



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Join the Conversation!

Virtual Public Scoping Meeting – November 1, 2023

- Billings Field Office -

Cottonwood Travel Management Area

Travel Management Plan and Environmental Assessment





# Agenda

- **Welcome and Logistics**
- **Presentation**
  - Cottonwood Travel Management Area (TMA) Overview
  - Travel Management Planning Process and Schedule
  - Evaluation Process and Alternatives
  - How to Participate and Comment
- **Question and Answer**

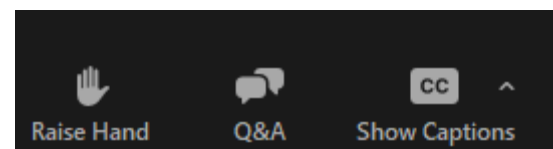




# Meeting Details

## Meeting Tips and Tricks for Zoom:

- Use the Q&A icon for the question-and-answer session.
- Use the Raise Hand feature to ask a question.
- Mute/Unmute will be controlled by the host for the entirety of the meeting.
- For technical assistance, contact the following email: [csmith@logansimpson.com](mailto:csmith@logansimpson.com)

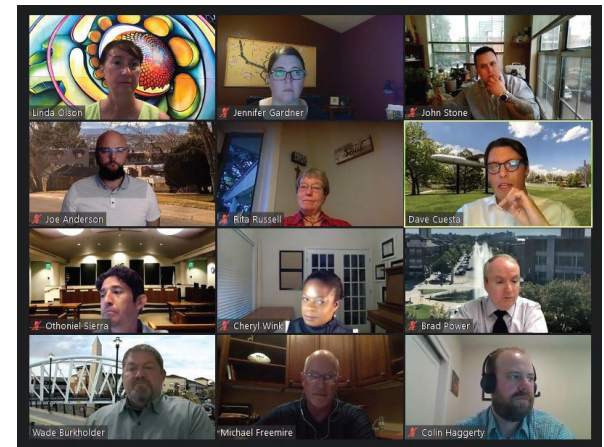




# Welcome and Logistics

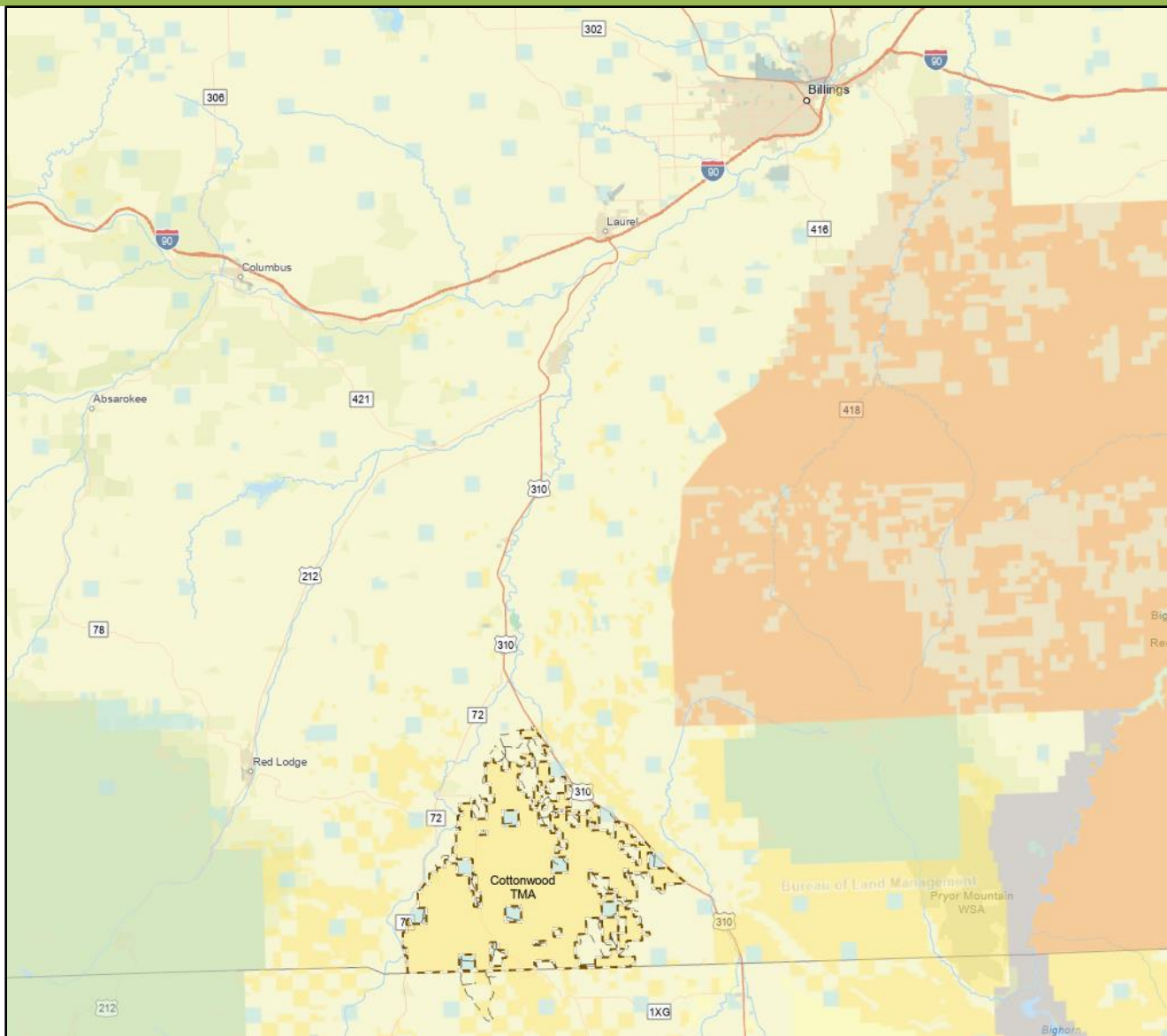
## Housekeeping and Ground Rules

- Microphones and videos of the audience will be turned off during the presentation.
- The meeting will be recorded for the project record.
- All materials presented today will be provided online.
- Questions can be placed in the Question & Answer box below throughout the meeting.
- Verbal questions will be taken at the end of the presentation.





# Overview Map







# What is Travel Management?

Provides opportunities for a range of motorized and non-motorized uses on public lands while protecting resources and minimizing conflicts among users. A Travel Management Plan provides goals for the travel network and resources.



## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Requires Federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared in compliance with NEPA regulations to analyze the effects of the TMP.





# Process & Schedule

## The Travel Management Process will:

- Follow the goals & objectives of the 2015 Resource Management Plan.
