

"Nothing can exceed the wonderful beauty of Zion. . . . In the nobility and beauty of the sculptures there is no comparison. . . . There is an eloquence to their forms which stirs the imagination with a singular power, and kindles in the mind a glowing response."

—Clarence E. Dutton, geologist 1882

Early Explorers and Settlers

When people of European origin first discovered and explored this area, native Americans of the Paiute tribe were claiming the region. Prehistoric peoples once lived here, but had moved on before the Paiute people arrived.

The Escalante-Dominguez party of Spanish padres was the first group of Europeans to explore this part of southern Utah. Skirting the great canyons, they crossed the Virgin River near Hurricane, Utah, in 1776, and beheld the glories of this area.

Fifty years passed before trappers and fur traders reached the Zion region. Jedediah Smith, one of the most daring, led a party of 16 men from Great Salt Lake south through the valleys to the Virgin River in search of pelts. Through this and a later expedition down the Virgin River, Smith provided information to guide other exploring parties to the area in the next few years. However, only meager observations and descriptions were reported.

It was Capt. John C. Fremont who, from his 1843-44 explorations, supplied the detailed information which led the Mormon pioneers to a mass migration into the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Within little more than a decade, the Mormons had established small settlements as far south as the Virgin River and had discovered Zion Canyon.

From that time to the present, the story parallels, to a marked degree, the settling and development of Utah by the Mormons and others. The colorful canyons, first thought of as obstacles to be avoided, soon became choice places for retreat and relaxation.

Geology, the Key to Zion

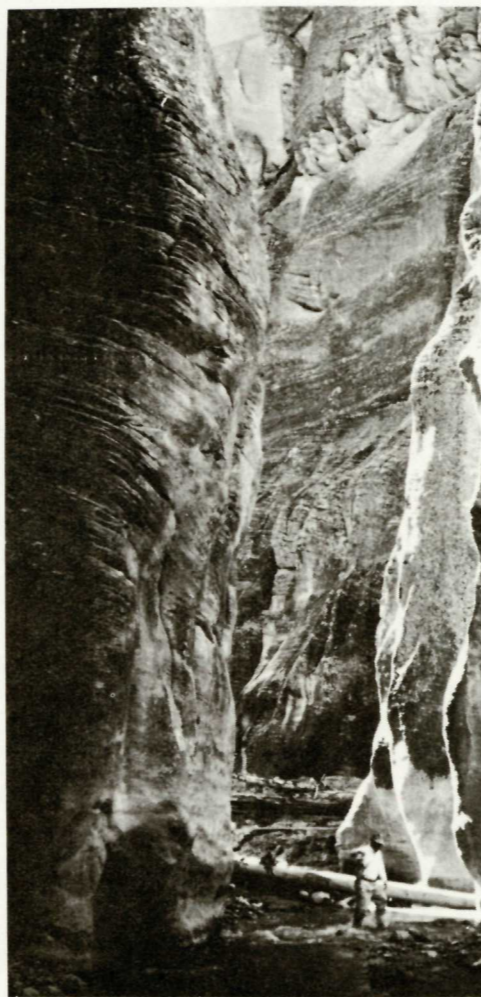
Like so many pages of a book, rock layers of the towering cliffs and slopes in the Zion region tell a fascinating geologic story of natural processes operating through more than 200 million years. These layers reveal that successive occurrences of vast inland seas, ponds and lakes, raging rivers, tropical lowlands, tremendous earth upheavals, and the constant forces of erosion have all played a part in forming this region.

Over these millions of years, in ever-changing patterns, oceans moved in and out several times, and finally deposited more than a vertical mile of sediment on top of the highest of the great sand dunes that you see today as sandstone walls.

About 60 million years ago, when the Zion country was near sea level, a very gradual uplift of the entire region began. Over a period of many millions of years, the land was lifted thousands of feet, and because of the tremendous stresses, the land mass broke into great blocks. The cleavage lines which separate these blocks are known as faults, and lesser fractures within the blocks are called joints. Along these planes of weakness, many canyons have been formed by the process of erosion. In the Finger Canyons area, in the northwest corner of the Park, the forces of deformation have folded the strata, and great blocks of bedrock have been thrust up and over themselves. There the towering "fingers" of Navajo Sandstone resemble the bows of ships riding up on a beach.

