



Lewis & Clark Trail News
Bringing the Trail to Life
November 29, 2025



Yucca at the Great Falls

Tony Huhn's stunning photo of Yucca plants in front of the Great Falls is our latest featured winning photo for inclusion in the 2026 LCTA Calendar

The yucca plant is common to hot, dry, gravelly habitats throughout the West. Its cream-colored, bell-shaped flowers attest to its membership in the lily family. The Dakota Indian name for it is Hupestula; Omahas and Poncas call it Duwaduwa-hi; Pawnees know it as Chakida-kahtsuor Chakila-kahtsu. Its needle-sharp leaves have given it the common name "Spanish bayonet."

Our supply of calendars is dwindling. These make wonderful gifts for the holidays and are for sale for \$20 as a fundraiser for LCTA programs. [Order yours now.](#)

Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance

Step Into History with Lewis & Clark VR!



Experience the Legendary Expedition Like Never Before

Ready for adventure? Take a journey through time with *Lewis & Clark VR*—the immersive virtual reality experience that brings the expedition's epic people, places, and events to life! Explore historic sites, interact with virtual artifacts, and uncover fascinating stories narrated by experts—all from the comfort of your classroom or home.

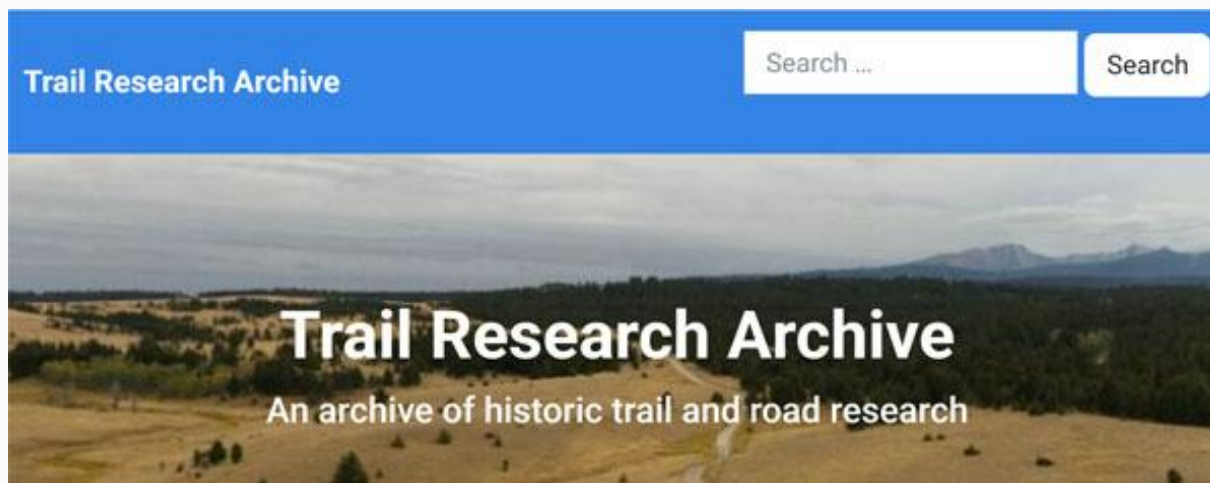
Proudly sponsored by the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance and created by the talented students at the [Shenandoah Center for Immersive Learning](#), *Lewis & Clark VR* is your ticket to a dynamic learning experience. Discover more at [SCIL](#) and download the app today at [Meta](#). Don't just learn history—live it!

The Future is Here

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Virtual Reality app is now available for download from the Meta Horizon store. Thanks to our partnership with [Shenandoah Center for Immersive Learning](#), you can experience the inside of an earth lodge, winter at Fort Mandan, and stand inside the cabin of a keelboat barge. Share the news widely!

[Meta Store](#)

A Cornucopia of Useful Trail Information



[Trailresearch.org](#), the newest addition to LCTA's stable of beneficial websites for the public, historians and researchers, was created to be an archival clearinghouse of historic trail research that locates and describes historical routes such as the [Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail](#) and the 1877 journey of the Nez Perce as the tribe evaded the U.S. military.

