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CFM



FINAL
General
Management
and
Development
Concept Plans

August 1986
UPDATED MAY 1995

LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT

Color Scans refer to page 3

Recommended by: /s/ James V. Court
Superintendent
Custer Battlefield National
Monument

August 8, 1986
Date

Approved by: /s/ Lorraine Mintzmyer
Regional Director
Rocky Mountain Region
National Park Service

August 18, 1986
Date

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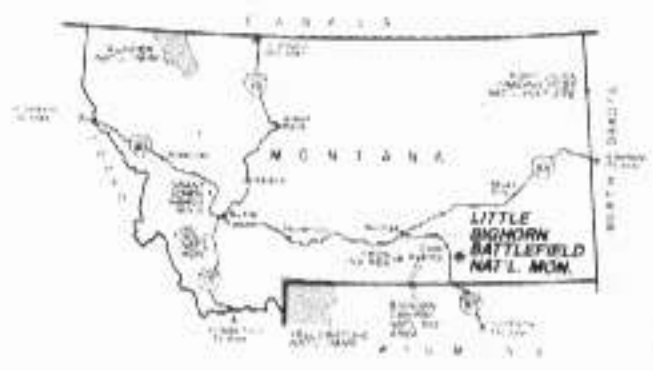
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LOCATION
 LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT
 U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR - NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1:50,000
 1968

PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

This document is a reprint of the 1986 General Management Plan (GMP) for the former Custer Battlefield National Monument. Public Law 102-201 changed the name of Custer Battlefield National Monument to Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. In this update all references to Custer Battlefield National Monument have been changed to Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

The update also includes additional discussions on Land Use and Management, Visitor Use/Development Concepts, and other areas to help clarify additional concepts being considered by the National Park Service. Decisions in the 1986 GMP have not been changed, additional discussions are identified with italic lettering. Any changes in decisions documented in the 1986 GMP will only be done after public review and environmental documentation has been completed for an amendment or revision to the plan.

INTRODUCTION

An Environmental Assessment (EA) which disclosed the potential environmental consequences of implementing this plan was made available for public review on November 20, 1985. A draft General Management Plan (GMP) and Development Concept Plan (DCP) which identified the National Park Service's proposed management philosophy for Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument was then released for a 60-day public review on June 4, 1986. This final GMP and DCP incorporates some modifications based on comments received during the public review periods.

The famous Battle of the Little Bighorn between 12 companies of the 7th United States Cavalry and the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne Indians was fought at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument on June 25 and 26, 1876. Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer and about 268 of his forces were killed. The national monument occupies 765.34 acres (all federal) in south-central Montana. It consists of two separate parcels. The main parcel contains the ridge where Custer made his last stand against the Indians. The second parcel contains the site of the Reno-Benteen defense perimeter. The two parcels are connected by a 4.1 mile national monument road.

The primary purpose of Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument is to preserve and protect the historic and natural resources pertaining to the Battle of the Little Bighorn and to provide visitors with a greater understanding of those events which lead up to the battle, the encounter itself, and the various effects the encounter had on the two cultures involved. A portion of the national monument is administered and maintained as the Custer Battlefield National Cemetery.

THE PLAN

The purpose of this GMP and DCP is to provide the necessary guidelines and strategies for management and use of Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Some of the strategies presented (such as, Historic Setting and Resource Protection) should be implemented as soon as possible to insure protection of the national monument's historic and natural resources. Other strategies (such as, Visitor Use Developments) are long-range actions which must be addressed at this time to provide continuity of planning for the park but do not require immediate implementation.

