

The BLM purpose and need for this project is to re-establish motorized public access to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument that was lost when the 2010 Blaine County Court declared the extent of the Bullwhacker Road crossing private property to be a private road.

A full range of authorities will be developed to address options available to restore access to the Bullwhacker area. The preliminary range of alternative includes the following:

1. **No Action Alternative** – the current management would continue in the Bullwhacker area of the National Monument; motorized public access to this area from the Cow Island Road would not be re-established.
2. **West Bullwhacker Access Route Alternative** – this route would be located to the west, paralleling the existing Bullwhacker Road on private land, and eventually connecting to existing roads on public land to the south. The route would require approximately 3.25 miles of new construction.
3. **East Bullwhacker Access Route Alternative** – this route would be located to the east, paralleling the existing Bullwhacker Road on private land, and eventually connecting to existing public land roads to the south. This would require approximately 3.4 miles of new construction, and an additional 1.5 miles of existing road would require upgrades and culverts.
  - a. *Butch Reservation Route Sub-Alternative* – *There is another option related to the East Bullwhacker Access Alternative; a route to Butch Camp and Butch Reservoir that would eliminate the need for new construction at the north end but would require extensive repairs to the Butch Reservoir.*
4. **Right Coulee**– this route would be over six miles in length and would start at the BLM-Cow Island Road. The route would follow existing two track roads for about half the total length and be following the east route alternative for the last two miles.

These three alternative road construction routes have not been flagged or otherwise identified on the ground. The specific identification of these three potential routes on the ground is the highest priority work that needs to be accomplished soon. An earlier engineering investigation identified potential routes on the east and west sides of the private property, but these investigations were only preliminary in nature, and not well-developed enough to proceed further with on-the-ground analysis. The pattern of BLM land on both the east and west sides of the private property allow for many possible combinations of potential routes. This is particularly prevalent on the east side of the private property. In many cases, the proposed route on the east side could run anywhere from the east boundary of the private property up to two miles to the east, where the landscape breaks into Right Coulee. The previously identified engineering routes on the east and west sides closely followed the private property boundaries, and it appears that there may be better alternatives for potential route placement. The pattern of timbered lands, riparian areas, and potential coulee crossings offers many and varied potential routes for a new road. The landscape is too large and the potential route placements too many to proceed without better refining the proposals for each of the three alternatives.