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Lewis & Clark Trail News
Bringing the Trail to Life
February 7, 2026



Beacon Rock Sunrise

Rising nearly 850 feet above the Columbia River, Beacon Rock is one of the most striking landmarks encountered by the Lewis and Clark Expedition as they pushed west toward the Pacific in the fall of 1805. Noting the river's narrowing channel and powerful currents here, members of the Corps of Discovery passed beneath this towering volcanic monolith—unaware it would one day become a symbol of the Columbia Gorge.

Rick Chromey photo

2026 Annual Gathering
Great Falls, Montana
June 21 - 24



First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park

History, Right at the Edge!

Join us for the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Annual Gathering ...
where history is written into the landscape

[Meeting](#) and [Hotel](#) Registration available now

Explore the [Meeting Guide](#)

Tony Turnbow Rescheduled (again)

Lewis County, Tennessee, has taken a beating from winter weather recently.

The Tony Turnbow book launch has again been rescheduled to take place on Saturday, February 21, at 2 p.m. (Central) at Lewis County Public Library and Archives.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming Tony L. Turnbow as he discusses his new book, Jefferson's Spy: The Secret Life of Meriwether Lewis, which explores Lewis's covert work for Thomas Jefferson and the enduring mystery surrounding his death on the Natchez Trace. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and personalization.

[Event Information](#)

LEWIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

BOOK LAUNCH

JEFFERSON'S SPY
THE SECRET LIFE OF MERIWETHER LEWIS
by Tony L. Turnbow

The Secret Life of Meriwether Lewis: Jefferson's Spy (Vol. 1) by Tony L. Turnbow

In Jefferson's Spy: The Secret Life of Meriwether Lewis, Tony L. Turnbow explores Lewis's relationship with his mentor, Thomas Jefferson, and the secret work he performed on Jefferson's behalf until his death on the Natchez Trace in Tennessee.

SATURDAY
January 24th, 2026

START TIME
02:00 PM Central

Join us for the launch of a fascinating new book by historian Tony L. Turnbow.

www.lewislibrary.com
15 Kyle Ave., Hohenwald, TN

LCTA Grants

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance annually provides grants to organizations that need assistance on projects that tell the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. For

2026, 17 organizations received a total of \$94,415 in grant funding. We're profiling two grant recipients in this and upcoming newsletters.

Powering Technology

The Lewis & Clark Trail Experience received a \$10,000 grant to help cover the annual costs of maintaining the online technology powering the organization's travel website, the [Lewis and Clark Trail Experience](#).

The website is one of the most effective communication tools the LCTA has for engaging the public. This year, several hundred thousand people are expected to visit the website for historic site listings, trail events, trip itineraries, and travel magazine features—all are about what is offered along the 4,900-mile Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

The website was developed by the National Park Service and then given to LCTA in late 2023 when the federal agency shifted to other priorities. The website is now managed by a LCTA volunteer, Kris Townsend, who donates more than 1,000 hours a year to maintaining and managing the travel website as well as [LCTA's public website](#) and educational website, [Discover Lewis & Clark](#).

[Explore the Lewis and Clark Trail Experience website](#)



Lewis and Clark Trail Experience



The Red House

The Red House Interpretive Center in Cape Girardeau, Mo., received \$6,300 from LCTA to assist in a community drive to fund a project that will replace the center's leaky roof. The center is a replica of a trading post built in 1797 by community founder Louis Larimier. The original building was destroyed by a tornado and rebuilt in 2003 by volunteers.

Located on the bank of the Missouri River, the center features exhibits depicting the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the lives, cultures, and customs of the area's early settlers. The center is a popular destination for school tours to learn about the expedition and local history.

In the early 19th century, the "red house"—named so because it was painted red—was the best-known trading post between St. Louis, Mo., and Memphis, Tenn. It was also the area's community and government center. In November of 1803, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark stopped to visit with Lorimier's family and purchase supplies for the expedition.

[Learn about Louise Lorimier and Meriwether Lewis' time at the Red House](#)

An Honor in St. Charles



The mayor of St. Charles, Mo., Dan Borgmeyer, recently presented Mimi Jackson with the prestigious St. Charles Rockstar Award to recognize the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Lewis & Clark Center, an educational museum that tells the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The award honors local people and organizations that have made a positive impact on St. Charles, a community north of St. Louis and a part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition story.

