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Lewis & Clark Trail News
Bringing the Trail to Life
June 13, 2026



Harpers Ferry © 2026 Dr. Rick Chromey

"My detention at Harper's Ferry was unavoidable for one month, a period much greater than could reasonably have been calculated on; my greatest difficulty was the frame of the canoe, which could not be completed without my personal attention to such portions of it as would enable the workmen to understand the design perfectly. –My Rifles, Tomahawks & knives are already in a state of forwardness that leaves me little doubt of their being in readiness in due time. "

Meriwether Lewis, April 20, 1803

Registration is still available
2026 Annual Gathering - Great Falls
June 21 - 24

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

Explore the updated [Meeting Guide](#)

Register Today

Annual Gathering Sponsors



Summer of VR - Lewis and Clark Virtual Reality

The Summer of VR tour has officially reached the Pacific.

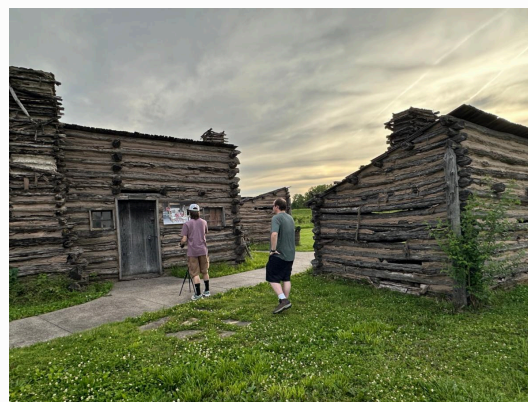
Over the course of an ambitious cross-country journey, students and faculty from [Shenandoah University](#) traveled from Winchester, Virginia, to Seaside, Oregon, retracing the path of discovery that connected the nation more than two centuries ago. Supported by the Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance and state humanities grants from Missouri, Iowa, and Idaho, the team made more than 50 stops along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, revisiting familiar locations while forging new partnerships and uncovering new stories.

Unlike the Corps of Discovery, the team reported no encounters with stranded whales, and, to our knowledge, no salt was boiled along the way. Yet the spirit of exploration remained very much alive as students documented landscapes, interviewed historians and community members, captured immersive footage, and gathered digital content designed to bring the Trail experience to audiences in entirely new ways.

The expedition marks a major milestone in the ongoing development of the Lewis and Clark Virtual Reality project. Throughout the summer and fall semesters, the Shenandoah University team will work to integrate newly collected content into the Lewis and Clark VR application, available on the [Meta Horizon Store](#), and the videos available on the LCTA [YouTube Channel](#). The expanded experience allows users to virtually visit key sites along the Trail, hear local stories, and gain a deeper understanding of the people, places, and cultures that shaped the journey.



Departing Winchester Virginia



Camp Dubois



Travelers Rest

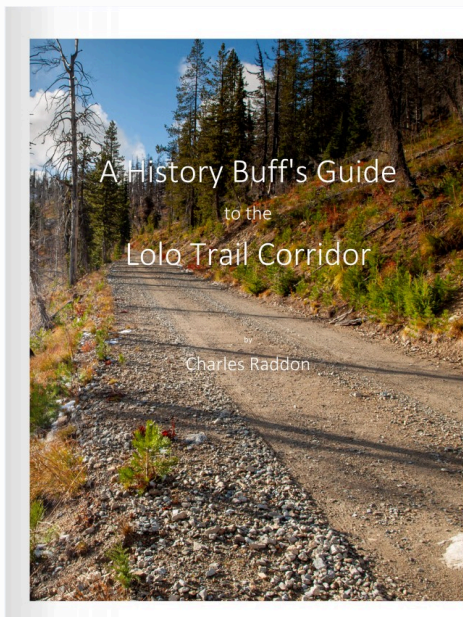


Ocean in View, Seaside, Oregon

The project has already produced significant results. In addition to the virtual reality application, the initiative created a 15-part [video series](#) featuring important stories and voices from across the Trail. Together, these digital resources are helping to make Lewis and Clark history more accessible, engaging, and relevant to new audiences.

As the Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance continues to explore innovative ways to connect people with the Trail, the Summer of VR project demonstrates how emerging technologies can complement traditional interpretation, bringing the landscapes, stories, and experiences of the Corps of Discovery to life for the next generation of explorers.

