



LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL



The Lewis and Clark Expedition sought to explore the Missouri River and locate a north-west passage to the Pacific Ocean. The group was also charged with thoroughly examining the geography, geology, ethnology, botany, and wildlife of the recently purchased Louisiana Territory and establishing good relationships with American Indians.

In 1978, Congress established the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail to tie together 120

historic sites associated with the Corps of Discovery. The trail, which extends 3,700 miles from Wood River, Illinois, to the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon, commemorates the expedition. Interest in including additional sites associated with the expedition could lead to trail expansion in the future.

The trail combines aspects of westward expansion, contact between Euro-Americans and American Indians, discovery, and material

Lewis and Clark traveled much of the Missouri River in a keelboat very similar to this one, which was built by the non-profit group Discovery Expedition of St. Charles, Missouri.

KEY FINDINGS

- The trail would benefit from the addition of a full-time historian to guide specific research, write a comprehensive administrative history, and incorporate new scholarship and tribal perspectives into park interpretation.
- Ethnographic resources are integral parts of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. A comprehensive ethnographic assessment would help park staff better understand ethnographic resources and respond to threats. Staff have worked to build successful relationships with associated tribes, especially through activities related to the bicentennial commemoration, but hiring a full-time ethnographer would help the park maintain these relationships and better protect ethnographic resources.
- Largely because of human influences, much of the Missouri River hardly resembles the meandering river of the early 19th century, and dams have drowned Celilo Falls on the Columbia River, once an important salmon spawning area and American Indian meeting place. While dams, agriculture, resource extraction, and urban development have altered much of the trail, sections of the trail remain much as the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition would have seen them in 1804-06. These significant cultural and natural resources include Glade Creek in Idaho and the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River in Montana (which is within the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument designated in 2001).

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Through funding provided by Challenge Cost Share and cooperation with American Indian groups, the park has engaged in a variety of cultural preservation and educational projects.
- The trail recently hired a natural resources specialist to collect data, provide technical support to trail partners, and begin proactive involvement in compliance issues. A cultural resources specialist will soon be hired to perform analogous duties.
- Park staff strive to interpret multiple themes and perspectives as they tell the stories of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

and cultural exchange—a multi-faceted story that is sometimes lost as the expedition is romanticized in popular culture. The Corps of Discovery has become a part of the national mythology, but the reality behind the story proves just as compelling as the national memory of the expedition. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail presents this story and its cultural nuances to audiences who may be unfamiliar with parts of it. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail also uses the story of the expedition to tell larger stories of the American narrative, such as foreign affairs, domestic issues, gender and race questions, and American Indian sovereignty.

Although the National Park Service administers the trail, it differs in some important ways from other lands and waters within the National Park System. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail owns just 78 acres within its boundaries; trail staff do not have management authority over the other lands and waters within park boundaries. Some areas are privately owned, while others are owned by various states. As a result, trail staff work with many partners, including state parks, other national parks and federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, American Indian tribes, state museums, local historic groups, and state historic preservation societies. Instead of directly managing sites within the trail, staff provide guidance, assistance, and resources to partner organizations.

Because of this unique administrative situation, the Center for State of the Parks did not apply its assessment methodologies to rate conditions of natural and cultural resources at the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Instead, the challenges associated with administering the trail, as well as successful programs and partnerships, are highlighted below.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

CULTURAL RESOURCES

HISTORY—PARK HISTORIAN WOULD BE A VALUABLE ADDITION

Historical interpretation is a primary responsibility of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, yet the park does not have its own full-time historian. Park staff use outside research to convey the many perspectives and cultural nuances associated with the Lewis and Clark story, but a park historian with extensive research training would help further incorporate the many interpretations of the trail into educational programs.

ARCHAEOLOGY—TRAIL-WIDE INVENTORY NEEDED

American Indian archaeological resources such as sacred sites, burial grounds, pictographs, and petroglyphs are found along all parts of the

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Protecting these sites from destruction, desecration, looting, and vandalism is a challenge for trail staff, in part, because there is no trail-wide inventory of archaeological sites and resources. This makes it impossible for trail staff to systematically analyze all resource threats. In addition, the Park Service does not have the authority to actively protect sites on lands it does not own, further limiting management options.

Updates to the trail's Comprehensive Management Plan, targeted for completion in fiscal year 2011, will provide clear direction for identifying and researching archaeological resources. Anticipated additions to the park staff by the end of 2007 include an archaeologist and a geographic information systems specialist. These two positions will be instrumental in developing trail-wide inventories and directing plans to analyze resource threats.

