



Park Profile 2024

ZION NATIONAL PARK

Facts and figures from FY23 unless otherwise noted.

www.nps.gov/zion





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Zion National Park

Located in Washington, Iron, and Kane Counties in Southwestern Utah, Zion National Park encompasses some of the most scenic canyon country in the United States.

The park is characterized by high plateaus, a maze of narrow, deep sandstone canyons, and striking rock towers and mesas. Zion Canyon is the largest and most visited canyon in the park. The North Fork of the Virgin River has carved a spectacular gorge here, with canyon walls in most places rising 2000-3000 feet above the canyon floor. The southern part of the park is lower desert area, with colorful mesas bordered by rocky canyons and washes. The northern sections of the park are higher plateaus covered by forests.

Establishment

Zion National Park was originally protected by Presidential Proclamation on July 31, 1909 as Mukuntuweap National Monument by President William Howard Taft. On March 18, 1918 the monument was enlarged and the name changed to Zion National Monument. The enlargement was effected to protect “unusual archeological, geologic and geographic interest...” and to provide opportunities for visitor enjoyment of its grandeur and scenic features. The area received National Park status by the provisions of the Act of November 19, 1919. Subsequent Presidential Proclamation of January 22, 1937 by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, established Zion National Monument (Kolob Canyons today) adjacent to the then existing park. The park and monument were combined in 1956 by an act of Congress.

*Stephen Mather, the first director
of the National Park Service, on
the West Rim Trail, 1919
NPS Photo*



Mission Statement

The Zion National Park mission is to preserve the dynamic natural process of canyon formation as an extraordinary example of canyon erosion and to protect and preserve the valuable cultural, geologic, and biological resources while providing safe, sustainable, and cost-efficient access for visitors' experiences and enjoyment. In addition, the park aims to educate both visitors and the general public about this exceptional environment.

Human History

Zion National Park contains evidence of at least 8,000 years of human occupation by Archaic, Ancestral Puebloans (known by archeologists as the Virgin Branch of the Kayenta Anasazi and Parowan Fremont), Southern Paiutes, and Mormon settlers who arrived in the 1860s.

Name

Zion, a Hebrew word interpreted by early Mormons to mean a place of safety or refuge, was given to the canyon by Mormon pioneers in the 1860s.



Natural Resources

4 | Natural Resources

Geographic Features

Size: 148,732 acres (232 square miles)

Designated Wilderness: 124,380 acres
(83.6% of total area)

Inholdings: 3,430 acres (5.4 square miles)

Zion Canyon

The North Fork of the Virgin River has carved out a 6.5 mi canyon from the Temple of Sinawava to the Town of Springdale, UT.

*View of the Virgin
River in winter
NPS Photo*

Elevation

Highest Point, Horse Ranch Mountain: 8,726 ft (2,660 m)

Lowest Point, Coalpits Wash: 3,666 ft (1,128 m)

