

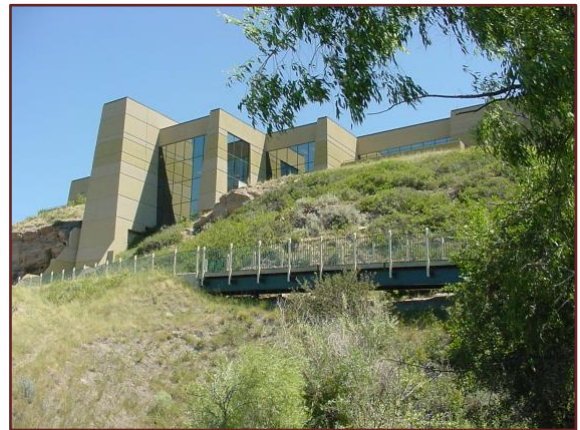


LCTA's 58th Annual Meeting to be in Great Falls, MT, June 21-24, 2026.

Great Falls is THE place to be next year for the 58th Annual Meeting of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance. The Planning Committee has some exciting programs planned. Robert Peck, Curator of Art and Artifacts and Senior Fellow of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, will be the Moulton Lecturer. This institution holds the majority of the Corps of Discovery's surviving botanical specimens. Having served with the Academy for the past 49 years, he has had daily access to these remarkable materials. Geologist and WPO contributor John Jengo will be a featured speaker as well.

We are also planning two day trips, one offering a guided tour by bus along the length of the Portage Route – including areas on private land that are normally off limits to the public, among them the Defeated Drain. The second field trip will take participants to Decision Point at the confluence of the Marias and Missouri rivers and the National Historic Landmark town of Fort Benton.

The Great Falls area offers so much to see that we simply cannot fit everything into the four days of the conference. Come early and join us for the 36th Annual Lewis and Clark Festival which kicks off Friday evening June 19 and continues all day Saturday June 20 with programs throughout the day including a special presentation by Native dancers. On Sunday June 21, the *Waking the Dead* tour of Highland Cemetery offers a unique history experience with live re-enactors and presentations about local historic figures at gravesites throughout the cemetery. Another option we are considering is a day-long float trip on the Missouri River, offering a rare vantage point from the river – just as the Corps would have seen it.



The Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center, managed by the US Forest Service, is situated high above the Missouri River in Great Falls, MT.

'Tis the Season to Give a Gift Membership in the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance

There is still time to celebrate this holiday season as well as next year's birthdays, anniversaries, and graduations by sharing the joy and excitement of membership in LCTA with those special someones. Please go to lewisandclark.org to give the gift that truly keeps on giving – *We Proceeded On, The Orderly Report*, the bi-weekly newsletter, national and local gatherings (both virtual and in person), friendships, and more. You can also give the gift of membership by check to LCTA at Attention: Georgia Kline; LCTA; PO Box 3434; Great Falls, MT 59403. Please call 416-454-1234 for more information. Happy holidays and a successful new year to come!

Following the Annual Meeting, the Portage Route Chapter is hosting a day hike to Lewis and Clark Pass. A three-day canoe trip is also in the works through the scenic White Cliffs of the Missouri River. Another option is the ever-popular scenic boat trip to the Gates of the Mountains between Great Falls and Helena. Then on June 26 and 27, Montana's fabulous new \$100 million Montana Historical Society Museum celebrates its grand opening in nearby Helena, with numerous activities planned for both days.

As you plan your time in Great Falls, consider coming early or staying later or both – to take advantage of everything. Our next update will offer more specifics on all of the events during the Annual Meeting. Stay tuned! *Text and Photo by Jay Russell*

LCTA Silent Auction a Great Success at Kansas City

Gathering. The auction, which raised more than \$3,000 for LCTA's William P. Sherman Library and Archives, owes much to the hard work and dedication of a number of Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance members. Carol Bronson helped set up the auction in Great Falls, MT, and made up the bid sheets. LCTA Secretary Keith Bystrom coordinated the donations from Mary Langhorst, Harlan Seyfer, and the Mouth of the Platte Chapter. Kay Schaefer organized the auction from Kansas City, and Barb and Rennie Kubik and LCTA Office Manager Georgia Kline set up and were at the auction every day to make it the terrific library fund raiser that it was. LCTA Treasurer Yvonne Kean worked with Georgia on the final accounting.