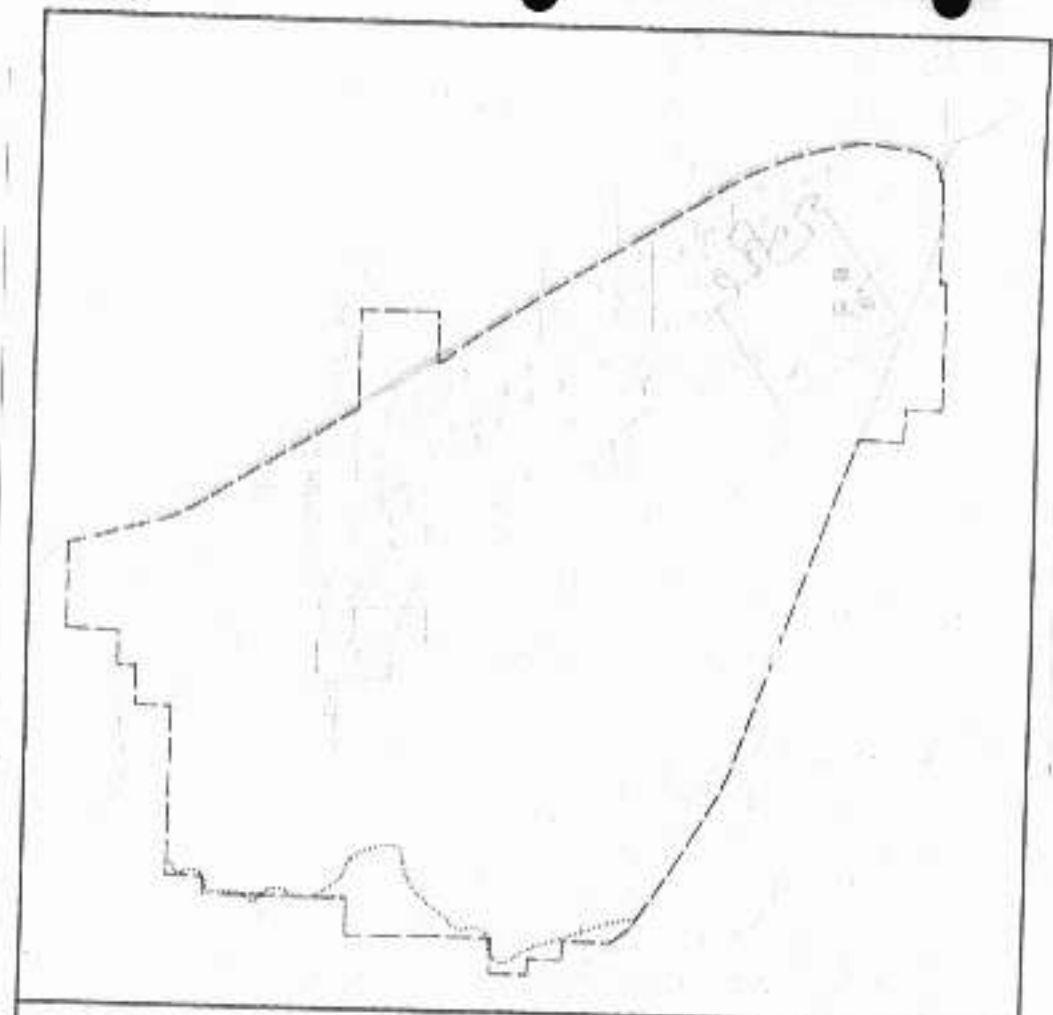
HISTORIC SETTING AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

Landscapes within the primary viewshed surrounding the national monument are an important element of the national monument's historic resources. Preservation of these viewsheds in a natural appearing condition is necessary to maintain the element of "historic association" the visitor feels with the landscape while at Custer Battlefield. Surrounding lands also contain artifacts and sites related to the Battle of the Little Bighorn. These lands must be protected from activities and land uses which will adversely affect their historic values.

Under this plan, the historic resources that relate to the Battle of the Little Bighorn would be protected through expansion of the national monument's boundary (see Proposed Boundary Map). Expanded boundaries would include lands in the foreground horizon to the east, to Reno Creek on the south, to Interstate 90 on the west, and to U.S. Highway 212 on the north. It would extend across Interstate 90 to include lands occupied by Reno's troops during the first skirmish of the battle. The proposed boundary would add approximately 11,800 acres to the national monument.

