



PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

**NEED**

Traffic and parking congestion have been an ongoing issue at Bandelier National Monument since the 1970s. During peak periods, visitation levels have often exceeded existing parking capacities resulting in overcrowded parking lots and lines of cars waiting to enter the park. Traffic and parking congestion negatively affects park resources, such as air quality, soundscapes, wildlife, and water quality, and causes impacts to visitor safety and the overall quality of visitors’ experiences.

**PURPOSE**

To develop solutions to transportation issues at Bandelier National Monument that are resource-sensitive, environmentally sustainable, cost effective, and improve visitor enjoyment.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Protect natural and cultural resources within the project area.
- Ensure visitor access and enhance opportunities for visitor enjoyment.
- Return Frijoles Canyon to a more tranquil setting.
- Reduce transportation-related impacts, such as air and noise pollution.

**NEPA PROCESS**

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) sets national environmental policy goals and establishes processes for carrying out environmental analysis of federal actions.

To comply with NEPA, NPS is preparing a Transportation Plan and Environmental Assessment (Plan/EA) on potential solutions to the existing transportation issues at Bandelier National Monument.

The Plan/EA will evaluate potential impacts to park resources and visitor enjoyment resulting from a “no action” alternative and other alternatives, including a non-transit alternative.

This public scoping process helps ensure that people are given an opportunity to comment and contribute early in the process so that issues, impacts, and potential alternatives are identified and considered.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

2012				2013			
Sep 24 & 25	October 10	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013
Public Scoping Meetings	Public Scoping Period Concludes	NPS Reviews Public Scoping Comments, Gathers Data, and Develops Draft Alternatives		Assess impacts and develop Transportation Plan/EA		Transportation Plan/EA to Public for Review and Comment	NPS Prepares Decision Document
			Release Alternatives Newsletter				
			Public Comment Period for Alternatives				

**We are here!**

= Opportunities for public input





TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES THROUGH 2010

PEAK PARKING DEMAND EXCEEDS CAPACITY IN FRIJOLES CANYON



- **Visitor frustration and crowding:** 90% of visitor use occurs in Frijoles Canyon, making it difficult for visitors to find parking and causing visitors to feel crowded. The need for employee parking adds to the parking challenges in the Canyon.
- **Resource damage:** When parking is congested in Frijoles Canyon, some visitors park in undesignated areas, causing impacts to park resources.
- **Air quality and noise impacts:** Heavy vehicle traffic and idling vehicles waiting to find a parking space impact air quality and the park's natural soundscape.
- **Wildlife impacts:** Wildlife breeding and nesting occurs within the Frijoles Canyon main parking area, and is disrupted by traffic congestion.
- **Difficulty conducting park operations and maintenance:** Traffic congestion in Frijoles Canyon interferes with the park's ability to conduct operations and maintenance activities.
- **Lack of advanced information:** Information about conditions in the park is not available to visitors until they arrive, making it difficult for visitors to adjust travel plans to avoid crowding and congestion.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION OCCURS AT PARK ENTRANCE STATION

