



Lewis & Clark Trail News

Bringing the Trail to Life

January 10, 2026



Crimson Bluffs, Missouri River, Montana

This dreamy, calming photo, taken by Cathy Milne and one of the 14 winners in our annual calendar photo contest, helps us imagine the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition moving up the Missouri River on July 24, 1805. Meriwether Lewis noted in his journal: "...passed a remarkable bluff of a crimson coloured earth on Stard. intermixed with Stratas of black and brick red slate. According to another journal writer, Patrick Gass, Sacagawea said the "red earth" was used by "natives" for paint.

Lewis was concerned about whether the river ahead might contain obstructions, perhaps precarious waterfalls like those the expedition had encountered the previous month at Great Falls. As the Corps of Discovery passed by the Crimson Bluffs, Sacagawea assured him that the river ahead would remain navigable. She knew this territory well; it was the general region where she spent much of her young life.

Located near Townsend, Montana, the Crimson Bluffs were threatened by real estate development in the late 1990s. A preservation effort led by a chapter of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance ended in the 2002 Bureau of Land Management acquisition of a 50-acre parcel of land encompassing the bluffs. The bluffs can now be reached via a foot path from a nearby parking lot or viewed by boat from the river.

[Learn more](#)



Great Falls, Montana June 21–24

2026 ANNUAL GATHERING

Truly Magnificent, Sublimely Grand



The Portage Route Chapter welcomes you to the 2026 Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Annual Gathering, hosted June 21–24 in Great Falls, Montana—the administrative home of the Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center.

[Guide](#)

Join members and partners in one of the most historically significant locations along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Explore the sites, discover new research, and share your passion for the Lewis and Clark story.

[Registration](#)

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.

Old Stone Tavern

Pittsburgh, Pa., is an integral part of the Lewis and Clark story. It was where Meriwether Lewis had the barge built (some folks call it a "keelboat," by the way). Regardless of what it was, the boat took six weeks to construct, much longer than expected, an agonizing delay for Lewis.

While Lewis had periods of free time, he likely spent some of it at the Old Stone Tavern, built in 1782 or earlier. The tavern was a popular gathering place for

travelers, military personnel, and craftsmen and still stands today as a designated historic site.

The [Old Stone Tavern](#) sits at the base of Greentree Hill along the Catfish Indian Trail, later known as Washington Pike (Route 50). This trail was a primary route for westward travel. The tavern would have been the first stop for the wagon carrying supplies Lewis sent overland to Wheeling, West Virginia, as all waggoners stopped there to water their horses before beginning the steep, winding climb up Greentree Hill.



[Pittsburgh's Old Stone Tavern Friends Trust](#) received a \$1,212 LCTA grant award to construct and install a sign holder for a National Park Service interpretive sign that illustrates obstacles that Lewis encountered in Pittsburgh. The signage will be in a good location. Not only will it be easily accessible from the tavern, it will also stand near other historic trails frequented by walkers, bicyclists and history buffs.

[Read about Lewis' time in Pittsburgh](#)



Lolo Trail

One of the LCTA's important projects this year is helping to improve the Lolo Trail Corridor across the Bitterroot Mountains between Missoula, Montana, and Weippe, Idaho.

The grant awarded \$10,000 to the Idaho Chapter (partnering with the [Travelers Rest Connection](#)) to clear downed trees, manage overgrown

vegetation, and repair or replace critical wayfinding and interpretive signage to U.S. Forest Service standards, improving safety, accessibility, and protection of sensitive cultural and environmental sites. The initiative pairs hands-on trail work with cultural education and launches the Lolo Trail Run to attract new audiences and foster sustained volunteer engagement.

The trail, roughly about 90 miles long, was traversed by the Corps of Discovery in 1805 and 1806, but its historical significance extends beyond the expedition. The trail is a living crossroads of history and recreation. It served as the "Route to the Buffalo" for Native tribes and was part of the flight taken by Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce to elude U.S. military pursuit. The trail is shared by the Nez Perce National Historic Trail and the Lolo Motorway.

In addition to Idaho LCTA and Travelers Rest Connection, the project partnership consists of the U.S. Forest Service, [Trust for the Nez Perce Trail](#), National Park Service, [Runners Edge](#), and [Lewis and Clark Trail Adventures](#).

[Discover more about the Lolo Trail](#)

Forts of Ohio Tour

Join a unique opportunity with fellow history enthusiasts May 15–18 for a curated, expert-led motor coach tour exploring the forts of western Ohio associated with the post-Revolutionary War period and the Northwest Indian War.

The tour begins with arrival at our staging hotel near the Cincinnati airport on Friday evening, May 15.

On Saturday morning, we depart by coach, tracing General Anthony Wayne's 1794 march north. Highlights include Greenville, Ohio—where Meriwether Lewis and William Clark witnessed the signing of the Treaty of Greenville, formally ending the conflict—and a visit to Fort Recovery.