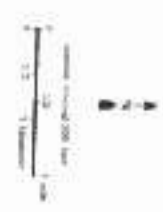
This plan could allow continuance of agricultural practices as they exist today on lands recommended for addition to the national monument. However, it would preclude industrial, commercial, residential, and other developments that may adversely affect the landscapes historic association with the national monument. Practices such as plowing the existing prairie, ranch buildings, access roads, overhead powerlines, and other manmade infrastructures will be avoided.

Expansion of the national monument's boundary must be accomplished through legislative action by an Act of Congress. Strategies used to protect lands within the proposed boundary may vary. These strategies may include land donations, exchanges for other Federal land, acquisition of scenic or conservation easements, acquisition of fee title with lease back, some acquisition of fee title, or other strategies that would insure protection of historic resources related to the Battle of the Little Bighorn.



LEGEND

- PROPOSED MONUMENT BOUNDARY
- CUSTER & LAST STAND HILL
- CUSTER NATIONAL CEMETERY
- CONTROL LINE
- DRAINAGE CANAL
- FORTINO BERTON CUSTER MOUND
- CUSTER ROAD
- EXISTING FERRIS WOOD
- SPORTING PARKING
- PROPOSED MONUMENT BUILDING
- VISITOR CENTER
- PROPOSED RESTROOM



PROPOSED BOUNDARY

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MONTANA COUNTY, MONTANA
NORTH PLatte, Montana
Map No. 10001

(NOTE: Little Bighorn Battlefield lies within the boundaries of the Crow Indian Reservation, there has been, and continues to be opposition against expansion of the boundaries. The leaders of the Crow Nation have gone on record expressing their unwillingness to "give up" any more base land.)

LAND USE AND MANAGEMENT

Management zoning (see Proposed Management Zoning Map) specifies the long-term allocation of the land resources within Custer Battlefield's proposed boundary. *(NOTE: See above note regarding the Crow Nation's opposition to boundary expansion.)* All lands within the proposed boundary would be classified as a Historic Zone where all activities would be managed to preserve, protect, and interpret cultural resources and their settings. Within the Historic Zone, four subzones have been identified (1) the Natural Subzone which contains about 73 percent of the proposed monument land, (2) the Cultural Resource Subzone which contains about 20 percent of the proposed monument land, (3) the Development Subzone which contains 6 percent of the proposed monument land, and (4) the Special-Use Subzone which contains the National Cemetery.

Management within the Natural Subzone would emphasize conservation of natural resources and processes. The preservation of archeological sites and values would be emphasized within the Cultural Resource Subzone and emphasis within the Development Subzone would be oriented towards facilities necessary to provide for visitor use and park management. Management within the Special-Use Subzone is oriented towards maintenance of the national cemetery.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Currently, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument does not have an approved Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). A draft of that plan has been prepared by monument staff; it is anticipated, the CRMP will be approved by October 1986. When approved, strategies in the CRMP will become a part of this general management plan. *(NOTE: A draft Resource Management Plan that includes cultural resource components was prepared in December 1991.)*

The national monuments museum collection including correspondence, manuscripts, books, documents, and such were stored at Eastern Montana College, Billings, Montana, from 1979 through 1984 via a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the college. The cooperative agreement was not renewed in 1984, and the entire museum collection is now stored at the park along with the responsibility of replying to continuous requests for information. As a result, one additional full-time position is needed to manage and preserve the museum collection and to respond to requests for historical information. Upon completion of the visitor orientation/administration facility, the museum collection will be moved to this building. All work will be in conformance with NPS-28. *(NOTE: Currently Little Bighorn Battlefield has one full-time museum technician, this position may be*

changed to a museum curator. It is anticipated an additional position will be needed to care for the museum collection.)

The national monument's National Register Nomination states, "All of the land in both sections of the monument are considered significant for the historic scene, resources, and archeology. Archeological resources and the cultural landscape are not addressed in this nomination. The modern intrusions are listed as noncontributing." Following completion of the proposed national monument boundary expansion, the National Register boundary should be evaluated and expanded as necessary. *(NOTE: The Last Stand Hill site, Reno-Benteen site, and the national cemetery were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 1, 1987.)*

The national monument's Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) was approved in 1977. When the monument's proposed boundary expansion is completed it will be necessary to update the NRMP to reflect management strategies necessary to maintain the historic appearances of lands within the proposed boundary. *(NOTE: A draft Resource Management Plan that includes natural resource components was prepared in December 1991 to replace the 1977 plan.)*

VISITOR USE AND INTERPRETATION

A better comprehensive view of the events and historic perspective of the Battle of the Little Bighorn will be provided to visitors through orientation facilities, interpretation, and improvements of interpretive methodology.