- Engage the public in a collaborative and transparent planning process with multiple opportunities to provide input.
- Designate existing routes for management as roads, primitive roads, or trails, or restoration depending on access needs and objectives.
- Incorporate existing and future needs for transportation, access, development, and recreational opportunities.
- Use an interdisciplinary planning process to address multiple users and uses of the travel network.
- Minimize multi-user conflicts and resource impacts.
- Develop multiple alternatives for a sustainable multi-modal travel network.



We are here





# How will this Plan affect me?

- Take into consideration your access and resource concerns
- Improve navigation and help find routes on the ground
- Optimize routes for multiple users and uses of the travel network
- Establish a plan for long-term management and maintenance for the travel network







# Route Inventory Process

- Completed in September 2021 using high accuracy GPS.
- Documented over 340 miles of the route network.
- Captured geotagged photos of route conditions, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Routes provide access to BLM, Private, and State Lands.
- Route data collected:
  - Number/Name
  - Average Width
  - Surface Material
  - Establishment
  - Relative Use Level
  - Relative Difficulty
  - Destination or Observed Purpose
  - General Observations (leads to overlook, camping, needs improvement, etc.)
- Some inventoried routes are currently designated as:
  - State Roads
  - County Roads
  - Authorized Use Only
  - Non-Motorized



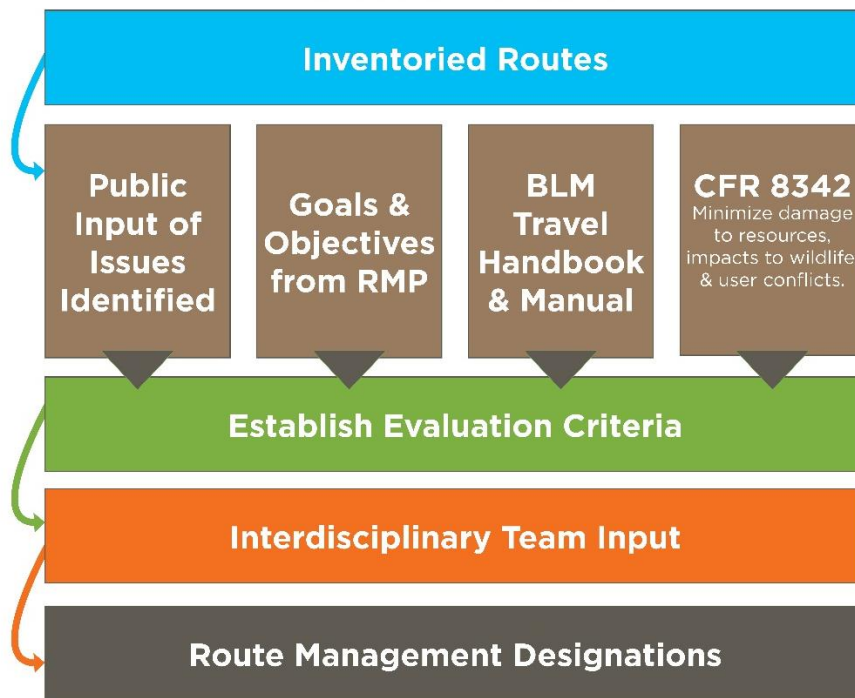


# Route Evaluation Process

After each inventoried route within the travel management area has been reviewed by the public, the evaluation process uses RMP criteria to identify resources impacted, mitigation measures, route purposes & uses, objectives and documents the route designation.