Mimi and her co-founder, husband Darold, started the museum in 1985. They became friends with Glen and Joanne Bishop, the founders of the Lewis & Clark Discovery Expedition, a re-enactment group that focuses on the Lewis and Clark explorers. The friendship was beneficial for both organizations. In 2001, the museum and Discovery Expedition created a nonprofit organization and built the [Lewis and Clark Boathouse and Museum](#) along the riverside of the St. Charles Historical District. The Boathouse and Museum plays an integral role in attracting more than a million visitors to the district each year.

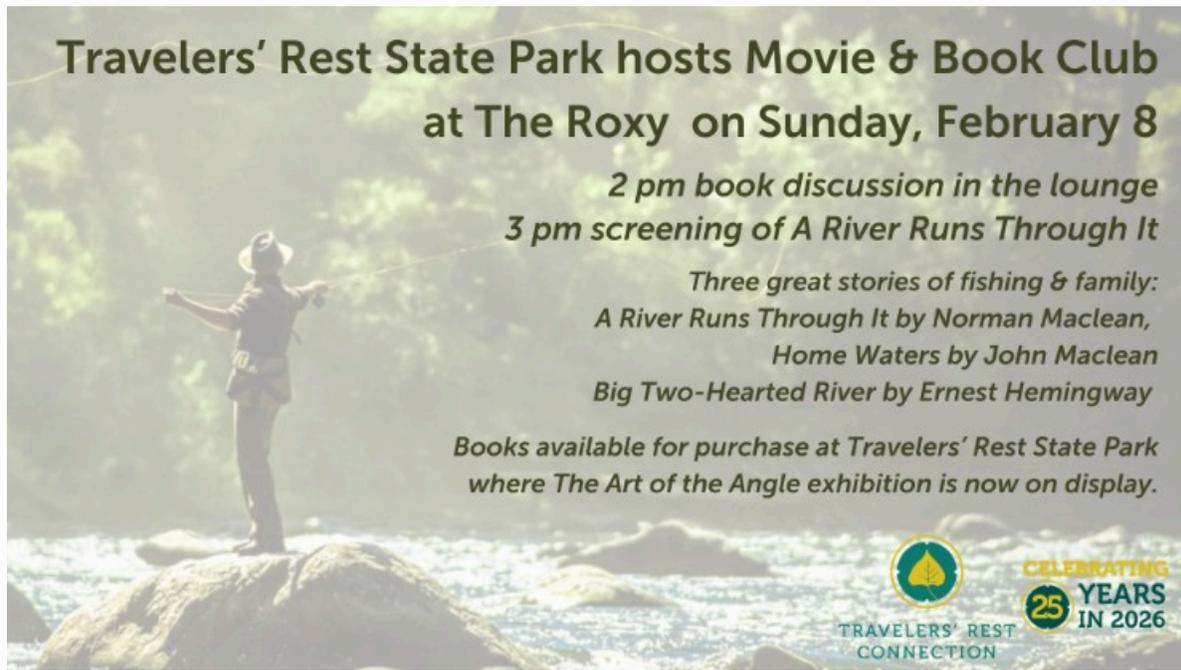
An official destination site on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Boathouse and Museum offers hours of immersion in the history of the expedition and America.

The museum has interactive, educational exhibits that chronologically trace the expedition's round-trip to the northwest Pacific coast. Exhibits focus on the Corps of Discovery's interactions and diplomacy with Indigenous tribes; the Missouri River ecosystem; maps and artifacts; and engaging activities for kids, including scavenger hunts, educational quizzes and more. Visitors can watch a 45-minute documentary that gives rich historical context for the expedition. The museum also features the largest indoor mural in Missouri, depicting the Missouri River and the landscape encountered by the expedition, as well as a cozy bookstore packed with books and information about the expedition.



Meanwhile, the boathouse is home to the Discovery Expedition's magnificent [full-scale replicas](#) of the expedition's pirogues and large boat. The vessels are used to give on-site living history demonstrations and reenactments to the public in communities along the historic trail. The designs of the boats were based on drawings by William Clark; more than 16,000 volunteer hours were spent constructing the vessels.

[Find out more about the Lewis and Clark Boathouse and Museum](#)