A new visitor orientation/administration facility, located with convenient access from Interstate 90, would provide initial contact to the park visitor. Visitors would receive orientation of the park and be encouraged to proceed on a loop tour, or those with limited time could proceed directly to "Last Stand Hill." In either case, visitors could stop at the orientation structure on their way out of the park to gain additional information. *(NOTE: The National Park Service is considering an alternate location for the proposed visitor/administrative facility. The alternate location is located west of Interstate 90 in the vicinity of the Garryowen area near the interstate overpass. This area provides a complete and comprehensive view of the battlefield from the first skirmish line to Last Stand Hill.)*

The new visitor facility would be used for visitor orientation, interpretive demonstrations, and presentations. Improvements to the quality and extent of static media would be made by implementing state-of-the-art techniques in upgrading the museum and wayside exhibits and improving audiovisual programs.

Visitors would be provided the opportunity to tour the battlefield in a correct, chronological sequence. They would receive an orientation at the visitor facility and then begin their tour either by bus or private vehicle. The tour would start at the visitor orientation facility, proceed to Garryowen on an existing interstate frontage road to Reno's first skirmish line site, and back under Interstate 90 to Reno's Crossing. A new low-speed, one-way road would begin at the Reno's Crossing site and proceed south along the west side of the Little Bighorn River, up Reno Creek, enter the existing national monument from the south, connect with the existing monument road at the Reno-Benteen site, and proceed over the existing road to Last Stand Hill. Unattended wayside exhibit structures would be located at Reno's first skirmish site and the Reno Crossing site.

Bus tours operating from Memorial Day through Labor Day would provide a large percentage of the annual visitation and the opportunity for a guided tour of the battlefield and its environments. A concessions operation could be used to provide the bus service, guided tours, and interpreters. Nominal fees would be charged to the visitor for this service.

Museum exhibits should be restructured to emphasize more aspects of the national monument's secondary theme, A Conflict of Cultures. The monument's story is best told where it happened--on the battlefield. Existing wayside exhibits are poor revealing little understanding of the events on the field. The plan proposes 15 new wayside interpretive panels in key historic locations.

The national monument's goal of providing an unbiased approach to the battle would continue. Museum exhibits need to be more sensitive to Indian visitors and Indian attitudes about the fight. Existing exhibits lack interpretation of Indian leaders in the battle such as Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Gull, and other leading warriors. *(NOTE: The national monument is completing the last phase of exhibit updates and the addition of a "contemporary" room to provide a more balanced story of the battle and the cultures involved. Photo exhibits are now in-place that depict some of the Indian participants in the 1876 battle.)*

The topographic relief map, completed in 1953, is of great interest to most visitors and is useful in providing an orientation of the national monument. However, it is ineffective in providing troop and warrior interpretation of the battle to the average visitor. The 1980 draft Interpretive Plan, prepared by the Rocky Mountain Regional Office and park staff, recommended a new relief map that uses fiber optics or light emitting diode transplants (or similar devices) that trace soldier and warrior movements. This map is a basic, unmanned interpretive device needed to provide all visitors with an overall picture of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. A new interpretive prospectus will be prepared upon completion and approval of this plan. *(NOTE: The fiber optic map is still in use, however, recent archeological investigations have indicated troop and Indian movements may vary from that displayed on the map. A draft interpretive prospectus has been prepared for the national monument, at the present time it is anticipated this draft will be integrated with a more comprehensive interpretive plan to better identify tools and stories to enhance education and interpretive efforts.)*

