

Birch Hollow • Zion National Park

Rating:	3A III
Best Season:	Spring, summer or fall.
Time:	4 to 6 hours if exiting upstream to Orderville Trailhead; 8 to 12 hours if descending downstream through Orderville Canyon.
Longest Rappel:	120 feet (40 m)
Access:	Requires car spot or shuttle service.
Permit:	Only required if descending through Orderville Canyon.
Seasonality:	Spring —Can be wet in the spring. The Virgin River must be less than 120 CFS to descend out Orderville Canyon. Summer —HOT! Bring plenty of water for the full sun hike in upper Orderville. Fall —The preferred season; nice temperatures and scenery. Winter —Roads and canyon trailhead are at higher elevation and often inaccessible due to snow.
Equipment:	Helmets, rappelling gear, webbing and rapid links.
Cold Protection:	None for Birch Hollow; wetsuits advisable in Orderville.
Drinking Water:	Bring plenty; none available until lower Orderville.
Flash Flood Risk:	Moderate
Skills Required:	General rappelling and downclimbing skills.
Anchors:	Fixed, mostly trees and bolts.

As the technical start to Orderville Canyon, save Birch for a nice day in the spring or fall when its charms will not be lost in the hot sun.

Descending Birch Hollow and exiting UP Orderville is entirely outside the park and does not require a permit. This has become popular as a straightforward, reasonably short technical day for beginners, and is not uncommon to see multiple parties of guided groups and large self-guided groups in the canyon.

Birch Hollow enters Orderville near the top of the Orderville hike, therefore descending Birch and going DOWN Orderville makes for a long day. Plan on 3-5 hours for Birch, then either 1-1/2 hours to ascend Orderville, or 6 hours to descend.

Car Spot: If walking out the top of Orderville, spot a car at the well-signed Orderville Trailhead, 11.4 miles up the North Fork Road. A real 4WD road descends from the Orderville TH 2.5 miles and, when dry, is driveable by high clearance 4WD vehicles only.

Driving: Birch Hollow is approached using an old logging road off the North Fork Road. Drive north on the North Fork Road 5.4 miles to the entrance of the Zion Ponderosa Resort. Continue on the North Fork Road 2.8 miles to a small dirt road on the left (west), between two fenced ranches, the Gifford and the EZ Acres. Park here (2WD) or drive the small dirt road ¼ mile to a small parking area at the top of a hill. The road from this point is an ATV trail, not suitable for even 4X4 vehicles.

Approach: Follow the old road down through the scrub. After 15 minutes, an ATV trail branches right toward Birch Hollow. Follow this around the head of a wash, through a meadow and up a hill. At a fork in the road, go right and follow the road out to the edge of a canyon. Follow the best of several social trails steeply down the hillside into the canyon. Allow an hour to get to the first rappel.

Alternative Approach: From the road between the two ranches, continue 0.4 miles on the North Fork Road to where Birch Hollow crosses the road and park. Drop down into the wash and follow the watershed. After an hour of thrashing through the brush, a 120-foot (40 m) drop is encountered. Rappel this using a block or tree. Do not add to

the erosion of the nasty trail around the side.

Canyon: R1: Rappel 120 feet (40 m) off a block. Continue hiking downcanyon. The main narrows section is soon reached. The canyon narrows up and a few small drops are encountered. These can be rappelled or carefully downclimbed. Soon, the first of a series of rappels is encountered.

R2: Rappel 80 feet (25 m) from one of the trees to the side into the slot.

R3: Walk down-slot 50 feet (15m) and rappel 80 feet (25 m) off bolts to the canyon floor.

Several more rappels from bolt anchors lead down beautiful fluted chambers to Orderville Canyon. Turn right to exit up Orderville Gulch and back to the North Fork Road. Turn left to descend Orderville to the Zion Narrows.