Later tilting of the Markagunt Plateau, of which the Kolob Terrace of Zion National Park is a part, permitted development of fast-moving streams along the south and west margins of the plateau. These rushing waters rapidly carved their way into the terrace's rock layers, continually deepening their crooked channels.

Billions of tons of rock were ground up and carried away, finally exposing the remains of that great ancient desert, now called Navajo Sandstone. Thus, the major features you see here, including the deep perpendicular-walled Zion Canyon, are the product of these upheavals, the erosive forces of restless streams, wind, rain, and frost.



The quick waters of the Virgin River pass through the Narrows, echoing against centuries-old handiwork carved in 160-million-year-old Navajo sandstone.

Landscape Influences Plants and Animals

The varieties of plants and animals in the park provide a pleasing change from the impact of great stone masses that form the walls of the canyon. It is these very walls, though, that create diverse environments for the plants and animals.

The Virgin River, running along the floor of Zion Canyon, supports a narrow corridor of riparian woodland where broadleaf trees, birds, and small mammals abound.

On narrow ledges above the river are drier benches and open areas of pinyon-juniper woodland. Thickets of short evergreens and oaks are interrupted by open flats covered with low shrubs. These areas are preferred by birds for nesting and by deer for browse.

The high country vegetation is predominantly ponderosa pine, quaking aspen, white fir, Douglas-fir, and many kinds of shrubs. Many of the resident birds in the park migrate from the canyons to the high country in the summer, then back when the snow falls.

Many side canyons have been cut back into the walls of the main canyon. These offer shade and moisture from springs, providing an ideal environment for many of the high country birds and other animals to live at much lower elevations. Pines and firs also grow in these side canyons, providing food and protection for the small animals associated with them. If there is enough moisture, cottonwoods and boxelders also will be present. Around the mouths of these canyons is more pinyon-juniper woodland. This association of environments allows you to enjoy all three in a small area without climbing from the floor of Zion Canyon to the plateau top.

From December to March, snow may fall intermittently but usually lasts only a day or two on the canyon floor. Winter-maximum temperatures average 12° C (53° F); the average minimum is -1° C (30° F).

May to October daytime temperatures may range from 22° C (72° F) to 39° C (103° F); nighttime, from 7° C (45° F) to 23° C (73° F).

What to See and Do

The visitor center is open daily. Here, you will find information to help plan your visit; natural history exhibits, orientation programs, a relief map of Zion Canyon, and books, posters, maps, and other publications sold by the Zion Natural History Association. **Interpretive program schedules are posted throughout the park.** Illustrated talks about the park are presented by naturalists each summer evening. See the posted schedules for locations. Guided trips are conducted daily in summer over well-maintained trails; in spring and fall, several times a week. Besides these programs the Zion Nature Center offers outdoor educational programs each June, July, and August for children ages 6 through 12. This gives children a chance to learn about Zion at their own level of understanding.

Drives. On a 21-kilometer (13-mile) round trip drive through Zion Canyon, you can see the shapes of Zion: The Sentinel, Court of the Patriarchs, Mountain of the Sun, and Great White Throne.

Kolob Canyons Road, in the Kolob Canyons section, is a paved 8.4-kilometer (5.2-mile) spur leading into the northwest corner of the park from I-15 near Kanarrville. This road is closed from late autumn to spring.

The Kolob Reservoir road from Utah 9 at the town of Virgin leads northward through private ranch country to the Lava Point Fire Lookout on the Kolob Terrace highlands and beyond. This is a steep, winding road and should be used only in good weather. It is paved only to the north boundary of the park.

Park roads are designed for you to enjoy the scenery—not for speed. Maximum speed is 55 kilometers (35 miles) an hour. Keep to the right of the center stripe. Don't park on curves. Watch for deer. Your car's lights must be in good working order; they are essential in traveling through the 1.6-kilometer (1-mile) tunnel on the East Entrance road. This road has an approximate grade of 6 percent on the switchbacks.

Walks and hikes. The trails of Zion complement the park's striking views and are almost as famous.