General George Rogers Clark during the Revolutionary War, before returning to our starting hotel. Every day will include additional stops of interest.

An optional extension day on Tuesday offers the opportunity to explore additional sites in the Cincinnati area via private vehicles, including the site of Fort Washington, William Henry Harrison's grave and museum, and Big Bone Lick in Union, Kentucky—the recognized birthplace of American paleontology.

The cost of the excursion is \$375, plus hotel accommodations, two meals on your own, and any expenses incurred on Tuesday. Registration and full payment are due by March 25, 2026. The tour is subject to cancellation if minimum participation is not met.

For information and to register, contact [Lou Ritten](#)



On Sunday, the itinerary includes Defiance, the Fallen Timbers Battlefield, and Fort Meigs in Perrysburg. The day concludes with an evening dinner cruise on the Maumee River.

On Monday, we follow the reverse route of William Henry Harrison's 1813 campaign, including a visit to the site of the Loramie Trading Post, destroyed by

General George Rogers Clark during the Revolutionary War, before returning to our starting hotel. Every day will include additional stops of interest.



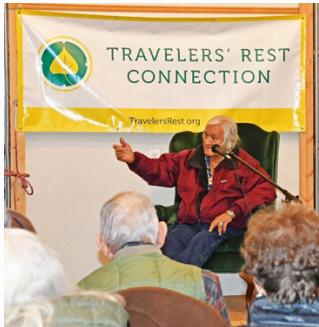


Winter Storytelling

For nearly two decades, Winter Storytelling at Travelers' Rest has been a seasonal celebration of the Séliš tradition of sharing stories during the cold winter months. Each Saturday from January 10 through March 8, gather at the Travelers' Rest State Park Visitor Center – and on Zoom – at 11 a.m. to hear stories from elders, authors, historians, and naturalists.

Admission to Winter Storytelling is \$5 per person; free for members of Travelers' Rest Connection.

Storytellers



Stephen Small Salmon



Austin Haney



Dan Hall

Seeking Lewis & Clark-Era Trades, Demonstrators, and Reenactors

September Confluence Education Day | America250



The Missouri–Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center and Fort Buford State Historic Site (North Dakota) invite Lewis & Clark–era reenactors, historical interpreters, and traditional skills demonstrators to participate in a hands-on Education Day on Friday, September 26, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT, in recognition of *America250*.

This immersive program will interpret the Missouri–Yellowstone Confluence as it existed in the early 19th century when the region served as a critical crossroads for river travel, trade, diplomacy, subsistence, and cultural exchange during the era of the Corps of Discovery and the fur trade that followed.



Programming will emphasize daily life, mobility, and practical skill sets associated with the Lewis and Clark period.

Interpretation will intentionally connect Indigenous lifeways, river-based travel, and frontier knowledge to the area's later military and settlement history. The day is designed to be informal, interactive, and educational, serving students and the general public alike. Demonstrators are encouraged to engage visitors through conversation, live demonstration, and hands-on experiences where appropriate.

Planning is currently underway, and the site team welcomes early expressions of interest. Travel assistance or stipends may be available, depending on funding and the scope of participation.

For more information or to express interest, please contact:

Stephen Ambrose Tours Lewis and Clark - Undaunted Courage



Follow the Corps of Discovery trail through Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon from Great Falls to the Pacific Ocean. Alisha Hamel, an LCTA Board member and Oregon Chapter President, leads the August 8 - 19 tour and welcomes Lewis and Clark enthusiasts and those who want to learn more on this trip of discovery. This event is offered through Stephen Ambrose Tours.

[For Information](#)

Day by Day Radio Episodes



[January 10, 1806](#)

After an early start at the [salt makers' camp](#), [Clark](#) hikes and canoes well into the dark to return to [Fort Clatsop](#). During the day, a dozen [Kathlamets](#) visit [Lewis](#) and [elk](#) become scarce.

I Set out at Sunrise with the party waded the Clat Sop river which I found to be 85 Steps across and 3 feet deep, on the opposite Side a Kil a mox Indian Came to and offered to Sell Some roots of which I did not want, he had a robe made of 2 large [Sea otter](#) Skins which I offered to purchase, but he would not part with them . . . I arrived at the Canoes about Sunset, the tides was Comeing in I thought it a favourable time to go on to the fort at which place we arrived at 10 oClock P M

—[William Clark](#)

