COTTONWOOD CREEK TRAIL

Cottonwood Canyon offers dramatic views of steep, vertical cliffs for hikers and advanced horseback riders. This non-motorized trail passes through BLM-managed public land, Bighorn National Forest-managed public land and State of Wyoming land. It begins at 4,750 ft. elevation and ends at 7,500 ft. elevation after 4.7 miles (about 2,800 ft. total elevation gain).

Several connections to motorized and non-motorized routes within Bighorn National Forest are possible beyond Cottonwood Creek Trail. For example, FS Road 12 connects to the Medicine Wheel National Historic Landmark, and FS Trail 054 connects to the Buckley Mule Falls National Recreation Trail.

Vegetation in Cottonwood Canyon includes narrowleaf cottonwood, willow, waterbirch, red osier dogwood, big sagebrush, juniper, mountain mahogany, Rocky Mountain maple, limber pine, Douglas fir, aspen, and bluebunch wheatgrass.

Bring drinking water, as Cottonwood Creek disappears underground at times. If using water from the creek, filter it or otherwise treat before drinking.

Melody Falls is about 1 mile from the trailhead.