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, which extends 3,700 miles from Wood River, Illinois, to the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon, passes through beautiful landscapes such as the Columbia River Gorge.





KELLY ELVERUM

CIRCLE OF TRIBAL ADVISORS ENSURES NATIVE VOICES ARE HEARD

The Corps of Discovery interacted with dozens of tribes on the journey to and from the Pacific coast, and the expedition's success relied considerably on assistance the tribes provided. Today, partnerships with American Indian groups are key to successful administration of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. To foster collaboration during bicentennial planning and activities, the Circle of Tribal Advisors (COTA) of the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial was established.

COTA, which is composed of representatives from 42 tribal governments, works with the trail, the National Council, tribes, and other local, state, and federal partners to produce educational programs that describe the large contributions of tribes to the national heritage of the United States and to provide information on protecting natural, cultural, and historical resources, especially sacred sites. COTA also works to preserve and revitalize native languages.

Funding from Challenge Cost Share and the Bureau of Indian Affairs supports much of COTA's work. Challenge Cost Share was created by Congress in 1995 to appropriate funds to the Park Service for use on National Scenic and Historic Trails. Since 1995, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail has received increasing amounts of funding from this program. In 1995, the trail received about \$40,000, while in 2005, Congress appropriated \$5 million to the trail. Over the last ten years, these funds have allowed trail staff to accomplish hundreds of projects, including many in partnership with COTA. The trail, with tribal support, has established cultural preservation projects and expanded interpretation and educational programs.

Both the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial and COTA will sunset after the bicentennial commemoration, and funds from Challenge Cost Share are likely to decline after associated activities conclude. The park will continue to work with tribes, and a new partnership similar to COTA will be explored when the park begins a new comprehensive management plan. Continued financial support will be critical in building on the partnerships, cultural preservation projects, and educational programs accomplished through COTA and Challenge Cost Share.

Funds from Challenge Cost Share helped support the Cathlapotle Plankhouse Project at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. When Lewis and Clark visited the region in 1805-1806, they met with the Chinookan people who lived there in similar cedar plankhouses. Today the site provides a variety of educational opportunities.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES— PARTNERSHIPS PROMOTE PRESERVATION

During the past 200 years, agriculture and water projects have altered much of the lands and waters along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Today, many of the important landscapes only vaguely resemble those experienced by Lewis and Clark. Trail staff offer suggestions to landowners concerning the protection of existing cultural landscapes, but park employees lack the authority to actively manage landscapes and have not completed an inventory to assess landscape threats.

In spite of these challenges, trail staff have made significant progress restoring some landscapes, such as Spirit Mound, an important American Indian site in South Dakota. In partnership with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks; the Missouri National Recreational River; and the Spirit Mound Trust, trail staff worked to purchase the 320-acre site and restore it to conditions that were present in the early 1800s.

Agricultural fields and a farmhouse, cattle feedlot, and silo were replaced with native prairie grasses, a walking trail, and interpretive signs that discuss both Lewis and Clark themes and American Indian perspectives. This project was made possible through the combined efforts of many individuals and organizations, and it stands as an example of creative restoration that could be emulated along other parts of the trail.





RICK AND SUZY GRAETZ, COURTESY OF BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

ETHNOGRAPHY—CONTINUING TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS IS CRITICAL

Numerous American Indian tribes are connected to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, making ethnography a critical management element. A comprehensive ethnographic assessment for the entire trail, though a daunting task, would guide future needs for maintaining positive relationships with associated tribes, identify the effects that the Lewis and Clark Expedition had on traditional lifeways, and guide a centralized and systematic approach to assessing threats to ethnographic resources.

Activities revolving around the 200th anniversary of the expedition have led trail staff to work diligently to promote positive relationships with associated American Indian tribes. It will be important to continue building on these relationships after the bicentennial activities

conclude. The trail must also continue to place a high priority on securing funding for projects such as oral histories and development of educational facilities.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND MUSEUM AND ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS—NONE MANAGED BY THE TRAIL

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail does not manage any historic structures, nor does the trail house any museum objects or archival collections. Individual sites along the trail manage and operate any structures, and individual sites manage their own collections. The trail has neither the staff nor the facilities to adequately store or protect artifacts, but an inventory of collections held at other locations would be useful in understanding the breadth of resources protected by sites along the trail.

Parts of the trail such as Citadel Rock along the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River look much as they did when Lewis and Clark saw them 200 years ago.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The Great Falls of the Missouri River were impressive obstacles to Lewis and Clark. The expedition spent nearly a month preparing supplies and portaging around the falls in June 1805. Today this incredible natural feature is the site of Ryan Dam.