Experienced hikers take such common sense precautions as the following: Obtain detailed information at the visitor center on backcountry trails before attempting to hike them. Seek the advice of the park staff before attempting the more difficult trails; tell someone where you plan to go and when you plan to return. Do not hike alone. Stay on established trails; taking shortcuts may endanger yourself and others.

Be alert to the threat of lightning and flash floods during thunderstorms.



Backcountry camping requires a permit, available at the visitor center. Open (ground) fires are not permitted; pack stoves are recommended to heat food. All trash must be packed out. Water from springs and creeks should be boiled.

The most popular trail, a 1.6-kilometer (1-mile) footpath from the road's end at the Temple of Sinawava, winds near the east wall of the canyon, past cliffs trickling with streams, to the Gateway to The Narrows. On this walk you can see the Hanging Gardens of Zion, luxuriant verdure, and wildlife. Self-guiding trips may be made throughout most of the year on the trails to Weeping Rock and to Canyon Overlook.

Other trails reach such places as Emerald Pools and Hidden Canyon. More strenuous but well worth your effort are the West Rim Trail, which leads to Angels Landing and views of the Great West Canyon, and the East Rim Trail with its unequalled view of Zion Canyon. In the Kolob Canyon section the trail from Lee Pass to Kolob Arch is a 22-kilometer (14-mile) round trip.

Hardy hikers who seek the unusual should enjoy the river bed route through Zion Narrows, a 21-kilometer (13-mile) trip beginning north of the park and ending at the Temple of Sinawava. Special permits, available only 24 hours in advance, are required and are issued at the visitor center. Please leave animals, trees, wildflowers, rocks, and geological formations undisturbed so that others may enjoy them. Wheeled devices, except wheelchairs and strollers, are not allowed on trails.

Climbing. All persons who plan to make technical rock climbs are required to register at park headquarters. Climbing alone is not recommended.

Horseback trips. Arrangements for guided horseback trips within the park may be made at Zion Lodge. Schedules are posted throughout the park. Private horseback parties should check at the visitor center. The East Rim Trail is closed to stock use because of its steep, narrow condition.

Fishing is allowed all year in the Virgin River below Zion Narrows, but it is marginal because of frequent flooding and seasonal fluctuations in water levels. A Utah fishing license is required.

The park is a sanctuary for wildlife; hunting and the use or display of firearms are not allowed.

Pets are prohibited on trails or in public buildings, and they must be kept under physical control at all times. Pets are prohibited in the backcountry.

How to Reach the Park

I-15 passes west of Zion and connects with Utah 9 and 17 to the park. U.S. 89 passes east and connects with Utah 9 to the park. In the summer, Color Country Tours, Inc. (P.O. Box 1032, Cedar City, Utah 84720), makes scheduled tours from Cedar City. The nearest scheduled air service is through Cedar City and St. George, Utah, where rental cars are available.

Accommodations and Services

Campgrounds. Either South or Watchman Campground is open all year; both are open in summer. Camping limit is 14 days; campsites are not reserved. Camping is permitted only in designated campsites, including the Lava Point Primitive Campground. Both South and Watchman Campgrounds have individual campsites, fire grates, tables, water, restrooms, and a sanitary disposal station for trailers and campers. There are no utility hookups in the park, but some are available in nearby Springdale. A few campsites are reserved for the handicapped in Watchman Campground. The visitor center and Zion Lodge have wheelchair ramps.

Build campfires only in fireplaces provided either in designated campgrounds or in the Grotto Picnic Area. Keep fires small and controlled.

Picnic sites are available at the Grotto Picnic Area (near Zion Lodge) and at the end of Kolob Canyons Road.

Lodging. The Utah Parks Division of TWA Services, Inc. (451 N. Main St., Cedar City, UT 84720) operates Zion Lodge. It has cabins in the park; reservations advised in summer: call (801) 586-7686. Contact TWAS for information on other seasons. Nearby communities offer year-round accommodations.

In-Canyon Tours. TWAS provides scheduled open-air tram tours of the canyon floor several times daily during the summer. The tours leave from Zion Lodge.

Food. Zion Lodge has a dining room and snack bar. Nearby communities have restaurants open year round.

