

## Project Summary

### Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

<b>Project Title:</b> Research to Support Application of the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Framework at Zion National Park
<b>Type of Project:</b> Research
<b>Funding Agency:</b> National Park Service, Zion NP
<b>Effective Dates:</b> April 1, 2002 - December 30, 2002
<b>Funding Amount:</b> \$16,790
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<b>Project Abstract:</b> Several years ago, the National Park Service began developing a carrying capacity framework titled Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) (National Park Service 1997). As the name suggests, this planning framework is aimed at maintaining the quality of the visitor experience and protecting natural and cultural resources in the face of increasing visitor use. VERP is built upon the same basic principles and concepts that drive other contemporary carrying capacity and related planning/management frameworks, including Limits of Acceptable Change (Stankey et al.1985), and Visitor Impact Management (Graefe et al.1990). The overall purpose of this study is to gather information that will help support application of VERP to Zion National Park. In particular, study objectives will focus on the four elements of the VERP framework that can benefit the most from empirical data: 1) collecting baseline data on visitor use and associated resource and social impacts, 2) identifying indicators and standards of quality, 3) monitoring indicator variables, and 4) management of visitor use to ensure that the standards of quality are maintained. Two visitor surveys will be conducted. Surveys of representative samples of visitors to selected areas of Zion National park will be conducted by means of personal interviews and/or self-administered questionnaires. These surveys will be conducted as visitors complete their visits to the park. The surveys will address four primary topics. The first survey will be conducted in the summer of 2002 (Phase 1) to measure indicators reflecting the quality of the visitor experience and visitor self-reports of recreation use patterns (Manning et al. 1996a; Wang and Manning 1999).
<b>Outcomes with completion dates:</b> 1 -Development of detailed study plan 2 -Review and evaluation of the social studies that have been done at Zion 3 -A critique of the existing written standards, and social monitoring techniques that may be in place. 4 -Report on interviews with visitors to assess dimensions of experience quality and potential issues relative to trade-offs with managerial interventions.
<b>Keywords:</b> Zion National Park, visitor experience, VERP, visitor surveys, planning
<b><i>For Administrative use only:</i></b> <i>Date Annual Report Received:</i>  <i>Date Final Report Received:</i>

*Publications, etc. on file:*