Exploring the Lolo Corridor: A New Resource for Trail Travelers



For centuries, the mountain route now known as the Lolo Trail served as a vital pathway between worlds. Long before maps, highways, or national historic trails, Indigenous peoples traveled these ridges and valleys between the buffalo-rich plains east of the Rockies and the salmon-filled rivers of the Columbia Basin. Often described as the "Road to the Buffalo" and the "Road to the Salmon," this corridor connected communities, cultures, and trade networks across the Northern Rockies.

Now, a new publication ["A History Buffs Guide to the Lolo Trail Corridor"](#) written by LCTA member and retired U.S. Forest Service manager Chuck Raddon, edited by LCTA

volunteer webmaster Kris Townsend, offers readers an opportunity to explore this remarkable landscape. Prepared for heritage travelers, amateur historians, and outdoor enthusiasts, the guide highlights historic sites located along the National Forest portions of the Lolo Corridor and provides information about their significance.

The guide explores both the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the [Nee-Me-Poo National Historic Trail](#), including the Corps of Discovery's difficult crossings of the Bitterroot Mountains in 1805 and 1806. Yet the story extends far beyond Lewis and Clark. At its heart are the Nimípuu (Nez Perce) and Salish people, whose ancestors established and maintained these routes for generations. This guide is an invitation to discover one of the most historically significant travel corridors in the American West.

All Things Digital:

National Park Service Awards Cooperative Agreement Funding

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance is pleased to announce the award of a \$49,000 cooperative agreement from the National Park Service to support and strengthen the organization's growing portfolio of digital programs.

The funding reflects the National Park Service's continued confidence in the Alliance's commitment to providing high-quality, accessible Lewis and Clark content to audiences across the nation. Special thanks go to Neal Bedlan and Ashley Danielson for their partnership and support in helping make this award possible.



Over the past several years, the Alliance has made significant investments in digital engagement, expanding opportunities for the public to discover, explore, and learn about the Lewis and Clark story. This funding will help offset costs associated with hosting and maintaining key platforms, including Discover Lewis and Clark, the Lewis and Clark Trail Experience, and TrailResearch, while ensuring these resources remain available to travelers, researchers, educators, and history enthusiasts.

The award will also support the development of an exciting new digital initiative that will be unveiled in July. While details remain under wraps for now, the new offering promises to further enhance the ways people can connect with the history, places, and stories of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

As the Alliance continues to expand its digital reach, partnerships with the National Park Service remain essential to ensuring that the story of the Expedition is preserved, interpreted, and shared with future generations. We look forward to sharing more details about this new initiative in the coming weeks.

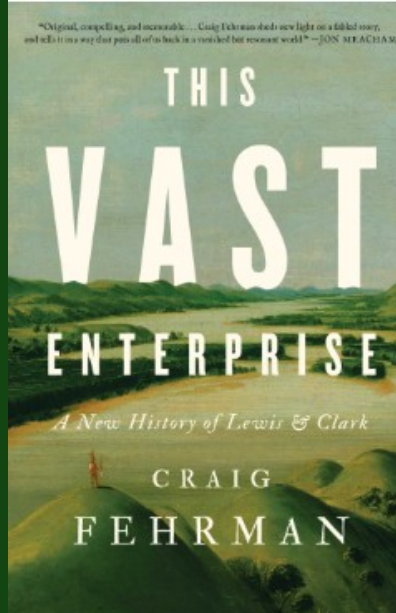
LCTA Zoomcast Library

[William Clark](#)

[John Ordway](#)

“Do we really need another book about the Lewis and Clark expedition? Over the past two centuries, hundreds of titles have charted the journey. And yet, after reading “This Vast Enterprise,” by Craig Fehrman, my answer is an emphatic yes.” *New York Times*

[Bookshop.org](#)



Substack

Lewis & Clark Stories Find a Growing Audience

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance's Substack publications continue to connect readers with the people, places, and stories of the Expedition. Together, Real Stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail and Undaunted Travel have attracted more than 420 subscribers, while their articles have been read, shared, and engaged with over 9,000 times since the project was launched in March.

Both publications are free to read and subscribe to, offering compelling, well-researched storytelling from across the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. From little-known historical accounts and remarkable landscapes to travel inspiration and cultural perspectives, each publication helps bring the Trail's rich heritage to life for modern audiences.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to explore [Real Stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail](#) and [Undaunted Travel](#), subscribe to receive future articles, and share your favorite stories with friends, family, and fellow Trail enthusiasts. Every new reader helps expand awareness and appreciation of the Lewis and Clark story.