Medical services. Hospitals are in St. George, 72 kilometers (45 miles) west of the park, Cedar City, 97 kilometers (60 miles) north, and Kanab, 68 kilometers (42 miles) east.

Religious services. Protestant (interdenominational), Latter-day Saint, and Roman Catholic services are held in summer. See posted schedules.

Public telephones are at the visitor center, Zion Lodge, and the campgrounds.

Automobile service. At Springdale and Mt. Carmel Junction service stations with towing service are operated all year. Springdale has a garage.

Have a Safe and Pleasant Visit

Your visit to this national park can be most pleasurable and rewarding, or it can be a time of distress, or even tragedy. Much depends on how you and your family observe the simple rules of the wilderness. The safeguards are yours—please use them. If in doubt, ask a park ranger.

Park rangers are here to enforce regulations and to help you if you have any questions or difficulties. Park naturalists help you to understand the geology and other natural history of the park. All park personnel welcome your observations and inquiries.

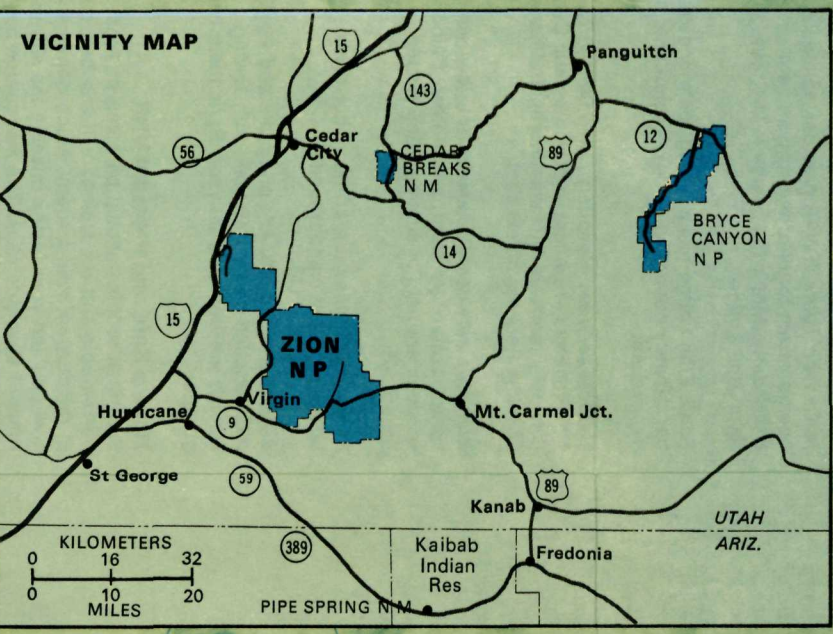
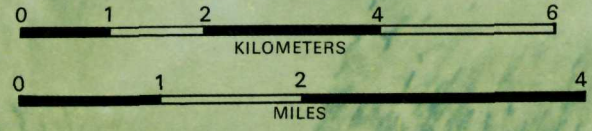
Down the canyon at a lofty distance, the Great White Throne and Angels Landing keep watch over this pleasant amphitheater called the Temple of Sinawava, here at the end of the Zion Canyon scenic drive.

ADMINISTRATION

Zion National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Springdale, UT 84767, is in immediate charge. Telephone (801) 772-3256.

