

CHAPTER 2: ALTERNATIVES

This chapter describes the various actions that could be implemented for Bighorn Canyon Roads and trails. The *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) requires federal agencies to explore a range of reasonable alternatives and to analyze what impacts the alternatives could have on the human environment, which NEPA defines as the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment. The analysis of impacts is presented in “Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences” and is summarized in Table 2.1 near the end of this chapter.

As prescribed by the NEPA regulations at 40 CFR 1502.14, the alternatives under consideration must include a “No Action” alternative. The No Action alternative in this document is the continuation of current management; no major changes would be made to current management actions.

Guidance from the 1981 General Management Plan

The 1981 GMP of Bighorn Canyon does not specifically describe trail design, building, or maintenance protocol except to say that “visitors should come away from Bighorn Canyon with an understanding and appreciation of the relationship of humans with Bighorn Canyon from prehistoric times to the present recreational/technological period.” However, the GMP’s interpretive directive pinpoints several trails which were then in use and which should continue. These include Sykes Mountain, the Hillsboro Ranch, Om-Ne-A trail, and possible future trails in Layout Canyon and into the Pryor Mountains. Trail planning and maintenance has, until now, been informal and minimal.

District Descriptions

North District

The North District of Bighorn Canyon for the purpose of this planning document is defined as the area from the monocline north to the northern-most park boundary. This district is semi-arid, receiving 18 to 20 inches of rain annually. Two vegetation zones are common in this part of the park. Along the flanks of the canyon is pine-and-fir woodland home to mountain lions, bear, elk, and mule deer. The north-most part of the park around Fort Smith is short-grass prairie. Crow culture, mountain men, and the Bozeman trail color the history of this area. Recreational boating and fishing are the primary recreational activities in this district. After events on September 11, 2001, the Om-Ne-A trail, one of only 4 trails, was closed to the public due to security concerns for the Yellowtail Dam.

South District

The South District of Bighorn Canyon, for the purpose of this planning document, is defined as the area from the monocline south to Abercrombie Shore, including Sykes Mountain, at the Southeastern end of Horseshoe bend. This section is considered a high desert in the rain shadow of the Rocky Mountains. Rainfall averages from 6 to 10 inches annually. Two vegetation zones are common in this part of the park, desert shrubland and juniper woodland. A variety of wildlife

utilizes this section of the park, including wild horses from the adjacent BLM wild horse refuge. Ranching, mining, native travel, and homesteading are the historical focus in this area of the park. Driving tours, recreational boating, and fishing are the primary recreational activities in this district.

Yellowtail Habitat Management Area District

The Yellowtail Habitat management Area, for the purpose of this planning document, is defined as the area from Abercrombie Shore south, excluding Sykes Mountain, to the southern-most park boundary. The Yellowtail Habitat Management Area provides riparian, cottonwood forest, shrubland, and wetland habitats. It is home to white-tailed deer, bald eagles, pelicans, heron, waterfowl, wild turkeys, and other species. Over 200 species of birds use the habitat throughout the year. The area is managed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department through agreements with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Reclamation. Hunting and fishing are the primary recreational activities in this district.

Trail Prioritization

Funding has not yet been secured for these projects, and base funds are insufficient for the execution of these trail projects. This document is intended as a planning and prioritization tool, not as a commitment to complete all trail projects. Trail priorities are listed in Table 2.1.

User Capacity Standards for Trails

The National Park Service (NPS) defines user capacity as the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the quality of park resources and visitor opportunities consistent with the purposes of the park. Trail use up to this point has been minimal and accounts for only a small percentage of recreational use of the park. Trails would be monitored to evaluate resource condition and to ensure that trail standards are not being exceeded. If trails are found to be near or at capacity, management action would be taken to mitigate potential impacts.

Actions Common to All Alternatives

Under all action alternatives, the NPS would strive to protect natural and cultural resources; provide for a variety of trail recreational experiences; ensure reasonable access to a safe, well-designed, and sustainable trail system; and ensure that trails are properly signed and that they meet established trail standards. Unpaved roads do not have common actions in all alternatives.

All NPS action alternatives examine what existing trails might be sustainable and could be part of an efficient and accessible trail system. The action alternatives differ in their trail recommendations with regards to type of trail, the type of maintenance and development of the trails.

The preferred alternative was constructed with careful consideration of public comments on alternatives A, B, and the No Action alternative. Existing trails, and new trails developed under the action alternatives, would permit use by single activity users such as hiking, equestrian, mountain biking only or by multiuse. Some action alternatives address user conflict and how that would be remedied in the case of multiuse trails.

The following actions would occur regardless of what action alternative may be implemented as the improved plan:

Education

NPS staff and volunteers would educate park users at the beginning of the implementation of this plan.

Americans with Disabilities Act Trails

Improvement at viewpoints such as the Devil's Canyon Overlook trail would still continue, in order to accommodate disabled visitors. Level of improvement and impact would be the most minimal for the No Action Alternative.

Trail Reclamation/Re-routing

A number of trail sections throughout the existing trail system would be identified for minor reroutes and included in a yearly programmatic work plan. Reroutes would occur to improve poor design and eliminate resource concerns. Appropriate mitigation measures and other guidelines identified in the work plan would be applied to minimize impacts on resources. Reroutes would be in compliance with NEPA, the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA), the *National Historic Preservation Act* (NHPA), and other related laws and policies. An NPS staff interdisciplinary team would review the yearly programmatic work plan for consistency and compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and mitigation measures before any work commences.

Partnerships

The park would continue to work with neighboring land agencies to maintain and improve trails and roads serving the interests of interrelated agencies.

Use of Volunteers

Although most trail work is done by paid employees of the park and the YCC, volunteers contribute to some work done with trails.

Tasks may include the following:

- Inspecting and evaluating trails and reporting problems
- Clearing and brushing
- Removing litter
- Re-establishing destroyed cairns, or displaced markers
- Implementing trail improvements with the help of park staff
- Reporting to NPS supervisors
- Educating the public on cultural and natural resource protection

Pets

Pets would continue to be restricted to leashes in campgrounds, parking areas or trails and would not be allowed on swim beaches.

Parking improvements

Parking areas are currently sufficient for trail use, however if visitor use increases to the extent that parking does not meet public need or is causing resource damage, roadside weed clearing and

gravelling may be implemented at high use areas. Any parking modification would follow sustainable building requirements and mitigation measures listed below.

Road Closures

Road closures may still occur if they are found to be redundant or damaging to resources. Although some gates have been opened in the past for hunters or mountain bikers, these actions have been found contrary to other management principles and re-visited for this plan. Access has therefore been restricted in some areas which may result in road and access closures.

Mitigations Measures

The following mitigation measures were developed to minimize the degree and/or severity of adverse effects and would be implemented throughout the planning, implementation and maintenance efforts.

Planning:

- All proposed and existing trail corridors will receive Class III Archeological surveys.
- Routes will also be surveyed for endangered or sensitive plants, as well as other natural resource values (sheep lambing areas, etc)

Implementation:

- A trail leader with experience in sustainable trail design and development will be hired to lead a trail crew when money is available to begin work on the trails.
- Road and trail crews would be informed about special status species. Cessation of construction activities would occur if a species were discovered in the project area, until park staff could re-evaluate the project. Trail crews would be trained to recognize noteworthy/significant geological features and mitigate damage or reroute trail around features.
- Should construction unearth previously undiscovered cultural resources, work would be stopped in the area of any discovery and Bighorn Canyon would consult with the state historic preservation officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, as necessary, according 36 CFR 800.13, Post Review Discoveries.
- In the unlikely event that human remains are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) would be followed.
- When working in or near the historic ranches, crews will be informed of the historic nature of the landscape and buildings.
- Park Service staff would inform trail and road crews of the penalties for illegally collecting artifacts or intentionally damaging paleontological materials, archeological sites, or historic properties.
- Crews would also be instructed on procedures to follow in case previously unknown paleontological or archeological resources are uncovered during trail and construction/maintenance.
- To minimize the potential for impacts to park visitor, roads and trails will be maintained/constructed one at a time so that visitors will have several different opportunities to enjoy the park.

- Removal of, or impact on, native vegetation adjacent to trails would be minimized as much as possible.
- Care would be taken not to disturb any sensitive species found nesting, hibernating, estivating or living in or immediately nearby worksites
- Resource management would be notified of the need to move rattlesnakes or similarly dangerous species.
- Efforts would be made to reduce the potential for non-native plant species that could be transferred on clothing and tools.

Maintenance:

- New signs would identify trails, with some markers specifically identifying allowed trail use. All markers will indicate that no ATV's are allowed on trails.
- A trail log will be developed and used for each of the trail. Maintenance on the trails will be rotated through on a bi-annual rotation schedule to ensure carrying capacity is not exceeded.
- Newly constructed trails and improvements with disturbed soil will be monitored for invasive weeds and managed for such in accordance with the Invasive Weeds Management Plan of the park.

Trail Descriptions

Trail Types

- Type A — Wheelchair accessible trails in the frontcountry constructed and maintained according to Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards. The trails typically access primary park features. Trail surfaces would be hardened. The use of directional and interpretive signs and structural elements to enhance safety and mitigate erosion is likely.
- Type B — Single or multiuse trails constructed and maintained for moderate to heavy use by visitors with beginner to intermediate skills. Trails are maintained to minimize safety hazards and resource impacts. Trails would be constructed of natural materials and have moderate variations and occasional rock or root protrusions. Trail surfaces would be unpaved. Trails would feature directional signs and structures that would minimize safety hazards and mitigate erosion.
- Type C — Single or multiuse trails constructed and maintained for light to moderate use by visitors with intermediate to high skill levels. Trails are maintained primarily to minimize resource impacts. Trails would be constructed of natural materials and have moderate to difficult variations and frequent rock or root protrusions. Trail surfaces would be unpaved. Trails might feature directional signs and structures that would minimize safety hazards and mitigate erosion.

Trail Maintenance Standards

- Primitive: Primitive trails are trails that are minimally maintained. This will include brushing the trail for visibility and rock removal.
- Developed: Developed trails will have some trail work done to them including but not limited to switchbacks, water bars, stairs, etc.

- **ADA Challenge:** ADA Challenge trails would be composed of dirt or gravel. A hardener may be added to the surface of some trails to make trails more accessible for wheelchairs and strollers.
- **Non-Challenge ADA:** Non-Challenge ADA trails would be composed of a hardened surface to be concrete or asphalt.

