

*The Great American Outdoors Act is providing crucial funding – up to \$6.65 billion over five years – to fix our national parks' crumbling roads, decaying buildings, outdated water systems and many more repair needs. This bill, along with other funding sources, is ensuring our parks can continue to welcome millions of visitors each year and protect the natural and cultural resources that tell our nation's history.*

# Zion

## NATIONAL PARK

**In Southwest Utah, massive red and pink sandstone cliffs soar into a brilliant blue sky at Zion National Park. Thousands of years ago, Zion's first residents tracked mammoths and camels through open desert, sheltered canyons and forested mesas.**

Visitors to Utah's first national park come today to experience those same stunning landscapes. Elevations range from 3,600 to 8,700 feet and provide habitats for an amazing diversity of plants and animals, including canyon treefrogs, black bears, mountain lions and peregrine falcons. The park is known for its world-class rock-climbing and as a destination for the sport of canyoneering.

Visitation to Zion has risen, from 2.8 million in 2013 to a record of more than 5 million in 2021, a nearly 80% increase. To address traffic and parking problems, protect vegetation and restore tranquility to the popular Zion Canyon area, the National Park Service operates shuttles that run every seven minutes or more frequently during the park's busiest months.

### THE CHALLENGE:

**a deteriorating campground that fails to meet safety and accessibility standards at a park with skyrocketing visitation**

Many visitors enjoy camping at Zion's three campgrounds. The South Campground is located near the Zion Canyon Visitor Center and a half mile from the South Entrance at Springdale, Utah. This campground is one of Zion's oldest continuously operating camping facilities and is also one of its most heavily used, but its facilities are in poor condition and have exceeded their design life.

Despite the campground's condition, sites are filled almost every night from March to October – its busiest operating season.



### BY THE NUMBERS:



**\$11.3 million**

estimated investment from the GAOA for repair projects



**5 million**

annual visitors



**8,700 feet**

maximum elevation



**89 year-old**

campground comfort station



**128 campgrounds**

at the park

**PHOTOS:** Cover: ©Andrew S | Shutterstock  
Back: ©NPS

The campground's historic comfort station, built in 1934, still functions but requires excessive maintenance and utilizes inefficient fixtures. Although three of the campsites are accessible for visitors using mobility devices, the restrooms at South Campground are not. Without maintenance, all these facilities will continue to deteriorate, impeding access, and reducing visitor satisfaction.

### THE PROJECT

The Great American Outdoors Act - Legacy Restoration Fund (GAOA-LRF) is providing funds to rehabilitate several visitor facilities and amenities including campsites, historic comfort stations, and the Watchman Amphitheater. The South Campground project includes total rehabilitation of roads, utilities and about 128 campsites. Vehicle pads and roads will be repaved, visitor use areas will be resurfaced and delineated, and site furnishings will be replaced. Road gates will be installed, and the overall site will be restored to improve aesthetics and visitor comfort. Utilities and fixtures will be updated at the historic comfort station.

The project also involves a total rehabilitation of the neighboring Watchman Campground Amphitheater to achieve compliance with accessibility standards, restore or replace pavement and a storm drain, and meet the standards of the

Architectural Barriers Act. This GAOA-LRF investment provides an opportunity for Zion management to look at improving the park's South Entrance from Springdale, making navigation easier for first-time visitors.

As the park prepares for these improvements, most of the campground will remain closed. The park will take advantage of this opportunity to work in the closed areas proactively removing hazard trees and completing a project to improve drainage under the park's main road which is near the campground.

### THE IMPACT

The improvements at South Campground will ensure that Zion campers continue enjoying this popular site long into the future. Restoration of the existing campsites will improve the visitor experience, and rehabilitation of historic comfort stations will allow the facility to operate more efficiently and effectively. Because of the campground's relationship to the Zion South Entrance and transportation network, the majority of the park's visitors will benefit from this rehabilitation.

The park hopes to realize other benefits including a reduction in maintenance needs through replacement of non-efficient features, improved facilities to welcome visitors, and improved

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marking and paving of roads. Improved accessibility at the Watchman Amphitheater will greatly benefit individuals with accessibility needs. Due to the reduction in maintenance needs, a reduced need for invasive plant removal, and improvements that will reduce the need for irrigation system maintenance, park staff will be able to better meet priority needs elsewhere in the park.



The Great American Outdoors Act is successfully repairing infrastructure at hundreds of parks across the country. However, with a \$22 billion backlog, much more is needed. We urge Congress to extend the Legacy Restoration Fund for an additional five years.

Preserving Our Past.



Protecting Our Future.