

Lewis & Clark Trail News

Bringing the Trail to Life

January 11, 2025



Richard Hunt

What Does "Alliance" Truly Mean?

By now, you've likely heard that in 2024, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation adopted a "doing business as" identity: the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance. But what does "Alliance" truly signify?

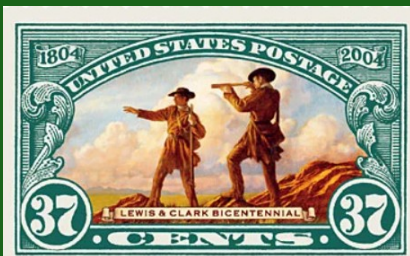
This year marked the 60th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Trail Commission's founding—a pivotal initiative to identify and mark the historic Lewis and Clark Trail. That early work laid the foundation for advancing public awareness of the Expedition's significance while promoting conservation and outdoor recreation along its route.

In 1969, the Commission issued its final report, outlining ambitious goals, including the recommendation to establish groups that would sustain its vision. Later that year, individuals from the Commission and its state committees founded the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation to carry that torch forward.

Now, six decades later, we've charted a new course to guide the next generation of Trail enthusiasts and supporters. Through modern education and digital travel platforms, we engage with audiences in the ways they consume information and explore their world today.

Our work connects more than 200 interpretive centers, museums, and visitor centers that preserve and share the Trail's historic and cultural stories. We provide resources, foster collaboration, and promote visitation and learning, serving as a central hub for Trail-related initiatives.





In calling ourselves an "Alliance," we embrace our mission to unite the many individuals, organizations, and institutions dedicated to preserving and promoting the Trail's legacy. Together, we form a powerful network—an Alliance—driven by shared passion and purpose.

We are proud to continue this journey and bring the spirit of the Trail to life for new generations. We proceeded on.

Quick Links

[Annual Gathering - Kansas City September 14 - 27](#)

[Lewis and Clark Traveling Trunk](#)

[Oregon Humanities Public Program Grants](#)

[LCTE Event Calendar](#)

[National Forest Foundation Fellowship](#)

[Missouri River Scientists Traveling Trunk](#)

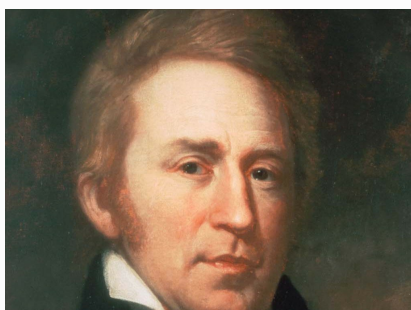
Join the
Alliance

Support the
Alliance



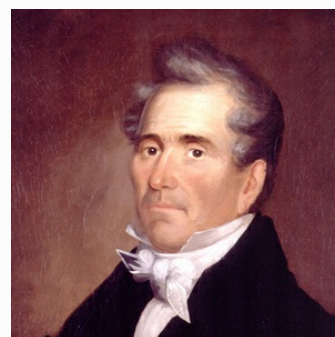
Watch
[Sakakawea's Son](#)

Jean Baptiste Charbonneau was the son of the Lewis and Clark Expedition's most popular member Sakakawea, and the too often maligned French Canadian



Watch
[William Clark, Paleontologist?](#)

Big Bone Lick State Historic Site in Union, Kentucky is known as being the "Birthplace of American Vertebrate Paleontology". Thomas



Watch
[Manuel Lisa, Sacagawea, and the Fur Traders](#)

After founding the Missouri Fur Company (1807–1814), in which

Toussaint Charbonneau. His storied life can be roughly divided into periods. His first 24 years were his education when he traveled with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, lived in a Hidatsa village, and was schooled in St. Louis and Württemberg, Germany. The second period (seventeen years) was in the Rocky Mountains as trapper, guide, and hunter. He lived his last twenty years in California where he served as an alcalde, miner, and hotel clerk in the California gold fields.

Because we have no journal or memoir, what can be learned of Jean Baptiste Charbonneau must come from the writings of others. Fortunately, he appears in many primary sources from the first half of the 19th century—a period of rapid western expansion in the United States.

In this archival footage, Amy Mossett, Director of Education for the MHA Nation, tells us of the story of the youngest member of the Expedition - Jean Baptiste, the son of Sakakawea and Toussaint Charbonneau

Jefferson had a fascination with Big Bone Lick and the mysterious remains of giant animals being found there. Jefferson first enlisted the help of Meriwether Lewis in 1803, instructing him to stop at Big Bone Lick on his way down the Ohio River to meet William Clark in Louisville. Jefferson wanted his own collection of specimens from Big Bone Lick to examine and study at his leisure. Lewis made his collection from Big Bone Lick and had it sent to Jefferson via river boat destined for New Orleans, however, the bones never reached Jefferson for the boat sank in its journey down the Mississippi River.

