

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

South Unit Loop Road Reconstruction Project

National Park Service
US Department
of the Interior



You're Invited!

The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking your input on the South Unit Loop Road Reconstruction Project at Theodore Roosevelt National Park (the Park). NPS has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and will be hosting a virtual public meeting.

When and Where

The Park will host a virtual public meeting and will present information on the project, potential impacts to resources, and visitors during construction. A Q&A session will follow the presentation.

- **Date:** February 23, 2022
- **Time:** 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. MST
- **Link:** <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkId=167>

INSIDE

02 Background and
Project Location

03 Alternatives
Explained

04 Project
Impacts

05 How to
Comment



Public Meeting

February 23, 2022

Please register for the meeting
in advance at:

- https://us02web.zoom.us/join/wn_e1xfzvhQToWGBJS6nhKNSA

Audio only access is also
available by calling:

- +1-646-558-8656
- Webinar ID 867 5574 1834
- Passcode: 580426

Background

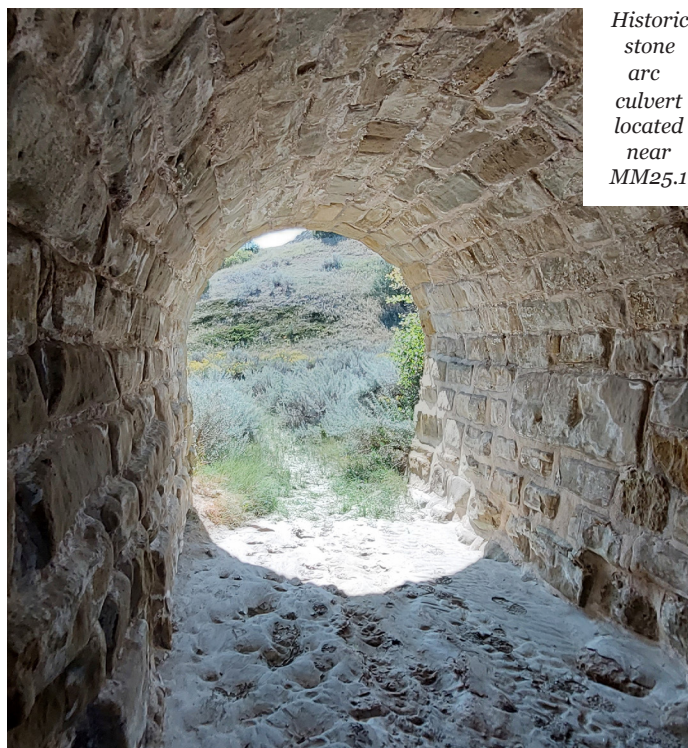
The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in partnership with NPS proposes to stabilize sections of the Park's Scenic Loop Drive between mile marker 22 and mile marker 28 (figure 1).

The nature of the soil and geology combined with freeze-thaw cycles have led to landslides, sinkholes and other dangerous conditions. A 150-foot section of Scenic Loop Drive collapsed in spring 2019, requiring closure of the roadway.

Geotechnical and pavement engineering studies on the road have recommended 6.15 miles of roadway for reconstruction, including bank stabilization, drainage improvements, and slope regrading.

Work will also be done on some existing historic culverts, and to improve drainage, new culverts will be added.

Figure 1. Project Location. The road closure zone between marker 22 and mile marker 28 is shown in orange.





Alternatives

The EA evaluates two alternatives including a no-action alternative (alternative 1) and one action alternative (alternative 2). Alternative 2 meets the Park's goals of re-opening the road and making it safe for the public.

ALTERNATIVE 1: No Action

Alternative 1, the no-action alternative, describes current management and the existing condition of Scenic Loop Drive ([figure 2](#)). Alternative 1 provides a basis for comparing the management direction and environmental consequences of alternative 2, and is required as a baseline by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Under alternative 1, the 6.15-mile section of Scenic Loop Drive would remain closed to visitors, erosion would continue to worsen the condition of the roadway, and structural and accessibility issues would remain.