Adequate parking space would be provided for oversized vehicles in the new visitor orientation/administration facility parking area. These vehicles would not be permitted beyond the parking area; however, occupants of these vehicles could take the guided bus tour through the national monument or take a shuttle or trail to Last Stand Hill. In the interim, the existing gravel-surface parking area adjacent to U.S. Highway 212 in the restaurant/gift-shop complex could serve as parking for semitrucks. A shuttle bus could provide transportation between the semitruck parking area and existing visitor center during the busy use season. These vehicles would be permitted as far as the cemetery parking area during the off season. Motor homes, pickup campers, and busses would be permitted in the monument. *(NOTE: Current visitation exceeds 400,000 annually. To help accommodate increased traffic levels the national monument is in the process of establishing a shuttle bus program to move visitors from a parking lot near U.S. Highway 212 to the national monument.)*

Parking for the national cemetery would continue in the existing parking area north of the cemetery. This area is out of view from Last Stand Hill.

INDIAN MEMORIAL

Public Law 102-201 authorized the design, construction, and maintenance of a memorial "in order to honor and recognize the Indians who fought to preserve their land and culture in the Battle of the Little Bighorn, to provide visitors with an improved understanding of the events leading up to and the consequences of the fateful battle, and to encourage peace among peoples of all races. . .". Public Law 102-201 also places the location of the memorial ". . . on the ridge in that part of Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument which is in the vicinity of the 7th Cavalry Monument. . .".

VISITOR USE/DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Visitor Orientation/Administration Facility

The new visitor orientation/administration facility would be located 1/4-mile south of U.S. Highway 212 providing convenient access from Interstate 90. This building and the accompanying large parking area would be out of view from Last Stand Hill. Visitor facilities would include an improved version of all visitor facilities now provided at the existing structure-- specifically museum displays, park orientation displays, auditorium, information counter, and rest rooms. *(NOTE: The National Park Service is considering an alternate location for the proposed visitor/administrative facility. The alternate location is located west of Interstate 90 in the vicinity of the Garryowen area near the interstate overpass. This area provides a complete and comprehensive view of the battlefield from the first skirmish line to Last Stand Hill.)*

The new visitor orientation structure would include a 150-seat auditorium. The existing audiovisual room is a converted storage room in the basement of the visitor center, seats 60 visitors, and is inadequate to handle the existing visitor needs. The existing facility is used primarily to show a 30-minute movie, "Red Sunday." The movie is shown five times a day, with overflow crowds that average a turn-away rate of 5 to 10 people per showing at the three showings between the hours of 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. This turn-away rate exists through the heavy visitor-use season of Memorial Day to Labor Day. The movie is not announced during this time period. When the movie was announced at the midday showing, the turn-away rate was averaging 30 to 40 people per showing (an estimated, annual turn-away rate of 8,000 to 11,000 visitors). The movie is not shown more often due to conflicts with other scheduled programs, many of which are held in the covered porch of the visitor center. *(NOTE: The new movie has been produced and is currently available for viewing in the auditorium, the comprehensive interpretive plan will help guide audio-visual program development at the national monument.)*

Typical attendance at interpretive talks averages 80 to 90 visitors and often reaches 180 visitors during the heavy visitor season of June through August. Under existing conditions, visitors are forced to stand in the sun or bunch up under the temporary sun shelter on the south side of the existing visitor center to listen to interpretive programs. An auditorium

in the new visitor orientation facility would eliminate this unfortunate situation.

The new auditorium would be used from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. each day during the heavy visitor use season. Twenty-seven of the existing thirty-one interpretive programs per day could take place in the new auditorium. Visitors would be protected from the hot and cold temperature extremes that they now endure at interpretive programs under the porch of the existing visitor center. The existing visitor center building, built in the mid-1950's, would be obliterated along with all associated walks and parking. The site would be restored, as nearly as possible, to blend with surrounding site conditions.

Picnic Area

A picnic area would be provided near the new visitor orientation facility. The picnic area would be located on fertile soils capable of supporting trees for shade to provide a welcome relief from the hot summer sun. *(NOTE: Ability to provide a picnic area in the future will be partially dependent on the selected location of the proposed visitor/administrative center.)*

Sanitary Facilities in Outlying Areas

Vault-type chemical handicap-accessible sanitary facilities will be provided at Reno's First Skirmish Site and at the Reno's Retreat River Crossing Site.