Start going through your collections now for the treasures you hope to donate to the Silent Auction at LCTA's 2026 Annual Gathering from June 21-24, 2026, in Great Falls, MT. But please! Do not send anything to Great Falls before sending the Library Committee a description and photo of what you'd like to donate at library@lewisandclark.org. And remember – "experiences" such as guided tours and stays at your vacation cabins are as welcome as books and objects. *Text and Photo by Carol Bronson*



Longtime LCTA member Mary Langford and her son Chris, a new LCTA member, at the Annual Gathering in Kansas City, MO.

LCTA Awards: Something Old, Something New

The **Robert Betts Award**, named for the author of *In Search of York*, is bestowed upon LCTA members who make outstanding contributions of time or treasures or both to LCTA's William P. Sherman Library and Archives. The award has been presented only twice. The first was to Don Nell for his donation of slides of organization events and sites along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The second was to Sue Buchel in recognition of the thousands of hours spent volunteering her professional expertise to the library and especially to archiving the collections. Please nominate people for the Robert Betts Award who have made significant contributions to the Sherman Library and Archives.

The **Townsend-Ritten Award**, newest of LCTA's member-recognition designations, was developed to acknowledge those members who have hiked, canoed, snow-shoed, kayaked that extra mile to carry the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance's mission and vision forward. The first recipients of this eponymous award were Kris Townsend for updating and maintaining Discover Lewis & Clark: www.lewis-clark.org, www.lewisandclark.org, and www.lewisandclark.travel and to Lou Ritten for his farsighted revision of LCTA's structural organization which will take us to the Lewis and Clark Expedition's semiquincentennial – and beyond.

Please consider nominating deserving LCTA members for the Robert Betts and Townsend-Ritten awards as well as the Meritorious Achievement, Distinguished Service, Appreciation, and Chapter awards by visiting awards@lewisandclark.org. While we know our members don't do the work to get the recognition, we also know it's appreciated when we give credit where credit is due. The submission deadline is April 1, 2026.

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Gift to Hasan Davis. Artist Steve Ludeman presented his watercolor entitled "Goodbye" to Hasan at York Fest in Portland, OR, on October 23, 2025, on behalf of LCTA's Oregon Chapter. In the painting, York bids his wife farewell before leaving with Captain Clark on the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the "western waters," a theme never before interpreted in a painting. Hasan's presentation of "The Journey of York" at York Fest, organized by Oregon Black Pioneers Executive Director Zachary Stocks, was supported in part by the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance.

If you would like to include your Chapter or Region's events in our next issue, please email your information to Philippa Newfield at philgor@aol.com by February 1, 2026. All Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance members automatically receive TOR electronically as part of their membership. The cost of receiving a paper copy of TOR is \$6.00 per year. If you wish a paper copy of TOR, please include your payment when you renew your LCTA/Region membership.
Philippa Newfield and Arend Flick,
Co-editors



Steve Ludeman presents "Goodbye," his painting of York as he bids his wife farewell before embarking on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, to Hasan Davis while York Fest organizer and Oregon Black Pioneers Executive Director Zachary Stocks looks on. *Photo by Jean Ludeman*



Ohio River Chapter members (l to r) Jerry Wilson, Janice Wilson, Lorraine Loesch, and Chapter President Mike Loesch represented the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance at the Big Bone Lick State Historic Site's Salt Festival near Union, KY. *Photo by Cindy Schuster*

LCTA Members Attend 41st Big Bone Lick State Historic Site Salt Festival.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was well represented by the Ohio River Chapter at the October 17-19, 2025, Big Bone Lick State Historic Site Salt Festival. Recall that Captain Meriwether Lewis stopped at Cincinnati in late September/early October of 1803 as he traveled down the Ohio River to meet William Clark at the Falls of the Ohio across from Louisville, KY. Lewis rode horseback from Cincinnati to Big Bone Lick at the request of President Thomas Jefferson who asked Lewis to secure prehistoric bones thought to be found in the area. After the Expedition, Clark explored the area in 1807, also at Jefferson's request.