Mountain Biking Trails

The opening of biking trails in the park would be subject to a rule making process as per 36 CFR 4.30, ensuring that “use be consistent with the protection of a park area’s natural scenic and aesthetic values, safety considerations and management objectives”. These trails would be open to hiking and horseback riding as well. Traditionally mountain biking and horseback riding have been conflicting activities. Because Bighorn Canyon has few of either group, it is felt that trails could be open for both uses. On these trails, signs would be posted that all users yield to horseback riders. However, on Mountain Bike specific trails, if there are conflicts, horseback riding would be prohibited. Please see the Appendix C for a more detailed list of trail priorities.

Descriptions of Planning Areas

In order to facilitate the planning and analysis of trails, trail systems, resources, and access points, the North and South Districts and the Yellowtail Habitat were divided into smaller sub-units or “planning areas”. The following section describes each of these planning areas. Trail classifications are based on trail criteria in appendix A and above-mentioned trail definitions.

North District

Reservoir Planning Area

Description: This section of the North District is nearest the reservoir and close to the Yellowtail Dam. The only trail in this area, the Om-Ne-A trail, follows the reservoir edge from the Yellowtail Dam to the Ok-e-beh marina and was closed after 9/11/01 due to security concerns for the dam.

Management considerations: Security requirements of the dam would need to be met before this area could be open to the public. Bighorn Canyon would work closely with the BOR on this trail to ensure security of the Yellowtail Dam and surrounding facilities, while investigating options to reopen the trail. This may include changing the start or end points.

Trails classifications: The only trail in this area is a Type C, developed trail

Headquarters Planning Area

Description: The trails in this area are minutes from the Park Headquarters in highly impacted areas, near roads that would see higher visitation and use. Parking for these trails would be pre-established, paved, graveled or impacted areas. There is currently only one trail in this area, the Beaver Pond trail.

Management considerations: One of the proposed trails overlooks all park housing and facilities

Trails classifications: The trail in this area is a Type B, developed trail

3-mile Planning Area

Description: The trail here is used mostly as river/fishing access.

Management considerations: none

Trails classifications: The trail in this area is a Type B, primitive trail

South District

Horseshoe Bend Planning Area

Description: This area is in close proximity to Horseshoe Bend, the main campground and boat ramp in the park, an area of high visitation. Trails are primitive and some may travel through areas with more sensitive soils making them more susceptible to impact and damage. Two trails currently exist in this planning area; the Sykes Mountain and Mouth of the Canyon trails

Management considerations: If trail use increases on the Sykes Mountain trail, additional parking space may need to be allocated nearby at the Crooked Creek Contact Station.

Trails classifications: The trails in this area are Type B, and C, primitive

Canyon Rim Planning Area

Description: This area, near the Devil's Canyon Overlook Viewpoint, is one of the most highly visited sites in the canyon and in need of ADA accessibility to the viewpoint. The viewpoint has a large paved parking area and the surrounding area is highly impacted. Currently in the park, hiking is allowed along the canyon rim from the Devil's Canyon Overlook, but lacks safety precautions for such use. Visitors can also unknowingly impact bighorn sheep lambing areas and disrupt cliff nesting birds. A proposed trail here could mitigate these concerns by funneling visitors to an enjoyable but focused trail. There are currently three trails in this area; the Stateline, Rangers Delight, and Sullivan's Knob trails. An unofficial connector trail is in place between the Ranger's Delight and Stateline trail utilizing an abandoned mining road. A proposed trail in this area (the Two Eagles Trail) would primarily use an abandoned powerline road to teach visitors about an important archeological site and Native American use of the park.

Management considerations: Proposed trail establishment would have to take wildlife areas and sensitive plant species in to consideration before implementing trail development. Safety and soil erosion are also of special consideration.

Trails classifications: The trails in this area are Type B, C, primitive trails, while the overlook is minimally developed with and ADA challenge path (path has been severely eroded and much of the hardened surfaced removed)

Proposed Wilderness Planning Area

Description: This planning area contains portions of an area that was proposed to be considered for wilderness status in 1981. At that time the Western Area Power Association (WAPA) had already established a power transmission line from the Yellowtail Dam in Montana, southwards towards the town of Lovell, Wyoming. Approximately 1.8 miles the maintenance roads they established for these transmission lines lie within the proposed wilderness area, drawing wilderness suitability into question. No trails currently exist in this area but a proposed trail would utilize these established roads.

Management considerations: Wilderness values and bicycle impacts would require further consideration and monitoring.

Trails classifications: The proposed trails in this area would be a Type B, primitive trail

Ranch/Landing Planning Area

Description: This area includes three of the most visited historic ranches in the park; the Ewing-Snell ranch, the Hillsboro ranch, and the Lockhart ranch. The latter two ranches are accessed on foot, using unpaved, two-track roads. The Ewing-Snell ranch, located near the main paved road, has been renovated and is used to house visiting researchers and volunteers. It has a large dirt parking area and the Upper Layout Creek hike is accessed from there. Lower Layout Creek, a primitive trail that follows a wash from the road to the lake is accessed south of the Ewing-Snell ranch, from the main park road. The area around Barry's Island, has several primitive trails and accesses a backcountry campground.

Management considerations: Protecting the integrity of historic sites would be a priority. Mountain bike impacts would need to be monitored.

Trails classifications: The trails in this area are Types B and C, primitive and developed

Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area

Habitat Planning Area

Description: This area is located within Bighorn Canyon NRA but is managed primarily by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department through an agreement with the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation. No trails exist in this area and none are proposed. There are however a number of public access roads that may require re-designation and possible reclamation.

Management considerations: Cooperative management with other agencies would be necessary.

Trails classifications: No trails exist or are proposed in this planning area. Roads are unpaved.

South and Southeast Lake Planning Area

Description: South of the Yellowtail Habitat and East of Bighorn Lake, a series of dirt roads lead to seldom visited sites of interest. Many of these roads are redundant, have little directional guidance and lead into BLM and Crow Reservation Land. No trails are proposed in this area but road re-designation and reclamation may be necessary for resource protection and safe public access.

Management considerations: Cooperative management with stakeholders is primary.

Trails classifications: No trails exist or are proposed in this planning area. Roads are unpaved.

Alternatives Considered

During the spring of 2009, an interdisciplinary team of Bighorn Canyon employees met for the purpose of developing Access and Trail planning alternatives. The meeting resulted in the definition of the projects objectives as described in the Purpose and Need, and a list of alternatives that could potentially meet these objectives. None of the proposed alternative would affect the availability of enjoyable off trail hiking in the

park. Two action alternatives and the no-action alternative were identified for this project. The alternatives are described below.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the trails, authorized uses, and roads addressed in this Plan would remain as they currently exist in the North and South Districts and the Yellowtail Habitat Area. Trails would be maintained minimally. Bicycles would be allowed only on paved roads and in parking lots and campgrounds.

North District

Reservoir Planning Area

The Om-Ne-A trail would remain closed and no trail maintenance would be done in this area.

Headquarters Planning Area

The proposed Ft. Smith Loop trail would not be established and the existing game trail would not be maintained. The Beaver Pond trail would continue to receive minimal brush removal and maintenance.

3-mile Planning Area

This path would continue to receive weed removal, brushing and minimal maintenance.

South District

Two track roads that are not designated for public use would remain closed to vehicle access.

Horseshoe Bend Planning Area

Sykes Mountain would remain a primitive trail, with minimal brushing and maintenance. Crooked Creek Fishing Access trail would not be developed and current paths and game trails there would not be maintained. Mouth of the Canyon trail would remain a primitive trail with minimal maintenance and would remain limited to hikers only. Any proposed trails would not be developed or allow mountain bikes.

Canyon Rim Planning Area

Devil's Canyon Overlook may still have a hardened pathway placed over an impacted area to accommodate ADA standards but paving and impact would be minimal. The proposed Balcony Trail would remain undeveloped but visitors would be allowed to walk the rim (at their own risk) without a designated trail. This could mean compromised visitor safety and increased soil erosion and impact to plants and wildlife. The Sullivan's Knob, Rangers Delight, and Stateline trails would continue to receive light brush removal but would remain primitive trails, increasing potential for braided trails, and resource impact. The Ranger's Delight and Stateline connector trail would remain informal and unmaintained.

Proposed Wilderness Planning Area

No action would be taken in this area and mountain biking would remain off-limits.

Ranch/Landing Planning Area

Upper Layout Creek would continue to receive minimal brushing and maintenance, with small re-routing if necessary to protect the resources. Lower Layout Creek would receive brushing to keep trail clear. The Hillsboro and Lockhart ranches would continue to be open to walk-in visitors along the old two-track roads leading in from the main road, with minimal brushing and maintenance. Gates would still be opened upon request for disabled visitors who are unable to walk in. Proposed trails would remain undeveloped. The Barry's Island trail would remain a primitive trail with minimal brushing and maintenance. The road past Chain Canyon would remain closed to vehicle traffic.

Bikes

Under the No Action alternative, bicycles would remain restricted to paved roads and parking lots. No trail use is permitted for bicycles unless a rule-making process is undertaken and designated in the parks compendium or other official park document.

Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area

Habitat Planning Area

No new action would be taken in this planning area

South and Southeast Lake Planning Area

No new action would be taken in this planning area

Alternative A – A variety of recreational trail and access opportunities would be developed.

Alternative A seeks to better serve the public and protect park resources by providing additional trails in appropriate locations, and by improving established trails. Many of the proposed trails would follow existing ranch or mine roads, and would not result in additional disturbance. Some roads would be closed to protect resources. Active restoration of closed road sections would occur as permitted by park resources.

Note: Funding has not yet been secured for these projects, and base funds are insufficient for the execution of these trail projects. This document is intended as a planning and prioritization tool, not as a commitment to complete all trail projects. See Table 2.1 for trail work listed in order of priority.

Letters in parenthesis correspond with maps(Figures 2.1-2.9) and priority trails list in Table 2.1

North District

Reservoir Planning Area

- The Om Ne A Trail (D) With permission from BOR and security modifications, this trail would be reopened. For the security of the Yellowtail Dam, the end of the trail closest to the Dam may be rerouted and connect into the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center Road. This trail would be open seasonally as the Dam road is only open during the summer season. It

would be an ideal trail for Interpretive Guided Hikes from the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center. It would be for hikers only.

Head Quarters Planning Area

- The Beaver Pond Nature Trail (B) The trail connecting this trail to the Bighorn Headgate Trail would be improved. Benches and interpretive signs discussing the nature along the trail and history of Fort Smith could be added. A 'pedestrians on road' sign should be posted at the entrance to the Lagoon Road for visitor safety. This trail would be hiking only.
- The Fort Smith Loop Trail (C) would be developed and constructed to give hikers the opportunity to hike along the ridge above Government Camp to MK Hill and down to the road. Hikers can follow the road system to the Beaver Pond (B) trail to make one large loop. This trail would be hiking only.

3-mile Planning Area

- 3-Mile (A) would be brushed, graveled and improved for better access. Spur trails could be reclaimed if impact is found to be excessive to stream banks and riparian area.