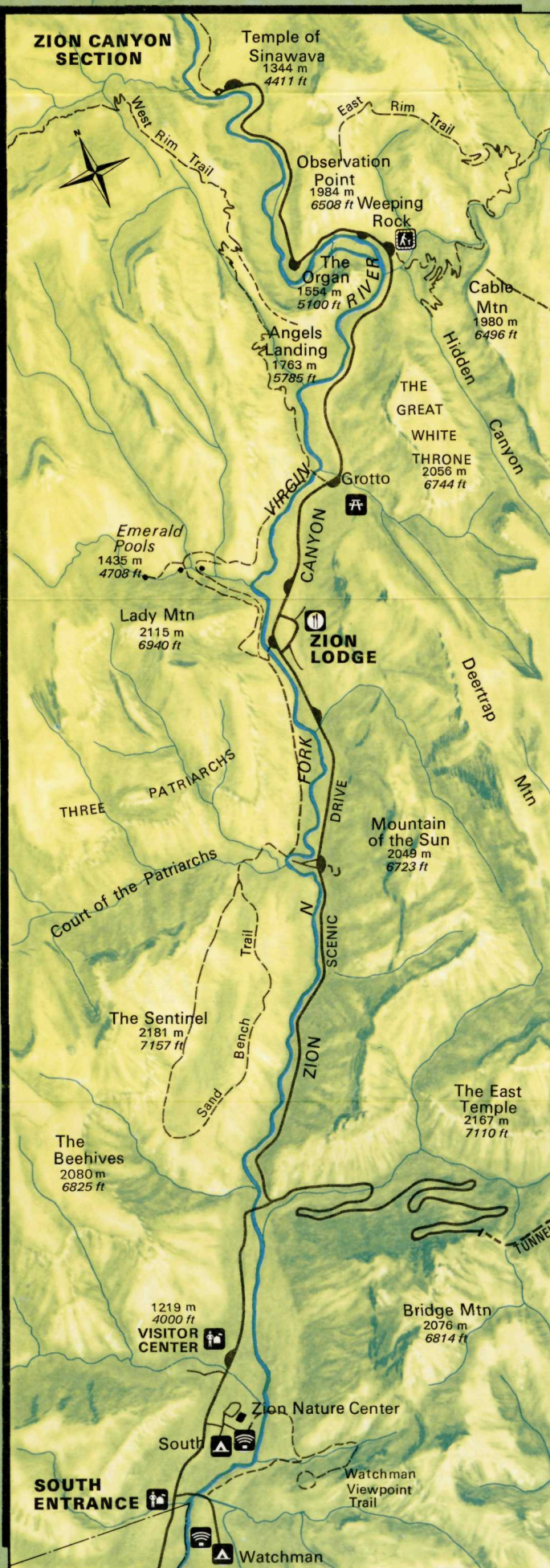
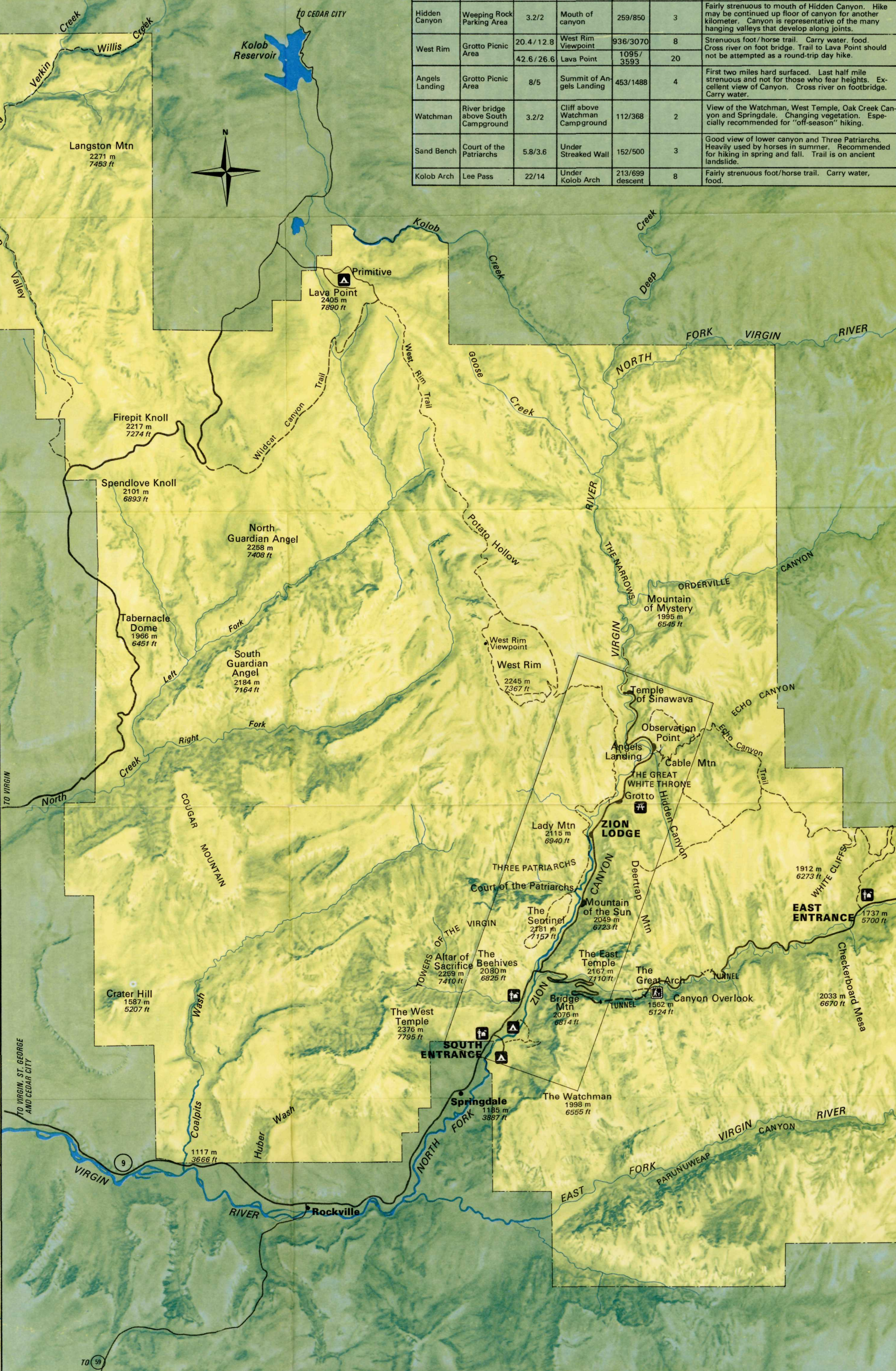