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

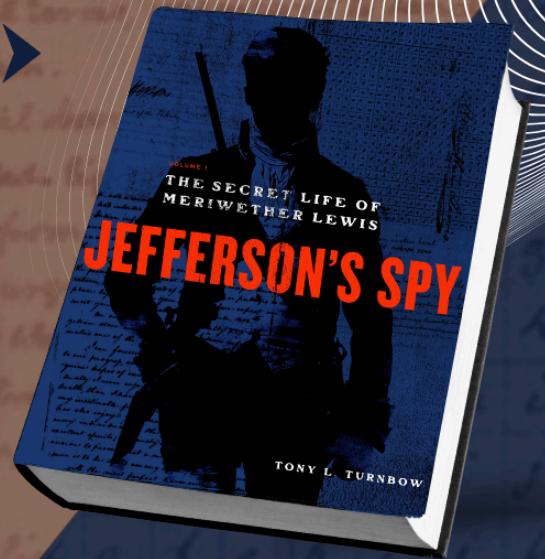
Originally aired by [Yellowstone Public Radio](#) during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial observance. These 627 radio episodes parallel the expedition dates starting May 14, 1804, and ending September 25, 1806. They are narrated by Hal Hansen, scripted by Whit Hansen and Ed Jacobson, and produced by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



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LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES



BOOK LAUNCH



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

[Lewis County Library](#)

[Of Interest](#)

[Grants](#)

[Alliance](#)

[Ohio River Way Challenge](#)

[Recreational Trails \(MO\)](#)

[Trip Inspirations](#)

[Conservation Fellowship](#)

[Idaho Preservation](#)

[Event Calendar](#)

[Voices of the River](#)

[Kentucky History Awards](#)

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Play Lewis & Clark Trivia

Well, this question will really knock your shoes off.

On August 13, 1805, Meriwether Lewis and companions John Shields, Hugh McNeal and George Drouillard made the first encounter with the Shoshone, whose leader, Cameahwait, turned out to be Sacagawea's brother.



At this first meeting, everyone sat down in a circle and smoked a pipe. The natives removed an item of clothing which, Lewis wrote in his journal, was a custom "indicative of a sacred obligation of sincerity in their profession of friendship given by the act of receiving and smoking the pipe of a stranger."

What was the item of clothing removed?

[Submit your answer](#)

Bravo for you if you know the answer. But it's not a surprise if you don't. Many Lewis and Clark history books overlook this "sacred obligation of sincerity." The best place to learn the answer is [Lewis' journal entry](#) of August 13, 1805. His 2,592 words of reporting on the encounter of two cultures were magnificent.

By the way, while you're reading the journey entry, look for the term "cap a pie." It's the arcane phrase in the "Words of the Expedition" article in this newsletter. You'll get a chuckle over what the term means.

The weeks winner will receive a book about the expedition. We've changed our policy about mailing a specific book to the winner. Now we send a list of books so the winner can choose one to his or her liking. Note: These are used books, but they are in excellent condition.

Fifteen readers submitted the correct answer to the last issue's question about the type of contest that occurred on Jan. 1, 1804, at Camp River Dubois. Answer: A shooting contest. When more than one reader submits the correct answer, a drawing is done to determine who gets the prize. The winner was Lorraine Forster.



Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance

Published by Ali Chouhdry



· 7h



Are you following along?

When we transformed our name from the *Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation* to the *Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance*, Facebook put up a bit of a fight over updating the page title to our new name—but thanks to Ali Choudry, we finally won. Check out the *LCTA Facebook* page, give us a follow, and share our content to help bring more people into the Lewis & Clark story.

[LCTA Facebook](#)

And a bonus - our Facebook Group [All Things Lewis and Clark](#) is a great forum where you can post and interact with fellow Trail enthusiasts.

All Things Lewis and Clark

Public group · 3.9K members · AI enabled



Words of the Expedition

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 diary.

Cap a pie

“Cap a pie”—Okay, now, what in the world did Meriwether Lewis mean when he wrote those words in his journal?

Put a cap on a pie? Not even close.

He penned the phrase to describe the appearance of “about 60 warriors mounted on excellent horses who came in nearly full speed.” This was August 13, 1805, when Lewis and the Shoshones first encountered each other. “...these men had come out armed cap a pie for action expecting to meet with their enemies,” Lewis wrote.

“Cap a pie” was the term Lewis used to describe how the natives were decked out in warrior garb, ready for battle. It’s a French phrase derived from Latin, and it is surely seldom used today, if ever, in the United States. It means someone decked out from head to foot—like knights in full armor.



The Shoshone encounter, by the way, was most fortuitous. It turned out that the leader was the “principal chief Ca-me-âh-wait,” who was Sacagawea’s brother. The Shoshone supplied horses used by the expedition to cross the Rocky Mountains.

[Read the full journal entry](#) of August 13, 1805. It offers an interesting view of the meeting of two cultures. And [learn more](#) about the Shoshone and Sacagawea’s tribal origins.

