Further explanation about instream flows has been added to the background information for "Park Policies and Practices – Water Quantity and Quality.

Best Copy Available
To: Superintendent, Zion National Park, Springdale, Utah 84767-1079
From: Utah Field Supervisor, Utah Field Office, Fish and Wildlife Service, Salt Lake City, Utah
Subject: General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (Vicir Management and Resource Restoration Plan)

This responds to your letter regarding the subject project. We have no comments on the project, as proposed. Should project plans change or if additional information becomes available we may choose to provide comments in the future.

We appreciate the opportunity to review your project. Should you have any questions or need any further information please contact Scott Green, Fish and Wildlife Biologist at (801)245-5009 ext. 154.

February 7, 2000

[Signature]

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The determination for the southwestern willow flycatcher has been revised to may affect, not likely to adversely affect. The June 1999 flycatcher sighting has also been added to the text.
COMMENTS

1. The proposed actions include items to reduce impact riparian areas, including river restoration efforts and increased visitor use. Impacts to riparian areas from restoration efforts would likely be short-term with long-term beneficial results. In addition, a riparian management plan will be developed, as part of the GMP, to address important water resources issues in the park, including visitor use and the restoration of sections of the North Fork's floodplain. Ongoing efforts by the National Park Service to survey for known willow Synanthus locations should direct management decisions to minimize impacts to Synanthus habitat.

In a phone conversation on December 21, 1999 between Ms. Laura Remol of this office and Ms. Elaine Kolenda of your office, it was agreed that the determination for nonnative willow Synanthus would be revised to a "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" conclusion in the final GMP and EIS. The Service can concen with this determination as it more accurately reflects that potential impacts may occur, however, with implementation of appropriate management actions, the impacts are not likely to adversely affect the species and may result in long-term beneficial effects.

As you have stated within the draft EIS, Zion National Park is a signatory to the Virgin Spangle Conservation Agreement and Strategy. This Agreement and Strategy outline specific actions that should lead to the long-term conservation and protection of Virgin spangle throughout the Virgin River basin.

2. We support actions that provide additional conservation and protection of streams inhabited by Virgin spangle and other native fish larvae. Specifically, we encourage caution management of activities such as recreational floating (i.e., tubing) that have been correlated with reduced Virgin spangle densities. We recommend that the EIS include a discussion of Zion management policy for this activity.

Another action that we anticipate will benefit Virgin spangle is the designation of non-recreational Research Natural Areas that include streams identified in the Virgin Spangle Conservation Agreement. The watershed of Sour Creek is one such example.

3. It would be helpful to include a brief discussion in the EIS of how the alternatives demonstrate Zion's participation in the Conservation Agreement and Strategy by providing additional conservation actions or protection for Virgin spangle.

Thank you for your interest in conserving endangered species. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Laura Remol, Wildlife Biologist, of this office at (801) 324-5001, ext. 142.

RESPONSES

2. Inter-tubing is not addressed in the plan because this activity is banned in the park. See "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 8.

3. The "Environmental Consequences" part describes the positive effects to Virgin spangle from various actions in the alternatives. Under the preferred alternative, greater management of recreational use along the North Fork, habitat improvement from river restoration, long-term water quality monitoring, and comprehensive protection provided by the Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement all contribute towards conservation and protection of spangle.

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State of Utah, Department of Community and Economic Development

Responses

1. Your comments have provided a number of recommendations for specific actions, such as contractual requirements for concessionaires who use historic resources within the park, and other project-specific preservation issues, such as deferred maintenance and property stewardship at the Birch Creek historic district. These recommendations would be more appropriately addressed within activity level plans (e.g., commercial services plan and resource management plan) that will either be developed or updated after the conceptual framework of the GMP is approved.

In the implementation of undertakings, including those identified in the apposed GMP Zion National Park will continue to comply with all federal mandates, including the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, and NPS policies, to protect and preserve historic properties. All work, whether conducted by the NPS or concessionaires, will continue to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines. Every effort will be made to lessen effects to historic properties to the maximum extent possible, through Section 106 consultation with the Utah SHPO. As required by NPS mandates and policies, Zion National Park managers will continue to manage the park's cultural resources, including archeological sites and historic resources, for the benefit of future generations.

With regard to cumulative impacts, we believe that none of the actions being proposed in the plan would result in cumulative impacts to the park's historic districts, based on the implementation of the actions listed in the draft document on page 141.

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Finally, because the historic resources in Zion National Park are located within historic districts, the Plan/ERI should address what effect cumulative changes within those districts will have. Small changes, considered individually may have no effect or no adverse effect. However, cumulatively, these changes may have an adverse effect. The most effective way of addressing this type of cumulative change is through the planning process.

We congratulate Zion National Park on its many successful historic preservation projects. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Park to ensure its cultural resources are preserved for this and future generations of Park visitors.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (801) 333-3063 or by email at bmurphy@historic.utah.gov.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Barbara Murphy
Preservation Planner
State Historic Preservation Officer
State of Utah, Governor's Office of Planning and Budget

1. The preferred alternative has been revised to state that any changes in the water supply system would be consistent with the Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement. Also see Washington County response 12.

2. The draft plan incorrectly proposed several modifications to the 1978 wilderness recommendation. There are specific legislative procedural requirements that must be met to revise a wilderness recommendation that has been sent to Congress. These requirements have not been met by this general management planning process. Consequently, the final plan has been revised to reflect the 1978 wilderness recommendation. Although the Park Service supports recognition of the Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement under any congressional wilderness designation, the Park Service cannot dictate future congressional actions. It would be at the discretion of Congress as to whether to include such language in any future wilderness legislation.

3. Such a statement, which is included in appendix F, has also been added to the preferred alternative text under “Proposals for Wild, Scenic, and Recreational River Designation.”
<table>
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| House of Representatives  
State of Utah  
February 21, 2000  
Mr. Dale Salter  
Park Training Coordinator  
Zion National Park,  
Springdale, UT 84767-1939  
RE: PLEASE ENTER THESE COMMENTS INTO THE OFFICIAL RECORD FOR THE  
ZION NATIONAL PARK PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  


1. The preferred alternative is not proposing major changes to where visitation occurs in the park. The 1978 wilderness recommendation to Congress has a major influence on the type of visitor use allowed in Zion's backcountry. About 90% of the park is in this category and,  


2. Zion National Park has had use limits regarding the use of saddle stock for many years. Saddle stock use has been limited to avoid impacts to sensitive natural and cultural resources and to other visitors. In the recommended wilderness area saddle stock have been confined to designated trails, with a few exceptions (e.g., Huber Wash and lower Coalpits). In the preferred alternative saddle stock could still use designated trails, as well as Huber Wash, Coeeqin Wash, and lower Coalpits. Since most saddle stock use is on established trails, the preferred alternative will not affect the vast majority of horse use in the park. See also “Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns,” concern 10.


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3. The plan does not call for the acquisition of private lands. It does propose that the Park Service acquire conservation easements and access easements on private lands outside the park on a willing-seller basis, or encourage local governmental entities or nonprofit groups to acquire these easements. The Park Service believes that the access easements are necessary to ensure visitor and park personnel access to relatively inaccessible parts of the park, and that the conservation easements are needed to preclude potential development that would affect the scenic qualities of the park and visitor experience. See also “Clarification of Commonly Railed Public Concerns,” concern 4.

Sincerely,

Rep. Wayne Harper
43rd District, House of Representatives

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COMMENTS

Five County Association of Governments

Mr. Dave False, Superintendent
Zion National Park
Springdale, Utah 84767-1099

February 22, 2000

Dear Mr. False,

I would like to once again thank you for the efforts you and your staff continue to make in keeping local governments informed and up to date on management planning at the Zion National Park. We appreciate your efforts to keep us informed.

Here are a set of comments regarding the Draft Parks General Management Plan. We look forward to your response regarding these comments, and wish to formally request a copy of the proposed General Management Plan when available.

1. Page 11 - Relations with Governmental Agencies

We appreciate your commitment to work closely with other governmental agencies to continue to be an active member of SCPIAC, and to continue with the Five County AOC. However, we ask that this policy be strengthened by the creation of an Advisory Council which would be composed of representatives from other federal agencies, state agencies, counties and city/townships.

The members of the Council, and the number of members, will be determined by the Five County AOC. The Council will meet at least twice a year to discuss matters related to the national parks.

2. Page 18 - Air Quality

The strategy to review, discuss, and recommend actions to mitigate or reduce emissions within 50 miles of Zion is a concern. There is not enough detail on how the strategy would be implemented. The Park has no jurisdiction over emissions outside of its boundary, and even the

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I propose to work with the county in the immediate implementation of a program to establish such an interim limit until a final plan is available, the subject to the review of the plannning committee and the FWS.

4. Visitor Use Management Strategies

The proposed plan is likely to be quite effective. The analysis is consistent with a trend of high use areas and low use areas, and it is likely to result in the creation of areas with low use.

5. Boundary Adjustments

The National Park Service is likely to be quite effective in implementing the proposed plan. The proposed plan is consistent with the trend of high use areas and low use areas, and it is likely to result in the creation of areas with low use.

6. Zone Boundaries

Many of the zone boundaries appear to be arbitrary and are not consistent with the trend of high use areas and low use areas. The proposed plan is consistent with the trend of high use areas and low use areas, and it is likely to result in the creation of areas with low use.

7. Fee Structure

As more and more visitors are added to the park, it is possible that additional fees will be necessary to manage the impacts and natural resources. Many foreign nationals visit the park, and they may be willing to pay additional fees.

The hiker group size limits in the primitive and pristine zones have been changed in the final plan. In both zones the current backcountry group size limit of 12, which has been in place since about 1982, would continue as an interim limit until the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies are completed. While a substantial body of scientific literature exists regarding the effect of group size on resources and visitor experiences (see Manning (1999) and Hammett and Cole (1998)), information collected during the development of the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies should assist park managers in setting appropriate group size limits for the primitive and pristine zones. It may be necessary to impose stricter group size limits than the current limit in order to meet the desired future conditions for the two zones as described in this plan.

3. NPS Management Policies provide for park managers to work with neighboring landowners on topics of mutual interest and to encourage compatible adjacent land uses by actively participating in planning and regulatory processes of neighboring jurisdictions. The park staff has been acting in accordance with these policies by working with the town of Springdale and their planning commission on such matters as the zoning ordinance for signs and the street lighting for streetscape improvements and shuttle stops for the new transportation system. Our approach is not to "seize" the land use permitting authorities of local governments", but rather to be a constructive, cooperative partner in helping to achieve mutually agreed upon goals.

4. Land protection planning and land acquisition are subject to all applicable legislation, congressional guidelines, executive orders, and departmental and NPS policies and guidelines. These include the NPS "Land Acquisition Policy Implementation Guidelines," the Department of Interior’s "Policy for the Federal Portion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund," NPS "Land Protection Plan Instructions," the Uniform Relocation and Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, and Executive Order 12610 ("Governmental Actions and Interference with Constitutionally Protected Property Rights"). As such the privately owned inholdings within the boundaries of the park are managed in accordance with our 1984 "Land Protection Plan."
With regard to guided backcountry use, as noted on page 13 of the draft, this is an issue in which there are sharply differing views. This issue would be addressed in the future wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies.

6. The trail in this area was constructed without consultation with the BLM or the town of Rockville and requires trespassing on private property to access it. It is our understanding that some limited, unauthorized use still occurs. The acquisition of the 313-acre parcel of BLM land on the Rockville Bench was included in the preferred alternative after its addition was requested by the town of Rockville.

7. The boundaries of the zones conform to natural features in most cases, although in some areas, as along roads and trails, the zone width is defined as a specified distance from the centerline. The scale of the maps in the document prevent the zone boundaries from being more clearly portrayed. With regard to cherry-stemming zones, we have tried to avoid this when possible.

8. Entrance fees for national parks are established in conformance with legislative requirements. Adjusting the fee structures to provide an increased fee for non-citizens would require congressional authorization.

9. The draft plan incorrectly proposed several modifications to the 1978 wilderness recommendation. See "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," Concern 13. This error has been corrected in the final plan. All of the alternatives now are consistent with the 1978 wilderness recommendation, which included the East Mesa and East Rim trails in recommended wilderness.
Kane County Commission

Kane County Commission
Kane National Park
Springdale, UT 84761-1098

Re: Kane County Board of Commissioners comments to the Draft General Management Plan

Dear Mr. Fahey,

While a relatively small portion of Zion National Park, as in Kane County, the impacts of a new General Plan on the communities and people of our County are critical. We would like to emphasize the economic impact and the need for economic development. Zion National Park is a vital part of our tourism economy and the well-being of people and businesses along Highways 89 and State Route 9. We therefore urge you to accept and study our comments in order to weigh and oppose any efforts to limit or close access to the Zion National Park.

We also recommend that local traffic and congestion be addressed by establishing alternative routes around Zion National Park. Routes such as the Ivins Park Sand Dunes road south to Ivins and State Route 168 to north Park City will benefit Kane County residents by providing the means to avoid the problems caused by Zion National Park in the heavily used summer months.

Zion National Park is a major tourist attraction and offers a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. A large number of people visit and plan to stay near the park. The area of Zion National Park is rich in history and has been inhabited by Native American tribes for centuries. Zion National Park and the surrounding communities are dependent on the tourism industry.

We ask you to consider the economic impact of Zion National Park on the communities and people of our County and to carefully examine the alternatives that would affect the park.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Kane County Commission
neighbor long before it became the Mulemaweap National Monument in 1909, and later Zion National Monument in 1918 at the end of World War I. After the
completion of the tunnel and road construction on Zion’s east side the Park
rapidly became a major factor to the communities of Met Carmel, Orderville, Glen Gold and Kanab, Utah.

2. As the main campgrounds in Zion continue to attract large numbers of visitors with
resulting pressures of how to handle and accommodate these people it is crucial to put
integrate to us risk management programs in the Draft General Plan that limit
violation and experiences on the Park’s back country features.

The group size restrictions on numbers ranging from 5 to 12 including horses
should be re-thought and examined. Preferentially guided backcountry
experiences should be of equal value in getting more visitors off of the main
canopy and out into the Park under closely controlled circumstances. This
would also provide for additional local opportunities for family owned guides and
outfitting businesses to benefit from this approach. This would go a long way to
helping to balance uses and reduce conflicts between sporting and horse use of
the back country areas. Tubing has evolved into another major use of the river.

3. In the Park and is another example of allowing people use in areas that reduce
the crowing in the main portions of the Park. Why not layback and float the
Virgin River through Zion National Park?

4. We are greatly troubled by the new proposed designations of wilderness, pristine
and primitive in the Park that are by design intended to keep the
American people out of the Park except in a few heavily impacted areas with
metropolitan or commuter buses as the preferred mode of transportation.
National Park designation on its own merit should equalize to standards sufficient
or resource protection while allowing the opportunity for people to enjoy all of the
uses and benefits of an area as grand as Zion National Park. We oppose
designation of Wilderness and Pristine to any area in the Park. The very nature
and charm, of features of the Park on their own are enough to convey the
impact ... need pristine conditions.

5. Critical habitats and ... an overflow in the Park have been allowed to change and
degrade from natural. Non due to the lack of disturbance cycles. Areas that
were once short grass ha. "Use" are now over stocked with woody plants, shrubs
and trees. The intentional re - "Use" of short grasses in the 1950s has resulted in conditions that are today producing the natural function of critical
ecosystems. This has large effects both upstream and downstream from Zion
National Park in air and water resources of the area. We feel that a very
invasive program of restoration projects, mechanical and natural must be
instituted in order for Zion National Park to do share in assuring the quality of
naturally functioning ecosystems in and on the edge of the Park areas.
Passive vegetation management programs are insufficient for maintaining
needed and required conditions for biodiversity. Fire must be re-introduced to
the Park, both natural and prescribed.

2. The hiker group size limits in the primitive and pristine zones have
changed in the final plan. In both zones the current backcountry group
size limit of 12, which has been in place since about 1982, would continue
as an interim limit until the wilderness management plan and carrying
capacity studies are completed. While a substantial body of scientific liter-
atur exists regarding the effects of group size on resources and visitor
experiences (see Manning (1999) and Hammitt and Cole (1998)), inform-
ation specific to Zion is limited. Information collected during develop-
ment of the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies
should assist park managers in setting appropriate group size limits for the
primitive and pristine zones. It may be necessary to impose stricter group
size limits than the current limit in order to meet the desired future condi-
tions for the two zones as described in this plan.

The final plan continues to call for the establishment of encounter rate
limits for hikers in the primitive and pristine zones. The continued growth
backcountry use requires some proactive action now to ensure that
resource integrity and the quality of visitor experiences are maintained.
Limiting group encounters is one way to ensure that that desired condi-
tions for the primitive and pristine zones are met. The encounter limits
proposed in the plan are within the range of encounter rates set in other
wilderness areas across the country. Like the zone size limits, the
encounter rates are labeled as interim limits because additional research,
specific to Zion, is needed to determine if these limits are sufficient for
protecting resources and ensuring quality visitor experiences in the primal-
tive and pristine zones. The future wilderness management plan and carry-
ing capacity studies would reexamine the encounter rates and modify them
if appropriate.

It should be noted that prior to the completion of the wilderness man-
agement plan and carrying capacity studies, park managers may institute
other interim group sizes or encounter rates in specific areas to address
resource damage or visitor safety concerns.

With regard to saddle stock group sizes, the limits have changed in
the final plan. See response #16 to Washington County and page 60 in the
final plan.

With regard to guided backcountry use, as noted on page 13 of the draft,
this is an issue in which there are sharply differing views. This issue would
Finally, we will comment on water resources for both in Park purposes and outside Park purposes. The issue of water law and rights is Utah are of prime concern to people and communities that border the Zion National Park up stream and downstream. We take our guidance from State law and very seriously follow that guidance. Water development for our communities is of critical importance in the up stream from the Park. We will as needs dictate, plan to utilize our rights to that water. Until more is known from surveys and studies of water transmission to and through Zion we are not inclined to low water development up stream from Zion on the basis of unsupported speculation. We feel a great deal more is needed in science based peer reviewed review prior to any concessions that affect the people of Kane County.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft General Plan for Zion National Park. We stand ready to assist in any manner necessary to assure a working plan with local input in deriving a plan for the resources in Zion National Park that enhances visitation and the experience of being in one America's national treasures.

Sincerely,

Kane County Board of Commissioners

Norman Carroll
Chairman

cc: Commission

Mayor

Alton

Glendale

Oreland

Kanab

Fredericksburg

Colorado City

Hildale

Southern Utah News

Spectrum

**RESPONSES**

be addressed in the future wilderness management plan as "varying capacity studies.

3. Towing in the park would continue to be banned based on resource and visitor experience impacts. See "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 6.

4. It is not the intent of the plan to keep people out of the park, but rather to provide opportunities for people to enjoy the park and its resources without degrading these resources. The new transportation system, for example, will help to accommodate large numbers of visitors, proving a quality experience in the front country areas of the park.

The 1978 wilderness recommendation to Congress also has a major influence on the type of visits. The allowed in Zion's backcountry. About 90% of the park is in this category and, according to NPS Management Policies, must be managed as if it were designated wilderness. Access to the backcountry will continue to be primarily along existing trails, most of which are in the primitive zone. A large part of the park is noted primitive, but it should be noted that zone includes much of the park that is not accessible due to steep topography. The plan allows use patterns much as they currently exist but with adjustments as needed to protect the resources. The current use levels in the Narrows and the Subway are examples of some of the adjustments we will have to consider as visitor numbers in the backcountry continue to grow. See also "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 6 and response 21 to Washington County.

5. Fire is a natural occurring process in Zion. We believe prescribed burns are important to continue, both to replicate natural ecological conditions and to avoid damage from wildfires.

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**
29 February 2000

Linda Nuttis
Zion National Park
Springfield, UT 84767-1098

Dear Ms. Nuttis:

Thank you for the opportunity to receive and comment on the draft plan for management direction in Zion National Park. In general, the plan is easy to follow and read, and it is well written.

Of course the Kane County Water Conservancy District is concerned about water issues. We are very concerned about maintaining our water resources. We are aware of the problems that have been caused by the decrease in water quality resulting from the sealing of some waterways. The Kane County Water Conservancy District is concerned that we have the opportunity to maintain our water resources and that in doing so water quality is preserved or enhanced to meet our needs. Most of the private lands, except those parcels which were already claimed, were patented from some states because of their associated water.

The draft plan mentions, in several places, the 1986 Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement, made between the park, the State of Idaho, and the water conservancy districts in Kane and Washington counties. Kane County is very concerned that Zion National Park is in the Indian Reservation and that in new water appropriations be considered some of the water must be used for the benefit of the Indians. Water needs should be met by non-federal agencies.

It appears that the plan and the intent of the park is consistent with the agreement mentioned, therefore most water-related issues are understood and the Kane County water conservancy district is satisfied with the direction provided.

We are, however, very concerned with the proposed new and scenic river selections. It is inconsistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to propose inclusion of rivers or river beds which have had such modifications and which have potential for traffic as are some stretches of the Virgin River and its tributaries. The selection of sites is particularly true inside the park in the main part of the canyon.

Specifically, the North Fork of the Virgin River below the Temple of Dalmatian has been channeled along much of the banks by gash

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baskets and earthen levees, it is paralleled by a highway, it has
several parking lots, bridges, a diversion, and man made rock walls
and rip-rap. The plan itself identifies this segment of the Virgin
River as having had major modifications for the protection of the
road and visitor facilities, and yet it is still proposed for
classification as a recreational river segment.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that a river worthy of
inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System would be,
"existing of flowing in a natural condition with no major
modifications, or only minor modifications, to the natural
character of the river, including the channel and flood area."
For the portion of the Virgin River below the "Temple", as stated
earlier, has had major modifications than any stream segment in the
park (and many other places). It is not consistent with the Wild and
Scenic Rivers Act to suggest that this particular segment be included in
the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Ebine Creek and Clear Creek, tributaries of the North Fork of Virgin
River are also segments which have been modified, and are now
proposed by in the draft plan as worthy of inclusion into the Wild
and Scenic Rivers System.

Ebine Creek, proposed in the draft plan as a recreational river, has
had the channel modified to protect the adjacent highway. It has rock
walls acting as rip-rap, and is crossed by two bridges.

Certainly the modifications to these waterways have not created an
improved condition within respect to the aesthetics, and they have
been modified, if the Park Service feels some special protection is
required, perhaps protection for cultural or historical sites would
be more appropriate for the bridges, walls, grade, trails, and other
structures than trying to convince Congress that the stream beds are
in a largely natural and free flowing condition.

The Napa County Water Conservation District realizes that all of the
park and its rivers are very beautiful and that many people come to
live in living recreation in a natural setting. However, the people
do not necessarily come to see the Virgin River, even though the
river helps form the park. The visitors come to see the lofty,
rocky peaks, the vegetation, the waterfalls, the varied wildlife,
resources which combine to create Zion's wonderful scenery.

It would be unfair to include such heavily modified waterways in the
system because it would create an unnatural ideal. Future
comparisons of wild and scenic river analysis are invalid. The
system was established by the Federal government to recognize the
value of our waterways, and the park service, as a federal agency,
are responsible for the outdoor recreation and conservation of
these waterways. As the river segments were included in the
National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, states and local water users
would probably carry the most heavy burden, as river segments

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practically anywhere could be under fire, even though the river had
dissociated, and major modifications. There must be a More
Concessions, National Park's proposal for suitable
segments for inclusion.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment and have input.
Please see that the Wash County Water Conservancy District remain on
record for all future water projects and receive notice of any actions
concerning your management plan.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Mikie Del. Executive Director
Wash County Water Conservancy District

cc US Representative James Hansen
Utah Representative Jim Mathis
WASHINGTON COUNTY
297 East Tabernacle - St. George, Utah 84770
February 28, 2000

Mr. Darr Salo, Park Planning Coordinator
Zion National Park
Springdale, Utah 84767

Dear Mr. Salo,

We have reviewed the comments from the Washington County Commission relative to the Draft Management Plan for Zion National Park. We would like to have had more time to study the Plan document and become more familiar with it. However, in the time allowed we have received a number of our staff members and associates to spend time in reviewing the plan and submitting their comments to us.

We have compiled these comments, together with our own, and attached them to this letter of transmittal. We would hope that these will be given careful consideration by the National Park Service, and the planning teams, prior to any final draft document being released.

Your acceptance and consideration of these comments is appreciated.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Curtis N. Aldred, Chairman
Washington County Commission

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<td>WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMENTS RELATIVE TO THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN) ZION NATIONAL PARK, UTAH</td>
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Submitted By
WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH

February 2000

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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMENTS RELATIVE TO THE DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN)
ZION NATIONAL PARK, UTAH

Washington County has completed a review of the Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Zion National Park, located in Washington County, Utah. It is obvious that a lot of effort has gone into the plan preparation. While the majority of the Park has been managed as a wilderness area since its beginning, the proposed management plan apparently has done little to change that practice, except in some areas to make access more difficult than was previously encountered by visitors to the Park.

The following pages contain comments from Washington County relative to the proposed Plan for your consideration in adopting a final management plan for the Park:

1. While the County has maintained a good relationship over the years with the current, and past Park Superintendents, and hopes to maintain such a relationship in the future, we are somewhat concerned that the planning team, who according to the draft plan, met with each agency to the Springdale Planning Commission, the Springdale Town Council, several Indian tribes, the Five County organization, SUPAC, various "tour groups" wherever that might have been, and others, yet no direct contact was ever made by the planning team with the Washington County Planning Department, Planning Commission, or County Commission to discuss the plan as it proceeded through the planning process.

Washington County surrounds the Park on three sides. Was any consideration given to future growth or development in Washington County as it might affect the Park, except for the impacts on the Town of Springdale? Did the planning team ever review any of the goals, policies, or guidelines of the Washington County General Plan? Or, did they ever obtain a copy prior to the completion of the draft document?

The lack of coordination and involvement between Washington County, the one entity most directly affected by the management plan, and the planning team, is of considerable concern to the County. We were apparently given the same opportunity for involvement as a citizen living in, say, New York City. Even though the plan states several times that coordination was done with local governments by the planning team, we are concerned as to who "local government" means since Washington County was left out as any direct consultation by the planning team was concerned.

2. While we have several specific comments relative to the Plan, the most obvious comment relates to the overall negative tone of the plan. What comes across to us reading the plan is a feeling that Zion Park would be a great place, if only we could figure out how to keep people out of it. Masked is written into the plan as the enemy, and the effort of the plan is directed toward

RESPONSES

Washington County

1. During the preparation of the plan, we relied quite heavily on the series of newsletters to provide detailed information about the plan and to seek input. Numerous updates were held with a variety of organizations including Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC) and the Five County Association of Governments, both groups having a Washington County Commissioner attending. The superintendent also met with Washington County Planning Commission and with Commissioners Earlely and Gardner to discuss the plan near the end of the public review process.

We have reviewed the County General Plan and have discussed the provisions pertaining to the park with Planning Director John Willie. The County General Plan notes that it is important that there continue to be close coordination between the federal and state agencies and Washington County officials in order to protect much of the character and culture and the economic base of the county that has made it an attractive place to live and do business. We certainly agree with that statement and will commit to improving our cooperative efforts.

2. See response 4 to Kane County Commission and "Classification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 10.
COMMENTS

2. How to keep people out of most of the park, or how to best minimize their entrance into it.

It is interesting to note that the Park was created in 1919, and that "when man discovered" inhabited the area for forty to fifty years prior to that date. The Park contains 148,014 acres of land, of which 133,054 acres, or 90% is public land in the total park area is being proposed for classification as "Protected." This would seem to indicate that man has not quite as destructive an effect on the park as he has had on the land. Therefore, it is very necessary to restrict the use of the park as significantly as is being proposed. It has been recognized as a prime condition for 150 years, how can it be expected to be so greatly degraded in the next fifteen to twenty years, the 1930's of the plan?

RESPONSES

3. Most of Zion National Park is recommended wilderness, which under NPS policies does not provide for development of visitor facilities. We do not believe the preferred alternative would affect access to most of the park. Indeed, we are trying to maintain access to the park by seeking easements across private lands to trailheads. With regard to your concern on group size limits, see response 2 to the Kane County Commission.
COMMENTS

3. Public use of Panorama Canyon - The County would strongly encourage the Park to allow the public into the canyon. If there need to be restrictions, that is much better than the no access that has been in effect. Panorama Canyon has been a popular venue in the Park for decades. The use of this area by the public needs to continue.

4. Future of Zion Canyon Lodge - The County strongly supports the proposed action relative to the Zion Canyon Lodge in maintaining the lodge and making it available for public use.

5. Wild and Scenic River Designations - If we recall correctly, a memorandum of understanding was signed by all of the Federal Agencies involved in the Southern Utah Planning Council, in which it was agreed that no wild and scenic river recommendations or designations would be made on a "local" level, but rather, that any study that would be done would be to be done on a regional basis. Even though there were representatives of the BLM and Forest Service involved in the current designation, this would not appear to be in harmony with the MOU that was signed some time ago.

Management of the North Fork of the Virgin River - The County would urge extreme caution in any changes proposed for the river segment through the Zion Canyon area. In its current condition, funds have not been uncertain. The County would have to see the channel changed or any failure that could result damage to the area around the lodge, giving rise to a demand that the lodge be removed because of danger of flooding.

With most of the Park being in wilderness, and such a small area proposed as an area where the public can actually come and see part of Zion, such part that i.e., it would seem that safety would be more important than reclassifying this last remaining area where over two million people are expected to come each year to experience Zion. Protect Zion canyon from flood damage.

The proposal to remove the flood control and bank protective structures on 4 miles of the Virgin River channel at the entrance of the Zion Lodge could have significant long term costs and detrimental effects. The Park Service planners would do well to understand why these facilities were built. The last place before they decide to remove them, the statement on page 147, under conclusions, that the action alternative would have a moderate to more long term adverse effect on the north fork natural river process within the Park is without foundation. Many of these facilities were built in the 1920's and 1930's are natural appearing and they do not have a significant effect upon the natural river process. The effect of removal of these levees and controlled structures on sediment and destruction of stream bank vegetation is greatly understated in the impact section of the plan. It is amazing that the core team did not include a hydrologist, nor did the bibliography refer to any publications which would relate to or give information on the subject.

RESPONSES

4. The National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management developed criteria to be used in addressing the Wild and Scenic River inventories within the state of Utah. We participated in a state sponsored Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to prepare an eligibility assessment of the river systems in the park. This MOU also inquired the Conservancy Districts for Washington and Kane Counties. We followed the provisions of this MOU using an interdisciplinary team of subject matter experts acceptable to all parties. We feel we fully complied with this MOU.

5. We share your concerns in using extreme caution in modifying the channel of the Virgin River above the Lodge. It is recognized that any effort to restore the channelized reaches of the North Fork of the Virgin River will have risks and impacts, most notably to existing vegetation, sediment loading, and fish. However, these impacts would be short term and relatively milder when compared to the benefits to riparian vegetation, natural stream function, and much improved native fish habitat once the channel adjusts to the unchannel condition. Although 4.5 miles of river were once channelized, the channelization remains effective for only about 2 miles of river, mostly in the vicinity of the lodge. Leves and other structures between the Temple of Sinawava and Grotto Pecos Area have been rendered ineffective by the river. The short sections of road remaining that remain have provided effective flood protection. Visitor safety will be a primary consideration in planning any restoration along the Virgin River. For the majority of park facilities, the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive has superseded the flood protection function of the levees, because it is now consistently higher and broader than the levees. Because most facilities are concentrated along the eastern edge of the floodplain, they can be protected while the river is allowed to use the remainder of the floodplain.

Impacts of existing channelization, including no lateral movement of the river channel, entrenchment of the channel, or absence of flooding on the floodplain (even during the 1984/85 flood in December 1984), and the absence of cottonwood reproduction, would continue under the no action alternative. We believe these impacts warrant the funding of a moderate to major long-term adverse impact.

The concept of river restoration was developed by the park to design and in consultation with other hydrologists in the National Park Service and other agencies. The specific approaches to river restoration and possible
6. Development and use adjacent to the Park. This issue does not appear to be treated particularly well in the proposed plan/ent. One way to achieve limited growth in this area is to work more closely with whatever local governments have jurisdiction over the area in question. There could be some additional development near the Kolob Canyons Freeway exit, which should have minimal impact on the Park itself.

7. There is no acknowledgment or indication that the core team recognized the Kolob Terrace road as a Washington County road and provides access not only to the Kolob Terrace area of the Park, but also a route-maintenance task between Washington and Iron Counties. Park management must acknowledge such uses and not attempt to restrict vehicle use on the road to areas outside of the Park.

8. River recreation - According to the report, the north fork has been severely abused in the past. Evidence of species have managed to survive this use. River recreation on the north fork in Zion Canyon is an important use, as mentioned in the report, and one that should not be abandoned. Leave something in the Park that can be seen and enjoyed by people without looking through a glass window.

9. Natural Sounds, Noise, and Air Traffic - Because of the wilderness designation on the Park, most of the natural sounds in the Park should also be preserved by that same designation. In the Canyon the sound of man may well disappear during most seasons with the use of the shuttle system. There is a going to be noise at this part of the park however, as the shuttle and other activities may not come to Zion Canyon expecting untested and natural sounds to predominate. There are too many people or too small of an area for that to happen. Improving the sound level of the Shuttle may help with this situation. The restrictions proposed to be placed on use and numbers of groups using the backcountry should more than likely be expanded or reduced for any disturbance that may take place at the small Iron County area.

10. The County, tour groups, and private police must be involved in any planning dealing with development of an overflight plan for the Park. Air space is very limited now as to allow a small impact will receive extensive evaluation over the next two to three years, which will include substantial input from experts in river restoration and other affected resources and public input through NEPA compliance.

6. We fully agree that we need to continue with our efforts in working with local governments having jurisdiction over lands adjacent to the park. We have worked closely with those sharing the park’s boundary including the town of Springdale, the town of Rockville, and adjacent private landowners. As noted on pages 15-16 of the draft, we will continue to consult and coordinate with local governments on developments and land uses adjacent to Zion, including the Kolob area.

7. We have worked closely with the county on maintaining our portion of the Kolob Terrace Road and do recognize the importance of that road in serving the Kolob escarpment area and connecting as part of a larger road system to the north. We have noted in the final plan, in the “Affected Environments” section that the Kolob Terrace Road outside of the park is a Washington County road and that it is a link between Washington and Iron Counties. There are no actions in any of the alternatives being considered that would restrict vehicle use on this road to areas outside the park.

8. We recognize that climbing and canyoneering are well established and traditional park uses and we have no intent of eliminating these activities. As mentioned in the draft plan, we will be preparing a wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies to better define our management practices for these activities.

9. With the recent enactment of Public Law 106-181 and its title VIII, the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000, we are committed to preparation of an air tour management plan (ATMP) to address the issue of commercial air tours over the park. A public NEPA process will be used to prepare the ATMP so there will be ample opportunity to gain input from all sectors of the air industry — private as well as commercial. We will continue to encourage all aircraft to fly outside the park, especially for those flights where the presence of the park was incidental to the purpose of the flight.

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<td>place may or may not fly in going cross country. Further restrictions will only increase the problem. Any plan for overflights in the Park must be tempered with flight patterns in the area in general. Local public officials and those most closely affected must be involved in any planning. The Park must not prepare a plan or a season. Most airplanes flying over Zion are doing so for the purpose of getting from point A to point B. However, with the continued expansion of wilderness study areas, national monuments, national recreation areas, and national parks, it becomes extremely difficult for a plane to find anywhere in southern Utah or southern Arizona to fly without being in or over some restricted area. Small planes are limited as to the length at which they can fly. Perhaps the real issue of the environmental community in the great desea for “suitcase” is in eventually eliminate air travel completely.</td>
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<td>11 Guide Services - The County has no strong opinion relative to outside guide services in the Park. If such services would be in the interest of economy of time and manpower within the Park, perhaps such an arrangement could be considered. There are many members around the Park area that we very familiar with the history of the Park and its other attributes. They could be useful in helping to manage the many Park visitors if a plan for their participation was carefully prepared. Do not categorically eliminate offers for private guide service without a careful study.</td>
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<td>12 Air Quality - This section discusses all the factors of how the smoke contributed to reduced air quality in the Park. For some reason, all discussions of air quality relate only to man-made pollutants. The greatest single impact on the environment is the smoke from the 1996 wildfires in the entire basin has nothing to do with the air quality of the Park area. The wood burned in this country, particularly during the spring and summer months, and reduced visibility because of it is a big concern. If you can determine how to control the amount of smoke, the man-made pollutants will be mostly negligible as to air quality in and around the Park. The days when Mt. Nabolom cannot be seen from Las Vegas are the days with the wind blowing in the desert land and the view is obscured by dust.</td>
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<td>13 Water Quantity and Quality - In view of the Park Service statement of its intent to fully comply with the 1996 water rights settlement, it is difficult to appreciate the meaning of the statement on page 15 of the draft documents under water quality and quantity which states that a number of water rights issues exist in Zion including water rights. - On page 15, the statement should be interpreted as follows: It made that the National Park Service would study water supply and treatment alternatives, including placement of treated water from Springdale, and construction of a new water treatment plant inside the Park. It should be understood that the work that the water right settlement did not contemplate the Park Service moving water rights outside of the Park which would be necessary under this proposal.</td>
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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<td>10. We agree that wind and dust create degraded visibility and air quality in and around the park and have revised the text accordingly in the final plan. The plan, however, addresses the Park Service’s responsibilities under the Clean Air Act to maintain the park’s class A air quality status by minimizing the effects of in-park pollution sources, as well as providing input as part of the EPA permitting process to reduce harmful emissions from sources near Zion National Park.</td>
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<td>11. We have deleted water rights from the discussion on page 14 of the draft document. However, all water rights issues affecting the park could not be addressed by the 1996 Water Rights Settlement Agreement. Examples include the possible acquisition or transfer of water rights should holdings within the park be acquired or our administration of privately owned rights within the park.</td>
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<td>12. The statement regarding building a new treatment plant inside the park has been deleted from the preferred alternative in the final plan. Any proposals for buying water from an expanded treatment plant in Springdale would be reviewed for technical and economic feasibility and would also have to conform to any requirements defined by the state engineer concerning possible changes in points of diversion or other related water rights matters. One of the alternatives for the park’s potable water supply would be considered involves moving water rights from the current spring diversions to diversions of the same amount of water from the Virgin River, then treating that water at a facility in the Town of Springdale. Though the point of diversion for appropriated water rights held by the park would have to be moved in order to accomplish this, both the point of diversion and place of use would remain within the park. Any such change would be accomplished through established procedures. Diversion from the Virgin River would probably occur at an existing diversion dam currently shared by the park, town of Springdale, and Springdale Consolidated Irrigation Company.</td>
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settlemet agreement  Aiso that the NPS acknowledges Utah State authority to control
appropriate rights within the Virgin River drainage

14. Night Sky - Because of the height of the parapeds of Zion, the amount of light
that penetrates the Canyons from outside the Park should remain negligible. In the wilderness areas, it
would be difficult to see any significant light from surrounding areas. The night sky should
remain a high quality without any significant requirements either within or outside the Park.

15. Cultural Resources - The County has no additional comments.

PARK POLICIES AND PRACTICES

1. The County supports the strategy of the Park to "Continue to establish and foster
partnerships with public and private organizations to achieve the purposes and mission of the
Park ---- would keep landowners, land managers, local governments, and the public informed----
work closely with local, State, and Federal agencies ---- they would also partner cooperative
regional planning whenever possible to integrate the Park into issues of regional concern."

The County is not without the Park, nor the Park without the County. Coordination and
cooperation between these entities and the local people is most important to the success of the
Park Management Plan. If local residents feel that they are a participant and have "ownership" in
what is decided, they will become the most vocal supporters of what happens in the Park. On the
other hand, if they feel ignored and left out, they will feel no obligation to support Park
management practices, to the detriment of the entire region. Local people and officials must be
kept informed and involved.

2. Natural Resources - The County has no additional comments.

3. Air Quality - Is discussed in #11 of the previous section.

4. Night Sky - Is discussed in #13 of the previous section.

5. Water Quantity and Quality - This is discussed under #13 of the previous section.

6. Natural Sounds - Is discussed at #15 of the previous section.

7. Cultural Resources - The County supports the policy and has no further comment.

8. Land Protection - The County supports the Park policy. It would appear however, that
there has been little effort over the years to actually acquire the holdings inside the Park. The
BLM, for example, makes a rigorous effort to eliminate holdings in sensitive areas on BLM land
and regularly will assist in trading these lands to other locations. The same proven holdings that

13. We are working currently on a major land exchange with private holders
and the BLM. We have consulted with other holders concerning acqui-
sition but the appraisals we obtained have not met with their desires. Our
policy of land acquisition involves a willing seller-willing buyer approach
so the financial arrangements have to be satisfactory to the landowner or
we cannot make a purchase. We have found the exchange process to be
the most satisfactory approach and one that provides the most benefits
for the landowner.

The Five County Association of Governments encouraged us to provide a
copy of our Land Protection Plan to the County Recorder's Office for
their use in administration of privately owned lands within the park. We
will ensure a copy gets to their office.

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COMMENTS

were in the Park thirty or forty years ago are still in the Park. It would seem that the Park expresses the landowners to simply donate the land to the Park, if not in the title, at least in providing no use of the land.

Most of the private land inside the Park cannot be developed because of lack of a suitable water supply which is necessary for any development to take place. For this reason alone, little actual development inside the Park of private lands is expected. The County would encourage a more active effort on the part of the Park to diminish private land from within the Park.

9 Visitors Use and Expectations - The County has no additional comments beyond the comments states elsewhere

10 Visitor Information and Education - The County has no further comment beyond the stated Park policy

11 Levels and Types of Park Development - Obviously the County would prefer to see a higher level of development and visitors' participation in Zoro Park. This would be harmony with the multiple use position of the County relative to public land. Realizing however, that the Park has essentially been managed as wilderness since its creation, we do not expect to see such change in the present policies related to development. That development be maintained at least at the current level is important in order to give the names who come to see the Park the opportunity of an in-Park experience as much as possible

12 Utilization and Communication Facilities - The County has no additional comments

13 Sustainability - The County has no further comments

THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE

14. The statement you are referring to was intended to clearly state that the Park Service would not be changing most of the existing uses and facilities in the park. It does not mean that all existing facilities and uses would continue in all of the alternatives, nor that the no-action alternative would need to be adopted. Under the preferred alternative most existing facilities and uses would continue as they are. Exceptions to this statement (e.g., removal of the Firepit Knoll residence) are noted in the alternative.

15. We are not proposing any changes in local residents' ability to drive through the park. See the "Clarifications of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 1.

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COMMENTS

The plan recognizes that saddle stock use is a traditional activity and allows saddle stock use to continue to be permitted on designated trails and areas at designated times. The large majority of horse use occurs on designated trails and we do not propose to change this.

We have changed the group size limits in the final plan. The existing group size limit of six people and six saddle stock would continue in an interim limit in the primitive zone. With regard to horseback use of the primitive zone, we disagree that large portions of this area have traditionally been used by horseback riders. Most of the primitive zones consist of rugged, steep areas that do not lend themselves to safe horseback riding. See also the "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 11, response 2 to Representative Harper, and the responses to the Backcountry Horsemen of Utah.

17. See response 13.


RESPONSES

16. The plan recognizes that saddle stock use is a traditional activity and allows saddle stock use to continue to be permitted on designated trails and areas at designated times. The large majority of horse use occurs on designated trails and we do not propose to change this.

We have changed the group size limits in the final plan. The existing group size limit of six people and six saddle stock would continue in an interim limit in the primitive zone. With regard to horseback use of the primitive zone, we disagree that large portions of this area have traditionally been used by horseback riders. Most of the primitive zones consist of rugged, steep areas that do not lend themselves to safe horseback riding. See also the "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 11, response 2 to Representative Harper, and the responses to the Backcountry Horsemen of Utah.

17. See response 13.


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1. Visitor Information, Orientation, Interpretation, and Environmental Education: No additional comments. The County supports the proposed action.

4. Management of the Proposed Wilderness Area: While the County does not support the wilderness designation of over 90% of the Park, it is recognized that the Park has been managed as wilderness for many decades and that this is not likely to change. If the private in holdings are acquired by the Park, then, obviously, will be declared as wilderness. On the other hand, as long as the are remained under private ownership, they will not be classified as wilderness to the County and will be subject to existing land use ordinances.

11. Levels and Types of Park Development: It would appear that the Park has no plans for any significant expansion of facilities to serve the public. It is possible to provide landscaped access to facilities within Zone C.1.0.0. the question is, how much does the P. A. plan to provide landscaped access to any of the back country experiences?

5. Utilities and Communications Facilities: The only additional comment to this subject is the problem of electrical transmission lines. Should it be necessary to remove the electrical transmission line serving the Park, Syndicate, and Ridgeville, there is a proposed wilderness area in the higher elevation area adjacent to the State of Arizona. Washington County has attempted unsuccessfully to get the transmission company to shift the transmission line away from the Park. The Park, however, has indicated that the transmission line could be constructed in the area out of the Park, should it become necessary to do so in the future.