Big Bone Lick State Historic Site is located near the town of Union, KY, down river from Cincinnati, OH. Ohio River Chapter members Jerry Wilson, Janice Wilson, Mike Loesch, and Lorraine Loesch represented LCTA at the festival. Mike exhibited many of his Lewis and Clark items which generated a great deal of interest among the festival goers. Steve Ludeman also sent a display of his

Lewis and Clark Eastern Legacy artwork. Ohio River Chapter members were also in attendance at Big Bone Lick State Historic Site's National Bison Day on November 1, 2025. *Submitted by Jerry Wilson*

Paddle Construction Instruction to Four Generations of Lewis and Clark Re-enactors

The story begins over a hundred years ago when a huge hollow cedar tree at least four feet in diameter fell into the Lochsa River far above Lewis' springtime "Long Camp" of 1806 near present-day Kamiah, ID. It took decades for the tree to be washed by spring floods about 100 miles down the Clearwater River system, probably spending years on various river banks and islands until it reached the rocky bank about 15 miles east of Lewiston, ID, in the 1990s. Fortunately the tree was still just below John Fisher's property when the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial re-enactment by the Discovery Expedition of St. Charles (DESC) was passing by.

Months before DESC arrived at Canoe Camp to build several ponderosa pine canoes in the fall of 2005, John had begun splitting out five- and six-foot boards for tables and canoe paddles such as the Corps of Discovery would have done 200 years ago at Canoe Camp and later at Fort Clatsop. Canoe Camp paddles were most likely of cedar as there are/were always lots of cedar logs on the Clearwater River, and such logs would have washed all the way down to the Columbia. Indian paddles were sometimes a combination pole and paddle because canoes were often poled upstream. The Corps of Discovery probably made both for downstream travel. West Coast paddles, on the other hand, were of ash. Women's paddles were an inverted "V" in shape, the tip for digging wapato roots from the bottom.

First John "cheated" by using a chainsaw to cut giant logs into six-foot-long "rounds" and then employed wedges and sledge hammers to split out slabs/boards that were six to ten inches wide and about two inches thick. For the newer cedar and cottonwood logs, he employed a bandsaw to cut boards of parallel grain.



Completed lighter cottonwood (used east of the Rockies) and darker cedar paddles. These 20-year-old western red cedar paddles, weathered from use, were made and used during the Bicentennial Expedition re-enactments. Freshly cut cedar is reddish in color.

John transported a pickup load of slabs/boards to the Discovery Expedition of St. Charles paddle fashioners at Canoe Camp and later at Fort Clatsop during the Bicentennial and other re-enactors in the 20 years since. He instructed the carvers in the use of hand saws to rough-shape the paddles, handles, shafts, and blades from the slabs. Then they used a drawknife to smooth, bevel, and round the edges and coarse rasps and files to smooth the handle and other surfaces.

Except for young "Shannon," a direct descendant of the original Shannon, almost everyone else ranged from 50s to 80s years of age. It was slow going for some, but the knot-free wood was easy to work. John's best time was one-and-a-half hours for a serviceable paddle. At that point, John thought he was done splitting out

slabs, but when the men arrived at the Pacific, they discovered the West-Coast tribes had two different styles of implement: one specialized for digging wapato for women and a more pointed one as a weapon when fighting from canoes. So John split out another 50 slabs. There was still a huge log left.



Cedar shake ready to be fashioned into paddles.



Travis Fedje (Pvt. Potts) holds a paddle blank while Mark Johnson (Pvt. Gibson) carves. Knappton Cove, Washington Quarantine Station, July 2018.

Flash forward to 2014. At LCTA's Annual Meeting near Sacajawea State Park at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia rivers near Pasco, WA, the Pacific Northwest Living History group needed more paddle blanks. Finding a nearby log (the spring floods had washed away the original log), John had his hands full that week with paddle making in addition to presentations on medicine and rawhide-rope construction. Then, while joining the Honor Guard at Great Falls, MT, for the June Lewis and Clark Festival in the 2020s, the paddle makers were challenged by carving cottonwood paddles with huge knots, an almost impossible job. A 25,000-acre forest fire in 2023 almost burned up John's old property on the Clearwater River near Juliaetta, ID, but left a lot of young cottonwood trees dead and standing. Growing closely and without side branches, they were perfect for

slicing into slabs for paddles. Cottonwood does not split like cedar, so John again cheated by using a

band saw to cut slabs and roughly shape the slabs. Green cottonwood cuts like butter, though, and a drawknife quickly shaped the paddles, almost as easily as with cedar. The blanks and several 90%-completed paddles are shown in the images; the old cedar paddles are from 2005.