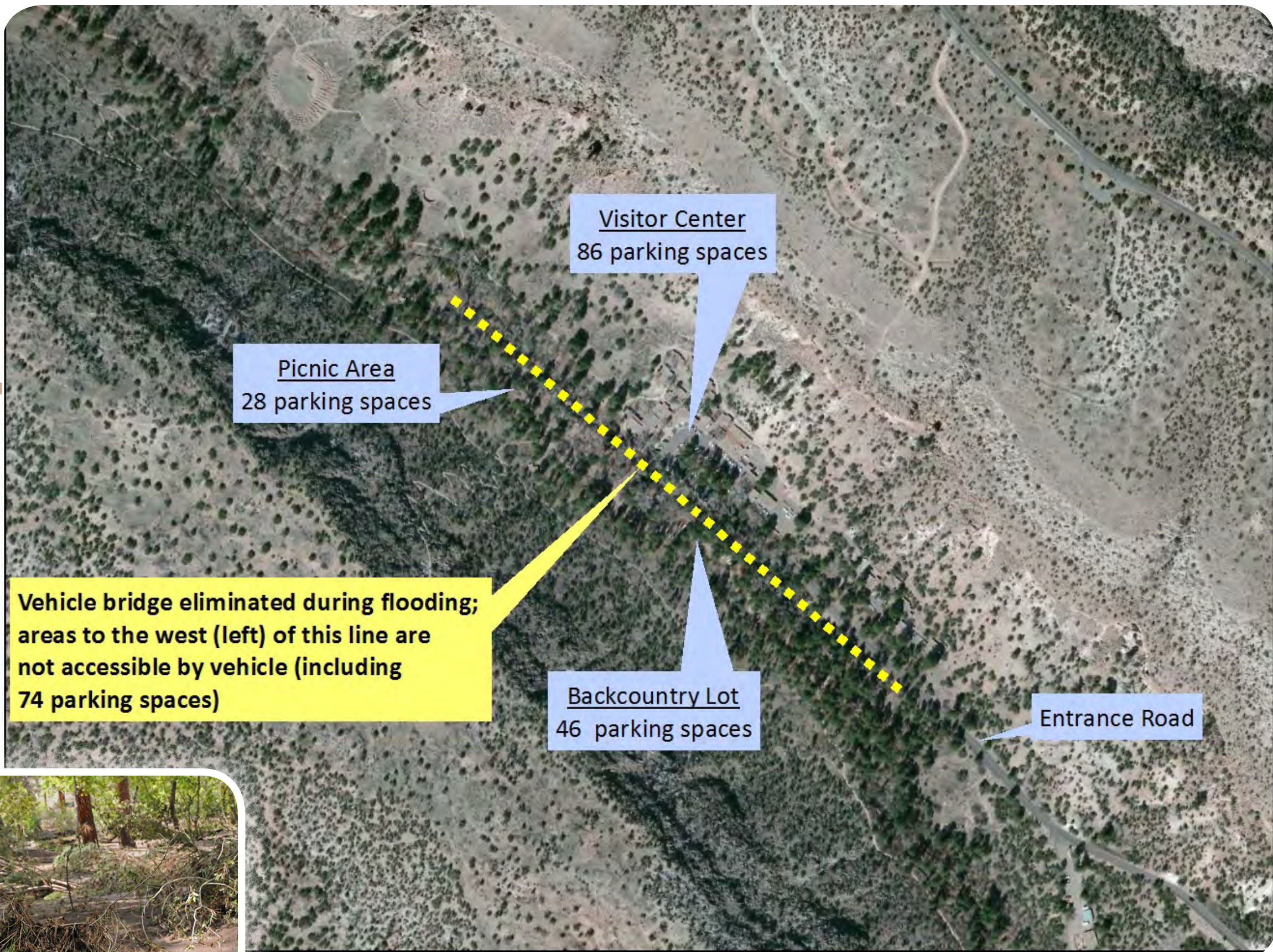


- **Visitor frustration:** Visitors are often greeted by long lines of traffic at the park entrance and waits of up to 30 minutes to enter the park.
- **Unsafe traffic conditions:** During peak periods, traffic waiting to enter the park backs up onto NM Route 4 and is exposed to the risk of crashes with through-traffic on the state highway.
- **Vehicle emissions:** Fee collection staff are subjected to emissions from idling vehicles waiting at the park entrance for parking to become available in Frijoles Canyon.

LAS CONCHAS WILDFIRE, 2011



Bridge removal resulted in ~50% reduction in parking capacity in Frijoles Canyon, making traffic and parking issues more challenging.