6. Sustainability: The County has no additional comments in this subject.

OTHER COMMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Washington County appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Management Plan for Zion National Park. Zion National Park is an important part of the County, and in reviewing the Plan, there are several things that stand out as areas of concern. Things such as:

- The importance of the Park, in maintaining the current level of public facilities within the Park. It is the ability to come to Zion and visit the Park either as a camping area or in the
lodge is very important to visitors. While encouraging facilities to develop adjacent to communities is also important, there is something special about having facilities within the Park.

To residents of adjacent communities identified elsewhere in these comments, it is very important to them to be able to travel through the Park in connecting between parts of Kane County and Washington County. Access, though at peak seasons, must be maintained.

Consider the number of groups in back country area rather than arbitrary numbers. This change in the Plan will go a long way toward solving many of the complaints that we have heard relative to the Plan.

20. We agree that it is extremely important to communicate with our neighbors on a regular basis and have routinely involved local groups and individuals in park management practices. For example, we hosted an information/educational meeting concerning prescribed fire and invited local residents from communities in the Zion Canyon area to review what was happening when we conducted a burn in the Lee Valley area. We have met with businesses like the Clear Creek Ranch and the Zion Ponderosa Ranch along the eastern boundary to coordinate visitor use and develop neighborly working arrangements. We meet periodically with the Blue Springs Homeowners Association adjacent to the Lava Point area, and we maintain contact with the Zican development at the east entrance, advising on visitor use and potential development of their facilities including their campgrounds.

We also agree that cooperation among all parties is essential for the success of this plan. We have been listening to user groups, local communities, and individuals as a part of this planning process. For example, we have met with local user groups such as climbers, kayakers, and horse riders, to address their concerns as park users. We also have made changes in the final plan to respond to many of the comments we heard.

As noted on pages 15-16 of the draft plan, the park staff will continue to work with park neighbors in the future to address issues and concerns. We will also seek input of local people and groups as we develop the future implementation plans (e.g., the wilderness management plan and river management plan), which will determine how the desired conditions in the General Management Plan will be achieved.

21. We believe the zoning schemes in the alternatives are consistent with the purposes of the park and NPS policy. The zones identify desired conditions, which in turn may or may not require restrictions in visitor use. One of the purposes of the park is to "provide a variety of opportunities and a range of experiences, from solitude to high use..." The pristine zone is at one end of this spectrum. This zone also is consistent with the definition of wilderness in the Wilderness Act, which states that these areas retain their "primeval character and influence" and have "outstanding opportunities for solitude." See also the "Clarifications of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concerns 6 and 10, and response 4 to the Kane County Commission.
The restrictions are not called for by the Park's purpose, significance or mission goals. All of the alternative and management prescriptions in this Plan should be and are consistent with and support the Park's purpose, significance and mission goals." p. 7. These goals include ensuring that "visitor impacts do not impair resources" and that the resource are maintained in healthy and viable levels consistent with natural processes." At the purposes, significance statements, and mission goals were based on the Park's "enabling legislation, legislative history, agency management policies, and the knowledge and insight of the Park staff." At

Since over 90% of the Park is legislatively protected for wilderness designation, and according to NPS policy, must be managed as if it were established wilderness, it is clear that the primitive zone exceeds this requirement. It is not clear that the restrictions on group size in the primitive zone are necessary to manage for wilderness characteristics.

It is interesting to note that the plans assert that management for wilderness "cures" certain expectations for visitors, such as the opportunity to experience solitude and quiet. But these expectations cannot always be met in some areas of the back country due to the behavior and number of other visitors." p. 9. The "behavior of other visitors" that interfere with the expectations of solitude and quiet of "visitors" is not specified, nor is the frequency of this behavior noted. In fact, the frequency of occurrence of this "non-wilderness" behavior in the wilderness is probably not known, given the limited data available (see below).

Furthermore, "the majority of visitors do not participate in back country camping, canoeing, horseback riding." P. 118 "Most visitors do not stay overnight in the Park and do not enter the Zone back country." P. 121. Given that "by [the 1992] visitor survey found that 7% of Park visitors went to Los Pinos (p.121) which is accessible by road, it is clear that a much smaller percentage visited the Park's wilderness by foot. Indeed, "[Comparison to the amount of recreational visits (2,404,534 in 1993), it is readily apparent that overnight use of the Park (272,402 overnight stays in 1997) accounted for only a small portion of the Park's recreational use." P. 122 the vast majority of these overnight stays occurred in the developed campgrounds and the ridge, one in the back country. Based upon the 1997 data found in Table 10 (p. 124), looking at the busiest month for back country camping (1,156 in October) and assuming all of these visitors stayed one night, as the 90% of the park sound primitive or primitive, they would each have used 32 acres in which to find solitude and silence. However, ultimately, most of these camps are groups of two or more and were spread out over the month. It is interesting to note the draft plan discuss the fact that overnight visits to the back country remained roughly steady, (re decreased) from 1995 - 1997. There just isn't a basis to conclude that people couldn't find solitude and silence even under the current management scenarios.

In spite of the intent by wilderness enthusiasts, the plan appears to be largely focused on the concerns that "visitor expectations regarding solitude may not always be met in some areas due to the number of other visitors." P. 121. It is unbelievable how the Park has chosen to give the "expectations" of "visitors" precedence over those of "other visitors." P. 123. There is simply no objective articulation for this choice. Indeed, who are the "visitors" with "expectations," and
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<td><strong>who are the “other visitors?” In fact, the data suggests that, whenever they are, the “visitors,” the case with the “expectations,” are in a small minority:</strong></td>
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<td>“Park staff have received comments indicating that some visitors feel that Zion is too crowded in certain areas and at certain times and that it is too difficult to experience solitude and quiet. The 1992 visitor survey found that 17% of visitors felt crowded in the Park. The 1994 visitor survey found that although visitors had serious concerns about parking and crowding, these concerns had a minimal impact upon the impressions of their experiences. Apparently, some people do not seem to be bothered by the increased visitation.”</td>
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<td>P. 119.</td>
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<td><strong>Unquestionably, most of the visitors surveyed had visited 1-9% of the Park which would not be noted visitors or tourists. Thus, the logical conclusion from the data, as presented in the Draft Plan, is that there is no need to severely restrict access to the ER of the Park.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>What is clear is that different visitors to wilderness believe in different ways and expect different experiences, and the Park has arbitrarily defined “significant” wilderness experience as the desirable one to manage for.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>It is also clear that the Park simply does not have reliable data to support the severe restriction of use in ER of the Park. The Draft Plan notes that:</strong></td>
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<td>The following are the highest VNP social data needs for the park:</td>
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<td>- accurate counts of the number of visitors (and groups of visitors) who are currently using specific areas in Zion’s proposed wilderness</td>
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<td>- characteristics of visitors found at various sites in Zion’s proposed wilderness</td>
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<td>P. 67.</td>
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<td><strong>Information on visitor activities and experiences was derived from “staff observations” and from two visitor surveys, whose results may not be truly indicative of visitor activities and experiences.”</strong></td>
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<td>P. 118 (footnote). Also note p. 124 (“A scientifically valid self-reported visitor profile is not currently available for Zion.”). Previously, the “staff observations” served as the basis for the selection of the visitors’ “perceptions” discussed above, even though the sample size could not provide this basis. The posting processes were also based upon experiences of increased visitation and management strategies. Therefore, the basis for the selection of the visitors’ “perceptions” is simplistic; relative little data are available, and there is no cause and effect relationship between past events and future use.”</td>
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<td>P. 122-123. Thus, the selection of use restrictions is not based for to protect Park resources and not called for to meet expectations of the large majority of Park visitors is clearly arbitrary.</td>
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<td>Furthermore, the restriction on horses has been desired since before services were added to the wildlife management plan, the use of horses in use would be increased. &quot;CM</td>
<td>Under the Organic Act the National Park Service is required to protect and preserve the resources and values of Zion National Park. Under SPS, the Park Service makes every reasonable effort to reach an agreement to acquire holdings from willing sellers.</td>
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<td>While it may very well be that some additional restrictions and measures to protect Park resources and that some areas of the Park should be managed for those who have repeated violations of wildlife or animal, the case shown in the draft plan does not need concern.</td>
<td>Under the Organic Act the National Park Service is required to protect and preserve the resources and values of Zion National Park. Under SPS, the Park Service makes every reasonable effort to reach an agreement to acquire holdings from willing sellers.</td>
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<td>The management of the Park includes that the National Park Service will seek to control access to private property. The Park Service recognizes that there is a desire for some areas to be managed with no wildlife or animal management possible to address issues of public concern. &quot;CM</td>
<td>Under the Organic Act the National Park Service is required to protect and preserve the resources and values of Zion National Park. Under SPS, the Park Service makes every reasonable effort to reach an agreement to acquire holdings from willing sellers.</td>
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<td>This is because on a voluntary basis, those areas might provide for the Park and ensure access. &quot;CM</td>
<td>Under the Organic Act the National Park Service is required to protect and preserve the resources and values of Zion National Park. Under SPS, the Park Service makes every reasonable effort to reach an agreement to acquire holdings from willing sellers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>While it is appropriate that some restrictions be added to the Park, there are measures with which no wildlife or animal restrictions or management could provide for the Park and ensure access. &quot;CM</td>
<td>Under the Organic Act the National Park Service is required to protect and preserve the resources and values of Zion National Park. Under SPS, the Park Service makes every reasonable effort to reach an agreement to acquire holdings from willing sellers.</td>
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<td>While the Park is a place along the Park service to which people can travel, it may affect the sensitive environment, wildlife, and public safety. &quot;CM</td>
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There were also administrators, a civil engineer, and a geologist. One person had a Ph.D in "resource economics." Other fields in the social sciences were not represented.

It is unclear whether sufficient consideration has been given to the potential impacts, including costs of the proposed North Fork changes. The extent of impacts in connection with flood events, including, but not limited to, smoke to the road and trails, cost of scoring of the road grade and trails, relocation of some water and sewer pipelines and potential loss of the benefits of the for the Oroville and Emerald Pool trails do not appear to have been carefully analyzed. P. 158.

... to the analysis of potential impacts was sufficient. It is noted on page 52 of the draft that a subsequent river management plan will assess in more detail alternative approaches to river restoration. See also response 5.

The statement that roads and grazing may be adding to sediment loads in the Virginia River is made to indicate that sediment loads may not be entirely natural. It is primarily based on a history of severely degraded range conditions that occurred early in this century on much of the watershed. This lead to extensive erosion control efforts from 1930 through 1960 and is documented by Seem (1999) and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (1949). Slope failures on the watershed associated with roads crossing the Tropic Formation are identified by the U.S. Geological Survey (1999). Though it is recognized that considerable improvement in watershed condition has occurred, current observations find that conditions that might be contributing to enhanced sediment loading still exist. These include roads along many major and minor streams, road construction to new residences, and sparse vegetative soil cover. Use of "road building" may improperly imply an imminent threat from new roads that does not exist. This term has been changed in the final document to simply "roads" because existing and any new roads are a concern.

We believe that wilderness and the zones in this plan do not restrict elderly Americans from using the park's backcountry. Most of the existing trails and routes in the backcountry would remain available to all visitors under the preferred alternative. Aside from the limits on group sizes and group numbers in different parts of the recommended wilderness, no restrictions are being proposed in the plan that would prevent visitors, including elderly Americans, from going into the backcountry. See also response 4 to the Kane County Commission and "Clarifications of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concerns 6 and 10.

RESPONSES

26. Without knowing exactly what actions would be taken to restore the "ver, it is not possible to analyze in detail the potential impacts. For the pur- pose of the programmatic environmental impact statement, we believe the analysis of potential impacts was sufficient. It is noted on page 52 of the draft that a subsequent river management plan will assess in more detail alternative approaches to river restoration. See also response 5.

27. The Plan also offers apparently gratuitous comments suggesting negative impacts of roads and grazing, without providing any basis. For example, the document suggests that the sediment transport of the North Fork of the Virginia River may be enhanced by road building and grazing on the watershed. P. 112. No basis is given for these allegations (indeed, there is no evidence in the plan to suggest that any road building has gone on in the watershed). Given the amount of natural sediment transported, it is unlikely that any small differences from road building or grazing could be measured. It is also interesting to note that, while mitigation is suggested to take care of impacts of actions the park service proposes to take, mitigation is not mentioned in connection with road building or grazing. Thus, for example, for Park projects, "reconstruction impacts would be temporary and mitigated by placing soil fencing, retaining and replacing topsoil, re-seeding areas, selectively project work, or applying other site-specific measures that would reduce runoff from construction sites." P. 157.

11. It is interesting to note that, while the proposed shuttle system was given a "finding of no significant impact," the draft plan admits that "the way visitors experience Zion Canyon will change dramatically when the shuttle starts operating." P 159. A survey of NEPA documents would undoubtedly reveal that where the agency favors an action, a FONSI is more likely to be the end product of NEPA review.

12. The restrictions called for in the preferred alternative and alternative A and B are not in keeping with the Park purposes, significance and mission goals. If the following statement is true, "All of the alternative management prescriptions in this management plan should be and are consistent and support the Park purposes, significance, and goals mission." P 76. Then only the no action alternative should be considered. This alternative is the one most clearly in keeping with the Park Service mandate to make the Park available to the public, as well as to protect its resources for future generations.

13. The adoption of the wilderness, primitive, and primitive zones announced by the preferred alternative would mean that currently the entire Park would be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act and its same cases, even more strict requirements. That would severely restrict the number of people and allowable activities including those Park visits entitled to a Golden Eagle Passport. We believe that such restrictions on elderly Americans is not in keeping with the law, or the intent of the legislation creating the Park. No meaningful basis is offered for
Distinguishing between lands which are placed into primitive versus primitive zones, the vast majority of the Park is placed under restrictions which go above and beyond what is necessary to maintain the lands in a condition suitable for wilderness designation. In our opinion, this is an unreasonable and unwarranted restriction on the ability of the average American, particularly elderly people to visit, enjoy, and benefit from the natural wonders of Zion National Park.
Washington County Water Conservancy District

1. The intent is to prohibit recreational use of saddle stock in this area. We would work with the adjacent landowner to prevent livestock from trespassing in the park, and then minimize the need for the landowner to ride into the park.

2. Horses have been permitted in this part of the park only on existing trails, like the West Rim trail above the Main Zion Canyon. Under the preferred alternative this use would continue to be allowed. See also “Clarifications of Commonly Raised Public Concerns,” concern 11, response 2 to Representative Harper, and responses to the Backcountry Horsemen of Utah.

3. All the alternative maps in the draft clearly state that private vehicular access to inholdings and existing roads would continue unless the inholdings and associated roads are acquired. See also Washington County response 23.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
February 23, 2000
Washington County Water Conservancy District
Comments on the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact for Zion National Park

General Comments
It was gratifying to note the acknowledgment of the 1996 Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement and that the National Park Service intends to fully comply with this settlement agreement. A "no action" alternative is the one most clearly in keeping with the park service mandate to make the park available to the public, as well as protect its resources for future generations.

4. The Park Service believes that all of the alternatives presented in the document are consistent with and support the park's purposes, significance, and management goals.

5. See Washington County response 28.

Specific Comments
4. The restrictions called for in the preferred alternative and alternatives A and B are not in keeping with the park's purposes, significance and mission goals. If the following statement is true: "All of the alternatives and management prescriptions in this management plan should be and are consistent and support the park's purposes, significance and goals mission." (page 7)

Then only the no action alternative should be considered.

5. The adoption of the wilderness, primitive and primitive zones envisioned by the preferred
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| 5. Alternative would mean that virtually the entire park would be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act and in some cases even more strict requirements. That would severely restrict the number of people and allowable activities including those park visitors entitled to a Golden Eagle Passport. We believe that such restriction on elderly Americans is not in keeping with the law or the intent of the legislation creating the park. It is a meaningless basis for distinguishing between lands which are placed into primitive versus preserve zones. The vast majority of the park is placed under restrictions which go above and beyond what is necessary to maintain the lands in a condition suitable for wilderness designation. In our experience, this is an unreasonable and unwarranted restriction on the ability of the average American, particularly elderly people to visit, enjoy and benefit from the natural wonders of Zion National Park. | 6. See Washington County response 7.  
7. See Washington County response 11.  
8. See Washington County response 12. |

6. There is no acknowledgment or indication that the comments recognized the Kolob Terrace road in a Washington County road and provided access not only in the Kolob Terrace area of the park but also in a transmountain link between Washington and Iron County. Park management must acknowledge such roads and not attempt to restrict vehicle use on this road to areas outside of the park. |

7. In view of the Park Service statement of its intent to fully comply with the 1996 Water rights settlement it is difficult to interpret the meaning of the statement on page 14 under water quality and quantity, "that a number of water resources issues exist in Zion including water rights. The purpose of the settlement was to resolve such questions. There should be no question about water rights." On page 49, the statement is made that the National Park Service would study water supply and treatment alternatives, including procurement of treated water. |
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<td>8. From Springdale and construction of a new water treatment plant inside the park, it should be understood the water right settlement did not contemplate the park service moving water rights outside of the park which would be necessary under this proposal.</td>
<td>9. See Washington County response 5.</td>
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<td>9. The proposal to remove the flood control and bank protective structures on 4.5 miles of the Virgin River channel in the vicinity of Zion Lodge could have significant long term costs and detrimental effects. The park service planners would do well to understand why these facilities were found necessary in the first place before they decide to remove them. The statement on page 147, under conclusions, that the no action alternative would have a moderate to major long term adverse effect on the north fork natural river process within the park is without foundation. Many of these facilities were built in the 1930 and 1950s are natural appearing and at this time do not have a significant effect upon the natural river processes. The effect of removal of these levees and controlled structures on sediment and destruction of stream bank vegetation is greatly underdetermined in the impact section of the plan. It is interesting that the core team did not include a biologist nor did the bibliography refer to any publications which would relate to or give information on this subject.</td>
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| **Kanab City**

February 22, 2023

Mr. Joe Fabes, Superintendent

Page: 1 of 2

Dear Superintendent Fabes:

Forn of all, I would like to thank you for extending the courtesy periods on the Utah Natural Resources Management Plan.

I would also like to express my concerns and formally request a copy of the proposed General Management Plan when it becomes available.

1. We feel that the public has a right to be informed of the various alternatives that are being considered and that the public should have a voice in the decision-making process. The proposed changes could affect the park's natural resources and should be made in consultation with the local community.

2. While the proposed changes may be necessary to protect the park's natural resources, we are concerned about the impact on the local community. We believe that the proposed changes should be made in a way that minimizes their impact on the local community. We recommend that the park staff consult with the local community to ensure that the changes are made in a way that is acceptable to the local community.

3. There are many ways for the public to enjoy the park, including hiking, picnicking, and fishing. We recommend that the park staff consider ways to allow the public to enjoy the park while minimizing their impact on the natural resources.

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<td>East Mesa and Fort Rim Trails should be removed from any wilderness or</td>
<td>4. We cannot remove these trails from the wilderness recommendation. See</td>
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<td>primitive designation. This will allow for unencumbered use of the</td>
<td>&quot;Clarifications of Commonly Raised Public Concerns,&quot; concern 13.</td>
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<td>trails by bicycles, wheel chairs, or other means not permitted in the</td>
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<td>wilderness designation. We hope you will give some consideration to</td>
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<td>these comments as you complete the General Management Plan. Please let</td>
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<td>me know if any additional clarification is needed. We would formally</td>
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<td>request a copy of the proposed General Management Plan.</td>
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<td>Securely,</td>
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<td>Karen L. Abbey</td>
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BEST COPY AVAILABLE
Donald Fairley, Superintendent  
Zion National Park (ZNP)  
Springdale, UT 84767  

February 29, 2009  

Dear Superintendent Fairley  

I wish to thank you for the opportunity to comment on Zion National Park's Draft General Management Plan (DGMP) which has been made available to the public for comments. My comments will deal specifically to the proposed addition of 311 acres of land currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) within the boundaries of the Town of Rockville.  

We, the town, strongly endorse the DGMP's proposed action to add this acreage to the Park as it will:  

- provide long-term protection of scenic values for the Park, as well as Rockville  
- protect important and unique resources, e.g., pristine wood, archaeological sites, and sensitive native plants and soils  
- maintain the natural character of the land, and  
- provide the opportunity to recover the damage caused when an unauthorized four-wheel drive was constructed against the wishes of the Town and the BLM (see attached material)  

This letter represents the desire of the citizens of Rockville and their elected representatives to offer our support for the Park's proposed to add BLM land within Rockville to ZNP, to remove the unauthorized trail, recover the affected land to a natural state, and to manage the 311 acres in keeping with Park standards and values.

[Signature]  
Mayor
RESOLUTION No. 92-2

A RESOLUTION TO ELIMINATE THE USE OF BICYCLES ON THE NRA LAND ON THE ROCKVILLE BENCH

WHEREAS a mountain bike trail has been illegally built on Bureau of Land Management land on the Rockville Bench within Rockville, Utah, and

WHEREAS said mountain bike trail has become a public nuisance due to trespassers from the BLM land onto adjoining private properties and into Zion National Park.

THEREFORE, the Town of Rockville resolves that there be no use of bicycles on the BLM land located on the Rockville Bench within Rockville, Utah.

THIS RESOLUTION shall become effective immediately upon passage and signature.

DATED AND PASSED this __th day of ___________ 1996.

[Signature]

Att禀:

[Signature]

Elaine M. Harris, Town Clerk

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| TO: DARLA SIBLES  
PARK PLANNING COORDINATOR  
ZION NATIONAL PARK  
SPRINGDALE, UTAH 84767-1099  
DEAR PARK PLANNER AND PARK SUPERINTENDENT,  
PLEASE ENTER THESE COMMENTS INTO THE OFFICIAL RECORD FOR THE  
ZION NATIONAL PARK PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
COMMENTS ON DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT STATEMENT FOR ZION NATIONAL PARK, UTAH |
| 1. The Zine National Park Draft Management Plan is designed to be a plan for the next 20 years of Park Management. It has been prepared with NO effort to coordinate with the County General Land Use Plans of the three counties it impacts, nor with any attempt to coordinate with County Commissioners or Planners. The only efforts made were occasional presentations to 5 Counties and STPAC telling them that the Park Service was working on a plan. We believe that a plan of this magnitude, which will affect County Planning and Economics for a long period of time, must, by law and necessity be clearly coordinated with County Governments being recognized as equal partners in the process, and County Land Use Plans being respected.  
AGREE  
DISAGREE  
NO OPINION |
| 2. The Zine National Park Draft Management Plan was poorly publicized; most participation in the process was by special interest groups, and, with the exception of working with the towns of Springdale to get their support for the shuttle, was not coordinated with the surrounding communities, particularly the communities to the east of the Park. A plan of this magnitude is going to directly affect the communities surrounding it, not only economically, but because it is in their "backyard". The local citizenry love the Park, and are frequent visitors. We feel that the Park Service must include local communities in their planning process, if they are to come up with a workable plan that will respect ALL of the local environment.  
AGREE  
DISAGREE  
NO OPINION |
| 3. Overseeing and negative impact is occurring in the main Canyon, and at the same time, less than 1 percent (1%) of the visitors is in the backcountry. In the Proposed Plan, more area will be restricted, resulting in 99% of visitor use occurring on 14% of the Park lands. A more logical solution to this would be to make access more available to other areas in the Park, with more trails and facilities, to help channel some of the visitors away from the heavily impacted areas.  
AGREE  
DISAGREE  
NO OPINION |

Mayor of Virgin  
1. See response 1 to Washington County. The other counties did not comment to this effect.  
2. We agree that it is very important to involve local citizens and communities in the development of this General Management Plan. But we disagree that local committees and citizens did not have sufficient opportunities to participate in the planning process. The planning team used newsletters, flyers, press releases, and Federal Register notices to keep local citizens and communities informed about the planning process and solicit their input in developing the plan. Our mailing list included people throughout the region, including those living on the east side of the park. Most of the people who provided input on the draft plan, either at the public meetings or through written comments, were local citizens, not special interest groups. See also responses 1 and 20 to Washington County.  

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<td>4. According to the Park Service's opinions, this new plan will have little impact, or perhaps a slight positive impact on the economy of the local communities. There has been little actual study done, this is merely conjecture. We feel that, given the importance of Zion National Park to the local and state economy, much more thorough studies must be done, in conjunction with state and county agencies.</td>
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| 5. One of the main reason they are giving, in this plan, for such severe restrictions on visitor use, is to protect the "microbiotic crusts". However, the research they are using, is quite inconclusive as to the value of these crusts, and more independent research that we are aware of actually shows these crusts to be detrimental to biodiversity. We feel that the science is not adequate to support such extreme landlocks, and more research must be done before policy can be made, and it must include outside sources. |

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| 6. Horseback riding is a popular and traditional use in the Park. Besides being one of the best ways to see the scenery, under the current Wilderness management, it is the only way that disabled or handicapped people can get out on the trails, as wheelchairs are banned. Studies conducted in other National Parks conclude that the only damage horses cause is in areas where they are concentrated. At the present time, there are no restrictions as to where a person can ride, including off-trail, which is best. The new plan will only allow horses to use a couple of designated trails that will also be used by hikers. We believe that this will cause conflicts between horses and hikers, and will be degradation of the resource due to concentration of use. We feel that this is extreme discrimination, not warranted by scientific evidence, for which there is no justification. Horses play an important role in search and rescue, especially as the Park is being managed as a Wilderness. If they are banned, how can proper search and rescue be carried out? We feel that this issue deserves some very serious study and public input. |

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| 7. Tubing the river is extremely popular, especially in hot summer months. There are whole businesses based on renting out float tubes, and taking people down the river. In the new plan, this activity will be BANNED. We believe that this is an unfair discrimination against this very popular activity with no science to support any harmful effects caused by it. It will obviously have extreme negative impacts on these businesses involved. We do not feel that the activity should be arbitrarily banned without much more study, both of its environmental effects, and the economic impact of eliminating it. |

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3. The economic impact conclusions in the draft plan were based on the professional judgment of the resource economist on the planning team. The level of economic analysis in the plan is consistent with what is normally done for general management plans.  

4. It is the intent of the plan to provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy the park and its resources without degrading those resources. Consequently, the plan allows use patterns much as they currently exist, but with adjustments as needed to protect the resources, including microbiotic crusts. The ecological role of these crusts varies from ecosystem to ecosystem. There are many factors that can limit plant establishment and growth, and knowing soil types and conditions is critical in assessing the role and function of microbiotic crusts in any ecosystem. In sandy loam soils of the western U.S. plants occur with a more even and closer spacing (generally less than 4 feet) and thus the ecosystem requires higher overall levels of nutrients and water. The presence of crusts have shown to greatly enhance seedling establishment, water infiltration, and nitrogen content of soils in these ecosystems, and thus aid in maintaining the higher plant density (pers. com., Jayne Beltap, USGS).  

5. For years horses have been prohibited on certain trails, and off-trail use of horses has been limited to a few areas where the resources can sustain this use. The preferred alternative would ban off-trail use in two areas (upper Coquils and Dahan Wash) where there are sensitive resources that have been or could be impacted by horses. But otherwise, the preferred alternative would not result in any substantial reduction in areas where horse use is currently permitted. See also response 2 to Representative Harper and "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 11.  


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7. Zion National Park entry - a class 1 air quality designation and claims significant authority over activities in the surrounding area that could affect air quality. However, there is nothing that occurs in the rest of Southeastern Utah that has any significant negative detrimental effect on air quality than the burn policy of the Park Service. The "controlled" burn that they implemented in the Fall of 1995 burned out of control for over 1 week, reducing visibility in the canyons to less than 2 miles, and causing severe health hazards for many of the young and old who live in the area. It was totally unacceptable, and not the first time. They have not even released the amount of acreage that actually burned, so it is difficult to calculate the exact amount of pollutants put into the air. Scientists have calculated that the emissions EVERY SECOND from a vegetation fire covering 1.5 acres is equivalent to the carbon monoxide emissions produced per second by 3,000 cars and the nitrogen oxides produced per second by 1,200 cars. In addition, a very destructive gas, methyl bromide, is also a byproduct. The bronze in methyl bromide is 30 times more efficient than chlorine in destroying upper-level atmospheric ozone. There are a number of other methods available to reduce fuel loading and improve the

8. See response 1 to Representative Harper, responses 2 and 4 to Kane County Commission, response 3 to Washington County, and "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 10. With regard to adding more trails, the park's terrain severely limits where additional trails could be provided. For much of the park it is not possible to improve access except at great financial cost and potential resource damage.

9. We agree it is necessary to work closely with local communities and landowners in planning prescribed burns or fires. See also response 5 to the Kane County Commission and response 20 to Washington County.
9. Biodiversity of the land that are more environmentally friendly than burning. We feel very strongly that no fees should be purposely set, until a study has been conducted to examine all of the alternatives, and the counties and private sector should be involved in the decision-making, because they have to live with the consequences.

10. There are several thousand acres of privately owned land in and around the Park. Much of it has been in one family for generations, other parcels are used for recreation, and have summer homes on them, some are in active agricultural activities. In the new Park plan, the Park service takes a rather aggressive stance toward the acquisition of 3500 acres of land both in and surrounding the Park. This idea of creating a "Buffer Zone" around the Park is a very alarming one, and we feel very strongly that no money should be allocated to the Park Service to acquire more land when they claim to not have enough to properly manage the land that they are already supposed to be managing. No private land should be purchased by the Federal government without consent of the land owners. It is time to recognize that private property has some protection under the Constitution, and there is no valid reason for the National Park service to be adding more land to lock away from public use.

11. There is another alarming issue contained within this plan: the National Park Service claims that S.R.S. which goes through the Park, actually belongs to the Park, and this plan asserts the Park's right, in the future, to close that highway to through traffic, except for a shuttle system. This is a very important route for property owners and local citizens, to access their jobs, or their property. We feel that this is an issue that needs to be clarified as soon as possible.

12. Recent criteria adopted by the National Park Service and BLM to evaluate segments of drainages for Wild and Scenic River designations go against the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act Law that specifically states that consideration of rivers should encompass the natural river unit. The Interior Department's criteria is allowing small segments of dry wash drainages, small creeks, and perennial washes to be designated "Wild and Scenic". This is contrary to the law's attention. The only River portions that come through Zion National Park are the forks of the Virgin River, and these are the only ones that should be considered.

10. See response 3 to Representative Harper.

11. See response 1 to the Kane County Commission and "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns" concern 1.

12. The process used to conduct the eligibility assessment is described in "Wild and Scenic River Review in the state of Utah: Process and Criteria for Interagency Use," (July 1996) which the Park Service believes is consistent with the intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Specifically the Act defines a river as "a flowing body of water or estuary; or a section, portion, or tributary thereof, including streams, creeks, runs, kilns, rills, and small lakes." For purposes of eligibility evaluation, the volume of flow is sufficient if it is enough to sustain or complement the outstandingly remarkable values identified within the segment. Rivers with intermittent or nonperiodic flows exist within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and may be representative of rivers within particular physiographic regions, such as the Colorado Plateau.

| COMMENTS |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **ZION COMMENTS** PG. 4 | **RESPONSES** | **REST COPY AVAILABLE** |
| **9** | biodiversity of the land that are more environmentally friendly than burning. We feel very strongly that no fees should be purposely set, until a study has been conducted to examine all of the alternatives, and the counties and private sector should be involved in the decision-making, because they have to live with the consequences. | **10. See response 3 to Representative Harper.** |
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| **11** | There is another alarming issue contained within this plan: the National Park Service claims that S.R.S. which goes through the Park, actually belongs to the Park, and this plan asserts the Park's right, in the future, to close that highway to through traffic, except for a shuttle system. This is a very important route for property owners and local citizens, to access their jobs, or their property. We feel that this is an issue that needs to be clarified as soon as possible. | **12. The process used to conduct the eligibility assessment is described in "Wild and Scenic River Review in the state of Utah: Process and Criteria for Interagency Use," (July 1996) which the Park Service believes is consistent with the intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Specifically the Act defines a river as "a flowing body of water or estuary; or a section, portion, or tributary thereof, including streams, creeks, runs, kilns, rills, and small lakes." For purposes of eligibility evaluation, the volume of flow is sufficient if it is enough to sustain or complement the outstandingly remarkable values identified within the segment. Rivers with intermittent or nonperiodic flows exist within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and may be representative of rivers within particular physiographic regions, such as the Colorado Plateau.** |
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ZION COMMENTS PG 5

14. Because of the lack of coordination with communications and local government, and the lack of reliable scientific studies and statistical analyses on economic ramifications of the Proposed Action in the Plan, the National Park Service should adopt a No Action Alternative until adequate study and local involvement is done to properly guide management for the next 20 years.

AGREE

DISAGREE

NO OPINION

For entry into National Park Service records of Public Comments

Name: David W. Lee

Title: Mayor, Town of Virginia

Address: 300 Park Ave, 70209

Virginia, UT 84779

Signature: 

Phone: (Optional): 801-635-0020

My Additional Comments: The town of Virginia is a small town with a population of 2,000 people. We are very concerned about the proposed development of the proposed National Park. We feel that this development would greatly impact our community and our quality of life. We would like to see a more detailed study done before any action is taken. We feel that the Park Service should work closely with the local community to ensure that our voices are heard.

Thank you for your consideration.

[Signature]

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The majority of all the popular climbing resources in Zion National Park are located within the Zion and Kolob Canyons Area. The management plan will address how the specific rock formations will be managed for climbing.
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<td>2. The bill requires new climbing activities to be approved and the establishment of the zone by 7/1/80. Although some members have expressed concerns, it is important to remember that these activities would be subject to the same regulations as traditional climbing, and any limits on climbing use would be identified as part of the wilderness management plan.</td>
<td>2. See response 1. As noted in the definition of the transition zone, during peak season there would be a low expectation of solitude due to sightings and sounds of other people. Any limits on climbing use would be identified as part of the wilderness management plan.</td>
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<td>3. See response 2 to the Kane County Commission.</td>
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### COMMENTS

- **Issue and Comments on the Report**

3. The DNR, in May, it appears that desired conditions for eating are achieved by the use of some light. The birds are observed to be the most active during the evening, often feeding on small insects and seeds. Monitoring the birds' feeding habits can help in understanding their needs and preferences, which can be beneficial for their conservation and protection.

4. Park personnel monitor the peregrine falcon territories that encompass popular climbing sites in the park. Closures to protect nesting birds are based on the results of this monitoring. The specific extent of these closures would be addressed in the wilderness management plan.

### RESPONSES

4. Park personnel monitor the peregrine falcon territories that encompass popular climbing sites in the park. Closures to protect nesting birds are based on the results of this monitoring. The specific extent of these closures would be addressed in the wilderness management plan.

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[Diagram of park access points]
The permit system ensures Park Service contact with climbers that allows communication of regulations governing climbing and canyoneering, and provision of information on sensitive resources, low impact techniques, and safety considerations. Because of the inherent hazards associated with this type of recreational use in the park, direct communication with these users is considered essential. Specific details on the permit system will be addressed in the wilderness management plan.
**COMMENTS**

The CEP while the proposed action will result in a more preserved environmental impact compared to the current condition. This approach aims to ensure a sustainable and balanced development. Although several theories and practices exist, the consensus is that a comprehensive strategy is needed to curb the negative consequences and values can be optimized through some preventive interventions. The proposed action will involve the collaboration of various stakeholders. As part of the comprehensive approach, the community and the affected parties should be adequately engaged. The planning and implementation of such projects require ongoing evaluation and adjustment to meet the needs and expectations of the people most affected.

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**RESPONSES**
COMMENTS
BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF UTAH
PO BOX 13108 DIXIE, UTAH 84723-3105

February 22, 2000
Darla Sillers
Park Planning Coordinator
Zion National Park
Springdale, UT 84767-3099

Dear Ms. Sillers:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your Draft General Mgmt. Plan and EIS for Zion National Park. We understand that your objective is to maintain a non-impaired natural state and to prevent degradation of resources within the Park boundaries. We strongly support that objective.

We have some urgent recommendations relative to two management directions within your proposed Preferred Alternative. They are as follows:

1. Limitation of number of horses and people per group. When Conomires and other early Spanish explorers first began to explore the North American Southwest, Native Americans soon realized the value of the horse. While the Spanish had and have produced great heritages, no one was ever adept at incorporating the horse into their world than the Native American, a people who lived and traveled as a part of, rather than apart from, their environment. So true did the early settlers and cattlemen of this area. The horse and mule were partners in the exploitation ... great American West. Today, while the risk may not be so great and the distance so far, this partnership of man and horse continues (see below). These areas must be preserved for just that.

And, best yet, this partnership of man and horse, these areas can only be preserved for just that. The current plan for the Park Service to preserve the land and natural resources in the current plan has not adequately protected the history and the tradition. We urge you to do just that, and not arbitrarily limit this kind of the historic and the traditional.

2. The use of Stagecoach Wash, Horse Wash, Scoggins Wash and the Lower Oak Hill areas are currently being used by hikers and were formally used by the Park personnel when they still had horses. There were other uses of the area as well. Whether or not there are needs for private designation under Park Service criteria, occasional off-trail use by hiker and mule would not degrade the historical nature of these remote areas.

We received many comments regarding the proposed changes in use of horses in the park. Please be assured that we recognize that horsesciders have a long history of use in Zion and that they have been conscientious supporters of our efforts to protect the park's resources. The plan recognizes that horse use is a traditional activity and specifies that this use would continue. The actions proposed in the draft plan were intended to ensure that the park's resources are not impaired in the future. However, we also recognize that we may have been premature in proposing some of the management actions related to saddle stock in the draft plan. The final plan has been revised to largely reflect current management of saddle stock in the park. The use limits in the final plan are identified as interim limits until the carrying capacity studies and the wilderness management plan have been completed. Additional interim management actions may be taken if required to address resource impacts. We do not believe most saddle stock groups would be affected by these actions. See also response 2 to Representative Harper, response 16 to Washington County, and "Clarifications of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 11.

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2. A new section on accessibility has been added to the "Park Policies and Practices" chapter in the final plan, which states the NPS policy on access for the disabled. NPS policy is to make all reasonable efforts to make NPS facilities, programs, and services accessible to and usable by all persons, including those with disabilities. The Park Service is committed to complying with the intent of the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, and the 1984 Uniform Accessibility Standards. We agree that horses are one way the disabled can access Zion's backcountry and support this use. However, limiting group size does not necessarily adversely affect visitor safety. We believe that the revised interim saddle stock group size limits in the final plan are sufficiently large to satisfy safety concerns for the disabled to enjoy Zion's backcountry.

3. [Continued on next page]
Dear Ms. Slifer:

As chairman of the Back Country Horsemens of Utah (BCHU) and a state director on the National Board of Directors for the Back Country Horsemens of America (BCHA), I would like to submit the following comments on the Draft General Management Plan and ES for Zion National Park.

After a thorough review of the above listed document, it is our opinion that Alternative A is a better overall alternative than the Preferred Alternative for the following reasons:

1. Alternative A would enable the Park Service to better serve the needs of the increasing number of pack visitors by improving access, by upgrading or building trails, designing new routes and adding picnic areas, interpretive facilities and back country campers.

2. Alternative A would still have plenty of “primitive” area for use by those who desire a “primitive” type of wilderness experience.

3. According to Table #5, pages 101-107, this alternative “would provide opportunities for more widespread and increased use of the park while still protecting park resources”. It would also provide moderately improved opportunities for visitors in most areas and a number of additional opportunities for visitors to enjoy the park’s proposed wilderness, including Pasadena.

4. If the Park Service is truly committed to serving the needs of a majority of its visitors while at the same time providing resource values, we suggest that Alternative A be the preferred alternative.

We do have a serious concern with the proposed group size limits for recreation stock use in the Primitive Area. It is our opinion that the proposed limit of 5 people and 5 horses combined is neither practical nor practical. According to this limit, a family group consisting of two adults and three children on horses would not be able to use any of the trail in their Primitive Area. Certainly a family of five people is not that unusual, and if you consider that if they wanted to take a pack horse in order to enjoy the trails, the restrictions becomes even more unrealistic.

We feel nothing in the ES’s indicate that pack and saddle stock use has been at a steady level in the area. We, therefore, would like to suggest that the group size limit should be the same as those established in Capitol Reef National Park and the Gooseberry Mesa area of the National Monument, namely 12 people and 15 riding or pack stock. Since the topography and many other characteristics of those two areas is very similar to that of the Primitive Area, the same reason why the group size limits should not be the same. Recreation stock use has been one of the historic uses.

Back Country Horsemens of Utah, Chairman, Public Lands

1. See response 2 to the Backcountry Horsemens of Utah, Chairman, Public Lands.

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We believe the trailheads where saddle stock are permitted are sufficient for access.

3. See responses 1 and 2 to Backcountry Horsemens of Utah, Chairman, Public Lands.

4. The plan recognizes that horse use is a traditional activity and specifies that this use continue. The actions proposed in the draft plan were intended to ensure that the park's resources are not impaired in the future. There was no intent to eliminate horses from recommended wilderness, nor does the Park Service believe that horse use is incompatible with wilderness.
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| One final comment: Upon reviewing the list on pages 207-209 of agencies and organizations that received this document, we were surprised to find no mention of Back Country Horses of Utah. As such, we as a parent organization (BCSHA) has a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Park Service to provide a general framework of cooperation, we would like to have our name placed on your mailing list for any future items relating to recreation stock use. Our mailing address is: Back Country Horses of Utah P.O. Box 13195 Ogden, Utah 84412-3195

Sincerely,
Jack Prestors
Chairman, BCSHA

Upon review and inspection of the Proposed Management Plan and EIS for Zion National Park, we, The Utah Basin Chapter of the BCSHU agree with those thoughts, ideas, concerns and sentiments. We too, would like to see certain parts of Zion National Park kept open to a reasonable group number of recreational stock users.

Sincerely,
Gale Robbins
President Utah Basin BCSHU

Alex Ober
Vice President Utah Basin BCSHU

Gale Robbins
robbins@backlink.com
(435)789-0821
126 E 3500 S
Vernal, UT 84078

Alex Ober
oh Ober@hotmail.com
(435)789-4321
551 E 500 S
Vernal, Utah 84078
Back Country Horsemen Of Utah

Kurt Thompson
President Washington Co. chapter
34 W. Coal Dr.
Brockside, UT 84782
Jan. 20, 2000

Mr. Eddy Lopez
Asst. Superintendent
Zion National Park
Springdale, UT 84767

Dear Mr. Lopez,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today. We appreciate the privilege of representing our national organization in the agreement with the National Park Service. We trust that we will be able to earn your confidence as an organization which can assist in teaching “Leave No Trace” horse use within our park so that this wonderful opportunity can be maintained for generations of the future to experience.

The following points summarize our main concerns with the proposed plan:

1. The general feeling in the wording seems to be based against the use of horses in the Park. We would hope that could be contained in the final draft.
2. The word “may” as used in the proposal means that the proposed areas would be in the final draft will use “will” in order to clarify the intent which we understand is the Park’s concern.
3. The arbitrary figure of four at the maximum number of stock allowed in a party is too low. There are many of us with horses larger than that. We would hope that it could be eight, which is what your current brochure on stock use states.
4. We would like the parties to hike open under the condition that members of the group take Close Rider Leave no trace training.

We look forward to our meeting.

Sincerely,

Kurt Thompson
President

Back Country Horsemen Of Utah, Washington County Chapter

1. See response 2 to Backcountry Horsemen of Utah, Chairman, Public Lands.
2. We have revised the wording to state that horses would be permitted on designated trails and at designated times. We do not feel the word “shall” is appropriate because we may not always permit horse use in a given area due to resource concerns and/or conflicts with other visitors. This is true for all uses in the park.
3. See response 2 to Backcountry Horsemen of Utah, Chairman, Public Lands and response 36 to Washington County.
4. See response 1 to Backcountry Horsemen of Utah, Chairman, Public Lands.
To whom it may concern,

In regard to the proposal to reduce the group size for stock users in Zion National Park, the Bridgerland unit of the Back Country Horsemen of American/Utah, does not support the number being reduced to four. Four is not an acceptable number to us because, if a family of four people from Cache Valley were to want to go on an overnight camping trip in the park, they would be unable to do so. Obviously a family of four would need four riding animals, and at least one pack animal to make the trip, the size limitation would not enable them to camp or travel together. A family of four is not an uncommon number, and if they cannot ride or camp together, then they will look for somewhere else to go. It makes us wonder if that is the intent of the group size reduction anyway, to eliminate stock use in the park.

With that said we support the Back Country Horsemen of Washington County, the local unit, and urge you to listen and work with them to achieve a manageable number.

BRIDGERLAND BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN

Blake Pulsipher
President 2000

Bridgerland Backcountry Horsemen

1. See response 2 to Backcountry Horsemen of Utah, Chairman, Public Lands and response 16 to Washington County.
To: Darla Sutten  
Park Planning Coordinator  
Zion National Park  
Springdale, Utah 84767-1009

To Park Planner and Park Superintendent,  
February 25, 2000

Our Canyon County 4 x 4 Club membership appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed Zion Park General Management Plan as we realize the importance of a plan that is projected to cover a county year period.

1. The plan suggests negative impacts regarding roads without providing any basis. The plan suggests road building and grading may increase sediment. (p.12) A study comparing natural sediment transport and vehicle sediment transport and the effects of each is necessary before vehicle access is unnecessarily restricted. Mitigation is recognized in the plan as part of planning regarding other impacts. Should it not also be considered if vehicular access were documented to cause impacts on the park rather than only restraining or eliminating vehicular access?