A user of the website will find often rare information about such western pathways

as the [Lolo Trail](#), [Oregon-California Trails](#), [Nee-Me-Poo \(Nez Perce\) National Historic Trail](#), and the less well-known [Bird-Truax Trail](#), [Carroll Trail](#), and [Mullan Road](#).

The website includes extensive information about the American West's fur-trading era and historic travels like the 1742-43 [Verendrye Exploration](#). There is also detailed information on more obscure routes like the [Hudspeth Cutoff](#) wagon road of the California Trail in Idaho and the [1848 Salt Lake Alternate](#) route used to supply goods to Mormons in Utah.

The website contains historic maps, academic articles, and an inventory and photographs of interpretive Lewis and Clark signage in the states in the western portion of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. A handy feature is a map called the Lewis and Clark Route Center Line. A user can enlarge the map to see geographic details on the travel undertaken by the explorers.

The website grew from the long-time efforts of three gentlemen with steadfast interests in history: [Steven F. Russell](#), an Iowa State University professor who spent three decades researching, locating and GPS-documenting historic trails; Ryan Cooper, a GPS expert with the National Park Service; and [Kris Townsend](#), an author and now a retired computer science/information systems college instructor.

Kris is the webmaster not only for the trails research site but also for LCTA's other three online sites: the [organization's website](#); [Lewis & Clark Trail Experience](#), which offer extensive information about travel opportunities on the Lewis and Clark Trail; and the educational site, [Discover Lewis & Clark](#), the world's foremost online information source about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. As part of his volunteer efforts, Kris also writes articles for the websites and is responsible for the vital and often complicated back-end work and coding to maintain the four websites.

Discussions among the three gentlemen about creating TrailsResearch.org began a decade ago when Ryan Cooper wanted to put a National Park Service trail inventory online. Steven Russell, who grew up in Idaho and Montana and was interested in the Mullan Road, became a strong advocate. "If we (meaning the website) were a shopping mall, Steve would be the Big Box, the anchor that made the mall successful," Kris points out.

The website's current extensive range of trail information was compiled by 11 researchers and authors. The site encourages additional contributors, including members of the public who have historic trail information. This includes old diaries kept by ancestors who traveled a trail.

"The website is meant to be an archive of different research that has gone on, lest it be forgotten, with the hope that current and future researchers will use the site to keep their research going," Kris says, "and it's also important for the public to have access to the research."

Day by Day Radio Episodes



[November 29, 1805](#)

[Lewis](#) and five men leave [Tongue Point](#) in their [Chinookan](#) canoe to find a site to build winter quarters. Meanwhile, some try to [hunt](#) while others attempt to dry leather clothes over smoky fires.

The Shore below the point at our Camp is formed of butifull pebble of various colours. I observe but fiew birds of the Small kind, great numbers of wild fowls of Various kinds
—William Clark

To listen to the Day by Day broadcasts for a certain day of the expedition, go to our educational website, [Discover Lewis & Clark](#)

Originally aired by [Yellowstone Public Radio](#) during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial observance in 2004-2006, 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.

Of Interest

[Ohio Riverway](#)

[trailresearch.org](#)

[Nature Conservancy](#)

[Steamboat Arabia Closing](#)

Grants

[Oregon Capitol History](#)

[Freedom's Frontier](#)

[Bus on Us](#)

[Operating Support \(PA\)](#)

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Play Lewis & Clark Trivia

On about the date of November 29, 1803,
Meriwether Lewis and William Clark learn



at [Fort Kaskaskia](#) that the Spanish governor of Upper Louisiana intended to _ _ _ _ _ the expedition. Click on the Submit form below and type in the five-letter word for your answer:

[Submit your answer](#)

By the way, if you have a mental *block* on the answer to this question, go to our educational website, [Discover Lewis & Clark](#), and type in November 29, 1803, to learn the answer.

