



Lewis & Clark Trail News
Bringing the Trail to Life
June 28, 2025



Starving "America's best idea"

Amid today's polarized politics and economic uncertainty, a quiet crisis is unfolding in America's most sacred spaces: the chronic defunding of the National Park Service. Once hailed as "America's best idea," our parks are now being starved of the resources needed to protect our shared natural and cultural heritage. This isn't just about closed campgrounds or broken toilets. It's about the erosion of national memory, public trust, and environmental stewardship. One of the last truly democratic institutions is being dismantled—quietly and quickly.

This year alone, parks face up to 30% staffing shortages. Seasonal rangers are gone. Educational programs cut. Interpretation eliminated. In some places, even janitorial services have been cancelled. Visitor centers are closing—not for winter, but for good.

The consequences are far-reaching. Trails go unrepaired, families are turned away, and stories—especially from underrepresented communities—go untold. Local economies suffer. Civic connection withers.

And this decline isn't accidental. It's the result of political neglect and sustained disinvestment, even as visitation soars and public support remains high.

This is a call to action. If we want future generations to know these places—and what they mean—we must act now. Fund the parks. Protect the stories. Preserve the soul of America.

They are not just where we go to escape. They are where we remember who we are.

Let's choose better,

[Richard Hunt](#)

Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance [Annual Gathering](#)

Kansas City, Missouri
September 14 - 17

[Register Now](#)

Early Bird Registration Ends July 31st

Discounted hotel rooms are going fast!

Revised Edition
[Registration Guide](#)

Now Available



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Watch
[The Mysterious West](#)

Episode 7 from the student team at the Shenandoah University Center for Immersive Learning.

The Expedition departs Fort Mandan after wintering and heads into territory virtually unknown to Europeans.



Watch
[The Great Falls](#)

After weeks of navigating the upper Missouri, the Corps of Discovery encounters not only the thundering falls but a new crisis: Sacagawea falls seriously ill. In a moment of hope and mystery, Captain Lewis gives her water from a nearby source known as Sulphur Springs—and she makes a remarkable recovery.

15 Cultural Protocols to Know Before you Visit Native Homelands in the U.S.



AIANTA
American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA), the only national organization dedicated to advancing cultural heritage tourism in Native Nations and communities across the United States, is sharing 15 cultural protocols travelers should know before visiting Native homelands in the U.S. While every tribe and region of Native America is different, follow these general guidelines for visiting Native lands.

Each tribal nation in Native America makes the decision on how best to balance community and tradition while providing visitors with enjoyable experiences. However, to avoid misunderstandings or violations of our traditions, tribes ask that visitors follow a basic code of conduct. In doing so, tribes can ensure the protection of sacred and ceremonial areas, including the preservation of historical artifacts.

Which term is preferred, American Indian, Native American or Indigenous?

All terms are generally acceptable, although many individuals have a preference. "American Indians" specifically refers to Indigenous people of the lower 48 states, while "Native Americans" encompasses Alaska Natives as well. Native Hawaiians are distinct from "Indians" and are their own unique people with ancestral ties to their homelands. To delve deeper into Hawaiian culture and protocols, visitors can consult the [Ma'ema'e Toolkit](#), a resource developed in collaboration with the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association and the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. "Indigenous" is more internationally favored.



What do Native peoples want to be called?

A key aspect of understanding cultures different from your own is through asking questions and actively learning about them. When referring to multiple individuals with different tribal affiliations, both "American Indians" and "Native Americans" are acceptable terms. However, when referring to individuals, it is preferable to use the name of their specific tribe whenever possible or available. Here are some examples:

- He is a Navajo commissioner.
- She is a citizen of the Nisqually Indian Tribe.
- He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

It's important to note that many of the tribal names commonly known are not the names the people refer to themselves as. For instance, "Nez Perce" is a colonizer-assigned misnomer, whereas "nimíipuu" is the preferred term, meaning "the people" in their own language.

What is Indian Country?

Indian Country refers to the many self-governing and sovereign Native American communities in the U.S., including Native American reservations and trust lands. Federally recognized tribes and the United States have a government-to-government relationship. As sovereign nations, they create and enforce their own laws, determine citizenship, and license and regulate activities in their jurisdictions. Native Americans are also United States citizens and have the right to vote. There are also state recognized and unrecognized tribes, while some Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian people have unique status.



How many tribes and Native Americans are there in the U.S.?

There are 574 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages. A federally recognized tribe is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that has a recognized government-to-government relationship with the U.S. Additionally, there are more than 60 state-recognized tribes, which allows for a degree of self-determination at the state level but not at the federal level. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2021, there are 7.2 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives living in the U.S., including those of more than one race.

Where is Indian Country?

All of America is considered Indigenous homelands. Due to treaties and forced displacement, the establishment of reservations, etc. were created. Today, the term "Indian Country" refers to this land base, while Natives continue to maintain their connection to their homelands beyond these borders. More than 56 million acres make up Indian Country, an area that when combined would be roughly the size of Great Britain. This area is spread across 326 Indian lands, including reservations, rancherias, pueblos, and villages. The largest is the 16-million-acre Navajo Nation Reservation that stretches across three states in the Southwest, and the smallest is a 1.3-acre parcel in California where the Pit River Tribe's cemetery is located. Many smaller reservations are less than 1,000 acres in size. Some reservations represent tribes' ancestral lands while others were created by the federal government to forcibly resettle Native Americans away from their homelands. Not all federally recognized tribes have reservations.



Can I visit any reservation?

Many reservations welcome visitors and have recreational, historical, and cultural sites and events to share with the public. All the attractions, experiences, and accommodations listed on [NativeAmerica.Travel](#) are open to the public. Other tribes prefer not to have tourists or require that visitors register at a tribal office. When in doubt, visit the tribal government website to understand if and where visitors are welcome. When visiting any reservation, you are considered a guest and should respect the privacy of the residents and adhere to the tribe's laws.

[Read the AIANTA Cultural Protocol](#)

Film Premiere of "Big Medicine: York Outdoors"



July 13, 2pm



Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Larsen Park Road, Sioux City, IA

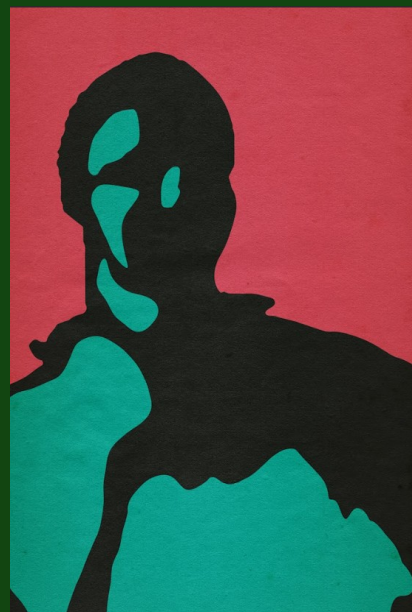
Join us for the premiere of [*Big Medicine: York Outdoors*](#), a compelling new film that elevates the story of [*York*](#), the only Black member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Despite his significant contributions and perseverance during the grueling three-year journey, York's story has been overshadowed in history. As Captain William Clark's lifelong servant, he faced the unyielding reality of enslavement while other expedition members were celebrated and rewarded for their achievements.

A collaboration with NEW Multimedia, *Big Medicine: York Outdoors* follows a group of Black adventurers on a transformative four-day river journey along the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument in Montana. This expedition retraces the path of the original Corps of Discovery while connecting York's legacy to the joy, healing, and empowerment that the great outdoors can provide.



Attention LCTA Members



Big Medicine: York Outdoors

Ballots for the 2026 Board of Directors and changes to By - Laws are being mailed this week. Return your ballot by the postmark deadline to ensure your vote counts. Contact [Georgia Kline](#) with any questions.

LCTA is supporting the distribution of the feature film Big Medicine. If your organization is interested in scheduling a free screening - contact [Richard Hunt](#)

Share the Adventure!

Lewis & Clark Trail News

[Bringing the Trail to Life](#)

April 5, 2025

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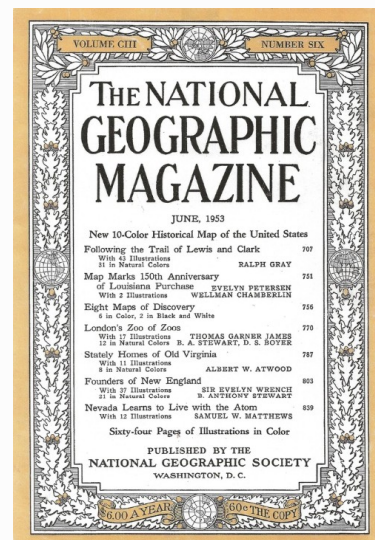


National Geographic from 1953

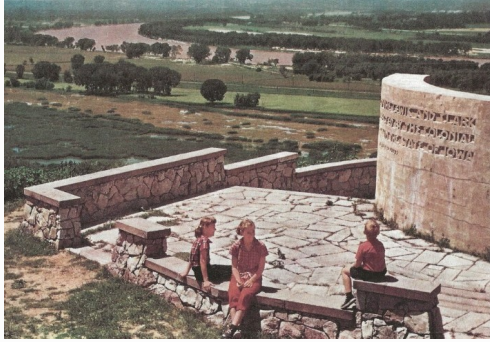
Friend of the Alliance, Camille Bradford shared this nostalgic glimpse into the past.