2. On page 24, the plan would "permit vehicle access to private land on existing roads and would not seek to acquire private lands...as long as these lands are devoted to compatible use."

What legal standard exists for these two statements? Does the private property ownership and access statement prejudice the Zion’s Park? Would the park express condemnation through eminent domain and acquire the lands “though due process and just compensation?” The basis for such statements do not exist in the plan.

3. What is the basis for the park plan to designate land that are more restrictive than Wildlands designations? b. what gives the Secretary of Interior the authority to exceed congressional land-use designations?

4. The draft plan has not provided a basis or documentation to justify severely restricting access to 8% of the park. Preservation has been emphasized in the plan at the expense of access by the majority of park visitors without justification for severely limited access. This issue needs to be corrected or justified with better documentation and study before the plan is enacted.

5. What legal basis does the plan have to close SR 9 at anytime? Is SR 9 a state maintenance route through the park? SR 9 is a very important state for property owners and local citizens to access from one community to another. If the Park Service has sole legal claim to SR 9 that basis should be stated in the plan.

6. The plan did not mention the NEPA requirement that the plan be consistent with the local government planning. What efforts were made to meet this requirement? The plan does not.

Canyon County 4x4 Club

1. See response 27 to Washington County.

2. See responses 22 and 23 to Washington County.


4. See response 4 to the Kane County Commission and “Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns,” concern 10.

5. See response 1 to the Kane County Commission and “Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns,” concern 1.

6. Conflicts with local land use plans has been added as an impact topic in the final document.

It should be noted that NEPA requires that an environmental impact statement discuss possible conflicts between the preferred alternative and land use plans and the extent to which the agency would reconcile the conflict. However, NEPA does not require that the General Management Plan be consistent with local land use plans.

7. See response 3 to the mayor of Virgin regarding the economic impacts. In response to the rest of your comment, no special effort was made to coordinate the economic impacts with local governments. However, the draft plan was sent to local governments, which had the opportunity to comment on the document. The local governments that responded did not dispute the economic impacts section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 In local economy seems to be based on conjecture rather than study. Were the economic impacts coordinated with local government? If so in what actual extent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Many aspects of the plan indicates that the planning effort was developed primarily to present Zion Park from visitors and that the public participation and local government coordination part of the plan was done to minimally meet the legal requirement. Can you give us some indication that this is not the case?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for letting us share concerns that are very important to our membership.

Canyon County 4-H Club
Mark Allred
1385 700 East
Kanab, UT 84741

8. See responses 1 and 20 to Washington County, response 4 to the Kane County Commission, and response 2 to the mayor of Virgin.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
Friends of Zion

Postbox 2000
San Diego, CA 92101

February 28, 2000

Dear Doctor,

In response to the release of the 1999 Zion National Park Domestic Genera Management Plan, I am writing to offer comments on various aspects of the plan and the overall management of Zion National Park. Zion is a place that has special significance for me, and I believe it is important to address the issues raised in the plan.

The uniqueness of Zion National Park, with its grand canyon, is one of the reasons why I am writing to you. Zion is not only a beautiful place, but it also represents a unique ecosystem that needs to be protected and maintained. I am concerned that the plan may not adequately address the issue of the management of the park.

I would like to express my support for the goals and objectives outlined in the plan. I believe that the management of Zion National Park is a critical issue, and I urge you to consider the comments I am offering.

Thank you for your consideration. Please add my name to your mailing list for future planning documents.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Best Copy Available
Comments on Zion National Park Draft General Management Plan, February 29, 2000

We are quite happy the draft is coming out now because we have the chance to make a great impact on the future of Zion National Park. And even more fortunately, it appears Zion is in a favorable position of being under the care of a new insightful and forward-thinking Director of the Intermountain Region, Karen White.

We are quite impressed with Mr. White's commentary in the 1998 issue of Forum, the publication of the Geosight Society. In her article she describes a vision that is especially exciting for Zion—a park extremely challenged by rapid development and growing demands for unlimited use.

Unfortunately, the Zion Draft General Management Plan seems to have lost footing. If the reason for national parks and the visitor experience national parks are mandated to provide, learning is the Organic Act's definable mission; we hope it will be a beacon in the plan's re-vision.

"...conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of same in such manner as will leave them unimpacted for the enjoyment of future generations."

Friends of Zion wants to help create a document that adheres to and champions this original ideal; a document with a unified vision—an approach, innovative, and, dare we say, passionate commitment to the protection of the spirit of place, this place, the sacred landscape and values of Zion National Park.

Friends of Zion challenges the National Park Service to create from this unfeasible draft a science-based management plan that will, for the first time, adequately address serious current impacts to park ecosystem and will provide a range of increasing protection to critical natural and cultural sites.

Important sites to this end can and should be taken immediately, without huge budget or staff increases:

* Our members also want to see real management reduction in Zion's Recommended Wilderness so that natural and exceptional resources, such as additional character and value, are extended full protection of the law.

Friends of Zion endorses a document that will provide a healthy "national park" visitor experience. Rather than mere viewing of existing through an increasing and complex structured trip filled with mandatory visitor center visits, compulsory shuttle transportation, and crowded hiking on deteriorating trails, we want visitors to lounge along a pristine, tree-flowing Virgin River, to hear the spirited notes...
COMMENTS

Friends of Zion

Zion DRAFT Comments

February 2000

RESPONSES

The Congress and the Federal courts have consistently told us that our first priority must always be to conserve, and to provide for closure within that context. The Challenge is about making the commitment to restore preservation so that parks will always have unimpeded resources for future visits to enjoy. That commitment to preservation means that sometimes we'll need to forego our policy for hard choices, and that we have to face political pressure which wants more development or accommodation of the opposite of [preservation].

One [National Park Service] has not done, however, is a very good job of educating the public about what it means to keep parks and wilderness functioning in an increasingly transformed landscape.

"Our commitment to natural and cultural resource inventory, monitoring, and the use of unaffiliated information to support management decisions is required by the 1996 Thomas Act." We can and must consider the resources that are at risk and every decision we make as park managers. "That doesn't require any more money or do if there are not funds." Friends of Zion chairman Director Ward’s innovative and courageous vision for reinvigorated national parks. Unfortunately, none of the direction we, Wade so eloquently asks for in his article is mentioned in the DRAFT, no.
equally as inviting, are NPS Management Policies 2000 and the Director's Orders and Reference Materials. Luckily, the Zon General Management Plan is in DRAFT, and can be revised and updated with the enthusiasm, hope and positive direction as clearly stated by Director Vade.

We know this will involve hard choices, but if these decisions aren't made now, they will be impossible to make after 27 years of continued development, vandalism, and crime. We're urged to "do what we can" and all national parks—like the future will take innovative and committed leadership on the ground and unshakable support from Regional and Washington offices.

Mr. Wade will also have the chance to make a profound difference at Zion National Park by her choice of a new superintendent. We encourage the choice of a superintendent who needs her evaluation of a good example, a superintendent who will focus on "meaningful" and not "meaningful" management programs without huge increases in responses, and only with more science-based resource management as a priority because they needed to have the facts on their side when they went out into the public arena to deliver their parts from new sources.

The accounting costs associated with the given alternatives can be greatly reduced by eliminating the waste of costly building and road projects, expensive in-park housing, increased shuttle services, etc., etc., etc. Staff costs hopefully will rise to provide scientific-based information, visitor resource interpretation, skilled and temperate law enforcement, educational wilderness permits, and sensitive restoration. Costs for staffing training, innovative resource management, conferences covering the latest conservation ideas and methods, compliance, wilderness management, and permanence will hopefully rise as well. The use of regional support and creative, inspired delivery from Regional and Washington offices are necessities and processes.

Thus, Friends of Zion offers:

A vision statement for Zion National Park

* Comments on the draft plan
  * Friends of Zion formally requests that the National Park Service produce a second draft of the Zion General Management Plan that incorporates Karen Wade's views, and ends this clean compliance with the NPS mission, current management policies, the area's science, and resource conservation methods. With this, Zion National Park will become a shining example of areas and a new model for all national parks.
A Citizen's Vision for Zion National Park

Sincerely, Zion. The Virgin River. These words ring in our imaginations like
Angel's Landing. We come to Zion hoping to find that which we can find nowhere else.
And, inversely, we do, something to Zion in a soul-seductive canyon. In the spirited roar of
rapids we urge, in canyon temples glint
n完全可以, once again, dig into our souls
forever. Later, while the world sinks in its
hardest suit around us, a vision of cool
water splashing over arid rock will come
when we least expect it. And we revel in the
idea that such places still exist. River's

Zion is a place of the wild, here the
Cedar Breaks Park merges with Spanish
Range and the Virgin River into forested
mountains to some desert. Zion's protected
lands are not only a'widespread wildness,
but are also interwoven in a vast network
of Federal lands which provide a chance to
manage Zion's unique ecosystems as part
of a whole.

From Zion's seen resources that the
unseen. The climate varies from high
altitudes to low, processes perceiving beneath our
feet, from unimagetable gorgeous process
running through unworldly time, and
from the sense of place that comes with
well-nuranged human souls. This place is
sacred not only to the native cultures for
which it is an unaged home, but also to a
growing global constituency. Multitudes of
people seek answers to Zion's essential
spirit and find solace in knowing this
wondrous place is managed to nurture the
area's unique natural systems on which
we all depend.

The park's vision and mission is to
preserve resources and provide values
within that context.

To protect Zion's tangible and intangible
wealth, the park will institute science-informed
management to preserve ecological
processes and historic, cultural and
recreational resources. Focused
wilderness both in and around its borders will be
managed as wilderness and the
Mineral Resources Decision Process will
address all actions therein. Wilderness
decisions will be made in articulation of
essential dissonance. Adoptive reuse of historic
structures will be encouraged, and the
brownfield's historical integrity
will be preserved. Cultural resources will be
protected from all impacts, and formal
government-to-government consultations will
be established with Native American Tribes.
Visitor use will be carefully managed to
ensure shared opportunities—wilderness
suitable to extended social
conditions—while accommodating the park's
primary responsibility of resource protection.
The unique qualities of each park area will be
preserved and restored to allow differing
cultural opportunities. All

Page 1 of 1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
interpretable. Education and outreach are essential to educate visitors with diverse tastes and capacities. Interpretive efforts will inform the public of the park's primary role as a center of culture and natural beauty.

- Planning and management: Compatibility with the natural setting and architecture, energy efficiency, and include alternative energy sources. Development will be permitted only to preserve park resources and values.

- Regional planning: Toleration of park's role in the park system. Recognize the role of the park in the region. The park will work with surrounding entities to plan and manage actions in the larger region.

- Discrete: Planning and management of the park's natural setting and architecture, energy efficiency, and include alternative energy sources. Development will be permitted only to preserve park resources and values.

- Regional planning: Toleration of park's role in the park system. Recognize the role of the park in the region. The park will work with surrounding entities to plan and manage actions in the larger region.
## Comments

### Comments on the Draft Plan

For the use of Zion National Park General Management Plan. This comment here on specific actions listed in the plan though we have these actions not specifically for a General Management Plan without a central vision or without vision for each area

### General

1. Alternatives are based on an incorrect assumption. NPS policies (both 1989 and 2000) require all wilderness areas to be managed as wilderness and Congress acts. The alternatives are inadvisable since management actions proposed in each area are based on omitting areas from wilderness designations.

2. The plan presents an inadequate range of alternatives: Is (a) develop, (b) don't develop, or proposed (b) what the NPS wants. The given alternatives are configurations of incrementally different ideas (as in the resource-focused alternative that proposes four new visitor facilities in the park's remote areas).

3. Wilderness management as outlined in a Primary Planning Issue or Congress not listed under Direction for the Plan: Purpose, Significance, and Mission Guideline for ZNP.

4. There is no overall vision. The plan reads as if written by authors who never discussed how that separate sections would be integrated into a sound whole. The park staff's ability to create a new, inclusive, and dynamic document.

5. By crossing "old ways" into a new future, the plan is already obsolete.


7. There is no innovation, commitment to the spirit of place, or adherence to the national park service ideal.

8. The plan provides unlimited citations to the deactivation of park resources.

9. The alternatives neither address the stated Desired Future Conditions or incorporate critical needs.

10. The plan needs defined visions for each area: i.e., Lake Powell, North Canyon, South Starting, the East Side, Paria-Escalante, and Zion Canyons.

11. There is no mention of ecosystem management or of the park in a regional context.

12. Spreading use rather than controlling it is impermissible, and poor development policy.

13. Alternatives' resource actions should be common practices, not an alternative.

### Responses

1. The text in the draft plan has been modified to address this comment. See the response to "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concern," concern.

2. We disagree with your categorization of the range of alternatives. The alternatives included a series of interrelated actions, strategies, and approaches for managing the park. Each alternative has a slightly different focus and addresses differing ways visitor use, the levels and types of park development, management of the Zion Canyon Lodge and the North Fork of the Virgin River. The three action alternatives also addressed park boundary adjustments and proposed wild and scenic river designations in the park. Although the planning team starting out with more management alternatives, as indicated in appendix E, the planning team narrowed the range based on the advantages of the alternatives relative to each other, the lack of major differences between the alternatives, and public responses to the initial range of alternatives. We believe the four alternatives in the draft and final plan reflect an adequate range of alternatives that address the major concerns and views that were expressed by park staff, other governmental agencies, organizations, and individuals during the planning process. With regard to alternative B, we are not aware of which four new visitor facilities you are referring to being built in remote areas. Only minimal new development was proposed in the park under this alternative, all which occurred in non-wilderness areas.

3. Wilderness management is identified in the final plan as an issue to be addressed in future plans. It also is discussed under "Park Policies and Practices."

4. An overall "vision" for the park, which includes the front and backcountry, has been added to the preferred alternative in the final plan.

5. The management zone descriptions outlined the desired conditions (i.e., vision) for these areas. See appendix D for detailed descriptions of the zones.

6. A direction on ecosystem management has been added to the "Park Policies and Practices" section of the final plan.
There is no mention of how the park will modify visitor's potentially damaging behavior. The plan seeks to limit impacts by changing use patterns, but without changing visitor behavior, these changes are counter
7. Use limits are in place for the Iciff Fork. We agree that interim group size limits are needed elsewhere. The final plan notes that group size limits and encounter rates for hikers in the primitive and primitive zones and for saddle stock users in the primitive zone are interim limits, which will be reviewed in the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies. The park’s highest priority implementation plan is the wilderness management plan. The wilderness plan and the carrying capacity studies will be completed within five years of approval of the GNP. See also response 2 to the Kane County Commission regarding hiker group sizes and response 16 to Washington County regarding horse group sizes.

With regard to issues being deferred to future plans, we believe existing laws, NPS policies, and park policies and practices provide sufficient interim direction. If any issue becomes pressing before a future implementation plan is finished, park managers will take appropriate action.

8. See response 1.

9. The text has been modified in the final plan to address the minimum requirement process. Specifically, the section on wilderness management in the “Park Policies and Practices” outlines the process.

10. All of the alternatives now are consistent with the 1978 wilderness recommendation except for changes that reflect the acquisition of private inholdings, state surface ownership, mineral rights, grazing rights, and water rights. No developments are being proposed in the recommended wilderness area. All wilderness acreage and percentage figures have been checked in the final plan and are consistent. And the term “proposed” wilderness has been replaced with recommended wilderness. See also “Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns,” concern 13.
In the preferred alternative in the final plan three areas designated as transition zones — the Timber Creek overlook, the Narrows from Orderville Canyon south to Mystery Canyon and the Observation Point trail — lie within the recommended wilderness area. These areas would be managed as "special" transition zones: management in these areas would be consistent with wilderness, although use levels would be permitted to be higher than in other zones in the wilderness area. Again, we believe this is not inconsistent with how other wilderness areas with high use levels are managed (e.g., the Mount Rainier, Alasce Lakes, and Grand Canyon Wilderness areas). See also response 2 to the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

We agree. However, no new facilities in the preferred alternative are in the recommended wilderness area. See also response 9.

We agree and have modified the alternates. e map: to remove all parking areas within the recommended wilderness.

We agree that a new plan is needed due to the wilderness recommendation and noted this on page 4 of the draft. See also response 11 and response 2 to the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

See response 9.

Guiding in the recommended wilderness area would be addressed in the future wilderness management plan, utilizing the minimum requirement process and NEPA. See also response 9.
## RESPONSES

17. We agree with many of your points. As noted in the introduction to this part, after reviewing public comments, the zoning and management of Panumwet have been changed in the final plan. Panumwet and upper Shanes Creek above the diversion would be designated as a research natural area. References to guided trips have been dropped, although NPS-lead educational groups would be permitted in this and other research natural areas.

### COMMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments or to the Federal Register of the Department of the Interior (January 25, 2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Friends of Zion members do not support guide services in the park's Wilderness area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening Panumwet Canyon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>During the public meetings, the only pressure to open Panumwet came from the people who would profit from it.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>It has recently come to our attention that numerous anecdotes supported the Panumwet area in a previous study. Why is the information not mentioned or incorporated?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>Since Panumwet is within a recommended wilderness, any changes to the stream must undergo the Minimum Requirement Process.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>Since the Environmental Analysis of opening Panumwet Canyon is totally negative, a separate NEPA document must be prepared for decisions affecting the canyon.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>What criteria recommends reopening?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>What access will be provided into Panumwet? The easements or acquisitions are needed.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>Guides generate demand through advertising where there was none. Does Zion really want to get in the business of managing waiting lists, booking travel, and monitoring recreational operations?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>I would like to see the park have plans to do without opening the associated Pandora box. Count your blessings and just say no.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>Why are Panumwet group sizes larger than those for wilderness permits or primitive permits?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>Panumwet Canyon must be considered in a regional context. The same recreational experience is available in thousands of other canyons throughout the Colorado Plateau. But only one canyon in all of the Southwest is set aside for full protection and future research. Panumwet. What an incredible gift the NPS is giving to the future—a canyon unlike any other—one which will guide the restoration of these thousands of other canyons.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>Many of our members (long-term local residents and most of the best local guides) Panumwet, and we can report that it is indeed a beautiful place. Although we would like the to have these again, we are willing to sacrifice our personal desire to the greater good and noble cause of preservation.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. <strong>The relocation of the Panumwet Canyon diversion is of primary importance to CO members</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Research Natural Areas

18. The draft plan identified the reasons why the existing research natural areas would be deauthorized on pages 10 and 62. There is little documentation regarding the reasons why these areas were originally classified as research natural areas, but they were typically chosen as representative vegetation. Additional rationale for deauthorizing the existing research natural areas is provided in the final plan. With regard to the new research natural areas, the discussion of research natural areas in the preferred alternative has been expanded in the final plan. More details are provided regarding the rationale for designating different areas as research natural areas. An appendix has been added that includes the attributes of each research natural area. The zone description describes how these areas generally would be managed. Regional context was not considered as a reason for designating the new research natural areas. However, they are believed to be generally rare to unique in the region.

19. The “Land Protection” section of the “Park Policies and Practices” chapter now states that the Park service would work with water right owners to minimize impacts to park resources. Should a private water right on Shunes Creek be acquired, that area would become part of the Parunuweap Research Natural Area and water diversion structures would be removed.

20. The degree of disturbance to lands and facilities will vary depending on the restoration technique selected, from very little for regional neglect, to extensive for construction of a channel with natural characteristics. Outside the river corridor, disturbances can be expected on some portions of the road shoulder that have a high risk of bank erosion. The degree of continuing disturbance would be similar to past maintenance of the existing levees or maintenance of the current road upstream of the Grotto picnic area where the river is no longer channelled. Just as it is now, the need for such activities would be concentrated in the periods following large floods.

In reference to what time period the river would be managed, the river cannot be managed for a particular time period because natural processes, in particular fluvial processes are variable, cyclic, and progressive and, as such, cannot be locked in time. Rather, the river would be managed to support natural processes within the limits of facility protection.

### Naturalized Virgin River

20. We support a naturalized Virgin River only if the park’s response to flood damage does not incur greater damage, i.e., constant re-channeling, bulwarks, etc.

21. Parking is planned for extending current spring water structures. We do not support the building of a weir treatment facility in the park.

22. Rafters will require NEPA permits and public comment before implementation.

### Zoning

- The area of Zone 2 does not support the zones as defined and delineated in the DRMP, since they do not provide wilderness experiences.
- Zones appear to be drawn to accommodate current uses rather than define it.

### Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Natural Areas</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>18. The draft plan identified the reasons why the existing research natural areas would be deauthorized on pages 10 and 62. There is little documentation regarding the reasons why these areas were originally classified as research natural areas, but they were typically chosen as representative vegetation. Additional rationale for deauthorizing the existing research natural areas is provided in the final plan. With regard to the new research natural areas, the discussion of research natural areas in the preferred alternative has been expanded in the final plan. More details are provided regarding the rationale for designating different areas as research natural areas. An appendix has been added that includes the attributes of each research natural area. The zone description describes how these areas generally would be managed. Regional context was not considered as a reason for designating the new research natural areas. However, they are believed to be generally rare to unique in the region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the basis of new RHAs?</td>
<td>20. The degree of disturbance to lands and facilities will vary depending on the restoration technique selected, from very little for regional neglect, to extensive for construction of a channel with natural characteristics. Outside the river corridor, disturbances can be expected on some portions of the road shoulder that have a high risk of bank erosion. The degree of continuing disturbance would be similar to past maintenance of the existing levees or maintenance of the current road upstream of the Grotto picnic area where the river is no longer channelled. Just as it is now, the need for such activities would be concentrated in the periods following large floods.</td>
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### COMMENTS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Areas should not be eliminated from wilderness due to overuse. The park should decrease use to near or restore wilderness suitability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>Zion Lodge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Friends of Zion members support a research and education facility at Zion Lodge in some fashion, but that more critical issues take precedence over the costly conversion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Zion Lodge is not necessary to meet the needs of shuttle passengers and cannot realistically be removed. However, we encourage developing a research education facility in conjunction with and paid for by the lodge conversion.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### BLM Lands

- Friends of Zion strongly supports the addition of BLM lands as mentioned in the plan, and supports their continued management as wilderness.
- Friends of Zion does not support the lease on park lands as currently overlaid with the BLU on the Sheeprock Bench. Mountain biking opportunities near the park are endless; it does not need to occur in the park.

#### Access and Conservation Easements

- It is difficult to comment on proposed easements without a map delineating same.
- Friends of Zion members do not support easements to provide easier access to the park's remote areas.

### RESPONSES

21. It is estimated that the park diverserts approximately 50% of the discharge of several springs to the potable water supply. A similar diversion of the Virgin River would constitute less than 2% of the flow. Eliminating spring diversions would restore natural flows downstream of the springs, permitting surface flow in several small tributary streams to extend further downstream and continue through a greater part of the year. A study of the water system alternatives would weigh these impacts and benefits against those of other alternatives.

With regard to building a water treatment facility in the park, that action was dropped from the preferred alternative in the final plan. The final document now states that the Park Service would examine alternative ways to obtain drinking water, including the procurement of treated water from Springdale.

22. We agree with your point regarding NEPA analysis and public comment. Current plans call for gathering an information baseline and seeking the input of experts in river morphology over the next year to develop reasonable alternatives, followed by a NEPA analysis and request for funding. This restoration is a high priority due to the continuing loss of overstory trees without replacement, the continuing loss of fish and wildlife habitat, the continuing loss of opportunities for visitors to observe a natural river system so rare in this country. Parks are directed to restore altered natural resources and to manage natural processes instead of features by NPS Management Policies.

23. No areas are being eliminated from the 1978 wilderness recommendation, nor are trails being "cherry-stemmed" out of wilderness. See responses 10 and 11.

24. As noted on page numbers 10, 11, and 43 of the draft plan, the lodge provides a unique historical visitor experience that adds to visitor enjoyment of the park. We therefore continue to support the existence of lodge operation — we do not support converting part of the lodge to a research facility. At the same time, we also agree there is a need for a research facility. The final plan states under "Park Policies and Practices" that park managers would work with other governmental, private, and nonprofit organizations to explore locations and outside the park for a research/environmental education facility and to find partnerships and funding sources for such a facility.
<table>
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</table>
| • The improvement in environmental conditions does not appear to be appreciably greater or different than the current alternative. Why would this be the park’s preferred option?  
• This alternative lists the negative impacts of wilderness management and not the positive impacts such as the benefit of visitors experiencing a true wilderness in Zion instead of something we call wilderness? Alternative A  
• Alternative A agrees the NPS’s primary responsibility to protect resources first, thus A and B are valid alternatives. None of these alternatives should resources be sacrificed to use.  
• Many opportunities in the backcountry could be expanded under alternative A. This would be a direct violation of wilderness policies without specific NPS and MPA analysis and public comment. Alternative B  
• Page 14. Alternative B focuses on providing increased protection for park resources while still providing opportunities for a range of visitor experiences. Isn’t this the NPS mission?  
• The resource actions proposed in Alternative B should be common practice, not an alternative.  
• The following should be implemented under all alternatives including the action, as omissions of a strong NPS:  
  • Reduce or eliminate negative impacts to  
  • Maintain visitor safety and security  
  • Unorganized, unqualifiable  
  • Unmanaged or competitive  
  • Excess unmanaged, unqualified  
  • Excess sheep, livestock, or grazing areas  
  • Air quality and water quality  
  • Natural Cook  
  • Microclimates  
  • Roadless land  
  • Roadless Communities  
• Why reduce subsidies in the main camp? Manage the camp for heavy use and reduce the environmental costs  
• No mandatory Zion Mt. Cantwell studies  
• No cost to facility. The case makes less sense, avoid impact, or, higher values, less cost, or more natural land entrance. |

would provide greater details on specific actions and quantification of impacts.

30. As stated in the document, the impact analysis was largely based on a review of existing literature and park studies, information provided by experts within the Park Service and other agencies, and park staff professional judgement. The bibliography has been expanded to include a more comprehensive list of the references that helped provide the background material and information used in the formulation of the alternatives as well as the impact analysis.
<table>
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- The improvement in environmental conditions does not appear to be appreciably greater in
  any alternative than the Action alternative. Why not use this park's proposed action?
- This alternative has a significant impact on water management and not the positive
  effects on the benefit of visitors experiencing real wilderness in Zon instead of something
  at just a wilderness?

**Alternative A**
- Alternative A ignores the NPS's primary responsibility to protect resources first, then
  action, and is a good alternative. How is the alternative should resources be restored to use
  being opportunities in the basin? This would be a direct violation of wilderness policy without
  stated NPS and WRPA analysis and public comment.

**Alternative B**
- Page 1. Alternative B focuses on providing increased protection for park resources while
  still providing opportunities for a range of water experiences. Why this the NPS position?
- The resource actions proposed in Alternative B should be common practice and
  are alternatives

The following should be implemented under all alternatives including the Action, at a cost of
- Reduce or eliminate negative impacts to
- Maintain species and populations
- Enhance species habitat
- Manage water quality
- Natural Beauty
- Recreational uses
- Reser... Community use
- Why reduce shrub in the main core? Manage the core for heavy use and leave the
  alternative use
- Yes, necessary. Zon NPS Central studies
- No new ski facility. The ski market provides a range of water experiences. In higher
  density in each ski industry vs. more natural and skiers.
### COMMENTS

| 31. | Most of the visitor facilities on the east side that were proposed in the draft plan, including new nature trails and a full-service visitor center, have been dropped in the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative still calls for possibly a few new restrooms and picnic sites. |

### RESPONSES

**Main Canyon**
- We do not support the building of any new facilities in the Main Canyon.
- We do not support the building of emergency facilities in the Canyon.
- We support the building of recreational facilities by park and concession staff within park boundaries.
- We wish to build outside the park or as part of a reclamation of Zion corridor.

**East Side**
- We do not support increased service and facilities on the East Side. To provide a unique experience different from the main canyon, we recommend no new contact stations, picnic areas, pullouts, short nature trails (which, because of its proximity, would need close monitoring).
- It is unclear from the current maps if the Friends of Zion Trail is in the park's original wilderness recommendation. If so, it should not be upgraded, signed, or heavily integrated.
- Friends of Zion asks that the East Side commercial development outside the park, if not, might need to be revised to possibly the East Side character and changed.

**Kotel Terrace**
- Current trails are consistent with wilderness. No need to remove.


**COMMENTS**

Lava Point

- Friends of Zion members oppose any development near North Creek or anywhere else on the Kolob Terrace road. Ranger and maintenance facilities should be located outside of Zion Canyon or Lava Point. Staff need to be quartered outside the park in existing town.

- Additional landbuyers and temporary ranger stations are encouraged.

Kolob Canyons

- Development and expansion in the Kolob Canyons area is opposed by Friends of Zion members. Employee housing, administrative offices, and maintenance facilities should be located outside the park.

- Should the need arise, we support limited use rather than increasing services.

- No campgrounds.

- Unhindered view of the Kolob Canyons area; visitors are greeted with a sweeping and panoramic view. Panoramic views are acceptable for the ranger on duty. There should be no water development in support facilities.

Other Facilities and Administrative Areas

- The area must control illegal parking.

- Parking areas, those provided at the East Zion Trailhead, East Rim Trail, and Center Hill Approach cannot be located in wildernesses and must be trimmed.

- Friends of Zion members do not support improving access to remote areas of the park like the road to Slate Canyon, north of the Zephyr Trail through the Wilderness area.

- The pursuit of national park water system is not feasible.

- New facilities housing and amenities outside the park. Facilities could be located in Virgin. Lava Canyon, as there are in other progressive parks.

**RESPONSES**

32. The preferred alternative states that some new visitor facilities could be built along the Kolob-Terrace Road. We believe that improving trailheads and adding a few picnic sites in already disturbed sites — the only new developments mentioned in this part of the park — would not impair park resources and would provide more opportunities for people to enjoy this area. We also believe that building a new focused visitor facility/ranger residence on BLM lands near the park boundary at North Creek is justified. As noted on page 54 of the draft, this facility would serve several functions that would be much more difficult or impossible to provide via Zion Canyon or Lava Point. Establishing an NPS presence near this part of the park would help the Park Service better protect park resources and provide needed services for visitors.

33. The proposal to expand the Lava Point campground has been dropped. The preferred alternative now states that there would be no new development at Lava Point, except for the replacement of the existing ranger residence. Although we generally agree that employee housing should be located outside the park, in this case there already is an existing structure in this area. Replacing the Park Service residence in this part of the park would enable a ranger to continue to stay in this part of the park and oversee the campground and picnic area, protect park resources, and provide services for visitors. It also should be noted that another park ranger residence in the area at Firepit Knoll would be demolished once the new ranger residence/visitor facility is established on BLM land along the Kolob-Terrace Road. Finally, there are no plans to pave the Lava Point road.

34. The preferred alternative now states that there would be no expansion of facilities along the Kolob Canyons Road other than the possibility of installing restrooms. The preferred alternative continues to state that additional administrative facilities could be built in the existing administrative area north of the entrance to support the increase in visitor services and facilities in this part of the park. (New employee housing, however, would be located outside the park.) This area already has been disturbed. It would be difficult to find a suitable location for administrative and maintenance facilities outside this part of the park.

35. The text has been changed to state that the trailhead/parking area at Crater Hill (Donut Wash) would be removed because it is within the recommended wilderness area. No parking area would be built for the East Mesas...
COMMENTS

37

A Citizen's Proposal: Alternative Q
Resource Protection for Visitor Use

To create a Citizen’s Alternative, Friends of Zion posed two questions:
1. What does Zion really need?
2. What can Zion reasonably accomplish in 10 years?

The much of Draft Plan seems to be based on subjective opinions rather than science. No research, sociological studies, or even anecdotal opinions are used to support the seemingly random explanation of RNA, visitor surveys, or management in general. Although the Friends believe the alternatives need to be totally different from a different critical philosophy (of protection and science), we have used the plan’s format to create a draft alternative for your consideration.

The plan also raises actions that need to occur immediately with those that must be necessarily be deferred until funding allows and with those which may never happen. It is difficult to understand exactly what the park is proposing for future management. We believe the Draft Plan is much too specific on terms like, for example, removing water facilities from springs when there has been no research to support such ideas. Further, clear like new parts, areas, new trails, new visitor centers are put on a list until appropriate research plans, and public comment has been incorporated. A GMP should be a vision document setting the general course through the forest rather than planting trees.

This plan does not set in motion any specific guidance that can begin when it is approved. What will happen first? Is what and will we be able to do? The alternative list presupposes, but no defined outcomes and set no course to get there.

The emphasis of alternative Q is to preserve resources and provide for vistas within real context. To preserve park resources, a resource-based management program will address serious current impacts to park ecosystems, provide a range of increasing protection for critical natural and cultural areas, and protect park and wilderness values for the

RESPONSES

trailhead in the final plan because that parking area is outside the park. The existing parking area for the East Rim trail will continue to be maintained because the area is located outside of the 1978 wilderness recommendation. See also response 13.

36. Access would not be improved to the East Rim and East Mesa Trails. Rather, the action being proposed — acquiring an access easement through the Ponderosa Ranch area — would ensure that there would continue to be access to this part of the park.

37. The planning team reviewed alternative Q and compared it with the revised preferred alternative and alternative B. Although there are several specific actions proposed in alternative Q that were not covered in the draft plan alternatives, the major elements being proposed in the alternative are now covered in the revised preferred alternative and/or alternative B. No major differences distinguish alternative Q from the alternatives in the final plan. Thus, the planning team did not identify a need to add alternative Q to the range of alternatives being considered for the future management of Zion.
### COMMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friends of Zion</th>
<th>Zon Chief's Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 26, 2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- and wilderness to low and high-use frontcountry areas.
- Alternative D and the proposed action offer primarily in the application of science for decision making, zoning schemes and zone-specific actions, wilderness management, and the philosophy of the Vision Statement.

### ZONE-SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The park will be divided into different management zones that identify different levels of increasing resource protection, offering social parameters and visitor use.

#### Zone Allocation and Related Actions

In Alternative D, the Zone Wilderness will be managed as wilderness. Zones in wildernesses will not sustain wilderness mandates; values will be limited to those resources in NPS Orders of Order 91.0.

#### Wilderness Management

All actions in wilderness will adhere to the Minimum Requirement Decision Process.

- Forested high and low development zones, as well as transition, and administrative zones, will only occur outside Recommended Wilderness Boundaries.
- Forested high development zones will include the area along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, the Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, the Kolob Terrace Road, Lee's Ferry, the Kolob Canyons Road, and entrance, and the East Park Entrance.

- Occurs outside the East Entrance, a visitor contact facility might be envisioned for inclusion through the NEPA and public comment process. Such a facility will be constructed well outside park boundaries.
- Forested high development zones will include the Visitor Transportation Center and Zion Lodge.
- Zones will never occur within Wilderness boundaries, and will include the Zion Overlook, Trail, Hidden Canyon, the area up to the mouth of the canyon, the Riverwalk, the Fun Trail to up to Mystery Canyon, and the road from Lake Point to the entrance to the West Rim Trail.
- All zones were recommended as wilderness in the 1984 Resource Management Plan, but these zones will be considered wilderness: non-allotment.
- Administrative zones will be limited to small areas around existing water contact facilities (Kolob Canyon entrance, Lee Point, the South and East Entrances, and Zoo Lodge). The dry dune near Coconino Wash will be removed and the area restored to natural conditions.
- Any facilities proposed for Zion Canyon will be reconciled for recreation outside the park.

### BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Wilderness
- The 1984 wilderness proposal is being modified to reflect acquisitions of several wilderness areas. A stop at the entrance to Lake Point will be added to the Recommended Wilderness since it now meets suitability requirements.
The East Rim and East Mesa parking lots and trailsheads must be removed from Recommended Wilderness. Friends of Zion cannot commit adequately to wilderness boundaries since an adequate staff was not provided in the DCA/PA.

To meet required wilderness conditions, park managers will need to limit current and future uses of visitor use on trails in wilderness. No new trails or clearly delineated routes, upgrading of existing trails and routes, additional name unassigned trails or new routes will be established in wilderness without completion of the NEPA and Minimum Requirement Processes. Wilderness areas the former control resources may be closed to use in p. sensitive species habitat or areas of cultural sensitivity.

Designated areas could be established outside of sensitive resource areas, determined through NEPA and the Minimum Requirement Processes to be the minimum action needed to manage wilderness as wilderness.

Water collection structures will remain at the springs in J.C. Canyons to meet need to build a new water treatment facility.

The section of the north fork of the Virgin River within the main canyon might be restored where a science-based study and following NEPA determines the correct course of action.

The park will restore the area beyond the One Creek Maintenance area, including the access road. To natural conditions, remove the road and other signs of human use, including the research camp (four tent pads), former test, maintenance equipment and a runway field.

The park will remove signs and removed social trails, campsite, resource, and cultural resource damage, etc. throughout the Recommended Wilderness.

Friends of Zion cannot adequately comment on Research Natural Areas since not enough information was given in the DCA/PA to make informed decisions.

Management Zone Visitor Use Limits

Visitor use limits may become necessary to protect resources in homogenous high and low development zones and transition zones. Wilderness and resource protection zone conditions limit visitor use numbers.

Intermediate use and overnight limits will be implemented on wilderness trails to maintain suitability until the VNP
processes completed. Group sizes for day and overnight use will be limited to no more than five people. Home use numbers will be based on research in other wilderness areas until VECP direction numbers for Zoo. Visitors will usually not exceed to encounter other groups in wilderness, but on certain trails, volunteer sections of the wilderness may encounter 2 groups per day. Unique, reasonably, and park service personnel in wilderness will adhere to the same group size limits, and will adhere to Minimum Requirements and Leave No Trace principles.

Research Natural Areas

These areas will be closed to general public use for resource protection, research and specialized educational trips (Friends of Zoo cannot adequately comment on Research Natural Areas without more information from the park). In the research natural area zone, research and guided educational group sizes will be limited to no more than five people. Recreational use will be prohibited in research natural areas. Places that do not meet wilderness criteria will be retained so that the evidence of human use is substantially unnoticeable and natural conditions prevail.

PROPOSED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

In alternative G, the Park Service will propose the same boundary adjustments as those described in the proposed action. A total of the land (2,940 acres with the Bureau of Land Management) (totaling approximately 900 acres). The Friends of Zoo (average elevation of approximately 15.5 miles in length, and they request designation (proposed approximately 7,200 acres) by the Research Natural Areas and Leave No Trace principles.

PROPOSAL FOR WILDFIRES, AGRICULTURAL, AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Proposed G will propose the same changes for inclusion in the national wildlands and scenic river system as the proposed action. The Park Service will propose the North Fork of the Virgin River basin above and below the Virgin River, North Creek, Little Creek, and Taylor Creek, and their tributaries for wild, scenic, and recreational river designation. (See table 1 for proposed designations.) The Friends of Zoo also request designation for designated routes. (See table 1 for proposed designations.) The Friends of Zoo also request designation for designated routes. (See table 1 for proposed designations.)
COMMENTS

February 28, 2000

Under alternative D, the entrance area will have a forested, low development zone in keeping with the philosophy of this alternative. No new developments (e.g., lodging, picnic area, and a nature trail) will occur in this area. The Little Forks Hostel (the road operator from the entrance gate to the Timber Creek Overlook trailhead) will also have forested, low development. Actions in this area may, at some future date, limit traffic. Skiing, improved trails, trails, and interpretive facilities along the road will not occur. The existing parking lot for the South Fork of Taylor Creek will be removed in alternative D to limit uncontrolled access to wilderness.

The Timber Creek Overlook Trail is an wilderness, and thus will not be up-graded nor will interpretative signs be added. This area to the north of the entrance will be an administrative zone. Administrative offices, park, parking and maintenance facilities will be located outside the park.

Kasha-Katuwe Tent site Area

Under alternative D, the portion of the Kasha-Katuwe Tent site area within the park will be forested, low development. Due to its location in wilderness, parking at the former Rio Grande and Milner PF, hostels will be removed. Trailheads for the Susquehanna and Hump Outline Trails also will be removed as they are in wilderness. No new ranger or maintenance facilities will be built along this road.

RESPONSES

Lana Point

The forested, low development zone will apply to the entrance area and the road accessing the campground and picnic area. In keeping with the philosophy of alternative D, no new development will occur, and no new picnic sites will be added. The road from the ranger residence to the West Rim Trailhead will be a transition zone. To meet desired conditions, the road by the ranger residence will be gated and closed to access by the uncontrolled public beyond that point (park staff and visitors to the private property to which the roads lead will be allowed to use motor vehicles). The road east of the gate at the West Rim Trailhead, including the three trails leading into private land outside of the park, will be an administrative area. This will allow continued minimal access by private landowners and their guests. This area north of the entrance also will be an administrative area to support management of this part of the park. The existing ranger residence here will be replaced with a new residence and the Forest Visitor Center will be completely removed.

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<table>
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<th>COMMENTS</th>
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| transition, and administrative zones meet. Areas  
| Areas near the country high development  
| include:  
| majority of the south entrance area  
| including the north entrance, the new  
| vector central/national stage area  
| and the north portion of the high river  
| running through the north entrance  
| majority of the Zion Canyon Lodge area  
| including the parking areas, lodging  
| facilities, and restrooms  
| No new facilities will be constructed in  
| high value zones.  
| The Park Service will apply the first  
| country/national development zone to the main  
| Zion Canyon road corridor. Resource  
| impacts will be reduced and the quality of  
| visitor experiences will be improved along  
| this segment of the road by creative surfaces,  
| limited signage, and dedicated trail. The  
| Grind and the canyon bottom will be  
| transition zones. Several trails will be in  
| the transition zone including: the Park trail  
| extending north of the park, the loop  
| into the Emerald Pool area, a  
| segment of the West Rim trail, the trail to  
| Angels Landing, the Hidden Canyon trail to  
| the north of the canyon, and the Route  
| into the Zion lodge.  
| A few areas will be administrative  
| zones, including Sammamish Canyon (site of  
| the shuttle maintenance facility), the  
| Washhaw employee housing area, the old  
| employee housing unit, the existing motor  
| center/headquarters, a portion of the  
| existing Oak Creek employee housing and  
| maintenance area, the Pine Creek housing  
| area, the Birch Creek employee housing  
| area, and convenience support facilities  
| around the Zion Canyon Lodge  
| and other future development will be located  
| outside the park.  
| East Entrance and the Zion-Mt. Carmel  
| Highway Area  
| An area north of the east entrance will be  
| a transition zone. No new facilities will be  
| built on the East Side within the park.  
| The road centerline (flyover) will be the  
| site of the development, and the short access road to  
| the East Rim trailhead will be transition  
| zones.  
| Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway  
| Several trails and extending resources  
| along the highway will be rehabilitated. Short  
| nature trails and signs will not be  
| constructed along the road. The Canyon  
| Overlook will be a transition zone, and  
|  
| BEST COPY AVAILABLE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to retain wilderness suitability. The Park Service will work with the</td>
<td>or Crow Canyon operations. All projects performed in conjunction with this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLM, the Park Service has adopted the following management plan:</td>
<td>center will adhere to LEI's Trace and Minimum Requirement Processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zon Canyon Lodge:</td>
<td>The Park Service will emphasize the establishment of a nonprofit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under alternative 3, the lodge facility will continue to provide</td>
<td>organization that will operate and maintain the facility under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food service and guided trips to the general visiting public</td>
<td>agreement with the national Park Service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some of the lodge facilities will be converted to an environmental</td>
<td>Management of the North Fork of the Virgin River:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>czionary education center offering a variety of programs, much like the</td>
<td>A River Management Plan, subject to NEPA and public comment, will employ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Canyon Institute or the Yavapai Institute:</td>
<td>a science-based study to alter what river period will be managed for.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The center will provide opportunities to enhance science-based</td>
<td>The plan will be considered only if the park’s response to flood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education for the visiting public through seminars, workshops,</td>
<td>damage does not incur greater damage, i.e. compact areas,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educational programs. An essential element of the facility will support</td>
<td>compact areas, flood control, etc. Visitors will be encouraged to help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSF, academicians, and professional research in the cultural, natural,</td>
<td>in the restoration project through interpretation, assisting in such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and social sciences. The facility will be run by a nonprofit</td>
<td>efforts, and in returning from damaging recreational activities. Most</td>
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<tr>
<td>organization or coordinating association that will use visitor service</td>
<td>of the new will be a transition zone in the area of Zon Canyon, but the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing to finance the science center. Housing and meals will</td>
<td>minimum appropriate tools will be used to complete recreation. Water</td>
</tr>
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<td>and be available for volunteer researchers, seminars on grants,</td>
<td>collection structures at springs will be studied to determine if they</td>
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<td>visitors attending educational programs, etc. A. A. will be</td>
<td>should be interfered. New water treatment plants will be built in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conducted in part of the lodge. Participants in the center’s programs</td>
<td>the Main Canyon. Although recreation of a considerable importance to the</td>
</tr>
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<td>several projects, like the Earth Watch.</td>
<td>park’s new environment, it will be considered behind more pressing</td>
</tr>
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322
Priorities and Funding

Unlike the other alternatives, the Park Service will implement the actions under
alternative G over the next eight to ten years. Otherwise it is too late.