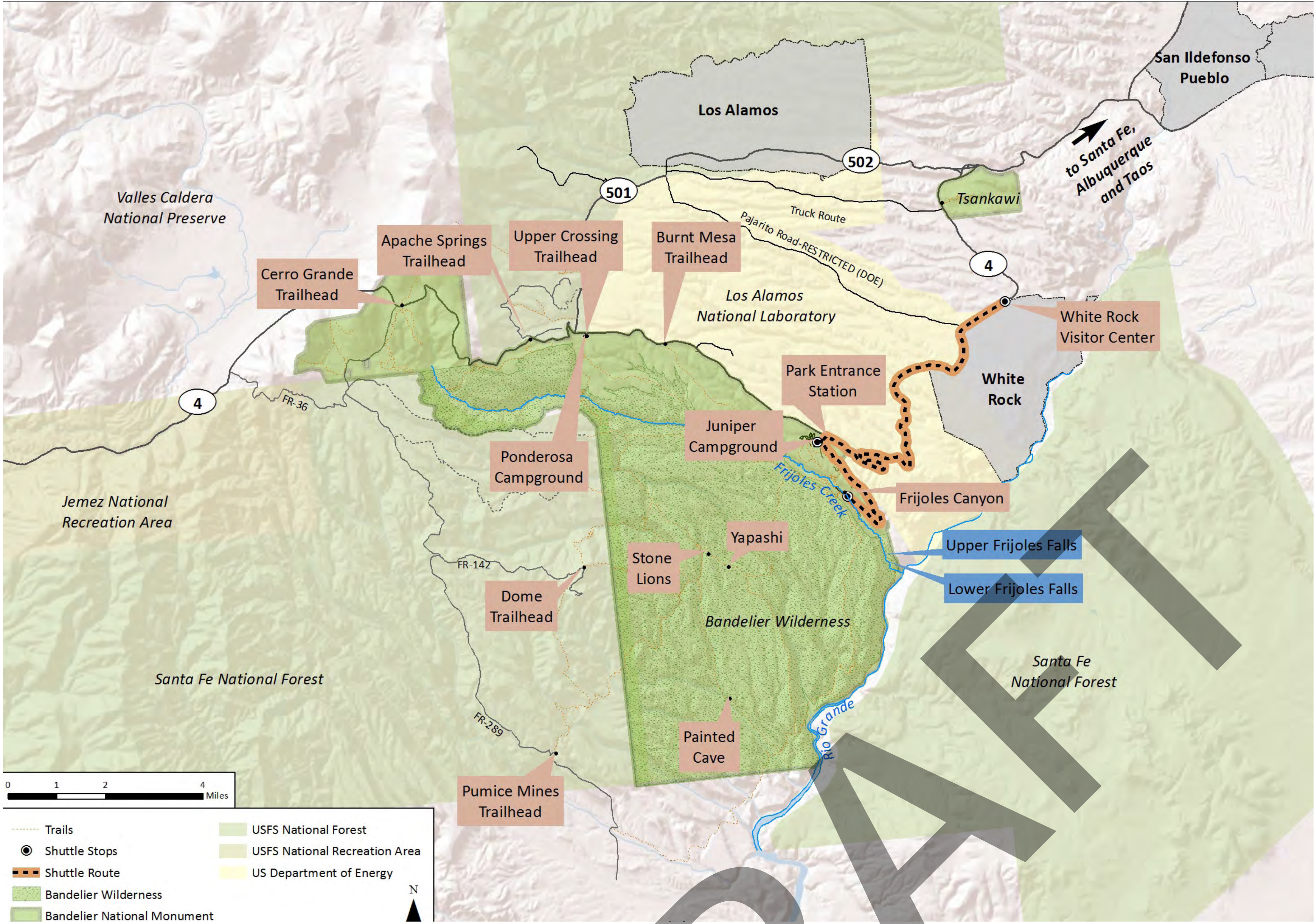






TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES 2012 - 2014: EMERGENCY SHUTTLE SERVICE



- Visitor frustration:** Some visitors must drive past the park entrance to White Rock, and then back-track on the shuttle to enter the park. Additionally, some visitors do not find out about the shuttle until they arrive at the park, and then have to drive to White Rock.
- Visitor inconvenience:** Visitors traveling with pets must leave them in vehicles at White Rock. Picnicking in Frijoles Canyon can be difficult for visitors without a personal vehicle.
- Impacts to visitor access:** The shuttle service does not provide park access during the early morning or late evening hours. Park trailheads on NM Route 4 are not serviced by shuttle buses.
- Temporary Solution:** Emergency shuttle service is scheduled to end in November 2014.

WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS IN BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT?

- Long-term solutions to parking and traffic congestion are needed.
- NPS will consider transit and non-transit alternatives to address transportation issues in Bandelier.