After the Corps of Discovery returned from their expedition into the new American West, Jefferson still wanted a collection of Big Bone Lick fossils. In 1807, he enlisted William Clark and his brother George Rogers Clark for the task. Upon their arrival to Big Bone Lick, they found the site picked over, with very little fit to send back to Jefferson. The brothers, along with their men, then spent the next several weeks at the site performing the first organized excavation of fossils on America soil.

William Clark participated, Manuel Lisa became a key figure in the fur trade along the Upper Missouri River. In 1807, he established Fort Raymond near the Big Horn River in present-day Montana. Over the next decade, Lisa built several trading posts, including Fort Manuel Lisa, near the modern boundary between North Dakota and South Dakota. Fort Manuel is historically significant as the site where Sacagawea, the Lemhi Shoshone woman who guided the Lewis and Clark Expedition, passed away in 1812.

This video features archival footage from the Tent of Many Voices, with LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, a Dakota and Lakota historian and water protector. LaDonna shares the rich and somber history of Fort Manuel Lisa and its connection to Sacagawea's final days.

A History of the Rocky Mountain Rendezvous Era 1825-1840

The Southwest Region of the Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance invites you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

January 26, 2025
3:00 PM Mountain Time



Jay H. Buckley, PhD

Jay H. Buckley is Associate Professor of History at Brigham Young University, Director of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at BYU, Director of BYU's Interdisciplinary American Indian Studies Minor, Past President of LCTA, author of a number of books among them William Clark, Indian Diplomat, and frequent contributor to We Proceeded On and The Orderly Report.

His current book project is A History of the Sheep Industry in Utah and the Intermountain West. Jay's talk on the rendezvous era during the fur trade will be the inaugural commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the start of the rendezvous system.

ZOOM LINK

Passcode: 1825



Missouri River Open Lands Conservation Project

A Great Falls, Montana, volunteer organization, Missouri River Open Lands Preservation [MROLP] is working to secure a permanent recreation easement for a 48-acre parcel of undeveloped state land along the Missouri River immediately south of Great Falls. The easement would prevent the loss of an important historical and cultural resource. This parcel may be the only piece of highly-accessible undeveloped public land left on this very eventful portion of the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail.

This site is where Lewis finally makes it back to the Missouri River in 1806, only to lose ten horses to resourceful Indians. Then he finds most of his precious collection

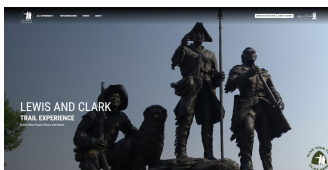
cached a year previous flooded near today's White Bear Island. He marvels at a vast buffalo herd of over 10,000 animals attended by many howling wolves. He sends Expedition members out to look for the horses, but only three can be found. One member, Droulliard, continues to search all the way to the Dearborn River, but the Indians and horses elude him. Lewis sends McNeal downriver on horseback to check out the pirogue and cache at the lower portage. McNeal has a run-in with a grizzly and narrowly escapes. You can read all about this chapter of the Expedition in Lewis's journal entries from July 11-16, 1806.

MROLP needs to raise about \$650,000 to purchase the easement, and they are almost two-thirds of the way there. Right now, all contributions up to \$33,000 will be matched by a group of generous donors. A check to "Missouri River Open Lands Preservation" [a 501(c)3 organization] can be mailed to: **First Interstate Bank, ATTN: Sharon Azure, 12 Third St NW, Great Falls, MT, 59404.**

The Alliance has written a letter of support for this project. For more information on the site and MROLP's efforts to preserve this historic site, as well as a copy of the Alliance's support letter, go to: [Missouri Open River Lands](#)

Our Network of Online Resources

The Lewis and Clark Trail Experience links authentic communities and cultures—including tribes whose connections span thousands of years—to historic, vibrant and living landscapes. Be amazed at our travel website



The Lewis and Clark story ties together famous people, natural history, military expeditions, Native American history, and more. Explore the 2300+ pages of all things Lewis and Clark on our educational website



Our national alliance connects Lewis & Clark resources across the country, inspiring lasting public engagement and promoting a more knowledgeable, healthier society. Explore more at our Alliance website



[TRAVEL](#)

[EDUCATION](#)

[ALLIANCE](#)

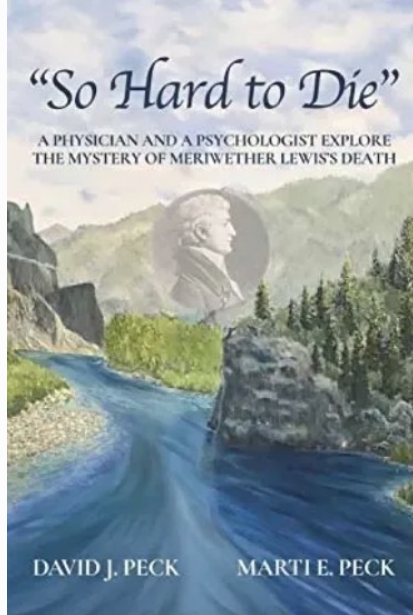


So Hard to Die

The Mysterious Death of Meriwether Lewis

Fans of the Lewis & Clark Expedition will have opportunities on January 17 and January 18 to learn valuable insights from two experts who can help answer nagging questions that, for the last two centuries, have vexed historians and aficionados of the famed 1803-06 journey.