The winner of this trivia contest will receive a copy of *Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes*, an intriguing book written by nine descendants of Native Americans whose lands the expedition traversed.

The question in our last newsletter was a tough one: What is today's common name for the "neck" (point) of land where the expedition camped on Nov. 27, 1805, during horrendous weather and huge waves on the lower Columbia River?

Nineteen readers submitted answers. Most answers were [Dismal Nitch](#) and [Cape Disappointment](#), and were incorrect. The accurate answer was given by six readers: [Tongue Point](#). Since more readers than one provided the correct answer, a drawing of names was done. The winner was Erica Keyser. She will receive a copy of *Wilderness Journey: The Life of William Clark* by William E. Foley.

Giving Thanks on the Trail

As we gather with family and friends this Thanksgiving, it's interesting to reflect on how the spirit of gratitude might have looked for the Lewis & Clark Expedition during the early 1800s — long before Thanksgiving became a national holiday.

Where the Corps of Discovery was in late November

- [November 24, 1803 – Grand Tower on the Mississippi River](#)

The expedition had just embarked on its epic journey up the Missouri River. The men were experiencing the challenges of going against the current on the Mississippi.

- [November 29, 1804 – Fort Mandan, below the Knife River Villages](#)

Winter had arrived along the upper Missouri. The river fell two feet, leaving the barge on dry land. In the process of removing its rigging, Sergeant Pryor dislocated his shoulder — four attempts were needed to reset it. The captains were busy discussing American trade rules with North West Company clerk François-Antoine Larocque, negotiating interactions critical to the expedition's success.

· November 28, 1805 – Tongue Point

The Corps faced fierce winds and rain, which William Clark described in his journal: “O! how disagreeable is our Situation during this dreadful weather.” Despite the challenges, the expedition pressed forward, documenting the land, people, and wildlife they encountered along the way.

Did they celebrate Thanksgiving?

The answer is likely no — not in the way we know it today. Thanksgiving as a national holiday didn’t exist during the Lewis & Clark Expedition. While the Plymouth “first Thanksgiving” of 1621 is often cited, the holiday’s modern traditions took shape much later, during the Victorian era.

It wasn’t until October 3, 1863, that President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday, aiming to “heal the wounds of the nation” during the Civil War.

Earlier presidents, like George Washington and John Adams, had issued days of thanksgiving, but Thomas Jefferson — president during the Lewis & Clark journey — refused to issue national Thanksgiving proclamations, believing it violated the separation of church and state. Jefferson’s opposition was constitutional, not personal; he did not object to private or state-level observances of gratitude.

The passing of a masterful Lewis and Clark artist

Gary Lucy, whose lifelong connection with the Missouri River evolved into famous paintings of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, passed away November 20 at age 76 in Washington, Mo. He left behind a collection of masterful paintings about American river life and historical scenes.

His most famous series of paintings focused on the expedition. The six paintings took him seven years to complete. To create the series, he conducted extensive research into the expedition’s history, uniforms, boats, and journals. His artwork has been published in LCTA’s quarterly journal, *We Proceeded On*.

The Lewis and Clark paintings have been reproduced more than 250 times worldwide, making them among the most widely distributed American historical artworks.

[Gary Lucy Tribute](#)





LCTA Oregon Chapter Holiday Dinner

Oregon Chapter members and friends will gather Saturday, December 6, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Netul Room at Fort Clatsop for the annual holiday dinner meeting.

Our main speaker will be Zachary Stocks, Executive Director of the Oregon Black Pioneers and seasonal ranger at Lewis and Clark National Historic Park (Fort Clatsop). Zachary's presentation, "York, The Man", will tell the comprehensive story of York both before and after the Expedition. In addition, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park Superintendent Jon Burpee will speak about developments at the park.

The dinner will be catered by Fulio's Restaurant in Astoria and will include wild caught salmon, elk meat and other tastes the Corps of Discovery would have preferred under better circumstances that Christmas in 1805.

Guests are welcome to attend.