Listening to the Trail, Day by Day Audio Episodes

LEWISCLARKTRAILSTORIES.SUBSTACK.COM

Real Stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail

Day by Day with Lewis & Clark



Long before podcasting became the norm, Yellowstone Public Radio quietly did something remarkable and ahead of its time. Something that still endures today.

As the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance heads to Great Falls, Mont., for its Annual Gathering, we thought it would be timely and altogether appropriate to remember and appreciate a project from the trail's bicentennial: the day-by-day radio episodes that still live on today—available to the public on the Alliance's Discover Lewis & Clark website.

During the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial (2004–2006), the station produced 627 short radio vignettes that followed the Corps of Discovery day by day, from 14 May 1804 to 25 September 1806. [Read the Article](#)

How to Follow the 1806 Yellowstone Return Route of William Clark

UNDAUNTEDTRAVEL.SUBSTACK.COM

Undaunted Travel



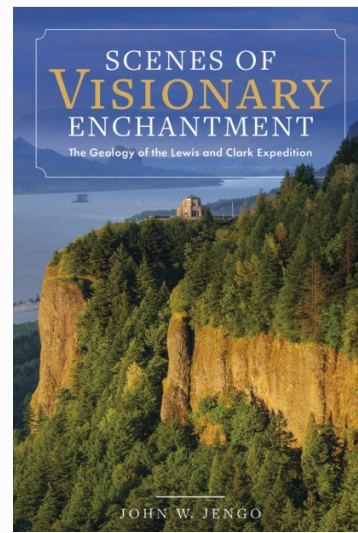
On July 3, 1806, at Travelers' Rest near present-day Missoula, Montana, the Corps of Discovery reached one of the most consequential moments of the expedition. After nearly two years of exploration, hardship, diplomacy, and discovery, Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark divided their forces to explore additional territory before returning home.

More than 220 years later, the mosquitoes remain undaunted in their commitment to authenticity, offering modern travelers a small but memorable glimpse of the misery that plagued the Corps of Discovery during river journeys. [Read the Article](#)

John Jengo - The Geology of Lewis and Clark

Professional geologist and Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance member John Jengo has spent more than 30 years studying the geology encountered by the Corps of Discovery. Be sure to look for his new book, *Scenes of Visionary Enchantment*, and, if you're attending the Annual Gathering in Great Falls, don't miss the opportunity to hear John share his insights in person.

As a preview—the recording of John's recent LCTA Zoomcast presentation is now available on the Alliance YouTube channel.



[Watch the Zoomcast](#)

2026 Photo Contest

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance 2026 Photo Contest is now open to submit your fantastic photos for judging and winners to be included in our annual calendar.

In 2024 Michelle Schwartz won with this *Headwaters of the Missouri* landscape. Entries will be accepted through August 1, 2026.



[Enter the Contest](#)

Future State Initiative Reaches Major Milestone

Over the past several months, volunteers, board members, and stakeholders from across the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance have participated in the Future State Initiative, an effort designed to examine the organization's long-term sustainability, growth opportunities, and strategic direction.

We are pleased to report that Phase 1 of this important work has now been completed. The three Future State Workgroups have finalized their reports and recommendations following a series of discussions focused on organizational development, public engagement, membership growth, capacity building, and the future role of the Alliance.

The reports and a consolidated summary of recommendations will be presented to the LCTA Board of Directors for review and discussion during its June 21, 2026, meeting in Great Falls, Montana. The Board will consider the findings and recommendations as it evaluates potential pathways forward for the organization.

The completion of the workgroup phase represents an important milestone in a process intended to help position the Alliance for long-term success and

greater impact across the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all who contributed their time, expertise, and thoughtful perspectives throughout this effort. The recommendations reflect many hours of discussion and collaboration by individuals who care deeply about the future of the Alliance and the Trail. Following the Board's review and consideration of the reports, we will share additional information regarding any approved priorities, initiatives, or next steps that emerge from this process.

-- Pat Traffas, Richard Welch, Yvonne Kean
Future State Workgroup Leaders



Painting created by Split Rock Studios, Sioux City, Iowa. Original in the collection of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation
photographed by Kristopher K. Townsend.

Day by Day Radio Episodes

[Lewis](#) reaches the [Grand Fall of Missouri](#) and marvels at its 'sublimely grand spectacle'. Several miles downriver, [Clark](#) gives [Sacaqawea](#) a dose of salts as a purgative and the [enlisted men](#) move the [boats](#) 13 miles up the river.

[June 13, 1805](#)

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.