NATURAL RESOURCES

RIVER HISTORY—SIGNIFICANT FEATURES REPLACED BY DAMS

When Lewis and Clark traveled westward along the Missouri and Columbia river basins, American Indian groups already had longstanding relationships and histories with the land dating back thousands of years. They hunted, fished, gathered food, farmed, and made homes along the rivers, which flowed freely and sometimes overflowed their banks.

Today, largely due to human influences, much of the Missouri River barely resembles the meandering river of the early 19th century. The backwater sloughs, oxbows, and wetlands that originally characterized the river no longer exist. Euro-American settlers who moved to the region considered the river unruly and sought to

improve navigation. Federal efforts at taming the river increased after the Civil War, but the greatest blow to the Missouri River came with passage of the 1944 federal Flood Control Act. Part of this legislation, the Pick-Sloan Plan, authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct dams and reservoirs intended to “secure the maximum benefits for flood control, irrigation, navigation, power, industrial and sanitary water supply, wildlife, and recreation.”

Six major dams and a 732-mile navigation channel have been built on the Missouri River since the 1930s. These projects have changed the river’s natural flows and movements, with effects on plants, animals, riverbank erosion, and sediment transport. Habitats for native animals and plants were altered as sandbars, meanders, and free-flowing water disappeared. More than 80 species of native fish, birds, plants, and

MANY PERSPECTIVES MUST BE INTERPRETED

Before they began their journey, President Jefferson gave Lewis and Clark a list of goals. Most important among these goals was to make contact with American Indian tribes and to establish good relations with them. In their quest to locate a water route to the Pacific Ocean, Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery traversed traditional Indian homelands, and without assistance from those native people—both in terms of trade and knowledge of the land—it is unlikely the explorers would have survived.

Contact with Lewis and Clark irrevocably changed the lifestyles of these tribes, as traditional tribal roles, cultures, and social patterns were affected. The explorers began a chain of events that would ultimately result in reduced Indian populations, loss of traditional lands, and numerous cultural challenges.

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center, which is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, highlights American Indian experiences and perspectives along with contemporary issues. The center, which is located in Great Falls, Montana, includes a 25,000-square-foot building with exhibits, an education room, large theatre, and retail store, as well as outdoor nature trails. One exhibit at the center that details the consequences of the expedition states that, “within eighty years of the Expedition, most tribes were restricted to reservations, mere postage stamps of their original homelands. Dark days followed as government policy attempted to destroy Indian culture.” This significant aspect of the expedition cannot be overlooked.

Interpretation of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail includes multiple



perspectives and communicates the complexity of the expedition. Tying the journey into larger themes has provided a complex reexamination of the expedition, and has made it more readily accessible to additional audiences.

The centerpiece of the interpretive center depicts the men of the expedition pulling dugout canoes out of the Missouri River.

mammals are rare or endangered. Water pollution from agriculture, industry, and municipal development is prevalent and affects water quality and harms native fish. American Indian lands were flooded, and sacred places and burial grounds were inundated with water.

Eighteen dams now regulate flows in the Columbia River and its main tributary, the Snake River. These dams created huge artificial lakes and obliterated some of the most dangerous waterfalls and rapids that challenged the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Celilo Falls, a major obstacle for the Corps of Discovery, was an important salmon spawning area and American Indian meeting place, but it is now flooded by Lake Celilo. The Columbia and Snake rivers are used to generate hydroelectric power and irrigate agricultural fields. Parts are developed for recreation, and a mountainous section of the Snake is designated as wilderness. Resource extraction on private and public land, such as logging and mining, was historically common and continues to be so.

While dams, agriculture, resource extraction, and urban development have altered much of the trail, sections of the trail remain much as the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition would have seen them in 1804-06. These significant cultural and natural resources

include Glade Creek in Idaho and the Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River in Montana (which is within the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument).

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT— UNDERSTANDING NATURAL RESOURCES IS A CHALLENGE

The Park Service owns just 78 acres along the trail, making natural resource management a matter of establishing cooperation with a variety of landowners, both public and private. Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail staff must strive to understand what it means to administer and accomplish goals along a 3,700-mile long trail.

Extensive monitoring and research along the trail are conducted by numerous local and national partnerships and organizations. The Nature Conservancy and the United States Geological Survey are both working on monitoring programs in the Missouri and Columbia river basins, and the Environmental Protection Agency is sponsoring an environmental monitoring and assessment program. Natural resources information that is collected should be compiled in a database so that it can be used to inform trail management.

The Upper Missouri Wild and Scenic River and Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument preserve parts of the trail that look much as they did when Lewis and Clark visited them 200 years ago.

