

[View Entire Newsletter](#)



Lewis & Clark Trail News

Bringing the Trail to Life
September 19, 2026



Westward on the Ohio

Photo courtesy of Michelle Schwartz

New Lewis & Clark Substack Articles

Subscribe to receive future articles, and share your favorite stories with friends, family, and fellow Trail enthusiasts.

[Real Stories of the Lewis and Clark Trail](#)



At age eighteen, he was the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery’s youngest enlisted man—and history has too often remembered him only as the expedition’s “lost boy.” But behind that label lies a remarkable story of hunger, life-or-death attacks, a shattered leg, and a man who transformed himself from explorer and soldier to a defender of law and justice.

[Read the Article](#)



Times were desperate, and as such, that colt wouldn’t be the only four-legged beast of burden to regret being chosen to haul the Corps of Discovery through a brutal stretch of wilderness. Without them, the Lewis and Clark’s expedition might not have even survived the Bitterroots, much less crossed them.

[Read the Article](#)

[Undaunted Travel](#)

George Shannon

The Man Who Found His Way

UNDAUNTEDTRAVEL.SUBSTACK.COM

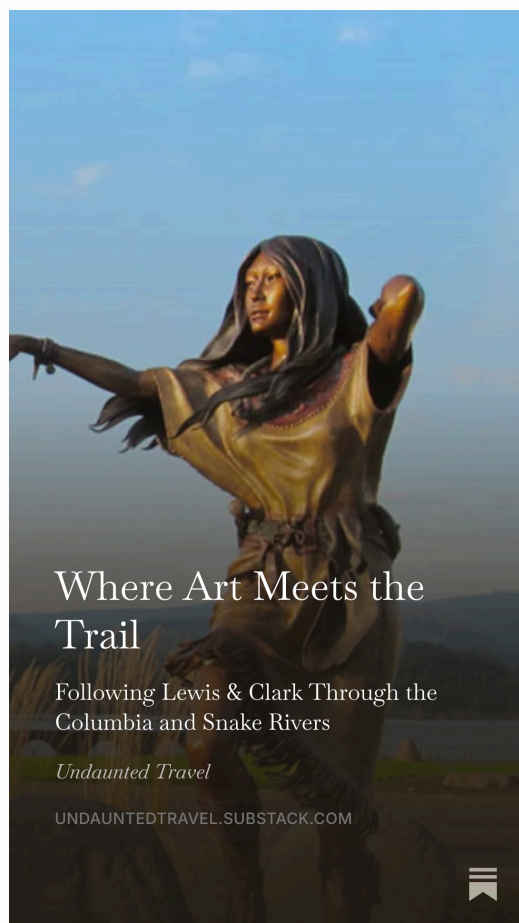
Undaunted Travel



From an 18-year-old recruit to a wounded veteran, lawyer, judge and public figure, George Shannon's story can still be followed across the American landscape.

For most people who know his name at all, George Shannon is the young man on the Lewis and Clark expedition who kept getting lost. It is a memorable story, and one that has been repeated often enough to become a shorthand for Shannon himself. But the story of the man behind that reputation is considerably more interesting.

[Read the Article](#)



Where Art Meets the Trail

Following Lewis & Clark Through the Columbia and Snake Rivers

Undaunted Travel

UNDAUNTEDTRAVEL.SUBSTACK.COM

Along the Columbia and Snake Rivers, a remarkable collection of public art connects the Lewis and Clark story with Indigenous history, living cultures, and the natural world. At the center of that experience is the Confluence Project, an ambitious collaboration that grew from an idea that emerged in 1999, as communities across the Columbia Basin began thinking about how to commemorate the bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery.

[Read the article](#)

Apply for a Trail Stewardship Grant

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance is pleased to announce that the 2026 Grant Program is now open for applications. Grants are available in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 and are intended to support stewardship, interpretation, education, preservation, and other projects that advance the understanding and



[Apply here](#)

LCTA @ REI

The Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance is celebrating National Public Lands Day by bringing the Lewis and Clark Trail directly to outdoor enthusiasts at REI stores across the country.



LCTA members will be on hand to share information about the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, opportunities to explore it, and the Alliance's work to preserve, interpret, and promote this remarkable national resource.

[Tualatin, Oregon](#) — September 19: Larry McClure

[Missoula, Montana](#) — September 26: Molly Stockdale

National Public Lands Day is a great opportunity to introduce new audiences to the stories, landscapes, communities, and experiences that make the Lewis & Clark Trail unique. From hiking and paddling to history, heritage, and cultural exploration, the Trail offers countless ways to get outside and connect with the American story.

If you're near one of these REI locations, stop by, say hello,

[National Public Lands Day](#)



Who knew Captain William Clark shops @REI? Actually LCTA member Roger Gascoigne made a special guest appearance in support of **National Public Lands**

Day at the Overland Park, Kansas REI store on September 13. Yvonne Kean, Richard Hunt, and Dan and Mary Lee Sturdevent all greeted shoppers and shared the LCTA story.

REI is putting \$1 million toward the public lands we love—and asking the public to help decide where those funds go. The Lewis and Clark Trail Alliance is proud to partner with REI to support Lolo Reconnected, an ambitious volunteer effort to restore and reconnect 100 miles of the historic Lolo Trail between Weippe, Idaho, and Travelers' Rest, Montana.

Now, we need your vote

Casting your vote with REI by choosing "Stewardship" will improve the opportunity for LCTA to receive a grant for \$67,000 which will support our Trail Stewardship projects including Lolo Reconnected.

[Vote](#)

Play Lewis & Clark Trivia



September 19...1806...Imagine what it was like.

You've been on the expedition for 859 days since departing Camp River Dubois...and now you're only a few days from returning to St. Louis...the end of the exploration.

Thankfully, you're canoeing with the current of the Missouri River rather than against it, as you did when struggling up the river in the first part of the expedition.

It's a fine day, and you and your companions only stop once, anxious as you all are to reach St. Louis. So everyone paddles hard and fast.

How many miles were traveled on this day?

- 40 miles
- 124 miles
- 72 miles
- 51 miles

[Submit your answer](#)

Here's a [hint](#).

The winner of this trivia question will be emailed a list of Lewis and Clark books to choose from as the prize.

The answer to the trivia question in the September 5 Trail News: There were language barriers—five different languages spoken—which led to translation challenges when Lewis and Clark held a council with the Flathead Salish at Ross' Hole in Montana. The translation communication passed through Salishan, Shoshone (from a Shoshone boy among the Flatheads and Sacagawea), Hidatsa (Sacagawea and Charbonneau), French (Charbonneau and a French speaker in the party), and English.

Seventeen readers submitted the correct answer. When there is more than one correct entry, a drawing is done to determine the winner. The winner for the September 5 trivia game was Paul Connor.

Artwork: AI-generated.

Trail Apprentices: Building the Next Generation of Trail Leaders



For more than 15 years, the [Partnership for the National Trails System](#) (PNTS) has helped prepare the next generation of trail professionals through its Trail Apprentice Program. Since 2009, students and young professionals from across the country have participated in PNTS workshops and conferences, bringing fresh perspectives, energy, and new ideas to the National Trails System.

The program has continued to evolve. Virtual career exploration and team-building activities were added in 2020, followed by hands-on projects and social media opportunities. In 2025, Apprentices expanded their experience by leading a professional presentation.

The 2027 program will take another step forward. Apprentices will work directly with PNTS and one of the National Scenic or Historic Trails on projects involving communications, social media, advocacy, research, community engagement, programming, or project management. They will also participate in virtual training and attend either the 2027 Hike the Hill® advocacy event in Washington, D.C., or the International Trails Summit in Durham, North Carolina.

The program is designed for emerging leaders seeking practical experience, professional connections, and a deeper understanding of careers in trails, public lands, stewardship, and advocacy.



[Apply Here](#)



Appaloosa horse added to original photo © 8 August 2008 by Kristopher K. Townsend.

Day by Day

Horse steak and spirit revival

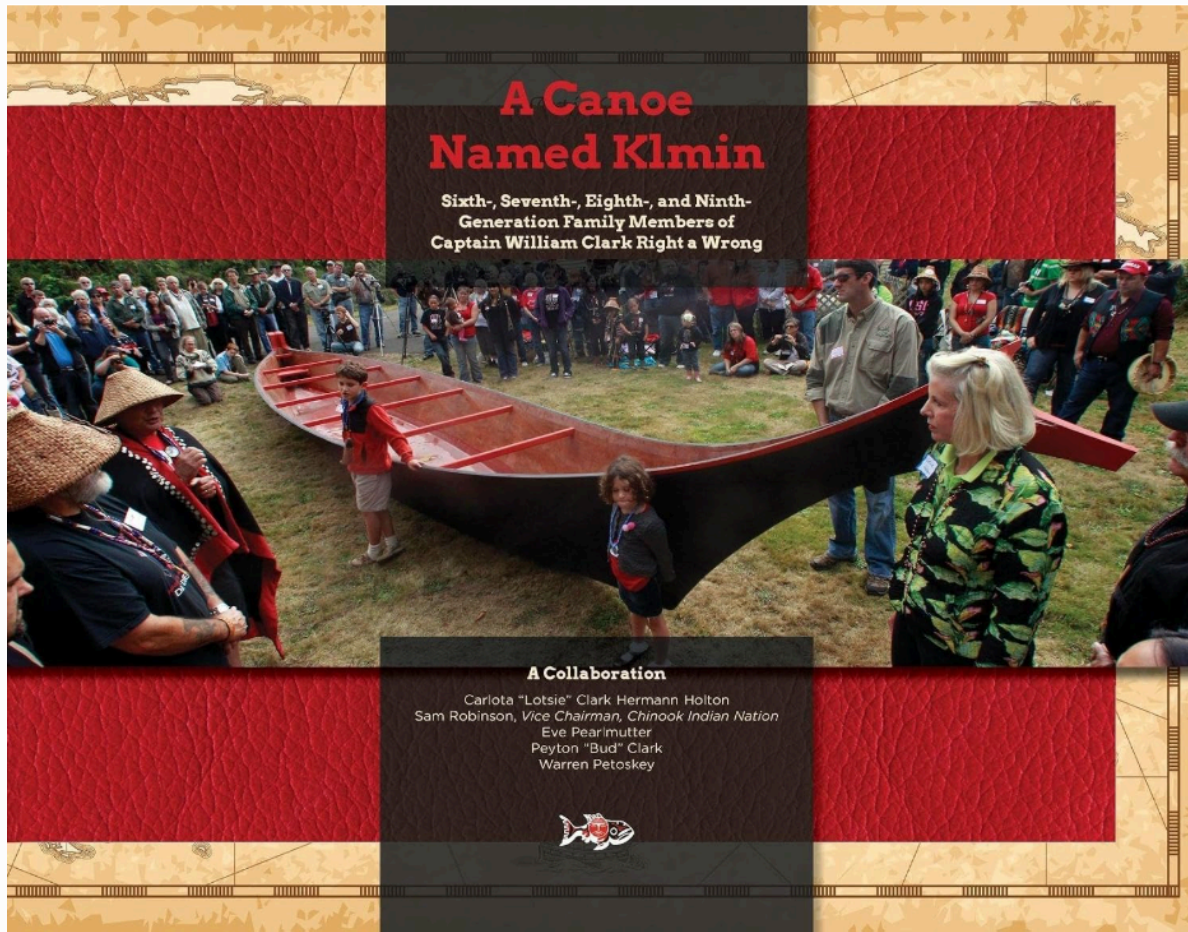
[September 19, 1805](#)

At the western edge of the [Bitterroot Mountains](#), [Clark's](#) advance party kills a stray horse. They leave most of it hanging at what is now named Horse Steak meadows. His small

detachment continues to a creek with tall cedar trees—Clark's Grove.