Play Lewis & Clark Trivia



In mid-June 1805, the Lewis and Clark Expedition reached the Great Falls of the Missouri River, at today's Great Falls, Montana. The explorers realized they needed to portage their dugout canoes and equipment around the five waterfalls, a tremendously difficult task.

Prior to the beginning of the portage, William Clark reconnoitered the area and staked out an overland route that minimized steep climbs by remaining mostly on level ground. The route also cut diagonally across a bend in the river.

It was physically tough going, and the explorers were constantly plagued by prickly pear cactus needles piecing their thin moccasins and indentations made by bison hooves that had hardened the soil, causing the men's feet to ache. Regardless, day after day, they covered mile after mile, making four round trips over 31 days.

About how many miles was the route one way?

[Submit your answer](#)

The winner of this trivia game will be emailed a list of Lewis and Clark books to choose one book for the prize. All books are used but in good condition.

The trivia question in the last Trail News asked about Meriwether Lewis's "experiment"—what was it? It was a portable iron-framed boat. Unfortunately, the experiment did not work.

Twelve readers answered correctly. When more than one reader provides the correct answer, a drawing is done. Kay Williams was the winner.

[Discover more about Lewis's "experiment."](#)

Arwork: Principal Cascade of the Missouri. Courtesy of Watzek Library, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon. Engraved from a drawing by [John James Barralet](#) (1807). Published on the [Discover Lewis & Clark website](#).

Racing the Missouri:

Filmmakers Capture a Modern Journey Down Lewis and Clark's River

This summer, a team of [four paddlers](#) is attempting something extraordinary: a record-breaking, human-powered journey down the entire 2,341-mile Missouri River.

Launching from the Missouri River Headwaters near Three Forks, Montana, the team is seeking to surpass the long-standing speed record established in 1980 by legendary paddlers Verlen Kruger and Steve Landick. To do so, they must complete the journey in less than 33 days, 18 hours, and 45 minutes.

For Lewis and Clark enthusiasts, the challenge offers an intriguing historical comparison. In [July 1806](#), Sgt. John Ordway and 9 members of the Corps of Discovery departed the Missouri Headwaters and traveled downstream to St. Louis in approximately 73 days. While separated by more than two centuries, both journeys share the same river corridor and highlight the enduring significance of the Missouri River as one of North America's great transportation routes.

But this effort is about more than speed.

The Missouri River connects landscapes, communities, cultures, and stories across the heart of the continent. From the Rocky Mountains of Montana to the confluence near St. Louis, it remains one of America's defining waterways. Capturing that story is the mission of filmmakers Amy Robin and Alex Maier of [Wilderness Mindset](#), who are documenting the expedition from beginning to end.

As they follow the paddlers downstream, Alex and Amy are recording not only the physical challenge of the record attempt, but also the people, places, history, and character of the Missouri River itself. Their work will become a feature-length documentary, streaming content, educational programming, and presentations that will help introduce new audiences to the river and the communities connected to it.

Readers may already be familiar with Wilderness Mindset's previous work documenting long-distance adventures and river expeditions. Their productions include *Mississippi Speed Record: An Epic Adventure*, *GREYBEARD: The Man, The Myth, The Mississippi*, *Figure It Out: On The Hayduke Trail*, and several other films focused on exploration, endurance, and the outdoors.

As an independent production company, Wilderness Mindset is investing significant time and resources into documenting this journey. To help support the project, the Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance is encouraging a grassroots "loaves and fishes"

MISSOURI RIVER SPEED RECORD

2,341 miles from Three Forks to St. Louis

JUNE 2026



fundraising effort with a goal of raising at least \$5,000 through many small contributions.

Supporters can help by sharing information about the project with friends, family, paddlers, river advocates, historical organizations, and communities along the Missouri River corridor. The expedition itself will last only a few weeks. The story it produces has the potential to inspire audiences for years to come.

To learn more about the project, watch the trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hIEWperigU>

To support the documentary project:

Wilderness Mindset

125 N. 4th Street

Columbus, MT 59019

Phone: (262) 719-9518

Email: info@WildernessMindset.com

Website: www.WildernessMindset.com

No gift is too small. Every contribution helps. To donate click here

<https://wildernessmindset.com/missouri-river-speed-record/>

Donations may be made via [PayPal](#), [Venmo](#), or by check. Supporters will be recognized in the film credits unless they request to remain anonymous.

Words of the Expedition

Repining



That's a word seldom used in today's vocabulary. Its origin is believed to be a combination of Germanic and English words that meshed together in the 1500s to mean discontent, complaining or expressing dissatisfaction. William Shakespeare used it in his plays to demonstrate resentful murmuring, often tied to political frustration, wounded pride or thwarted ambition.