## Establishing and Applying Evaluation Criteria:



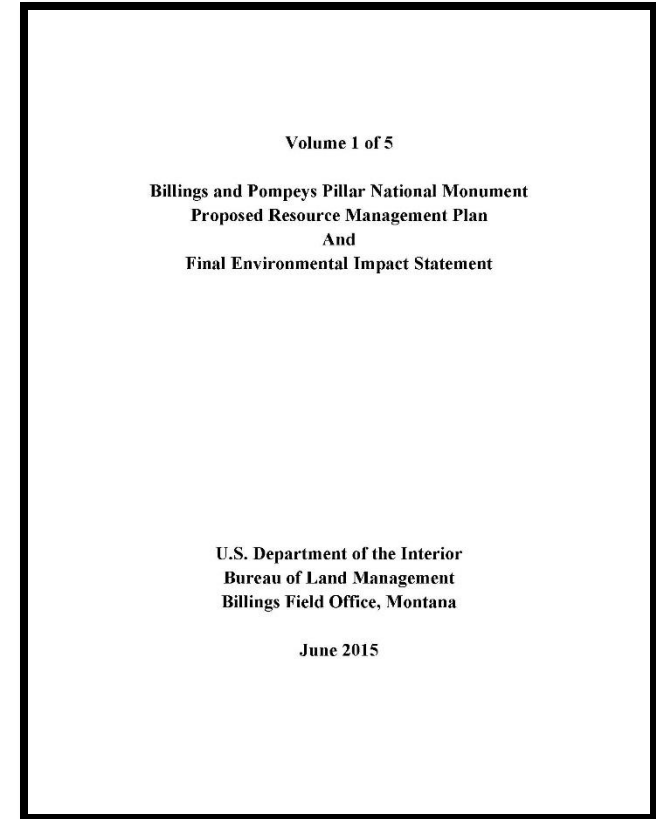


# Route Evaluation Process

## Billings and Pompeys Pillar National Monument Resource Management Plan - 2015

### Criteria & Considerations

- Air Quality
- Soil
- Water
- Mineral Resources
- Fire and Fuels Management
- Biological Resources
- Heritage Resources
- Land Resources
- Recreation
- Special Designations
- Socioeconomic Resources





# Modes of Transportation

## Non-Mechanized



Moving by foot, stock or pack animal (or other animal-powered travel) (e.g., hiking, trail running, horseback riding).

## Mechanized



Moving by mechanized vehicle such as a bicycle (e.g., mountain biking).

## Motorized (OHV)



Moving by means of vehicles that are propelled by motors such as cars, trucks, OHVs, motorcycles.

An Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) is any motorized vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain (43 CFR 8340.0-5).