Water

Rivers and major streams: 97 mi

Intermittent streams: 458 mi

North Fork of the Virgin River

Length in park: 17.95 mi

Average gradient throughout park: ~71ft/mi

Chamberlain Ranch to Temple of Sinawava: 87ft/mi

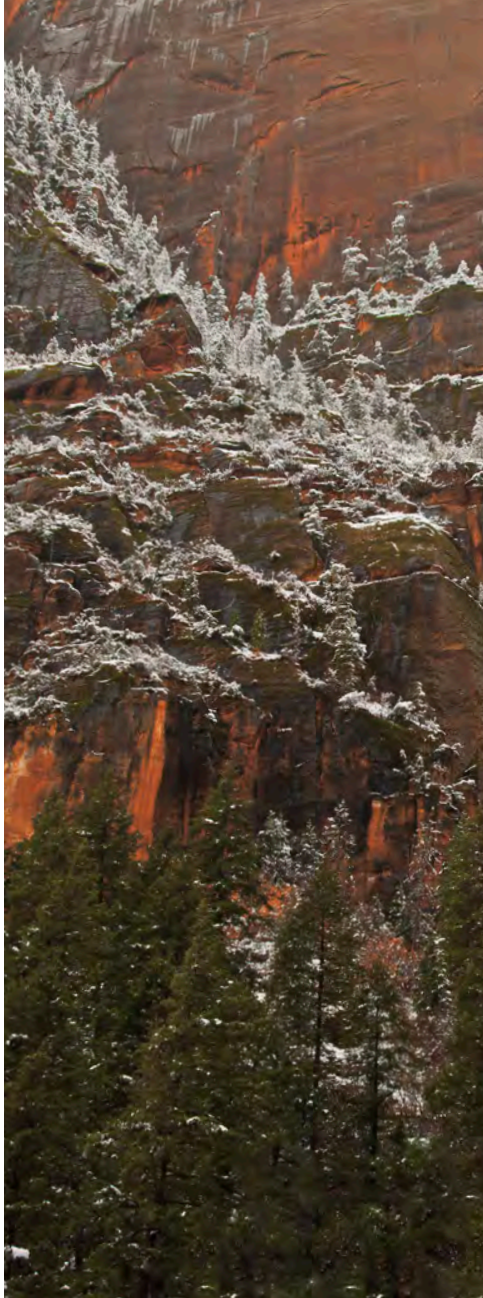
Temple of Sinawava to South Campground: 55ft/mi

Sediment transfer: one million tons per year

(average; extremely variable year-to-year)

The Narrows is a two-mile section of the North Fork of the Virgin River above the Temple of Sinawava that in places is only 20–30 ft across with 2000+ ft canyon walls on each side.





Climate & Weather

Zion Canyon



Maximum Precipitation

Recorded in 2005:
31.65 in (80.4 cm)



Minimum Precipitation

Recorded in 2002:
5.01 in (12.7 cm)



Highest Temperature

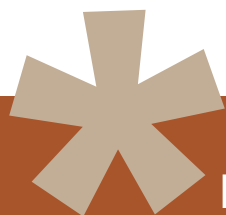
July 1, 1950, July 10,
2021, & July 11, 2021:
115°F (46C)



Lowest Temperature

January 21, 1937:
-15°F (-26C)

Month	Normal Low Temp (°F)	Normal High Temp (°F)	Normal Mean Temp (°F)	Daily Highs Over 100°F	Daily Lows Below 32°F	Normal Precipitation (in)
January	30.3	54.2	42.3	0	20.2	1.82"
February	33.5	58.3	45.9	0	12.8	1.98"
March	38.3	66.2	52.3	0	9.0	2.04"
April	43.9	74.3	59.1	0	3.0	1.31"
May	52.7	85.2	68.9	0.4	0.3	0.67"
June	62.0	95.7	78.8	6.4	0	0.31"
July	69.0	101.0	85.0	16.0	0	1.22"
August	67.7	98.3	83.0	9.9	0	1.45"
September	60.3	91.0	75.6	1.7	0	1.04"
October	48.8	78.3	63.6	0	1.4	1.30"
November	37.0	63.5	50.3	0	9.5	1.42"
December	29.5	53.3	41.1	0	18.0	1.63"
Annual	45.7	76.3	62.0	34.3	74.3	16.19"



Precipitation data from the Utah Climate Center; "Normal" period 1981–2010. Additional data provided by Dave Sharrow, former park hydrologist for Zion.