All Fort Smith trails have the potential to become interconnected at some point if demand and resource protection call for it.

South District

All dirt roads/tracks in this district that are not designated as trails, access roads or service roads would be closed, and allowed to re-vegetate. Roads open to public access would be signed as "designated routes". Gates on service roads would remain closed to visitor access with the exception of disabled access to historic ranches. All North Boundary roads will be closed to vehicle use.

See attached park maps for designated roads. Active restoration of closed road sections would occur as permitted by park resources.

Horseshoe Bend Planning Area

- The Sykes Mountain Trail (R) would be maintained as a primitive trail. This is the only trail that has posts and cairns due to the fact that much of this trail is on limestone rock. More trail markers would be added to improve route-finding and visitor safety. This would remain a hiking only trail.
- The Sykes Notch Trail (S) would be designed and constructed. A parking area would be constructed off of the Sykes Parallel Road. The trail would go up the notch to the spring continuing to the top of Sykes Mountain and connecting into the Sykes Mountain Trail(R). This would be a difficult, primitive trail with minimal brushing and trail work, for hikers only.
- Crooked Creek Fishing Access Trail (P) would be a gravel developed trail to provide for fishing access. It would leave from the parking area and be constructed around the wash to the lake at the shoreline. The trail would end at elevation 3640, full pool. This trail would be a hiking only trail.

- The Mouth of the Canyon Trail (Q) would be become a gravel developed trail. The developed section would follow the abandoned road to the overlook of the Mouth of the Canyon and Crooked Creek. From there, visitors can return the way they came or loop back to the trail on a primitive trail through the junipers. Starting in the Horseshoe Bend campground, this trail would be open to hikers and mountain bikers but not horses, as they are not allowed in campgrounds. The parking area at the trailhead may be leveled or cleared as the need arises.
- The Rim Trail (T) would be developed, beginning at Crooked Creek and joining the proposed Balcony Trail (M) to Devil Canyon. The Rim Trail would be a single track along the limestone rocks near the rim of the Bighorn Canyon. The Rim Trail would be a multi-purpose trail for hiking and mountain biking only. If substantial conflict arises between the two user groups, this would become a mountain biking only trail from Crooked Creek to the convergence with the Balcony Trail. This trail is subject to rule making process 36 CFR 4.30(b).

Canyon Rim Planning Area

- Devil Canyon Overlook would be redesigned to allow better handicap accessibility. This is an area of high visitor use and needs improvements that involve sustainable trail design. Trail hardener may be used to solidify the path.

The southern section of the overlook may use a hardener to better designate a walking path and stairs would be cut into the rock to the overlook point. The northern section would remain primitive with some stairs cut into the steep section of rock. This path would be hiking only.
- The Balcony Trail (M) would be designed and developed to follow the canyon rim for a ½ mile south of Devil Canyon overlook. This would be a developed, hiking only trail. The Balcony Trail would allow bicyclists from the adjoining Rim Trail to walk their bikes to the Overlook.
- The Sullivan's Knob Trail (L) would remain a primitive trail with brushing and light maintenance. Some water bars may be added in places of erosion. This would remain a hiking only trail.
- The Stateline Trail (O) would be developed. Access to an area where the limestone layer of the canyon can be viewed would be improved. A natural rock-slab bench would be added at the overlook to designate the end of the trail. This would be a hiking only trail.
- The Ranger Delight Trail (N) and Connector trail to the Stateline trail would remain primitive with brushing and light maintenance.
- The Two Eagles Interpretive Trail (J) would be designed and developed to use an old road scar to teach visitors about a native American camp site. The site has a number of stone circles (teepee rings) and a bison drive line. The trail would be hiking only, and planned to minimize impact to the archeological site which would be exhaustively documented before construction to allow monitoring on a stone by stone level.

Proposed Wilderness Planning Area

- The Power Line Trail (K) would begin at the Mustang Flats parking area following the WAPA maintenance roads south to the cattle trailing road south of Devil Canyon Overlook. This trail would be a multi-user non-motorized recreation trail. WAPA has maintenance planned from 2011 to 2013. After WAPA completes their work, Bighorn Canyon would begin to use this road as a multi-user trail with motorized access granted to WAPA for maintenance purposes only. Approximately 1.5 miles of this trail is in proposed wilderness on an existing road. This trail is subject to rule making process 36 CFR 4.30(b).
- Wilderness Roads other than WAPA maintenance roads would be closed and re-vegetated.

Ranch/Landing Planning Area

- The Lower Layout Creek Trail (J) would remain primitive with brushing and light maintenance. During WAPA line reconstruction they may build a bridge over the wash to access their transmission line and use part of this trail as a service road. If they do not, a bridge or culvert would need to be added at the wash to improve hiker safety. This trail would be open to all non-motorized recreational use.
- Upper Layout Creek Trail (I) would be redesigned and sustainably reconstructed to improve trail safety and sustainability. This work would include implementing water bars and switchback construction. A sign would be placed at the spring discussing the spring's vulnerability to human impacts. This trail would be a hiking only trail.
- The Hillsboro Trail (H) leads visitors into one of the parks historic ranches. From the east visitors can hike the service road to the ranch. This road would be used to allow handicap accessibility to the ranch for those that are unable to hike the half mile to the ranch. From the west, visitors can hike the original road into the ranch. A parking area and gravel trail to the west gate would be constructed. At the gate a walk-through would be installed. The remaining portion of this trail would remain primitive with brushing and clearing of rocks. This is a hiking only trail. Horses are not allowed in the historic ranch areas.
- The service roads to the Hillsboro and Lockhart Ranches would remain closed for public vehicle use, but gates would be opened upon request to allow access for disabled visitors.
- The South Pasture Trail (F) would be constructed as a sustainable single track mountain biking trail. It would be open to hikers and mountain bikers however, if substantial conflict between the two user groups arises, it would become a biking-only trail. This trail would begin at the gate south of the Lockhart Ranch down to Medicine Creek Campground where it joins the Barry's Island Trail. The first few miles of the South Pasture trail would remain a two-track road for emergency vehicle entry. The road from Barry's Landing to Medicine Creek would continue to be used as a service road, but closed to motorized visitor use. All other sections would be developed into single track. The Weather Station Cut Off (F to Barry's road) would give mountain bikers and hikers the opportunity to do a shorter trail or to avoid some service road riding/hiking. The Cut Off would be constructed as a sustainable single track mountain biking trail. This trail is subject to rule making process 36 CFR 4.30(b).
- Barry's Island Trail (G) would become a developed trail open to all non-motorize recreational use. Maintenance would be necessary in the wash area on the south side of the island. The beginning of this trail is also a service road and remains open to vehicle traffic to

Chain Canyon. A sign would be posted explaining that this service road has limited access, 4x4 recommended and no trailers. Parking improvements such as leveling, widening and graveling may be made at the Chain Canyon gate, depending on visitor use and impact. From Chain Canyon to Medicine Creek, the service road would be open to park vehicles only.

- The Deadman to Dryhead Overlook Trail (not on map) may be designed and constructed as the only backcountry trail in the canyon. It would be primitive with hiking-only designation. A backcountry camping area would be developed and the trail marked. Use of this trail would require a backcountry permit with a limit on the number of users in the area. This trail is the lowest priority of all trail actions.

Yellowtail Habitat Management Area District

All dirt roads/tracks not designated as trails, access roads or service roads would be closed, and allowed to re-vegetate. Roads allowing public access would be signed as “designated routes”. See attached maps for designated roads. Active restoration of closed road sections would occur as permitted by park resources.

Habitat Planning Area

Roads in the habitat would be maintained with some closures in areas where two roads lead to the same area (i.e. the roads into Mormon Point). Public access roads would be marked as “designated routes”. Roads in the Habitat are subject to closure contingent on lake levels. The access road into Abercrombie Shore may be rerouted. In that case the original road would be closed and re-vegetated.

South and Southeast Lake Planning Area

Some spur roads from the John Blue Canyon road would remain open for lakeshore access. “Social” roads and undesignated roads may be reclaimed. See the map for designated roads.

Alternative B – Redesign and maintain existing park trails.

Alternative B would improve existing trails in both the North and South Districts without the addition of new trails or roads. Where appropriate, trails would be re-routed to better protect resources and add to visitor safety and enjoyment. Trail re-routing would be done in such a way as to reduce impact as much as possible. Less desirable trails and roads would be abandoned, and left to be naturally reclaimed. ADA accessible pathways would be improved in popular points of interest. Unpaved roads with public access would be defined within the South District and the Yellowtail Habitat Management Area and would be subject to maintenance and grading. All roads at the North Boundary of the South district would be closed to the public. Bicycles would not be allowed on trails. Signs and markers may be used to improve visitor awareness and resource protection.

North District

Reservoir Planning Area

- The Om Ne A trail (D) would be the same as in Alternative A. This is an established trail that has been closed for several years, therefore brushing and maintenance would be greater than its maintenance thereafter. All plans would be dependent on BOR approval.

Head Quarters Planning Area

- The Beaver Pond Nature Trail (B) would be a developed hiking only trail. Benches and interpretive signs discussing the nature along the trail and history of Fort Smith could be added. A 'pedestrians on road' sign should be posted at the entrance to the Lagoon Road.
- The Fort Smith Loop Trail (C) for alternative B is the same as the No Action alternative

3-mile Planning Area

Same as Alternative A.

South District

All dirt roads/tracks in this district that are not designated as trails, access roads or service roads would be closed, and allowed to re-vegetate. Roads open to public access would be signed as "designated routes". Gates would remain closed to visitor access with the exception of disabled access to historic ranches. All North Boundary roads would be closed to vehicle use. Bicycles would be allowed only on paved roads and in parking lots and campgrounds.

See attached park maps for designated roads. Active restoration of closed road sections would occur as permitted by park resources.

Horseshoe Bend Planning Area

- Crooked Creek Fishing Access Trail (P) action would be the same as in Alternative A.
- Sykes Mountain, Mouth of the Canyon and proposed Sykes Notch and Rim Loop trails (R,S,Q,T) would follow the No Action alternative.

Canyon Rim Planning Area

- Devil Canyon Overlook would be the same as Alternative A.
- The Balcony trail, Sullivan's knob, State Line and Ranger's Delight trails (M,L,N,O) would be the same as the No Action alternative.
- The Two Eagles Interpretive Trail would not be built.

Proposed Wilderness Planning Area

Management would remain the same as stated in the No Action Alternative.

Ranch/Landing Planning Area

- Upper Layout Creek Trail (I) would be redesigned and sustainably reconstructed to improve trail safety and sustainability. This work would include the construction of water bars and switchbacks. A sign would be placed at the spring discussing the spring's vulnerability to human impacts. This trail would be hiking only.