Partnerships with other agencies or groups will be essential to implement the
ecosystem and wildland management
within a regional context.

Unsure the other alternatives, staff
increases and modifications within park
management will not be as imminent to support
the implementation of the alternative.
The park service will apply and adhere to
the new NPS Policies 2009, Director’s
Orders and Reference Manuals.
## Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>REASON FOR ELIMINATION</th>
<th>TOTAL COSTS</th>
<th>ANNUAL SAVINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lamp Posts</td>
<td>Maintenance issues and low usage</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water System</td>
<td>Obsolete technology and high maintenance costs</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Equipment</td>
<td>Obsolete and incompatible with current systems</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL COSTS</th>
<th>ANNUAL SAVINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes

- Maintenance and repair expenses for the new system are estimated to be lower due to improved efficiency and reduced wear and tear.
- The overall savings are calculated based on the projected 10-year lifespan of the new equipment, assuming an annual inflation rate of 3%.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Canyon Trust</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. We recognize that the population of Washington County will continue to increase in the future. We also realize that increases in visitation must be managed and that limits on visitor use are necessary in areas. However, just because Washington County will continue to grow is no reason to believe that the National Park Service will allow park resources or the visitor experience to deteriorate. One of the primary purposes of the General Management Plan is to provide a proactive framework for addressing future problems related to increasing visitor use and adjacent development. We believe the actions in the plan (e.g., conducting carrying capacity studies, acquiring conservation easements, pursuing an ecosystem management approach) will help prevent many potential negative impacts to the park’s resources due to population growth.

2. The preferred alternative has been revised to include a request for congressional authorization to prepare a related lands study that would identify key lands that are integral to maintaining ecological integrity and long-range conservation of critical natural and cultural resources.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND CANYON TRUST</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

February 26, 2003

Don Fabel
Superintendent
Zion National Park
Springdale, UT

Dear Superintendent Fabel,

The Grand Canyon Trust greatly appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Alternative Management Plan. As community leaders, we strongly support the Trust’s commitment to protect and preserve the National Park. We commend the Trust for its efforts to address the significant challenges facing the Park.

The Trust supports the proposed Alternative Management Plan, which effectively addresses the issues highlighted in the letter. We encourage the implementation of the Plan, which includes recommendations for increased visitor service management, education, and conservation efforts.

The Trust looks forward to working with the National Park Service to ensure the continued success of the Park.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]

[Title]

---

1. Local population is projected to increase by ten percent over the next ten years. This growth is expected to have a significant impact on the local economy and the Park’s resources. The Trust supports the proposed Alternative Management Plan, which includes recommendations for increased visitor service management, education, and conservation efforts.

2. The preferred alternative has been revised to include a request for congressional authorization to prepare a related lands study that would identify key lands that are integral to maintaining ecological integrity and long-range conservation of critical natural and cultural resources.

---

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While the purchase of water rights is not specifically precluded by the Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement, it would be a departure from our negotiating position that existing water diversions do not have a measurable impact on park waters. Additional large diversions upstream of the park are unlikely at this time because the state engineer considers this basin fully appropriated to downstream users. For these reasons, acquisition of water rights upstream of the park is currently a relatively low priority. Since the Water Rights Settlement Agreement specifically limits the park's federal reserved water right, the only way for purchased water rights to be converted to instream flows would be for them to be donated to the Utah Department of Natural Resources.

While it is unclear whether the priority watershed designation is specifically being used in the state of Utah, the Park Service supports the use of water quality remediation and watershed planning programs to improve and maintain water quality. The park staff is currently participating in watershed management planning efforts in Kane and Washington Counties to address waters that do not meet state standards. Additional programs, both state and federal, that could provide funding to private land owners and agencies for water quality remediation will be explored.

4. Due to the values and sensitivities of the natural and cultural resources present in Parowan Creek, the preferred alternative has been revised to include Parun-vegap as a research natural area.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
[Name]
Southwest Utah District

30
Figure 3.1
Population Projections for Washington County
Donald Fahey  
2000  
Superintendent  
Lion National Park  
Springdale, UT 84767-0105  

Dear Superintendent Fahey,

The Grand Canyon Wildlands Council and Southwest Forest Alliance thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft GNEIS for Lion National Park.

We strongly urge that the "goals" section include the following statements emphasizing a strong wilderness and ecosystem conservation commitment:

- Actively pursue Wild and Scenic designation for the Virgin River and its tributaries.
- Manage the Park as a defiant wilderness, with consideration of the Park as a core ecological reserve.
- Manage the Park with regional ecosystem implications in mind (i.e., the status of ecological buffer areas and relationship to dispersal corridors).
- Develop a scientifically credible conceptual model of the Park ecosystem to help determine the inter-relationships between its natural and cultural resources and dominant ecological processes.
- Manage towards restoration of endangered, extirpated, and large predatory species in the Park region.
- Conduct/update the Park’s comprehensive biological inventory, with special emphasis on the distribution of endangered, endemic, and important indicator species (e.g., large predators) as well as habitats, especially those required by extirpated species.
- Report annually to the public on the Park’s progress towards these scientific and management goals.

Specific Comments:

In the context of conservation biology reserve design, Lion National Park forms a core area where native species and natural processes should receive the highest protection.
Wild and Scenic Rivers

First, we heartily endorse an eligibility/suitability study of all riparian zones within the Virginia River basin. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is potentially as significant to the water resources of the Park as the Wilderness Act is to land resources. The Act is a strong congressional directive that river areas designated pursuant to its authority be preserved in their natural, or at least existing, condition. This implies an adequate quantity of water, of acceptable quality, necessary to accomplish the purpose of preserving the free-flowing condition of a designated river. Since an adequate supply of water obviously is necessary to accomplish the purpose of the Act and preserving the free-flowing condition of rivers, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act stands as the clearest expression yet of Congress’ intent to assert a federal right in water.

Rationales for proposing designation include, but are not limited to: 1) protection of park resources from internal or external threats, 2) to extend into or out of the park a designation or proposed designation of the river on other public lands, 3) to recognize the outstanding values of the river, or 4) as a perceived aid in managing a river area in the park. Designation would aid long-term protection for the Virginia River and its tributaries, some of which are already threatened by activities such as well drilling, diversion, and other developments.

Wilderness

We recognize the biological and sociological significance of wilderness protection. In wilderness (proposed as well as designated), managers must maintain and protect ecological processes and natural conditions as well as provide for a wilderness experience (Wilderness Act, Section 2(a)(c)). While this apparently contradictory preserve-and-use philosophy reiterates a fundamental premise of the WPA Organic Act (39 Stat. 535, 16 U.S.C. 1), the Redwoods Act Amendment (16 U.S.C. 1133), the rigorous standard of protection and prohibits use-related desecration of all areas of an area. Park Wilderness should afford the highest level of legal protection for any area in the United States.

The following comments develop a framework for the Final EIS:
Ecosystem Management

1. With the exception of the Wild and Scenic River study, ecosystem management strategies have been overlooked. Protection of park values must be accomplished within the context of surrounding lands, which often have conflicting management mandates. To meet wilderness objectives, management programs must develop a thorough understanding of the conditions and processes that make up the wilderness resource, such as air and water quality, wildfires, biota and habitats, and recreation, to name only a few (Cole 1990). Land-use practices on adjacent lands, such as mining, grazing, water diversions, logging, and road construction, and the introduction of exotic species may pose environmental threats to the Park. Attainment of the long-term management goals of protecting the ecological integrity of individual wilderness areas requires looking beyond the Park boundary and adopting an ecosystem management approach. This concern must be reflected in Park goals.

Ecosystem management is management driven by explicit goals, executed by specific practices, and made adaptable by research and monitoring based on our best understanding of the ecological interactions and processes necessary to sustain ecosystem composition, structure, and function. Park Service policy demands that managers try to maintain all the ecological components of the ecosystems, including the natural abundance, diversity, and ecological integrity of plants and animals (WEIP Management Policies, Chapter 4). The ecosystem concept provides the fundamental premise for regional management and brings a compelling new vision to the ongoing debate over the future of public lands.

The Southwest Forest Alliance and Grand Canyon Wildlands Council would welcome the opportunity to help facilitate implementation of the ecosystem management concept. As mentioned above, one of our primary goals is assisting in the design and implementation of a scientifically-based network of conservation reserves within the Southern Colorado Plateau Ecoregion. As part of such a network, the large, relatively continuous wilderness covered by Zion National Park and adjacent lands provides the basis for the Park's greatest value. The Park encompasses a great diversity of species, habitat types, ecosystems, environmental gradients, and natural processes. These are the natural values that management must "steer and restore where necessary. Also of great significance are the geologic and cultural features that make this landscape unique.

1. A discussion of ecosystem management, including desired conditions and strategies to achieve these conditions, has been added under the "Park Policies and Practices" chapter of the document.

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2. Exotic species are of special concern in the National Park because of the potential for rapid proliferation of species such as Razorsedge that have already arrived in the lower reaches of the Virgin River. Removal must be immediate before the problem becomes too large to control. A long-term plan for removal of other established non-natives and replacement/restoration of native species should be developed.

We hope these comments prove useful.

Sincerely,

Kim Cowboys, Wilderness Coordinator
Southwest Forest Alliance
P.O. Box 1940
Flagstaff, AZ 86002

Kelly Burke, Coordinator
Grand Canyon Wilderness Council
P.O. Box 1946
Flagstaff, AZ 86002

CC
Ronald J. McConnell, The Wilderness Society
Lee Thomas, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Greer Chennery, Canyon View
Bob Smith, Sierra Club
Dave Simko, National Parks and Conservation Association

RESPONSES

2. The GMP presents the overall desired conditions for natural resources, including restoration of native plant community integrity and control of exotic species. The recommendation to develop a long-term restoration plan would be more appropriately addressed in the park’s resource management plan, which provides the details and specific strategies for addressing the park’s resource management problems.
February 24, 2000

Superintendent Don Felvey
Zion National Park
Springdale, Utah 84767-1099

Dear Superintendent Felvey:

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the opinions of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) in regards to the Draft General Management Plan (GAMP) and Environmental Impact Statement that will direct the course of visit and resource management for Zion National Park over the next two decades. NPCA, founded in 1919, is the only national organization dedicated solely to protect and enhance the national park system for present and future generations. These comments will attempt to reflect the views of our 400,000 members, including several thousand members living in Utah and near Zion National Park.

Before we address specific elements of the plan, let me try to articulate some general comments. Zion was born out of citizens' awe and inspiration experienced in this place. That uplifting spirit is still very much found here today. The name of Zion refers to the holy city of God. We strongly encourage the National Park Service to capture the spirit of these intangible values that are so important to the place, in the final GAMP. Words do have power in them. Here a writer knows the essence of this place, and captures this in your final plan. For such a Zion's essential quality, it needs to be expressed to the tone of the language and environment, no matter what is written today and to come. As_theme, the feeling and emotion, the language and image, are sought.

Also regarding the document's general tone, we would encourage the final plan to more effectively use the plan to educate the public about conditions currently and past in Zion, and the potential impacts of future management plans. We encourage you to use that context, rather than a more factual and anecdotal approach.

To natural sources? To water quality in the Narrows? To provide more factual...
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| Data on the state of the park's resources will allow you to fully seize this "teachable moment" and take advantage of the opportunity present in the GMP. In addition, we do not like to see so many issues (about 10 issues identified on pp. 15-14 along with others referred to later in the document) put off to other future planning processes. Our concerns are two-fold. First, given the meager money appropriated to NPS for planning, many of these plans will be put off well into the future, if they happen at all. Meanwhile, some of these issues are urgent and need to be resolved very soon. What guarantee is there that these will be addressed soon? Second, by putting off major issues and approaching them piecemeal, the park is in violation of NEPA which requires planning efforts to include an evaluation of the cumulative impacts of the agency's actions. How can these cumulative impacts be evaluated by the public if many key issues are to be addressed individually over a period of the next 20 years? We would encourage to park GMP to include a better discussion of the importance of these issues in many cases provide some interim direction before a more detailed plan can be developed, and provide a succinct list of issues in the GMP of plans that will be developed at later time. This list does not have to be all-inclusive as early issues will arise that cannot be foreseen today, but it should include those planning issues which are anticipated. This approach will make clearer to the public the park's intentions. It will also complement the GMP by specifically stating what specific issues are being deferred. We see no reason why the plan chooses to totally ignore issues such as climbing, canyoneering and guide service, postponing these issues yet once again to some uncertain date in the next 20 years. We would also like to note that the GMP's three alternatives really provides the public with a curious trade-off in choices. Alternative A places emphasis on visitor opportunities at the expense of park resources. Alternative B emphasizes resource protection at the expense of visitor experiences. Then there's the Preferred Alternative. Given that trade-off, guess which alternative sounds most reasonable? Despite the biased presentation of choices, we still prefer, overall, most of the general directions presented in Alternative B. And we suggest you use the descriptor, "more sufficient protection" when referring to Alternative B, rather than "additional" or "increased" protection. Readers need to understand that you're not just proposing additional protection to give your rangers more to do While the details of the plan can obscure the "big picture", it appears to us that there are seven major issues facing the park and which this document needs to address. They are: 1) increasing visitor service; 2) management of Research Natural Areas; 3) use of Parunuweap and Canyon; 4) use of Zion Lodge; 5) Wild and | 2. The plan did not ignore the issues you mentioned. Rather it provided a general approach to managing visitor uses as noted under the "Park Policies and Practices" chapter and the management zones. The plan has been revised to emphasize the completion of a wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies as a top priority for the park, to be completed within the next five years. In addition to indicators and standards, the wilderness management plan would address management of canyoneering, climbing, river recreation, and commercial guiding. The General Management Plan is a conceptual document that focuses on what conditions should be achieved and maintained throughout the park. The General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement evaluates the fundamental differences in effects between alternatives and helps provide a basis in choosing between broad actions in subsequent implementation plans. NEPA documents are then tied to the broadscale General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. Tiering allows the Park Service to focus on the right set of alternatives or decisions at the right time (40 CFR 1508.28).
Scenic River designations, 6) management of the Virgin River’s North Fork, and 7) development and use adjacent to the park. We then have included short discussions of miscellaneous remaining issues. I have organized this letter around these issues.

Increasing Visitor Use: Don’t Put Off ‘til Tomorrow What You Need to Do Today

The numerous increases in visitation in Zion National Park places both the visitor experience and its natural and cultural resources at risk, demanding new management prescriptions to protect park values. This document addresses the issue by recommending dispersing use to Kolob Canyon and the eastern portion of the park by being more accommodating of increasing visitor capacity there, zoning the park, and calling for a Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Plan (VERP) to be developed for setting carrying capacities at various locations throughout the park.

We do not favor providing additional toilets, trails and more infrastructure along the Kolob Canyons Road or at the eastern park entrance, particularly the suggestion of building new visitor centers at those locations. The front country experience should not become the same throughout the park, but rather should reflect a variety of experiences for visitors seeking different recreational opportunities. Thus, the Springdale entrance and Zion Canyon can provide the experiences for masses of visitors, the eastern and Kolob areas of the park should remain in a much less developed state, not much different than today. Rather than changing the experience to accommodate more visitors, we would suggest limiting visitation to preserve the experience.

While zoning the park to achieve a spectrum of visitor experiences is a first step in setting carrying capacity limits, it is not a substitute. We applaud the plan for calling for a VERP program to be initiated in the park, but we stress that calling for a plan that might be years in development and implementation – if ever-active funding is forthcoming – is not the same as setting capacity limits. We believe that the park is up to compliance with the 1976 National Parks and Recreation Act requiring parks to establish carrying capacities, contrary to your statement on page 3 stating that this is “one of the primary purposes of this plan.”

This plan should be doing much more to put in place strict capacity limits to preserve the resources and experiences as an actual measure until such time that a more scientifically accurate plan can be put in place. To wait for VERP is to guarantee a diminishment of a quality experience for many park visitors and continued recreational impacts to the resources, and is a violation of the law.

In fact, we recommend that the final management plan include language prohibiting the park from building any more infrastructure or developing any plans

3. The preferred alternative has been revised to note that there would be no expansion of visitor facilities along the Kolob Canyons Road, except for installation of restrooms at existing parking lots if necessary. The pre-
ferred alternative has also been revised to delete the references to con-
struct new trails along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway because of the sen-
sitivity of the resources in that area of the park. In addition, park man-
agers would work with private and public landowners and agencies to
locate a space outside of the east boundary of the park for use as an or-
extination/education facility.

4. We agree that the draft plan did not provide enough emphasis on visitor
carrying capacity. The final plan has substantially expanded the discussion
carrying capacity in the preferred alternative. The final plan now goes
into more detail in describing the VERP framework and provides justifica-
tions for the interim carrying capacities being proposed.

We believe that this General Management Plan satisfies the Nat-
ional Parks and Recreation Act requirement regarding the “identification of and
implementation commitments for visitor carrying capacities for all areas of the unit.” The plan notes this is an important issue that requires action
now and in the future. It sets management zones that qualitatively set car-
rying capacities for the park and specifically sets interim limits regarding
group sizes, encounters, and saddle stock use in the recommended wilder-
ness area. This is consistent with current NPS guidance, which calls for
general management plans to qualitatively address capacity by
describing visitor experiences and resource conditions by zone. Much
work still needs to be done on identifying zone indicators and standards.

The final plan provides a much stronger commitment than the draft plan
did to identifying indicators and standards and completing the wilderness
management plan and carrying capacity studies within five years.

PRELIMINARY WORK ALREADY HAS BEGUN REGARDING DATA COLLECTION.

It also should be noted that if resource damage or loss is determined to be
occurring before the wilderness management plan or carrying capacity
studies are completed, appropriate action will be taken under the superin-
tendent’s authority under 5 CFR 1.5. (The park staff already has taken
action to manage day and overnight use in two popular areas — the Left
Fork of North Creek and the upper Narrows — based on the high poten-
tial for resource damage and crowding in these confined canyons.

Overnight camping limits also have been instated to protect resources on
the West Rim and in LaVerkin Creek/Ship Valley.)
that will affect visitation until a comprehensive VERP or similar analysis is conducted to assess carry capacity for various park resources and experiences.

Many of "..." limits set in this plan, such as for group size or horse use, appear to be arbitrary and capricious, a violation of the Administrative Procedures Act, as there is little to no underlying scientific basis for many of these numbers. One of the numbers we particularly take exception to is managing the park's primitive zones, made proposed wilderness, as allowing 12 contacts per day of up to as many as eight people per contact. We believe that most social science studies of visitor perceptions within a wilderness area would show that these numbers -- a contact every hour during a 12 hour day -- with groups of as many as eight, far exceeds social carrying capacity. Again, we urge stricter limits, scientifically based.

This plan is an opportunity -- largely missed in the draft document -- to begin educating the public on the need to establish reasonable limits. This opportunity and challenge is not lost on us. On page 119, you claim that, "Apparently, some people do not seem to be bothered by increased visitation." That sounds like permission to grow the park without limits. It also ignores basic recreational research studies that show visitors who seek solitude will be displaced by those who hold other values (see research work of Drs. Robert Manning, Univ. of Vermont and Jerry Vase, Colorado State Univ., name just two). The draft must address the displacement of certain types of visitors, as areas of the park become more crowded.

The DOG's should also commit the park to conducting a NEPA process any time there is either a greatly increased amount of visitor use of the park, a portion of the park, or a type of recreational use in the park, and b) a new recreational use in the park. With that direction in place, an assessment would be required under these conditions early in, while the issue is still manageable, rather than waiting until it becomes a problem. Thus, for example if park violation studies in the next decade, an assessment should be conducted to determine whether current plans are adequate to address this new situation the park finds itself in. Or, if a new technology is introduced into the park with ramifications for visitor experience or resource protection. However, an assessment with public participation would be triggered.

Also, on the document's first introductory page (no page number) it states of the proposed action: "... overall park visitation would continue to increase." We submit that this is not necessarily what would occur under the proposed action. If a carrying capacity study is to be conducted, it may demonstrate the need for the park to reduce visitation in many areas. The plan must clearly state this possibility if any study is to be conducted objectively. It also needs to provide straight talk in raising the distinct possibility that under the course of this plan, more visitation limits will be enacted if visitation continues to increase.

5. See response 2 to the Kane County Commission regarding the biker group size and encounter rate limits being set in this plan. See response 16 to Washington County regarding the horse use limits.

6. We believe the draft plan and the preferred alternative did in fact begin the process of educating the public about the need for reasonable limits. The draft plan states several times that actions are needed to manage visitor use, including placing limits on use (see pages 9, 25,49,50-51,61-62). With regard to the statement you quoted on page 119, that point was made based on the results of a 1994 study: apparently some people were not bothered by increased visitation because they said it had a minimal impact on their experience. However, in no way does that statement mean that we intend to "grow the park without limits." We also recognize that an unknown number of visitors will be displaced due to increased use in the no-action alternative, which was not stated in the environmental consequences in the draft plan. This has been corrected in the final plan.

7. The GMP provides the management direction for the park over the next 20 years. Development of the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies will further define desired resource and visitor experience conditions throughout the park. The GMP, wilderness management plans, and carrying capacity studies will provide the basis for proactive decision making on various issues such as increasing visitor use and new recreational uses. We expect that these plans will guide management of the park for many years. However, as with any plans, they would be reviewed as needed to determine if they are still adequate in meeting the needs of the park. Should any revisions to the plans be proposed, appropriate NEPA compliance will be completed as part of that process.

8. This sentence has been modified in the final plan. See also response 6.
 COMMENTS

In reading this plan, we are perplexed by the plan's dealing with RMAs in the park. What are the criteria for designation? We strongly suggest that park staff need to look outside of their boundaries. What management prescriptions on lands in the region effectively manage lands as RMAs? Looking regionally, what natural resources and/or processes are rare or threatened for which extra protection emphasis should be provided in Zion where these resources/processes are found? In other words, how should the park use special protection efforts, like RMAs, to compliment the situation found outside the park?

There is no basis provided in this document for the public to make an informed decision on whether RMAs should exist in the park, what their function should be, where they should be located, how many are needed, or how large they need to be to accomplish their purpose.

We see no attempt by the park to solicit professional advice on this topic that requires some technical expertise. Input should be sought from knowledgeable professionals, which we see as an omission on your making list of this document which includes only four university libraries in the country.

Use of Parunuweap Canyon: To Close or Not to Close? That is the Question...

In 1962 Zion National Park closed Parunuweap Canyon to recreational use until the proposed designation as an RMA could be studied and evaluated. Like our main point in the previous section, we do not believe the public has enough information to make an informed decision here. Has the park informed the public of the results of its post-1992 study of the Canyon? Did it do a study? What is the motivation to now delay the RMA? What are the values in keeping it closed?

We believe the park is very vulnerable to a legal challenge surrounding its management of this canyon. First, there were no public participation process over the decision to close the canyon and apparently the promises made to study the canyon and report back to the public have not been kept. Second, the decision to close then, or open now, can be seen as "arbitrary and capricious", a violation of the Administrative Procedures Act, without greater scientific justification.

We only point out these concerns because we feel the park is not treating this issue with the seriousness it demands. You need to do far more in the way of documenting this canyon's many values and resources before you can make an informed, enlightened decision.

RESPONSES

9. See response 18 to the Friends of Zion.

10. Due to the values and sensitivities of the natural and cultural resources present in Parunuweap Canyon, the preferred alternative has been revised to include Parunuweap as a research natural area.
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<td>10. An example of how poorly this appears to be thought out is that the plan cannot identify even an access route to and from the canyon, should it be opened to the public. It said, if a decision is forthcoming, we would encourage you to make the case to keep it closed. So many areas of the park are under such increasing visitation pressures that it is a prudent course of action for the park to fully preserve at pristine one of its canyons. Perhaps it should receive RAM status. One of its values certainly might be serving as an undisputed riparian area baseline that might help inform management decisions for other riparian areas in the region, including its state stream, the North Fork of the Virgin River. Use of Zion Lodge: Recreation vs. Education vs. Restoration. We commend the park staff for considering the full spectrum of possible uses of Zion Lodge, beginning in the scoping document. We believe there are good reasons to argue that the lodge should be kept as is (thus allowing visitors who do not camp to have an overnight experience in the park), using it as an environmental education center (to foster a better understanding of park resources and values) and to remove it (to restore the valley to its natural state). Each reason is valid in its own right. We need to ask: what is the best use for this remarkable canyon valley? We would encourage the park to explore how a portion of the lodge might be reserved for environmental education and research groups, at least during portions of the year. We would also ask the park staff to think about ways in which the valley could be restored to a more natural condition. If this can largely be done with the lodge present, great. If the presence of the lodge prohibits significant re-arrival of the valley, then this plan should begin to prepare the way for the possibility of the eventual removal of the lodge beyond this document’s planning cycle.</td>
<td>11. See response 24 to the Friends of Zion. 12. Comment noted. The plan proposes that the segment of Shunes Creek above the water diversion be classified as wild and that the segment below the diversion be classified as recreational. 13. The “Primary Planning Issues and Concerns” section of the document has been revised to include a discussion of the current condition of the North Fork riparian community.</td>
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<td>12. We support the wild, scenic, and recreational designations on all tributaries as identified in the DGM. Further, we support a wild designation of Shunes Creek within the park. The short section of Shunes Creek possessing an historic water right does not qualify for wild status, but should be designated as recreational. Management of the Virgin River’s North Fork: Can this Virge be Reestablished? The DGM makes no mention that there is no regeneration of cottonwood trees along the North Fork of the Virgin River in Zion Canyon. The forest that exists there today was sustained by river flooding and meandering across the valley.</td>
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COMMENTS

13. Today the river has been channelized and the banks fortified to prevent these natural processes. We strongly urge the park to remove much of the river’s artificial constraints and move the riparian system back to a more natural hydraulic process. Policy would promote natural processes to dominate a greater degree. Actions here may need to be guided by adaptive management, employing some practices and then measuring the effect. It may be that the riparian zone in Parowan Creek can serve as a model for better understanding this system.

* * *

14. The preferred alternative has been revised to include a request for congressional authorization to prepare a related lands study that would identify key lands that are integral to maintaining ecological integrity and long-range conservation of critical natural and cultural resources.

15. We agree with your comment and have changed the text in the final plan. See also "Clariﬁcation of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 13.

RESPONSES

14. The preferred alternative has been revised to include a request for congressional authorization to prepare a related lands study that would identify key lands that are integral to maintaining ecological integrity and long-range conservation of critical natural and cultural resources.

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<td>comprehensive (regional) plan. You need to get your own house in order first before discussions begin with the community. We encourage the park to initiate an intensified inventory and monitoring program of the park’s natural and cultural resources. Other parks are leading the way to identify the park’s “vital signs” and develop a monitoring program around these key resources and natural processes. We would like to see greater emphasis given to this in the plan, as well as greater input from scientists throughout the region in helping to guide park management. Then use this information in your management decisions, which does not seem to happen enough in this park.</td>
<td>16. A direction on ecosystem management has been added to the “Park Policies and Practices” chapter of the final plan.</td>
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<td>We would like to see the DGMP call for greater communications, forums and discussions among regional land management agencies and development of cooperative planning across the landscape. We need greater outreach in this regard and a more sophisticated understanding of the role NPS plays in the greater ecosystem. Toward that end of reaching out to the scientific community, we suggest the park consider going out to the scientific community with the draft plan and seeking specific, targeted comments on aspects of this plan. We are concerned that the public only 90 days to study and comment a complex document. Although that exceeds your policy, we feel NPS should be working harder at seeking input from qualified professionals which cannot easily be done in 90 days. Finally, we support the park’s efforts to preserve natural amenities within the park. We believe the importance of protecting this resource could be articulated stronger in the DGMP. We would be happy to draft language for your consideration in discuss this at greater length with you. In other resource monitoring needed in the park, we support sound monitoring research efforts in the park to better understand the current situation and what further actions are needed to preserve this resource. In sum, the park has difficult decisions ahead to proritze park resources above visitor use. These decisions will be more defensible if they are science-based rather than staff “best guesses”. Greater public support needs to be garnered, both through outreach programs for the local community and an interpretive program that develops messages around park issues. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with suggestions for improving the DGMP. We will look forward to seeing the changes you decide to incorporate into the final plan. Please call on us if we can be of assistance.</td>
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Sincerely,

Mark R. Peterson
Central Rocky Mountain Region Director
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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316
February 11, 2000

Darla Sides
Planning Coordinator
Zion National Park
Springdale, UT 84767-1099

Dear Darla,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft General Management Plan (DGMAP) for Zion National Park. As a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of biological diversity, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is very interested in the sanctuaries that are found within the Park.

Over the past 15 years or so, TNC has had the occasion to work cooperatively with the Park on a number of projects and issues related to basic resources. In 1987 I took part in a rare plant inventory of the Park, in conjunction with Dr. Stan Weath of Brigham Young University and Dr. Durrell McArthur of the Utah Science Lab in Provo. The following year I had the fortune to inspect several rabbit mesa tops in the Park and evaluate them for prospective status as Research Natural Areas (RNAs). About seven years ago I shared some opinions with the Park concerning Park status for Parunuweap Canyon and for other areas in Zion.

Though we have not been involved as actively or continuously as some other groups, TNC recognizes the importance of Zion National Park as a haven for many features of biological significance. We know this all along, based on the projects I mentioned above. The significance of Zion has recently been reiterated to us in the process of conducting a large-scale planning effort to identify places in need of conservation action. We call this process a strategic planning, and a brief fact sheet about it is presented as Attachment 1 to this letter.

We started this planning process last year for the Colorado Plateau ecoregion, which covers most of southern Utah and includes essentially all of Zion National Park. The initial, systematic data-gathering stages of this process have revealed to us the great biological importance of Zion National Park in a regional context. That is, the Park has the best (or only) examples of a number of biological resources on the Colorado Plateau. The Park Service also has wonderful opportunities to conserve these resources.
resources, especially compared with other federal and state land-management agencies whose lands contain similar features.

In the remainder of this letter, I will provide comments on what features in Zone are of interest to TNC, and how we recommend that your management of the Park be structured to conserve these features for the life of the GMP (and, we hope, long after).

Features of Zion National Park of interest concern to TNC

Attachment 2 to this letter contains lists of species and communities present in Zion National Park that we hold to be of conservation concern or interest. These species and communities are among the “conservation targets” identified in our Colorado Plateau ecoregional planning process.

We see that many of these are considered as natural-resource “impact topics” in the analysis of environmental consequences of the EIS (DGMP page 136). Further, the significance of Zion Park for these resources is noted in the Affected Environment chapter of the DGMP.

Eliminated from evaluation as natural-resource impact topics are the southwestern willow flycatcher and all rare plant species. We can accept the explanation given for excluding the willow flycatcher on page 136. However, we hope that monitoring for potential adverse impacts to its one documented location (western end of Parunuweap Canyon) and other areas of suitable habitat will be done, and that any subsequent and/or site-specific plans/EAs will consider potential impacts to willow flycatchers.

We are also interested in conservation of the suite of neotropical migrant birds that use riparian habitats in Zion and its vicinity. Perhaps conservation of these birds as a group would be accomplished by management that maintains functional riparian communities in the Park. However, specific impacts to these birds resulting from Park visitation (especially during nesting seasons) may be different from visitor impacts to riparian vegetation itself. The most critical periods appear to be June and early July for the willow flycatcher, and early May through late July for all neotropical migrant birds.

Zion National Park is highly significant in a regional context with respect to the eight rare plant taxa listed in Attachment 2. Two of these are known only from Zion National Park: Hays’ sedges (Carex haysii) and Claussen’s willow (Salix claussenii), both of which grow in hanging gardens. The other six plants occur both inside and outside of the Park, but five of them have their best known occurrences or greatest portion of their ranges within the Park. These five are Foster’s columnar (Aquilegia

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Forocea var. (host), Ceano dasy (Ergonom canana), Zon dasy (Ergonom sonia var. sonia), Zon jamesia Lamesia americana var. zonis), and Zon torrey (Spheroemers rufina). Only the host are gledenal pales (Ippaloma pinacei) has another substantial area-of-occurrence outside of Zon, in the Death hollow-Valls Backbone area of the Dina National Frest. However, its presence in Zon National Park is still the largest and most abundant to own for this species.

It's years that ye i have good knowledge of the locations and habitats of these eight rare plants, based on reports from the late-1980s studies and inventory work by Park staff, and by with of their being among the natural resource GIS layers used in development of the C.J.IP (Appendix E). My files still contain the original field notes and mapped locations I discovered of rare plants in 1987 and 1988, and I would be happy to share these with you if you want to be sure that they appear in the Park's database.

The explanations given for not including the Park's rare plant species as impact topics (pages 139-145) are difficult to discuss at face value. That is, rare plant populations will remain secure if trails can be properly located, if routes can be properly identified, if mitigation measures can be employed, and if visitor uses/resource conditions in the Pristine and Pristine Zones remain as stated in the DMP. However, these are very "NS", especially the last one.

We have special concern for the rare plants in the country along the Zon-Mount Carmel Highway, east of the large tunnel (i.e. Ergonom canana, Ergonom sonia var. sonia, Spheroemers rufina and Heteronnea pinacei). In the rare plant section on pages 139-140, the DMP accurately describes the inadvertent trapping of rare plants from off-trail heath in skirtrock and adjacent habitats. Especially vulnerable is Ergonom dasy (Ergonom sonia var. dasy), which grows along the edges of horizontal or gently-sloping ledges on large sandstone outcrops - just the places where most people would walk.

The DMP explicitly notes the vulnerability of such rare plants in the "shady accessible and inviting" areas along the Zon-Mount Carmel Highway. The expectation that impacts to these plants will remain minimal over the life of the SMP, by virtue of being in Pristine or Pristine Zones, depends entirely on how well the Park is able to control the use levels in these areas - a topic talked about at some length later in this letter.

How the Park is managed to conserve or enhance its important biotic resources

The Proposed Action contains many positive features, and we generally support it as a good blueprint for the final SMP. We do, however, believe that several possible

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February 11, 2000  
Page 4 | | 

modifications to the Proposed Action should be considered. The good points of the Proposed Action, and recommendations for some changes to it, are mentioned in the specific comments that follow regarding: (1) relict vegetation communities and RNAAs; (2) locations or habitats for sensitive (large) species and communities not contained in RNAAs; and (3) the special case of Parunupeak Canyon.

Relict vegetation communities and RNAAs.

The rugged topography and long NPS administration of Zion have allowed certain areas of the Park to remain in (or recover to) largely unaltered, pre-European-settlement condition. Many of these so-called relict areas, with their common and unusual vegetation communities, would make good members of the regional/national system of RNAAs.

With the concurrence of the Park's three existing RNAAs, for various reasons including manageability problems, excessive size, and other inconsistencies with RNA selection criteria in the USEPA Guidelines. We are very pleased to see that the DORMP authorizes new RNAAs (via zoning) in its Action Alternatives -- a change from the situation that was presented in the October 1997 publication of Zion Vision and Visions. Based on the analyses that went into identifying prospective new RNAAs, the Park will have much better knowledge about those areas that eventually become established. These new areas should also be more manageable as RNAAs than the two large existing ones are now.

With regard to which areas to authorize as new RNAAs, the suite presented in the Proposed Action is good. It includes all areas that THC had identified in past, plus several other areas that appear to be good (though personally unknown to me) proceeding from the Park's internal analysis. To this suite of new RNAAs in the Proposed Action we suggest one addition: that of Parunupeak Canyon. The rationale for this recommendation is presented later in this letter, in the section that discusses Parunupeak Canyon in particular.

The suite of prospective new RNAAs in Alternative B contains many areas with which I am not personally familiar. Not having seen the Park's internal analysis, it is difficult to comment on many of these areas. In general, however, the number and size of areas involved suggests that some might be susceptible to manageability problems. This collection of areas also has the potential to contain excessive duplication of features.

The new RNA suites of the Proposed Action and Alternative B are both superior to the one presented in Alternative A. The latter appears to be minimal and less

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representative of the Park's vegetation diversity than those of the other Action Alternatives.

The actual management of RNAs (presented in the RNA Zone description on pages 324-325) appears to be good. If you haven't already done so, it may be useful to check these general management guidelines with RNA management language contained in the NPS 77 Guidelines for RNAs. One important point that is not specifically stated in the DOWA is that RNAs are to be used for non-manipulative research only. The DOWA states that RNAs will be closed to recreational activities, which most people would interpret as being closed to hiking access. However, it should also be stated that there is no access to cliff-rimmed mesa top RNAs via (recreational) rock climbing is also prohibited.

Beyond authorization of RNAs via the eventual final GMP, there may be additional RNA establishment procedures contained in the NPS 77 Guidelines - primarily for documentation of the areas' contents. I would be happy to provide any information from my files or field notes for areas to which I have been, in order to help the Park comply with any additional designation requirements.

Locations/habitats for sensitive species and communities not contained in RNAs.

Apart from new RNAs, we are interested in management of places in the Park that serve as habitat for the species and communities of concern and interest to us. My knowledge of such places is certainly not as comprehensive as that of the Park's Resource Management staff. However, I can point to a few key locations as follows:

- Canyons and highlands on both sides of the Zion-Mount Carmel Highway, to the east of the big tunnel: rare plants (as mentioned above), desert bighorn sheep, microbiotic crusts, Mexican spotted owl.
- Deep canyons and tributaries to the North Fork Virgin River: Mexican spotted owl, Virgin spadecake, riparian communities, hanging gardens (including the Zion swale and garden-specific rare plants).
- Parunuweap Canyon/Eden Fork Virgin River: Riparian communities, Virgin spadecake, willow flycatcher, neotropical migrants, desert bighorn sheep, Zion tansy.

In reviewing the Park's prospective management of such areas, we first considered what would be the best zone assignments or designations for them. Generally, the more restrictively these areas are managed (in terms of visitor use), the better. The Palisade Zone would appear to be the best for conservation of sensitive biotic resources, as it allows the least number of people and has the least likelihood for visitor impact.
We generally support the scheme of Zone assignments set forth in the Proposed Action, and clearly favor them over the Zone assignments of Alternative A. To the Zone assignments of the Proposed Action we suggest two changes:

1. Designate Parunuweap Canyon as an RRA. This was mentioned above, and the rationale for it is explained further in the following section of this letter that discusses Parunuweap Canyon in particular.

2. Zone the country east of the big tunnel — specifically the Zone-Mount Carmel Highway and the washes of Pine and Clear Creeks — as they appear under Alternative B (except that new RNAs in this geographic area could be as identified in the Proposed Action.) Due to the importance of this area for sensitive plant and animal species and hydrological criteria, and to ready accessibility, we believe it should be managed as restrictively as possible. Under the zoning of Alternative B, the highway corridor itself would be Front Country-Low Development, with immediate jurisdiction of the Pristine Zone.

A possible sticking point with this suggestion is that the DOPS appears to tie this zoning scenario in with a mandatory east-side shuttle system (page 60). We are not advocating that such a shuttle system be implemented right away, and are not sure why it would be mandatory (i.e. not knowing the whole Nunes: thresholds of the Front Country-Low Development Zone.) Such a shuttle system may eventually be necessary, and it may be good to lay the proper zoning groundwork for it in advance.

The intent of this suggestion, whatever zoning may be needed to accomplish it, is to keep the Zone-Mount Carmel Highway corridor (east of the big tunnel) as undeveloped as possible, except in the vicinity of the East Entrance. That is, create no developments or other incentive/encroachments (such as unflushed short trails into lower reaches of side canyons, as mentioned on page 61) to draw people off the road and up into the east-side canyons.

We have also looked at the appropriateness or adequacy of the zone descriptions (Appendix B) for the Pristine and Pristine Zones themselves, since these two Zones appear to cover most of the areas in the Plan that contain features of biological interest. We reassure that the DOPS is not the intended vehicle for providing specific details of Zone management, nor for articulating site-by-site management prescriptions within each zone. In their general way, however, the descriptions of these two Zones appear to be quite good in terms of their potential for biological resource conservation.

1. The preferred alternative has been revised to state that no new development, with the possible exception of a few restrooms and picnic sites and associated parking spaces, would be provided along the road. In addition, park managers would work with private and public landowners and agencies to locate a space outside the east boundary of the park for use as an orientation/information facility.
COMMENTS

Data Sites
February 11, 2000
Page 7

Reading the description of the Pristine Zone has raised a few red flags, however, that we believe are worth noting. The following points attempt to summarize these issues. The observations and opinions contained in these points proceed from my past experiences in Zion, and from twenty years of seeing changes wrought by the unbridled explosion of recreation and tourism in the canyon country of southeastern Utah (the last 7½ years spent living in Moab):

- The demand for ever-increasing future levels of backcountry use in Zion is cause for great concern. The DGMMP acknowledges that backcountry use has increased dramatically since the mid 1980s, and that numbers of backcountry campers have more than doubled from 1988 to 1997 (page 9). Further, the DGMMP states that canoeing is the fastest growing activity in the backcountry, and the impacts on the resources and the hiker experience have increased accordingly (page 237). The current backcountry camping-use numbers may already be too high for desired resource conditions, and the average rate of increase for the period above (about 8.5% per year) is completely unsustainable into the future.

- Impacts from "at-large" camping in the backcountry are likely to be much more pervasive and severe than those from designated site-only camping. Unrestricted at-large camping causes proliferation of new campsites and expansion of existing sites. The "milling" behavior of campers leads to rapid beating out of ground, which is especially destructive to areas of microbial crust.

- The "pioneering spirit" of many backcountry users is very strong, as acknowledged by the DGMMP (page 224). "Some visitors might feel like they were the first humans to explore this area." Unless they are effectively "trained" or properly educated in travel techniques, or both, many people will wander wherever they please — to the detriment of sensitive crust surfaces and rare-plant occurrences.

- Natural resource mitigation measures listed in the DGMMP (page 52) refer to minimizing impacts on microbial crusts in developed areas. A longer-term, larger-scale concern is impacts to crusts in undeveloped backcountry areas from recreational visitor use.

- Avoiding adverse impacts from backcountry day-use activities is problematic. Numbers and behaviors of backcountry-day-use visitors can be very hard to control. (For example, if the Pristine Zone's group size limit of 5 people applies to day use as well as overnight use — the Use Limits box on page 62 is not explicit about this — how will the Park realistically enforce this policy?) Will pre-trip check-in and permit issuance be mandatory for anyone setting foot in a Pristine Zone for any reason or length of time?"

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COMMENTS

Daria Soto
February 11, 2000
Page 8

Highway is particularly attractive for day use, given its easy access, short routes, and scenic qualities. The sensitive botanic resources in this area (rare plants, lichens, sheep, soil crusts) are particularly vulnerable to adverse impacts.

- Sources of external publicity (guidebooks, articles in newspapers or outdoor magazines) that focus attention on particular trails or portions of Zion are beyond the Park's control and can weaken favor on the best trail plans. Such publicity can cause faint routes to become wide through.Fire very rapidly.

- There are likely to be some significant, and unanticipated, displacement issues arising from recent changes in the Park such as the Zion Canyon shuttle system. Future changes in Park management will no doubt create other unknown concerns. Some particular concern would be a displacement of large numbers of people from the main Zion Canyon to the east side Zion-Mount Carmel Highway corridor.

- The actions that the Fristine Zone will contain no visitor developments (page 224), and will be free of all signs of people except for faint hiking routes (page 223), will be extraordinarily challenging to achieve in the face of the bullet points listed above. Something is going to have to give in a big way. In making the tough choices, we urge Park managers to use fast to the strategy written on page 25 (right column, second paragraph) to "use the method that assures the most resource protection."

The DGMP identifies a number of subsequent actions to be taken in order to manage the Park in this challenging environment. One of the first to be done is a visitor experience and resource protection (VERP) plan that will form the basis for determining visitor carrying capacities for various zones in the Park. We endorse your doing this plan and hope that resources are available to begin it soon. Some thoughts for your consideration with respect the VERP plan and carrying capacities are as follows.

- Carrying capacities, which result in "caps" on visitor numbers, should be (and almost certainly will be) based on natural-resource-protection considerations. Carrying capacities that are socially- or visitor-experience-based in nature are virtually limitless. People who are unaffected by small numbers of other visitors will simply stay away from the Park altogether, or at least from its used areas. To a visitor from downtown Berlin or Tokyo, however, a crowded trail or viewpoint may be totally unacceptable. In the absence of visitor restrictions, the Park would probably never become too crowded to repulse some visitors - those who came and stayed would be the ones who tolerate the crowded conditions. (The DGMP appears to acknowledge this on pages 118-119.)

RESPONSES
In order to have only fast hiking routes present in the Pristine Zone through the 20-year life of the GMP, it seems that carrying capacities there would have to be extremely low. In fact, current use levels may well exceed resource-based carrying capacities that will be determined for some backcountry areas. While the DGMP says (page 49) that “Park managers... would limit increased visits in certain areas to satisfy zone conditions”, it may in fact be necessary to decrease visitation significantly if the Park is to meet desired resource conditions in some (many?) parts of Pristine Zone.

For specific implementation of general management direction in the final GMP, guided by results of the VERP/camping capacity studies, there seems to be a need for some type of backcountry management plan similar to the one created for Canyonlands National Park. The wilderness management plan described in page 61 of the DGMP appears to fit this bill. It would be wise also to include in this process the climbing/canyoneering management plan referenced on page 71. Such a backcountry plan should be sufficiently comprehensive and detailed to deal with issues such as day use, overnight use, hiking, horse use, climbing, canyoneering, number of groups per day, overnight and day use, annual visitor-day ceilings, education, pre trip orientation, backcountry facilities, permit/reservation systems, and others.