Figure 2. Project Area Condition under the No-Action Alternative



ALTERNATIVE 2: Reconstruction of South Unit Loop Road (Proposed Action and Preferred Alternative)

Alternative 2, the proposed action and preferred alternative, would address multiple roadway problem areas along Scenic Loop Drive by reconstructing 6.15 miles of road from mile marker 22 to mile marker 28 for longevity and resilience. Alternative 2 includes specific treatment options—such as subgrade excavation, structural improvements (e.g., [figure 3](#), lagging walls), drainage improvements, and pullout and parking area improvements—for repairing each section of the road to address existing problems. These treatment

Figure 3. Example Soldier Piles and Lagging Walls in Mesa Verde National Park



options are based on existing data, geological and soil studies, field exploration, survey and mapping of surface features, groundwater and hydraulics analyses, geotechnical back-analysis, and stability analyses. The project area would consist of a 400-foot-wide corridor (i.e., approximately 200 feet from the centerline on each side of the road). The project area may include several locations beyond the 400-foot-wide corridor to allow for

adequate stormwater drainage based on hydraulics, erosion, geotechnical, and slope stability analysis.

Alternative 2 also includes landslide mitigation and minimization measures, such as stabilization, that would protect natural aesthetics and reduce environmental impacts.

Project Impacts

The NPS evaluated a wide range of potential impacts from the proposed action, and incorporated advice from federal, state, and local agencies, as well as tribes, to identify issues and concerns related to park and tribal resources. Anticipated impacts of the summarized below.



CULTURAL RESOURCES

- There would be potential impacts to historic stone headwalls of 23 culverts that contribute to the Scenic Loop Drive Historic District. About half of the culverts would need upsizing and/or redesign and the other half would be replaced with the same size pipe and alignment. Repairs would follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- The reconstructed roadway would still contribute to the historic district because there would be no change to the road alignment or the visual quality of the historic district.
- No adverse impacts on archeological sites are expected but NPS would provide for an archeologist and tribal cultural specialist to monitor ground-disturbing activities.
- NPS would continue coordination with the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and tribes, and follow stipulations in the draft memorandum of agreement with the SHPO to resolve potential adverse effects to the historic district.



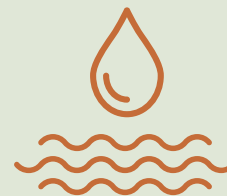
VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE

- Construction is expected to take 2 years, so the road will continue to be closed to the public.
- Access to the Ridgeline Nature Trail would also remain closed during construction.
- NPS will coordinate with the City of Medora and North Dakota Department of Transportation on installing appropriate signage to inform the public about detours.
- Emergency vehicle access through construction zones will be established.
- The final project, including the style and color of features like the retaining walls, will be sensitive to the landscape.



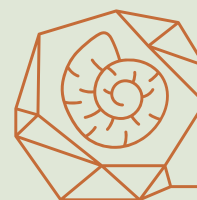
GEOLOGY AND SOILS

- There would be some unavoidable impacts to geology and soils during, and as a result of construction, but in the long run, the improvements in infrastructure would prevent erosion, landslides and other damage.
- Best management practices during construction will help to control erosion and stormwater runoff, as well as dust.
- The spread of invasive plants would be prevented by evaluating topsoil for nonnative invasive plant infestations and requiring construction equipment washing and inspections. Revegetation after construction will also help to improve soil stability.



WATER RESOURCES

- Wetland scientists would identify and clearly mark wetlands before construction and NPS would implement Best Management Practices for erosion and sediment control.
- Water resources such as streams could be temporarily impacted during construction activities, but best management practices such as silt fencing would minimize these.
- About 0.03-acre of wetland located downhill of a significant landslide would be affected, but following construction, the free flow of surface water through the wetland would be restored.
- In the long-term, streams in the project area would be improved as the free flow of surface water is restored.



PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- Ground-disturbance is unavoidable and could cause some disturbance or loss of non-renewable fossils.
- Impacts would be avoided or minimized as much as possible and a paleontology expert would be on-site during ground-disturbing actions in sensitive areas.





Bison at Theodore Roosevelt Park

How to Comment

The NPS is excited about restoring this Park road! Your comments and input are fundamental to our planning and environmental review process. You can submit your comments electronically or by mail.

Comment Period: February 14, 2022 - March 1, 2022

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK



Submit your input electronically
(preferred method):

[https://parkplanning.nps.gov/
parkHome.cfm?parkId=167](https://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkId=167)



Or mail to:

Superintendent
Theodore Roosevelt National Park PO Box 7
Medora, ND 58645

Before including your address, telephone number, electronic mail address, or other personally identifiable information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment (including your personally identifiable information) may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold your personally identifiable information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

