

THE
FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Zion National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: ZION

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Zion National Park is characterized by high plateaus, a maze of narrow, deep sandstone canyons, and striking rock towers and mesas. The park is uniquely located at the junction of the Colorado Plateau, Great Basin and Mojave Desert regions. The park also has an elevation range of over 5,000 feet, which comprises four different life zones including desert, riparian, woodland, and coniferous forests. This unique geography and variety of life zones allow for unusual plant and animal diversity.

Zion has a rich human history dating back to at least 8,000 B.P. (before present). The archeological record begins with evidence of small groups that hunted game and gathered wild plants throughout the region. Later Ancestral Puebloan practiced agriculture and produced ceramics in the area. Southern Paiute were hunter-gatherers, who also practiced some floodplain agriculture in the area. The first Euro-Americans to the area were Fathers Dominguez and Escalante. Later John Wesley Powell explored areas around Zion Canyon for the U.S. Geological Survey. The Mormon pioneers came next; they farmed, grazed livestock and logged various areas in the park. In 1909, Zion was established as Mukuntuweap National Monument, Utah's first National Monument.

Today park visitors enjoy a variety of recreational opportunities from hiking and backpacking on established trails to exploring backcountry areas that require special equipment and skill. The canyons and cliffs that characterize Zion provide outstanding opportunities for visitors to be challenged on technical rock climbs and canyoneering routes.

Zion National Park will provide park visitors educational and recreational opportunities that foster an appreciation of Zion and its resources while ensuring that visitor impacts do not impair resources. The park will strive to maintain the natural and cultural resources to ensure long-term integrity while being consistent with natural processes. The park will maintain facilities and operations in ways that are safe for visitors and staff in a sustainable and cost-effective manner. We will strive to be an organization that is responsive to employee needs and recognize the contributions of each individual. These activities will be done in such ways that will foster supportive partnerships with private and public organizations and individuals to achieve visitor use and resource protection goals.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Jock Whitworth, Superintendent

Site: ZION

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

o The primary vehicle route through Zion National Park includes a 1.1 mile long tunnel constructed in the 1930s. Large vehicles require stopping traffic to allow one way traffic through the tunnel. To increase employee and visitor safety the park will create an automated system to augment the current system which relies on employees to stop traffic. This system will enhance visitor and employee safety during the staffed and unstaffed portions of the day.

o Expand close-captioning and other accessibility features for park audio visual programs and interpretive installations.

o Zion National Park will develop and implement a strategy to restore the Virgin River Corridor as outlined in the General Management Plan. In collaboration with interest groups the park will maintain safe public access up the historic canyon while restoring and protecting natural and cultural resources. Through the restoration of a channelized portion of the Virgin River, visitor access points to the river and canyon trails, and long term protection of a historic road, visitors will be able to continue to safely enjoy the best known natural resource and cultural landscape of Zion National Park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

o Zion NP will rehabilitate its high-priority historic buildings in order to insure their longevity and use them into the future. Examples include: the first visitor center and museum at the Grotto, the oldest building in the park, will be rehabilitated and used as a combined facility for the Artist in Residence Program and park Research Program; Historic residences will be protected from loss and maintained for their historic use as residences. As feasible these will be done in partnership such as the Zion Park Foundation or Zion Natural History Association.

o Thematic studies will be developed on park historic uses to preserve park and surrounding communities. These will focus on the time periods that center around the early park history and CCC and Union Pacific use of the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.

o Zion NP will restore and maintain native habitats through an active vegetation management program that includes partners and volunteer groups. Zion will be a leader in researching and utilizing a variety of methods to control and reduce invasive species. In addition to restoring native habitats, these efforts will utilize native vegetation to maintain cultural landscapes which will lead to improved visitor experiences and environmental stewardship through reduced water usage.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

- In collaboration with the Northern Colorado Plateau Network, Zion National Park will utilize the data collected through the vital signs program to improve natural resources. For instance water quality samples that are currently being collected can be used during assessments for post fire management activities to insure these activities do not impact the water resources of the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

- Zion NP will continue to inventory for archeologic resources. High priority areas include La Verkin Creek, Hop Valley, Upper Coal Pits, and Dalton Wash. Associated with the archeological inventories is to conduct research with the subsequent consolidation of missing archeological collections made during the time period when the park was developed.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