A plan of this nature could also include elements of resource interpretation. On this subject, it would seem best for the Park to avoid its own publicity or on-site interpretation of sensitive areas. Instead, brochures and other interpretive materials should steer people away from sensitive areas. It would also be good for the Park to discourage external publicity (such as guidebooks) of sensitive areas.

The need for a specific follow-up backcountry plan appears to be pretty urgent, and we hope that the Park is able to begin this process soon. It seems best to get out ahead of visitor-use trends rather than attempting reactivity to alter use patterns after they are entrenched (and also being located with extensive reclamation). Prevention is ultimately easier and cheaper than a cure.

Another observation made upon reading the DGMP is that the Pristine Zone appears to have advantages over the Primitive Zone in terms of greater flexibility for backcountry “development” (e.g., designated campsites, construction/maintenance of trails, directing of travel routes—see page 223). Despite the DGMP’s best intentions for visitor experiences and resource conditions in the Pristine Zone, the juggernaut of backcountry use demand may call for some management uses of the Primitive Zone to be applied in the Pristine Zone. Looking ahead to this possibility, it may be wise for...
Zone management language in the eventual CMAP not inadvertently to preclude actions that may be necessary in the future in terms of developments (e.g. dedicated maintained trails, designated camping or visitor management in the Provine Zone. If this is unacceptable, then the Park would benefit from implementing highly-aggressive visitor management strategies to the Provine Zone such as mandatory permits for overnight and day use, mandatory pre-trip education, daily/annual limits on group numbers, and others. This latter course is generally suggested on page 224 of the CMAP.

A final observation is that ongoing monitoring of visitor use levels and impacts to sensitive resources in thebackcountry (e.g. Provine and Provine Zones) is vital. The CMAP mentions that this is being done, but does not describe the details of the monitoring effort. Provine Zones may encounter a variety of management levels.

I hope that the foregoing comments are not seen as too pessimistic or patronizing. In some ways they are a reaction to the experience of watching recreational growth and impacts over the past decade or so in the Modob area (Arches NP, Canyonlands NP, BLM lands). The situation in Provine and its surroundings is certainly similar. If you don’t get control of it now, then you never will.

Parunuweap Canyon.

The Parunuweap Canyon area merits special consideration for a number of reasons. As mentioned earlier in the report, it contains a relative wealth of significant and sensitive biological features. Among these are cottonwood-shade-willow riparian forests, Virgin speckled mouse, Arches Canyon, and desert big horn sheep.

Zion’s 'sensational', the Park’s, seasonal migration of the West's, including the Park’s, and the Park’s, mountain brush, that have been lost or are in the process.

I have never been in Parunuweap Canyon, having only looked down it from above on its right side, and so have not seen its ecological features first hand. In past meetings and correspondence with the Park and attempting to evaluate the worthiness of Parunuweap Canyon for designation as an RPA, but at those times stopped short of making a recommendation one way or the other.

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| **Davis Sites**  
February 11, 2000  
Page 11 | 3. Due to the values and sensitivities of the natural and cultural resources in Parunuwep Canyon, the preferred alternative has been revised to include Parunuwep Canyon as a research natural area.  
The final plan now sets an interim group size for research and education groups going into research natural areas at 12 or fewer people per group — the same as the other zones in the recommended wilderness area. This interim limit will be reexamined and possibly modified when the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies are completed. |

Strong arguments have been made by others for designating Parunuwep Canyon as an RNA. Nothing I know about it disqualifies it from RNA status according to the selection criteria contained in the NPS-77 Guidelines, to the contrary, it appears to meet most of the criteria very well. Further, its authorization for RNA designation in two of the three Action Alternatives of the DQMP acknowledges that the Park considers it to be worthy of RNA status.

Therefore, based on the biological significance and worthiness of Parunuwep Canyon as a Research Natural Area, we recommend that it be so designated as provided for under Alternative B of the DQMP (i.e. not excluding the river corridor as in Alternative Y). As such it would be managed according to the prescriptions of the RNA Zone, except that some special management may be desirable as a follow-up to designation. For example, maximum party size may be better set at five (as in the general Pristine Zone), a maximum number of annual user-days could be considered, etc.

If RNA designation for Parunuwep Canyon is not authorized, then it certainly should be included in the Pristine Zone as provided for in the Proposed Action. Further, its features and significance merit special management beyond that generally called for in the Pristine Zone. Page 62 of the DQMP acknowledges this need for different treatment, and lists conditions of this special management. Several comments about special management for Parunuwep Canyon — if it does not become an RNA — are as follows:

- We strongly agree that under no circumstances should Parunuwep Canyon be open to independent public use.
- The term "NPS-sanctioned" is not clearly defined. It would be best for groups to be NPS-guided only, or at a minimum have a Park Service person familiar with Parunuwep Canyon's resources accompany each group.
- Reduce the limit on number of people per party to 5 for day use (other than Y). Also, restrict variation to one group at any one time, and establish limits on frequency of group entry and total number of person-days per year (probably very low, in the hundreds rather than thousands).
- Avoid any entry into the riparian area unless specifically studying resources there (such as birds). Allow no other travel off the designated route, unless needed for valid research purposes.
- Determine and put in place these and all other use conditions (e.g. DQMP page 62) BEFORE opening Parunuwep Canyon to any public visitation. |
February 11, 2000

This concludes the comments from The Nature Conservancy on the Draft General Management Plan and EIS for Zion National Park. I hope that you have found these comments to be constructive and useful. We look forward to a General Management Plan that effectively protects the Park’s significant biotic resources.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Joel S. Tury
Director of Conservation Science

cc: Chris Montague
Director of Conservation Programs,
The Nature Conservancy of Utah

Attachments (2)
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| **ATTACHMENT 1**  
**THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AND ECOREGIONAL PLANNING**  

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is an international, non-profit organization that seeks to maintain the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters that they need to survive.  
- The process we use to set our conservation priorities (i.e., to identify the places where we will work) is termed ecoregional planning. Ecoregions are areas of land and water defined by similar geology, landforms, climates, vegetation, and ecological processes. Sixty-four ecoregions have been identified in the lower 48 states.  
- Within each ecoregion, TNC will work with partners to develop a "portfolio" or list of sites that, taken together, fully represents the communities and species that are characteristic of the ecoregion. We believe that if these sites are managed for conservation, along with other compatible purposes, then the long-term survival of all of the ecoregion’s biological diversity will be maintained.  
- TNC recently started an ecoregional planning project for the Colorado Plateau, in southern Utah plus portions of the other four corners states. We aim to complete this project by the end of September, 2000.  
- The ecoregional planning process has two steps: (1) data development and analysis, and (2) portfolio development and assessment. The first step involves assembling relevant data on the ecoregion’s species and communities that are in need of conservation action (collectively termed “conservation targets”), and their known locations. The second step builds the minimum group of sites that collectively contain examples of all of the ecoregion’s conservation targets.  
- In order to do the first step of this planning procedure, we need the knowledge and expertise of people who are most familiar with the species and biologic communities of the Colorado Plateau. To this end, we held an “Experts Workshop” in Salt Lake City on November 8-9, 1999. At the Workshop we tapped into the considerable knowledge held by people who familiar with the Colorado Plateau.  
- Resulting from the Workshop we have a large volume of information on specific sites where viable examples of our conservation targets (species and communities) are located. From this body of information we will identify an optimal subset of places—the portfolio of sites—that must be saved. We will also do some broad-scale analysis of threats and feasibility for actions at these selected sites.  
- Once the Colorado Plateau ecoregional planning process is complete, we will focus on implementing conservation actions on sites identified in the portfolio. We cannot do this implementation alone, but aim to work closely with various partners and stakeholders to achieve conservation success within the context of compatible land uses.  

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## COMMENTS

### ATTACHMENT 2

**BIOTIC RESOURCES IN ZION NSP OF INTEREST OR CONCERN TO THC**

### SPECIES

#### Mammals
- Desert bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis nelsoni)

#### Birds
- Mexican spotted owl (Strix occidentalis lucida)
- Southwestern willow flycatcher (Empidonax difficilis 
  interferens) [Actually all willow flycatchers, given great 
  difficulty with subspecies determination]
- Neotropical migrants as a group

#### Fish
- Virgin spinedace (Leopoldia mollisaltus mollisaltus)

#### Invertebrates
- Zion snail (Physella zionis)

#### Plants
- Foster's columbine (Aquilegia formosa var. fosteri)
- Hayes' sedge (Carex hayesi)
- Canary daisy (Erigeron canarianus)
- Zion daisy (Erigeron zionis var. zionis)
- Jic. as golden aster (Heterotheca jiciana)
- Zion penstemon (Penstemon americana var. zionis)
- Zion larkspur (Delphinium rufescens)
- Clausen's violet (Viola clauseni)

### COMMUNITIES

#### Scarce, Restricted or Sensitive Communities
- Reptiles: Fremont cottonwood (Populus fremontii) with velvet ash (Fraxinus velutina), cottonwood willow (Salix exigua), plus various shrub and herb species.
- Hanging gardens.
- Micronesia (cryptobiotic) crusts.

#### Common, Widespread Representative Communities
- Rock cleft communities with dwarf mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus microstachys) and other characteristic species.
- Pinyon juniper (Pinus monophylla-Juniperus osteosperma).
- Mountain brush: various combinations of Gambel oak (Quercus gambelii), Utah serviceberry (Amelanchier utahensis), bigtooth mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus montanus), and greening manzanita (Arctostaphylos pungens).
- Pandorea jinna (Pitheus ponderosa).
- White fir-Douglas fir (Abies concolor-Pseudotsuga menziesii).

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February 21, 2000

STATEMENT OF THE SIERRA CLUB - UTAH CHAPTER

RE: General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement & Draft
Zion National Park

The Sierra Club's Utah Chapter appreciates this opportunity to provide comment on the NPS 2000 Draft General Management Plan (GMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Zion National Park.

John Muir founded the Sierra Club in 1892. The Sierra Club's mission is to "Enjoy, Explore, and Protect the Wild Places of the Earth. To Provide Practical and Promote Responsible Use of the Earth's Ecosystem and Resources, to Foster Humanly to Protect and Preserve the Quality of the Natural and Human Environment, and to Use All Lawful Means to Carry Out These Objectives." The Sierra Club has approximately 650,000 members nationwide, of whom about 5,000 members reside in Utah.

The Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club offers these comments at the Sierra Club's lead Chapter concerned with the protection of Zion National Park, as well other Utah national parks and monuments. The views presented are not official policy positions of the Sierra Club but are part of our comments on the Draft on behalf of the hundreds of members who wrote to us in support of the DEIS. (Signature.

Dick Hapgood
National Parks Representative, Public Lands

Wayne Hinkson, Chair
Public Lands Committee
Sierra Club Preferred Alternative: "B"

The Sierra Club supports "Alternative B", "Resource Protection Emphasis." That is in accordance with the overall Mission of the Sierra Club and its view on National Parks since its founding. (However, the Sierra Club does not favor conversion of Tuz Lodge from its present function of visitor services and overnight lodging. This is an historic lodge and a historic, appropriate use, albeit with some impacts on the Park. The Lodge offers a 24-hour Park experience, and thus should continue to be available adequately for that use, subject to lawful and appropriate NPS regulations and constraints.)

Introduction

The Sierra Club wishes to express its appreciation to the National Park Service for the hard work and planning that has gone into this GMP preparation. We applaud the high level of protection for its resources at Zion National Park proposed in both the "Preferred Alternative" and in "Alternative B" of this GMP.

However, the Sierra Club expresses as a central concern that the NPS fully address all elements of its charge as expressed in law and NPS Management Policies.

NPS has an obligation to:

1. Ensure preservation of the integrity, the national assets of parks, their environmental, cultural, and historical quality, and their importance in providing benefit and inspiration for all the people of the United States, which NPS has interpreted to mean the full spectrum of tangible and intangible attributes of Parks.

2. Demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship, and to tangibly demonstrate the highest level of environmental ethics. (Emphasis supplied).

Central Problems: Tone and Philosophical Content of 2001 Draft GMP AND DRAFT EIS

Need Attention Strengthening

We therefore see a general weakness — yet major opportunity — in these documents which needs to be clearly addressed.
An odd, flat, "bundles" term, considering that the Park is named "Zion." It permits the draft language. It impairs the GMP and DSE. It is surprising and disappointing to find missing even the historic origins of Zion’s very name in so core a Park planning document, at the beginning of the new millennium.

As much perhaps as in any park of the system, there is in Zion, a uniquely powerful aura, a feeling of exalted, spiritual grandeur and sanctity experienced when one looks up and out towards soaring cathedral-like spires and monoliths. How did it receive its name?

The Sierra Club that is particularly concerned that NPS address a largely neglected human dimension. What kinds of interior states of mind are enabled here? The Sierra Club suggests a comprehensive review of the popular and historic literature about Zion’s unique inspirational/esthetic quality for an institutionalized document as its Year 2000 GAP.

Zion thinly affords a "contemplative recreation" opportunity, which deserves more explicit recognition.

This recognition is necessary because it is critical to the Significance of the Park (as implied in its very name.) Such a review would provide more specific means to affirm Zion the best level of protection as we move into a fourth millennium, fraught no doubt with many tough controversies.

Environmental law professor Joseph S. Sal in his noted book, "Mountains Without Handrails," and the many authorities he cites, assert the central importance of "reflective recreation," of mental quality of experience being generally preferred in crowded, superficial quantity of visitor experience. The Sierra Club has long espoused that view. If Zion has a Park where that principle holds, it would be this one. NPS must better examine its potential in this GAP.

One reason NPS needs to lay a strong philosophical/foundational foundation for Zion stems from the particular, increasing concerns of both the NPS itself and of Zion managers, also of the general public, regarding the increasing threats to Natural Quiet. It is the absence of peace and quiet, the flattening of interior states of wonder, that we notice more and more. This trend is becoming especially real for Zion from many sources, especially from manufactured engine sources on ground and in the air.

The quality of landscape and theodicy, even skycape, the very aura of the Park, the quality of contemplative experience once possible in such a special place as Zion, may soon become permanently eroded. The "interior domain" of art, wisdom, and beauty perception, the very poetry of landscape and music are being pressed flat. They are squeezed by loss of the natural quiet and sounds, and interfered with by other distractions, high and low. Holistic contemplations and uncommodified freedom of enjoyment are going.

As author Jack Turner concluded (in personal experience from another southern Utah Park — Capitallands), the decline of wilderness and biodiversity may be "found in the decline of art, wisdom, magic, songs, holiness, the sacred, and good" in our experience of the natural world. He sadly and logically observes, "we must the natural world according to our (diminished) experience of it."
**COMMENTS**

**Remedies:** (1) Strengthen the Foundational Elements

| Why not, then, explore the deeper dimensions of scene, including a paragraph about the scene Zion, plus some historic quotations or stories, and drawing upon some creative Zion plans scenes? This would provide an access within the GMG towards a fuller recognition of the interior domains of wonder which can be forestalled and expanded in such a park setting. Scattered allusions to "solitude", or "tranquility" or even "beauty" do not -- in themselves -- lay a sufficiently adequate philosophic foundation for Zion. The NPS foundational law (not above) indeed doesn't on such terms, including terms like "eignty", "impression." But we need some full context, actual paragraphs, some vivid examples of Zion that flesh out, evoke meaning for these terms.

Failure to provide the requisite foundation in "significance", and elsewhere in the GMG, will "spoil" negatively all down the line; it will diminish in understated critical inference plans such as energy and implementation planning to address key issues. The NPS needs, rather, to provide a strong, operating philosophic motivational base throughout "Planning Background", "Primary Planning Issues and Concerns", "Park Policies and Practices" also in particular select CDM sections such as "High Stakes", "Natural Sounds and Natural Quiet", "Visiter Use and Experiences", Information, Orientation and Interpretation, "The Natural Soundscape", "Geologic Resources", etc.

(2) Strengthen "Natural Soundscape" Section

Having suggested deeper core foundation and principles, the Sierra Club rephrased that suggestion in the Natural Soundscape Section (Pages 116-117). Our earlier considerations take us towards the Sierra Club's Principles of Natural Quiet from both NPS and the Sierra Club, as applied to Zion.

1. The sounds and silences of nature are among the intrinsic elements which combine to form the natural environment. Natural sounds include sounds of stillness are inherent components of the "scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife" within units of the National Park System.

2. Natural quiet is the soundless opportuni experience only natural sounds within periods of deepest silence. The quiet to be preserved or restored is as defined by the National Park Service as "the quiet at the lower end of the ambient sound level range that occur regularly between wind gusts, animal sounds, etc., not just the average sound level". As the Park Service explains, "Lulls in the wind or intervals between animal sounds create intervals where the quiet of a...)
COMMENTS

3. Zion is a crown jewel National Park with vast spaces of noble and astounding beauty, tremendous interior depths, and wilderness. Such a Park has a distinct and powerful aura, fully dependent upon the remote natural sounds and natural quiet. As such, this area offers unique opportunities for understated energy, solitude, contemplative recreation, inspiration, and education. Further, the Park also provides unique refuge and unconfined natural habitat for animals. Artificial, human-generated noise can disrupt some sensitive animal activities.

4. A goal of Zion managers should be to preserve and, where impacted, fully restore the natural quiet within the Park, and to address this issue in the unit's GMP.

The Sierra Club supports the establishment of appropriate noise standards and comprehensive baseline sound level monitoring and sound source inventory of all NPS units. This includes continual assessment of noise from all human-generated sources and incorporation of public comments about noise impacts.

---

RESPONSES

2. This information has been incorporated into the document.


COMMENTS

of this issue, how important it is in the NPS not connote "Natural Quiet," then, as to the shadows. Usage of both terms with the public and within the agency is necessary and valid.

3. Add a section: "DAILY SKY"
The Sierra Club agrees with the NPS that "Zone's night sky" (or, for that matter, "night scape") is a feature that significantly contributes to the visitor experience. Does not connote "Definite Sky" also, in substance, however?

3 The latter concern is only partly addressed through the "Air Quality" language. Unfortunately, the ugly, unrelenting, uncountered noise levels from various sources and daily profligating commercial high-altitude traffic above the Park are -- more and more -- denigrating that defense skin. Long, nightly, off-proceeding, multiple-united visual scenes or bad days markably impair the otherwise inspiring, beautiful, vertical and horizontal landscapes of Zone. The GMP needs to include a specific discussion of this problem in the GMP's sections dealing with Natural Resources. It thus would recognize that the Defense as well as Night Sky is jeopardized and provide a planning base for recognition of the sky scape.

Clearly, the GNP should specify the need for the "Daily Service to work with the FAA and perhaps allied industry towards the monitoring and restriction of this problem (which also increasingly plagues other units of the National Park System.)."

Meanwhile, the Zone Ledge night lighting remains on a rather obsessive scale both on its landscaped grounds and as seen from elevated vistas in the Park. This leads to another point.

(4) Add a section: "VISTA CLEARING"

4 The NPS should include a new section introducing the concept of "Vista Clearing" (as has been done in the Grand Canyon National Park General Management Plan.) This will enable specific noise- and light-level design guidelines and look to minimize noise and light impacts. The "Vista Clearing" could substitute various measures ranging from aircraft corridors to garbage cans to highly destructive visitor signs, or lighting, or activities. The point is, that everything is appropriate in every vista, or vista atmosphere or skyline, at Zone. The "best of the best" vistas, those with extraordinary preservation, spiritual character, should be proceed to the fullest from our planning them.

In this regard, the Sierra Club believes that there should be no development of "further visitor service facilities, parking lots, paved overlooks, roads, etc. in the Kolob Canyons section of the Park. Experience of the extraordinary vistas in that area as would be diminished by such development.

RESPONSES

3. Both noise and visual impacts from aircraft flights over the park are a concern and should be dealt with collectively. The test under "Park Policies and Practices" chapter has been revised to clarify that park managers would continue to work with the Federal Aviation Administration and other aviation interests to minimize noise and visual impacts.

4. We believe protection of scenic vistas has been adequately covered in the "Park Policies and Practices" chapter, including the discussions under "Relations with Private and Public Organizations," "Night Sky," "Natural Sounds," and "Levels and Type of Park Development." With regards to the Kolob Canyons the preferred alternative has been revised to note that there would be no expansion of visitor facilities in the Kolob Canyons Road area, except for installation of restrooms at existing parking lots if necessary.