Cultural Resources



Museum Collections

55.05% of the collection is catalogued

717,427
Archives

30,306
Archeology

25,566
Biology

6,160
History

716
Geology

611
Paleo

110
Ethnology

105
Art

Archaeological

- 599 sites
- 36 of these sites occur within the Parunuweap Archaeological District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places

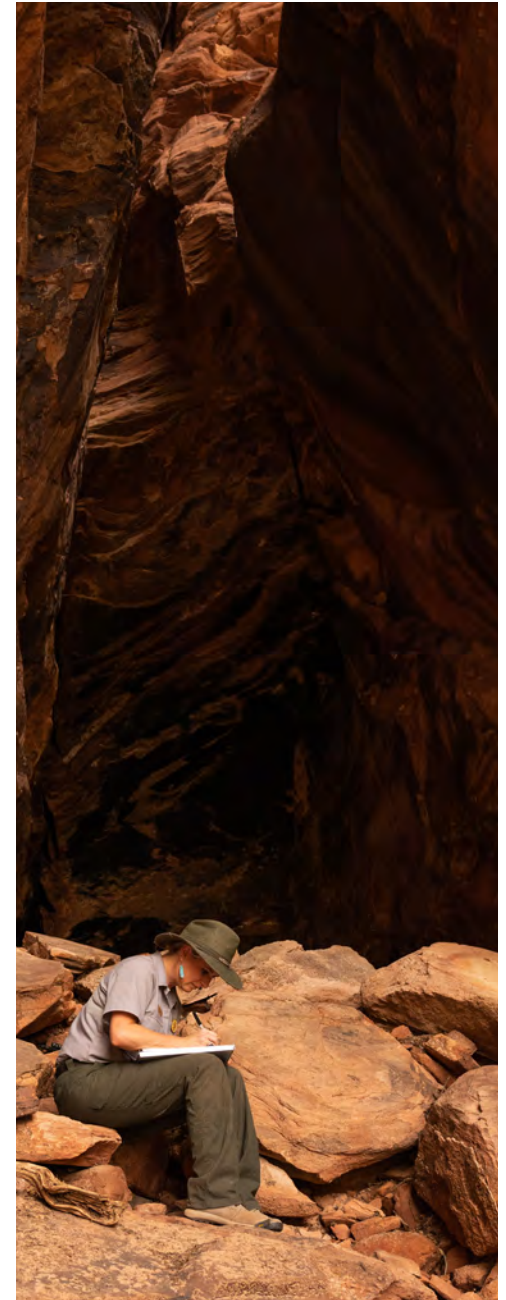
National Register of Historic Places

- 94 sites
- Includes 2 prehistoric archaeological sites and 92 historic structures/buildings

Selected detail of historic structures/buildings *many of which occur within 3 documented Historic Districts*

- 3 roads (including related road features: bridges, retaining walls, culverts, parking areas, tunnels)
- 8 hiking trails
- 4 irrigation ditches
- 12 residences and 6 garages, 3 dormitories, 15 cabins
- 3 Comfort Stations
- 11 office and utility buildings

Cultural Landscapes: 2



Biological Resources



Species of Special Concern

1 reptile, 2 amphibians, 3 fish, 8 birds, 8 mammals, & 8 invertebrates

Arizona Toad

Northern Leopard Frog

Gila Monster

Bald Eagle

Black Swift

Ferruginous Hawk

Flammulated Owl

Lewis' Woodpecker

Northern Goshawk

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Peregrine Falcon

Pinyon Jay

Desert Sucker

Flannelmouth Sucker

Virgin Spinedace

Coarse Ramshorn

Lindahl's Pyrg

Montane Snaggletooth

Thin-lipped Vallonia

Top-heavy Column

Zion Snail

Monarch Butterfly

Western Bumblebee

Allen's Big-eared Bat

Fringed Myotis Bat

Long-legged Myotis Bat

Long-eared Myotis Bat

Spotted Bat

Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Western Red Bat

Yuma Bat

Flora: 1074 total taxa

(including subspecies & variations)

40 tree, 137 shrub, 492 perennial forb, 213 annual forb, 129 perennial graminoid, 35 annual graminoid, and 28 fern.

162 species are introduced and 10 listed as noxious weeds by the state of Utah.

46 local endemic species.

Fauna: 374 total species

4 fish , 7 amphibian , 29 reptile, 72 mammal, and 262 bird.