- Park backcountry trails will be maintained to ensure compliance with the park's 2007 backcountry management plan. Programs will be created to encourage volun -tourism and other outside groups to assist with maintenance of park trails.
- Fences along boundary areas and inholdings are in poor condition allowing for cattle trespass. The park will improve the quality of fences and thus reduce the documented number of cattle trespass incidents increasing the quality of park resources and slowing the spread of exotic weeds into the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

STEWARDSHIP

Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

o Zion National Park will seek out research opportunities through CESU's, the USGS, and other partners to expand science opportunities in the park. The park will continue to lead the way through the blending of science and management in resolving complex management issues such as the spread of cheat grass, an exotic devastating natural ecosystems of the west. The park will capitalize on the rehabilitation of the historic Grotto museum, which was the first Park museum, and adaptively use it as a shared facility with an Artists in Residence program and Research program and work closely with park partners to enhance research opportunities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

STEWARDSHIP

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Expand & refine Junior Ranger Program to better serve a diversity of ages.
 Initiate Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program to carry park values & messages into classrooms.
 Initiate a multi-day youth program, "Zion Rock Stars", through the Zion Canyon Field Institute to educate youth about national parks, park resources including an emphasis on geology, & park management programs.
 Expand educational outreach programs to reach more classrooms, increase awareness of leave no trace & resource education issues, and encourage & accommodate on-site educational field trips by school classes. More outreach efforts will target diversity and specific youth groups such as the scouts.
 Create partnerships & provide opportunities for youth and adult volunteers. Identify projects which will fit the ability of the volunteer group (e.g., school, club, Eagle Scout project). Emphasize the role of the new Volunteer Coordinator in working with community organizations in creating long-term partnerships with the Park. Help create the mind-set in Park employees that volunteers can be used on appropriate projects. Create Park ownership among the public through their involvement in service projects.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

Zion will practice climate friendly operations, reducing our carbon foot print, reducing our solid waste stream, design and construct LEEDs rated facilities, practice green purchasing of all supplies and materials, work with other agencies to provide leadership and comment on proposed developments and projects that may increase emissions and contaminates that will reduce or eliminated their impacts.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

- Private development is increasing along the boundaries of Zion National Park. The park will seek means to partner with surrounding landowners and communities to increase understanding of the park's mission and goals. The park will seek agreements that ensure protection of park resources as well as continued visitor access to backcountry areas.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

ENVIRONMENT

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

o Zion will increase the number of interpretive programs focused on environmental issues and showcasing the park's green practices and facilities.
o Encourage the public to reduce use of non-environmentally friendly materials through innovative programs such as areas to refill reusable water bottles instead of sale and purchase of disposable bottled water, an effective, sustainable shuttle system, and expanded website focusing on sustainable practices.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

Zion will increase our fleet of alternative vehicles and we will purchase and use green sources of energy as they become available.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

ENVIRONMENT

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

o Private development is rapidly increasing along the boundaries of Zion National Park. The park will seek means to partner with surrounding landowners and communities to increase understanding of the park's mission and goals. The park will seek agreements that ensure protection of park resources as well as continued visitor access to backcountry areas.

o Through the engagement of partners such as the towns of Springdale and Rockville, concessioners, contractors, Zion Natural History Association and surrounding communities Zion will lead the way in southern Utah to develop an effective recycling and waste reduction program.

o Through the engagement of partners Zion National Park will lead the way as environmental stewards. Not only by example (use of hybrid vehicles, environmentally friendly shuttle systems, sustainable LEED rated designs for construction and rehabilitation projects, improved lighting to protect the night sky and reduce energy consumption), the park will provide guidance, examples, lessons learned, and encouragement on its website, through interpretive programs, participation in green initiatives and programs, and publications.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

RECREATION

- Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.
- Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

o Zion National Park will remain at the forefront of the NPS in the field of internet based backcountry permit technology expanding the current permit and reservation system to include self serve backcountry permits kiosks .

o Increase biking opportunities within/adjacent to the Park by emphasizing the work now being done with Springdale and other partners on the Zion Canyon Trail. Identify the potential to link with other trails, design a hiking/biking trail from Canyon junction to the Temple of Sinewava - where feasible, while protecting resources. Extend the Shuttle system into March and November reducing parking issues.

o Work more extensively and effectively with youth groups such as Scouts to provide an educational experience to strengthen their stewardship ethic. Providing the participants and their leaders with education and information to reduce accidents, rescues, and permit violations.

