



Memo To File

A. Project Information

Park Name: Zion National Park

PEPC Project Number: 94859

Project Title: Modernize Wilderness Reservation and Permit System

Project Location:

County, State: Iron, Utah **District, Section:** Park-wide, Wilderness Backcountry

County, State: Kane, Utah **District, Section:** Park-wide, Wilderness Backcountry

County, State: Washington, Utah **District, Section:** Park-wide, Wilderness Backcountry

Project Leader: Annette Werderich

B. Description of the Current Action (Project Description)

Purpose & Need

In 2007, ZION officials created a permit system through the Wilderness Stewardship Plan to provide a means by which to protect and preserve the park's natural & cultural resources and values, and the integrity of the wilderness character for present and future generations. In 2011, ZION official solicited public comments to adjust wilderness permitting procedure as a result of increased demand and long in-line waits at the visitor center. By 2012, ZION opted to allow visitors to access an online permit system as a "Zion Express Member" where visitors could convert reservations to a permit. To utilize the online system, visitors would sign up as a ZEM in person at the Visitor Center in order to create an account accessed with a username and password. Presently, the system has become cumbersome and operates in a redundant manner. For each application, users must repeatedly enter information into the system which has resulted in some visitors creating multiple accounts, some with over 40 profiles. Further, the existing system does not provide a means by which to track visitors that may violate park rules and impair wilderness characteristics.

Alternatives Considered but Dismissed

Two alternatives were considered for this proposal. The first alternative would implement no administrative action. This was not considered to be a viable alternative because this would allow the persistent problem of account creation to continue and there would be little means to track violations. Therefore, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration. The second alternative is the proposed action and would modernize the existing wilderness permit system to allow ZEM's to repeatedly access a single account. No other alternatives have been identified or considered.

Preferred Project Proposal

Modernizing the ZION Wilderness Reservation and Permit System would continue to remain free of charge. Reservations are highly recommended as our resources are in very high demand, but they are not required. The online reservation system is an option for visitors. The park would continue to provide approximately 50% of our resource's availability for in person walk-ins the day of or day before at the Wilderness office. The system would still require all users to create a user login and password in order to make a Calendar Reservations, to apply for the Advanced Lottery, and for any Last-Minute Drawings. The only change would require inputting a valid email address as a username. This small change would allow users to repeatedly access the same account, significantly reducing the time spent re-entering personal data and the number of accounts held by a single system user. Advantages would also be seen in park operations by allowing visitors the ability to manage their account online further reducing the time

spent by staff creating accounts. Warnings and violations issued by ZION VRP could also be tied to an individual's account.

C. Description of Previous Compliance Documentation

Decision Document Name: Wilderness Reservation & Permit System EA & FONSI

Decision Document PEPC ID: [13678](https://pepc.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=13678)

Decision Document Approval Date: Nov. 26, 2007

D. Notes

CE: D3 Minor changes in programs and regulations pertaining to visitor activities

1) 2007 Wilderness Stewardship Plan (EA & FONSI) PECP #13678

<https://pepc.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=13678>

2) Seeking Comment on Wilderness Permitting Procedures PEPC #39375

<https://pepc.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=39375>

E. Conclusion

I certify that the existing NPS NEPA document has been reviewed and there are no substantive differences between the current proposal and its associated environmental impacts and the proposal and impacts as described in the existing NEPA document and associated decision document.

Superintendent: _____

Jeff Bradybaugh