Non-native fauna: 4 bird species, 9 fish species, and 4 mammal species.



Threatened or Endangered Species

4 birds, 1 reptile

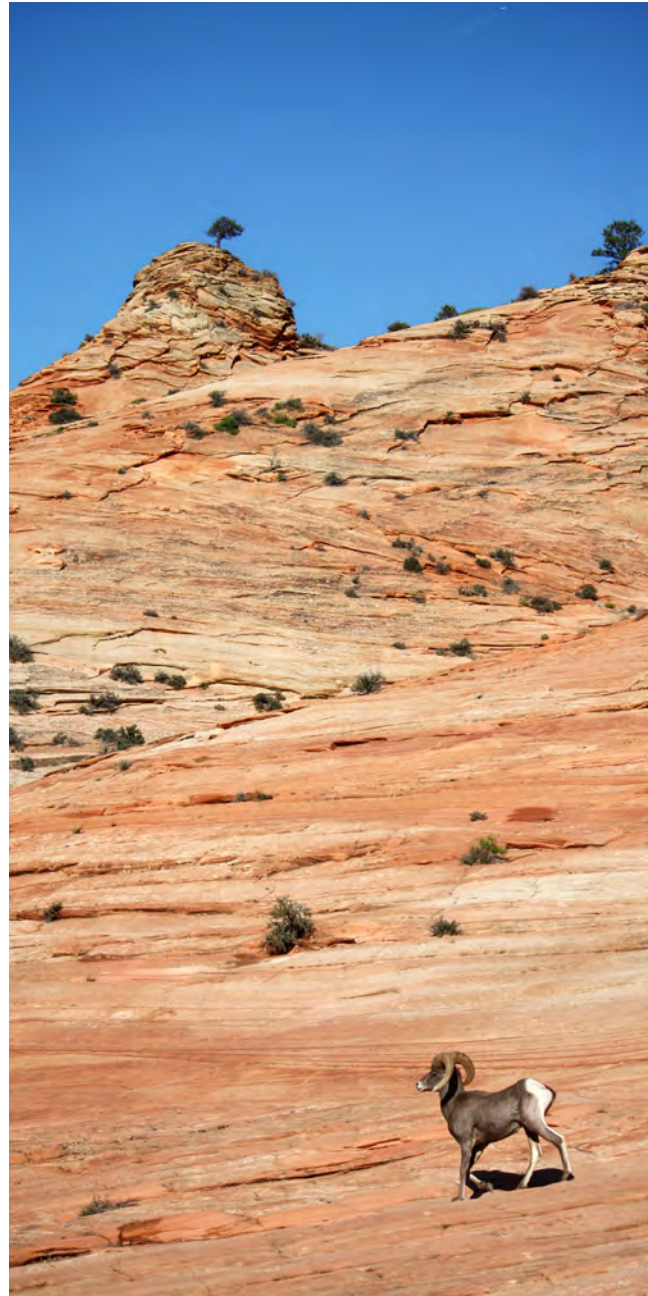
*California Condor
(critically endangered)*

*Mexican Spotted Owl
(threatened)*

*Mojave Desert Tortoise
(endangered)*

*Southwestern Willow
Flycatcher (critically
endangered)*

*Yellow-billed Cuckoo
(endangered)*



Ongoing Projects

Bats

This project will define key characteristics and locations of bat winter roost sites, monitoring for the presence of the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome (WNS), a disease that has caused precedent-setting mortality in eastern U.S. bat populations.

Desert Bighorn Sheep

A project with Zion National Park, Zion Forever Project, Utah Department of Wildlife Resources, and Utah State University to understand current and future disease risk for the Zion herd and to collect information describing the life history of the Zion bighorn population.

Peregrine Falcon

Zion National Park provides critical sanctuary for Peregrine Falcon nesting. This annual program monitors nesting activity beginning in March until chicks fledge, usually in late July.