**Travelers' Rest State Park hosts Movie & Book Club
at The Roxy on Sunday, February 8**

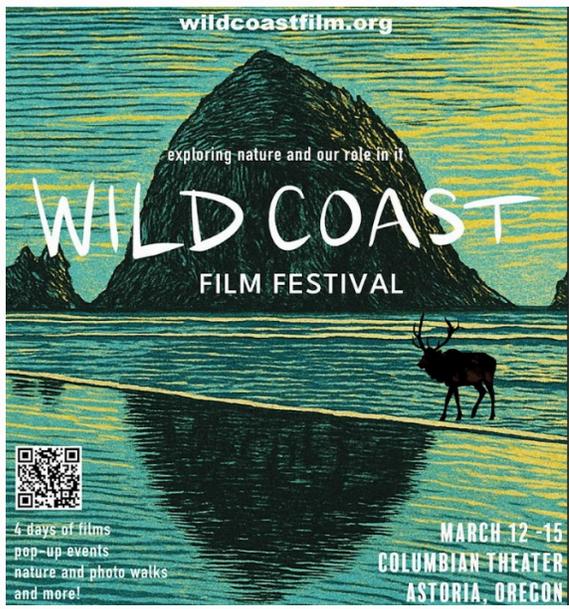
*2 pm book discussion in the lounge
3 pm screening of A River Runs Through It*

*Three great stories of fishing & family:
A River Runs Through It by Norman Maclean,
Home Waters by John Maclean
Big Two-Hearted River by Ernest Hemingway*

*Books available for purchase at Travelers' Rest State Park
where The Art of the Angle exhibition is now on display.*

[Details](#)



Wild Coast Film Festival

The 3rd annual Wild Coast Film Festival, exploring nature and our role in it, takes place March 12 - 15 at the [Columbian Theater](#) in Astoria, Oregon.

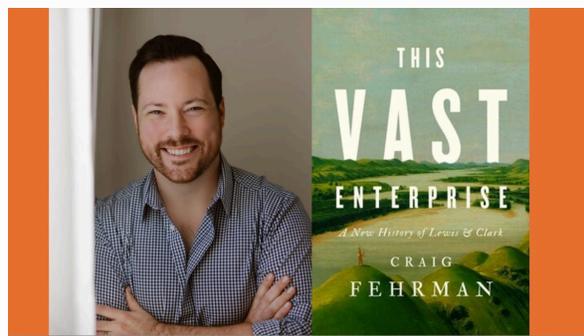
The festival features films by renowned regional and international storytellers and will host a special screening of [Big Medicine: York Outdoors](#).

There are seven film blocks, each approximately two hours long as well as local pop-up events in Astoria. These informal gatherings are open to the public and feature special panel discussions. Attendees can eat, drink, and nerd-out on conservation topics.

Wildcoastfilm.org

**Vast Enterprise
Zoomcast**

Join the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance on February 22 at 4 PM (Central Time) for a second online conversation with Craig Fehrman. After his first well-received event—on his groundbreaking forthcoming book, *This Vast Enterprise: A New History of Lewis and Clark* (Simon & Schuster, 2026)—Fehrman will share another round of insights, this time focused on Clark.



In specific, Fehrman will share two new documents: a forgotten memoir written by a Clark family friend and a notebook of Clark's. These documents allowed Fehrman to prove that Clark spent a year at college in Virginia. Forget the bad spelling—William was actually the better-educated of the two captains!

Fehrman will discuss what Clark studied and how it shaped him, first as a military officer and then as an explorer. As in Fehrman's first presentation, attendees can expect a behind-the-scenes look at his research process and a new perspective on Clark's personality and journals.

[Zoomcast Information](#)

Day by Day Radio Episodes



[February 7, 1806](#)

Living in High Style

After a dinner of [elk](#) marrow bones and brisket, [Lewis](#) sarcastically says they are living in high style at Fort Clatsop.

Meanwhile, [Sgt. Gass](#) and his detail spend a disagreeable night out in the rain. Lewis describes the ravages of smallpox among the [Clatsop](#) and a local species of huckleberry.

This evening we had what I call an excellent supper it consisted of a marrowbone a piece and a brisket of boiled Elk that had the appearance of a little fat on it. this for Fort Clatsop is living in high stile.

—[Meriwether Lewis](#)

Listen to the full library of [Day by Day broadcasts](#)

Originally aired by [Yellowstone Public Radio](#) during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial observance. These 627 radio episodes parallel the expedition dates starting May 14, 1804, and ending September 25, 1806. They are narrated by Hal Hansen, scripted by Whit Hansen and Ed Jacobson, and produced by Leni Holliman.



Wild & Scenic Film Festival

Friday, February 27, 2026

Liberty Hall

644 Massachusetts St.

Lawrence, KS

Doors open at 6 p.m.

Films start at 7 p.m.

[The Wild & Scenic Film Festival](#) is the largest environmental film festival in the world. The Lawrence showing will feature great short films, door prizes, informational tables by our partners and sponsors.

Are you a student or teacher? Request a FREE ticket! We have a limited number of free tickets available for students and teachers. Email us at info@kansasriver.org to learn more and request a ticket. Tickets are first come, first serve so reserve yours soon!