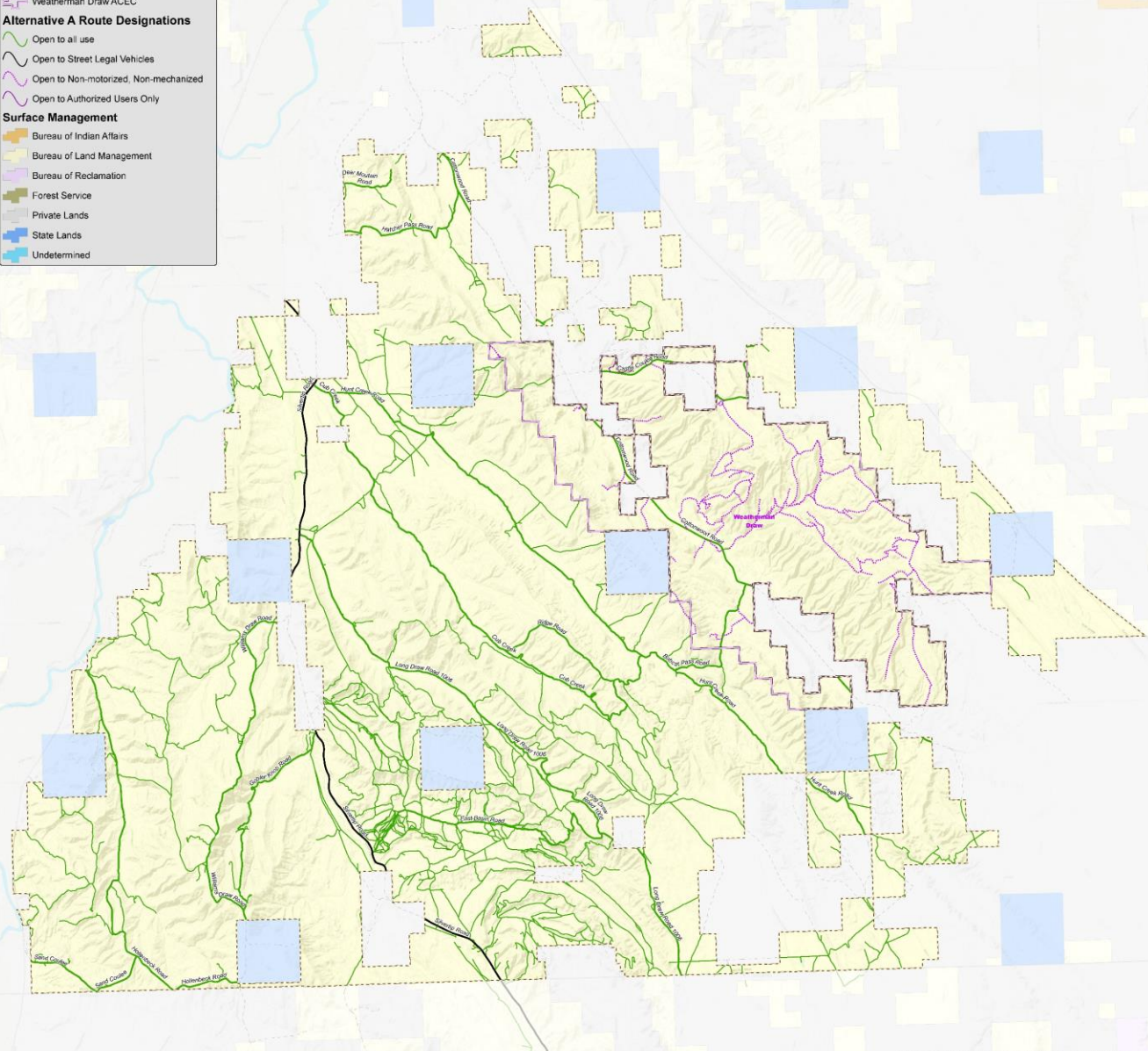




# Alternative A – No Action

Cottonwood TMA - Final Route Designations: 10/31/2023

- Cottonwood TMA
- Weatherman Draw ACEC
- Alternative A Route Designations**
  - Open to all use
  - Open to Street Legal Vehicles
  - Open to Non-motorized, Non-mechanized
  - Open to Authorized Users Only
- Surface Management**
  - Bureau of Indian Affairs
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Bureau of Reclamation
  - Forest Service
  - Private Lands
  - State Lands
  - Undetermined



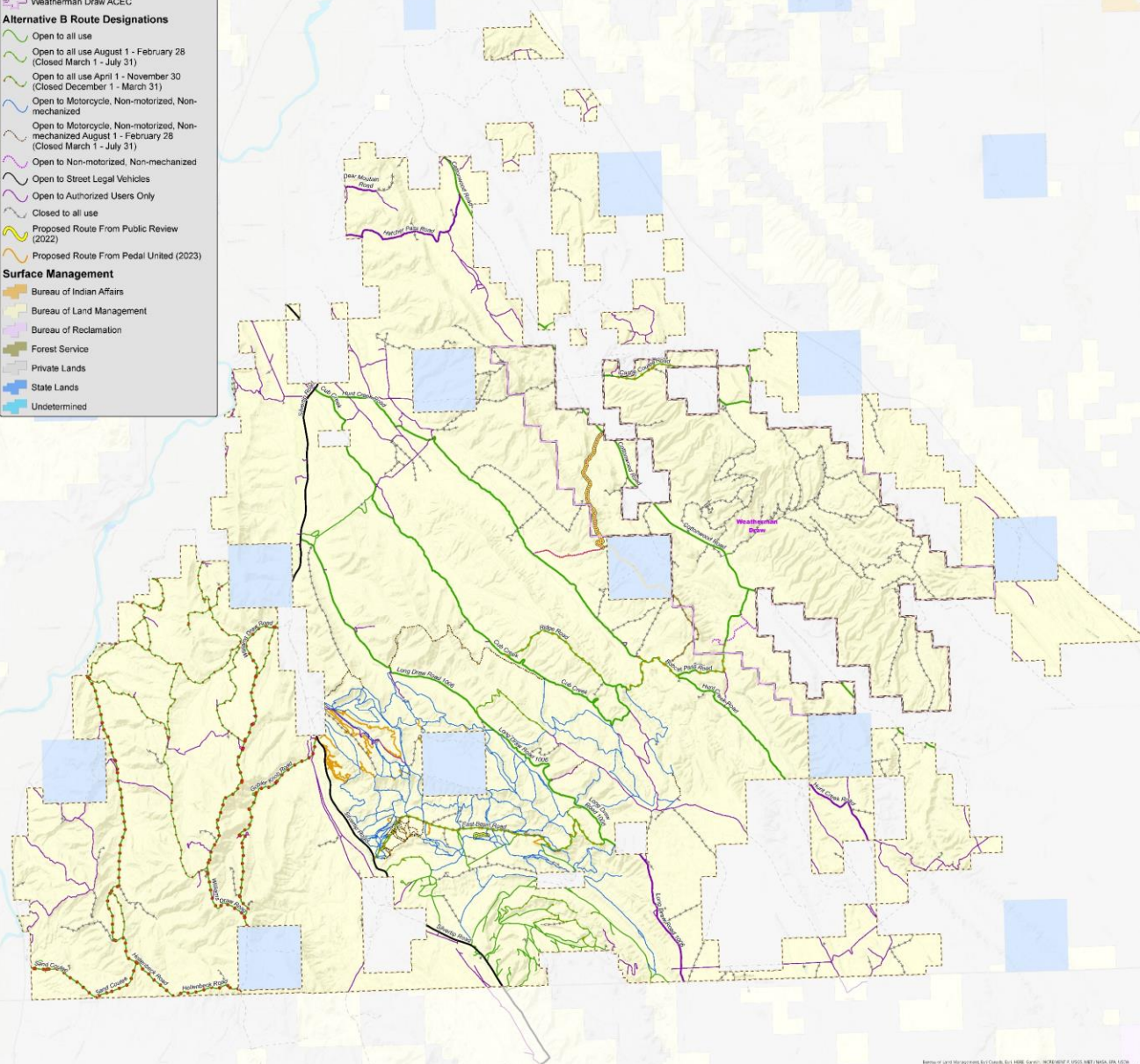
*Alternative A represents the continuation of current management direction and proposes no new plan or management actions.*