Front-country Facilities & Development

Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel

Constructed 1927-1930

Cost: \$1,896,000

Length: 5613 feet (1.06 miles)

Width: 22 feet

Height: 16 feet

*Zion-Mt. Carmel
Highway in winter
NPS Photo*

Campgrounds

Watchman Campground

Open year-round

Reservations from March thru November, available up to 6 months in advance

164 sites – 95 electric, 69 tent, 18 walk-in, 15 accessible

7 group sites

South Campground

Closed for construction

Closed December thru February

117 sites – 3 accessible

4 group sites

Lava Point Campground

Closed in winter based on road conditions

6 primitive sites

89.4 miles

Hiking Trails

36.6 miles

Roads

2.4 miles are unpaved

4

Picnic Areas

Grotto, Kolob Canyons, Zion Nature Center, Zion Canyon Visitor Center

Visitor Services



Zion Search &
Rescue at training
NPS Photo



Visitation

4,623,238 – down 1.47% from 2022 (4,692,417)

*Average # of visitors/day during the peak months:
May – 16,650; June – 18,861; July – 18,157*

2022 – second highest year of visitation.

2020 – only year since 2015 to have yearly visitation

2018 – over 500,000/month in only 3 months.

2021 – first year that yearly visitation hit over 5,000,000.

2019 – highest year of visitation on record (4,488,268 visits recorded).

2017 – first year that visitation hit over 500,000 for 6 consecutive months.



Visitor Protection

138
Search & Rescue
Incidents

300
Emergency
Medical Services

Fire Management

The Fire and Aviation Management Program at Zion National Park provides oversight and management for the following park units: Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, Capitol Reef National Park, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Rainbow Bridge National Monument, Pipe Spring National Monument, Cedar Breaks National Monument, Golden Spike National Monument, Timpanogos Cave National Monument.

Wildland Fires: 5 fires burned 172 acres.

Fuel Treatments (e.g. mechanical, prescribed fire, herbicide treatments): 3 projects for 85 acres.

Zion Wilderness Use

Type of Permit	# of Permits	# of Visitors
Overnight Backpacking Permits (not including The Narrows)	2,310	5,589
Canyoneering Permits (including The Narrows)	6,299	24,088
Boating Permits	56	198
Overnight Climbing Permits	128	256
Overnight Canyoneering Permits (including The Narrows)	505	1,624
Totals	9,297	8,566

4,454
Law Enforcement
Incidents

1,265
Service Calls

33
Structural Fire
Callouts

89
Mutual Aid Calls

1
Fatality

Interpretation & Education



Angels Landing Pilot Program

207,699 permits issued in 2023

The National Park Service implemented the Angels Landing Pilot Permit Program in April 2022. This program was implemented in response to concerns about crowding and congestion on the trail. Throughout the pilot, Zion staff have been collecting important information and monitoring trail conditions that will inform ongoing visitor use planning.



Ranger Kelsie giving
a Museum Patio talk
NPS Photo

Distance Learning

In 2017 Zion piloted the Distance Learning Program as part of its “Every Fourth Grader in the Park” program.

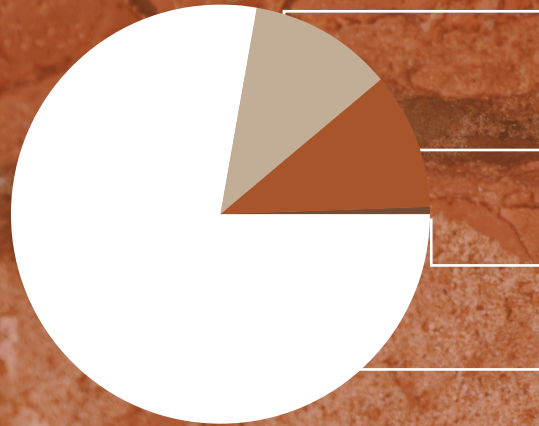
In 2023 86 Programs, 50 Schools, 3,447 students and teachers reached.