All proceeds from the Wild & Scenic Film Festival benefit Friends of the Kaw and our work for the Kansas River. Get your [tickets](#) today, then join us on February 27 to get inspired!

[Tickets](#)

Of Interest

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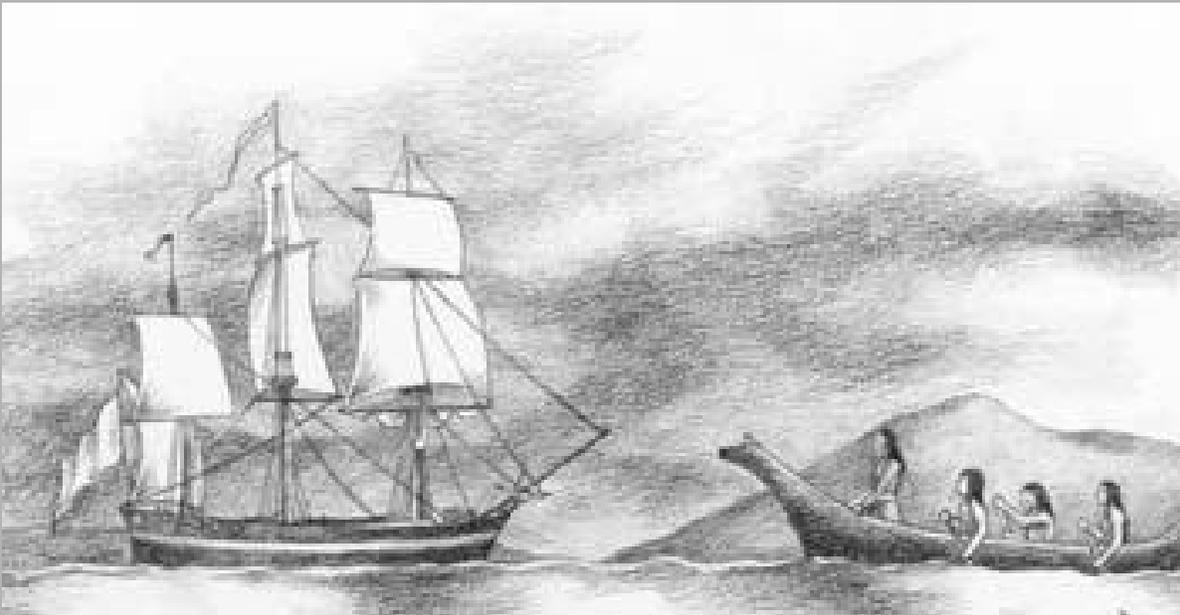
[Support LCTA](#)

Play Lewis & Clark Trivia

While at Fort Clatsop, Meriwether Lewis made this Feb. 7, 1806, journal entry about a disease that

"...has distroyed a great number of the natives in this quarter. it prevailed about 4 years since among the [Clatsops](#) and distroy several hundred of them, four of their chiefs fell victyms to it's ravages. those Clatsops are deposited in their canoes on the bay a few miles below us. I think the late ravages...may well account for the number of remains of vilages which we find deserted on the river and Sea coast in this quarter."

During the quarter-century prior to the expedition's arrival on the Columbia River, this disease was spread to the Clatsops and other native communities by sailors from ships that traded along the Pacific Northwest coast. An estimated 50 percent of the Columbia River population was killed by the disease.



What was the disease?

[Submit your answer](#)

The Trivia Game winner will be emailed a list of Lewis and Clark-related books to choose one from as the prize. The books are used but in excellent shape.

The question for the Trivia Game in our last newsletter was about the fuel source at Fort Mandan until it ran out on January 24, 1805. All but one respondent answered buffalo chips and driftwood. Those are correct for fuel sources prior to Fort Mandan. Three readers correctly replied that coal was the initial fuel source at Fort Mandan. Coal could be found along the Missouri River cutbanks prior to January 24.

When more than one reader answers correctly, a drawing is held to determine the winner. For this question, the winner was Stan Spencer.

[Read about the importance of coal to Thomas Jefferson](#)

Words of the Expedition

Living in Clover



Wapato Root

Living in Clover is an idiom occasionally used today to describe living comfortably and enjoying a prosperous life. The expression dates back to the early 1700s, when it was commonly used by farmers raising livestock. When their cattle had abundant clover to eat, the animals were living in clover.

But for the Lewis and Clark explorers, living in clover had nothing to do with cattle. Meriwether Lewis used the phrase in his [journal entry of March 11, 1806](#), to describe a rare abundance of food while they spent the winter at Fort Clatsop: sturgeon, anchovies and small potato-like wapato roots (see the photo). He took pen to paper that day and wrote: "...we once more live in clover."

