



Lewis & Clark Trail News
Bringing the Trail to Life
August 8, 2026



These bighorn sheep standing quietly in the wilderness offer a living connection to one of the rarest surviving artifacts from the Lewis and Clark Expedition. During the journey, William Clark collected a bighorn sheep horn and later gave it to his sister, Fanny Clark. The horn is in the collection of the Filson Historical Society in Louisville.

Photo courtesy of Upper Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center

Photo Contest Final Call

There's still time to share your favorite moments from the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail!

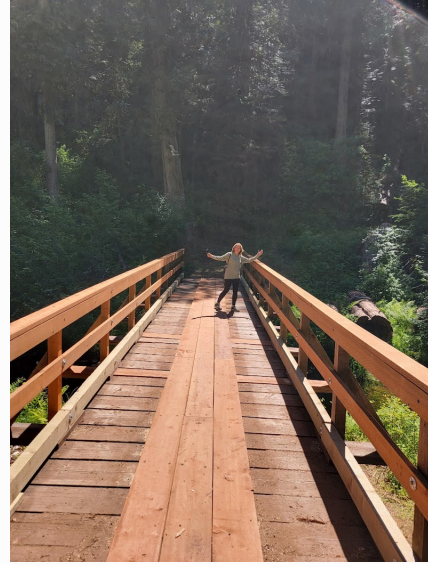
The deadline for the 2026 Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Photo Contest has been extended to August 20, 2026, giving you additional time to submit your best photographs from your travels and adventures along the Trail.

Winning entries will be featured in the 2027 Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance Calendar, showcasing the remarkable landscapes, historic sites, wildlife, and experiences that

make the Trail such a special place. It's an opportunity to share your perspective with thousands of fellow members, travelers, and history enthusiasts throughout the coming year.

Whether you've captured a breathtaking sunrise at an interpretive site, a quiet moment on a historic trail, vibrant wildlife, or the beauty of the rivers and landscapes that shaped the Expedition's journey, we'd love to see your work.

Don't miss your [chance to participate!](#)



A Trail Tradition Heads to the Nation's Capital



Each year, the USDA Forest Service selects a tree from one of America's 154 national forests to serve as the U.S. Capital Christmas Tree. Known as "The People's Tree," it stands on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capital throughout the holiday season as a symbol of the nation's public lands and the people who care for them.

In 2026, that honor belongs to Idaho's **Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests**, marking the first time this remarkable forest has provided the Capital Christmas Tree. For those who know and love the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, it is especially meaningful. These forests encompass landscapes rich in Trail history, including portions of the historic Lolo Trail traveled by the Corps of Discovery and stewarded today by dedicated volunteers.

The Capital Christmas Tree is accompanied by dozens of smaller companion trees, each adorned with handcrafted ornaments and tree skirts created by artisans and volunteers from across the state. Among them is a very special contribution from Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance member **Cathy Jo Zeller** of Lewiston, Idaho.

Cathy and her husband, John, recently joined the LCTA family through the **Lolo Reconnected** volunteer trail restoration project. John attended the first work session at Musselshell Meadows and enjoyed the experience so much that he returned for the Saddle Camp work party—this time bringing Cathy along to share in the adventure.

Inspired by their experience, Cathy created a beautiful tree skirt for one of the companion trees using commemorative **Lolo Reconnected** and **National Trails System 50th Anniversary** bandanas. Her handmade piece is more than a holiday decoration—it tells the story of volunteers who are helping preserve one of America's most significant historic trails for future generations.

We are honored that a small piece of the Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance will be part of this year's Capital Christmas Tree display, representing not only our organization but also the thousands of volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to caring for our nation's historic places.

Thank you, Cathy, for sharing your creativity, and thank you to both Cathy and John for your enthusiasm, your stewardship, and your commitment to keeping the spirit of the Trail alive. As visitors gather around the Capital Christmas Tree this holiday season, they'll also be celebrating the generosity and craftsmanship of volunteers like you.