Mark Johnson (standing) and J.D. Ray of the Pacific Northwest Living Historians at Sacajawea State Park's Heritage Days in October 2023.

About four or five years ago, John began training Laurie Rudd to present programs on Lewis and Clark medicine to Idaho's fourth graders at the Rendezvous Events. She took on more and more projects and began helping John fabricate medicines like Rush's "bilious pills" (never call them thunder clappers or thunder bolts, terms from the late 1800s). Laurie is now a part-time river historian for American Cruise Lines, as Rob Heacock of blessed memory had been. Meanwhile, Northwest re-enactors were still looking for more cedar canoe blanks to carve. John had recently scored a great cedar log, but it was second growth, unlike the original, and hard to split as it had a few knots so we had to resort to the band saw.



Antique drawknife with two handles, an essential Expedition tool for shaping and carving paddle handles.



Blue electric power planer used to shave knotty areas which are almost impossible to carve with a drawknife. Its use greatly sped up the bulk paddle production.

Laurie wanted to learn how to carve a paddle, so John started her off with a second-quality slab that had a few knots as mistakes would not matter. She took hours to become proficient but ended up with a serviceable paddle. Her next one will be much easier with first-quality wood in a parallel grain. Rocky, Laurie's eight-year-old son, worked with her and helped hold the paddle in place.

Meanwhile, her oldest son Russell, ten years old, who also worked on the first paddle, graduated to shaping a replica *tukus*, the Nez Perce name for a digging stick used to dig up camas, biscuit root, and other Northwest root crops. Made of wood or antler and later steel, the digging sticks came in lengths of from two to three-a-half feet and many different configurations. The Nez Perce traditionally used wood from the hardest slow-growing trees like fruit species and Pacific yew; John worked with both wood and antler shafts as originally employed. Russell used branches from a neighbor's old and dead trees. It was tedious work to sand off bark and shape the tips, but he achieved shafts identical to those in museums. John sped up the process with a belt sander, the method West Coast tribes employ in their cultural workshops. He made the first two *tukus*, and Russell will fashion about 90% of the next two. One will be for his mother to use in presentations and the other for historical interpreters or a museum. Without a blacksmith forge, John has been using a hammer, electric saws, and grinders for the steel-shafted replica *tukus*. These will feature wood or deer antler handles. *Text and photos by John Fisher. Re-enactment photos courtesy of Mark Johnson*



Laurie Rudd carves a paddle with the assistance of her son Rocky Rudd, aged eight.



Russell Rudd, aged ten, sands a shaft of wood for a *tukus*, a Nez Perce digging stick used to unearth edible and medicinal roots. John plans to give *tukus*, plant portfolios, and dried, mounted plants to historical interpreters and Lewis and Clark museums and has already brought the first group to the University of Idaho Herbarium in Moscow, ID.



Recreation of Camp Dubois, Wood River, IL.

The State of the Trail. Neal Bedlan, named acting superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail upon the retirement of Superintendent Mark Weekley, discussed Trail projects at LCTA's 2026 Annual Gathering in Kansas City, MO, last September. Interpretation, Acting Superintendent Bedlan said, is geared to present a varied visitor experience. He first offered a short history of the Trail. The LCNHT was originally designated when the National Trails System Act was amended to include national historic trails under Section 5 in 1978. The Trail was established as "a trail of approximately three thousand seven hundred miles, extending from Wood River, Illinois, to the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon..." On March 12, 2019, President Donald J. Trump signed the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation,

Management, and Recreation Act into law, authorizing an extension of the LCNHT, described as "...a trail of approximately 4,900 miles, extending from the Ohio River in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon...."

Acting Superintendent Bedlan noted that the trail's web strategy is to share content. "Create once and publish everywhere," he explained. The LCNHT's strategy is paying off. The Trail has clocked one million page views on NPS.gov and are second in shared content in all of the NPS. On the Trail itself, the LCNHT has acquired several digital assets to facilitate redesign by NPS and replacement of older interpretive panels.

Once families are out on the Trail, children will have access to the Junior Ranger packet at more than 30 host sites in 13 states. The Junior Ranger program received the national Freeman Tilden Award for inclusive storytelling and accessible features. Also on the interpretation front is the rollout, in partnership with LCTA, of the short documentary "Big Medicine: York Outdoors" along with an interpretive guide.