5
### Comments

Conclusion

And so we have come full circle as we were. The Secret Club organizes NPS to achieve more fully in this Year 2000. (Final Secretary Management Plan), the unique case, the unique name of news which have proven and under various opportunities and which we should present. We may have words of Frederick Delahunty, a man who has many opportunities open to the world's news, song, story, and music.

```
"I ask neither song nor speech: I ask to the Original Father. To the eternal Father, the Original of the Original Father, I ask He who is the Whole of the Whole, I ask He who is the Son of the Son, I ask He who is the Son of the Son..."

Frederick Delahunty (1901)
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### Responses

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## FOOTNOTES

3. We suggest addition of the italicized words to each heading, for reasons given in comments.
5. Ibid., Sec. 3.2.1.

N.B. these succinct writings of the late, famed Tenth photographer Ansel Adams, penned 50 years or more ago, underscore our urgent call for NPS to greatly strengthen the effective environmental protection of this Zion National Park Cliff.

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<th>COMMENTS</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ADDITIONAL REFERENCES AND NOTES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Also in Multicarvings: Landscape and Story in Zion Canyon (Ibid.) is this memorable quote about Zion from Clarence Dutton's famed academic geological synthesis in his 1882 Tertiary History:</td>
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> "In an instant, there flashed before us a scene never to be forgotten. In coming time, a wall! I believe, take rank with a very small number of spectacles, each of which will, in its own way, be regarded as the most exquisite of its kind which the world discloses."

Dutton went on:

> "Nothing can exceed the beauty of Little Zion Valley... in its wildness and beauty of the sculptures there is no comparison. No wonder the fierce Mormon Zealot, who named it, was reminded of the Great Zeum, on which he formed mood was born... of beauties not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

2) See also Nicky Leach, The Guide to the National Parks of the Southwest, (Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, Tucson, 1991) for other quotes on the artistic and inspirational dimensions of Zion.

3) For quotations on interior states of mind relating to Natural Quiet, Natural Sounds, Silence and Solitude:


   2) Dale Salak, (ed.) The Wonders of Solitude (New World Library, San Rafael, California, 1995)

4) Ken Wilber, The Marriage of Sense and Soul (Random House, 1993) includes a snoopsg, rigorous philosophical treatment of how interior dimensions of human consciousness become overly reduced (flattened) to their exterior correlates during the last two centuries.
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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra Club – Utah Chapter: Detailed Comments on Selected Sentences and Paragraphs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Pages 13 and 20, integrate term &quot;Natural Quiet&quot; into the legal headings as appropriate.</td>
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<td>2) Pages 26 and 27, &quot;Desired Conditions&quot; (suggested additions here and in items below, set as italics)</td>
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<td>• Park staff should provide information on how to enjoy the Park, but only in a &quot;safe&quot; or &quot;low impact&quot; way, but in an inspirational way.</td>
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<td>• &quot;Signs of people and sound of motors and mechanized devices remain substantially unnecessary.&quot;</td>
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<td>3) Pages 10-11. &quot;Forest Country Zones&quot;, the last &quot;buffer&quot; under both High and Low Development Zones should be modified to say, &quot;Louis would only be placed on the numbers of people or certain uses of technology to address resource protection concerns.&quot; Also, on Page 31, &quot;Protean Zones&quot;, first &quot;buffer&quot; &quot;Natural conditions and processes would be largely undisturbed by people and their technology.&quot;</td>
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<td>4) Page 71, Noise Management Plan, delete the phrase (&quot;including air tours&quot;). This plan over time would provide useful information on needed modifications on air tours and would not be, actually cannot be, separated from the ATMP in terms of the resource, especially when one considers cumulative and synergistic effects.</td>
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<td>5) Page 107, Matrix on &quot;Natural Quiet.&quot; the title &quot;Natural Quiet.&quot; is proper, but within the matrix cells, confusion is introduced by inconsistencies in terms, such as &quot;natural sounds,&quot; &quot;noise levels,&quot; &quot;noise impacts.&quot;</td>
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<td>6) Page 155, add to very last paragraph on this page, &quot;... the noise reduction in noise that to implementation of the Zion Canyon transportation system will unmask the sound of many of these flights. Also...&quot;</td>
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<td>7) Page 156, add to the Conclusion the following sentence. &quot;Perceived aircraft impacts will likely increase in the Zion Canyon from country owing to the somewhat&quot; effect of motorized noise reduction on ground.&quot;</td>
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<td>8) Page 168. Will not the &quot;more formalized&quot; experience created by the shuttle also be no more textile or commercial (a genuine contribution, in this stage of engagement?) This might also be noted.</td>
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<td>9) Page 170, Conclusion, second sentence, &quot;Zoning would help ensure... an undisturbed aura of landscape, air, flora and fauna throughout the park’s proposed...&quot; proposed wilderness.&quot;</td>
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<td>Page 170, Conclusion, fifth sentence, &quot;Placing limits...&quot; would enhance opportunities</td>
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<td>for enjoying solitude, quiet, and experiencing high-fidelity natural sounds. “</td>
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<td>10) Page 180: A rewrite is needed for Cumulative Effects. Suggestion:</td>
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<td>“If aircraft flights over the park increased, however, the noise of the aircraft combined with increased noise levels would result in a negative cumulative impact on natural sound levels and on natural quiet. In Zion Canyon, the mitigation of vehicular noise because of the sheer will be to some degree offset by the annoyance of aircraft noise finding the Canyon from above.”</td>
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<td>11) Page 224, Appendix, “Visitor Experience.” Suggestion:</td>
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<td>“Only natural sights and sounds would be heard, meaning the low-end natural ambient would be fully protected via noise standards and noise thresholds. Boats and equipment and the use of aircraft would generally not be permitted to access or impact the zone as per the Wilderness Act and NPS Policy.”</td>
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COMMENTS

February 26, 2000

Mr. Tyler, Superintendent
Zion National Park
Springdale, Utah 84763

Re: Supplemental Comment on ZION NATIONAL PARK GNP and DCP

Dear Dave:

Today, the Utah Office delivered two packs containing our Sierra Club-Utah Chapter Comments on the Zion National Park Draft GNP and DCP. NPS Ranger Chris Curtsinger signed it dated note acknowledging receipt. I trust you and Darla have by now received them.

An additional 15% well-known influence, the "1994 Report to Congress on the Effect of Airplane Overflights on the National Park System" contains a particularly relevant essay by Peter Lyca, "The Emergence of Science", which I think is a good addition to these comments.

So on behalf of the Utah Chapter, I submit them, and ask that they might be appended with our Feb. 26, 2000 Comment.

Sincerely,

Dick Heigen, National Parks Representative
Public Lands Committee

cc: Darla Selles

RESPONSES

SIERRA CLUB-UtAH CHAPTER
1275 South Highland Avenue, A5-0
Salt Lake City, UT 84105

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Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

February 28, 2000
PO Box 1720
Cedar City, UT 84721

Zion National Park
Administrator, Civil Safety, Superintendent
P.O. Box 1720
Cedar City, UT 84720
FAX: February 28, 2000
435-772-8624

RE: Draft General Management Plan and GLCP for
Zion National Park (ZAMP)

Dear Superintendent, Park

The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA) appreciates the opportunity to participate in the planning process of the DGM for Zion National Park. SUWA’s early involvement can be traced back to an office in Springdale. Specifically at the front door of the park, thus forming a connection that still exists between SUWA and its stated treasure territory. SUWA is an organization dedicated to maintaining and enjoying the park’s many outdoor experiences value. SUWA is also deeply interested in how the park is managed and in its virtually unspoiled by public lands, most of which is managed by BLM, and some of which possess wilderness characteristics and remaining attributes and are included in America’s Backcountry Wilderness Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1050 which SUWA enthusiastically supports.

Our comments are mainly concerned with wilderness area and their management within the park. We respectfully request that these comments be given meaningful consideration as the final DGM is being drafted.

As is clear from the mandate of the National Park Service’s Organic Act, Zion National Park must be managed to preserve its resources unencumbered for the enjoyment of future generations. Further, as the DGM staff states, the purposes of Zion National Park are:

- preserve the dynamic natural process of canyons formation
- protect and present the geological features
- preserve and protect its archeological features
- preserve the larger area intact for the purpose of scientific research
- provide a variety of opportunities and range of experiences for park visitors
- without degrading these resources

With such strong direction for preserving the resources of the park, it is evident that the management plan must make preservation of the resources to highest priority.

Sincerely,

The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

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management plan should not be a popularity vote cast by the ever-increasing numbers of park users, but rather a soundly-based document that outlines what is best for the park’s resources based on findings of scientific research. This point deserves special attention, as it is evident in our DOPM that scientific review and findings were not used as a basis for any of the determinations and conclusions that were contained in the DOPM.

1. **Wilderness**
   **Proposed and Recommended Wilderness**
   It is SUWA’s understanding that the lands in the park that are shown on the “Wilderness – No Action” map in the DOPM (page 41) are lands that have been recommended to Congress for wilderness designation. Thus, these lands must be managed as wilderness until Congress acts on this recommendation. The proposed action proposes to administratively remove lands from this wilderness recommendation. Although the plus date state (p. 155) that parts of currently proposed wilderness areas would be excluded under the proposed action, the DOPM does not mention that these areas are recommended to Congress as wilderness. In addition, the DOPM emphasizes the overall net increase in proposed wilderness, and the fact that currently recommended wilderness areas would be dropped is merely disregarded.
   SUWA strongly urges NPS to reconsider its plan to drop various areas from proposed and recommended wilderness status. Managing the park for wilderness values will automatically allow the park to be managed so that its resources are protected, as required by the Organic Act.

2. **Management Zones**
   Wilderness is wilderness, and management of wilderness should not be classified and divided into zones. By classifying some recommended wilderness areas as pristine, while others are classified as primitive, NPS is creating, at the very least, an impression of a distinction between various wilderness areas. There is no need, and indeed, no authority to improve management zones that have different goals that distinguish between various wilderness areas. Wilderness cannot be high-graded or subdivided.

3. **Proposed Boundary Adjustments**
   SUWA applauds the NPS for its consideration and forethought with respect to adding to the park the five BLM areas that are contiguous to the park. These areas are included in the citizen’s wilderness bill, HR 1725/861. As these parcels qualify for wilderness designation, SUWA strongly urges NPS to manage these parcels as wilderness to begin the public process to allow the park’s wilderness recommendation can be amended to include these parcels.

4. **Visitor Facilities**
   **Kolob Visitor Center**
   While data were used that supports the proposal in the preferred alternative to expand the Kolob visitor center. What is the basis for this proposal? How will this help protect the

   **RESPONSES**

   1. The text in the draft plan has been modified to address this comment. See “Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concern,” concern 13.
   2. The primitive, pristine, and research natural area zones (and in a few cases the transition zone) in the General Management Plan are management prescriptions that enclose the recommended wilderness. They have no effect on legal designations. Rather, the zones articulate management goals for particular areas within the recommended wilderness, identifying desired resource conditions and visitor experiences, and appropriate loads and levels of visitor use, and management activities. Different zones are applied in the recommended wilderness because the diversity of resources, uses, and conditions warrant the area being managed differently. The Wilderness Act recognizes that wildernesses may differ in their values and that special provisions may be applied to certain areas. NPS policy also states that management zoning in wilderness is appropriate so long as the conditions specified in the zones are not inconsistent with wilderness values. Thus, we believe it is appropriate and necessary to include different management zones within the boundaries of the recommended wilderness area.
   3. It will be the intention of the Park Service to administer and protect the proposed BLM Wilderness Study Area acquisitions in keeping with NPS Management Policies and Director’s Order 41: Wilderness Preservation and Management. In keeping with established guidelines, the National Park Service will subsequently initiate the administrative process needed to recommend to Congress the addition of these units to the National Wilderness Preservation System: as either NPS “designated” or “potential” wilderness.
   4. The preferred alternative has been revised to state that the Kolob Canyons visitor center may be expanded. The improvement is intended to provide some additional interpretive and office space to a facility that now only has very limited room for exhibits and information. We do not believe that improving this facility would attract substantially more visitors – more people will visit this area regardless of whether or not the visitor center is expanded. With additional exhibits and information, visitors will be better informed about actions they can take to minimize impacts.

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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<td>resources of the Kolob area? What negative effects to the Kolob area are likely due to expanded visitor services? The Kolob area is nearly all recommended wilderness. Expanding the Kolob visitor center will likely serve to attract more visitors to the Kolob area, which in turn, can have significant effects on the wilderness values of the Kolob Canyons area.</td>
<td>5. See responses 32 and 33 to the Friends of Zion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kolob Terrace Road Area, Lava Point</td>
<td>6. Building the visitor center inside the park has been dropped from the preferred alternative in the final plan. Instead the Park Service would work with other landowners and the county to locate a space outside the park to provide information to visitors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>As with the proposed Kolob visitor center expansion, how will these proposed facilities improve protection of the park’s resources? The Kolob-Terrace travel way is not one of the main routes that visitors to the park take, but by constructing a visitor office on the route, visitors will likely be attracted to the area, thus creating resources of the area to sustain impacts that they are not currently sustaining. Likewise, any new visitor facility at Lava Point will likely draw more visitors to this remote area, increasing the impacts to the park’s resources.</td>
<td>7. See response 2 to the Friends of Zion.</td>
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<td>Lava Entrance</td>
<td>8. A formal protocol for monitoring backcountry campsite impacts has been in place for many years. When the wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies are completed, an additional system for monitoring visitor impacts would be implemented. Also you should be aware that in the final plan we have revised the group size limits for the primitive and primitive zones. See response 2 to the Kane County Commission.</td>
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<td>The full service visitor center at the east entrance appears to be unnecessary. The vast majority of park visitors is to one city main canyon. Thus, visitors naturally end up near the existing visitor center, which is entirely adequate to serve as the single visitor center for the park. In addition, it does not seem necessary to construct a down-sized version of the full-service visitor center, such as the proposed fenced visitor facility, to the east entrance. The bus service hands out a park map, that indicates the location of the existing visitor center, which is adequate.</td>
<td>9. See response 18 to the Friends of Zion.</td>
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<td>Zion Canyon Lodge</td>
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<td>SUWA supports the proposal in Alternative D to convert the lodge into a facility for research and academic-based education. This is particularly appealing since there are ample lodging accommodations in nearby Springdale, making the park lodge much less essential for overnight stays. The removal of the lodge will allow Zion NP to be free of commercial enterprises within the park boundaries, which is in keeping with the purposes of the park.</td>
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<td>Backcountry Visitor Use Management</td>
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<td>SUWA appreciates the NPS for recognizing that the backcountry must be managed so as to protect the impression one gets of its remoteness and its opportunities it provides for solitude. The DUMP would limit the group size to five in the primitive zone and eight in the primitive zone and would limit visitor numbers on several trails. Although such limits may vary well be necessary, has the NPS been monitoring the various backcountry areas in the park to determine the impacts to the resources that are currently occurring and whether the impacts are from visitor use?</td>
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<td>Research Natural Areas</td>
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<td>The DUMP fails to provide sufficient information for SUWA to make meaningful and helpful comments. Please address this deficiency in a supplement to the DUMP or in a second draft.</td>
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| **10** Future Project Proposals and Decisions  
SUWA wants to encourage the NPS to make a greater effort to involve the public, as required by NEPA, for future proposal and action, that the NPS may take in order to begin implementing portions of the management plan. Involving the public from the very beginning of a project will result in a better-informed decision, which should result in better management of the park’s magnificent resources.  

Summary  
In summary, it appears that the DGMMP is a visitor accommodation plan, rather than a comprehensive plan to provide guidance on how to manage the park’s resources in a manner that promotes them. The DGMMP merely proposes to spread out the incoming visitor use, rather than attempting to control it in a responsible manner. As SUWA’s comments above emphasize, these various proposals do not likely meet the stated purposes and goals of the park. As such, the DGMMP does not adequately address the mandate to protect the park’s resources.  

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these comments with you at your convenience. I can be contacted at 415-961-5496. Again, SUWA appreciates the opportunity to participate in this planning process.  

Sincerely,  

Lori Thorns  
SUWA |

10. We agree with your point regarding NEPA analysis and public comment. Appropriate NEPA compliance will be completed for all future proposals and implementation plans.
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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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| **Utah Heritage Foundation**  
February 10, 2000  
Darla Sadler  
Zion National Park  
Springdale, UT 84767-1099  
Dear Ms. Sadler:  
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Ground Management Plan/ES for Zion National Park. I offer the following comments on behalf of the Utah Heritage Foundation, a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and promoting Utah’s historic built environment through public awareness, advocacy, and active preservation.  
I agree that an alternative, as proposed, would appropriately plan historic resources in Zion. However, the final plan and preferred alternative should, in my opinion, have stronger statements about the NPS commitment to preserve and use historic resources within the park. To that end, I urge you to include the following in the final management plan/ES:  
- When additional square footage is needed by the NPS or concessionaires, the plan should state that the intent of the NPS is to seek to reuse individualized or under-maintained historic resources before constructing new.  
- During contract renewal or renegotiation with concessionaires, require a higher level of maintenance on historic resources utilized by concessionaires so that all buildings are maintained according to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Register Eligibility. For instance, it appears that historic buildings in the Faux Creek area will be razed or renovated for buildings in the future but drive-up service costs made mandatory in the future just to save or continue using these historic buildings.  
- Thank you, the NPS, Zion Park Lodge is well maintained. But, the lodge is closer within an historic district and that context is very important to maintaining historical significance as well as a unique visitor experience. I suggest that the plan note it is essential that gradual expansion within the historic district—whether new construction or infrastructural improvements—always comply with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the cumulative impact of those changes threatens the loss of historic sense of place.  
- Lastly, I urge you to include a statement in the plan which reiterates that the NPS, 

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<th>COMMENTS</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<td>property steward, will seek to set an example of the highest standards in historic property stewardship. This plan offers an opportunity for the NPS to make a strong statement about its commitment to preserve historic resources within Zion. Thank you for your work on the plan and for the chance to comment. I would appreciate the opportunity for Utah Heritage Foundations to become a stronger partner with your historic resources staff in order to better promote, and assist where appropriate, your good work at Zion National Park.</td>
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Sincerely,  

[Signature]
L Rebek L. Hering  
Executive Director

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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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**Virgin River Runners Coalition**

Dale Sides  
Zion National Park  
Springdale, UT 84767-1099

*Re: Comments regarding Zion National Park Draft General Management Plan*

The following comments on the Zion National Park Draft General Management Plan are made on behalf of the more than 60 members of the Virgin River Runners Coalition, a river-runners advocacy group based in southwest Utah.

1. We wholeheartedly endorse the Wild and Scenic River designations listed under the Proposed Action alternative for tributaries of the Virgin River in Zion National Park, including the "incisional" status proposed for the segments of the North Fork Virgin River downstream of the Temple of Sinawava.

2. We support the removal of rip-rap and gabions from the scenic banks of the North Fork Virgin River in the park to allow the floodplain to return to a more natural state.

3. We support allowing rafting and kayaking on the North Fork Virgin River downstream of the Temple of Sinawava as an integral part of diversifying the recreational opportunities in Zion.

4. We support the concept of carrying capacity and use limits, but do not support the outright closure of any area, except for wildlife-reproduction needs, as in cliff closures during peregrine falcon nesting season and Pahvant Canyon during higher stream flow.

5. We are not opposed in guiding services being allowed in Zion National Park.

6. We support construction and maintenance of hiking trails, particularly in less-used areas of Zion to promote dispersal of crowds from the main canyon corridors.

7. We disagree with the Resource Value Rating of "C" for recreation on the North Fork Virgin River downstream of the Temple of Sinawava, listed on Table F-7, p. 234, Zion DMP. We believe it should be a "B"—one of the most significant in the region.

Sincerely,

Juanita Herda  
Virgin River Runners Coalition

---

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COMMENTS

Date: 3/8/06 3:18 PM
Sender: [Email]
To: [Email]
Subject: [Email]

The comment in the draft plan has been modified to address this comment. See "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 13 in the introduction of this part.

Thanks.

February 28, 2005

I. The comment in the draft plan has been modified to address this comment. See "Clarification of Commonly Raised Public Concerns," concern 13 in the introduction of this part.

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2. These changes to the wilderness recommendation were dropped in the final plan. See also response 1 to the Friends of Zion.

3. We cannot make a new wilderness recommendation without preparing a separate wilderness study and holding public hearings. Since these steps were not taken during the planning process, we cannot send an additional wilderness proposal to the Secretary of the Interior at this time. See also response 10 to the Friends of Zion.

4. The Park Service will continue to manage the recommended wilderness as wilderness under its management policies.

5. The preferred alternative in the final plan does not propose additional development along the Kolob Canyons Road area. Thus, this action would continue to offer a different frontcountry experience than Zion Canyon. See also responses 32, 33, and 34 to the Friends of Zion.
There is no range of conditions within pristine and primitive zones. Under the proposed situation, some primitive zones are currently quite pristine. Should they be allowed to degenerate to defined primitive quality? What are the limits of acceptable change for the resources? More data is of little technology for the SAC should be made available for comments.

North Fork of the Virgin River
We suggest the establishment of a scientific facility in the Virgin River area. The primary purpose of this facility would be to support the research and education functions of the park. The facility would be located midway between the drop zone and the mouth of the river. The facility should be designed to provide adequate protection for the resources in the area.

The scope of the project should be defined carefully. The facility should be designed to accommodate a maximum of 100 visitors per day. The facility should be designed to provide adequate protection for the resources in the area.

6. First, we should point out that 81% of the park would be primitive zones in the preferred alternative, while only 11% would be zoned primitive. Primitive and pristine zone conditions are equally valid, although some may prefer conditions in one zone over another. This plan is designed to ensure that Zion continues to have both primitive and pristine conditions. Although the primitive zone would have different desired conditions than the pristine zone (e.g., this zone would allow more use than the pristine zone), park managers would not necessarily take actions to achieve these conditions. In other words, areas zoned as primitive, but with currently pristine conditions, may continue in their present condition. With regards to limits of acceptable change, a future wilderness management plan and capacity studies would identify specific indicators and standards for resource and social conditions. Additional information needs to be collected to determine which indicators and standards should be selected for each zone.

We agree and noted on page 52 of the draft that a river management plan was needed to more thoroughly study this action. See also response 22 to the Friends of Zion.

We see response 24 to the Friends of Zion.

We see response 5 to the National Parks and Conservation Association.

Due to the values and sensitivities of the natural and cultural resources present in Parunuweap Canyon, the preferred alternative has been revised to include Parunuweap as a research natural area.

The text in the final plan has been modified to address your comment. The preferred alternative now states that a wilderness management plan and capacity studies would be developed within five years of the completion of the General Management Plan. A variety of issues and topics would be covered in the wilderness plan, including carrying capacities, climbing/canyoneering, commercial guiding, and river recreation. The other topics you raised (natural sound, night sky, air and water quality) would be discussed in the wilderness plan if appropriate, and/or may be covered in the other implementation plans (e.g., the resource management plan).
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| Planning process since the vast majority of the park is recommended  | Thank you for the opportunity to comment. SPCG has submitted its comments on the SPCG report for the Year 2023. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or need clarification on any of our comments. We look forward to working with SPCG as we review their draft. 

Sincerely,  

Robert J. Biglow  
National Parks Program Director |

| 353 | BEST COPY AVAILABLE |
APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE HISTORY FOR ZION NATIONAL PARK


5. Zion National Monument was established on January 22, 1937, by Presidential Proclamation No. 2227 (50 Stat. 572). Gross acreage of the monument was 48,414 acres.

6. Zion National Monument was made a part of Zion National Park on July 11, 1956, by Act of Congress (70 Stat. 527). All lands formerly in the monument were included in the park. Total acreage now: 142,655 acres.

7. An act to revise the boundaries of Zion National Park was approved February 20, 1960 (74 Stat. 4). The boundary change added a total of 3,485 acres to the park. Total acreage now: 146,630 acres. (Note: Official land records of the National Park Service indicate that as of January 1, 1970, gross acreage of Zion National Park was 147,035 acres.)

8. An act to revise the boundaries of the national park was approved October 21, 1976 (90 Stat. 2732).

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF KEY LEGAL MANDATES

Legal mandates provide direction for what can and cannot be considered in this plan. Several of the provisions of key legal mandates are summarized below.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ORGANIC ACT OF 1916 (P.L. 64-235)

This act created the National Park Service and established its mandate to conserve park resources and values and provide for their enjoyment. 'The National Park Service shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations...' Such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.' The act also authorized the Secretary of the Interior to make rules and regulations for the use and administration of NPS areas, and allowed concessioners to be granted leases in parks.

NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION ACT OF 1978 (P.L. 95-625)

Section 604(b) of this act requires that general management plans be prepared and revised in a timely manner for each unit in the national park system. The act further specifies that general management plans shall include measures for the preservation of the area's resources, indications of the types and intensities of development associated with public use of the unit, visitor carrying capacities for all areas of the unit, and indications of potential modifications of the unit's external boundaries if needed.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973, AS AMENDED (16 USC 1531 ET SEQ.)

The purpose of this act is to provide protection for animal and plant species that are currently in danger of extinction (endangered) and those that may become so in the foreseeable future (threatened). Section 7 requires all federal agencies to ensure that their activities do not have adverse impacts on the continued existence of threatened or endangered species or on designated areas (critical habitats) that are important in conserving those species. Thus, the National Park Service is required to fully integrate endangered species conservation planning into park system management. Agencies also are required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency does not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or critical habitat. The result of formal or informal consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service should be documented in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969 (NEPA; P.L. 91-190)

This act sets forth the federal policy to preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage. Another purpose of NEPA is to help public officials make decisions that are based on an objective understanding of environmental consequences and to take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. The act applies to all federal projects or projects that require federal involvement. All federal agencies are directed to use a systematic, interdisciplinary approach that integrates natural and social sciences in planning and decision making that may impact the human environment. NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality implementing regulations describe the process a proposed federal action such as this plan must follow. Among the steps in the process, NEPA and the regulations require early coordination, called "scoping," to determine the scope and significance of issues to be addressed in an environmental impact statement. A structured
format for public involvement during the public review process is specified. When preparing an environmental impact statement, the regulations further require federal agencies to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives to the preferred alternative.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT OF 1968 (P.L. 90-542)

This act establishes federal policy to preserve certain rivers with remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values in a free-flowing condition and to protect their immediate environments. The act created the national wild and scenic rivers system and outlined criteria and procedure whereby free-flowing streams, or portions thereof, could be added to the system. The system includes wild, scenic, and recreational rivers. Rivers and streams proposed for inclusion in the system must be considered during project planning and project impacts identified in an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966, AS AMENDED (16 USC 470, ET SEQ.)

This act establishes as federal policy that the historical and cultural foundations of the nation’s heritage be preserved. Section 106 requires that federal agencies that have direct or indirect jurisdiction over undertakings take into account the effect of those undertakings on properties eligible for or included in the National Register of Historic Places. The section also provides the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the state historic preservation officer an opportunity to comment on the undertaking. The 1992 amendments to the act have further defined the roles of American Indian tribes and the affected public in the section 106 consultation process. Section 110 requires federal managers, in consultation with the state historic preservation officers, to establish programs to identify, evaluate, and nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

Preservation and the state historic preservation officer an opportunity to comment on the undertaking. The 1992 amendments to the act have further defined the roles of American Indian tribes and the affected public in the section 106 consultation process. Section 110 requires federal managers, in consultation with the state historic preservation officers, to establish programs to identify, evaluate, and nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964 (P.L. 88-577)

The Wilderness Act established the national wilderness preservation system, composed of congressionally designated, federally owned areas. Federal agencies are required to administer these areas to provide for their use and enjoyment, now and in the future, and to protect and preserve their wilderness character. NPS policy is to manage all public lands, including National Park System areas, in a manner consistent with the agency mission to protect wilderness.

APPENDIX C: RELATIONSHIP OF OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS TO THIS GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Several plans and agreements have influenced or will be influenced by the General Management Plan. These documents are briefly described below:

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SOUTHERN PAIUTE TRIBE ON COLLECTING NATURAL RESOURCE MATERIALS (1998)

The current memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, the Moapa Band of Paiute Indians, and the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah allows for the collection of limited quantities of plant materials by authorized tribal members within the boundaries of the Zion National Park and Pipe Spring National Monument. The development of this agreement was a collaborative effort between tribal representatives and NPS staff. The memorandum of understanding recognizes:

- The importance of preserving and maintaining the cultural and natural resources of the tribes.
- The necessity to consult with tribal representatives to ensure compliance with federal, state, and tribal laws.
- The significance of protecting the cultural and natural resources for future generations.

This agreement is intended to provide a framework for the management of natural resources within the park, ensuring that the cultural and natural heritage of the tribes are protected.

ZION HOUSING MANAGEMENT PLAN (1998)

The housing management plan is intended to provide direction for determining the minimum number of housing units in Zion that are necessary to support the mission of the park. The plan calls for removing all NPS employee housing out of the park except for housing for emergency responders (i.e., employees in positions whose presence is required within a specific geographic area to provide a timely response to emergencies outside normal working hours), seasonal employees, lower.graded...
tation system plan, and the resulting actions taken by park management, put some limits on the range of desired conditions and alternatives that could be considered for Zion Canyon in this plan. For example, allowing private vehicles in the canyon during the summer was excluded from consideration during the development of alternatives in this plan. However, some of the alternatives in this plan/EIS provide general directions on the operation of the shuttle system (i.e., the terminus of the shuttle route in the canyon).

**ZION NATIONAL PARK GPRA PLANS (1997)**

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) directs all federal agencies to produce a strategic plan and annual performance plans. A park strategic plan describes the park’s mission, mission goals, and measurable long-term goals, and includes a resource assessment. A park annual performance plan lists annual performance goals (the outcomes expected to be achieved in a given fiscal year) and includes an annual work plan (inputs and outputs) to achieve the annual goals. The Zion park staff completed their first strategic plan and annual work plan in 1997. The planning team used the park mission goals in developing the Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement. In the future, GPRA plans will tier off of the General Management Plan, building on the mission, mission goals, and management prescriptions described here. The adequacy of the General Management Plan also will be continually reevaluated in the strategic planning process for Zion.

**ZION NATIONAL PARK WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (1996)**

A.. agreement between the United States, State of Utah, and Water Conservancy Districts from Washington and Kane counties, was signed in December 1996 to settle the water-rights claims for Zion National Park. This agreement was developed as part of the general adjudication of water rights that the state is conducting for the Virgin River Watershed. Both state appropriative rights and federal reserved water rights were recognized for Zion National Park, with the former being critical for providing water for administrati-
how long-term resource goals will be achieved in Zion and thus provides a working foundation for resource management actions in the park. The plan provides an overview of the park’s natural, cultural, and physical resources; analyzes resource management needs; and prescribes long-term strategies to address the park’s most important resource problems and research needs. The resource management plan identifies specific actions and assigns them priorities. These actions are updated on a regular basis. The existing 1994 resource management plan will be revised as needed to incorporate the management directions provided by this document.

LAND PROTECTION PLAN, ZION NATIONAL PARK (1984)

Land protection plans are developed for each park containing nonfederal lands or interests that may be subject to acquisition. Land acquisition is guided by a park’s land protection plan. Zion’s land protection plan identified nonfederal lands and interests within the park’s boundaries and provided examples of compatible and incompatible uses of those lands. Alternative land protection techniques were examined and evaluated for protecting park values and meeting management objectives. The plan established priorities for acquisition of land or interests within the park boundary and made recommendations for short- and long-term actions. It noted that the National Park Service will not seek to acquire any interest in private lands without the consent of the owner as long as these lands are devoted to uses that are compatible with the park. The action alternatives in the Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement shows how the National Park Service would like to manage the nonfederal lands within the park boundary if and when they are acquired.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER REVIEWS IN THE STATE OF UTAH (1996-1997)

In December 1994, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service, and National Park Service agreed to develop a common process and criteria for determining the eligibility and suitability of Utah rivers for potential inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system. A uniform methodology was published in 1996, which the three agencies are using to prepare wild and scenic river eligibility assessments in the state (USFS et al. 1996). In 1997, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and the state of Utah agreed in a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in conducting wild and scenic river studies. The National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management also signed an agreement to conduct joint eligibility determinations and suitability recommendations for six small BLM river segments adjacent to and upstream of Zion. The 1996 interagency eligibility criteria and process were used to assess the rivers and streams in Zion and on the six adjacent BLM segments. The Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement includes the eligibility determinations for these rivers and streams, as well as suitability determinations for wild and scenic river designations.

DIXIE RESOURCE AREA, PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (1998)

This plan establishes land use allocations and management guidelines for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered land in the Dixie Resource Area, which indirectly affects much of Zion National Park due to its proximity. The plan primarily focuses on land use prescriptions for BLM lands in Washington County in light of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of rapid urban growth. The plan has a 20-year time frame. Management objectives, decisions, and allocations are presented for such topics as land transfers, transportation, recreation, wilderness, livestock grazing, and fish and wildlife habitat. The Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement is proposing boundary adjustments that would affect several BLM tracts covered by the Dixie Resource Area plan. The National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management also agreed to jointly study the eligibility and suitability for designating several small drainages on BLM lands adjacent to the park as wild and scenic rivers. The findings of this study may affect the Dixie Resource Area Resource Management Plan.

APPENDIX D: DEFINITIONS OF THE MANAGEMENT ZONES

FRONTCOUNTRY HIGH DEVELOPMENT ZONE

This zone would provide visitors with highly structured opportunities to enjoy and learn about the park by means of monitored, primary roads. In essence, visitors would feel as though they were in a pocket of civilization surrounded by the park’s natural beauty. A wide array of visitor services and facilities would be available. The experience would be highly social. Both natural processes and the natural landscape would be highly modified.

Resource Conditions

Natural processes and the landscape would be greatly altered to accommodate visitors and support park operations. Throughout the area, resources may be altered or manipulated—i.e., necessary to restore damaged areas, preserve or maintain cultural resources, or to direct visitor use and minimize human impacts. All alterations, however, should blend in with the surrounding landscape or facilities to the extent possible.

Visitor Experience

Visitors would view the park landscape from the relative comfort of motor vehicles and highly developed facilities. Transportation, lodging, camping, orientation information, and a wide variety of other services would be readily available to help visitors learn about and enjoy the park’s resources. Visitors would feel secure in a developed environment. The visitor experience generally would be highly social with frequent interaction among visitors and between visitors and park staff. Although there may be some opportunity for solitude at certain times of the day, particularly during the off-peak season, encounters with others would be more likely compared to other management zones. Throughout the year, the only limits on numbers of people or on group size that could be encountered, both day and
night, would be due to resource protection concerns or facility design capacities. Visitors would stay overnight in campgrounds or lodges. Because of the close proximity of facilities and services, visitors would not need to have a high degree of self-reliance or outdoor skills. Travel would occur mainly along primary or secondary roads or on walkways connecting facilities.

Management and Scientific Uses

Most management actions would focus on maintaining facilities and providing high quality visitor experiences, with a secondary focus on mitigating impacts from human use. Actions that may be taken to manage visitors include: directing or limiting use via signs, fences, or pathways; educating visitors; and encouraging behaviors that protect resources and maintain visitor safety. Research and resource management activities also would be permitted, with some restrictions. Many types of equipment would be allowed for scientific and management purposes, although how, when, and where they would be used may be restricted. Fee collection would take place in this zone. For both research and administrative purposes, the number of people would be limited if there are resource protection concerns or by the design capacity of the facilities.

Appropriate Kinds of Activities and Development

Visitors could participate in a wide variety of highly structured and facility-dependent recreational activities. These activities would revolve mainly around going to a visitor center, enjoying motorized sightseeing, and camping in a developed campground or staying overnight in a lodge. Other activities could also include walking, bicycling on roads or designated trails, watching wildlife, and viewing selecting cultural sites. The use of nonmotorized watercraft (e.g., kayaks), climbing, and canyoneering would be permitted, although these activities may be restricted or prohibited at certain times and locations. Dogs that are an integral part of the pets may be allowed at designated sites and at designated times. Nonmotorized water activities would be permitted on trails and designated areas. Commercial filming may be permitted provided it is consistent with the desired resource and social conditions described above for the zone. Group activities (e.g., weddings, reunions) may occur with a special use permit. A broad range of formal interpretive, education, and orientation programs, facilities, and information would be provided in this zone. Guided and self-guided activities may also be provided. For example, slide programs, guided walks and tours, live presentations, exhibits, publications, cooperating association sales (e.g., sales of park resource-related interpretive materials), and some nature trails could be found here. Educational programs and workshops could also be accommodated (e.g., Junior Ranger program, Elderhostel, painting and photography workshops). The greatest type of appropriate development would be found in the frontline high development zone. Additionally, the greatest number and highest quality of parks, facilities, and interpretive facilities would be found here. This is the only zone where full-service visitor centers and developed campgrounds (with electricity, sewage dump stations, and showers) could occur. The existing lodge, gift shop, and restaurant would be in this zone. Sprinkler systems, housing, and exterior lighting also would be permitted in this zone. Exterior lighting would be the minimum needed for visitor safety in order to minimize impacts on night sky viewing. Other types of appropriate visitor facilities may include focused visitor facilities, paved or hardened walkways, nature trails and river put-in or take-out sites, restrooms, developed picnic areas, and interpretive facilities. Several other types of developments, including corrals, barns, entrance stations, utility lines, irrigation systems, diversion dams, and other structures associated with park operations and maintenance, may be permitted in this zone. Culturally significant resources, including historic structures, may be used for administrative purposes.

Resource Condition

Natural processes and landscapes would be unaltered, except within or directly adjacent to the limited number of developed sites. In developed areas, natural processes are landscapes may be altered or manipulated when necessary to restore damaged areas, to preserve or maintain cultural resources, or to direct visitor use to avoid resource impacts. All alterations would be designed to blend in with the natural landscape.

Visitor Experience

In this zone visitors would experience the park while in or near their vehicles and with the aid of some services and facilities. Visitors would feel they were part of the natural landscape, while also having the security of knowing other people and facilities are nearby. Sights and sounds of people and some vehicles would be expected. Although there would be few opportunities for solitude and the probability of encountering other people or NPS staff would be moderate, the social experience would be uncrowded. Throughout the year, the only limits on numbers of people or on group size that could be encountered, both day and night, would be due to resource protection concerns or facility design capacities. At night, people could camp in campgrounds, but no lodging would be available. Basic necessities and conveniences would be provided; therefore, visitors would not need a high degree of self-reliance or outdoor skills. Travel generally would be by motor vehicle along secondary roads, or by foot or bicycle on short trails.

Management and Scientific Uses

Management and scientific uses would be the same as described for the frontline high development zone.

Appropriate Kinds of Activities and Development

Most activities would be somewhat structured, with the visitor experience oriented around motorized sightseeing, camping in campgrounds, picnicking, and taking short walks. Non-motorized watercraft use, bicycling on roads or designated trails, climbing, canyoneering, viewing selected cultural sites, nonmotorized winter activities, commercial filming, and group activities generally would be permitted, with some restrictions or prohibitions possible. Day use of saddle stock may be permitted on designated trails and at designated times. A wide range of interpretive, educational, and orientation programs, facilities, and information would be provided, but to a lesser extent than in the frontline high development zone. Unlike in the frontline high development zone, lodging, conferences, food sales, and gift sales would be prohibited. The types of development permitted would be similar to those in the frontline high development zone, but they would be less concentrated and generally more primitive. For example, only secondary roads would be present—roads may be paved, but would be designed to maintain the rural setting, with low traffic volumes and slow speeds. Picnic sites (table) would be limited to a cumulative total of ten sites per zoned area. Campgrounds would not have electricity, sewer dump stations, or showers. Focused visitor facilities may be present to provide visitors with park orientation information or to interpret....
specific park resources. The following types of developments would not be allowed: sprinkler systems, exterior lighting, full-service visitor centers, lodges, gift shops, and restaurants. Existing historical features (e.g., orchard, irrigation ditches) may be maintained. Culturally significant resources, including historical structures, may be used for administrative purposes.

TRANSLATION ZONE

The main purpose of this zone would be to allow visitors to view or directly access many of the park's prime resources by means of nonmotorized, maintained, high-use trails. This would be a day-use zone. Only minimal facilities (e.g., trails) would be present. Visitor use would be concentrated within or near these facilities, leaving the rest of the landscape largely undisturbed and the resources protected.

Resource Conditions

Natural processes would likely be altered to a greater degree than in the primitive and pristine zones, but less so than in the frontcountry high and low development zones. For example, culverts could be constructed to direct the flow of water under a trail, although other types of stream channelization could not occur. (However, channelization could continue in the section of the North Fork of the Virgin River flowing through the main Zion Canyon.) Some parts of the natural landscape may be altered by hardening them or shielding them from impacts (e.g., surfacing trails or campsites, putting in water bars, installing toilets). As in the frontcountry low development zone, natural processes and landscapes may be altered or manipulated in developed areas in the transition zone when necessary to restore damaged areas, to preserve or maintain cultural resources, or to direct visitor use to avoid resource impacts. All alterations would be designed to blend in with the natural landscape.

Visitor Experience

Visitors would have opportunities to view or directly access many of the park's prime resources by means of nonmotorized, maintained, high-use trails. Visitors would have a sense of being in a natural landscape, although during the peak season there would be a low expectation of solitude due to the sights and sounds of other people. The probability of encountering other people and NPS staff would be high, but crowding levels would not keep visitors from reaching desired destinations or viewing outstanding park features. Throughout the year, the only limits on day-use numbers of people or group sizes that could be encountered—would be due to resource protection concerns or facility design capacities. This zone generally would be closer to conveniences and easier to access than the primitive and pristine zones; therefore, visitors would need only a low to moderate degree of self-reliance and basic outdoor skills. Travel generally would be on foot and largely directed via surfaced trails, and other clearly delineated routes over land or water.

Management and Scientific Uses

Management actions would focus on maintaining visitor facilities, mitigating impacts from human use, and providing for quality visitor experiences. In order to avoid resource impacts, actions may be taken to manage visitors, including designating overnight use areas, directing or limiting use via safety rails or chains, fences, and other barriers, and educating and encouraging behaviors that protect resources and maintain visitor safety. Research and resource management activities also would be permitted, with some restrictions. Most types of equipment and small motorized vehicles that do not exceed the trail widths would be allowed. Horses, when, and where equipment would be used for management or scientific purposes may be restrict...
the zones described above. The landscape would be largely undisturbed, with natural processes predominating. However, compared to the pristine zone, access would be easier into this zone, there would be no signs of people, and the area would feel less remote.

Resource Condition
Natural processes and the landscape would be unaltered in the pristine zone, except for a few minimal developments such as primitive trails and designated campsites. Little evidence of recreational impacts would be tolerated. Resources may be altered or manipulated if necessary to restore areas that have been disturbed. Some resources may be altered to preserve mountain cultural resources, but such changes would be kept to the minimum extent possible. A few resources also may be manipulated to direct visitors to avoid resource impacts, but they would be subtle and harmonize with the natural environment (e.g., building native plant barriers).

Visitor Experience
Visitors would have opportunities in the pristine zone to experience Zion's wildlands with utmost assistance. There would be a sense of being immersed in a natural landscape with a moderate sense of solitude. Natural sights and sounds would be almost all that one sees and hears. The probability of encountering other people, and NPS staff would be moderate throughout the year. Generally, a visitor would encounter no more than twelve groups per day. The intermin hike group size limit for day and overnight use would be 12 or fewer individuals. For saddle stock parties, the intermin group size would be a maximum of six saddle stock and six people. Groups of eight people could camp out of sight of others. Because this zone would be farther from conveniences, visitors would need to have a high degree of self-reliance, and more advanced outdoor skills may be necessary (e.g., route-finding or canyoneering ability). However, travel would be largely directed via primitive trails and routes over land and in streams.

Management and Scientific Use
Most of the management actions in this zone would be devoted to protecting resources, minimizing, or avoiding potential impacts from visitors, and restoring disturbed areas. Actions that may be taken to manage visitors include setting group size limits, designating camping sites, restricting off-trail use, and encouraging behaviors that protect resources. Research and resource management activities would be permitted, with some restrictions. For both research and administrative purposes, all groups would be limited to no more than eight people. Motorized equipment and use of aerial transport to access the zone generally would not be permitted, as per the Wilderness Act and NPS policies.

Appropriate Kinds of Activities and Development
With the exception of interpretive activities and bicycling, the same types of nonmotorized visitor activities described in the transition zone could occur in the pristine zone (although there may be different qualifications, restrictions, or prohibitions on visitor activities). Only limited opportunities may be provided for formal guided interpretive walks. No bicycling would be permitted. However, day use of saddle stock would be permitted on designated trails and at designated campsites. Off-trail use of saddle stock would be permitted only in designated areas. Overhead camping with saddle stock would be permitted only at saddle camp sites. There would be very little development, either to support visitors or for management purposes. Narrow, unpaved trails and/or roads would be maintained (paved trails that existed at the time of zoning are an exception to this rule). Some designated campsites and other facilities may be provided for the purpose of protecting resources rather than for the convenience of visitors (e.g., pit toilets and stream crossings, but not bridges). Some developed river put-in and take-out points may be designated to minimize the potential for resource impacts. Informational directional signs also may be provided when deemed necessary for human safety and resource protection; however, interpretive signs would not be present. Some administrative facilities may be maintained if they are needed for park-wide management (e.g., radio repeaters, weather stations, existing water collection devices, river gauges). Culturally significant resources, natural or cultural structures, may be used for administrative purposes.

Pristine Zone
The pristine zone would offer the feeling of being entirely alone in Zion's remote and isolated wildlands. This zone would provide visitors a chance to experience a natural landscape. Use of these areas would be low, and group encounters infrequent.

Resource Condition
Lands in this zone would be managed to perpetuate natural conditions and processes, undisturbed by people. There would be very little tolerance for uses or actions that would disturb or alter resources and natural processes; the only sign that others have used the area may be faint hiking routes and bolts on climbing routes. However, some resources may be altered or manipulated if necessary to restore areas that have been disturbed, or to preserve mountain cultural resources.

Visitor Experience
Visitors would have the sense of being immersed in a totally natural landscape. With virtually no evidence of others passing through this zone, some visitors might feel like they were the first humans to explore this area. Only natural sights and sounds would be seen and heard. There would be a strong sense of isolation and remoteness. The probability of encountering other people or NPS staff would be very low throughout the year. For example, visitors would not usually see other groups either during the day or at night. The intern group size limit would be a maximum of 12 people per group. Because visitors would not find conveniences and other people in this zone, they would need to be entirely self-reliant and possess a high level of outdoor skills—route-finding and canyoneering abilities would be essential.

Management and Scientific Use
Management in the pristine zone would be aimed primarily at protecting park resources, while still ensuring that visitors have a high-quality experience. Minimal administrative use would occur, such as restoration of disturbed areas, search and rescue, and monitoring of endangered species. However, providing the type of desired visitor experience
would require a high degree of management of visitors outside of the zone. For example, visitor levels would need to be tightly managed to ensure that visitor encounters are minimized. If impacts occur due to visitor use, there would be increased management of visitors (e.g., required orientations, use restrictions, temporary closures).

Long-term inventory and monitoring and resource management to mitigate human impacts or preserve cultural resources would occur in this zone. Other types of research may take place if this zone is considered to be the only, or best suitable, area for that research. All research activities would require a project research proposal that would be subject to internal (National Park Service) and external peer reviews.

For both research and administrative purposes, the size of groups and the total number of groups would be the same as described for visitors in this zone. Motorized equipment and the use of aircraft to access the zone generally would not be permitted, as per the Wilderness Act and NPS policy.

Appropriate Activities and Development

Hiking, backpacking, climbing, canoeing/carrying, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and nonmotorized watercraft use would be permitted, with restrictions or prohibitions possible at certain times and locations. Commercial filming may be permitted, provided it is consistent with the desired conditions and intent of the zone. No commercial recreational activities, monitored mechanical uses, or saddle stock would be permitted in order to minimize impacts to other visitors and the resources. Interpretive and educational services also would not be provided in the pristine zone.

No visitor developments generally would be present, including campsites, signs, or maintained river put-in/take-out. However, routes and paths may be defined and maintained if necessary to prevent resource damage. Limited hiking routes and climbing bolts would be permitted. Administrative developments generally would not be permitted, with the possible exception of existing radio repeaters that are essential for parkwide management. Culturally significant resources, including historic structures, may be maintained but would not be used for administrative or other purposes.

RESEARCH NATURAL AREA (RNA)

This zone applies the intent of the national network of "research natural areas," which are field ecological areas designated primarily for research and education and to maintain biological diversity. Research natural area zones would be applied in areas with little to no human disturbance. Baseline inventory and long-term ecological observations would be emphasized in this zone, with the primary purpose of creating an ecological environmental benchmark over time. This zone would not be open to recreational use, but may be open to educational uses.

Resource Condition

This zone is located in areas that are prime examples of natural ecosystems and areas with significant genetic resources with value for long-term baseline observational studies or as control areas. The areas would exhibit little evidence of human disturbance, although they would be relatively accessible with the exception of the isolated mesa tops). Limited manipulations may be allowed, provided the intent is to restore the area to more natural conditions (such as when using prescribed fire), or to preserve significant cultural resources (such as when conducting archeological research).

Visitor Experience

Any areas included in this designation would be closed to all recreational uses. Educational trips may be authorized under established RNA guidelines, subject to justification, documentation, and internal review.

Management and Scientific Uses

All management and scientific uses in research natural areas would require a project research proposal that would be subject to internal (National Park Service) and external peer review. Long-term inventory and monitoring, and resource management to mitigate human impacts or preserve cultural resources would occur. Other types of research, sampling, or collection may occur if it is considered to be the only, or best suitable, area for accomplishing the research objectives. Limited administrative uses (e.g., search and rescue) would be permitted, but would be infrequent and last only a short time. For both research and administrative activities, the interim limit would be 12 or fewer individuals. The total number of groups would be established in the carrying capacity studies and the wilderness management planning process. Motorized equipment and the use of aircraft to access the zone generally would not be permitted, as per the Wilderness Act and NPS policies.

Appropriate Kinds of Activities and Development

Although this zone would be closed to general public use, some interpretation of the areas may occur outside of the zone, such as explaining the benefits and use of benchmark environmental monitoring sites as land management tools. Camping and trail construction would not be allowed, except to provide essential access to established research facilities. Temporary research equipment (e.g., stream gauging stations, meteorological equipment) would be permitted if there is no practical alternative for achieving research goals, and where consistent with the wilderness management plan, the Wilderness Act, and other park documents (e.g., the "Resource Management Plan").

ADMINISTRATION ZONE

The primary purpose of this zone would be to support the management and administration of the park. General visitation would not occur, although some visitors may access these facilities areas to obtain staff assistance or to solve a problem. The level of facility development and concentration would vary as needed to provide for park operations, the degree of modification of natural processes and landscapes also would vary.

Resource Condition

Natural processes and the landscape would be altered to support park operations; the degree of alteration would be dependent on need. Resources may be altered or manipulated whenever necessary to restore damaged areas, to preserve cultural resources, or to direct use in order to avoid resource impacts. However, all alterations should blend in visually with the surrounding landscape or facilities to the extent possible.
Visitor Experience

General public visitation would not be encouraged, because this zone would be intended to serve primarily administrative functions. However, some visitors may have access to obtain staff assistance or to solve a problem.

Management and Scientific Uses

Most management activities would be devoted to maintaining park facilities and for park operations. Research and resource management activities would be permitted with some restrictions. Most types of equipment would be allowed for scientific and management purposes, although how, when, and where the equipment is used may be restricted. For both research and administrative purposes, the number of people would be limited if there are resource protection concerns or by the physical capacity of the facilities.

Appropriate Kinds of Activities and Development

Because the public would seldom be in this zone, there would be no interpretive, educational, or orientation facilities or services; however, orientation information, such as signs, may be present to direct visitors where to go for assistance. The type, level, and concentration of administrative facilities would depend on the requirements for park operations, and generally would be the same as in the frontcountry high development zone.

APPENDIX E: DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Work on the General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (plan/EIS) began in the spring of 1996. The planning team consisted of park staff and interdisciplin ary specialists from the Denver Service Center (the planning, design, and construction center for the National Park Service) and the Harpers Ferry Interpretive Design Center. The planning team used the visitor experience and resource protection (carrying capacity) framework in developing the Zion plan/EIS.

The first step in the planning process was to identify the purposes of the plan and mandates and constraints for planning, and to scope the issues and concerns that needed to be addressed in the plan.