Share the Adventure!



Help us expand the community by sharing the newsletter with your network. Simply provide this [sign-up link](#) to friends, family, and fellow Trail enthusiasts.

See all the events on the [LCTE Events Calendar](#)



[What Canoes Can Teach](#)



[Birds Audubon Drew](#)



[Inhabitants](#)

Where on the Trail?

Our newest fun feature invites you to guess the location along the Trail.

[Answer](#)

This aerial photo was taken by aviator and photographer Jim Wark, who began retracing the Lewis and Clark Trail by air in 1999. Many of his photos are featured in articles on our educational website, Discover Lewis & Clark.

[More about Jim and his photos.](#)

[Discover Lewis and Clark](#)



The Last Word

Even a century after the Corps of Discovery returned east, the Lewis and Clark Expedition still held the public in its grip. That enduring fascination was on full display in 1905, when Portland staged the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition, drawing millions of visitors to celebrate an expedition already 101 years past.

The fair transformed memory into spectacle—pairing history with ambition, progress, and a vision of the American West's future—while reaffirming the expedition's place in the national imagination.

Now, 223 years after Lewis and Clark set out, that same impulse to revisit, reinterpret, and reconnect with the journey remains strong, reminding us that the story of the Trail is not fixed in the past, but continually rediscovered.



LCTA member and history aficionado Mark Stevens shared a digital copy of this original 20-inch by 9-inch photo of all of the old Oregon Pioneer Association members who attended the 1905 Lewis and Clark Centennial

Exposition. The event was held to honor the expedition that reached the area in early November 1805 on its westward push to the Pacific Ocean. There are 510 people shown in the photo.

Among them are Mark's great-great grandfather Hezekiah Caples, who crossed the Plains in 1844, as well as Mark's great-great uncle, Charles Caples. The photo was taken by the official Lewis and Clark Exposition photographer, Fred H. Kiser, and appears to be posed in front of the Foreign Palace or European Building at the Expo.

In the summer of 1905, Portland staged an audacious experiment in self-invention. On June 1, nearly 40,000 people streamed into the opening day of the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition and Oriental Fair. This was Portland's only great exposition and, though not officially recognized, its de facto "World's Fair."



Over the next four and a half months, more than 1.5 million visitors passed through the gates of a temporary city that rose specifically for the Exposition from the muddy swamplands around Guild's Lake, in what is now Portland's northwest area, and then vanished almost without a trace after the Exposition concluded.



**BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF LEWIS AND CLARK CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION AND ORIENTAL FAIR
PORTLAND, OREGON.**

The exposition marked the 100th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, but commemoration was only part of the story. Portland's business and civic leaders saw the fair as a bold declaration of arrival, positioning the city as a rising industrial and cultural hub competing with Seattle and San Francisco.

The 400-acre fairgrounds were designed by a team of prominent architects, including the two Olmsted brothers whose creative designs of parks in Boston, Portland, Louisville, and Seattle helped define what Americans today

think of as a public landscape, The fairgrounds featured Spanish Renaissance-style buildings, sweeping promenades, and a central artificial lake. At night, more than 100,000 electric bulbs outlined domes, bridges, and statues, dazzling visitors unused to such displays of light.



Exhibits from 21 countries and numerous U.S. states filled the grounds, showcasing art, technology, agriculture, and visions of Pacific trade. One structure stood apart: the monumental Forestry Building, a seven-story “log cathedral” built from massive Douglas firs, celebrating the Northwest’s timber wealth. It was billed as the “World’s Largest Log Cabin.”

The Exposition’s motto reflected the adventurous spirit of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: “Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way.” Numerous statues adorned the fairgrounds, including a statue of *Sacajawea and Jean-Baptiste* which today stands in the city’s Washington Park.

When the fair closed in October 1905, most buildings were torn down. Guild’s Lake was filled in and eventually became an industrial area.

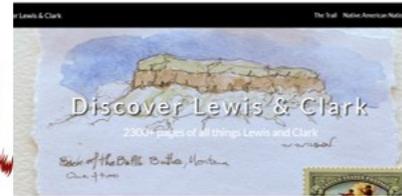
The exposition faded into memory. Yet its impact endured. The fair made a profit, helped spark Portland’s population boom, inspired the popular annual Rose Festival, and firmly placed the city on the national map—proof that even a temporary city like that at Guild’s Lake can leave a permanent legacy, all thanks to a community honoring the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Richard Hunt

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