- The Lower Layout Creek Trail (J) would remain primitive with brushing and light maintenance. During WAPA line reconstruction they may build a bridge over the wash to get to their line and use part of this trail as a service road. If they do not, a bridge or culvert would need to be added at the wash to improve hiker safety.
- The service roads to the Hillsboro and Lockhart Ranches would remain closed for public vehicle use, but gates would be opened upon request to allow access for disabled visitors. Paths would receive improved brushing and maintenance.
- The South Pasture and Deadman to Dryhead Overlook trails (F, not on map) would remain un-established. Bicycle use would not be allowed on the 2 track roads.
- Barry's Island Trail (G) would receive improved brushing and may need improvement where the trail is degrading. Bicycles would not be allowed past Chain Canyon.

Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area

Habitat Planning Area

Would be the same as in Alternative A

South and Southeast Lake Planning Area

Would be the same as in Alternative A

Alternative Summaries

This section summarizes the major components of the No Action, A, and B Alternatives and compares the ability of these alternatives to meet the objectives discussed on page 4 in the Purpose and Need section.

Under the No Action Alternative, the trails, authorized uses, and roads addressed in this plan would remain as they currently exist.

Trails- Only minor re-routing would occur in target areas for the purpose of trail sustainability and resource protection. No new trails would be established and all trails would remain off-limits to mountain bikes. Equestrian users would have access to all trails and be permitted off trail, but would not be allowed in parking areas, campgrounds and historic ranches. ADA accessibility would only be established at the Devil Canyon Overlook.

Roads- Roads with closed gates would be closed to the public, with the exception of historic ranches where gates would be opened upon request for disabled users. Vehicle use would be restricted to public access roads only. Bicycles would not be allowed on 2-track roads and continue to be restricted to paved roads, parking areas and campgrounds. Roads may be closed and reclaimed in the Yellowtail Habitat Area and on the East side of the lake depending on redundancy and impact.

Parking- No improvements to parking would be done outside of established road corridors.

This alternative would not meet park objectives. No Additional access would be provided to areas of natural and cultural interest in the park, and visitors ability to navigate trails would continue to erode. Though handicap access would be improved at Devil's Canyon Overlook, additional access will not be added. Trails and service roads would not be more clearly defined, and use of undesignated roads and trails would continue to threaten resources. This alternative would not meet resource protection and visitor experience objectives.

Alternative A would establish new trails for a variety of recreational users and improve established trails.

Trails- New trails would be designed and established, which may include new access points and parking improvements. Under approval of the BOR the Om-Ne-Ah trail could be re-opened in the parks North District. Some of the new and existing trails would be classified to allow new users, particularly mountain bikes. Trails would have designated user groups, accommodating hikers, mountain bikers, equestrian users and disabled visitors. ADA access would be improved at the Devil Canyon Overlook. Some existing trails would be re-routed to become more sustainable, safe and maintainable, which will protect the nearby resources. Trails would also accommodate various skill levels from beginner to experienced hikers.

Roads- Roads with closed gates would remain closed to the public, with the exception of historic ranches where gates would continue to be opened, upon request, for disabled users. Vehicle use would be restricted to roads designated for public use. Roads would be closed and reclaimed in the Yellowtail Habitat Area and on the East side of the lake and active restoration could take place if funds allowed.

Parking- Parking improvements could be made in established road corridors and on dirt roads where trailheads already exist. New trailheads may have clearing, leveling or graveling improvements to establish small parking areas. Parking improvements would be minimal and as low impact as possible, utilizing mitigation measures listed on page 27.

This alternative would most closely match park objectives. Additional access would be provided to areas of natural and cultural interest in the park, and visitors ability to navigate trails would be improved. Handicap access would be improved at Devil's Canyon Overlook, as at additional park sites. Trails and service roads would be more clearly defined, reducing threats to resources. This alternative would meet resource protection and visitor experience objectives.

Alternative B would allow for existing trails to be improved or redesigned, but no new trails would be constructed.

Trails- No new trails would be established in the park. Existing trails would be improved, some of them becoming developed or more defined by trail markers. Some existing trails would be re-routed to become more sustainable, safe and maintainable, which would protect the nearby resources. ADA access would be improved at the Devil's Canyon Overlook. Bicycles would be allowed on paved roads, campgrounds and parking areas, but would not be allowed on or off trail, or on 2-track roads. No biking would be allowed in the proposed wilderness.

Roads- Roads with closed gates would remain closed to the public, with the exception of historic ranches where gates would continue to be opened, upon request, for disabled users. Vehicle use would be restricted to roads designated for public use. Roads would be closed and reclaimed in the Yellowtail Habitat Area and on the East side of the lake and active restoration could take place if funds allowed.

Parking- No improvements to parking would be done outside of established road corridors.

This alternative would meet some park objectives. Improved access would be provided to areas of natural and cultural interest in the park, and visitors ability to navigate trails would be improved. Handicap access would be improved at Devil's Canyon Overlook, but not at additional park sites. Trails and service roads would be more clearly defined, reducing threats to resources. This alternative would meet resource protection and visitor experience objectives.

Preferred Alternative

As with all alternatives, the preferred alternative is based on laws, regulations and policies, public health and safety, and the objectives of this plan. That being the case, the alternative that best fits into the plan objectives and meets the requirements of laws and policies is Alternative A.

North District

Reservoir Planning Area

Under the preferred alternative, a long, intermediate trail would be re-opened.

Headquarters Planning Area

Signs to increase driver awareness of pedestrians would be added. More trail options, at different skill levels would be available.

3-mile Planning Area

Access would be improved and managed to protect the resource.

South District

Horseshoe Bend Planning Area

Trails would be better maintained and signed for visitor identification and safety and provide access to areas of interest. The needs of different types of trail users would be met including beginner and advanced hikers, bicyclists and equestrians for developed and primitive trails. Established trails would direct hikers to points of interest while reducing impact to sensitive soils.

Canyon Rim Planning Area

An ADA accessible pathway would have the most planning and improvement under Alternative A. Other trails would be more easily identifiable and delineated to allow for safer visitor access to canyon viewpoints while protecting wildlife, soils and vegetation. One new trail would enhance visitor experience, opening new viewpoints and increase visitor safety near the canyon edge, while another would allow visitors to explore archeology and Native American history.

Proposed Wilderness Planning Area

A new trail would provide a new recreational option for longer trips.

Ranch/Landing Planning Area

A larger variety of recreational users would be able to use trails. Areas of the park with limited access would be more available to a wider group of trail users.

Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area

Habitat Planning Area

Undesirable roads would be eliminated, reducing resource impact and enhancing visitor experience.

South and Southeast Lake Planning Area

Undesirable roads would be eliminated, reducing confusion in route-finding and protecting natural and cultural resources.

Table 2.1 Summary of Alternatives and Priorities

Priority #	Trail Name	Map letter	No Action	Alternative A	Alternative B
1	Devil Canyon Overlook	M	Disabled accessibility may be improved	Trail would be made more accessible for disabled visitors and the southern section of the overlook walk would use hardened gravel with stairs cut into the rock to the overlook point. The northern section will remain primitive with some stairs cut into the steep section of rock.	Disabled access may be improved
	User group:		hikers	Hikers	Hikers
	Trail ratings:		developed, easy	developed, easy	developed, easy
2	Upper Layout Creek	I	Light brushing and maintenance	Trail would be sustainably reconstructed to improve trail safety and sustainability. A sign will be placed at the spring discussing the spring's vulnerability to human impacts	Trail would be sustainably reconstructed to improve trail safety and sustainability.
	User group:		hikers	Hikers	Hikers
	Trail ratings:		primitive, difficult	primitive, difficult	primitive, difficult
3	Beaver Pond Nature Trail	B	Light brushing and maintenance	Trail would be extended along the Afterbay rim to connect into the Bighorn Headgate Trail. Benches and interpretive signs could be added. A 'pedestrians on road' sign would be posted at the entrance to the Lagoon Road	Improved brushing and maintenance. Benches and interpretive signs could be added. A 'pedestrians on road' sign would be posted at the entrance to the Lagoon Road
	User group:		hikers	hikers	Hikers
	Trail ratings:		developed, easy	developed, easy	developed, easy

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4	Crooked Creek Fishing Access	P	No trail development.	Would be a gravel developed trail to provide for Fishing Access.	Would be a gravel developed trail to provide for Fishing Access.
5	Two Eagle Interpretive trail	V	No trail development	Would be constructed as trail with information on Native American use of area	No trail development
User group:		n/a		hikers	
Trail ratings:		n/a		developed, easy	
				Hikers developed, easy	
Priority #	Trail Name	Map letter	No Action	Alternative A	Alternative B
5	South Pasture Trail	F	No trail development No bikes allowed.	Would be constructed as a sustainable single track mountain biking trail.	No trail development. No bikes allowed.
User group:		n/a		hikers, mountain bikes	
Trail ratings:		n/a		primitive, moderate	
				n/a	
				n/a	
6	Hillsboro Site Trail	H	Light brushing and maintenance. Roads would be open only for disabled access.	East road will be used to allow handicap accessibility to the ranch. Visitors can hike the original road (from west) into the ranch. A parking area and gravel trail to the gate will be constructed. At the gate a walk-through will be installed.	Improved brushing and maintenance. Roads would be open only for disabled access.
User group:		hikers, autos(disabled only)		hikers, autos(disabled only)	
Trail ratings:		developed, easy to moderate		developed, easy to moderate	
				developed, easy to moderate	
7	Om-Ne-Ah	D	Trail will remained closed	Would be re-opened pending BOR approval. Re-routing may be necessary for dam protection.	Would be re-opened pending BOR approval. Re-routing may be necessary for dam protection.
User group:		hikers		hikers	
Trail ratings:				hikers	
8	Mouth of the Canyon	Q	Light brushing and maintenance	Would become a gravel developed trail. The developed section will follow the road scar to the overlook of the Mouth of the Canyon and Crooked Creek.	Light brushing and maintenance
User group:		hikers		hikers, mountain bikes	
Trail ratings:		primitive, moderate		developed, moderate	
				hikers	
				primitive, moderate	