o Zion will develop a premier trail maintenance program that restores them above the good condition. Trails are on the National Historic Register will maintain the contributing features to maintain this status through craftsmanship, durability, and partnerships.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

RECREATION

- Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.
- Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.

o Zion will establish a full-time volunteer coordinator position.

o We will identify a catalog of projects for volunteers to provide volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups of diverse ages and interests and utilize partnership organizations to advertise and recruit participants and to assist in coordinating and leading 'work trips'.

o Zion will utilize and work cooperatively with local businesses to provide incentives for visitors wanting to volunteer while visiting and develop projects that benefit both the park and surrounding communities and cross traditional boundary lines.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

o Zion will work with the Utah Office of Tourism and area Visitor Bureaus in promoting and conducting the park's 100th Anniversary celebration in 2009.
o We will work with the local visitor bureaus to encourage more visitation to the Kolob Canyons section of Zion National Park and provide programs focused on that area to encourage visitation to lesser used areas.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

EDUCATION

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

We will produce a teacher's activity guide to enhance classroom and on-site class visits to the park.
Develop interactive, web based outreach programs for specific grade levels and tied to school curriculum.
Develop high school/college level field institute classes to fit with earth science and geology curriculums.
Initiate Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program to bring park values and messages into classrooms that the park cannot reach with educational outreach messages.
Expand educational outreach programs to reach more classrooms and encourage and accommodate on-site educational field trips by school classes.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Zion will produce "pod cast" type features that are downloadable over websites and update our park website, including a variety of interactive links, with programing that appeals to younger visitors and intices them to log in, learn, and have fun! .

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Zion will provide technology downloading stations for iPods, pocket PCs etc. Expand and refine our Junior Ranger Program to utilize new technologies where appropriate.
Deliver high quality and relevent interpretive programs that inspire and engage, utilizing new technologies where appropriate.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

EDUCATION

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Zion will continue, expand and update our interpretive programs
Establish an Artist-in-Residence program to connect visitors to the park through the arts.

- Emphasize the restoration of the Grotto Museum as part of this program.
- Provide opportunities for workshops/classes and extensive public involvement.
- Include plans to create gallery for display/sale of work in the Human History Museum.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

We will expand outreach programs to Universities via non-traditional opportunities in order to develop long-term stewardship and future diverse employees for the National Park Service. We will work with the Southern Utah University Honors Program to bring brilliant, young, diverse students to the Zion group to learn from the extraordinary natural and cultural resources and provide the parks with their ideas, recommendations, and enthusiasm.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.

Zion NP will seek out ways to recruit individuals who represent America through outreach programs with Universities where students unaware of the career opportunities with the National Park Service.

Zion will continue to use the IMR diversity website for reviewing and recruiting candidates interested in positions with the National Park Service. We will continue to distribute announcements to sources that will produce a wide range of diversity candidates for consideration and attend at Job Fairs at Colleges, Universities, Trades School, Workforce Services offices, etc. We will continue to provide detailed information to "call-ins" requesting information on both permanent & seasonal positions and provide explicit instructions on how to apply to any/all government advertisements.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.

Zion will be considered one of the best National Park Units to work at. Working as a team across divisions and within divisions, strategies and opportunities will be developed to encourage personal growth of employees and provide a fun, productive workplace that will improve satisfaction as employees of the National Park Service. These efforts will transcend beyond the work place and lead to greater recruitment into the service.

Zion will continue to provide a wide range of services for employees, and the general public.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: ZION

PROFESSIONALISM

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

o Zion will continue to develop a safety culture that emphasizes accountability, commitment, training, and watching out for ourselves and each other. We will promote a healthy and safe working environment through regular "safety tailgate" meetings, All Employee Meetings with a safety discussion, Monthly Safety Committee Meetings, Monthly Executive Safety Committee Meetings, development of safe practices and JHA's, Root Cause Analysis of accidents whether employee or public involvement. Supervisors will continue review work areas to evaluate any/all safety hazards that can be eliminated. Management will take a leadership role in assuring all employees have required training and are empowered to stop work if they can not do it safely. We will conduct safety walk arounds to evaluate work/public areas to identify hazards and safe and unsafe acts and procedures. Unsafe acts and procedures will be analyzed, and actions taken to prevent them in the future. Safe acts and suggestions will be consistently rewarded.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS