



Lewis & Clark Trail News

Bringing the Trail to Life
September 20, 2025



Two Medicine Fight Site

Fran Brunn, one of the winners of our 2025 photo contest, was intrigued by the scene she photographed, the Two Medicine Fight Site, where Meriwether Lewis and three other explorers had a violent encounter in July 1806 with eight young Blackfeet, ending in the death of one and possibly two of the tribesmen.

Fran and husband Joe visited the site thanks to a tour given by long-time Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance member Larry Esptein, an authority on the site which is in a remote area 25 miles southeast of Browning, Montana. When he was a 12-year-old Boy Scout, Larry helped to locate the actual site of the skirmish.

Fran and Joe became interested in the Lewis and Clark Expedition after viewing the PBS 1997 Ken Burns series, *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*. Since then, they have been on several trips along the section of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail from St. Louis, Mo., to Fort Clatsop on the Oregon coast.

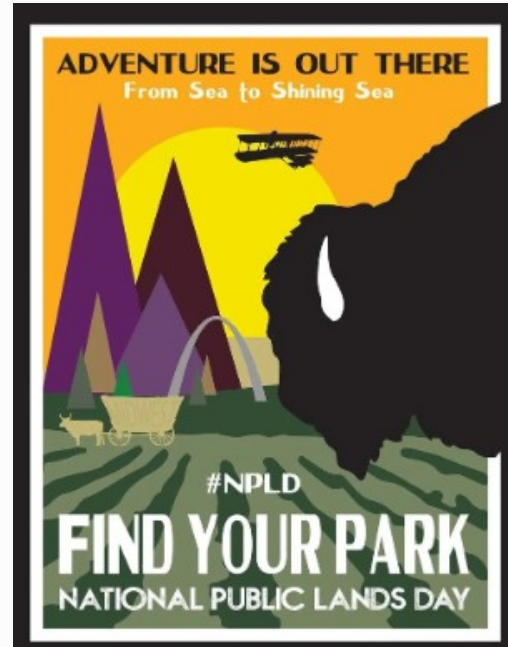
"The Lewis and Clark Trail has significant opportunities to take wonderful photographs," Fran says. "It's interesting to visit and photograph the locations where you know you are standing at the same place the members of the

Corps of Discovery did so many years ago.”

Fran’s photo was one of 14 winning photos that are published in the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance’s 2026 calendar. The calendar is for sale for \$20 as a fundraiser for LCTA programs. [Order yours now.](#)

National Public Lands Day

National Public Lands Day is organized annually and led by the [National Environmental Education Foundation](#), in partnership with the National Park Service and other federal agencies. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers roll up their sleeves to help restore and preserve public lands of all types and sizes—from iconic national parks and rivers to local urban green spaces and everything in between. National Public Lands Day is special because it provides all lovers of the environment—old and new—an opportunity to show our appreciation for these unique places.



National Public Lands Day is more than a clean-up—it’s a chance to connect with new communities, an event that creates kinship among those working together for a common goal, and an opportunity to use America’s public lands for education, recreation, and overall physical and mental health. The theme for this year’s celebration is National Public Lands Day: Together for Tomorrow. Let’s join forces for a common goal, stewarding America’s natural resources for future generations to enjoy. Be a part of this impactful day and help make a difference in our public lands!

[Find an Event in Your Area](#)

Successful Outcome of a LCTA Grant

With help from the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance, the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center in Sioux City, Iowa, hosted three free performances this summer that enhanced the public’s awareness of the center’s educational opportunities and provided a better understanding of Native American tribal cultures. The performances, in turn, helped to promote the public’s awareness of a new project at the Center.

The well-attended performances, funded largely by a \$7,500 LCTA grant, included [Many Moccasins Dance Troupe](#), which



featured dancers of all ages; and Starr Chief Eagle, a member of the Sicangu (Rosebud) Lakota Sioux in South Dakota. She is one of the Midwest's best-known hoop dancers and part of a generation of women bringing their talents to what was originally a male practice. The third group was the Duniya Drum and Dance Company, a West African rhythm and dance troupe whose performance demonstrated the importance of dance to indigenous peoples around the world.

The performances also fulfilled the important role of acquainting the public with center's development of a "Wall of Unsung Heroes" that depicts participants in the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

With construction to be completed in 2026, the project is developing an interesting exhibit featuring expedition members and others who performed important roles but are seldom seen elsewhere in exhibits throughout the United States. The exhibit will show the expedition was not just comprised of a members of a white man's army but involved, rather, men and women from many various racial, ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds.

"The epic adventure was not just a man's story," said Lori Snow, the Center's development director. "Many women were influential in the journey every step of the way. Women from the Arikara, Mandan and Hidatsa, for example, were a large part of the expedition all the way up the Missouri River, providing food and information. And, of course, there was Sacagawea."



Oregon Black Pioneers presents

York Fest

A weeklong festival honoring York
of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Portland, Oregon
October 17–25, 2025

Fri. October 17, *The Unraveling of York* Presentation and Discussion

Vin Shambry with Todd McGrain
Alberta House

Sat. October 18, *Our Rooted Futures Festival*

The York Collective
LABS Media

Sun. October 19, *Boating with Bubba: The York River Loop Tour*

Flossin Media & Soul District Business Association
TBA

**Wed. October 22, *Big Medicine: York Outdoors* Film Screening and
Panel Discussion**

Oregon Black Pioneers, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and NEW
Multimedia
Tomorrow Theatre

Thu. October 23, *The Journey of York* Presentation

Hasan Davis and Oregon Black Pioneers
Alberta House

Fri. October 24, *York The Explorer* Folk Opera World Premiere

Aaron Nigel Smith and Dr. Renee Mitchell
Patricia Reser Center for the Arts

For ticketing information and more details about each
event, visit YorkFest.com.



Last Chance to Apply Grant Deadline is September 30th

There's still time to apply for a Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance grant! Applications are due at the end of this month, and award decisions will be shared by year's end. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available. If your organization would like to be considered, start your application here.

[Grant Application](#)

Of Interest

[Shep at the Bend](#)

[American 250 Prep](#)

[Ohio Riverway](#)

[Hatfield Lecture Series](#)

[Washington DAR](#)

[September 20, 1806](#)

Grants

[Avista](#)

[Musselshell Valley](#)

[National Archives](#)

[Pomeroy \(Signage\)](#)

[Dreyfus Foundation](#)

[Mellon Foundation](#)

Alliance

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[Expedition Timeline](#)

Play Lewis & Clark Trivia



On June 26, 1804, on their journey up the Missouri River, the Lewis and Clark explorers arrived at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas rivers in what is now Greater Kansas City, Mo. The expedition remained there until June 29. During that time, the captains took navigational measurements; necessary repairs were made to equipment and boats; sharp eyes kept a lookout for natives; and two soldiers were caught and disciplined for imbibing whiskey the previous evening.

What is the name of the site today where the expedition stopped?

[Submit your answer](#)

The trivia winner will receive a copy of *The Hardship and Medicine of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* by LCTA member Dr. David J. Peck. The book ingeniously combines the remarkable adventures of Lewis and Clark with David's examination of the health problems their explorers faced.

(*Psst*, if you attended this last week's Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Annual Gathering in Kansas City, you probably visited the site.)

The answer to the trivia question in our last newsletter is Scannon, the name by which the dog Seaman was incorrectly named until the 1980s. To learn about the name confusion, read the *We Proceeded On* article, "Call Him a Good Old Dog, But Don't Call Him Scannon," by Donald Jackson.

Sixteen people submitted the correct answer. When more than one person submits a correct answer, a drawing is done. Susie Taylor was the drawing winner. She will receive a copy of *Wind Hard from the West: The Lewis and Clark Expedition on the Snake and Columbia Rivers* by the late Robert Heacock, the author, and Kris Townsend, photographer.



Watch
[Only Six Days of Sun](#)

The Lewis and Clark Expedition reported very little sunshine during their 106-day winter stay at Fort Clatsop in 1805-1806, with records indicating only six days of actual sun despite many days without rain, and a period of over two weeks of nearly constant rain. The expedition suffered from the incessant wet, cold, and illnesses during this time, experiencing a consistent, uncomfortable climate typical of the region's temperate rainforest.



Watch
[Returning Home](#)

Our next chapter in our ongoing video series exploring the incredible journey of the Corps of Discovery. In this episode, we follow Lewis, Clark, and their team as they leave Fort Clatsop in March 1806 and begin their long trek back to St. Louis. Along the way, the Corps encounters dramatic landscapes, Native nations, and unexpected challenges that shape the final phase of their legendary expedition.