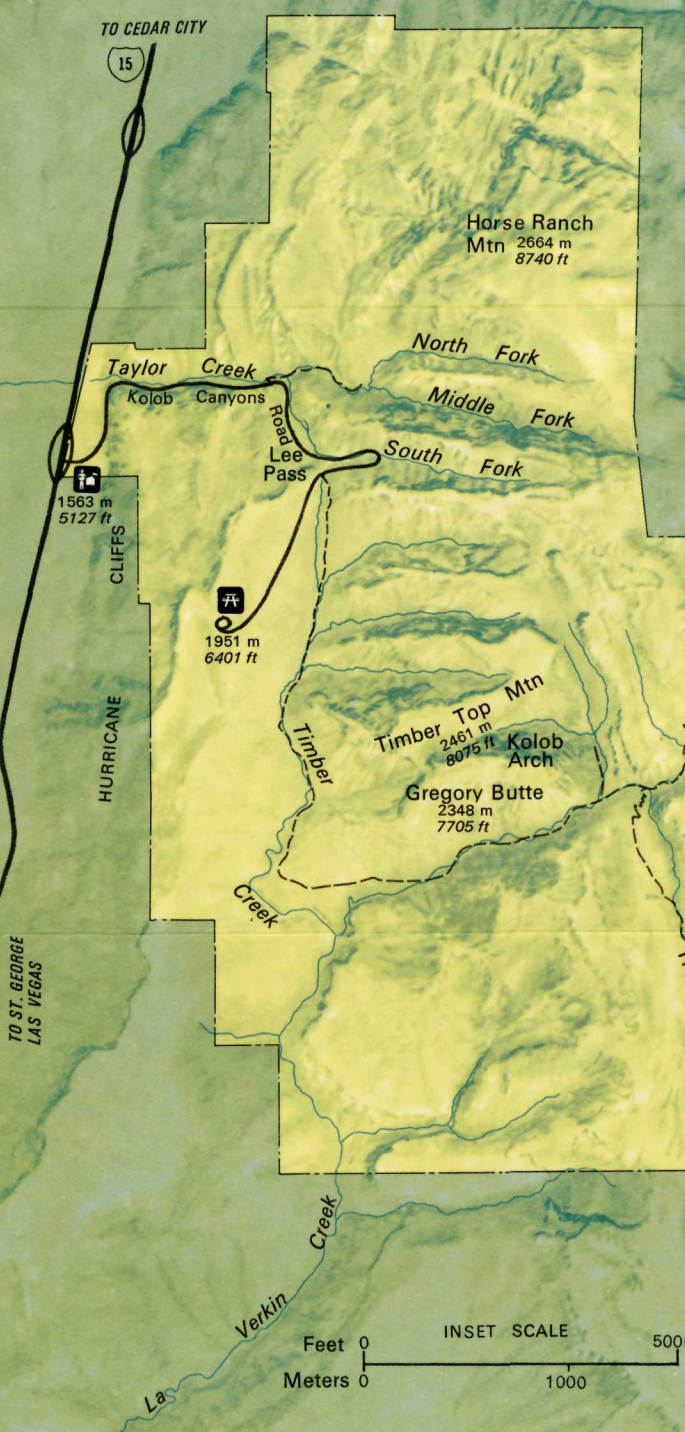
As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