The next major step was to develop a range of reasonable alternatives for managing the park and to identify a preferred alternative for the park. The planning team went through an iterative process in developing the draft alternatives. First, the planning team gathered and analyzed information on existing visitor use and park resources, and identified key issues facing the park. With this information, the team developed an initial range of alternatives for managing the park's visitors and natural and cultural resources. The alternatives were then compared in terms of how well they achieved several criteria. Using this comparison as a starting point, the team developed a preferred alternative, which reflected the preferred vision for managing the park over the next 20 years. At this point, the team also narrowed the range of alternatives, and revised the remaining alternatives. Throughout the process, newsletters were distributed to share information and to solicit the views and concerns of interested citizens.

ANALYZING EXISTING VISITOR USE AND PARK RESOURCES

To better understand the park and the issues facing it, as well as to understand the options available for resolving the issues, the planning team first analyzed visitor use and resource data. Visitor use statistics such as trends in lodge and campground use, backcountry camping, and vehicle traffic were gathered and studied. The planning team also estimated day and overnight visitor use levels and distributions in the park based on earlier studies, professional judgment, and data from the existing overnight permit system. Areas where visitors or park staff have noted problems in the past were discussed, as were the probable underlying causes of these problems.

At the same time, natural and cultural resources were evaluated. A computerized geographic information system (GIS) was used to store, display, manipulate and analyze spatial resource data. The sensitivity and value analyses described below incorporated GIS data sets of six cultural and twelve natural resources. The resources are listed below:

Natural Resources

- Bodies of water (ponds, lakes)
- Microbiotic soils
- Streams (rivers, creeks, drainages)
- Soils
- Vegetation types (riparian, mixed coniferous forest, mountain shrub, pithon-juniper, desert scrub, hanging gardens, rock crevice)
- Rare plants
- Virgin River spinedace
- Southwest willow flycatcher
- Desert tortoise
- Bighorn sheep
- Zion snail
- Mexican spotted owl

Cultural Resources

- Anasazi structural features
- Pueblo artifacts
- Lithic scatters
- Rock art
- Pioneer
- Historic National Park Service

Many of the GIS resource; layers used in the analyses were created from existing inventories, in-
The next step was to identify preliminary alternative concepts for management of the park. The concepts form the core of the management alternatives for Zion. They describe possible directions for the future of the park and guide how the management zones would be applied “on the ground” in the park. The planning team identified five preliminary alternative concepts.

The seven management zones and five preliminary alternative concepts were presented for public review and comment in a newsletter.

After receiving the public’s comments, the team revised the management zones and added a new “semiprimitive” zone; the preliminary concepts were redeveloped. The park staff then placed the zones in the park in different ways to reflect the five preliminary concepts. For each management concept, the team also developed a list of actions that would be taken to implement the zoning scheme. The end result of this work was the creation of five draft management alternatives:

- Alternative A provided additional opportunities for use and access
- Alternative B concentrated use in the park
- Alternative C reduced use while still providing for a diversity of visitor experiences
- Alternative D emphasized resource protection
- Alternative E called for minimal changes to park conditions as they were in 1997

All of the draft management alternatives supported the park’s purposes and significance, addressed the identified issues, and responded to public desires and concerns; however, each alternative differed in the compromises or tradeoffs made between preserving resources and accommodating visitor use.

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Park Service also developed a sixth no-action alternative. This alternative reflected how the park is currently managed and would be managed in the future if no changes occurred. It also provided a basis for comparing the other alternatives.

The five draft-management alternatives (the “action” alternatives), and the no-action alternative were described in an alternatives workbook. Public comments, concerns, and ideas were then sought on the alternatives.

DEVELOPING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The next major task in the planning process was developing a preferred alternative—the NPS preferred approach for managing the park over the next 20 years. In order to develop a preliminary preferred alternative, the five draft alternatives that had been reviewed by the public were evaluated using an objective analysis process called “Choosing By Advantages” (CBA). This process evaluates different choices (in this case the five preliminary action alternatives) by ranking and comparing the relative advantages of each according to a set of goals and relevant facts.

Only the zoning schemes presented under each of the five management alternatives were considered in Zion’s CBA evaluation, not the specific implementation actions. This is because the zoning schemes describe the desired future conditions for the entire park (the level of visitor use, resource conditions, management activities, etc.) and are expected to remain the same over the life of the plan. The implementation actions, on the other hand, describe how the park staff could meet the desired conditions. These actions could change in the future with the advent of new information and technology.

The first step in the CBA process was to develop the criteria that would be used to compare the alternatives. The criteria were based on park purposes and significance, laws and policies, and the criteria and comments commonly expressed by the public and park staff about the draft management alternatives. The team identified five criteria by which to evaluate the alternatives. The criteria were:

- preserved and protected natural resources and features
- preserved and protected historic buildings, structures, and features
- preserved and protected known archeological sites
- provided for wilderness values and conditions
provided for visitor enjoyment and education through a wide range of appropriate visitor opportunities and facilitated visitor access to the park.

For each criterion, the team identified the advantages of an alternative based on the specific characteristics or consequences of that alternative ("relevant facts"). Each advantage was given a point value that reflected its importance when compared to the advantages of the other alternatives. By adding up the advantage scores for each alternative, the team was able to determine how the alternatives compared overall.

After completing the CBA scoring for all five draft alternatives, alternatives D and E had the highest total advantage ratings. Alternative E rated lower than D for the goals related to visitor archeological resources and natural resources. The team concluded that alternative D was the closest to the direction a preferred alternative should take; however, alternative D rated relatively low for the goals related to visitor enjoyment and education, wilderness, and historic resources. Therefore, the team developed a new alternative—the preferred alternative. This alternative was similar to alternative D but better provided for visitor enjoyment, improved wilderness conditions and values, and better protected historic resources.

NARROWING THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES AND REVISING THE REMAINING ALTERNATIVES

In addition to identifying the preferred alternative, the planning team used "Choosing By Advantages" and other information to narrow the range of alternatives. After analyzing the advantages of the alternatives relative to each other for achieving park purposes and NPS policies (i.e., preserving and protecting cultural and natural resources, providing for visitor enjoyment and education, providing for wilderness values), the advantages of alternatives B and C were determined to be the same as or better in at least one of the other action alternatives. Neither alternative B or C had the greatest advantage compared to the other alternatives. (Alternative C was the least favored of all the alternatives.) In addition, neither of these alternatives was highly favored by the public based on the responses to the alternatives workbook. The planning team also was able to include those elements in alternatives B and C with high advantages in the other action alternatives.

Based on further analysis, the planning team also discarded alternative E. Alternative E was dropped because it was almost identical with the preferred alternative—there were very few differences in the management directions and zoning schemes that distinguished the two alternatives.

The planning team ended up with four alternatives for managing Zion National Park:

- the National Park Service's preferred alternative
- alternative A, which provides additional opportunities for use and access
- alternative D (renamed alternative B in this document), which emphasizes resource protection
- no-action alternative

Revisions to the Range of Zones and the Alternative Zoning Allocations

After analyzing the alternatives using the CBA process, the planning team revised the original range of zones. The semiprimitive management zone was dropped because the zone did not differ significantly from the primitive management zone other than for use levels. All areas where the semiprimitive zone was applied under each alternative were rezoned as primitive.

The planning team initially had decided to eliminate the existing administratively designated research natural areas in the park, which were set aside to protect the ecological integrity of areas for research purposes. However, after further consideration, the team decided to retain this designation. The team consequently developed a new zone that reflects National Park Service direction on the management of research natural areas. This zone, appropriately enough, is called the research natural area zone. The former resource reserve zone was replaced by this new zone.

With the elimination of alternatives B, C, and E, some of the distinctions between low key areas of the park were dropped and could have been lost. To avoid this, the planning team made several changes to zoning schemes (i.e., how the zones were allocated on the ground) for alternatives A and D.

Revisions to the Implementation Actions Component of the Remaining Alternatives

After completing the CBA analysis, the planning team also reviewed the implementation actions that had been described for each alternative in the October 1997 alternatives workbook. The team felt these actions should be better linked to how various areas of the park were zoned under each alternative (i.e., the desired conditions). Therefore, the key actions listed in the workbook were replaced with a description of needed or allowable actions related to how specific areas of the park were zoned (i.e., "zone-specific management strategies"). The planning team felt this information would give the public a more tangible sense of what the zoning alternatives could mean on the ground, an idea of the magnitude of the changes proposed under each alternative, and allow a more meaningful comparison of the alternatives.

General management strategies were also developed to provide more guidance about how

visitors, resources, and facilities would be managed parkwide.

COMPLETION OF THE FINAL PLAN

After the public review period ended on the draft plan, the planning team reviewed and analyzed all the oral and written public comments it received on the draft. Changes were made in the draft to clarify points, correct errors and omissions, and provide the rationale for decisions. A number of changes were also made to the management zones and to all the alternatives (e.g., treatment of the recommended wilderness area). The preferred alternative was revised in several places to address the concerns of the planning team and the public; for example, management of Pansorweap Canyon. (Please see the "Consultation and Coordination (chapter for a list of the major changes made to the draft plan.)

The Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement includes the revised four management alternatives, an analysis of their environmental consequences, agency and organizations' comments on the draft plan, and the National Park Service's responses to those comments.
INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the National Park Service's (NPS) study of potential wild and scenic rivers in Zion National Park. The purpose of this study is to determine whether any of these rivers should be recommended for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system.

Seven rivers—each including the main stem and major tributaries—were evaluated within the park. These rivers constitute all of the park's major waterways. As per a 1996 Memorandum of Understanding between the NPS and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), this study also evaluated six short stream segments outside of national park boundaries on lands administered by the BLM. Total river mileage of the six BLM segments is 2.3 miles (see table F-3). These river segments are upstream of and contiguous with the park rivers, and were evaluated along with park rivers in the interest of efficiency and holistic resource management. Wild and scenic river determinations for the BLM segments will constitute a land use plan amendment to the Dixie Resource Area Resource Management Plan (1998).

The rivers evaluated were:
- North Fork of the Virgin above and below the Temple of Sinawava
- East Fork Virgin River
- Coal Pits Wash
- North Creek
- La Verkin Creek
- Taylor Creek
- Camp Creek

The North Fork of the Virgin River was evaluated in two segments because the character of the river area changes significantly at the Temple of Sinawava.

Five of the seven rivers (and their tributaries) were found eligible and suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System: the North Fork Virgin River above and below the Temple of Sinawava, the East Fork Virgin River, North Creek, La Verkin Creek, and Taylor Creek.

AUTHORITIES


STUDY PROCESS

All rivers in the park were evaluated. Each river study corridor included the channels of main stem and major tributaries and to adjacent lands one-quarter mile from each river bank.

The wild and scenic river study process is composed of three steps:
- determine if rivers are eligible as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
- determine the appropriate classification of eligible rivers
- determine whether the eligible segments would make suitable additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System

Eligibility

The process used to conduct the eligibility assessment is described in “Wild and Scenic River Review in the State of Utah: Process and Criteria for Interagency Use,” July 1996. The process was developed as a collaborative effort between the

National Park Service
Bureau of Land Management (Cooperating Agency)
National Park Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. The intent is "to provide a uniform methodology to be used by the three agencies to obtain consistent results in wild and scenic eligibility assessments made during planning efforts in the state of Utah." To be eligible for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system, a study segment must be free-flowing and the stream corridor must exhibit at least one "outstandingly remarkable" resource value. "Free-flowing" means existing in a largely natural condition without major impoundments, diversions, or other modifications of the waterway. There are no specific requirements concerning minimum flow for eligible segments. Flows are considered sufficient for eligibility if they sustain or complement the outstandingly remarkable values for which the segment would be designated. Rivers with intermittent flows have been included in the national system. Outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) are scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values that are judged to be regionally significant—those that stand out as among the best on a regional basis. All resources assessed should be directly river-related, or owe their location or existence to the river. Features that are exemplary (outstanding examples of common types), or as those that are rare or unique, should be considered. Regional significance was determined within the context of expressly delineated geographic regions specific to each resource being evaluated (see the maps in exhibit 1). A team of 18 subject matter experts from the public and private sectors was assembled for the task of rating the resource values of each river (see exhibit 2). Criteria were developed to assist in the evaluation of each resource (see exhibit 3). These criteria were rated as follows: 3 = value is one of the most significant in the region 2 = value is typical in the region 1 = value is less significant than most in the region 0 = value is nonexistent Once all rivers were rated, two methods were used to determine regional significance: • For each river resource, rating scores for all the criteria were added and averaged as a whole. A total score of 2.5 and higher indicated an outstandingly remarkable resource value. • For each river resource, rating scores for each criterion were added, averaged, and rounded to the nearest whole number. Resources that scored a 3 on a majority of the criteria were considered outstandingly remarkable. The results of these two methods were identical. These results were then inspected to ensure the numerical findings made intuitive sense. Classification Four factors are evaluated in classifying eligible rivers: water resources development, shoal development, accessibility, and water quality. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act specifies three categories of classification: • Wild river areas are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with no watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America. • Scenic river areas are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. • Recreational river areas are readily accessible by road or railroad, may have some development along their shorelines, and may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. Suitability The suitability phase of the study evaluates whether designation as a national wild and scenic river would be the best way to manage eligible rivers. Suitability considerations include the environmental and economic consequences of designation and the manageability of the river if designated. Appendix F: Wild and Scenic River Evaluation

INTERIM MANAGEMENT
NPS management of stream segments in the park found to be eligible and suitable is sufficient to protect their eligibility, classification, and suitability, pending action on wild and scenic river designation, from any threats that might conceivably originate within the park.

River segments under BLM management that are found to be eligible and suitable will continue to be protected under the authority of section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) until this land use plan amendment to the Dixie Area Resource Area Resource Management Plan is finalized. At that time, allocative decisions for protection of suitable segments will supersede earlier decisions made in the Dixie Resource Area Resource Management Plan.

CORRIDOR RESOURCES

Park Setting
Located on the western extremity of the Colorado Plateau Province in southwestern Utah and encompassing the southern and western perimeter of the Kolob Terrace (a southern extension of the Markagunt Plateau), Zion National Park exhibits outstanding exposures of Permian through Cretaceous rocks. Due to the downcutting of the Virgin River, Zion Canyon provides an outstanding display of Triassic and Jurassic sediments, the most spectacular of which is the 2,000-foot thick exposure of Navajo sandstone.

Characterized by high plateaus, a maze of narrow canyons, and striking rock towers and mesas, elevations range from 3,700 feet in Zion's southwestern corner to 8,726 feet (Horse Ranch Mountain) in the northern end of the park. This variation in elevation, combined with myriad springs, streams, and intermittent and permanent water sources, has produced a complex and diverse system of flora and fauna.

To this rich environment were drawn prehistoric cultures, most prominently members of the ancestral pueblo people. Earlier Archaic settlement has been suggested by the presence of isolated artifacts. The Southern Paiutes also occupied the area and were in residence when the first European Americans reached southern Utah. Evidence of early Mormon settlement, Depression-era construction projects, and other historically significant structures occur throughout the park.

General Resource Significance
Zion National Park's significance statements describe the importance or distinctiveness of the aggregate of resources in the park:

• The towering, brilliantly colored sandstone cliffs of Zion provide intimate and awe-inspiring scenic and emotional experiences found nowhere else.

• Zion National Park contains one of the last mostly free-flowing river systems contributing to a major canyon formation and riparian community of the Colorado Plateau.

• The numerous narrow and complex canyon systems, in close proximity with sheer cliffs and widely variable topography, create a variety of microhabitats supporting a diversity of sensitive life forms and species adaptations.

• Alcoves, hanging gardens, and grooves nourished by ground water, support unique plants and animal communities, including endemic species.

• The geologic formations, representing several epochs in the formation of the Colorado Plateau's "Grand Staircase," provides unique educational insights.

• Near pristine archeological evidence of the ancestral pueblo people (Virgin Anasazi) culture is present. Well-preserved sites provide valuable scientific information of local and regional levels.

Water Resources
Water is a key resource in Zion, shaping the landscape and affecting plants, animals, and visitor use. Nearby communities and landowners also rely on the water that flows into and out of the park. Zion's water resources are currently in a relatively natural condition, and consist of perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams, natural lakes, springs, seeps, wetlands, and tinajas (i.e., sand-
These canyons and their rivers are a chief attraction for park visitors, who marvel at the vertical canyon walls that, in some places, rise upward 1,500 feet from the canyon floor. The canyons are especially popular in the hot summer months when people seek shelter from the high temperatures and glaring sunshine.

Wildlife
Five animals on the federal threatened and endangered list are found within the park: American peregrine falcon, bald eagle, Mexican spotted owl, southwestern willow flycatcher, and the desert tortoise.

Other wildlife species that may depend on canyon or riverine environments include desert bighorn sheep, mountain lions, mule deer, bats, and round breeding bird population (with approximately 75 percent of the Neotropical migrant bird species occurring in riparian habitats). 26-confirmed species of reptiles, and six confirmed species of amphibians.

Several invertebrate groups in Zion have been studied to varying degrees, and species lists have been developed. Twenty-six species of snails are now listed within the park, but the only species studied in depth is the Zion snail, an endemic found only in upper Zion Canyon. Information on aquatic invertebrates is helpful in assessing water quality.

Fish
Eight fish species are present in the park, including three nonnative species of trout. Despite this, the native fish communities are relatively intact and include suitable habitat for two species (Virgin spinhead and the flannelmouth sucker) whose abundance has declined rapidly in recent years due to habitat alteration throughout much of their ranges.

The Virgin spinhead, abundant in the Virgin River 150 years ago as recently as 20 years ago, is now in danger of disappearing, and was proposed for listing as a threatened species in 1993. In lieu of listing, a conservation agreement was prepared, in 1993 between numerous federal, state, and local agencies, including Zion National Park. This agreement identifies steps required and responsible parties, to assure adequate habitat and survival of the spinhead. Within the park, currently the spinhead are found most abundantly in the East Fork Virgin River and Shunes Creek, with smaller populations occurring in the North Fork Virgin River and North Creek.

Ecology/Vegetation
Zion National Park is situated near the western margin of the Colorado Plateau, where its waters drain into the Mohave Desert, via the Virgin River. The Great Basin is immediately adjacent to the northwest of the Kolob portion of the park. The park's lowest elevation is Cool Pits Wash at about 3,800 feet, and the highest elevation is the summit of Horse Ranch Mountain at 9,826 feet. This 5,000-foot range in elevation supports vegetative communities from the Colorado Plateau, Mohave desert, and the Great Basin.

Riparian and aquatic vegetation comprise an important segment of the park's vegetation. These riparian areas support the richest flora and avian fauna in the park. Zion's riparian areas have been studied to identify prevalent species and management of these species (Harper, Sanderson, and McArthur 1988). More than 25 known rare or endemic plants occur in the park.

Fremont cottonwood, velvet ash, and other water loving trees and shrubs grow along the rivers and streams and around seeps and springs. Wet sandstone walls found in many of the canyons support peculiar plant communities called hanging gardens. The gardens support maidenhair fern, Zion shooting star, Cardinal monkeyflower, yellow and red columbine, Zion daisy, and other water loving plants.

Cultural/Historical
Zion National Park has a variety of cultural resources from a wide range of time periods. Prehistoric occupations began several thousand years ago and continued up to the eighteenth century. These occupations included the people of the Archaic, Basket Maker and Ancestral Pueblo, and Southern Paiute cultures. Most of the historic remains in the park belong to the ancestral pueblo (also known as the Virgin Anasazi) culture.

In historic time, the Mormon Church's colonization efforts dominated the region. Settlements of this period are located on the margins of the park, with remnants scattered throughout the park. When Mukuntuweap (Zion) National Monument was established in 1909, many of the pioneer families were still farming small irrigated plots of land. Later, activities relating to the establishment, development, and expansion of the park dominated the area.

Historic trails, tunnels, roads, bridges, and buildings in the park are products of the "NPS-Rustic" style of landscape and architecture. The Rustic style dominated National Park Service construction throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Excellent examples of this architectural style can be seen along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, the Grotto picnic area, the NPS maintenance yard, and in the Oak Creek and Pine Creek residential areas.

The early 1950s mark the close of the historic period, as younger resources do not meet the 50-year cut-off established by the National Register of Historic Places. However, management actions continue to create cultural change, and significant resources will continue to be added to the National Register as appropriate.

Scenery
Due to its diverse landscape and topography, Zion National Park provides opportunities for a wide variety of scenic views. Looking down into some of the canyons from above provides excellent views of sharply incised canyons with panoramic vistas looming in the background. Views from within the canyons are on a much more intimate scale, with canyon walls sometimes as narrow as 2 feet, with vertical relief up to 1,500 feet. Lush hanging gardens and splendid displays of wildflowers often cling to canyon walls, creating a unique combination of colors and textures. Rock art and archaeological sites can sometimes be viewed from within or above the canyons.

In several areas of the park, there are varying combinations of sedimentary rock and igneous...
rock from volcanic periods, creating interesting color, shape, and texture associations. Throughout much of the park, towering red sandstone canyon walls mark a sharp contrast to the flowing rivers that created them. Many named features such as the Great White Throne, Angel’s Landing, and the Temple of Sinawava, attract special interest and provide excellent opportunities for photography.

Recreation

Recreation visitation to Zion National Park has increased steadily since designation, and now averages 2.5 million people per year. Many people visit the park as part of the circle tour of the southwest. Visitor surveys indicate that Zion canyon receives the heaviest use, followed by the east side of the park along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway and Kolob Canyons to the north. The primary activities sought by visitors in these areas are sightseeing, picnicking, hiking, photography, swimming/wading, camping, and concessioner horseback riding tours.

Backcountry use has increased dramatically since the mid-1980s. Several areas in the park now have designated campsites, and an annual monitoring program tracks site conditions. Within the Narrows and the Left Fork of North Creek, restrictions on the number of through-day-hikers have been implemented. During the warm months (May-September), visitors tend to congregate in the water-filled canyons, particularly the North Fork of the Virgin River, the Left and Right Forks of North Creek, Middle Fork Taylor Creek, and La Verkin Creek.

Canyoneering is the fastest-growing activity in the backcountry, and the impacts on the resources and the hiker experience have increased accordingly.

ELIGIBILITY

Five rivers were found eligible for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system: the North Fork Virgin River above and below the Temple of Sinawava, the East Fork Virgin River, North Creek, La Verkin Creek, and Taylor Creek. The segments of the North and East Forks, Taylor Creek, and La Verkin Creek on adjacent BLM lands were all found eligible, except for the upstream 1.7 mile portion of Shunes Creek (tributary to the East Fork), from the Kane County line to the dry waterfall. These rivers were found to be free-flowing, and exhibited at least one outstandingly remarkable resource value. Coal Pits Wash and Camp Creek are ineligible because they lack outstandingly remarkable resources.

Table F-1 illustrates the results of the rating process. Values of "3" indicate outstandingly remarkable resources. Following the table, the outstandingly remarkable resource values are listed for each eligible river, along with the criteria for which the resource values were judged to be regionally significant. Comments provided by subject matter experts are included to provide some insight into the thought process of members of the rating team.

Determinations of outstandingly remarkable values pertain to each river as a whole. There may be reaches of main stem and tributaries that exhibit the value to a lesser extent.

North Fork of the Virgin River above the Temple of Sinawava

Geology. Value is one of the most significant in the region for geologic/hydrologic feature abundance, diversity of features, and educational/scientific value.

- This section of river has spectacular exposures of the Navajo sandstone. Though excellent Navajo exposures are common, there are few if any other locations where the entire thickness of the formation is exposed in an almost vertical cut with 100 percent exposures. The erosional features associated with the unusually rapid downcutting of the Virgin River are also spectacular. There are also excellent examples of joint-controlled erosion.

Recreation

[The geology value in this segment is the] "best in the world."

Ecology/Geology. Value is one of the most significant in the region for species diversity, riparian habitat quality, ecological function, rare communities, and educational/scientific value.

- One of the most significant examples of an inverted valley in existence. It harbors a phalanx of plants more typical of higher elevations [along with] an absence of livestock and associated impacts.

- [It contains] "rare hanging gardens and other unique vegetation."

- "Natural processes are largely unimpeded."

Scenic. Value is one of the most significant in the region for diversity of view and special features.

- "Canyon walls are up to 1,500 feet high, with a width of less than 25' in some areas. Rich red sandstone walls and dark desert varnish contribute to color and texture variety. Big Springs is one of the most spectacular hanging gardens anywhere, and provides a very interesting visual combination and contrast of lush greenery and abundant wildflowers in a narrow sandstone canyon. This is one of the most popular hikes in the park, as well as the region, for its outstanding scenic qualities."

- "Great contrast in soil, rock, and vegetation from the top to the Temple — from ponderosa and pinyon to cottonwoods and willows, and from high plateaus with wide vistas to a deep, narrow canyon. The Narrows itself is memorable and rare for its visual qualities—in particular, the play of light and shadow on the walls, a feature enhanced by the echoing sounds of cascading water in the narrow gorge. Here, probably more than in any other section, water dominates the physical characteristics and shapes the experience a hiker has."

North Fork of the Virgin River Below the Temple

NOTE: The North Fork’s main stem channel exhibits the greatest modification of any reach in the park. Structures include a mile of gabion basket armoring on the east riverbank, as well as smaller areas of riprap, two grade control structures, and a concrete retaining wall at the site of a recent landslide. However, in the context of the entire 10-mile main stem reach, these modifications are minor. The river still flows in a largely natural condition, and therefore meets the definition of “free-flowing” as a requirement for eligibility.

Geology. Value is one of the most significant in the region for geologic/hydrologic feature abundance, diversity of features, and educational/scientific value.

- The geologic value lies in the number and variety of geologic features that are very well

Appendix:

Wild and Scenic River Evaluation

Appendices

Table F-1: Resource Value Ratings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Cultural/ Historic</th>
<th>Geology</th>
<th>Wildlife</th>
<th>Fish</th>
<th>Ecology/ Vegetation</th>
<th>Recreation</th>
<th>Scenery</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Fork above Temple</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Fork below Temple</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Fork Virgin River</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Pits Wash</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Creek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Verkin Creek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Creek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Camp Creek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating Legend:
- 3 = value is most significant in the region
- 2 = value is significant in the region
- 1 = value is less significant than most in the region
- 0 = value is non-existent

[409]

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[410]

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exposed in a relatively small geographic area. These include: near 160 percent exposures of the Moenave, Kayenta, Navajo, Temple Cap, and part of the Carmel Formations; three-dimensional views of some of these units due to the side canyons which allow better study of depositional and facies relationships; very visual examples of the variation in the erosional characteristics of units ranging from massive sandstone to clayey shales; excellent examples of landslides and rockfalls caused by undercutting incompetent units combined with oversteepening by a rapidly downstream river—the landslide and associated lake deposits just above the junction are probably the best exposed and most easily visualized example of this type of feature anywhere in the area. They are a favorite of geologists and geology students.

- [The geologic value of this section is the] "best in the world."

Wildlife. Value is one of the most significant in the region for species diversity, species abundance, natural reproduction, and wildlife viewing.

- [There are] "unbroken stands of mature cottonwood (and) crucial nesting habitat for peregrine falcons and Mexican spotted owls."

- "Wildlife diversity and abundance are high through this segment.

Fish. Value is one of the most significant in the region for habitat quality, species diversity, natural reproduction, and species abundance.

- "The fish community is in excellent condition. The segment harbors more abundant fish populations than are found elsewhere."

- "Has abundance and good distribution of pools, runs, and riffles. Still a fair amount of shading by vegetation and bank overhangs."

- Species diversity and abundance is high—four native species (spinedace, speckled dace, desert sucker, and flannelmouth sucker) are the most common.

- "Annual fish shocking numbers are good, and research shows good numbers in the appropriate habitat types."

- "Natural reproduction is high, as all four species are reproducing in great numbers."

- "Numerous small size fish are found during shocking, and it is difficult to avoid netting of Juveniles."

East Fork of the Virgin River

Cultural/Historical. Value is one of the most significant in the region for cultural/historical significance, site integrity, data potential, educational/interpretative values, and is formally designated a National Register Archeological District.

- The river has a "good concentration of substantial ancestral pueblo sites under NPS protection" and "numerous sites with intact subsurface deposits, outstanding educational and interpretive opportunities, and an outstanding volume of data."

Wildlife. Value is one of the most significant in the region for habitat quality, species diversity, natural reproduction, and wildlife viewing.

- This river includes "important habitat for a variety of wildlife, including peregrine falcons and willow flycatchers. Species diversity and abundance are high throughout this segment."

- "Wildlife viewing potential is best in the region—opportunities to see at least 15 species of birds, four to five species of lizards, mountain lions, peregrine falcons, golden eagles, and bighorn sheep."

Fish. Value is one of the most significant in the region for habitat quality, species diversity, natural reproduction, and species abundance.

- "The fish community is in excellent condition. The segment harbors more abundant fish populations than are found elsewhere."

- "Has abundance and good distribution of pools, runs, and riffles. Still a fair amount of shading by vegetation and bank overhangs."

- Species diversity and abundance is high—four native species (spinedace, speckled dace, desert sucker, and flannelmouth sucker) are the most common.

- "Annual fish shocking numbers are good, and research shows good numbers in the appropriate habitat types."

- "Good amount of shading due to vegetation. Vegetation is still reproducing naturally, with lots of diversity of habitat types."

- "All four native species are present in tremendous abundance."

- "Annual fall monitoring results show this river to have the highest abundance in the region, as well as having some of the highest numbers of juvenile fish (natural reproduction)."

Ecology/Vegetation. Value is one of the most significant in the region for species diversity, riparian habitat quality, ecological function, and educational/scientific value.

- Within the park, this river has an "absence of livestock and associated impacts."

- "Rare hanging gardens, and other unique vegetation."

- This river segment contains at least two rare plant populations. It is the best example of native riparian vegetation and processes in the park.

Recreational. Value is one of the most significant in the region for recreational diversity, experience quality, and social setting.

- This river is "historical, with river snakes (meanders), habitats, hanging gardens, and boulder faces."

- "The length of season for recreational opportunities in this canyon is higher than most in the region due to its low elevation. Additionally, this canyon offers a diversity of recreational opportunities, from moderate canoeing to easy hiking in flat terrain."

- "This river provides an opportunity for a very unique experience, in that it/haven opened to recreational use, it could be strictly limited to provide the highest degree of resource protection and visitor solitude."

Scenic. Value is one of the most significant in the region for diversity of view and special features.

- "The Left Fork is particularly diverse in scenic views, beginning at the initial descent across spectacular crossbedding (variations in color and texture), down Russell Gulch into the "Left Fork of North Creek." Clear, deep potholes, the characteristic "swab" curvature of the canyon walls and the slot "subway tracks" are very unique in the region."

- "Hanging gardens in the Right Fork are richly diverse and complex. The slot canyons.
coupled with the wide canyon vistas in the first and last sections of the canyon, make this area extremely diverse."

- "The upper section is particularly worthy of above average regional significance. High relief and surface variations meld well with the contrast in soils, rock, vegetation, and cascading water."

La Verkin Creek

Geology. *Value is one of the most significant in the region for geologic/hydrologic feature abundance, diversity of features, and educational/scientific value.*

Taylor Creek

Geology. *Value is one of the most significant in the region for geologic/hydrologic feature abundance and educational/scientific value.*

CLASSIFICATION

Proposed classifications for the six rivers are listed in table F-2. Tributaries are listed beneath main stems.

SUITABILITY

All five eligible rivers, including the eligible portions of the six BLM segments, were found suitable for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system.

Characteristics That Do or Do Not Make the Area a Worthy Addition

The rivers of Zion National Park exhibit numerous narrow and complex canyon systems in close proximity with sheer cliffs and widely variable topography, creating a variety of microhabitats supporting a diversity of life forms. Cultural resources from a wide range of time periods are present, and the river corridors provide a valuable recreational resource.

Each of the five eligible rivers has at least one exceptional natural, cultural, or recreational resource value, and most of the rivers have several of these values. As of yet, this region of the country, with its dramatic desert and canyon rivers, is very poorly represented in the national system. Hence, these rivers would make a valuable addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system.

Landownership

Ninety-seven percent of the river corridors found suitable are federally owned, including all of the East Fork Virgin River and both segments of the North Fork of the Virgin River (table F-3). Seven percent of La Verkin Creek, Four percent of North Creek, and one percent of Taylor Creek are private inholdings, totaling about four river miles. There are no private inholdings along the BLM segments.

Current Uses

The primary uses of Zion's river canyons are recreational. In the backcountry, (where the majority of the study river mileage is located), hiking, camping, and canyoneering predominate. For the most part, these river canyons cannot be seen unless one hikes into them. Along the road-accessible reach of the North Fork below the Temple, other recreational uses occur such as automobile sightseeing, picnicking, wading/swimming, and horseback riding. Also in the corridor along this reach of the North Fork are Zion Lodge (a concession offering lodging, food services and guided tours) and several NPS facilities, including the park visitor center, employee housing, water storage and maintenance facilities, as well as park campgrounds.
Table F-3: Proposed Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North Fork Virgin, above Temple</th>
<th>Wild</th>
<th>North Creek</th>
<th>Wild</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kolob Creek (incl. BLM segment)</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine Mile Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Left Fork</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orderville Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Grapewine Wash</td>
<td>Scenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Wolf Springs Wash</td>
<td>Scenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Pine Springs Wash</td>
<td>Scenic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Fork Virgin, below Temple</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Little Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birch Creek Canyon</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Russell Gulch</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Creek (excluding the segment below the lowest switchback west of the tunnel on Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway)</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>La Verkin Creek</td>
<td>Wild</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table F-3: River Mileage and Landownership of Suitable Rivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North Fork Virgin, above Temple</th>
<th>Flow</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>BLM</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>% Federal Ownership</th>
<th>Proposed Boundary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Fork Virgin</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Rem-to-sim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolob Creek</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Rem-to-sim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose Creek</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Rem-to-sim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slumber Creek</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Rem-to-sim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orderville Canyon</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Rem-to-sim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep Creek</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100 Rem-to-sim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery Canyon</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100 Rem-to-sim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Rem-to-sim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table F-2: River Mileage and Landownership of Suitable Rivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North Fork Virgin, below Temple</th>
<th>Flow</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>BLM</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>% Federal Ownership</th>
<th>Proposed Boundary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Fork Virgin</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birch Creek Canyon</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Creek</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Creek</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaps Canyon</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shunye Creek</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elcho Canyon</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Creek</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>½ mile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Private holdings within the park’s river corridors receive some grazing use. There is a private water right located or the lower end of Shunes Creek, stretching from the park boundary southeast for approximately three-quarters of a mile. Current authorized uses along eligible BLM segments corridors include summer sheep grazing on the Yaw or Creek segment (Cedar Mountain Allotment) and authorized nonuse for cattle on the Shunes Creek segment (Grapevine Allotment). Dispersed outdoor recreation including hiking, hunting, and fishing occurs on all segments. The geology, isolation, and poor accessibility of these small lands limit their multiple-use capacity.

Uses and Resources Enhanced, Curbaited, and Foreclosed

Wild and scenic designation would have little if any effect on uses within Zion National Park. The park is already administered for protection of the outstandingly remarkable resources, and construction of new dams is extremely unlikely. No uses would be foreclosed or curtailed because of the designation.

The same is true for the BLM segments. Impacts from suitability determinations would not change current uses, nor would it be expected to curtail or foresee future uses, as none have been proposed in these areas. Protective measures that would limit or foreclose future development are already in place for four western segments that fall within wilderness study areas.
Existing Resource Protection

Zion National Park was established to

- Preserve the dynamic natural processes of canyon formation as an extraordinary example of canyon erosion
- Reserve and protect the scenic beauty and unique geologic features, labyrinths of remarkable canyons, volcanic phenomena, fossiliferous deposits, brilliantly colored strata, and rare sedimentation
- Preserve the archeological features that pertain to the prehistoric races of America and the ancestral Indian Tribes
- Preserve the entire area intact for the purpose of scientific research
- Provide a variety of opportunities for visitors to listen to and enjoy the resources without degrading those resources

Zion’s clear mandate is to protect park resources, including the resources found in the river corridors. This mandate is based upon the park’s enabling legislation (41 Stat. 356 and 70 Stat. 527) and legislative history, the NPS Organic Act (16 USC 1), and NPS Management Policies (NPS 2001).

Regarding private inholdings, the “Zion National Park Land Protection Plan” (NPS 1984) allows little change in the current, minimal development and use of these lands. Listed as incompressible uses are: improving undeveloped land; major alterations to existing structures or new construction; intensification of current use; subdivision; creation of hazards to the public or to wildlife; and any activity that adversely impacts park resources. The land protection plan lays out the action that the park staff will take to deal with any incompressible use. These restrictions more than adequately guarantee the continued natural character, and existing classification, of the river corridors.

- In addition, in many cases the extreme topography of the river canyons limits development of any use, regardless of ownership.

For the BLM segments, in addition to resource protection measures cited above, the Dixie Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement (BLM 1998) directs management as portrayed in table F-4 below.

Federal Water Reservoir Rights

A determination by the National Park Service of eligibility and suitability for the inclusion of rivers within Zion National Park to the wild and scenic rivers system does not create new water rights for the park. Federal reserved water rights for new components of the wild and scenic rivers system are established by Congress through amendment of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. When a river component is added to the wild and scenic rivers system, water is reserved, from water that is not appropriated at the time of designation, in the amount necessary to protect the features which led to the river’s inclusion in the system.

River flow in Zion National Park is protected by federal reserved water rights recognized under the Zion National Park Water Rights Settlement Agreement among the United States, Utah, the Washington County Water Conservancy District, and the Kanab County Water Conservancy District. In the agreement, the United States reserved rights to “all water underlying, originating within or flowing through Zion National Park . . . that was unappropriated as of the dates of reservation of the lands now within the boundaries of the park, which waters are to remain in a free-flowing condition,” subject to all presently existing uses as well as an unlimited amount of future development above the park. The rights comprise “those waters in the Virgin River Basin,” and include all tributary sources of surface and groundwater.

Because this agreement provides comprehensive protection of Zion National Park rivers, the National Park Service will support designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act only if the authorizing legislation recognizes the Agreement as constituting the reserved water rights for the park and is explicit in not reserving more water for the park than is provided for in the agreement. In this way the National Park Service honor its commitments made in negotiating the agreement.

Manageability to Protect Outstanding Resource Values (ORVs)

Given the existing situation of nearly complete federal ownership of the river corridors and the administration’s focus upon resource protection, ORV protection will continue in the park regardless of designation.

Resource protection on BLM lands will continue under the authority of section 202 of the Federal 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table F-6: Proposed Management Changes for Suitable BLM River Segments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willow Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolob Narrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shunes Creek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix F: Wild and Scenic River Evaluation

Lights Policy Management Plan until land use planning, through this amendment, is completed. Proposed amended decisions to the Dixie Resource Area Resource Management Plan are portrayed in table F-5 below.

Costs Required for Lands/Environment Acquisition and Corridor Management

No costs are anticipated for corridor management due to wild and scenic river designation.

Extent to Which Administration Costs will be Shared by Local and State Governments

The river corridors within the park are almost entirely federally owned, and the BLM river corridors are entirely public lands. No additional costs are anticipated due to designation and management of park and BLM segments as wild and scenic rivers. Hence, state and local governments will not be expected to share in the costs of administration.

Feasibility and Timeliness of Designation

The Bureau of Land Management and the USDA Forest Service also currently are conducting wild and scenic river review processes in the Virgin River Basin. A joint review process was not feasible for administrative reasons. However, the three agencies have collaborated on aspects of the wild and scenic process (e.g., selection of a pool of subject matter experts, and the inclusion of contiguous upstream BLM segments in the NPS assessment process), as directed in the 1996. “Wild and Scenic River Review in the State of Utah — Process and Criteria for Interagency Use,” and ensuing interagency agreements. Regardless of the outcome of these other planning processes, designation of the five rivers in Zion National Park and the upstream BLM segments would be both timely and feasible.
PROPOSED BOUNDARIES

Once rivers are included in the national wild and scenic rivers system, a management boundary is determined. Given the deep, narrow canyon character of many of Zion’s rivers, it is proposed that a topographic-based management boundary be considered for these national wild and scenic river designated waterways. Table F-3 depicts corridor width proposals of either 1/2 mile or rim-to-rim.
EXHIBIT 2: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Craig Addicott, Professor of Environmental Engineering, Utah State University, Logan
Jack Burns, Cultural Resources Specialist, Zion National Park
J.L. Crawford, Historian
Gardner Dalley, Archeologist, BLM Cedar City Field Office
James Deacon, Professor of Environmental Studies, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Robert Eves, Geologist, Southern Utah University
Steve Hedges, Wildlife Biologist, BLM Cedar City Field Office
Logan Heber, Professional River Guide
Mary Hunnicutt, Biologist, Zion National Park
Laurie Kurth, Botanist, Zion National Park
Fred Lohrenz, Geologist, Southern Utah University
Bill Lund, Geologist, Utah Geological Society
Ken McDonald, formerly a Nongame biologist with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (now with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks)
Laird Naylor, Archeologist, Zion National Park
Dave Pettit, Photographer
Dennis Turville, Photographer, Canyonre
Stu Welsh, Curator and Professor, Brigham Young University
Grant Willis, Geologist, Utah Geological Society

EXHIBIT 3: RESOURCE VALUE RATING CRITERIA

Resource values were rated according to the following criteria. For all of the rating sheets, the following ratings were used:

3 = value is one of the most significant in the region
2 = value is typical in the region
1 = value is less significant than most in the region
0 = value is nonexistent

Cultural/Historical Criteria:
Significance: Consider tracts or features associated with use by prehistoric, historic, contemporary cultural groups, or a historicity, significant event or person. Consider sites that have significant human interest value. Rare, unique, or unusual sites or features are of higher value.

Site Integrity: Consider presence of exceptional examples of architecture, features, or remains from a significant period in history. Unmodified sites retaining original character and features in excellent condition providing exceptional examples are of higher value.

Ethnographic Significance: Consider sites, features, or resources associated with historic or modern day use, that exhibit a continuation of traditional use (e.g., fishing, natural resource collection), or are related to land use (i.e., irrigation).

Data Potential: Consider major sites or features with multiple scientific data sources. River corridors representing more than one culture or culture periods are of higher value. Sites and features used for rare and sacred purposes are of higher value.

Education/Interpretation: Consider sites that have regional or national importance for interpreting significant prehistoric or historic events, sites, or people; sites that clearly and graphically reveal an interesting or unique history of the region; and have the ability to attract visitors from outside the region.

Listing/Eligibility: Consider corridors that contain sites or features that are currently listed in, or are eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, or designated as a national historic landmark.

Geology Criteria:
Geologic and Hydrologic Feature Abundance: Landforms with unusual, unique, or outstanding geologic/hydrologic features (e.g., deep canyons, unique rock formations/outcrops, waterfalls, wetlands, hanging gardens, gorges, arches, lake deposits, stream terraces, hoodoos, lava flows). River corridors with an abundance of unusual, unique, and distinctive geologic features to the region are of higher value.

Diversity of Features: Consider the number and variety of special geologic/hydrologic features, and the value of these features to the region. Consider the unique or rare combination of geologic/hydrologic features (e.g., erosional, volcanic). The greatest diversity of features are of higher value.

Educational/Scientific Value: Geologic/hydrologic features clearly and graphically reveal an interesting/unique educational or scientific story of earth’s history. River corridors that represent “textbook” examples of a common feature or are the best example of a feature in the region are of higher value.

Wildlife Criteria:
Habitat Quality: Consider the presence, extent, and carrying capacity of a variety of wildlife habitats, including winter range, summer range, transition zones, travel corridors, and calving areas. Consider unique habitats or critical links in habitat for rare species (federally listed, state-listed, sensitive species, or candidate species). Areas with the greatest and best habitat, contiguous habitat, and habitat for rare species are of higher value.

Species Diversity: Consider the number and variety of species present and the value of these
species. Rivers with the greatest diversity of species, including rare species, are of higher value.

Species Abundance: Rivers with the greatest number of wildlife within the river corridor are of higher value.

Natural Reproduction: Rivers with extensive natural reproduction are of higher value than those supported mostly by transplants.

Quality of Experience (wildlife viewing): Consider the sights, sounds, and smells attendant with wildlife experience. Highly scenic, pristine rivers are of higher value as compared to rivers that are visually monotonous, heavily developed, malodorous, or noisy.

Fish Criteria:

Habitat Quality: Consider the presence, extent, and carrying capacity of spawning areas, rearing areas and adult habitat; and habitat for wild stocks and rare species (federally listed, state-listed, sensitive species, or candidate species). Areas with the greatest amount and best habitat, especially for wild stock and rare species, are of higher value.

Species Diversity: Consider the number and variety of species present and the value of these species. Rivers with the greatest diversity of species, including wild stocks and rare species, are of higher value.

Species Abundance: Rivers with more fish are of higher value.

Natural Reproduction: Rivers with extensive self-sustaining natural reproduction are of higher value than those supported mostly by stocking.

Ecology/Vegetation Criteria:

Species Diversity: Consider the presence, extent, and diversity of plant communities; ecological values that are critical to protection of biological diversity; and critical habitat for species conservation (e.g., refugia). River corridors with the greatest diversity and importance to species conservation are of higher value.

Riparian Habitat Quality: Consider riparian communities that are intact with structural diversity and species composition appropriate for the geographic area. Vegetative composition and distribution is primarily of native species.

Ecological Function: Consider rivers with rare or unique corridors that are critical and essential for species migration and genetic interaction. Natural flooding, channelization, and river movement are not impeded or altered (i.e., there are no human-made structures along the banks or in the river).

Rare Communities: Rivers with rare, sensitive, threatened and endangered species, communities, and habitats are of higher value.

Educational/Scientific: Consider ecological values and features that clearly and graphically reveal an interesting/unique educational or scientific story of the ecological form and function. River corridors that represent “textbook” examples of plant and animal associations or ecological values/features in the region are of higher value.

Recreation Criteria:

Length of Season: Consider the amount of time the river corridor is used or available for recreation purposes, such as outdoor education, photography, backpacking, hiking, canyoneering, climbing, camping, horseback riding, kayaking, etc. Rivers with the longest season of use are of higher value.

Recreation Diversity: Consider the number and variety of recreation uses occurring within the corridor. Rivers that provide for the largest number and diversity of recreation uses are of higher value.

Experience Quality: Consider the comparative number or percent of similar experiences available in the region. Rivers that provide the most unique opportunities are of higher value.

Social Setting: Consider the type of use, level of use, and potential conflicts between user groups in and along the river corridor. Rivers with un-crowded conditions and no user conflicts are of higher value.

Scenery Criteria:

Diversity of View: Consider the presence of high relief; severe surface variation; rich color combinations (e.g., high variety, vivid colors); pleasing contrast in soil, rock, vegetation, and water, views that greatly enhance visual quality; still or cascading water that is dominant in the landscape. River corridors with the greatest diversity and variety of views, both foreground and background, are of higher value.

Special Features: Consider outstanding natural, historical, or cultural features; landforms with unusual or outstanding topographic features (e.g., gorges, narrow slot canyons, high relief, rock outcrops, falls, rapids, springs, color, vegetation). River corridors with high relief and focal points that are visually striking, particularly memorable, or rare in the region are of higher value.
APPENDIX G: LETTER FROM THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Zion National Park, Springdale, Utah
From: Assistant Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah
Ecological Services: Field Office, Salt Lake City, Utah

Subject: Endangered and Threatened Species List for Zion National Park Visitor Management Resource Protection Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has received your request for a list of endangered and threatened species which may occur in the area of influence of the subject management plan for Zion National Park. The following species may occur in the project area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bald Eagle</td>
<td>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert Tortoise</td>
<td>Gopherus agassizii</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican Spotted Owl</td>
<td>Sturnia occidentalis bidentata</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peregrine Falcon</td>
<td>Falco peregrinus</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</td>
<td>Amphidromus sudeticus</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah Prairie Dog</td>
<td>Cynomys parvidens</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though we do not believe there are currently any Utah Prairie Dogs within park boundaries, the southern tip of the species’ range is so close to Zion’s northern border that they were included because Zion may be within their dispersal range.

Only a Federal agency can enter into formal Endangered Species Act (ESA) section 7 consultation with the Service. A Federal agency may designate a non-Federal representative to conduct informal consultation or prepare a biological assessment by giving written notice to the Service of such a designation. The ultimate responsibility for compliance with section 7, however, remains with the Federal agency.

The proposed action should be reviewed and a determination made if the action may affect any listed species or its critical habitat. A determination also should be made if the action is likely to jeopardize a proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of any proposed critical habitat. If the determination is “may affect” for listed species, formal ESA section 7 consultation should be prepared by the Federal agency to the Assistant Field Supervisor at the address given above. In addition, if a determination is made that the proposed action may jeopardize proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat, the Federal agency must confer with this office. At that time, the Federal agency should provide this office with a copy of a biological assessment or any other relevant information that was used in reaching its conclusion.

Your attention is also directed to section 7(d) of the ESA, which underscores the requirement that the Federal agency or the applicant shall not make any irretrievable or irreversible commitment of resources during the consultation period which would, in effect, delay the formulation or implementation of reasonable and prudent alternatives regarding their actions on any endangered or threatened species.

If further assistance is needed, please contact me or Marlet A. Zablan, Wildlife Biologist, of this office at telephone (801) 524-5001.

[Signature]
APPENDIX II: STATEMENT OF FINDINGS FOR THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, ZION NATIONAL PARK

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Site

The North Fork of the Virgin River is the main drainage through Zion Canyon. A number of tributary streams feed into the North Fork within the canyon, including Birch Creek. Zion Canyon is the primary visitor use area within the park. Because of the topographic characteristics of the canyon, a narrow valley confined by tall canyon walls, much of the existing use and development is located along the bottom of the main canyon or side streams.

Description of the Preferred Alternative

This statement of findings addresses the National Park Service proposal to retain the Zion Lodge and associated development, the support facilities at Birch Creek, existing picnic areas, as well as the addition of new picnic sites in Zion Canyon. Maintenance of other existing facilities within the canyon and proposed transportation system developments were covered under the statement of findings for the Development Concept Plan for Zion Headquarters (NPS 1994a) and the subsequent Zion Canyon Transportation System Environmental Assessment (NPS 1997a). The transportation system plan modified the elements of the earlier development concept plan and the statement of findings.

Flooding Characteristics in the Area

The North Fork experiences wide fluctuations in flow with a seasonal snowmelt peak in the spring, followed by generally low summer and fall flows. Occasional heavy storms, which can occur at any time of the year but area most common in summer and early fall, produce the largest flows in the Virgin River system. These runoff events are usually of short duration and can occur suddenly. Floods in desert regions such as Zion are often accompanied by large quantities of debris and sediment, increasing the impact of floods. The reservoir is located a few miles upstream of the park on a tributary of the Virgin River. The Kolob Reservoir spills into Kolob Creek, which runs southeast into the North Fork.

Through much of Zion Canyon, the 100- and 500-year floodplains closely follow the banks of the river. The probable maximum flood area flows out into much of the valley floor.

Estimates of flood stage indicate that the Zion Lodge and associated facilities (parking, restrooms, cabins, concessioner housing) would be protected by the existing road grade, which would contain both the 100- and 500-year floods. An exception to this is in the upstream reach adjacent to the main lodge building, where the 500-year flood would overtop the road and inundate a portion of the lawn area in front of the lodge. The flood depth would not reach the lodge foundation and overbank velocities would not likely exceed two feet per second. Even with failure of the road grade, neither of these design floods would reach the elevation of the lodge, since the foundation is estimated to be a minimum of three feet above the 100-year flood and one foot above the 500-year flood.

No floodplain mapping or flood stage estimates have been made for the support facilities (concessioner housing, water tank, and stability embankments) on the Birch Creek point. Based on the topography and river channel characteristics in this area, these facilities are likely elevated outside of the 100- and 500-year floodplains, but would be within the probable maximum floodplain.

JUSTIFICATION FOR USE OF THE FLOODPLAIN

Why the Proposal Would Retain Facilities in the Floodplain

The Zion lodge and Birch Creek facilities would be retained for their existing use and would remain within the probable maximum floodplain. The floodplain is closely bordered by canyon walls that slope upward at a sharp angle. Therefore there is little foot area that is level enough for development that is outside of the floodplain and there are no other suitable non-floodplain sites on the narrow canyon bottom for relocation of these facilities. The overnight facilities in these two areas would be outside of the more frequently flooded sites as well as the 100- and 500-year floodplains. The park’s warning and evacuation procedures would also remain in effect.

Under NPS procedures for implementing Executive Order 11988, the existing and proposed picnic areas may be placed within the 100-year floodplain, but these day use facilities must contain signs informing visitors of flood risk and suggested actions in the event of flooding. These facilities would be signed to warn visitors of flash flood hazards and evacuation areas.

Alternatives Considered in the Environmental Impact Statement

There were no alternatives considered in the General Management Plan that would remove the Zion Lodge, Birch Creek development, or picnic areas. One alternative did consider converting the lodge to an environmental education center, although overnight use would still continue in support of this new function.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE-SPECIFIC FLOOD RISK AND ACTIONS TO MINIMIZE HAZARD TO LIFE OR PROPERTY

The above facilities for visitors and employees, including overnight users, would be maintained in their existing locations within flood hazard areas along the North Fork and tributaries because flood prone areas are unavoidable within the confines of the canyon walls. These facilities could be lost during an extreme flood event, but are outside of areas potentially subject to more frequent flooding. To protect lives the evacuation plan and warning system would remain in effect. The flash flood warning and evacuation plan consists of daily contact between Zion dispatch and the National Weather Service during the summer to receive weather forecasts and storm potential conditions. Observations of drainage conditions by park rangers are also collected. The standard operating procedure is to close the upper canyon road to visitor traffic during flash floods, while posting rangers as scouts along the river to warn visitors and employees of impending danger. The park would also emphasize public education and awareness of flood hazards. Picnic facilities would be signed to warn of flash flood hazards and evacuation areas. These measures would minimize potentially hazardous conditions to people.

The natural and beneficial values of floodplains (moderation of floodwaters, maintenance of water quality, and groundwater recharge) would primarily not be affected by retaining the existing facilities. Minimal effects on ground water recharge would result from retention of impervious structures or paved surfaces.

SUMMARY

The National Park Service has determined that there is no practicable alternative to maintaining Zion Canyon Lodge, Birch Creek support facilities, and picnic areas within the probable maximum floodplain. This determination was based on the decision to maintain Zion Canyon as the primary visitor use area within the park, with provisions for overnight and day-use facilities. These facilities are not within areas subject to frequent flooding, and with the early warning system and evacuation plan, the risk to human safety would be minimized.
**APPENDIXES**

Recommended:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Resources Division</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</table>

Recommended:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Compliance Officer</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Recommended:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Director</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</table>
# Appendix I: Summary of Research Natural Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Natural Area</th>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>Ecological Units Present in the RNA</th>
<th>Other Resource Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kolob Mesa</td>
<td>The relatively flat top of Timber Top Mountain and Nagunt Mesa overlooking the Kolob Canyons. Also includes canyon draining west from Timber Top Mountain. Access is by helicopter and technical climbing only. 222.6 acres – Alternative A 625.5 acres – Alternative B and Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Hanging canyons  Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic Springs and seeps  Rock crevice and stickrock communities</td>
<td>Peregrine Falcon nesting and foraging  Natural 1st order watershed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakes Creek</td>
<td>Shakes Creek Canyon below the Navajo Sandstone cliffs along the southern boundary of the park, excluding the administrative area around a water right diversion. Shakes Creek is a small perennial stream tributary to the East Fork of the Virgin River.</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic Springs and seeps  Reverse adaptation of ancestral Pueblian people</td>
<td>Big horn sheep lambing area  Good populations of virgin speedace  Natural function in riparian area  Ancestral Pueblian people use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging Gardens</td>
<td>Five hanging gardens in Zion and Parusweepe Cannons. RNA would include the immediate vicinity of Grotto Spring. Weeping Rock, Sinawava Hanging Garden, and two unnamed springs in Parusweepe Canyon. 1.4 acres – Alternative A and B 2.2 acres – Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Hanging gardens  Springs and seeps</td>
<td>Rare endemic plant and animal communities  Rare hydrology  Endemic invertebrates including Zion snail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated Moss Tops</td>
<td>Isolated mesa tops that are surrounded by high cliffs of Navajo Sandstone. These include Burt Mountain (s. of La Verkin Creek), Greatheart Mesa, Isolated T-riple, four unnamed high mesa west of Horse Pasture Plateau, and two closely associated unnamed mesas north of Wymops Mountain. Access is by helicopter and technical climbing only. 877.4 acres – Preferred Alternative 870.2 acres – Alternative A 1,908.1 acres – Alternative B</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial  Hanging canyons</td>
<td>Genetic isolation of some plant and animal species is possible. Conditions for plants and animals are as near natural as physical isolation can provide  First order ephemeral channels  Riparian ecosystems in the absence of large mammals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goose Creek</td>
<td>The sandstone slot canyons of Goose Creek, which drain east from Lava Point and Horse Pasture Plateau. A five-mile long tributary of the North Fork of the Virgin River with deep narrow canyons and perennial stream flow in the lower reaches.</td>
<td>Slot canyons  Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic Springs and seeps  Hanging canyons  Riparian forests</td>
<td>Mexican spotted owl habitat.  Second and third order ephemeral and perennial channels  Surface almost entirely inside park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Best Copy Available**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH NATURAL AREA</th>
<th>GENERAL DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>ECOCLOGICAL UNITS PRESENT IN THE RNA</th>
<th>OTHER RESOURCE ATTRIBUTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crazy Quilt Mesa</td>
<td>Access to most of Goose Creek is through technical canyoneering.</td>
<td>Rock crevice and slickrock communities</td>
<td>Excellent examples of slickrock, and crack &amp; crevice geology and hydrology; Several rare plant species; Potential Mexican spotted owl habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in:</td>
<td>966.5 acres – Preferred Alternative and Alternative B</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>The top of Crazy Quilt Mesa and adjacent slopes, east of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative B</td>
<td>Checkered Mesa near the East Entrance to the park.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Access is by helicopter and technical climbing only.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1550 acres – Preferred Alternative and Alternative B</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slickrock</td>
<td>Access to most of Goose Creek is through technical canyoneering.</td>
<td>Rock crevice and slickrock communities</td>
<td>Excellent examples of slickrock, and crack &amp; crevice geology and hydrology; Several rare plant species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in:</td>
<td>An area of extensive slickrock bates, slopes and terraces, south</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>of Clear Creek, east of Gifford Canyon and around the head of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative B</td>
<td>Crawford Wash.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>556.6 acres – Preferred Alternative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combined with Parasunwap - Alternative B</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Pinyon-Juniper</td>
<td>An area of relatively deep sandy soils supporting relic pinyon -</td>
<td>Relict forest</td>
<td>Unusually large old-growth pinyon – juniper communities; Unique association of birds; Numerous evidence of ancestral Puebloan people use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in:</td>
<td>juniper forests in the southeastern most corner of the park. The</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>vicinity includes dune deposits and slickrock. Access is via</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative B</td>
<td>several miles of poor roads across BLM land.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1805 acres – Preferred Alternative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combined with Parasunwap - Alternative B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slopes of Parasunwap &amp;</td>
<td>Includes Parasunwap and Shanes Creek Canyons in the</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic</td>
<td>Bighorn sheep lambing area; Peregrine falcon breeding; Mexican spotted owl breeding; Rare plants; Numerous evidence of ancestral Puebloan people use; Historic use; Natural hydrology and healthy riparian communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanesburg Mtn.</td>
<td>southeastern part of the park. This RNA would include slopes</td>
<td>Springs and seeps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in:</td>
<td>below the Navajo Sandstone cliffs, the sandstone bluffs of</td>
<td>Shot canyons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative A</td>
<td>Shanesburg Mountain (between the two canyons). It would</td>
<td>Hanging gardens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exclude the riparian corridor along the East Fork of the Virgin</td>
<td>Hanging canyons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>River and the alluvial fan zone around a water diversion on</td>
<td>Riverine adaptation of</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shanes Creek.</td>
<td>ancestral Puebloan people</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parasunwap canyon contains the East Fork of the Virgin River,</td>
<td>Eolian landscape</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>one of the last remaining natural rivers in the desert southwest.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.8639 acres – Alternative A</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasunwap</td>
<td>Preferred Alternative – Includes Parasunwap and most of</td>
<td>Rock crevice and slickrock</td>
<td>Numerous evidence of ancestral Puebloan people use; Bighorn sheep lambing area; Peregrine falcon breeding; Mexican spotted owl breeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in:</td>
<td>Shanes Creek Canyons below the Navajo Sandstone, and</td>
<td>communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Transverse mountain above the Navajo sandstone.</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative B</td>
<td>Expanded to include; most of the southeastern</td>
<td>Springs and seeps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>portion of the park incorporating Parasunwap Canyon, Shanes</td>
<td>Hanging gardens</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hanging canyons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH NATURAL AREA</td>
<td>GENERAL DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>ECOLOGICAL UNITS PRESENT IN THE RNA</td>
<td>OTHER RESOURCE ATTRIBUTES</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Creek Canyons, Shenandoah Mountain, and Transview Mountain. Incorporates the “Slickrock,” “Southeast Pinyon-Juniper,” and “Shunes Creek” RNAs described above. Pahvantwag canyon contains the East Fork of the Virgin River, one of the last remaining free-flowing large rivers in the desert southwest. The surrounding lands include extensive slickrock and old-growth Pinyon Juniper in the southeastern corner of the park.</td>
<td>Eolian landscape Riverine adaptation of ancestral Puebloan people</td>
<td>Historic Use Natural hydrology and healthy riparian communities Unusually large old-growth pinyon – juniper communities Unique association of birds Several rare plant species</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cane and Curtain Creeks</td>
<td>462 acres – Preferred Alternative 11,270 acres – Alternative B</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic springs and seeps</td>
<td>Paleontological deposits Lower elevation riparian systems Perennial and seasonal streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in: Alternative A Alternative B</td>
<td>150.1 acres – Alternatives A and B</td>
<td>Riverine adaption of ancestral Puebloan people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Creek and Eton Wash Valley Bottoms</td>
<td>The canyon bottoms and adjacent slopes of the right and left forks of North Creek, and adjacent southern portions of Lee Valley and Little Creek. Also includes the westernmost portion of the Canejon Wash drainage adjacent to the park boundary. The travel corridor along the East Fork of North Creek is excluded.</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic springs and seeps</td>
<td>This area is utilized by the park as a seasonal riparian corridor and is an important part of the park’s ecological diversity. Potentially significant paleontological deposits are found in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in: Alternative B</td>
<td>3.665 acres – Alternative B</td>
<td>Riverine adaption of ancestral Puebloan people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildcat Canyon</td>
<td>The high death slickrock canyons between the upper Left and Right Forks of North Creek and the western cliffs of Horse Pasture Plateau. Access is difficult and technical.</td>
<td>Rock cresew and slickrock communities Springs and seeps Hanging canyons Eolian landscape</td>
<td>Excellent examples of slickrock and crack &amp; crevce ecology and hydrology Rare plant species likely Potential Mexican spotted owl habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in: Alternative B</td>
<td>504.0 Acres – Alternative B</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic springs and seeps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Cuisapits</td>
<td>The upper reaches of Cuisapits Wash, where a small perennial stream forms a narrow riparian corridor.</td>
<td>Hanging canyons Eolian landscape</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic springs and seeps Riverine adaption of ancestral Puebloan people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in: Alternative A</td>
<td>161.3 acres - Alternative A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RESEARCH NATURAL AREA</td>
<td>GENERAL DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>ECOCLOGICAL UNITS PRESENT</td>
<td>OTHER RESOURCE ATTRIBUTES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper La Verkin Creek (Including Willis and Beartrap Canyons)</td>
<td>The upper reaches of Beartrap, Willis and La Verkin Creeks. These are deep forested canyons with perennial streams. Includes canyons and Bullpen Mountain.</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic Springs and seeps Hanging gardens</td>
<td>Medium sized and small perennial streams with intact riparian zones Biodiversity areas for mountain lion, Mexican spotted owls, and peregrine falcons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in: Alternative B</td>
<td>1.176.4 acres – Alternative B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower La Verkin (Including lower Timber Creek)</td>
<td>The gorges of Timber Creek and La Verkin Creek below the La Verkin Creek Trail. These are deep narrow canyons with about 4 miles of perennial streams perennial streams. Riparian vegetation, though narrow, is well developed, relatively undisturbed and includes some ponderosa pine.</td>
<td>Riparian fluvial &amp; aquatic Springs and seeps</td>
<td>Medium sized and small perennial streams with intact riparian zones Mixed-age stands of riparian deciduous trees Cryptosperma acutifolium Unique stands of large ponderosa pines at lower elevations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in: Alternative B</td>
<td>221.1 acres – Alternative B</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Description of Ecological Units

Eolian Landscape - Areas where wind is the predominant shaper of the land. Features include unvegetated dunes, vegetated wind-deposited soils that are often deep, and wind erosion of exposed rock. The ability of eolian soils to capture and store water is enhanced by their sandy texture and depth.

Hanging Canyons - Canyons that are isolated from below by abrupt vertical cliffs, and are thus hanging above the rest of the terrain. As such hanging canyons contain plant and animal communities isolated from human and other influences that affect more accessible canyons. The large vertical relief in Zion National Park permits the occurrence of larger hanging canyons with a greater degree of isolation than elsewhere.

Hanging Gardens - Seeps issuing from vertical faces of Navajo Sandstone. These vary in size and create rare vertical wetlands habitats that support unique plant communities and endemic invertebrate species. Though found elsewhere on the Colorado Plateau, hanging gardens in Zion National Park are more numerous and larger, and contain species not found elsewhere.

Riverine Adaptation of Ancestral Puebloan People - Areas occupied by ancestral Puebloan people where they became adapted to life along large perennial watercourses of the Virgin River basin. This setting may have permitted a more sedentary lifestyle and greater populations than upland sites. Early excavations in Parunuweap Canyon provide "type sites" that are a benchmark for defining ancestral Puebloan people. Occupation occurred over several periods, and included a wide range of site types (pueblos, rock shelters, and cliff dwellings). The sites and their setting remain relatively intact.

Rock Crevices and Slickrock - Areas dominated by flat, sloping and vertical exposures of cross-bedded Navajo Sandstone. Plant and animal communities adapt to these settings that are at once harsh (due to sun, wind and temperature exposure) and accommodating (due to less competition, and greater water availability from runoff and seepage through cracks in the rock). The result is the occurrence of several rare and endemic plant species.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
Appendix 1: Summary of Research Natural Areas

Relict Forests – Woodyland communities that have never been logged or otherwise disturbed. They contain old growth forests and specialized habitats for species such as Mexican spotted owl. Soils and moisture regimes differ from distant forests.

Relict Mesas – High mesa tops, isolated by steep cliffs and accessible only by helicopter or arduous technical climbs. These generally lack large mammals and have fire regimes altered by humans. Vegetation, terrain and herpetological assemblages are generally unaltered. Genetic isolation might be significant.

Riparian, Fluvial and Aquatic – Habitats associated with rivers. These are some of the most diverse and productive habitats. Riverine systems are adapted to flood disturbance, channel migration, and abundant free-flowing water. Flow patterns are essentially natural.

Slot Canyons – Deep narrow canyons, accessible only by traversing the stream channel, that are cooler and moister than in surrounding terrain. Streambeds in slot canyons are dominated by flooding. Their existence and formation is highly developed in Zion National Park. They are important as habitat for Mexican spotted owl and mesic mixed conifer communities.

Springs and Seeps – Water sources that are important habitat for specialized vegetation and wildlife including endemic snails. These are important sites for the study of groundwater hydrology.
APPENDIX J: BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES FOR PLAN AMENDMENT PROTEST

These protest procedures are only applicable to the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) wild and scenic river recommendations that have been incorporated into this proposed General Management Plan for Zion National Park. These recommendations constitute an amendment to BLM’s St. George Resource Management Plan dated March 14, 1999. The subject river segments, managed by the BLM’s St. George Field Office (formerly the Dixie Resource Area), are contiguous to Zion National Park and include: Willis Creek (40 acres); Beartrap Canyon (40 acres); Goose Creek (120 acres); Shores Creek (240 acres); the head of the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek (40 acres); and the head of Kolob Creek Narrows (40 acres). BLM and Zion National Park have been cooperating as partners and striving to reach joint conclusions as to eligibility, tentative classification, and suitability for entire river segments including portions on public lands contiguous to the park in Washington County, Utah. Although the BLM-managed river segments identified above were found not eligible for further study when considered on their own in BLM’s original inventory, they have been found to be both eligible and suitable when considered in conjunction with the contiguous segments in the park.

The BLM’s resource management planning process provides for an administrative review to the BLM Director if you believe approval of the St. George Field Office’s Resource Management Plan Amendment incorporated into the Zion National Park General Management Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement would be in error (see 43 CFR 1610.5-2). Careful adherence to the following guidelines will assist you in the preparation of a protest that will assure the greatest consideration of your point of view.

Only those persons or organizations who participated in the scoping or comment periods during the Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement planning process leading to this proposed Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement may protest. If our records do not indicate that you had any involvement in any stage in the preparation of the Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement, your protest will be dismissed without further review. A protesting party may raise only those issues that he/she submitted for the record during the planning process. New issues raised in the protest period should be directed to BLM’s St. George Field Office Manager for consideration in plan implementation, as a potential plan amendment, or as otherwise appropriate.

The period for filing a plan protest begins with the Environmental Protection Agency publication of the Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement containing the provision “...an extension of time. To be considered timely, your protest must be postmarked no later than the last day of the protest period.

Although not a requirement, we suggest that you send your protest by certified mail, return receipt requested.

Protests must be in writing to: Director, Bureau of Land Management.
Attn: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protests Coordinator
WO-210/LS-1075
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20240

Overnight Mail address is: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Attn: Ms. Brenda Williams, Protests Coordinator (WO-210)
1620 L Street, NW, Rm 1072
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202452-5110

Protests filed late or with other BLM offices shall be rejected. To be considered complete, your protest must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

1. The name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest.
2. A statement of the issues being raised. This must be specific to BLM’s wild and scenic river recommendations and land use plan amendment incorporated into the Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement; not to decisions to be made by Zion National Park or the park’s plan as a whole.
3. Identification of the parts of BLM’s land use plan amendment being protested. To the extent possible, this should be done by reference to specific pages, paragraphs, sections, tables, maps, etc., included in the document. This, again, must be specific to BLM’s wild and scenic river recommendations and land use plan amendment; not to other parts of the park’s plan.
4. A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that you submitted during the planning process, or a reference to the date the issue or issues were discussed by you for the record.
5. A concise statement explaining why the Utah BLM State Director’s proposed decision is believed to be incorrect. This is a critical part of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents, environmental analysis, or available planning records (i.e., meeting minutes or summaries, correspondence). A protest that merely expresses disagreement with the proposed decision, without any data, will not provide BLM with the benefit of essential information and insight. In this case, the Director’s review will be based on the existing analysis and supporting data.

At the end of the 30-day protest period and after the Governor’s consistency review, the BLM’s land use plan amendment, excluding any portions under protest, will become final. Approval will be withheld on any portion of BLM’s land use plan amendment under protest until final action has been completed on such protest.
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1997 "Ecology of Mexican Spotted Owls (Strix occidentalis lucida) in National Parks on the Colorado Plateau."


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**Preparers**

Core Team

Leon J. Clifford, Project Manager, Denver Service Center (now with the Atlanta Regional office). B.S. (Environmental science) and B.L.A. (Landscape Architecture). Twenty-four years with the National Park Service. Responsible for project budget and schedule.

Dan Cohen, Geographic Information Systems Specialist, Zion National Park (now with Bureau of Reclamation). B.S. (Wildlife Biology), M.S. (Forest Science (GIS)). Three years with the National Park Service and 17 years with multiple federal and state land management agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, BLM, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Responsible for implementing GIS data analyses including resource values and sensitivities assessments and landscape predictive models, the development of alternative GIS maps and databases and wilderness scenarios and contributed to the impact analyses.

Donald A. Falvey, Superintendent, Zion National Park (retired). B.C.E. (Bachelor of Civil Engineering), M.P.A. (Master of Public Administration). Twenty-seven years with the National Park Service, six years with Bureau of Indian Affairs, two years with the U.S. Army. Responsible for providing overall management direction for the plan.

Richard Lichtkoppler, Resource Economist, Denver Service Center (now with the Bureau of Reclamation). B.S. (Business Administration), M.S. (Natural Resources), Ph.D. (Resource Economics). Nine years with the National Park Service. Responsible for descriptions of the socioeconomic resources in the “Affected Environment” and analyzing impacts on socioeconomic resources.

Allen Hagwood, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Denver Service Center (retired). B.S., M.S. (Geology). Thirty-four years with the National Park Service. Job captain for the Zion plan (1995-1997). Responsible for coordinating data collection, carrying capacity studies, and public involvement activities for the project; provided day-to-day guidance to team members.

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Kate Hammond, Interpretive Planner, Harper’s Ferry Center—Denver. B.A. (Environmental Studies and History). Two years with the NPS Harper’s Ferry Center, three years with Amistad National Recreation Area (chief of interpretation), 2-1/2 years with National Park Administration of Argentina (interpretive planner and manager), and three seasons with Massachusetts State Parks. Responsible for writing the description of visitor use in the “Affected Environment” and assessing impacts on visitor uses and experiences.

Michael Rees, Natural Resource Specialist, Denver Service Center. B.A. (Environmental Studies). M.F.S. (Master of Forest Science). Seven years with the National Park Service and eight years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Job captain, February 2000 present. Responsible for writing the introduction, legal mandates, and park policies and practices, and the alternative chapers, and for compiling and editing the document. Helped develop the alternatives.

Elaine Rideout, Natural Resource Specialist, Denver Service Center. B.S. (Environmental Studies). Seventeen years with the National Park Service and four years with the Ohio Department of Transportation. Responsible for writing the descriptions of natural resources in the “Affected Environment” and assessing impacts on the natural resources.

Darla Sidles, Special Projects Coordinator, Zion National Park. B.A. (Business Administration). Eight years with the National Park Service and five years with the U.S. Forest Service. Responsible for day-to-day planning within the park, and liaison between the park staff and Denver Service Center.

Howie Thompson, Senior Natural Resource Specialist, Denver Service Center (now with the NPS Washington, D.C., office). B.A. (Biological Sciences), M.S. (Botany, Taxonomy, and Ecology). Twenty-two years with the National Park Service. Job captain, January 1999 to January 2000. Responsible for managing the planning process and coordinating preparation of the document.
INDEX

P
Panunueap Canyon, vii, viii, ix, 13, 46, 52, 74, 87, 94, 98, 111, 124, 162, 163, 164, 166, 177, 178, 190, 192, 195, 197, 203, 205
peregrine falcon, 16, 24, 150, 151, 405, 409
proposed wilderness, viii, xi, 19, 34, 48, 51, 52, 71, 72, 91, 92, 93, 101, 104, 109, 116, 166, 169, 182, 196, 197, 199, 210, 211, 397

R
research natural areas, vii, viii, ix, 4, 13, 45, 52, 65, 73, 85, 87, 94, 96, 98, 106, 108, 109, 111, 115, 116, 166, 173, 174, 177, 178, 182, 189, 191, 196, 203, 204, 205, 211, 393, 394, 399

S
saddle stock, x, 32, 43, 45, 48, 52, 60-61, 70, 72, 80, 86, 97, 109, 116, 130, 182-83, 196, 211, 229-30, 234, 388-89, 391-93
south entrance, 15, 36, 51, 69, 102, 103, 104, 109, 128, 135, 142, 181, 194, 208, 209, 385
southwestern willow flycatcher, x, xi, 116, 123, 150, 158, 164, 172, 177, 178, 192, 205, 405
Springdale, 14, 18, 36, 37, 48, 58, 65, 105, 130, 141, 142, 166, 168, 184, 185, 198, 213, 214, 220, 224, 225

T
Temple of Sinawava, viii, ix, 46, 47, 51, 64, 65, 69, 76, 79, 87, 94, 101, 103, 107, 111, 122, 124, 128, 158, 163, 166, 174, 177, 190, 191, 201, 204, 206, 208, 211, 215, 402, 407

V
VERP, 3, 80, 95, 107, 183, 394, 396
Virgin spinedace, ix, 51, 58, 93, 123, 124, 148, 153, 158, 162, 172, 174, 175, 405

W
wild and scenic rivers, v, ix, 14, 55, 76, 383, 386, 402, 407, 411, 414, 415, 416

Z
Zion Canyon Lodge, vii, viii, xi, 14, 46, 47, 48, 51, 63, 69, 70, 86, 97, 103, 111, 128, 130, 208, 431
Existing private property rights, including land ownership and mineral and water rights, are not shown on this map (see the Wilderness Recommendation and Land Status map). The National Park Service recognizes all private property rights in the park and respects the rights of the owners. If and when the private rights are acquired, these areas would be managed like the surrounding park lands.

No Action
Zion National Park, Utah

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
The above acreage figures are based on computer (GIS) analysis.

POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREAS are lands that do not qualify for an immediate designation due to temporary non-Conforming or incompatible uses (e.g., private inholdings, private water rights). These areas would be included in the wilderness recommendation or converted to designated wilderness upon termination of the non-conforming uses.

TOTAL: (148,016 ACRES)
This map is based on the 1978 recommendation that was submitted to Congress. The map includes changes that have been made since that time due to the acquisition of inholdings, state surface ownership, and mineral rights, grazing rights, and water rights, and the inclusion of a valid existing water right on Camp Creek that was overlooked in 1978. All inholdings and lands with existing private water rights are shown as potential wilderness areas. Until the inholdings and lands with private rights are acquired, the National Park Service recognizes and respects the rights of the owners. Private vehicle access to the inholdings on existing roads would continue until such time as the inholdings and associated roads are acquired.

Road/trail corridors displayed on this map are intended to differentiate recommended, potential and non-wilderness areas. They may or may not correspond to the legal rights-of-way.

Recommended Wilderness and Land Status

Zion National Park, Utah

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service

DSC • August 2000 • 116 • 20027a

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The above usage figures for the zones are based on computer (GIS) analysis. These figures may not correspond with the legal descriptions. All prescriptive zone boundaries displayed above are based on the known locations of geographic features, cadastral surveys, park infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources.
This zoning map shows how private inholdings and other lands with private water and mineral rights within Zion National Park would be managed if they are acquired in the future. Until the private rights (as shown on the Wilderness Recommendation (1978) and Land Status map) are acquired, the National Park Service recognizes that the inholdings are private lands and it respects the valid rights of the landowners and mineral and water right owners.

Preferred Alternative
Zion National Park, Utah
United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
DSC • August 2000 • 116 • 20022a

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
Proposed Park Boundary Adjustments and Adjacent Landownership
Zion National Park, Utah
United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
DSC • August 2000 • 116 • 200303a

Legend
- NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGE US FOREST SERVICE PRIVATE STATE
- PROPOSED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS
- BLM WILDERNESS STUDY

Proposed Acquisition of Access
1. North Fork Virgin River
2. Orderville Canyon
3. Ponderosa Ranch
4. Anasazi Plateau
5. Camp Creek
6. Horse Ranch Mountain

Proposed Acquisition of Consents
Kolob Terrace Area
Anasazi Plateau
North Fork Virgin River
Proposed
Wild and Scenic Rivers
Zion National Park, Utah
United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
DSC • August 2000 • 116 • 20024a

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0 1 2 3 5 MILES
The above acreage figures for the zones are based on computer (GIS) analysis. These figures may not correspond with the legal descriptions. All prescriptive zone boundaries displayed above are based on the known locations of geographic features, cadastral surveys, park infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources.
This zoning map shows how private inholdings and other lands with private water and mineral rights within Zion National Park would be managed if they are acquired in the future. Until the private rights (as shown on the Wilderness Recommendation (1978) and Land Status map) are acquired, the National Park Service recognizes that the inholdings are private lands and it respects the valid rights of the landowners and mineral and water right owners.

Alternative A
Zion National Park, Utah
United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service
DSC • August 2000 • 116 • 20020a
The above acreage figures for the zones are based on computer (GIS) analysis. These figures may not correspond with the legal descriptions. All prescriptive zone boundaries displayed above are based on the known locations of geographic features, cadastral surveys, park infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources.
This zoning map shows how private inholdings and other lands with private water and mineral rights within Zion National Park would be managed if they are acquired in the future. Until the private rights (as shown on the Wilderness Recommendation (1978) and Land Status map) are acquired, the National Park Service recognizes that the inholdings are private lands and it respects the valid rights of the landowners and mineral and water right owners.

**Alternative B**

Zion National Park, Utah

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service

DSC • August 2000 • 116 • 2002a
### Table 5: Summary of Management Alternatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Management</th>
<th>No-Action Alternative</th>
<th>Preferred Alternative</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to manage Zion as in the past, relying on existing plans.</td>
<td>Apply a new zoning scheme, focused on protecting the diversity of park resources and providing a range of quality visitor experiences within that context.</td>
<td>Apply a new zoning scheme, which would provide opportunities for more widespread and increased use of Zion while still protecting park resources.</td>
<td>Apply a new zoning scheme, which would provide a high degree of resource protection while still providing a range of recreational opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carring Capacity</td>
<td>Carrying capacity not addressed.</td>
<td>Write additional plans to address specific types and levels of visitor use, and set carrying capacities through indicators and standards. Establish a long-term program to monitor park resources and visitor experiences.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Backcountry Visitor Use Management</td>
<td>Continue to limit backcountry group size to 12 people/party. General management changes except for operating the main canyon transportation system and already approved facilities (e.g., a research facility in the south entrance-main Zion Canyon area). Continue to allow an unlimited number of parties/area except for the areas listed below. Continue to limit visitor day use in the Left Fork of North Creek and in the Narrows from the top down. Continue to limit overnight use in the Narrows, La Verkin Creek, and the West Rim trail.</td>
<td>Set interim group size limits for hikers and saddle stock groups in the primitive and pristine zones. In the pristine and primitive zones hiker group size would be 12 per party. In the primitive zone a maximum of six saddle stock and six people would be allowed per group. No saddle stock permitted in the pristine zone.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative. In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on 12 trails and routes: Camp Creek, the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, La Verkin Creek trail, Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, Right Fork of North Creek, Narrows from the northern park boundary to Orderville Canyon, Orderville Canyon, Mystery Canyon, upper Hidden Canyon, Dalton Wash, and upper Coalpits Wash. All recreational use would be prohibited on routes in research natural areas, including Goose and upper Shunes Creeks and Parunuweap Canyon. (All trails and routes in the recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative. In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers in the Narrows from the northern park boundary to Orderville Canyon, Mystery Canyon, and the La Verkin Creek trail. Prohibit all recreational use on routes in research natural areas, including upper Coalpits Wash and upper Shunes Creek. (All trails and routes in the recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative. In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on 17 trails and routes: Camp Creek, the North, Middle, and South Forks of Taylor Creek, upper La Verkin Creek, La Verkin Creek trail, Hop Valley, Northgate Peaks, Connector trail, the Narrows from the park boundary to Mystery Canyon, Mystery Canyon, Orderville Canyon, Hidden Canyon, upper Coalpits Wash, Watchman, upper Emerald Pool, Sand Bench, and Observation Point. Prohibit all recreational use on routes within research natural areas, including Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, Goose Creek, the Right Fork of North Creek, Dalton Wash, and Parunuweap Canyon. (All trails and routes recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall Park Development | Undertake no new construction or major management changes except for operating the main canyon transportation system and already approved facilities (e.g., a research facility in the south entrance-main Zion Canyon area). Build already approved facilities. Construct/replace some minor facilities, such as picnic sites and ranger residences. | Build already approved facilities. Construct a number of new developments, including picnic sites, trails, focused visitor facilities, and ranger residences. | Build already approved facilities. Construct a number of new developments, including picnic sites, trails, focused visitor facilities, and ranger residences. | Undertake a minimal amount of new development in the park, other than already approved facilities. |

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Table 5: Summary of Management Alternatives

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<th>No-Action Alternative</th>
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<td>Apply a new zoning scheme, focused on protecting the diversity of park resources and providing a range of quality visitor experiences within that context.</td>
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<td>Apply a new zoning scheme, which would provide a high degree of resource protection while still providing a range of recreational opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying capacity not addressed.</td>
<td>Write additional plans to address specific types and levels of visitor use, and set carrying capacities through indicators and standards. Establish a long-term program to monitor park resources and visitor experiences.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to limit backcountry group size to 12 people/party.</td>
<td>Set interim group size limits for hikers and saddle stock groups in the primitive and pristine zones. In the pristine and primitive zones hiker group size would be 12 per party. In the primitive zone a maximum of six saddle stock and six people would be allowed per group. No saddle stock permitted in the pristine zone.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to allow an unlimited number of parties/area except for the areas listed below.</td>
<td>In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on 12 trails and routes: Camp Creek, the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, La Verkin Creek trail, Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, Right Fork of North Creek, Narrows from the northern park boundary to Orderville Canyon, Orderville Canyon, Mystery Canyon, upper Hidden Canyon, Dalton Wash, and upper Coalpits Wash. All recreational use would be prohibited on routes in research natural areas, including Goose and upper Shunes Creeks and Parunuweap Canyon. (All trails and routes in the recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to limit visitor day use in the Left Fork of North Creek and in the Narrows from the top down.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative. In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers in the Narrows from the northern park boundary to Orderville Canyon, Mystery Canyon, and the La Verkin Creek trail. Prohibit all recreational use on routes in research natural areas, including upper Coalpits Wash and upper Shunes Creek. (All trails and routes in the recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative. In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on 17 trails and routes: Camp Creek, the North, Middle, and South Forks of Taylor Creek, upper La Verkin Creek, La Verkin Creek trail, Hop Valley, Northgate Peaks, Connector trail, the Narrows from the park boundary to Mystery Canyon, Mystery Canyon, Orderville Canyon, Hidden Canyon, upper Coalpits Wash, Watchman, upper Emerald Pool, Sand Bench, and Observation Point. Prohibit all recreational use on routes within research natural areas, including Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, Goose Creek, the Right Fork of North Creek, Dalton Wash, and Parunuweap Canyon. (All trails and routes recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to limit overnight use in the Narrows, La Verkin Creek, and the West Rim trail.</td>
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**TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

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<td>Apply a new zoning scheme, which would provide opportunities for more widespread and increased use of Zion while still protecting park resources.</td>
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<td>Carring Capacity</td>
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<td>Overall Backcountry Visitor Use Management</td>
<td>Continue to limit backcountry group size to 12 people/party. Continue to allow an unlimited number of parties/area except for the areas listed below. Continue to limit visitor day use in the Left Fork of North Creek and in the Narrows from the top down. Continue to limit overnight use in the Narrows, La Verkin Creek, and the West Rim trail.</td>
<td>Set interim group size limits for hikers and saddle stock groups in the primitive and pristine zones. In the pristine and primitive zones hiker group size would be 12 per party. In the primitive zone a maximum of six saddle stock and six people would be allowed per group. No saddle stock permitted in the pristine zone.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative. In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on 12 trails and routes: Camp Creek, the Middle Fork of Taylor Creek, La Verkin Creek trail, Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, Right Fork of North Creek, Narrows from the northern park boundary to Orderville Canyon, Orderville Canyon, Mystery Canyon, upper Hidden Canyon, Dalton Wash, and upper Coalpits Wash. All recreational use would be prohibited on routes in research natural areas, including Goose and upper Shunes Creeks and Parunuweap Canyon. (All trails and routes in the recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative. In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers in the Narrows from the northern park boundary to Orderville Canyon, Mystery Canyon, and the La Verkin Creek trail. Prohibit all recreational use on routes in research natural areas, including upper Coalpits Wash and upper Shunes Creek. (All trails and routes in the recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative. In addition to the existing limits, may need to limit or reduce visitor numbers on 17 trails and routes: Camp Creek, the North, Middle, and South Forks of Taylor Creek, upper La Verkin Creek, La Verkin Creek trail, Hop Valley, Northgate Peaks, Connector trail, the Narrows from the park boundary to Mystery Canyon, Mystery Canyon, Orderville Canyon, Hidden Canyon, upper Coalpits Wash, Watchman, upper Emerald Pool, Sand Bench, and Observation Point. Prohibit all recreational use on routes within research natural areas, including Beartrap Canyon, Willis Creek, Goose Creek, the Right Fork of North Creek, Dalton Wash, and Parunuweap Canyon. (All trails and routes recommended wilderness would be subject to visitor use limits.)</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Park Development</td>
<td>Undertake no new construction or major management changes except for operating the main canyon transportation system and already approved facilities (e.g., a research facility in the south entrance-main Zion Canyon area).</td>
<td>Build already approved facilities. Construct/replace some minor facilities, such as picnic sites and ranger residences.</td>
<td>Build already approved facilities. Construct a number of new developments, including picnic sites, trails, focused visitor facilities, and ranger residences.</td>
<td>Build already approved facilities. Construct a number of new developments, including picnic sites, trails, focused visitor facilities, and ranger residences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Development And Visitor Use Management By Specific Park Area</td>
<td>No-Action Alternative</td>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Alternative A</td>
<td>Alternative B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kolob Canyons Area</strong></td>
<td>Undertake no new actions; maintain existing facilities.</td>
<td>Possibly limit the number of vehicles in the future.</td>
<td>Allow unlimited traffic.</td>
<td>Limit the number of vehicles in the future if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Possibly expand the Kolob Canyons visitor center.</td>
<td>Expand the Kolob Canyons visitor center.</td>
<td>Maintain the existing Kolob Canyons visitor center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No new visitor facilities other than possibly installing restrooms</td>
<td>Improve or add focused visitor facilities, trailheads, trails, parking lots, and picnic areas.</td>
<td>No new visitor facilities provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adjust trailhead parking lots to reflect trail use capacities.</td>
<td>Adjust trailhead parking lots to reflect trail use capacities.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative, except remove the South Fork of Taylor Creek trailhead and restore the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kolob-Terrace Road Area</strong></td>
<td>No new actions.</td>
<td>Remove the Firepit Knoll residence and road and restore the area.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Possibly improve existing trailheads and add picnic sites.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Reduce or remove trailhead parking and trails at several sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Build a focused visitor/ranger residence/office on BLM lands near the park boundary at North Creek.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lava Point</strong></td>
<td>Undertake no new actions; continue to maintain existing facilities.</td>
<td>Limit vehicle traffic if necessary.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative except: for the addition of a focused visitor facility and nature trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain existing visitor facilities.</td>
<td>Possibly add a focused visitor facility, nature trail, and picnic tables and possibly expand the existing campground to a total of 12 sites.</td>
<td>Maintain existing visitor facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Replace the existing ranger residence.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to close the roads east of the West Rim trailhead to public recreational use.</td>
<td>Open the roads east of the West Rim trailhead to the park boundary to public motorized use.</td>
<td>Gate and close the road near the Lava Point ranger residence to motorized visitor access beyond that point. Move the West Rim trailhead to the ranger station/residence area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Entrance And Main Zion Canyon</strong></td>
<td>Undertake no new actions except for those in previously approved plans.</td>
<td>Possibly add picnic sites in disturbed areas, in addition to facilities approved in other plans.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to maintain existing facilities.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Remove facilities and structures from Oak Creek above the maintenance area. Continue to maintain other existing facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue existing activities.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Reduce the number and frequency of shuttles going past the lodge. Reduce visitor numbers on several frontcountry trails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue existing activities.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Remove the horse concession operation on the Sand Bench trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designations</td>
<td>No-Action Alternative</td>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Alternative A</td>
<td>Alternative B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zion Canyon Lodge</td>
<td>Undertake no major change in the functions and operation of the lodge. Continue to maintain the historic qualities of the lodge through contract provisions and in a commercial services plan.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
<td>Convert the lodge into a facility for research and science-based education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Fork Of The Virgin River</td>
<td>Maintain the existing riverbank armor and levees.</td>
<td>Identify strategies for managing visitor use and determine how and where parts of the river channel and floodplain would be restored to a more natural condition.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Entrance And The Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway Area</td>
<td>Undertake no new actions; continue to maintain existing facilities.</td>
<td>Possibly implement a voluntary shuttle system. Possibly add a few picnic sites and restrooms in previously disturbed areas. Improve the trailhead for the East Rim trail. Remove and rehabilitate some pullouts along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Implement a mandatory shuttle system. (Continue to permit nonrecreational and community traffic to drive the road.) Build a full service visitor center near the east entrance. Improve the trailhead for the East Rim trail; redesign parking areas along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, and remove and rehabilitate all pullouts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended wilderness, Potential Wilderness, and Nonwilderness</td>
<td>Recommended wilderness: 132,615 acres (90% ) Potential wilderness: 4,175 acres (3% ) Nonwilderness: 11,226 acres (8% ) Continue to manage the three existing research natural areas, covering about 31,000 acres (21% of the park), as they have in the past. Deauthorize the three existing research natural areas. Designate 9,031 acres (6% of the park) as new research natural areas and manage the RNAs as per NPS policy. An intern limit of 12 or fewer people/group set for educational, research, and administrative groups.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Natural Areas</td>
<td>Designate Parunuweap as a research natural area open to authorized research and NPS-guided educational groups. Open the main canyon to limited NPS or NPS-sanctioned guided interpretive trips between June 16 and January 15. Identify six river segments on BLM lands adjacent to the park as eligible and suitable for addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system.</td>
<td>Deauthorize the three existing research natural areas. Designate 6,328 acres (4% of the park) as new research natural areas and manage the RNAs as per NPS policy. Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Deauthorize the three existing research natural areas.</td>
<td>Designate 20,543 acres (14% of the park) as new research natural areas and manage the RNAs as per NPS policy. Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parunuweap Canyon</td>
<td>Continue to close the canyon to recreational use.</td>
<td>Designate the entire canyon as a research natural area and open to authorized research and NPS-guided educational groups.</td>
<td>Open the main canyon to limited NPS or NPS-sanctioned guided interpretive trips between June 16 and January 15.</td>
<td>Designate the entire canyon as a research natural area and open to authorized research and NPS-guided educational groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Wild &amp; Scenic River Designations</td>
<td>Propose no drainages for addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system.</td>
<td>Recommend five drainages and their tributaries as eligible and suitable for addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system: the North Fork of the Virgin River above and below the Temple of S�-r-wawa; the East Fork of the Virgin River; North Creek; La Verkin Creek; Taylor Creek. Recommend six river segments on BLM lands adjacent to the park as eligible and suitable for addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Summary of Management Alternatives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Boundary Adjustments</th>
<th>No-Action Alternative</th>
<th>Preferred Alternative</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Propose no boundary adjustments or access or conservation easements.</td>
<td>Propose five BLM areas, totaling approximately 950 acres, for transfer to the park.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Propose nine access easements, totaling about 15 miles, on lands outside the park boundary.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Propose three conservation easements, totaling 2,220 acres, on private lands outside the park.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZONE</td>
<td>NONWILDERNESS</td>
<td>POTENTIAL WILDERNESS*</td>
<td>RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS</td>
<td>TOTAL ACRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontcountry High Development</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontcountry Low Development</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>1,322</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>2,860</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13,602</td>
<td>16,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>5,339</td>
<td>4,023</td>
<td>110,083</td>
<td>119,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Natural Area</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13416</td>
<td>8,893</td>
<td>9,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,226</td>
<td>4,175</td>
<td>132,615</td>
<td>148,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontcountry High Development</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontcountry Low Development</td>
<td>2,585</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,585</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>4,775</td>
<td>3,994</td>
<td>82,319</td>
<td>91,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44,092</td>
<td>45,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Natural Area</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>6,145</td>
<td>6,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,226</td>
<td>4,175</td>
<td>132,615</td>
<td>148,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontcountry High Development</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontcountry Low Development</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>2,491</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,455</td>
<td>6,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primitive</td>
<td>7,387</td>
<td>3,985</td>
<td>107,802</td>
<td>119,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Natural Area</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>20,348</td>
<td>20,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,226</td>
<td>4,175</td>
<td>132,615</td>
<td>148,016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All acreages were calculated using GIS data layers, graphical display, and summary statistics. Total acreages and percentages vary between the alternatives due to rounding. The acre figures may not correspond with legal description acre figures.

*Potential wilderness areas are lands that do not qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible uses (e.g., private inholdings, private water rights). The Park Service would add these areas to the wilderness recommendation or convert them to designated wilderness if and when private rights are required or relinquished.
# Table 7: Summary of the Impacts of the Alternatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic/Resource Value</th>
<th>No-Action Alternative</th>
<th>Preferred Alternative</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Air Quality</strong></td>
<td>Minor to moderate, localized, increase in air quality impacts due to increase in expected visitation and retention of existing traffic patterns and vehicle use.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative, except air quality may improve compared to the no-action alternative because the number of vehicles on the Kolab Canyons Road may be limited in the future.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Minor to moderate improvement in air quality due to: the reduction in number of facilities and visitor use levels; the institution of a mandatory shuttle system on the park's east side; possible limits on vehicle numbers on the Kolob Canyons and Kolob-Terrace Roads; and the reduction in the number and frequency of the Zion Canyon shuttles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor, short-term decrease in local air quality due to construction activities.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water Quality</strong></td>
<td>Moderate, localized, adverse effects on water quality due to increased use.</td>
<td>Minor, localized adverse effects on water quality, such as increased turbidity, sedimentation, and bacterial contamination, due to increased use. Mitigation would include visitor management, improved waste management, and visitor education.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Minor long-term improvement in water quality due to decreased use and improved visitor management. Mitigation would be similar to the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor, short-term increases in turbidity and sedimentation during construction, which could be mitigated through accepted construction practices.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate, short-term increases in turbidity from river restoration measures. Occasional episodes of increased turbidity and sedimentation would occur for several years as the channel adjusts.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floodplain of the North Fork of the Virgin River</strong></td>
<td>Zion Lodge and the park support facilities at Birch Creek would remain within the probable maximum floodplain because no reasonable alternative locations are available. Minor to moderate, long-term increase in the number of people exposed to flood hazards in Zion Canyon due to increased day use. Moderate to major, long-term impairment of floodplain functions/processes would continue along 4.5 miles of river in the park due to past channelization. Moderate to major, adverse cumulative impacts on natural floodplain values would result.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action except for the addition of new picnic areas.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor decrease in the number of people exposed to flood hazards due to decreased day use in primitive zones.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic/Resource Value</td>
<td>No-Action Alternative</td>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Alternative A</td>
<td>Alternative B</td>
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<tr>
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<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian/Wetland Communities</td>
<td>Continued decline and increased dryness of the riparian system along 4.5 miles of the river as a result of the isolation of the North Fork from its floodplain in portions of Zion Canyon. Moderate to major impacts on riparian communities along the North Fork within the park, with the greater impact occurring along the channelized and heavily used sections of the North Fork. Incrementally small loss of riparian habitat in the region, but this still would contribute to the continuing loss of riparian areas within the Virgin River watershed. Minor impacts, with mitigation, to other park riparian areas, due to recreational use.</td>
<td>Moderate, long-term, beneficial impacts on riparian communities from permitting the river to use the floodplain in a much more natural manner. Moderate, beneficial effects from the incremental increase in riparian acreage within the Virgin River watershed. Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging Gardens</td>
<td>Continued potential for impacts on hanging gardens not protected by barrier. Minor, short-term, adverse impacts on gardens due to increased visitor impacts, continued potential for visitors to adversely affect other hanging gardens; minor, short-term impacts with mitigation measures.</td>
<td>Long-term, positive effects due to zoning five locations with hanging gardens as research natural areas, which would help limit future visitor impacts. Continued potential for visitors to adversely affect other hanging gardens. Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiotic Crusts</td>
<td>Continued localized, long-term, moderate to major, negative impacts on microbiotic crusts within areas of extensive development and trail use. Minor impacts on microbiotic crusts from a parkwide standpoint because most of the approximately 75,000 acres of park lands likely supporting microbiotic crusts would not be subject to disturbance.</td>
<td>Same as the no-action alternative except microbiotic crusts in additional areas would be affected by new development — primarily along the East Entrance and Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, Kolob-Terrace Road, Kolob Scenic Road, and lower Zion Canyon. Same as the preferred alternative except for effects to additional microbiotic crusts due to new developments, such as a bike trail paralleling the Kolob-Terrace Road and additional picnic sites along the Kolob Canyons Road.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Minor to moderate, localized reduction in soil compaction and erosion, primarily along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway, due to zoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Spinedace</td>
<td>Long-term, minor to moderate, adverse impact on spinedace habitat from diminished pool/riffle habitat and riparian vegetation in portions of the North Fork due to river stabilization measures. Continued reduction in the abundance of larval fish and the ability of fish to feed in high recreational use areas. Major, long-term impact on the population may result if high levels of recreational use occurred on an increasingly greater proportion of the river. Negligible impacts on spinedace populations elsewhere in the park due to low or restricted visitor use levels.</td>
<td>Minor to moderate, long-term benefit to the North Fork population due to river restoration measures that potentially enhance the spinedace population within disturbed areas. Major, long-term, cumulative benefit due to further protection and potential enhancement of this population. Negligible short-term increases in turbidity due to river restoration activities. The potential for new impacts would be minimized along the North Fork based on increased visitor management, although the ability of fish to feed would continue to be adversely affected due to turbidity in high use recreational areas. Negligible to minor impacts on spinedace populations elsewhere in the park due to low or restricted visitor use levels resulting from zoning.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic/Resource Value</td>
<td>Nonaction Alternative</td>
<td>Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Alternative A</td>
<td>Alternative B</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mexican Spotted Owls</strong></td>
<td>Not likely to adversely affect the productivity of known owl territories due to: the mitigation of potential impacts from closures and signing of side canyons; continued monitoring of spotted owl to assess potential impacts; and implementation of use restrictions, if necessary.</td>
<td>Not likely to adversely affect the productivity of known owl territories due to the mitigation of potential impacts: most owl habitat zoned pristine; trail closures and signing of side canyons off of the main Zion Canyon as necessary; continued owl monitoring; and restrictions on backcountry camping locations. Impacts also avoided with consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prior to the construction of new picnic areas and restrooms adjacent to the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway.</td>
<td>Not likely to adversely affect the productivity of known owl territories, due to most owl habitat zoned pristine and primitive, appropriate mitigation measures, and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.</td>
<td>Not likely to adversely affect owl populations, with most habitat zoned research natural area and pristine. This alternative would have the least potential of all the alternatives for disturbance of the owls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southwestern Willow Flycatcher</strong></td>
<td>Not likely to adversely affect the flycatcher; loss of riparian areas within park would contribute to major loss of riparian areas and potential flycatcher habitat within the Virgin River watershed.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desert Bighorn Sheep</strong></td>
<td>Continued protection from disturbance of all known lambing areas due to year-round closures of Parunuweap and Shunes Canyons. Minor to moderate impacts on sheep in foraging areas due to the potential for unlimited visitor use in frequently used portions of the range. Major impacts could occur, should sheep be displaced from key portions of their range.</td>
<td>Avoidance of visitor use impacts on lambing areas due to zoning. Negligible to minor impacts from sheep research activities. Negligible to minor visitor disturbance to sheep in foraging areas due to zoning, which would permit only low-impact use and seasonal closures. Minor benefit to sheep from limiting and reducing use in Gifford Canyon, an important sheep use area.</td>
<td>Negligible to minor visitor disturbance to sheep in foraging areas due to zoning, which would allow very low, restricted levels of use, and seasonal closures. Minor to moderate impacts on sheep in foraging areas along the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway due to the potential for increased visitor use over a large portion of the sheep's range. Major impacts could occur, should sheep be displaced from key portions of the range.</td>
<td>Avoidance of visitor use impacts on lambing areas due to zoning as research natural areas. Negligible to minor impacts from sheep research activities. Minor benefit to sheep from prohibiting or slightly reducing visitor use in most of the sheep's foraging range, primarily Parunuweap and Shunes Canyons and other areas south of the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Soundscape</strong></td>
<td>Minor to moderate, long-term decrease in natural sounds due to the expected increase in visitation and retention of existing visitor use patterns and vehicle use.</td>
<td>Minor to moderate, long-term decrease in natural sounds due to increases in use levels. Minor reduction in noise levels if vehicle use is reduced on the Kolob Canyons Road. Minor reduction in noise levels with the voluntary shuttle system on the east side of the park.</td>
<td>Moderate increase in noise levels with higher use levels. Minor reduction in noise levels with the voluntary shuttle system on the east side of the park.</td>
<td>Moderate decrease in noise impacts due to reduction in number of facilities and visitor use levels and mandatory shuttle system on park's east side. Minor decrease in noise impacts if vehicle numbers are limited on the Kolob Canyons and Kolob-Terrace Roads.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Range of Experiences/Activities in the Park</strong></td>
<td>Overall long-term, minor to moderate, negative impacts on the range and quality of the visitor experience based on: gradual decrease in the quality and range of recreational opportunities in popular areas; diminished opportunities for quiet and solitude in areas not closely managed; increased crowding and traffic congestion in frontcountry areas other than the main Zion Canyon; and continued unrestricted visitor access to much of park.</td>
<td>Overall, minor, positive impact on most visitor experiences in the frontcountry and backcountry based on applying the new zones and the development of a few new visitor facilities. A few saddle stock groups would be adversely affect a minor to moderate degree, and some visitors may feel their personal choices and access to park resources were being adversely affected by reducing or limiting use levels on 12 trails and routes.</td>
<td>Overall, moderate, positive impacts on most visitor experiences in the frontcountry and moderate, positive and negative impacts on visitor experiences in the backcountry due to: expanded frontcountry scenic driving and hiking opportunities and backcountry hiking opportunities, and a number of additional opportunities for visitors to enjoy the park's recommended wilderness, including Parunuweap. Adverse effects on some visitors due to further increases levels with other visitors and reduced levels of use in use in four areas.</td>
<td>Overall, moderate to major, negative impacts on the experiences of many visitors in the frontcountry and moderate, negative impacts on visitor experiences in the backcountry due to: fewer opportunities to experience Zion Canyon above the lodge; fewer opportunities to stay overnight in the park and ride horses; reduced personal choices generated by the mandatory Zion-Mt. Carmel shuttle in this part of the park; and possible limits or reductions on 17 trails and routes in the backcountry. Positive impact to backcountry visitors based on improved opportunities for solitude and quiet in most of the park, and positive impact on some visitors and group who use the new education/research center.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recreational Facilities Nearby to the Park</strong></td>
<td>Negligible to minor, negative effect on the experiences provided at these areas, with increased visitation and the displacement of a few people to nearby recreational areas.</td>
<td>Minor, negative effect on the experiences provided at nearby recreational areas, due to the displacement of some from Zion caused by increased visitor management.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
<td>Same as the preferred alternative.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomic Environment</strong></td>
<td>Negligible, positive contribution to the overall local/regional economy. Continued moderate to major positive contribution to the local economy.</td>
<td>Overall negligible, positive change in the local/regional economy. Moderate to major, positive effect for a small number of businesses and individuals, based on increased visitation and various construction projects.</td>
<td>Overall, negligible to minor, positive or negative change in the local/regional economy, with increased park use and additional construction projects. Moderate to major, positive, economic benefits to some individuals and firms.</td>
<td>Overall, negligible to major, negative change in the local/regional economy. Moderate to major, negative effects on some businesses and individuals due to the elimination of competition and from some development projects in the park.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above acreage figures are based on computer (GIS) analysis. These figures may not correspond with the legal descriptions. The access zone acreages apply only to land inside the park boundary.