Concrete-to-Canyons

Concrete to Canyons is an award-winning place based environmental education program. Started in 2013, the program was designed to connect urban youth to public lands.

In 2023 Zion connected with 115 students and teachers.

Contact Stations



Zion Human History Museum
199,194 visitors

Kolob Canyons Visitor Center
186,356

Zion Nature Center
8,074 visitors

Zion Canyon Visitor Center
1,388,224 visitors

1,781,848

Visitors reached through
contact stations

154,199

Visitors reached through
programming

Program	Ranger-led Programs	Informal Ranger Roves	Ranger-led Youth Programs	Jr. Ranger Stations	Distance Learning	Field Trips	Concrete to Canyons
# of Programs	1,251	736	309	578	86	12	15
# of Contacts	34,725	59,759	3,763	52,090	3,446	301	115

There were no classroom outreach programs in FY23.

Volunteers-in-Parks & Youth Programming



Volunteers-in-Parks (VIPs)

158 volunteers contributed 21,165 hours of service in FY2023. Campground Hosts, Interpretation Volunteers, and Natural Resources Volunteers made up the majority of those hours at 7,476 hours, 5,985 hours and 4,135 hours respectively. Moreover, 359 short-term event

volunteers donated 1,575 service hours. Bringing the combined totals to 517 volunteers and 22,740 volunteer hours.

Additionally, in FY2023 the park hosted 86 youth interns from various programs, including the Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative (IIC), American Conservation Experience

(ACE) work crews, Latino Heritage Internship Program (LHIP), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Scientists-in-Parks, and more.

Three AIRs (Artists in Residence) were hosted in 2023. Two painters and a poet contributed a total of 400 hours to the park.

Administration

Work Group	Permanent	Career Seasonal (STF)	Terms	Seasonals	Operating Budget
Administration	12	0	0	0	\$1,250,212
Interpretation	10	5	0	15	\$1,309,970
Visitor Resource Protection	35	22	3	20	\$2,074,319
Maintenance	25	17	3	6	\$2,671,737
Resource Management	9	3	2	12	\$1,186,862
Total	91	47	8	53	\$8,493,100

Approximate number of employees and base appropriation of funds FY 2023.



Service Contractors

Zion Transportation Shuttle System

In May 2000, Zion implemented a mandatory shuttle bus system for park visitors along the six -mile Zion Canyon Scenic Drive. The system also provides service in the town of Springdale. The shuttles operate full time mid-March through mid-November (dates vary), with service on weekends in February and late November. The Springdale Loop consists of several stops made by a 40 ft shuttle and the Zion Loop consists of nine stops made by a 60 ft bus.

Concession Operations

Xanterra Parks and Resorts, Inc.

Zion Lodge (motel units, historic cabins, restaurant, snack bar, gift shop) - open year-round.

Canyon Trail Rides, Inc.

Guided horse trips in Zion Canyon,
March through October..

*Canyon Trail Rides, Inc. on
Sand Bench Trail, 2018
NPS Photo*



Commercial Use Authorizations (CUA) & Special Park Uses (SPU)

SPUs are special events or activities that provide a benefit to an individual or group and that require a written authorization and management control from the NPS. Zion issued 251 special use permits in 2023 for weddings, filming, 1st Amendment activities, church services, and more (compared to 184 in 2022 and 164 in 2021).

Zion Forever Project



Zion Forever Project (ZFP) is Zion's official nonprofit partner. The Forever Project provides resource connectivity through curated educational and interpretive products in its park stores (located in the park visitor centers), offers more than 50 field courses a year, and serves as the park's philanthropic and outreach partner.

Under the Infinity Z banner – the Zion Forever Project provides funding and strategies to address the park's highest priorities in resource protection, visitor experience, education and sustainability – ensure the park's margin of excellence for generations to come.

Contact Us

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