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9	Balcony	M	No trail development	Would be designed and developed to follow the canyon rim for a ½ mile south of Devil Canyon overlook.	No trail development
	User group:		n/a	hikers	n/a
	Trail ratings:		n/a	developed, easy	n/a
Priority #	Trail Name	Map letter	No Action	Alternative A	Alternative B
10	Ft. Smith Loop	C	No trail development	Would be developed and constructed to follow the ridge above Government camp to MK Hill and down to the road.	No trail development
	User group:		n/a	hikers	n/a
	Trail ratings:		n/a	primitive, moderate to difficult	n/a
11	3-Mile	A	Light brushing and maintenance	Would receive improved brushing and maintenance	Would receive improved brushing and maintenance
	User group:		hikers	hikers	hikers
	Trail ratings:		developed, easy	developed, easy	developed, easy
12	Sykes Notch	S	No trail development	A primitive trail would be developed from the Sykes Parallel Road, up the notch of Sykes Mountain to join the Sykes Mountain Trail.	No trail development
	User group:		n/a	hikers	n/a
	Trail ratings:		n/a	primitive, difficult	n/a
13	Sykes Mountain	R	Light brushing and maintenance	Would receive improved brushing and maintenance	Light brushing and maintenance
	User group:		hikers	hikers	hikers
	Trail ratings:		primitive, difficult	primitive, difficult	primitive, difficult
14	Barry's Island	G	Light brushing and maintenance. Roads would be closed to all but service vehicles.	Trail would be opened to bikes and sustainably improved. Roads would be closed to all but service vehicles.	Light brushing and maintenance. Roads would be closed to all but service vehicles.
	User group:		hikers, horses	hikers, mountain bikes, horses	hikers, horses
	Trail ratings:		primitive, moderate	primitive, moderate	primitive, moderate
15	Sullivan's Knob	L	Light brushing and maintenance	Light brushing and maintenance. Some water bars may be added in places of erosion.	Light brushing and maintenance. Some water bars may be added in places of erosion.
	User group:		hikers	hikers	hikers
	Trail ratings:		primitive, easy to moderate	primitive, easy to moderate	primitive, easy to moderate

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Priority #	Trail Name	Map letter	No Action	Alternative A	Alternative B
16	Stateline	O	Light brushing and maintenance	Would become a developed trail. Access to an area where the limestone layer can be viewed would be improved. A natural rock-slab bench would be added at the overlook to designate the end of the trail.	Light brushing and maintenance
	User group:		hikers	hikers	hikers
	Trail ratings:		primitive, easy to moderate	developed, easy to moderate	primitive, easy to moderate
17	Ranger's Delight	N	Light brushing and maintenance	Light brushing and maintenance	Light brushing and maintenance
	User group:		hikers	hikers	hikers
	Trail ratings:		primitive, easy	primitive, easy	primitive, easy
18	Lower Layout Creek	J	Light brushing and maintenance	Trail would remain primitive with brushing and light maintenance. A bridge or culvert may need to be added at the wash to improve hiker safety.	Trail would remain primitive with brushing and light maintenance. A bridge or culvert may need to be added at the wash to improve hiker safety.
	User group:		hikers, horses	hikers, mountain bikes, horses	hikers, horses
	Trail ratings:		primitive, easy to moderate	primitive, easy to moderate	primitive, easy to moderate
19	Power Line	K	No trail development. No bikes allowed.	Would be developed beginning at the Mustang Flats parking area following the WAPA road scar south to the cattle trailing road south of Devil Canyon Overlook.	No trail development. No bikes allowed.
	User group:		n/a	hikers, horses	n/a
	Trail ratings:		n/a	primitive	n/a
20	Rim trail	T	No trail development. No bikes allowed.	Would be developed as a single track biking/hiking trail from Crooked Creek to the Balcony Trail at Devil Canyon.	No trail development. No bikes allowed.
	User group:		n/a	hikers, mountain bikes	n/a
	Trail ratings:		n/a	primitive, difficult	n/a
Priority #	Trail Name	Map letter	No Action	Alternative A	Alternative B

21	Deadman to Dryhead Overlook	not on maps	No trail development	A primitive trail may be designed and constructed as the only backcountry trail in the canyon. A backcountry camping area would also be developed.	No trail development
	User group:		n/a	hikers	n/a
	Trail ratings:		n/a	primitive, moderate	n/a