By Lewis and Clark's time, repining meant something closer to inward discontent, particularly under hardship. The word appeared in a Meriwether Lewis journal entry in mid-June 1805, as the expedition was about to begin its physically exhausting portage around the Great Falls of the Missouri River, near today's Great Falls, Montana.

"...we all believe," Lewis wrote, "that we are about to enter on the most perilous and difficult part of our Voyage, yet I See no one repining; all appear ready to meet those difficulties which await us with resolution and becoming fortitude."

[Learn about the Great Falls portage](#)



Teacher Workshop

The Lewis and Clark Fort Clatsop Teacher Workshop is designed for educators seeking creative ways to bring history to life for their students. Hosted at historic Fort Clatsop, one of the most significant sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, this in-person

professional development opportunity provides practical teaching tools, historical resources, and collaborative learning experiences that can be immediately applied in the classroom.

Participants will earn five professional development credit hours and enjoy a complimentary lunch while exploring innovative approaches to teaching American history, Indigenous history, geography, exploration, and cultural heritage.

Whether you teach elementary, middle school, high school, or informal education programs, this workshop will provide valuable resources and strategies to help students connect with the story of the Corps of Discovery and the people, places, and cultures that shaped the American West.

October 24 at 9 a.m. Fort Clatsop Visitor Center, Astoria, Oregon

[Registration](#)

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



[Longest Dam Race](#)
Fort Peck, MT



[Keelboat Adventure](#)
Atchison, KS



[L&C Encampment](#)
Naselle, WA

Where on the Trail?

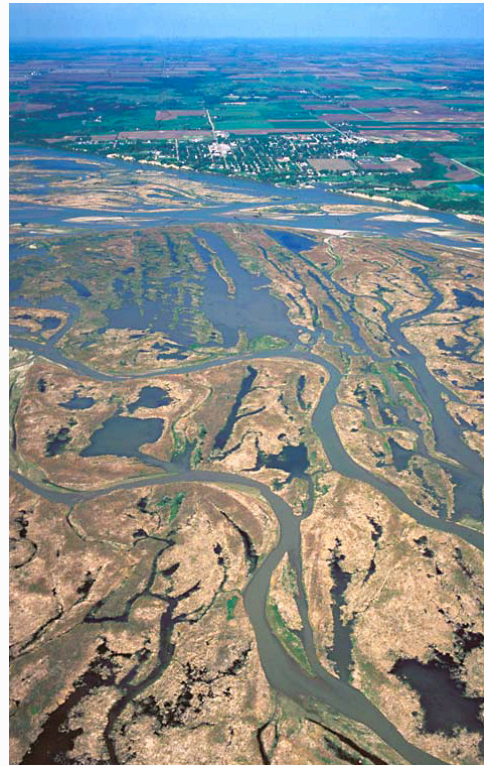
Our newest fun feature invites you to guess the location along the Trail.

[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](#)



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.



Lewis & Clark Trail News
Bringing the Trail to Life



Lewis & Clark
Trail Experience

The Last Word

Summer has arrived, and with it comes one of the busiest and most rewarding seasons along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

Across the Trail, opportunities abound to engage with the landscapes, stories, and communities that make this national treasure so meaningful. Whether you are joining one of our [Lolo Trail work outings](#), attending the [Annual Gathering](#) in Great Falls, or participating in programs offered by our many [interpretive and community partners](#), there has never been a better time to get outside, explore, and learn.

I encourage you to regularly visit the [Lewis and Clark Trail Experience Events Calendar](#) to discover activities taking place throughout the Trail corridor. From guided walks and educational programs to volunteer projects and community celebrations, the calendar continues to grow as more organizations share opportunities to connect with our shared heritage. While you're there, take time to explore the [Trip Inspirations](#) section and begin planning your next Trail adventure.

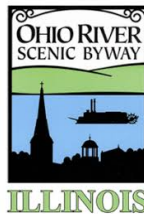
As America 250 commemorations continue across the nation, the [Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail](#) offers a unique lens through which to experience

the American story. Stretching nearly 4,900 miles through remarkable landscapes and diverse communities, the Trail invites us to reflect on our past while discovering the people and places that continue to shape its future.

This summer, I hope you'll answer that invitation. Get out on the Trail. Visit somewhere new. Attend an event. Meet fellow travelers and history enthusiasts. Every mile traveled and every story shared helps keep the Lewis and Clark legacy vibrant for future generations.

Richard Hunt

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