# Alternative B – Conservation

Cottonwood TMA - Final Route Designations: 10/31/2023

- Cottonwood TMA
- Weatherman Draw ACEC
- Alternative B Route Designations**
- Open to all use
- Open to all use August 1 - February 28 (Closed March 1 - July 31)
- Open to all use April 1 - November 30 (Closed December 1 - March 31)
- Open to Motorcycle, Non-motorized, Non-mechanized
- Open to Motorcycle, Non-motorized, Non-mechanized August 1 - February 28 (Closed March 1 - July 31)
- Open to Non-motorized, Non-mechanized
- Open to Street Legal Vehicles
- Open to Authorized Users Only
- Closed to all use
- Proposed Route From Public Review (2022)
- Proposed Route From Pedal United (2023)
- Surface Management**
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Forest Service
- Private Lands
- State Lands
- Undetermined



*Alternative B emphasizes the conservation of physical, biological, and/or cultural resources over open routes. Relative to all alternatives, Alternative B conserves the most land area for physical, biological, and cultural resources, and closes the most miles of routes.*





# Alternative C – Access

**Cottonwood TMA - Final Route Designations: 10/31/2023**

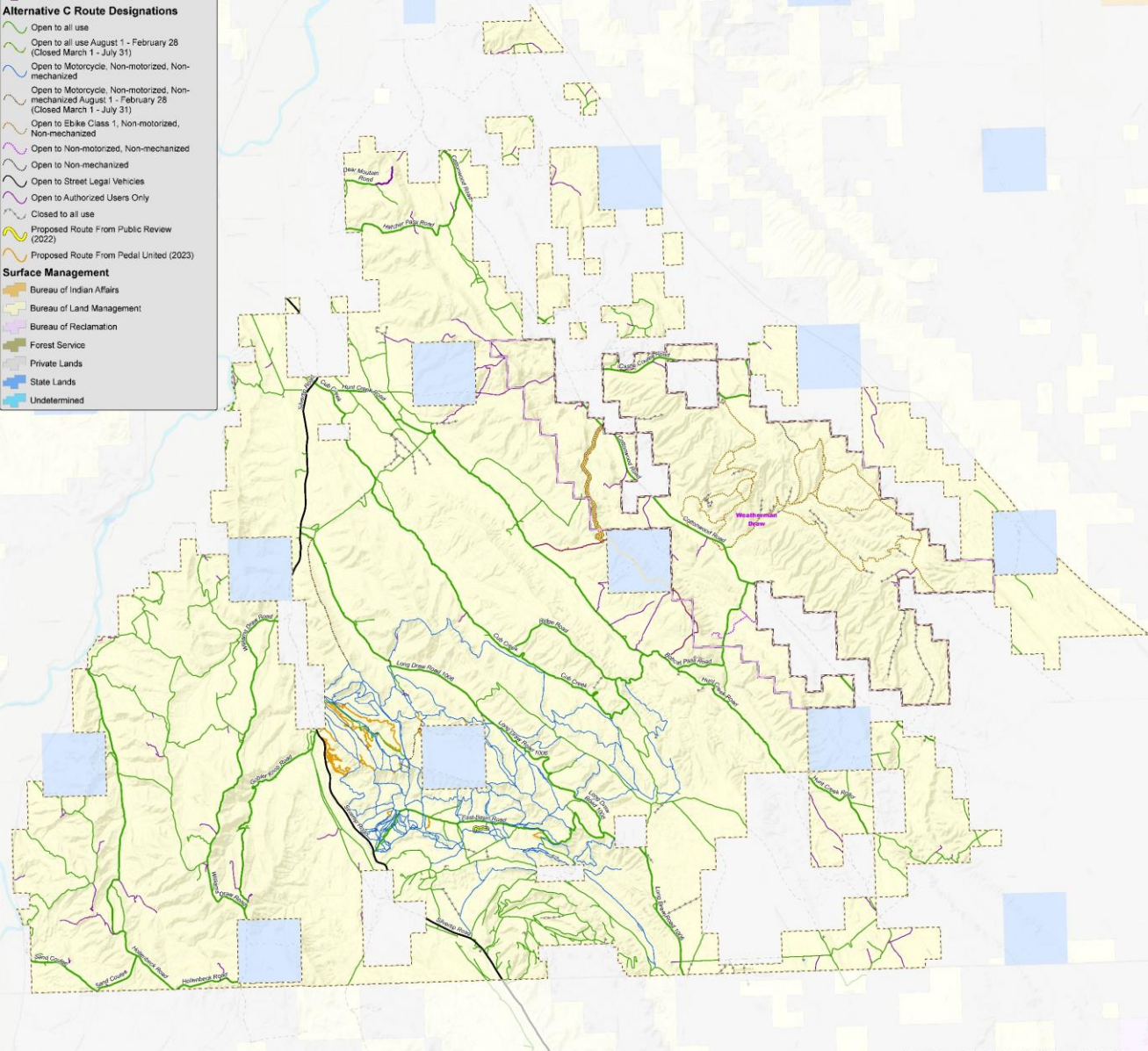
- Cottonwood TMA
- Weatherman Draw ACEC

**Alternative C Route Designations**

- Open to all use
- Open to all use August 1 - February 28 (Closed March 1 - July 31)
- Open to Motorcycle, Non-motorized, Non-mechanized
- Open to Motorcycle, Non-motorized, Non-mechanized August 1 - February 28 (Closed March 1 - July 31)
- Open to E-bike Class 1, Non-motorized, Non-mechanized
- Open to Non-motorized, Non-mechanized
- Open to Non-mechanized
- Open to Street Legal Vehicles
- Open to Authorized Users Only
- Closed to all use
- Proposed Route From Public Review (2022)
- Proposed Route From Pedal United (2023)

**Surface Management**

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Forest Service
- Private Lands
- State Lands
- Undetermined



*Alternative C emphasizes access while providing minimum resource protection. Among the three action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, and D), Alternative C closes the least miles of roads.*

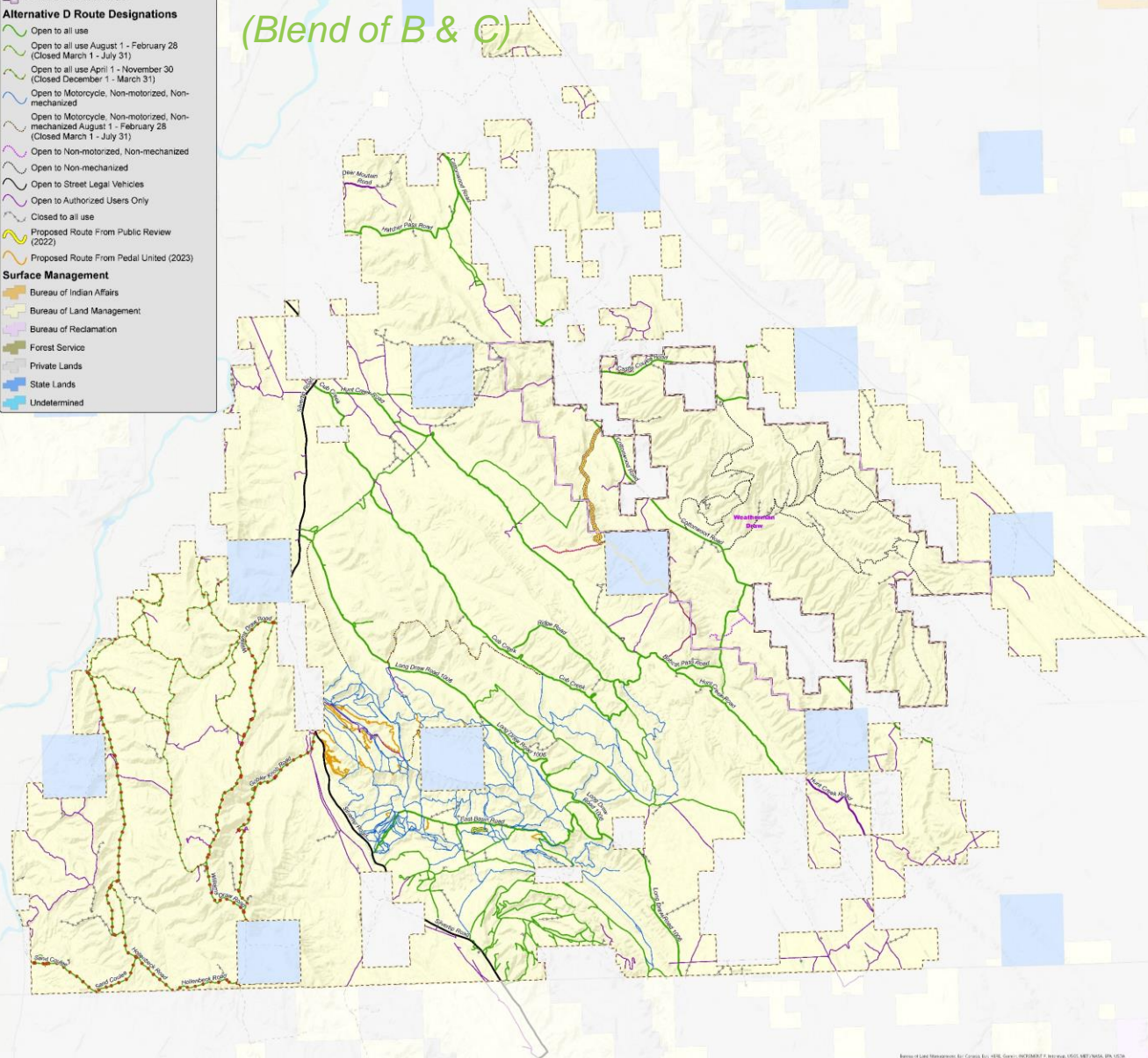




# Alternative D – Balanced

(Blend of B & C)