DRAFT

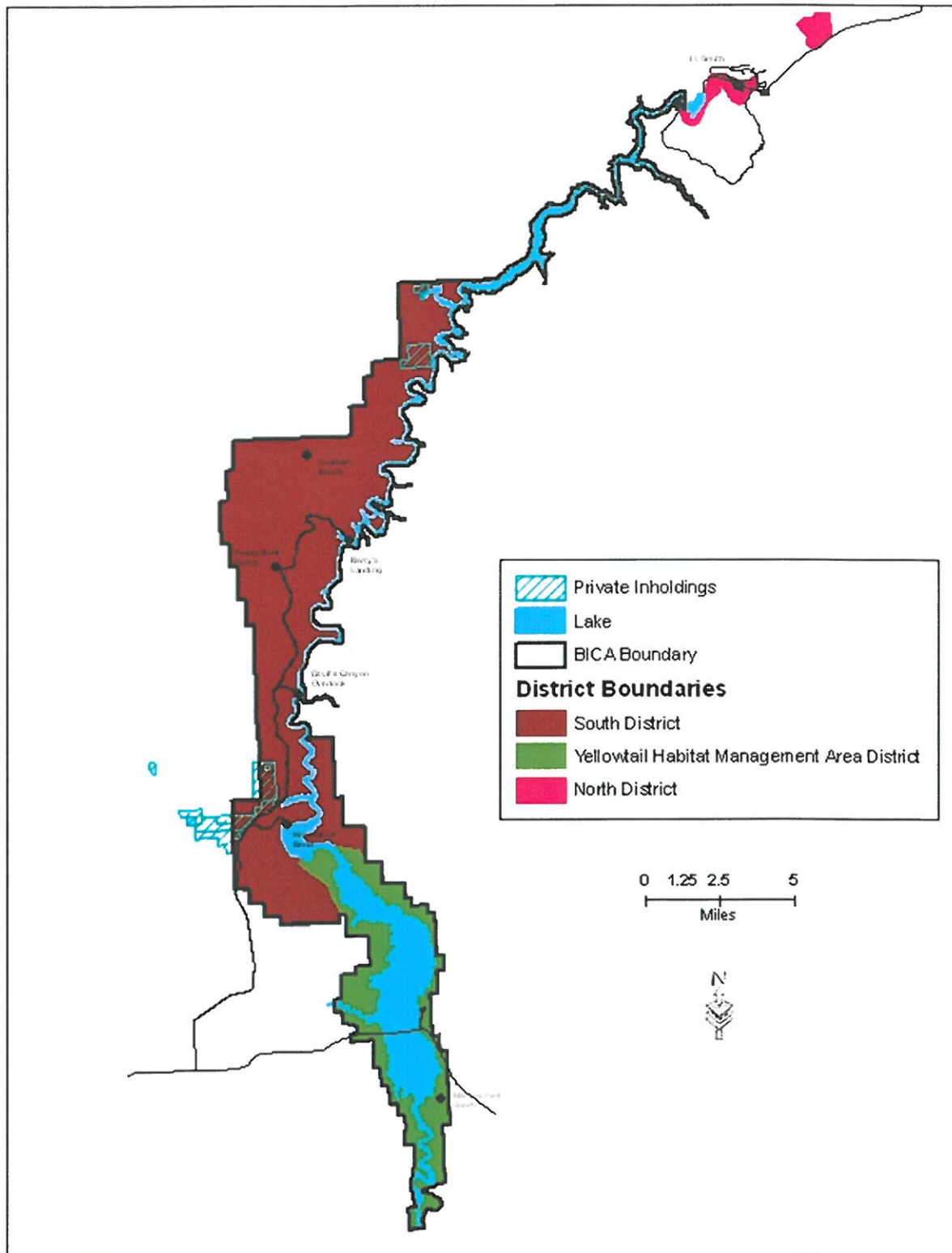


Figure 2.1 Planning Districts

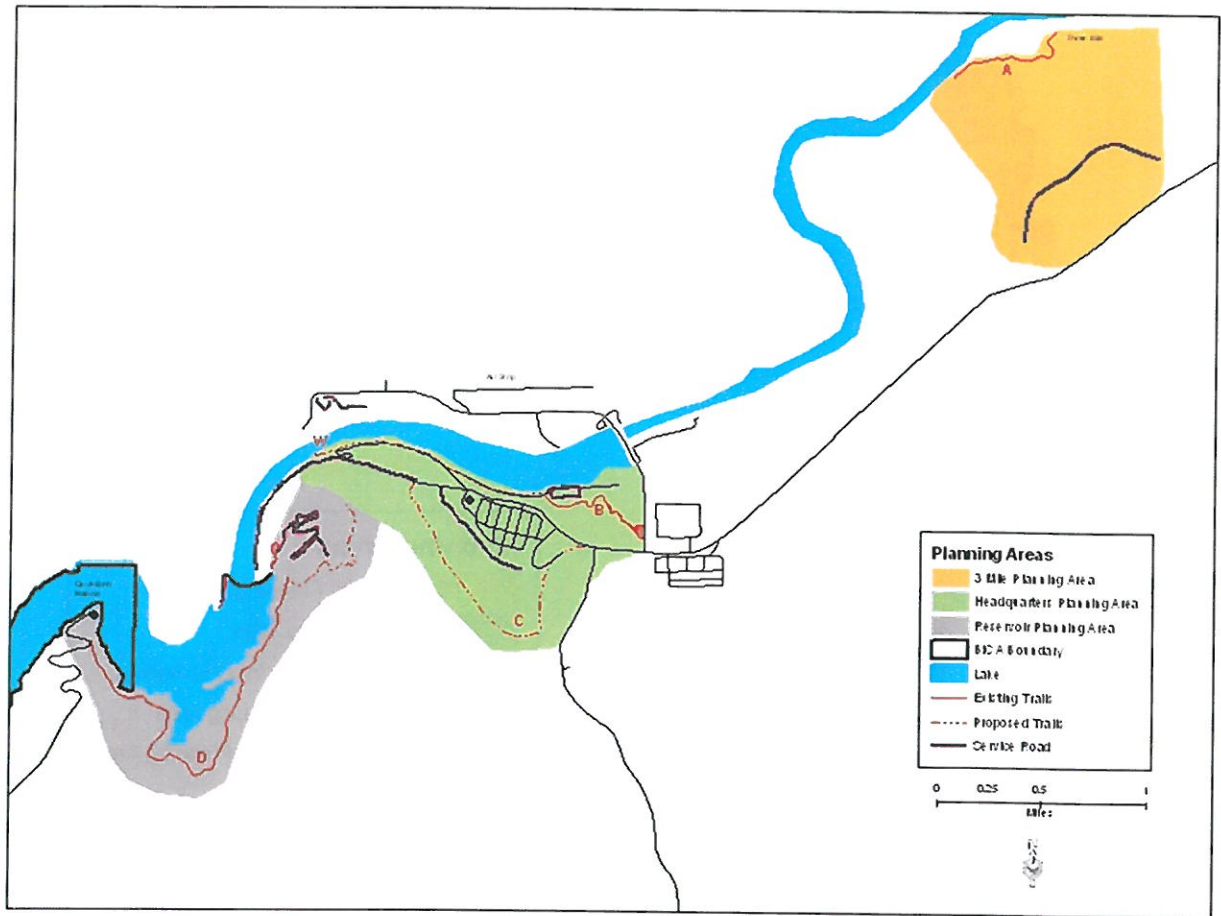


Figure 2.2 Planning Areas at Bighorn Canyon: Ft Smith

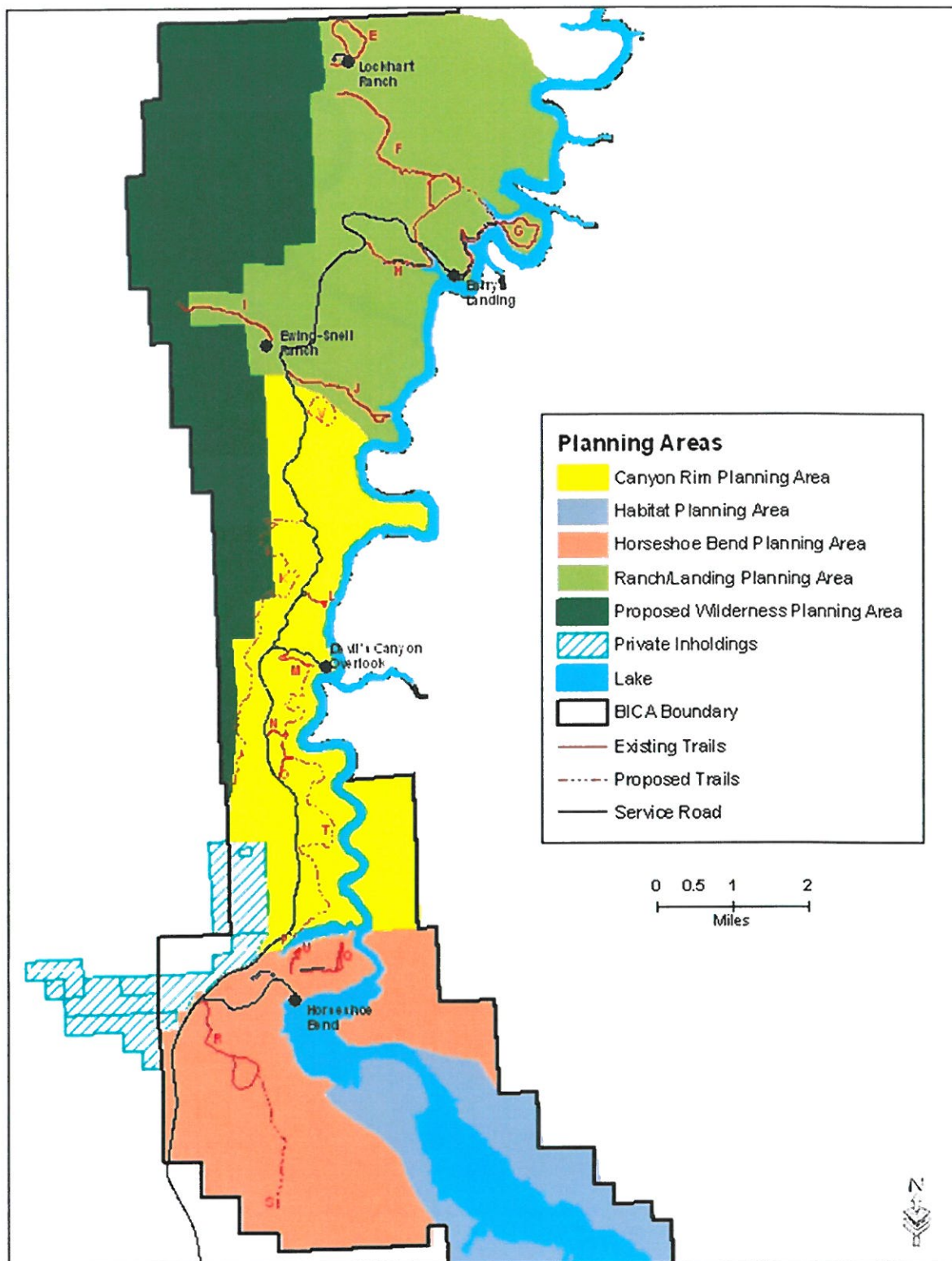


Figure 2.3 Planning Areas at Bighorn Canyon: South District

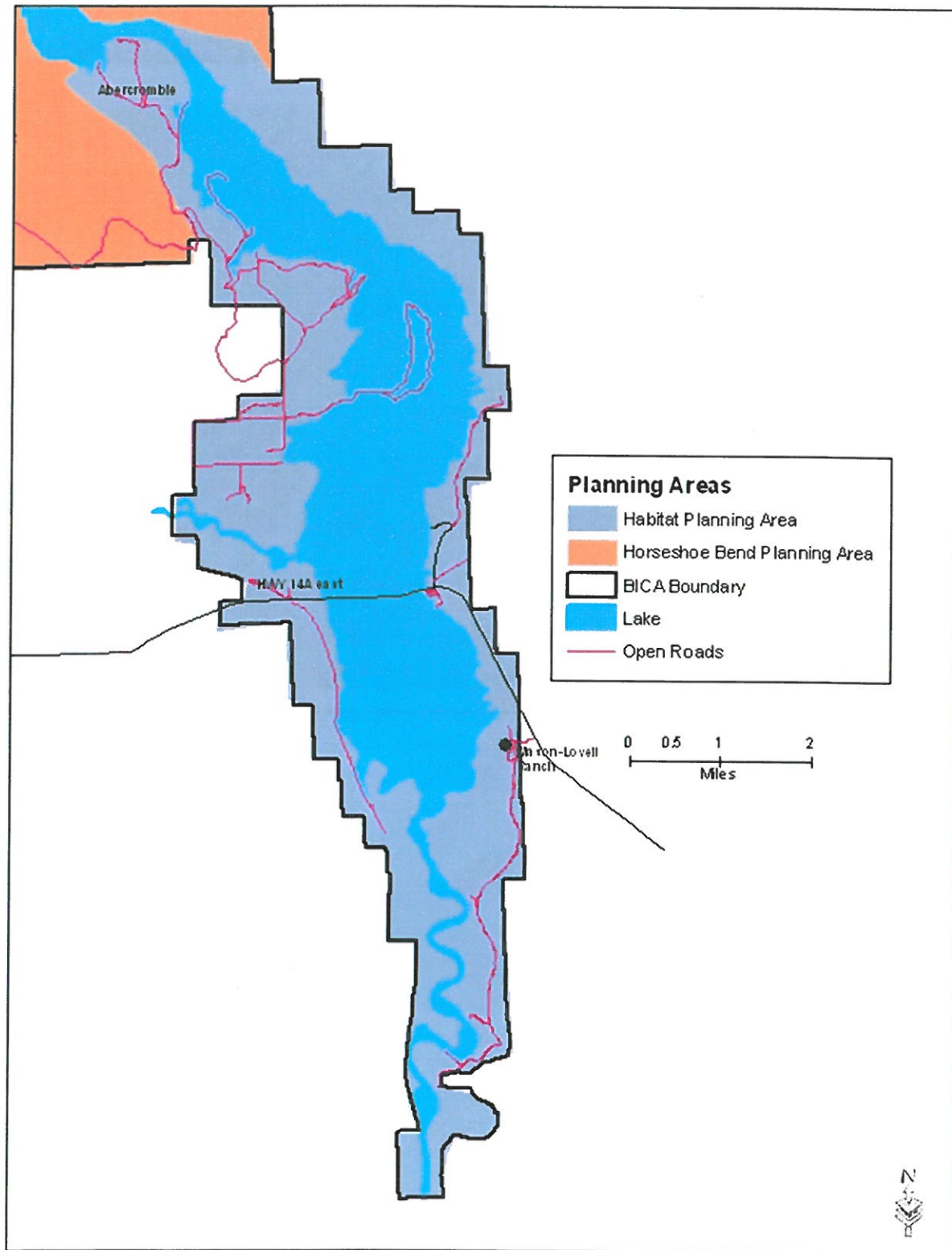


Figure 2.4 Planning Areas at Bighorn Canyon: Habitat.