ZION NATIONAL PARK



- Paved Road
- Gravel, Dirt Road
- Self-guiding Nature Trail
- Amphitheater
- Ranger Station
- Accessible
- Trail
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Lodging
- Campground

Park Trails	Starting Points	Round Trip (km/mi)	Terminus	Ascent (m/ft)	Round Trip (avg. hrs.)	Remarks
Gateway to the Narrows	Temple of Sinawava	3.2/2	End of Pavement	17/57	1½	Level to moderate grades. Trailside exhibits near Temple of Sinawava and along way. First half relatively easy for wheelchairs; aid recommended beyond stadium.
Weeping Rock	Weeping Rock Parking Area	0.8/0.5	Weeping Rock	30/98	½	Easy, surfaced, self-guiding trail. Water drips from over-hanging cliff; springs issue from it. Hanging gardens; travertine deposits.
Emerald Pools	Opposite Zion Lodge	1.9/1.2	Lower Pool	21/69	1	Cross river on foot bridge. Small pools formed by two falls. One-way trail or combination of loops. Distances and ascent are for lower pool. Add 1 mile (1.6 km) and 360 feet (110 m) for Upper Pool.
Canyon Overlook	Parking area-upper end of long tunnel	1.6/1	Railing at end of trail	50/163	1	A self-guiding trail. Mostly easy walking to top of Great Arch (Blind Arch not visible from this point). Excellent view of Pine Creek Canyon and west side of Zion Canyon.
East Rim	Weeping Rock Parking Area	12/8	Observation Point	655/2148	7	Fairly strenuous foot trail. Carry water, lunch. Cross foot bridge, go past Weeping Rock Trail sign. Cable Mtn. is not a round-trip day hike.
Hidden Canyon	Weeping Rock Parking Area	3.2/2	Mouth of canyon	259/850	3	Fairly strenuous to mouth of Hidden Canyon. Hike may be continued up floor of canyon for another kilometer. Canyon is representative of the many hanging valleys that develop along joints.
West Rim	Grotto Picnic Area	20.4/12.8	West Rim Viewpoint	936/3070	8	Strenuous foot/horse trail. Carry water, food. Cross river on foot bridge. Trail to Lava Point should not be attempted as a round-trip day hike.
Angels Landing	Grotto Picnic Area	8/5	Summit of Angels Landing	453/1488	4	First two miles hard surfaced. Last half mile strenuous and not for those who fear heights. Excellent view of Canyon. Cross river on footbridge. Carry water.
Watchman	River bridge above South Campground	3.2/2	Cliff above Watchman Campground	112/368	2	View of the Watchman, West Temple, Oak Creek Canyon and Springdale. Changing vegetation. Especially recommended for "off-season" hiking.
Sand Bench	Court of the Patriarchs	5.8/3.6	Under Streaked Wall	152/500	3	Good view of lower canyon and Three Patriarchs. Heavily used by horses in summer. Recommended for hiking in spring and fall. Trail is on ancient landslide.
Kolob Arch	Lee Pass	22/14	Under Kolob Arch	213/699 descent	8	Fairly strenuous foot/horse trail. Carry water, food.



TO MT. CARMEL JUNCTION, GRAND CANYON, BRYCE CANYON