Drs. David Peck and Marti Peck will give presentations at the Western Spirit: Scottsdale's



Museum of the West, Scottsdale, Arizona, about these issues:

- David will talk about the question of how successful were the explorers in their dealings with Native Americans? This presentation will be from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (Mountain Time) on Friday, January 17.
- The next day, on January 18, David and Marti will focus on the long-unanswered question of how did Meriwether Lewis die—by suicide or by murder? This topic will be covered from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (Mountain Time) .

The presentations are free to museum members; for non-members, \$10 per presentation. A person can attend one or both presentations.

[Western Spirit Museum Programs](#)

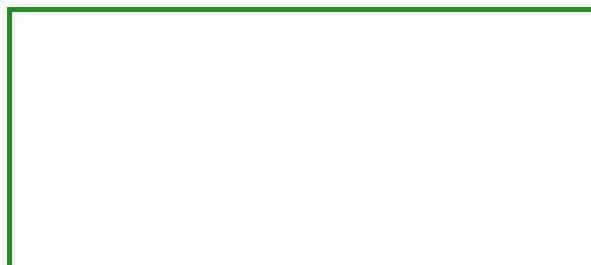
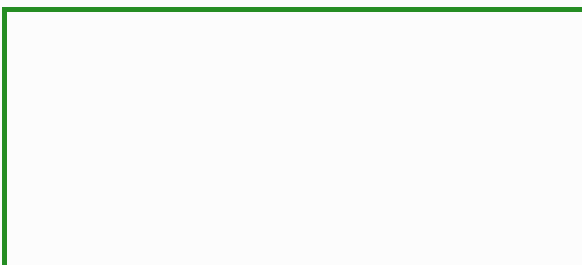
New Mobile APP for the Lewis and Clark Trail Experience

Experience the **Lewis & Clark Trail**
With Our **New APP**

Get it on
Google play

Download on the
App Store

Scan the QR Code with your mobile device





Lewis and Clark Auto Tour Route

The genesis of today's auto tour route can be traced back to 1929. As automobiles grew in popularity throughout the 1920s, the federal government decided to increase funding for construction of long-distance highways in the western United States. By the end of the 1920s, the entirety of the trail, from Missouri to Oregon, was accessible using a series of highways, public roads, and service roads, except for a 70-mile section in Idaho's Bitterroot Mountains.

Wanting to upgrade the area's wagon road, R. P. Hilleary and his team submitted a proposal in 1929 to build an automobile-accessible road along the Lolo Trail, and construction began in August 1930.

After years of construction, the Lolo Motorway opened to the public in 1935, finally providing Americans with a contiguous road along the route of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

[NPS LECL](#)



Kentuckiana

Kentuckiana – the region along the Ohio River that contains Jeffersonville, Clarksville, and New Albany in southern Indiana as well as Louisville across the river in Kentucky is a crown jewel in the Lewis and Clark story. Attractions including Historic...

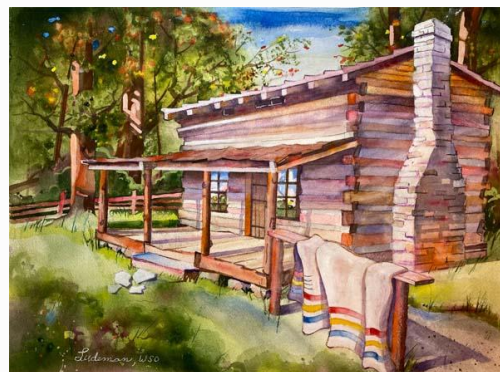
Stops: 7

Travel Distance: 12.98 miles

[VIEW INSPIRATION](#)

New LCTE Trip Inspiration Kentuckiana

Kentuckiana – the region along the Ohio River that contains Jeffersonville, Clarksville, and New Albany in southern Indiana as well as Louisville across the river in Kentucky is a crown jewel in the Lewis and Clark story. Attractions including Historic Locust Grove, the Falls of the Ohio State Park, Cave Hill Cemetery, the Belvedere Plaza (with its Ed Hamilton statue of York), and Mulberry Hill provide an outstanding opportunity to experience history.



lewisandclark.org





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