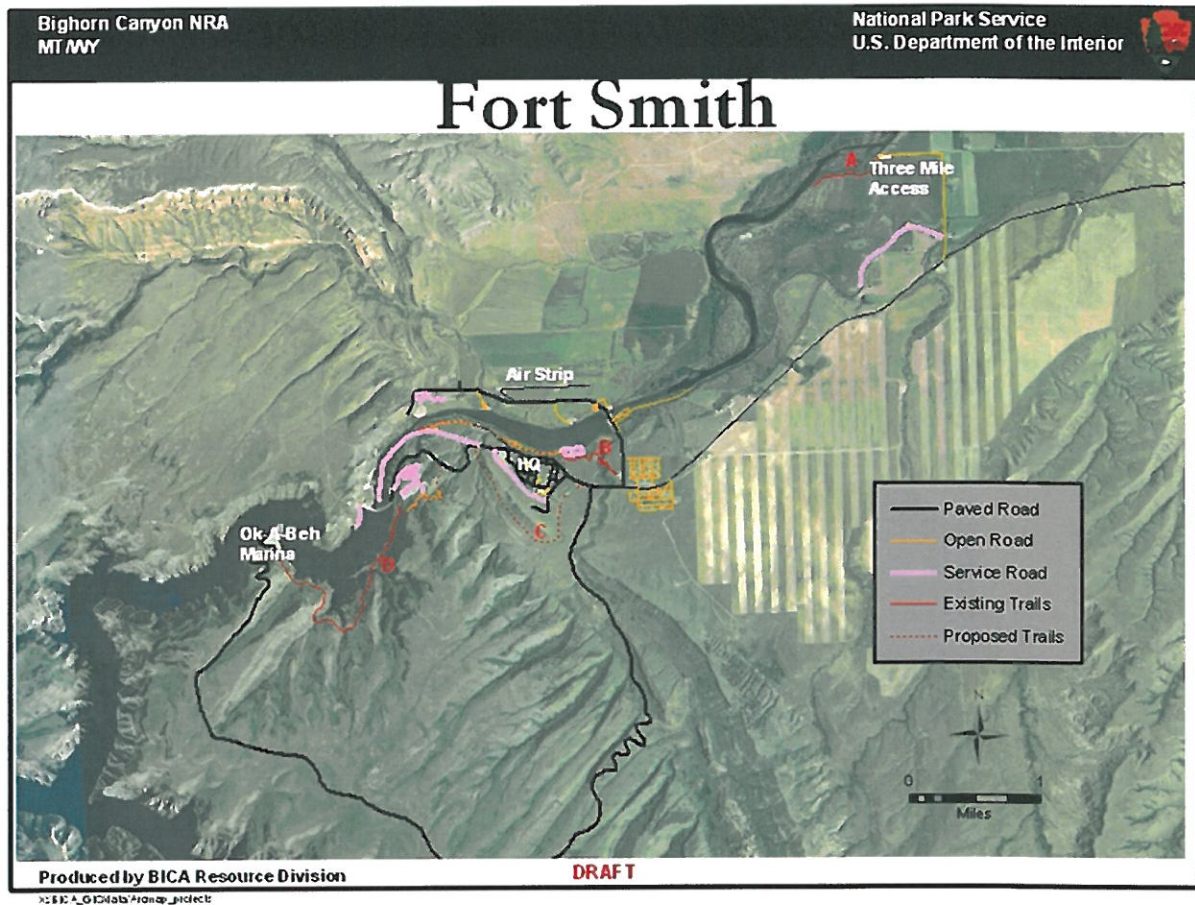


Figure 2.5: Ft Smith

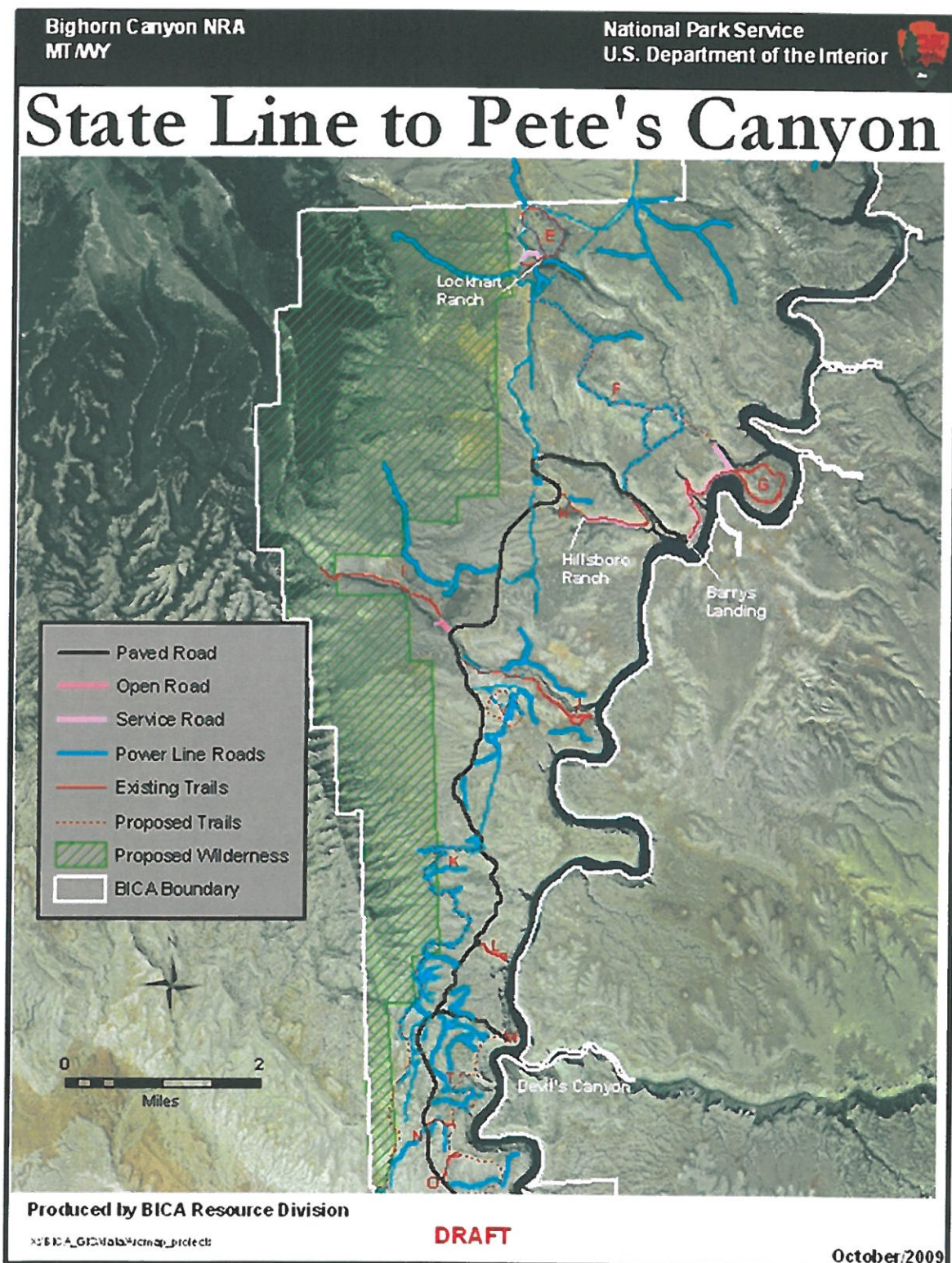


Figure 2.6: Stateline to Pete's Canyon

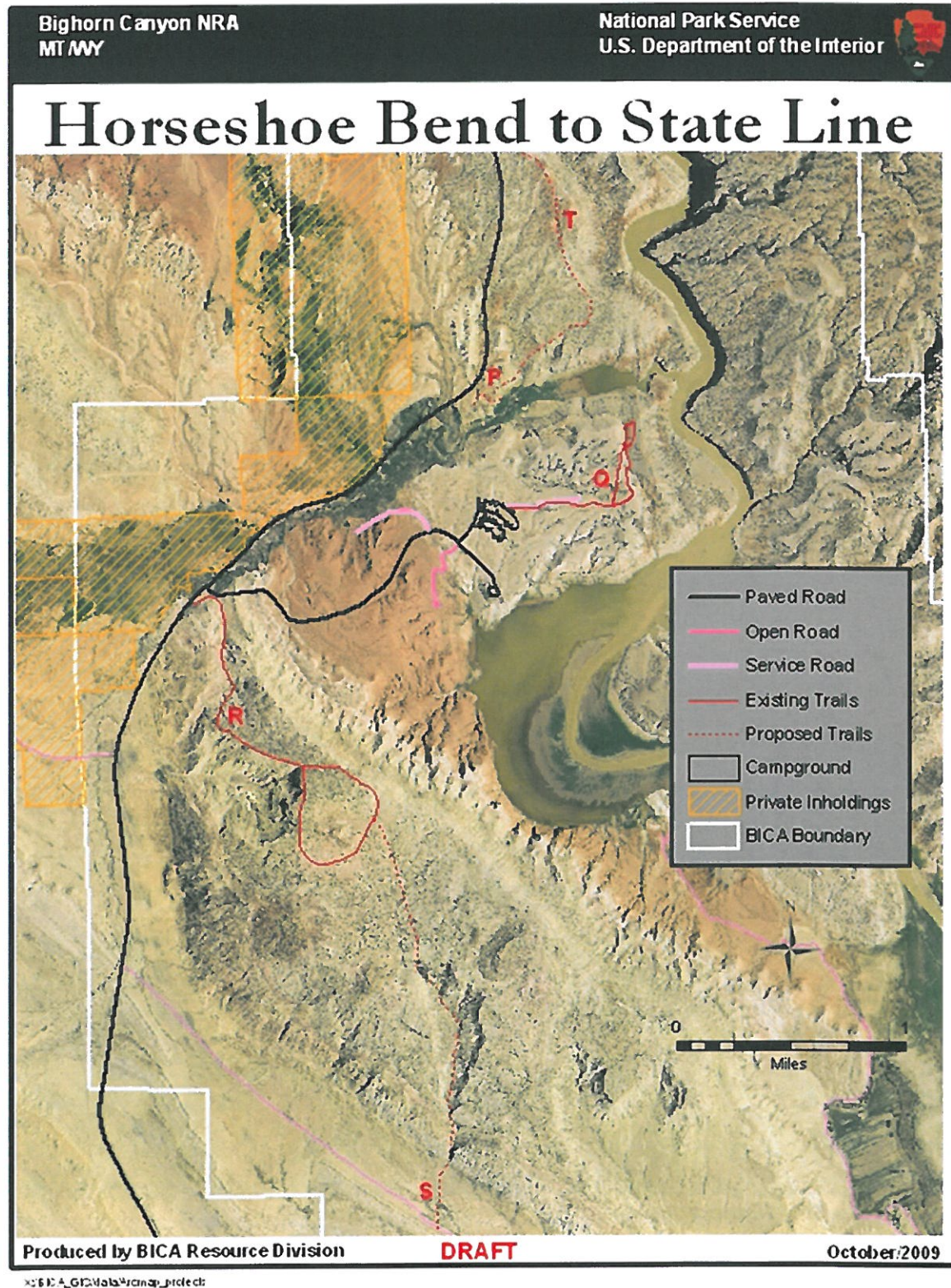


Figure 2.7 Horseshoe Bend to Stateline

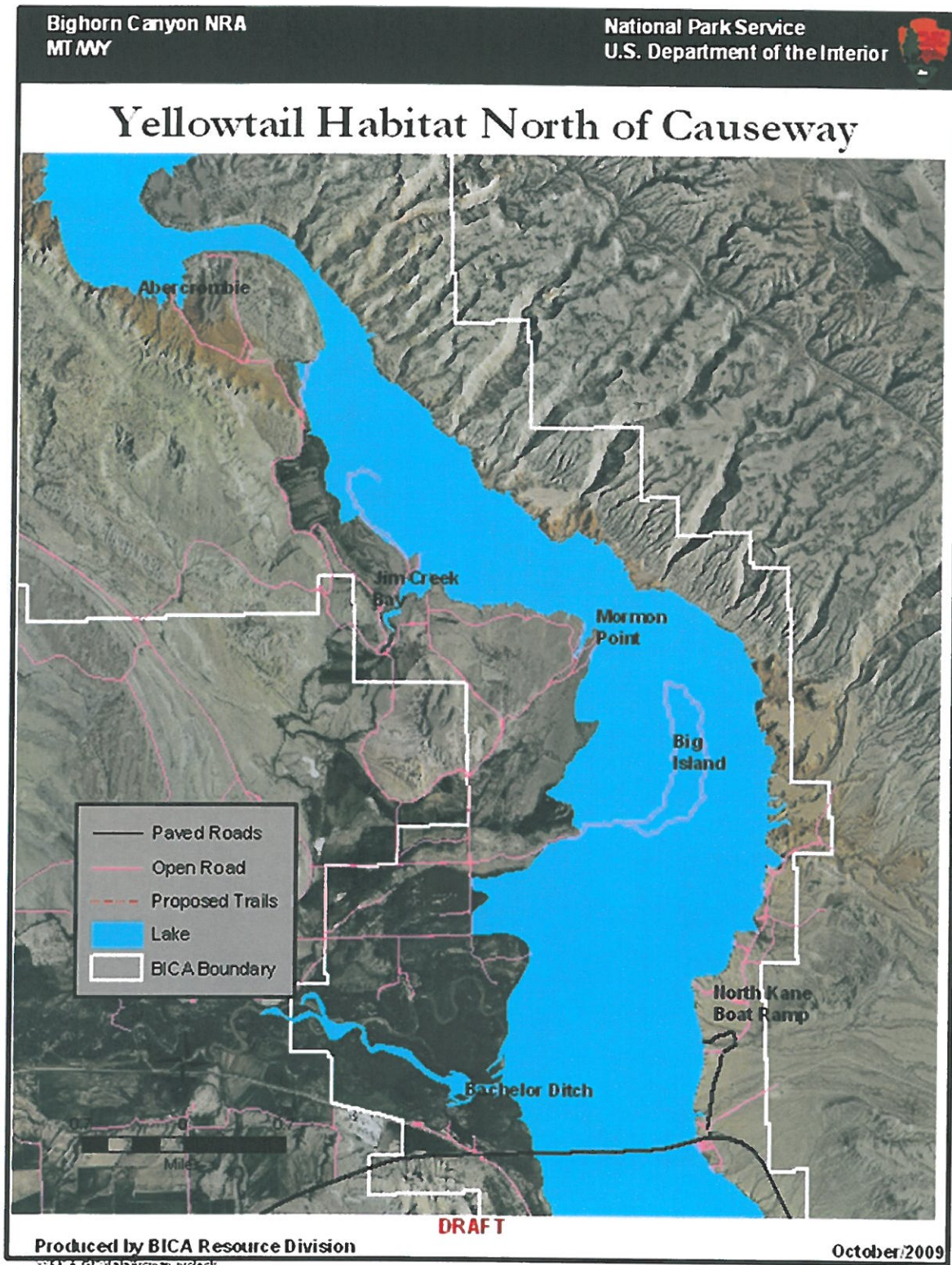


Figure 2.8 Yellowtail Habitat North of Causeway

Alternatives Considered but Dismissed from Further Consideration

The Trails Planning Committee carefully considered numerous trails and road suggestions. Many ideas were incorporated as elements of the alternatives. Many suggestions were not considered because they did not meet the objectives of the plan, or because other trail and road suggestions better achieved the objectives of the plan. Two topics were specifically dismissed from further consideration; ATV trails and trails in the Yellowtail Habitat, both for reasons of visitor safety and resource protection. Larger increases in paved parking areas were also considered and dismissed, due to low visitation and trail use and need to protect resources.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying the criteria suggested in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), which guides the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The CEQ provides direction that “the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that would promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA:

- Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
- Assure for all generations safe, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings
- Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences
- Preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice
- Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities
- Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

The No Action Alternative, does not meet the above six evaluation factors.

By taking no action:

- Some trails would continue to degrade more rapidly than others, increasing safety, erosion and impact issues.
- Only limited user groups (hikers desiring relatively short hikes) would be served by the parks trail system. No specific provision would be made for mountain bike trails. User conflict could occur, as routes will not be designated for specific user groups.
- The potential for resource damage would be high, particularly in areas such as the Devil’s Canyon Overlook where the lack of an established trail can lead to increased erosion, wildlife and plant disturbance.
- Because Archeological surveys have not been completed, these resources may continue to be at risk.

- Uses and desired conditions of primitive unpaved roads will continue to be undefined. Locked gates to two track roads would remain closed to the public. Old mining roads may be left unmaintained but will not be designated for restoration projects.
- No priority or ranking would be in place to guide future funding proposals for park trail construction/improvement.

Alternative B meets some of the above six evaluation factors.

By pursuing Alternative B the following would be met:

- Trails would be made more safe for the visiting public and also minimize resource damage along and around the trails and access road ways.
- Resource damage would be addressed on trails, which could be re-routed to address resource issues

The following would not be met:

- Only limited user groups would be served by the park's trail system. Trails would remain open to hikers and equestrians but would be unavailable to mountain bikes. Trails would also be limited in skill level providing very little option for advanced hikers.
- Archeological resources may continue to be at risk.
- Uses and desired conditions of park 2-track roads would remain undefined, increasing potential for resource damage.
- Options for recreation at Bighorn Canyon would remain limited.

Alternative A meets much of the criteria for the environmentally preferred option

By pursuing alternative A:

- Trails would be re-designed and established to meet visitor needs for safety, variety and aesthetic values, while limiting undesirable and unintended consequences.
- The widest range of recreational needs would be met, benefiting a diverse group of park visitors
- Historic, cultural and natural aspects, key to our national heritage could be managed more precisely, reducing risk and damage to them.
- The needs of an increasing visitor population could be met while still maintaining standards for protection and preservation.

The preferred alternative has also been selected as the environmentally preferred alternative because it is the alternative that would best protect the biological and physical environment by diverting park visitors away from areas with sensitive soils, wildlife breeding areas and endangered plant habitats. Use would be concentrated on specific trails, ensuring protection of the biological and physical environment as well as archeological resources.

Although Alternative B is close to meeting the goals and objectives of the plan, Alternative A was selected because of a greater certainty in achieving goals (see Table 1.1). The No Action alternative was not selected

because it would have adverse effects on the natural and cultural resources of the park over the life of the plan.

Table 2.2 Trails Types Represented by Each Alternative

	No Action	Alternative A	Alternative B
Number of trails	13	22	15
Hiking trails (total)	13	22	15
Easy hikes	8	10	8
Moderate hikes	6	9	7
Difficult hikes	2	6	2
Mountain bike trails	0	5	0
Equestrian trails	5	6	5
Accessible paths	1	2	2

Table 2.3 Summary of Impacts by Alternative

Planning Area	No Action Alternative	Alternative A	Alternative B
Vegetation			
Reservoir	beneficial and adverse, local, short- and long-term and moderate	adverse, site-specific, long-term and minor	adverse, site-specific, long-term and minor
Headquarters	no discernable effect, local, short- and long-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible
3-mile	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor
Horseshoe Bend	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial and adverse, site-specific and local, short and long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor
Canyon Rim	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor
Proposed Wilderness	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial and adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	adverse, local, short- and long-term and moderate
Ranch/Landing	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial and adverse, local, short- and long-term and moderate	beneficial, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor
Yellowtail Habitat	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor to moderate	beneficial, local, long-term and moderate	beneficial, local, long-term and moderate
South & SE Lake	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, local, long-term and minor.	beneficial, local, long-term and minor
Wildlife			
Reservoir	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and moderate	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and negligible

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Headquarters	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and negligible	adverse, local, short- and long-term and negligible
3-mile	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, short- and long-term and negligible	beneficial, site-specific, short- and long-term and negligible
Horseshoe Bend	adverse, site-specific, short-term and minor	beneficial and adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor
Canyon Rim	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	adverse and beneficial, site-specific, short- and long-term and negligible to minor	beneficial or have no discernable impact, local, short- and long-term and negligible
Proposed Wilderness	beneficial, local, long-term and negligible	beneficial and adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor
Ranch/Landing	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial and adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor to moderate	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor
Yellowtail Habitat	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor
South & SE Lake	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, local, long-term and minor	beneficial, local, long-term and minor
Special Status Species			
Wildlife			
American peregrine falcon	adverse, site-specific, short-term and minor	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible to minor	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible to minor
Yellow billed cuckoo	adverse, local, short and long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific to local, short and long-term and minor to moderate.	beneficial, site-specific to local, short and long-term and minor to moderate.
Pallid bat	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible
Spotted bat	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible
Fringe-tailed myotis	adverse, site-specific, short-term and minor	adverse, site-specific, short-term and minor	adverse, site-specific, short-term and minor
Townsend's big-eared bat	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short-term and minor.	adverse, site-specific, short-term and negligible
Northern leopard frog	adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, short and long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, short and long-term and minor
Plains spadefoot toad	no discernable impact	no discernable impact	no discernable impact
Plants			
Blowout penstemon	No effect	No effect	No effect
Ute ladies-tresses	No effect	No effect	No effect
Wyoming sullivantia	adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and minor	beneficial adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, short and long-term and minor to moderate
Persistantsepal yellowcress	adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and minor	adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and minor	adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and minor

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Bighorn fleabane	no discernable impact	no discernable impact	no discernable impact
Hairy prince's plume	no discernable impact	no discernable impact	no discernable impact
Wind River milkvetch	no discernable impact	no discernable impact	no discernable impact
Rabbit buckwheat	adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and negligible	adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and negligible
Geology and Soils			
Reservoir	adverse, local, short- and long-term and negligible	adverse, local, short- and long-term and negligible	adverse, local, short- and long-term and negligible
Headquarters	no discernable change	beneficial and adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	no discernable change
3-mile	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial and adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor
Horseshoe Bend	adverse, local, short and long-term and moderate	beneficial and adverse, site-specific, short and long-term and minor to moderate	beneficial, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor
Canyon Rim	adverse, local, short- and long-term and negligible	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor
Proposed Wilderness	negligible effect	beneficial and adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor to moderate
Ranch/Landing	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term and minor	adverse and beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor	no discernable effect or be beneficial, local, short- and long-term and minor to moderate
Yellowtail Habitat	adverse, local, short- and long-term and moderate	beneficial, local, long-term and moderate	beneficial, local, long-term and moderate
South & SE Lake	adverse, local, short- and long-term and moderate	beneficial, local, long-term and minor	beneficial, local, long-term and minor
Archeological Resources			
All areas	adverse, site-specific, long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, long-term and minor
Cultural Landscapes			
All areas	adverse, long-term, site-specific, and minor	beneficial and adverse, site-specific, long-term and minor	beneficial, site-specific, long-term, and negligible to minor
Ethnographic Resources			
All areas	adverse, long-term, site-specific and negligible to minor	adverse, long-term, site-specific and minor	adverse, long-term, site-specific and minor
Wilderness Values			
Proposed Wilderness	No discernable effect	beneficial and adverse, short- and long-term, local, and minor	No discernable effect
Visitor Experience			
North District	no discernable change	beneficial, local, long-term and minor	no discernable change

South District	no discernable change	beneficial, local, long-term and minor	beneficial, local, long-term and minor
Yellowtail Habitat	no discernable change	beneficial, local, long-term and minor	beneficial, local, long-term and minor
Park Operations			
All areas	adverse, site-specific, short- and long-term, and minor	beneficial and adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor	beneficial and adverse, local, short- and long-term and minor

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