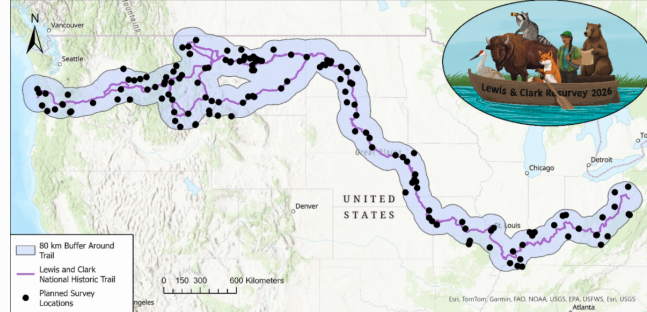


Lewis and Clark Resurvey 2026 Progress Report

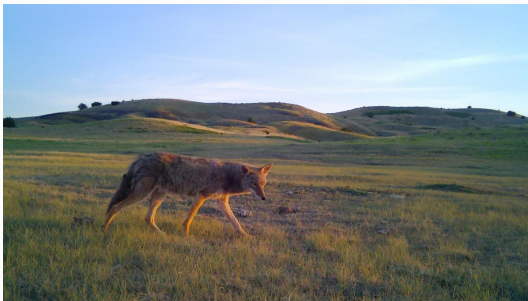
In April of 2026, wildlife researchers at the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute launched their Lewis and Clark Resurvey project to

complete a biological resurvey of the historic expedition trail using motion-triggered cameras.

This survey is part of Smithsonian's *Our Shared Future: 250* initiative commemorating the nation's 250th anniversary. Through collaborations with over 100 partners along the trail, the research team is collecting wildlife data from 150 survey sites within 80 km of the congressionally designated trail, extending westward from Pennsylvania to Oregon. Once data collection is over, they will compare the modern data against historical wildlife observations extracted from the expedition journals. You can read more about the project on the National Zoo's [Lewis and Clark Resurvey webpage](#).



Now that the survey is more than halfway complete, with data collection continuing through October, the team is excited to provide a progress report. As of August 5th, their collaborators have collected data from 59 survey sites in 15 states. In total, they have captured over 49,000 observations of animals at more than 600 distinct camera locations. These include iconic western species, such as bison, mountain lions, coyotes, and black bears, in many of the same places they were described by members of the Corps of Discovery. The research team looks forward to gathering more incredible photos of the diverse North American species that have inspired generations.



Submitted trail camera images

Contact Project Coordinator Brigit Rooney (rooneybr@si.edu) for additional information.

Lewis & Clark Trail Resurvey Zoomcast
August 23, 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time



In conjunction with the Trail Resurvey project, join us for an upcoming Zoomcast featuring Brigit Rooney of the Smithsonian Institution, who will share insights from the recently completed [Lewis & Clark Trail Resurvey Project](#).

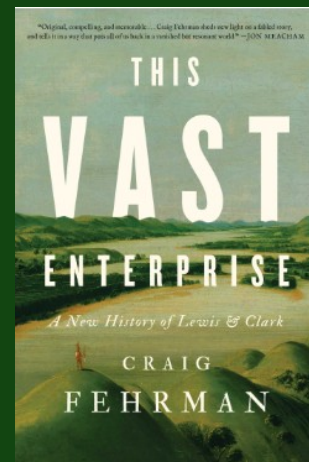
A Zoom link will be emailed to all registered participants prior to the event. Event will be live: 5 p.m. Eastern, 4 p.m. Central, 3 p.m. Mountain, 2 p.m. Pacific.

[Register Here](#)

This Vast Enterprise

Watch the Video Interviews on
[William Clark](#)
[John Ordway](#)

[Bookshop.org](#)



Meet Craig Fehrman at one of these Book Festival Events

August 25 / Westfield, IN: Westfield Washington Public Library. **Free** — [details here](#).

September 1 / Bloomington, IN: Morgenstern Books. **Free** — [details here](#).

September 25–27 / Harbor Springs, MI: Harbor Springs Festival of the Book. [Register here](#).

October 3 / Norfolk, CT: Haystack Book Festival. **Free** — [register here](#).

October 19 / Mt. Horeb, WI: Mount Horeb Public Library. Free — details to come.

October 20 / Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Public Library. **Free** — [register here](#).

November 10 / St. Charles, MO: St. Charles Public Library. Free — details to come.

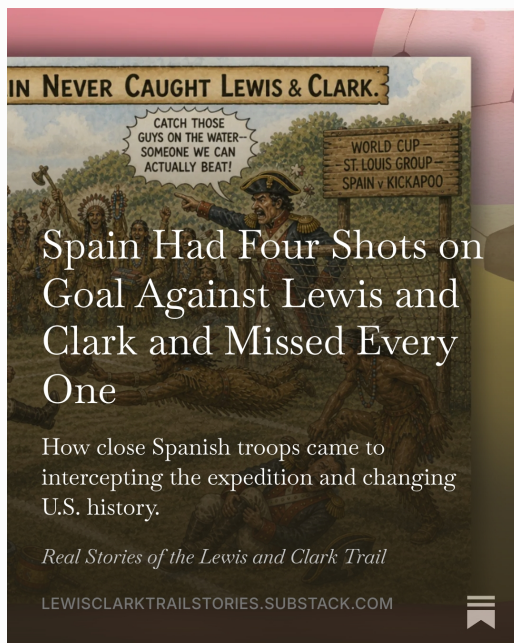
April 13, 2027 / Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society. [Register here](#).