A vintage National Geographic article exploring the Lewis and Clark Trail long before the region was transformed by impounded lakes or had received National Historic Trail status.

We invite you to enjoy this retro journey, back when road trips featured woody station wagons instead of Sprinter vans and no auto-tour signs pointed the way!



[View the Magazine](#)



Monument Park, Council Bluffs 1953



Monument Park, Council Bluffs today



Explore & Preserve the Lolo Trail

Join Our Summer Tour!

The Idaho Chapter of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance invites you to camp along the historic Lolo Trail and help maintain its interpretive signs this summer. This self-supported trip (i.e. bring your own food and gear) includes two weekend outings:

- July 11-13 (East Side) – Camp near Powell, Idaho, exploring Lolo Pass, Snowbank, Bear's Oil and Roots Camp, and more.

This trip blends trail preservation with immersive history, retracing Lewis and Clark's rugged journey across the Bitterroot Mountains from Lolo, Montana, over Lolo Pass to Weippe, Idaho. While inspecting and repairing interpretive signs, we'll also explore some of the most significant Corps of Discovery sites along the Lolo Trail. Expect rough, dusty roads—high-clearance vehicles with durable tires are recommended. LCTA membership is not required to participate in these outings.

If you are interested in participating, contact Chuck Raddon, idahoclarkie@gmail.com.



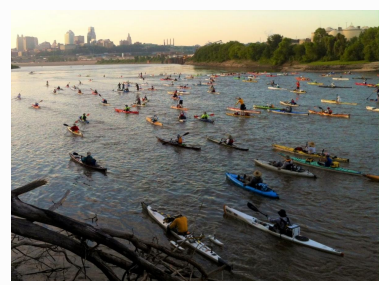
[Arlee Celebration](#)

Arlee, MT
July 4 - 6



[So Hard to Die](#)

Fort Clatsop
July 7



[MR 340 Race](#)

Kaw Point - St Charles
July 8 - 11

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**Traveling the Trail
this summer?**

Take the Lewis and Clark Trail Experience with you by downloading our mobile APP. Scan the QR code with your mobile device.

New Trip Inspiration

Our latest [Trip Inspiration](#) comes from LCTA National Secretary Keith Bystrom, who shared this route with the Board of Directors during our recent visit to Omaha.

This journey highlights the Lewis and Clark Icon Sculptures—installed during the Bicentennial celebration—that mark key points along the Trail from Bellevue to Fort Calhoun

Around Omaha

Icon Monument Loop



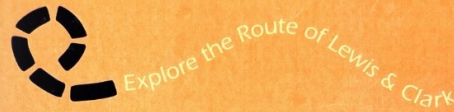
The area around Omaha, Nebraska and Council Bluffs, Iowa (ne Kanessville) offers a rich experience of historical sites, public art, the National Park Service headquarters of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and a redeveloped riverfront that is a...

Stops: 13

Distance: 71 miles

[VIEW INSPIRATION](#)

Read about the original installation of the Icon [Exhibits](#)



The Lewis & Clark Interpretive Trail Along The Missouri Riverfront

National Association For Interpretation
2005 NAI Interpretive Media Awards Competition

The Last Journey of Meriwether Lewis

Suicide or Murder?

By [Clay S. Jenkinson](#)

Here's what we know. Lewis was appointed governor of [Louisiana Territory](#) on 28 February 1807. He did not arrive in [St. Louis](#) to take up his duties until 8 May 1808. He was in residence in St. Louis for a year and a half—actually, one year, five months, and twenty-seven days. By the summer of 1809, his world was beginning to fall apart. He was by now in an open breach with his lieutenant, Territorial Secretary Frederick Bates. In fact, their struggle brought them to the first stage of an affair of honor that might have led to a duel, if [William Clark](#) had not carefully stalled the process and ratcheted things down until Lewis was under greater self-control.

The War Department in faraway Washington, DC, had begun to refuse to honor some of Governor Lewis's vouchers, a few of them for very large sums of money, and the tone of correspondence from functionaries in the War Department to Lewis had become reproachful. The word had gotten around the territorial capital that Lewis's official finances were being challenged at the highest levels of the United States government.

This had the effect, as Lewis ruefully acknowledged, of causing his personal creditors to crowd in on him for payment. His personal solvency was in a perilous state. Rumors had begun to circulate to the effect that Governor Lewis would be recalled or at least not re-appointed, that the new Madison administration had lost confidence in him.

Grinder's Stand
by [Michael Haynes](#)



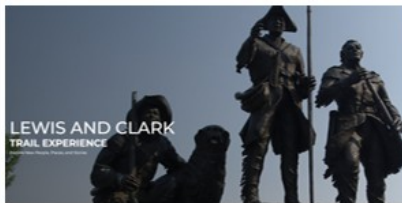
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