- Cottonwood TMA - Final Route Designations: 10/31/2023**
- Cottonwood TMA
  - Weatherman Draw ACEC
- Alternative D Route Designations**
- Open to all use
  - Open to all use August 1 - February 28 (Closed March 1 - July 31)
  - Open to all use April 1 - November 30 (Closed December 1 - March 31)
  - Open to Motorcycle, Non-motorized, Non-mechanized
  - Open to Motorcycle, Non-motorized, Non-mechanized August 1 - February 28 (Closed March 1 - July 31)
  - Open to Non-motorized, Non-mechanized
  - Open to Non-mechanized
  - Open to Street Legal Vehicles
  - Open to Authorized Users Only
  - Closed to all use
  - Proposed Route From Public Review (2022)
  - Proposed Route From Pedal United (2023)
- Surface Management**
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  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Bureau of Reclamation
  - Forest Service
  - Private Lands
  - State Lands
  - Undetermined



*Alternative D incorporates elements from Alternatives B & C to strike a balance between long-term conservation of public land and resources within the planning area while providing access.*

*Alternative D represents an approach to land management that address the issues, management concerns, and purpose and need while balancing resources and resource uses.*

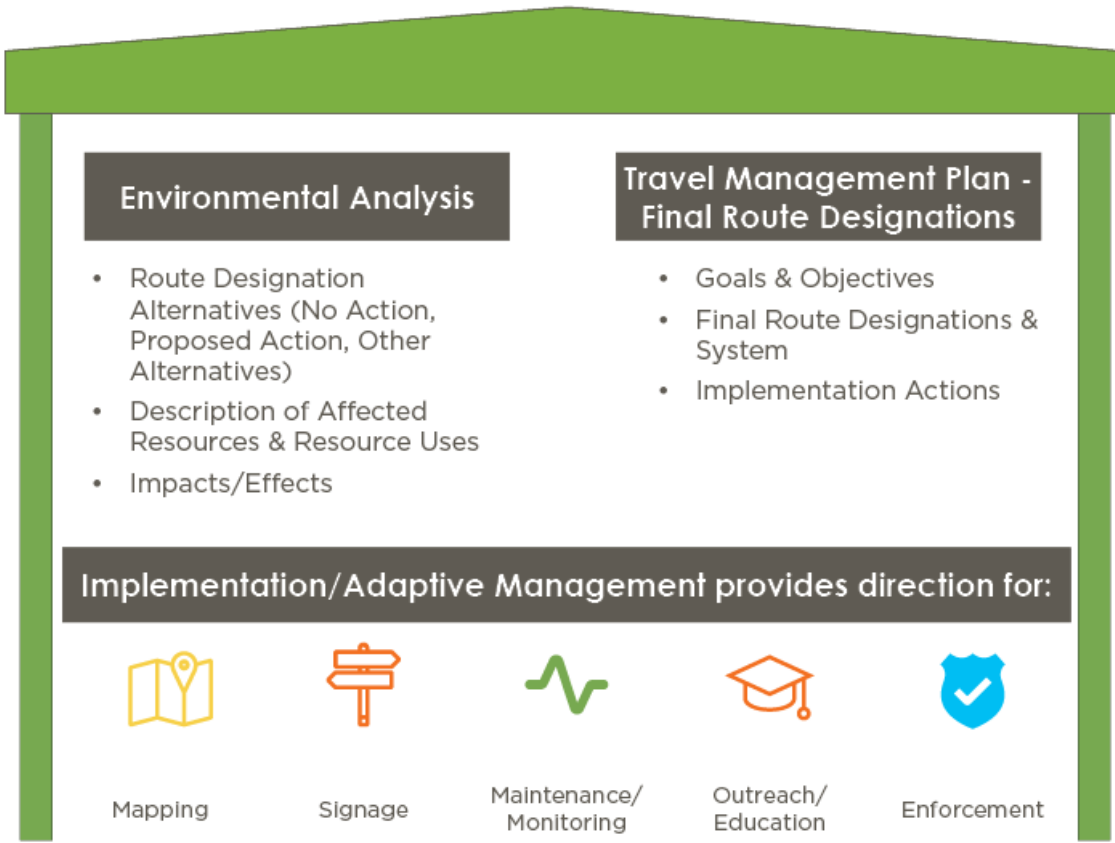




# Planning and Implementation Process

## Developing the Travel Management Plan, Environmental Assessment, and Future Implementation

The Travel Management Plan will work to create a logical and sustainable travel network (roads, primitive roads, and trails).





# How to Comment

## **ePlanning:**

<https://eplanning.blm.gov>.

Search using the NEPA number: DOI-BLM-MT-C010-2024-0002-EA.