April 14, 2027 / Seattle, WA: Seattle Public Library. Free — details to come.

April 15, 2027 / Boise, ID: Boise State university. **Free** — [register here](#).

New Lewis & Clark Substack Articles

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.



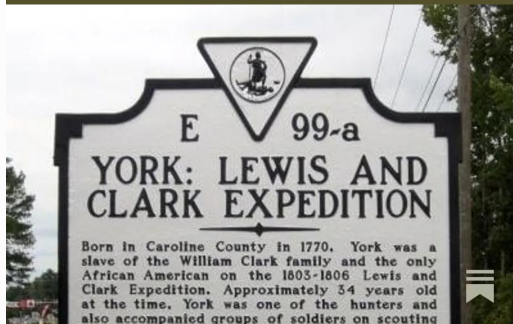
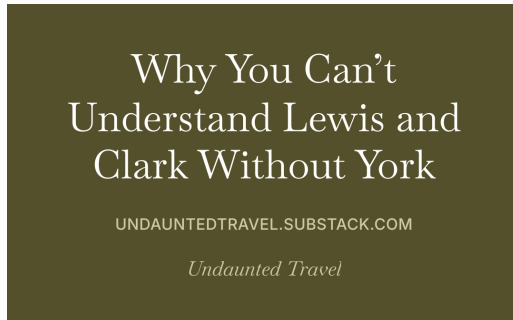
Spain recently showed the world how to win big: the 2026 World Cup Championship.



Who was the mystery man who built the expedition's big boat?

But two centuries ago, Spanish officials failed—over and again—to win a very different game: stopping Thomas Jefferson's semi-secret expedition from crossing what they saw as their own turf.

[Read the Article](#)



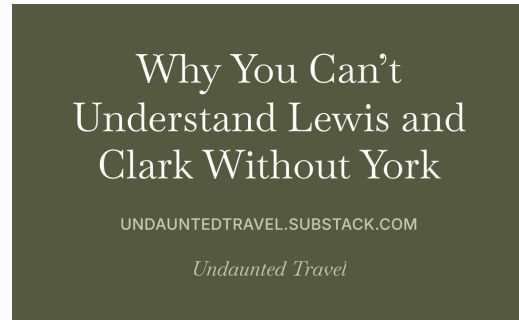
Part 1:

Long before York set out with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, he spent three decades following William Clark across a changing America—not as a volunteer, but as an enslaved man whose life was largely determined by the choices of others.

[Read the Article](#)

Find out in this article about a very human drama: a frontier boat-builder with his own priorities and exasperating habits, and a hyperfocused expedition leader who needed a vessel yesterday.

[Read the Article](#)



Part 2:

Take an expedition into the lives of two teenagers: William Clark, son of one of Virginia's renowned families; and York, who grew up beside him. Follow them to Kentucky, the edge of a restless frontier where they learned lessons that no classroom could teach.

[Read the article](#)

Lolo Sign Maintenance Continues

Even after the organized voluntourism weekends concluded, the dedicated members of the Idaho Chapter of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance continue their stewardship of the Lolo Trail.

Here, volunteers are rebuilding and replacing damaged interpretive panels along the Lolo Motorway, ensuring that visitors can better understand and experience this remarkable historic corridor.



Play Lewis & Clark Trivia

On August 5, 1806, as the expedition was heading home on the Missouri River, approaching present Oswego, Missouri, the brothers Reuben and Joseph Field killed a bear that, according to Meriwether Lewis' journal, "measured nine feet from the extremity of the nose to that of his tail."

What kind of bear was it?

1. American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*).
2. Asiatic Black Bear (*Ursus thibetanus*).
3. Gummy bear (*Feedmelam hungeratus*).
4. Spectacled Bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*).
5. Grizzly (*Ursus arctos horribilis*).



The winner of this trivia game will be emailed a list of Lewis and Clark books to choose one as the contest prize. The answer and name of the winner will be published in the next *Trail News* issue. The books on the list, by the way, are used ones, but they are in excellent shape.

The answer to the trivia question in the last issue was "Bitterroots." The Lolo Trail crosses the Bitterroot Mountains, following the ancient Nez Perce route over the mountains between present-day Idaho and Montana.

Thirteen readers submitted correct responses. When more than one person responds with the correct answer, a drawing is done to choose the winner. The winner was Margaret Nelson.

[Submit your answer](#)

Photo by Jim Peaco, courtesy U.S. National Park Service. Published in Discover Lewis & Clark, the educational website of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance.