The LCNHT is concomitantly focused on resources stewardship through the Trail's collaboration with local groups on land protection. To guide appreciation of the physical Trail, the LCNHT is developing a history of the culture of outdoor recreation and working with Drexel University in Philadelphia on the plants of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

A future project will be the Trail's identification of High Potential Historic Route Segments that enable visitors to experience the Trail as Lewis and Clark experienced it, both in person and vicariously/virtually. The term "high potential route segments" denotes those segments of the Trail that would afford high-quality recreation experiences in a portion of the route having greater than average scenic value or an opportunity to share the experience of the original users of a historic route vicariously. The project will be coupled with a program honoring Indigenous place names to heighten awareness of the significant role played by the tribes along the Trail in the success of the Expedition.

The NPS completed an initial inventory of 78 High Potential Historic Sites (HPHS) along the originally designated portion of the LCNHT in 2018. HPHS are defined in the National Trails System Act as

"...those historic sites related to the route, or sites in close proximity thereto, which provide opportunity to interpret the historic significance of the trail during the period of its major use." Criteria for consideration as high potential sites include historic significance, presence of visible historic remnants, scenic quality, sense of place, and relative freedom from intrusion. In 2020, the National Park Service engaged a contractor to identify HPHS along the then newly designated Eastern Extension of the Trail. Funding for this work was provided by the National Park Foundation.

Terrain360, the LCNHT, and the Lewis and Clark Trust, Inc. announced a collaborative project to map a portion of the Yellowstone River. The mapping will use state-of-the-art 360° ultra-high-definition spherical imagery to capture 507 miles of river starting just south of Livingston, MT, and proceeding on to the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. This endeavor will generate over one million ultra-high-resolution images, provide an unparalleled view of the river, and aid in assessing and documenting the state of the river.



Yellowstone-Missouri River Confluence. *Photo by Jim Wark*

The integration of these technologies represents significant progress in the field of digital cartography and environmental conservation, enabling a level of detail and accessibility that enhances public



Columbia River Gorge, looking east from Crown Point, OR. *Photo courtesy Wiki Commons.*

engagement and scientific research. By combining these technologies with the historical and cultural significance of the Yellowstone River, this 360° view will capture the beauty of the landscape, contribute to the conservation and educational efforts regarding the Yellowstone, and advance how we interact with and comprehend our natural environment in enabling educators, students, researchers, and the general public to travel virtually from Livingston to the Missouri River confluence. Pioneers in immersive mapping, Terrain360 employs specially outfitted boats equipped with cutting-edge camera systems designed to capture comprehensive 360° imagery. To view existing imagery from the Trail, visit lewisandclark.travel or Terrain360.com.

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Iconic Seaside Statue Rededicated. Thirty-five years after it was installed, a monumental statue in Seaside, WA, entitled "End of the Trail" by noted artist Stanley Wanlass was rededicated on September 7, 2025, with a special plaque. Thousands of visitors to this popular tourist city are reminded of Lewis and Clark's accomplishments at the Seaside Turnaround overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Mayor Steve Wright chose this date to coincide with the annual Saltmakers Return event. This year nine Pacific Northwest Living Historians participated, boiling seawater to make salt 24/7 at their weekend camp on the beach several blocks south near the site of the actual 1806 salt cairn. The city sponsored both events. Former Seaside Mayor Joyce Williams had originally commissioned the Turnaround statue; the rededication and the plaque recognize the artist's contribution to the Lewis and Clark saga.



Mayor Steve Wright addresses gathering at the rededication of "End of the Trail" by sculptor Stanley Wanlass in Seaside, OR. *Photo courtesy of Brandy Wanlass, Wanlass Foundation*

Some 100 onlookers gathered at the statue to celebrate. LCTA Oregon Chapter member Mark Johnson and Washington Chapter member Glen Allison left their saltmaking duties briefly to make remarks. Brandy Wanlass, granddaughter of Wanlass who created several other Lewis and Clark bronzes on the Oregon and Washington coast, unveiled the plaque.

Wanlass lives in Utah, but asked his granddaughter to share his words: "I am a hopeless idealist and romantic. Life is short but art is long. I wanted to leave something edifying, of significant beauty and a tribute to the spirit, dignity, and excellence of man." More information about the artist is available at www.stanleywanlass.com. *Submitted by Larry McClure*