## **Mail:**

Billings Field Office  
attn: Jenny Alexander, Outdoor Recreation Planner  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, MT 59101

**Comments must be received by November 19, 2023**





# How to Provide Effective Comments

**Discuss and provide input on the existing route network on your public lands in the Cottonwood TMA.**

- Identify issues and/or opportunities associated with the route network.
- Identify destinations and/or purpose of the route.
- Provide information on the season and type of use specific route(s).

## **Tips for Making Effective Comments:**

- Be as specific, concise, and relevant as possible.
- Focus your comments on specific routes or areas, and their opportunities and/or issues.
- Identify solutions or ideas to help solve current travel-related issues.





# How to Provide Comments



## BLM National NEPA Register



### Cottonwood Travel Plan

DOI-BLM-MT-C010-2024-0002-EA

- Home
- Documents
- Maps
- Participate Now**

Last Updated: 10/31/2023, 12:20:24 MDT

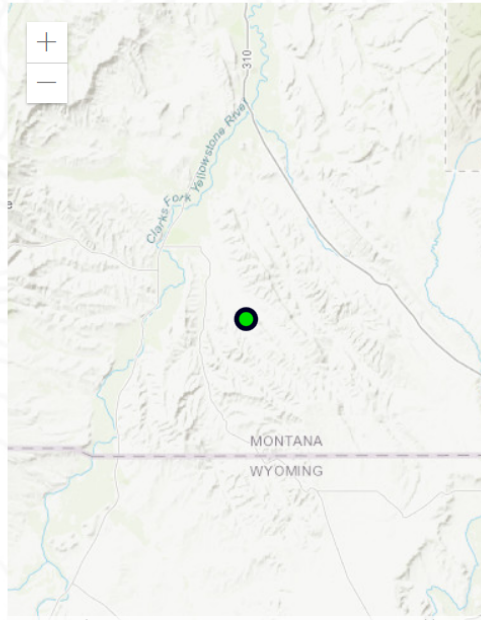
#### Project Information

<b>NEPA Number:</b>	DOI-BLM-MT-C010-2024-0002-EA
<b>Project Name:</b>	Cottonwood Travel Plan
<b>Project Type:</b>	Environmental Assessment
<b>NEPA Status:</b>	In Progress - Public Scoping Period
<b>Lead Office:</b>	Billings FO
<b>Last Updated:</b>	10/31/2023 12:20:24 MDT

#### Project Description

We are starting scoping for the Cottonwood Travel Planning Area. The TMA includes approximately 76,305 acres of BLM-administered land containing nearly 320 miles of assessed routes. Inventory Completed: September 2021 Inventory review public meetings: March 30 & April 4, 2022 Internal Evaluation completed: October 31, 2022

#### What's New



Project Location







# How to Provide Comments



### Participate Now

DOI-BLM-MT-C010-2024-0002-EA

The following participation periods are open for submitting feedback on the listed document(s) and/or map(s).

Participate	Document/Ma...	Type	Period	Status	Subm
<a href="#">Participate Now</a>	<a href="#">Cottonwood Travel Man...</a>	Document	10/18/2023 - 11/19/2023	Open	

*\*Note: A status of "Closed" identifies a Participation Period as closed with public input still allowed.*

- Home
- Documents
- Maps
- Participate Now**





## Add New Comment for Cottonwood Travel Management Plan Public Scoping Meeting Notification.docx

### 1 Your Information


1 Your Information

2 Preview

3 Receipt

Comment (Required)

Upload File(s) (Optional) Supported file types: .pdf, .xls, .xlsx, .jpeg, .jpg, .png, .doc, .docx, .ppt, .pptx





Drag and Drop

- or -

[Browse files](#)


Files


Submitter(s)

✓ Submitter 1 

First Name (Optional)

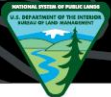
Last Name (Optional)

I would like to provide additional contact information 

Add additional submitters [Add](#) 

[Cancel](#) [Preview](#) 

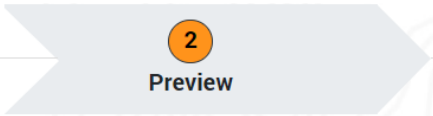




# How to Provide Comments

## 2 Preview

Your Information



3 Receipt

### Comment

test

### Submitter(s)

Submitter 1  
**Name:** Test, Test  
**Address:** Not Provided  
**Group or Organization Name:** Not Provided

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment - including your personal identifying information - may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Withhold my personally identifying information from future publications on this project** (Required)

Yes    No

Cancel

Edit

Submit





# Question & Answer

- Please enter your questions in the Question-and-Answer box at the bottom of your screen.
- Raise your hand to ask a verbal question.
- If you are calling in, select \*9 to raise your hand and you will be called on.
- In your verbal questions please be succinct and respectful so everyone can have a chance to participate.

**ePlanning:** <https://eplanning.blm.gov>. Search using the NEPA number: DOI-BLM-MT-C010-2024-0002-EA.

**Mail:** Billings Field Office  
attn: Jenny Alexander, Outdoor Recreation Planner  
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Thank you!

Questions

