National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Zion National Park

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Zion National Park

July 11, 2015 9 p.m.
For Immediate Release
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15-14

Cathedral Fire Burning in Zion National Park

Lower Portion of West Rim Trail Temporarily Closed

The Cathedral Fire in Zion National Park was started by a lightning from a thunderstorm that passed through the area on the evening of July 9. It was first reported last night and is probably a holdover from the storm. The fire is located on Cathedral Mountain just to the west of Angels Landing. The fire is in a remote location on a mesa top with difficult access. Flames and smoke are visible from the very popular Angels Landing Trail located nearby and from numerous locations in Zion Canyon.

The fire is now estimated at 50 acres with active fire behavior, including running and torching of trees on the mesa top. The fires main movement is to the north, towards a portion of the West Rim Trail. It was flown by a helicopter late this afternoon for an update. It is currently being monitored by park firefighters. Due to its location and access and egress issues, it is not safe to put firefighters near the fire. Firefighters would have to be transported by helicopter to the site which is also dangerous. The fire is not threating any park resources on the mesa top. Fire is a natural part of the ecosystem in this area and it is being allowed to play its natural role as long as there are no direct threats to park resources or visitor safety.

At approximately 5:30 p.m. this afternoon, the lower section of the West Rim Trail, from the Grotto to Cabin Springs, was closed due to debris from the fire falling down into Refrigerator Canyon. This section of the trail is also how park visitors get to the popular Angels Landing Trail. The closure was caused due to concerns that the debris that fell into Refrigerator Canyon might not allow visitors to pass through safely and from the danger of being struck by the debris. The visitors that were on the Angels Landing Trail at the time of the closure were escorted down the trail by firefighters. All visitors have been successfully escorted from the trail at this time. The trail will reopen once firefighters feel there is no longer a threat to visitors.

-NPS-

Cathedral Fire 2015

Shift: 7/12/2015; 0800 hrs
Perimeter: 7/11/2015 1830 hrs
Acres: 42.4

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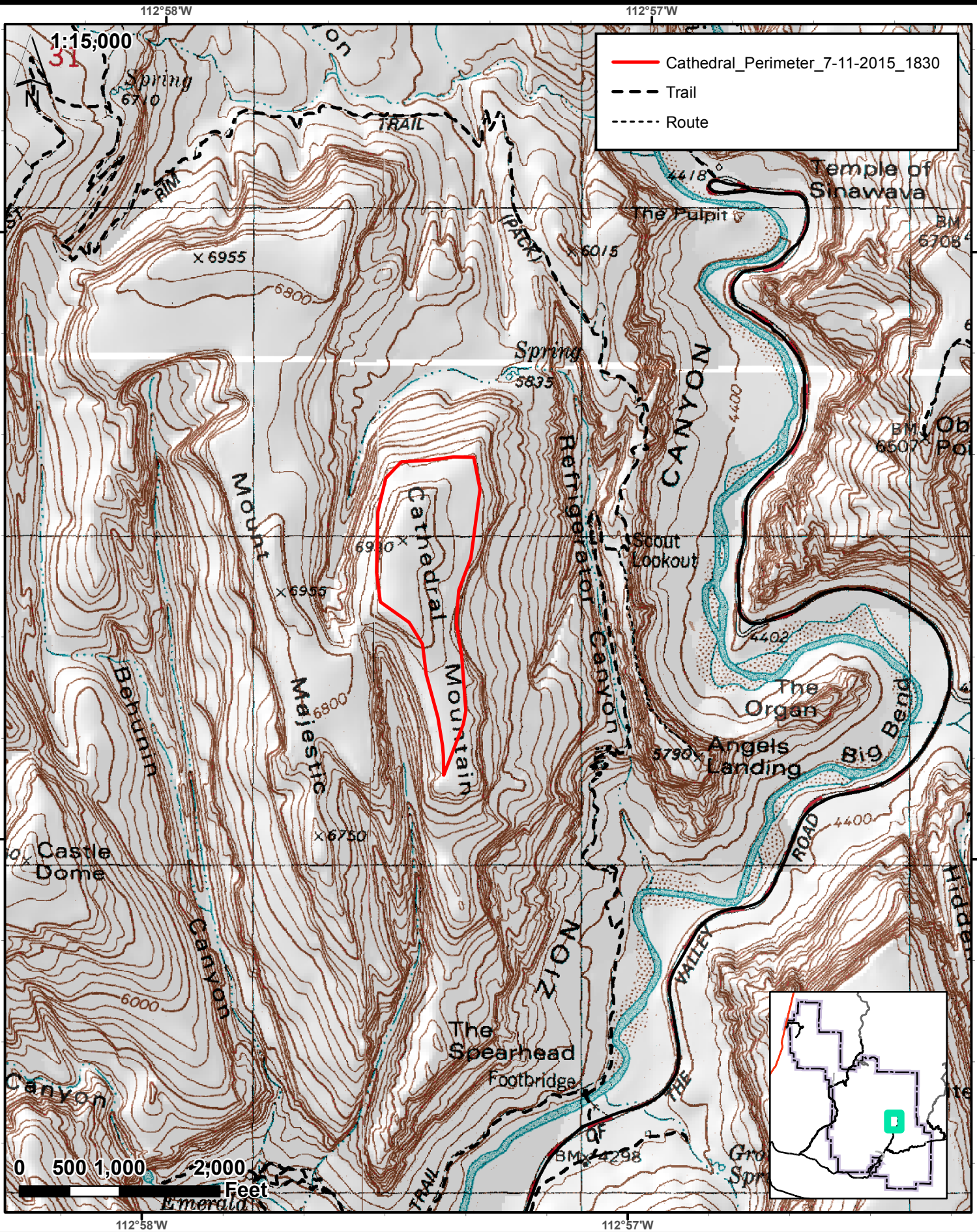
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