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](#)



[Bats](#)
Columbia, MO
January 13



[Bird Friendly Iowa](#)
Sioux City, IA
January 18



[Big Medicine](#)
Provo, UT
January 22

Southern Prairie and Riverbend Chapter Annual Meeting

Catch up with your Lewis and Clark friends and make new ones at the annual meeting of the Missouri-Kansas Riverbend Chapter and the Southern Prairie

Region of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance. You'll enjoy the speaker...and, of course, the food!

Join trail enthusiasts and LCTA members on February 7, 11:30 a.m. at the fabulous Cascone's Restaurant, 3733 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, Mo. The luncheon cost is \$30 a person. Contact Yvonne Kean - yjkean@gmail.com to register a

After the business portion of our gathering, LCTA Member Dennis Figg will deliver an informative presentation on a topic that has long intrigued him: the Osage Nation and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The land of his small farm was in the Osage Territory when the Lewis and Clark explorers passed by while traveling the Missouri River.

In addition to his interest in the Osage, Dennis, a retired conservation biologist, has extensive knowledge of the plants and animals of the Great Plains, the Ozark Highlands, and the wetlands of the Missouri River Valley. Over the years, he has given hundreds of talks about wildlife diversity conservation to audiences across the nation. He has published both popular and technical articles in conservation journals and magazines and was a regular contributor to the Missouri Conservationist.



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

The tradition of New Year's resolutions goes back over 4,000 years, from Babylonian promises to the gods to Roman vows to Janus, the god of beginnings. Not personal resolutions—but the start of 2026 is the perfect time to spotlight our ten key initiatives. Ambitious and meaningful, each focuses our energy on fulfilling LCTA's mission as "keepers of the story and stewards of the Trail."

1. The LCTA **Lolo Trail Project** is a place-based stewardship and engagement initiative along the historic Lolo Trail in northern Idaho and western Montana, integrating trail maintenance, interpretation, volunteerism, and tribal partnerships. It will help to build local community and chapter capacity, deliver trail stewardship, attract diverse funding, and serve as a replicable model for member recruitment and local vitalization.

2. The LCTA **Virtual Reality Project** expands access to the Lewis and Clark Trail through immersive, culturally informed VR experiences. It attracts new audiences, enhances education, supports partnerships and revenue, and complements on-site engagement. Our Version 1.0 is live and available for [download](#) thanks to our partnership with Shenandoah University Center for Immersive Learning. Version 2.0 development has grant funding secured and will capture additional content during summer 2026 to expand and deepen the offering.

3. LCTA is continually seeking **grant funding** to advance mission-driven projects while strengthening financial sustainability through indirect cost recovery. Focused on stewardship, technology, and engagement initiatives, grants catalyze impact and revenue. 2026 awarded grants are in place to fund and advance, Digital Advertising, Lolo Trail Project, Web Hosting and Content Development, and Virtual Reality projects.

4. LCTA's **digital strategy**, anchored by [Discover Lewis & Clark](#) and the [Lewis and Clark Trail Experience](#), strengthens engagement, authority, and revenue. Robust platforms, immersive content, and enhanced storytelling meet the audience "where they are", expand reach, and build Alliance brand awareness.

5. LCTA through our Digital Steering Committee is developing new communication methods and technology including **Substack**, a digital publishing platform, which can expand our digital outreach through heritage tourism and historical education content. Watch for a future invitation to subscribe.

6. **Trail News** is LCTA's biweekly digital newsletter, delivering [curated Trail updates](#) that strengthen engagement, credibility, and brand recognition. Starting twelve months ago with this new concept, we have grown to over 3,500 subscribers.

7. **The William P. Sherman Library and Archives** preserve essential Lewis and Clark Trail scholarship, strengthening LCTA's credibility and educational mission. The LCTA Library Committee is seeking funding from a proposed assessment grant which will guide strategic planning to expand research and public engagement through digital and on-site access.

8. **The Big Medicine** film series expands LCTA's Trail storytelling including *York Outdoors* and the proposed feature *Big Medicine: Voices*. This initiative enhances brand visibility, strengthens interpretive authority, and creates sponsorship, partnership, and public engagement opportunities. Award of grant opportunities will be required for production and distribution of *Big Medicine: Voices*.

9. LCTA partners with the **National Park Service** to enhance interpretation, education, digital platforms, and public engagement. Strengthening this

collaboration amplifies impact, credibility, and visibility, enabling co-branded initiatives and funding opportunities.

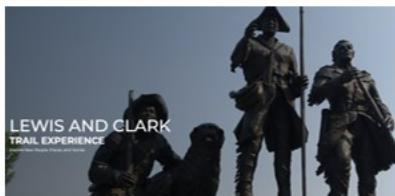
10. LCTA is forging stronger relationships across [the Trail network](#), including federal agencies, states, and interpretive centers, to reestablish its role as a central hub for Trail collaboration. Strong connections enable stewardship, resource sharing, and engagement.

Richard Hunt

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TRAVEL

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