National Cemetery

There is an immediate need for comfort stations near the national cemetery. This comfort station would be retained when the existing visitor center and parking are removed to enhance views from Last Stand Hill. Therefore, the comfort station should be located so as not to be visible from Last Stand Hill while still providing convenient visitor access. An underground structure could be considered.

The existing spray irrigation system may be replaced by an underground-drip system in the national cemetery. This new system would eliminate spraying of the headstones and the depositing mineral that causes staining and headstone deterioration. Other benefits include reduced maintenance cost and water and electricity conservation. A method to reduce or eliminate cemetery irrigation would be investigated and, if practical, implemented.

PARK OPERATIONS/DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The new visitor orientation/administration facility will house administrative functions and provide additional storage space. Site of the visitor/administrative facility would be on a small ridge with a south-facing slope providing the opportunity for solar heat and air conditioning. Visitors would view the building as a single-level structure. However, the structure would have two levels with the administrative and storage facilities on the lower floor with south-facing windows in the office portion. Construction costs for the administration and storage portion of the structure would be reduced by approximately one-third as compared to a single-story building. Heating and air conditioning costs would also benefit by approximately one-third savings depending on the type of construction selected. All life-cycle costs should be reduced by approximately one-third again dependent on the type of construction.

The maintenance area would be retained in its current location. Additional storage in the maintenance area would be accomplished by a 12-foot by 26-foot double-deck addition to the existing maintenance building, a freight elevator would be included in this structure.

STAFFING AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS

The following staffing levels would be required at the national monument with full implementation of this plan. Current staffing ceiling is 10.1-person years. *(NOTE: The current staffing level for the national monument is 17 person years.)*

POSITION	PERSON YEARS
Office of the Superintendent	
Park Manager	1.0
Division of Interpretation	
Supervisory Historian	1.0
Park Ranger (GS-07)	1.0
Park Ranger (GS-05, 3 seasonal positions)	1.0
Park Ranger (GS-04, 4 seasonal positions)	1.0
Division of Administration	
Administrative Technician	1.0
Clerk/Typist	1.0
Division of Maintenance	
Maintenance Mechanic Foreman	1.0
Maintenance Mechanic	1.0
Cemetery Caretaker	1.0
Cemetery Caretaker	.83
Laborer (Janitor)	.5
Laborer (WG-03, 3 seasonal positions)	.99
	<hr/>
TOTAL	12.32

Annual operations and maintenance costs that would be required upon full implementation of this plan is approximately \$500,000. *(NOTE: Current base funding is nearly \$500,000 annually.)*