Cost is \$20 payable at the door by cash, or a check made out to "Oregon Chapter, Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance."

RSVP by email: SlowPokeTours@gmail.com

BIG MEDICINE

YORK OUTDOORS

November 30, Wethersfield, Connecticut

December 4, Helena, Montana

January 22, Provo, Utah

January 27, Billings, Montana

February 26, St. Peters, Missouri

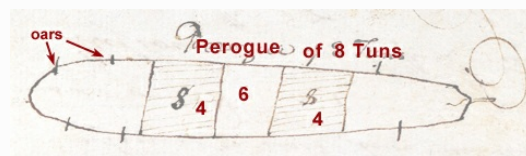
February 28, Seaside, Oregon



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

Words Worth Reviving:

The *Journals of Lewis and Clark* contain a language that feels raw, immediate, and strangely poetic. The spelling is eccentric, the phrasing inventive, and the tone often somewhere between military dispatch and wonder-filled



Perogue

The French word pirogue was used in the fur trade for a large dugout canoe or open boat. Lewis seems to have used the terms pirogue and canoe interchangeably.

diary.

September 4, 1803

*the **Perogue** was loaded as his been my practice since I left Pittsburgh, in order as much as posseble to lighten the boat, the [man or men] who conducted her called as in distress about an hour after we had got under way, we came too and waaited her coming up found she had sprung a leek and had nearly filled (Lewis)*

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](#)



[Christmas Open House](#)

Freedom, PA
December 6



[Arrival Event](#)

Hartford, IL
December 13 & 14



[La Guianne](#)

Prairie du Rocher, IL,
December 31

LCTA Members Tour Lewis and Clark Center



Members of LCTA's Missouri-Kansas Riverbend Chapter and Southern Prairie Region on November 21 toured a remarkable military education center named in honor of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Twenty-six members went on a guided tour of the state-of-the-art Lewis and Clark Center, the home of the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College, at Fort Leavenworth in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Members Jay Haden and Don McGuirk, both retired colonels, gave presentations about their time spent at the college. Meanwhile, two members, Julie Chin Bloom and Lawrence Kaspari (see photo), drove eight hours from Chicago to take the tour and dine with LCTA members in a pre-tour luncheon.



Fort Leavenworth—built in 1827, making it the oldest continuously operating military installation west of the Appalachian Mountains—annually provides advanced education and training for 1,500 officers from the Army and other U.S. military branches, as well as military officers from more than 100 countries. The officers attend 10 months of classes in the Lewis and Clark Center to prepare them for leadership command.

The vast center, which features impressive entryway displays about Lewis and Clark, both Army officers, also houses a museum that includes a gallery of images of former students who have achieved significant success. Lewis and Clark are featured in the gallery—not as students, but due to their visits to the locale as the expedition moved along the Missouri River in 1804 and 1806.

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](#)

The Last Word

As we approach the close of another remarkable season along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the people who make our mission possible: our volunteers.

Every mile of progress we make—every interpretive project, every restored landscape, every new connection with the public—begins with your dedication. This year, your commitment has taken on an even greater significance as we embark on an important new initiative to chart the future state of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance.

This work is more than a planning process. It is a moment for all of us to reimagine how the Alliance can better serve communities, support cultural tourism, elevate Trail-wide voices, and ensure that the stories of the Expedition remain relevant and accessible for generations to come. And like every meaningful chapter in our organization's history, it is our volunteers—your experience, your energy, your creativity—who are leading the way.

I am inspired by the thoughtful contributions you've already offered: your ideas on regional engagement, your insights into partnerships and programming, and your willingness to roll up your sleeves and participate in shaping what comes next. Your involvement ensures that the Alliance's future is not just strategic—it is authentic, collaborative, and grounded in the spirit of stewardship.

The future of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance is bright.

Not because of any one initiative, but because of the people behind it. With your continued support, we will emerge stronger, more unified, and better equipped to advance our mission across the entire Trail.

Thank you for all that you do—and for all that we will accomplish together.

Richard Hunt

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