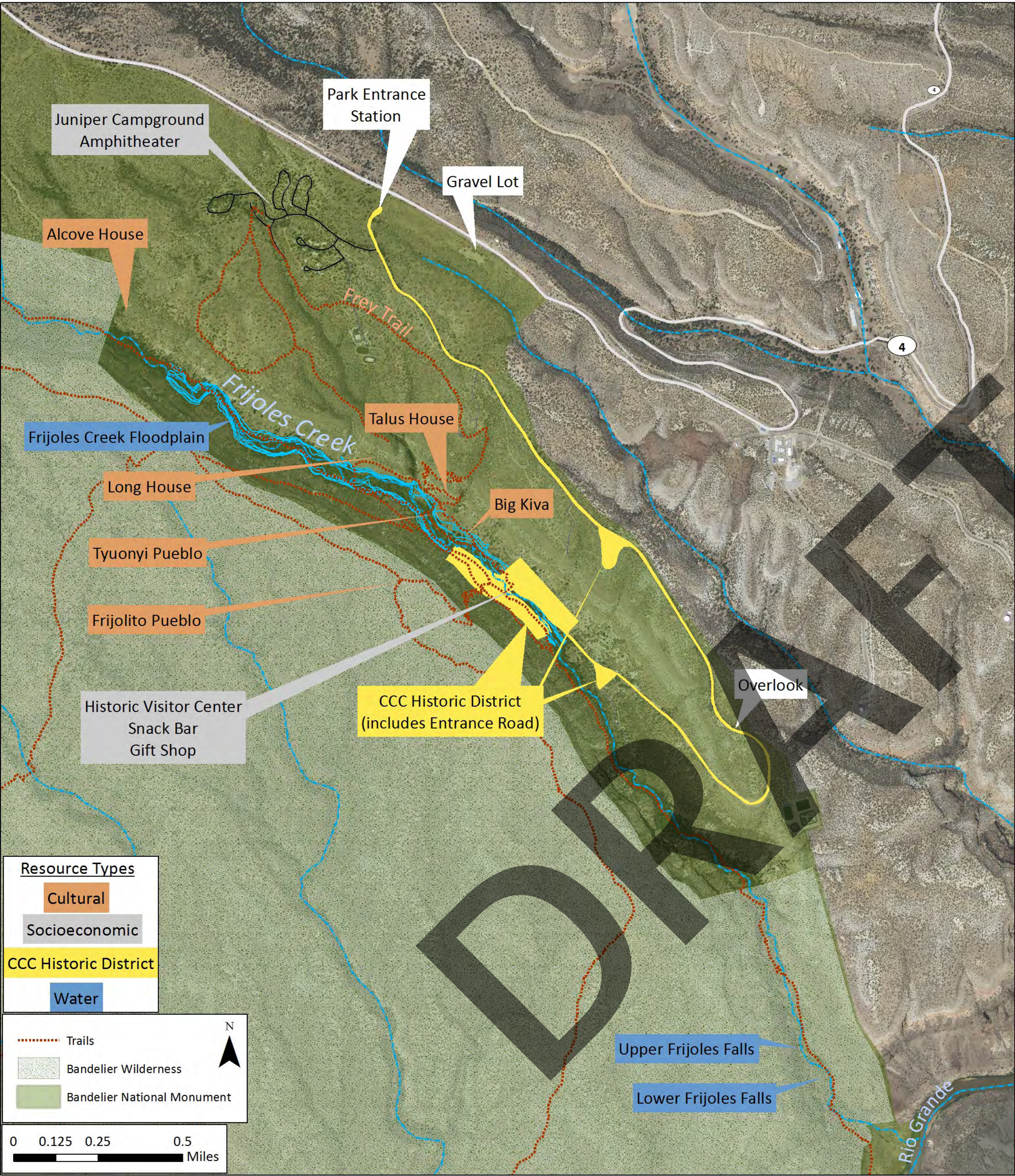






RESOURCES | NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL

PARK RESOURCES



CULTURAL RESOURCES



VEGETATION



WILDLIFE



WATER BODIES/WETLANDS



SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCES



OTHER RESOURCES



IMPACT TOPICS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THIS PLAN (DRAFT)

- Vegetation
- Wildlife/Wildlife Habitat
- Water Resources
- Floodplains
- Air Quality
- Soundscapes
- Archeological Resources
- Ethnographic Resources
- Cultural Landscape
- Historic Structures
- Socioeconomic Resources
- Access and Circulation
- Visitor Use/Experience
- Park Operations





COMMENT BOARD

Place a dot { ○ } on the location(s) where you have a comment, and record your comment on a post-it note.

Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
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