DEVELOPMENT COST ESTIMATES TO IMPLEMENT 1986 GMP

Date: June 16, 1989

ITEM

NET
COST ESTIMATE
\$316,800

Boundary Fencing, 12 miles, 4-strand barbed wire @ 26,400/mile

New Visitor/Administrative facility

2,500 SF museum

4,000 SF, 150 seat auditorium

800 SF lobby

250 SF, public restrooms

400 SF association sales

1200 SF offices (NPS and association)

600 SF museum vault

600 SF library

1000 SF association storage

200 SF employee showers/lockers

Total net SF - 11,650 SF

Total gross SF - 16,300 SF, @ \$200/SF

\$3,260,000

Visitor Center Landscaping @ 10% of net

326,000

Visitor Center Furnishings @ 15% of net

489,000

Visitor Center Interpretive Media @ 15% of net

489,000

Utilities

Water, 1 mile of 6 inch pipe @ \$28/LF

148,000

Power, .25 miles, underground @ \$14/LF

18,500

Telephone, .25 miles, underground @ \$14/LF

18,500

Sewage - 2 acre lagoon @ \$85,000/acre

170,000

lagoon line @ \$3/SF

261,000

lift station

125,000

300' - 10" line @ \$40/LF

12,000

New Entrance Road and Parking

.5 miles 2-way road @ \$550,000/mile

275,000

150 car parking lot @ \$1,300/car

195,000

50 oversize parking spaces @ \$4,500/space

225,000

10 semitruck with trailer spaces @ 7,000/space

70,000

<i>General Landscaping and Site Restoration</i>	
New entrance sign	25,000
Landscaping	400,000
Obliterate old visitor center	200,000
Grounds restoration	50,000
<i>National Cemetery Irrigation, 12.5 acres @ \$7,500/acre</i>	450,000
<i>Parking expansion, Last Stand Hill, 15 spaces @ \$1500/space</i>	22,500
<i>Visitor Historical Comprehension Improvements</i>	
Topographic relief map	50,000
2 Wayside exhibit structures @ \$35,000 ea.	70,000
5 Wayside exhibits @ \$15,000 ea	75,000
4.4 miles road @ \$550,000/mile	2,420,000
Bridge	1,200,000
2.5 miles trail @ \$42,000/mile	105,000
<i>Restore Historic Stone House</i>	130,000
<i>Roach Rehabilitation, Last Stand Hill to Reno-Benteen Site</i>	
5 miles @ \$300,000/mile	1,500,000
<i>Picnic Area</i>	
.22 miles road @ \$550,000/mile	121,000
20 car parking lot @ \$1,600/car	32,000
400 L.F, 4" water line @ \$22/L.F	8,800
2 shelters @ \$27,000 ea.	54,000
Landscaping	50,000
2 drinking fountains @ \$2,500 ea.	5,000
Comfort Station	90,000
20 picnic tables @ \$500 ea.	10,000
<i>2 Chemical toilet systems @ \$43,000 ea.</i>	86,000
<i>Maintenance Storage</i>	
12' x 26' maintenance building addition @ \$110/SF	35,000
Freight elevator	30,000
<i>4 Unit Apartment, 1 bedroom/unit</i>	250,000
TOTAL NET CONSTRUCTION	\$13,858,100
TOTAL GROSS CONSTRUCTION (61% + NET)	\$22,311,541

ADDITIONAL STUDIES/PLANS NEEDED

A trail study is needed to determine the most effective procedure to preserve and interpret Custer's troop advances from Rosebud Creek to Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. This troop movement is an integral part of the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

Alternatives that need to be analyzed:

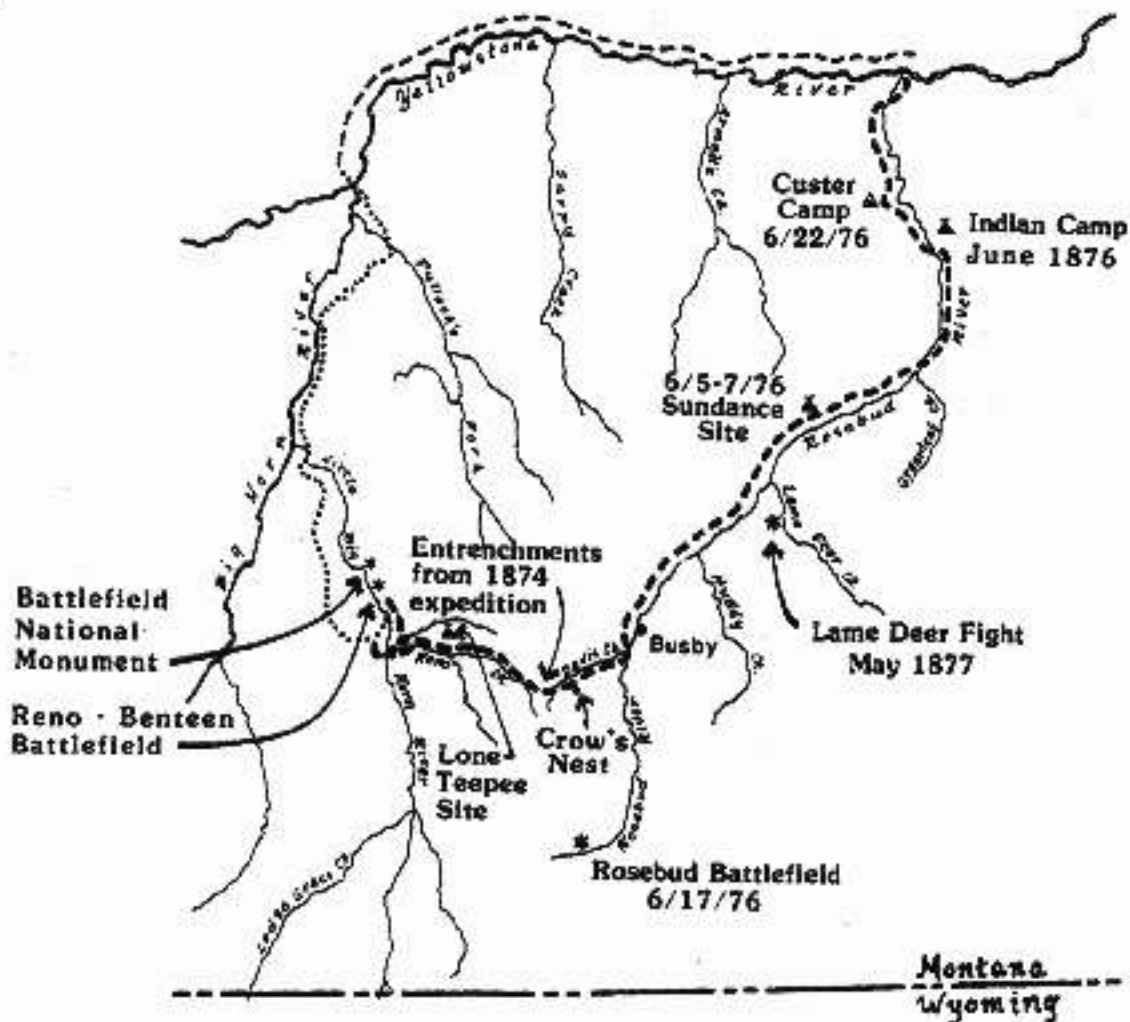
1. Existing conditions to continue.

Currently there is no historic trail reflecting the significance of the route of Custer and the Indians to the epic battle on the Little Bighorn. Visitor inquiry and interest in retracing the historic route is growing. Unless the area is protected, the potential for the trail's destruction via oil, gas, or mineral development appears large. While it is true the trail is not needed at the monument to interpret the monument story, the advantages of preserving it in whole will add immensely to the overall historic interpretation.

2. Establishment of the historic trail from the mouth of Rosebud Creek to Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

Under this alternative, the National Park Service would seek historic trail status for the areas associated with The Battle of the Little Bighorn beginning from the mouth of the Rosebud and ending at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Total length of the trail is approximately 100 miles: 80 miles are on existing State or county roads, and the remaining 20 miles are on private or Indian land. Negotiations for easements are needed with State, county, and other landowners. Interpretive markers would be placed at significant historic points along the trail. Those already identified as possessing historic importance include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Custer campsite, June 21, 1876
2. Custer campsite, June 22, 1876
3. Custer campsite, June 23, 1876
4. Indian campsite, June 5-7, 1876
(Site of Sitting Bull's Sun Dance)
5. Custer campsite, June 24, 1876
6. Crow's Nest
7. Indian campsite, June 16, from which warriors attacked Crook at battle on Rosebud, June 17, 1876
8. Morass
9. Lone Teepee
10. Reno's Crossing.



- Custer's route
June 22-26, 1876
(proposed historic trail)
- Terry's route
June 23-27, 1876
- Gibbon's & Terry's route
June 22-26, 1876



Historic Trail Study Proposal

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

U.S. Dept. of the Interior - National Park Service

An interpretive prospectus is needed to provide sufficient detail to implement this general management plan/development concept plan.

The Natural Resource Management Plan should be updated following completion of the national monument's proposed boundary expansion.

A Land Protection Plan needs to be developed to identify specific acquisition strategies that need to be implemented within the proposed boundary.

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^{*} No longer with the Rocky Mountain Regional Office