Lolo Reconnected Anniversary Celebration



Travelers' Rest Connection is proud to partner with the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance in their efforts to restore wild sections of the trail between Lolo and Lewiston, Idaho. This summer, groups of volunteers spent several days clearing trail, removing downed trees, and repairing signs. Use the QR code to learn more.



**AN ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION OF LEWIS &
CLARK ON THE LOLO TRAIL**
Saturday, September 5, 2026

10 am to 2 pm

Travelers' Rest State Park, Lolo

Gallery Games

Ursus Horribilus: The Grizzly Bear Illustrated

Guided Tours

Archaeology of Travelers' Rest

Hands-On History Demonstrations

Historic Firearms

Cooking with the Corps

Journaling Workshop

with Missoula Writers' Collaborative

Experience the Trail in a New Way

Virtual Reality

by Shenandoah Center for Immersive Learning

For more information, visit www.travelersrest.org or call 406-273-4253

Lewis & Clark
TRAIL ALLIANCE





Beaverhead Rock

© 22 July 2013 by Kristopher K. Townsend.

Day by Day Radio Episodes

Moving the [dugout canoes](#) up the crooked [Beaverhead River](#), [Sacagawea](#) recognizes “[the beaver’s head](#)” and informs the captains that the summer home of her people—the [Lemhi Shoshones](#)—is not far ahead. [Lewis](#) collects seeds from local grasses resembling hay, and [Pvt. Shannon](#) is still missing.

[August 8, 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.

Words of the Expedition

"Tartar"



You may have heard your dentist use the word “tartar,” referring to incrustation on the teeth consisting of plaque that has become hardened by the deposition of mineral salts (such as calcium carbonate). Of course, today there is also a culinary use of the word—steak tartar, the food-grade substance cream of tartar, and so forth.

There are also [other uses of the word](#), including a medical reference that came into being circa 1704—*tartar emetic*. According to Dr. Gary Moulton’s edition of the Lewis and Clark journals, [tartar emetic](#) is a white salt compound of potassium, antimony, oxygen, carbon, and hydrogen, soluble in water and used to induce vomiting.

Meriwether Lewis used tartar emetic as an expectorant, according to the journals, to treat York, Sacagawea, the toddler Pomp, and Natives when they were ill. On [July 7, 1805](#), Lewis wrote in his journal: “...my man York Sick, I give him a dosh of Tarter.” On [May 24, 1806](#): “...we gave [Sacagawea’s son]...a doze of creem of tartar and applied a fresh poltice of onions.”

Note on errors in last issue of “Words of the Expedition”: Calumet Bluff is located much closer to Yankton, S.D., than the community of Homer, Neb., mentioned in the article about the word “Milk.” The bluff is the southern anchor of the Gavins Point Dam on the Missouri River, and the Lewis and Clark Visitor Center, managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers, stands atop it. The natives with whom the Lewis and Clark explorers met were Yankton Sioux (Ihanktowan), not Lakota. Additional information: This was the first meeting of any Oceti Sakowin tribe and was only successful because of Pierre Dorion, a trapper who had lived among the tribe for years.



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](#)



[Festival of the Little Hills](#)

St. Charles, MO
August 21 - 23;



[Lewis and Clark Trivia](#)

Lolo, MT
August 26



[Peace Medal](#)

Yankton, SD
Ongoing Exhibit

Where on the Trail?

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail is filled with fascinating museums, breathtaking landscapes, and historic sites—but it also features the built environment.

This issue's "Where on the Trail?" spotlights one of these unexpected gems. Can you identify where this photo was taken?



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.

The Last Word

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LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL EXPERIENCE

Explore New People, Places, and Stories

- IDAHO
- ILLINOIS
- INDIANA
- IOWA
- KANSAS
- KENTUCKY
- MISSOURI
- MONTANA
- NEBRASKA
- NORTH DAKOTA
- OHIO
- OREGON
- PENNSYLVANIA
- SOUTH DAKOTA
- TENNESSEE
- WASHINGTON
- WEST VIRGINIA

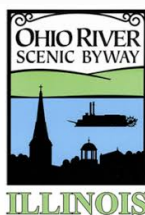
Behind every great digital experience is someone quietly making it better. Our intrepid webmaster, Kris Townsend, has once again improved the Lewis and Clark Trail Experience by adding the ability to browse attractions, events, and historic sites by state.

This new feature provides an intuitive way to discover the remarkable places that make up the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Whether you're planning a cross-country expedition or looking for destinations close to home, it's another step toward making Trail exploration easier and more enjoyable.

Give it a try—you may just discover your next adventure.

Richard Hunt

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