BIG MEDICINE YORK OUTDOORS

September 27, Richland, Washington

September 28, Missoula, Montana

September 30, St. Charles, Missouri

October 3, Hohenwald, Tennessee

October 9, Billings, Montana

October 10, Kansas City, Kansas

October 14, Great Falls, Montana

October 15, Troy, Idaho

October 16, Lewiston, Idaho

October 18, Pendleton, Oregon

October 22, Portland, Oregon

November 1, Newburgh, Indiana

November 19, Marietta, Ohio

December 4, Helena, Montana

February 28, Seaside, Oregon



New screenings being added - check the [Events Calendar](#) for updates

National Bison Day

Celebrate National Bison Day with the Big Bone Bison! Stop by the bison viewing area anytime between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on November 1 to learn about the herd, hear stories, and view artifacts with the bison program coordinator.

The Black Wolf Singers and

Okandada will be honoring the bison with hand drumming, singing, and dancing starting at noon, following the adopt-a-bison check presentation by the **Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance: Ohio River Chapter**. National Bison Day has been observed on the first Saturday of November since 2012. The National Bison Legacy Act of 2016 designated bison as our nation's national mammal due to their ecological, cultural, and historical contribution to the United States and Native American culture. This program is **FREE** and open to the public.



[Big Bone Lick](#)



On Wednesday, June 11, 2025, The [Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum](#) (CGDCM) was evacuated due to the Rowena Wildfire that closed Highway I-84 between Hood River and The Dalles. During the evacuation, all visitors, staff, and the beloved raptors safely left the grounds. The building still stands, despite fire burning all around, thanks to the heroic efforts of the emergency responders. The Museum is now re-opened. Come visit us!

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.



[NPS Free Admission](#)

Nationwide
September 27



[What is Native Art?](#)

Ilwaco, WA
through November 1



[Festival of Combustion](#)

Pittsburgh, PA
October 4

The Last Word

One of the wonderful traditions of our Annual Gatherings is the presentation of the Moulton Lecturer. The lecture is named in honor of the undaunted historian, Dr. Gary E. Moulton, whose meticulous editing resulted in *The Definitive Journals of Lewis and Clark*, a complete and authoritative account of what the explorers wrote. Moulton's work is considered one of the major scholarly achievements of the late twentieth century.



The Moulton Lecturer at this year's Annual Gathering—held this last week in Kansas City, Mo.—was Dr. Stephen Aron, the president and CEO of the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles, Calif., and emeritus professor of history at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Aron is the author of five books about America history, including the brilliant 2022 *Peace and Friendship: An Alternative History of the American West*.

To describe the book as “brilliant” (and its author, too, of course) is not an exaggeration. Dr. Aron led the Annual Gathering audience on an in-depth, highly interesting expedition into an aspect of American history that many other historians have tended to overlook—that is the “alternative history” of the American West.

“Alternative history,” by the way, should not be confused with the more common phrase “alternate history,” in which an author or movie producer concocts a fictional “what if...?” scenario based on real history. By contrast, alternative connotes a choice between two or more things or existing outside the mainstream, Dr. Aron said.

As an example, he pointed to the months spent by the expedition at Fort Clatsop in the winter of 1805-06. The common history told now about that

period of time reflects on the apparent amicable interactions between the explorers and local natives. However, the explorers were wary and kept a close eye on the natives when they came to trade at the fort. All of this occurred at a time in American history when “the Americans’ all gasping hunger for land that had turned the Ohio Valley into dark and bloody ground,” Dr. Aron noted.

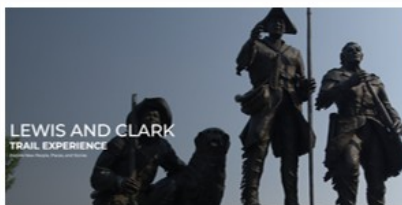
“In the end,” he continued, “the co-captains brokered no breakthroughs in intercultural relations at Fort Clatsop. The peace remained undisturbed, but no friendships were forged. Still, the absence of violence was no small accomplishment, especially compared with the abundance of bloodshed on the Virginia-Kentucky-Ohio frontier where Lewis and Clark had come of age.”

Peace and Friendship features a scintillating chapter about the expedition’s time at Fort Clatsop, as well as insightful chapters on other alternative histories. The book is an excellent read for people interested in American West history. Dr. Aron is working on an article for our scholarly quarter journal, *We Proceeded On*, and his Annual Gathering presentation will soon be available on our YouTube site.

Richard Hunt



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