Still on the [Lolo Trail](#), [Lewis](#) and main group climb a ridge where they can see the plains to the west. They hope that the “horrible mountainous desert” will soon end. They then descend to [Hungry Creek](#).

A Canoe Named Klmin



A Canoe, a Wrong, and a Remarkable Act of Reconciliation

More than 200 years ago, as the Lewis and Clark Expedition prepared to leave the Pacific Northwest after a difficult winter at the mouth of the Columbia River, the Corps of Discovery faced a problem: they were short one canoe.

Their solution was to take one from the Chinook people.

For the Chinook, canoes were far more than simple transportation. They were central to their culture, livelihood, and way of life. The theft was a serious insult—one that remained part of the story of the expedition long after the Corps headed east.

More than two centuries later, descendants of William Clark sought to acknowledge that wrong. Carlota Clark Holton, a seventh-generation descendant of William Clark, worked with members of the Chinook Indian Nation to create a 36-foot replica canoe. The canoe was custom-built in Oregon and presented to the Chinook

in an effort to restore a relationship damaged by an act committed more than 200 years earlier.

The canoe was cleansed, blessed, and given a name before being placed in the Columbia River—becoming, in the words of the late Chinook leader Ray Gardner, a *living member of the tribe*.

It is a remarkable story about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, but it is also about something much larger: acknowledging the complexity of the past, listening to Indigenous perspectives, and finding ways to build relationships in the present.

The Story Continues

The story of the canoe, the theft, and the effort to make amends is told in a book available through the Lewis and Clark Boathouse and Museum in St. Charles and a [video](#) hosted on their YouTube Channel. (Proceeds from book sales are shared between the museum and the Chinook Indian Nation).

[Purchase the book online](#)

There is also an opportunity to hear more about this remarkable story in person. Lotsie will give a presentation and participate in a book signing at [Hearth & Soul](#) in St. Louis on September 26 from 1–3 p.m.

The event is open to the public and will provide an opportunity to hear more about the story, participate in a conversation about the history, the canoe, and the effort to make amends.

BOOK SIGNING


HEARTH & SOUL
ST. LOUIS

Meet the Authors & Book Signing

A Canoe Named Klmin
with Authors Carlota "Lotsie" Clark Hermann Holton & Eve Pearlmutter

Join the Authors for a book signing & conversation about history, accountability, and the power of returning what was lost.

Light bites & libations provided

Cohosted by the Lewis & Clark Boathouse & Museum

**SATURDAY,
SEPTEMBER 26**
1PM - 3PM



9640 CLAYTON ROAD

 HEARTHANDSOUL.COM  @SHOPHEARTHANDSOUL

THE GORGE
AWAITS

LEWIS & CLARK TRAIL ALLIANCE
2027 ANNUAL GATHERING

AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2027

SKAMANIA LODGE
STEVENSON, WASHINGTON

lewisandclark.org/annual-gathering



Words of the Expedition

"Flack"



Flack is one of those words in our culture today that has different meanings. For example, it's used to give criticism ("He gave me flack about my shirt") or as an adjective describing a military flack (or "flak") jacket that helps protect against projectiles or, among other uses, as a noun to describe a public relations person ("He is the flack for the organization").

But for the Lewis and Clark explorers, flack meant "to splash."

On July 24, 1806, while traveling on the Yellowstone River, William Clark used the word this way: "...had Buffalow Skin tacked on So as to prevent the waters flacking in between the Two canoes."

Twelve days earlier, Clark used the word to describe the way beaver splashed their tails onto water: "the beaver was flacking in the river about us all the last night."

Photo of the beaver from the National Park Service.

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



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 unexpected.

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

[Answer](#)



The Last Word



From Missouri River Open Lands Preservation

Missouri River Open Lands Preservation (MROLP) is working to protect a vital section of the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail. With \$176,000 needed in funds to reach the goal of \$755,000, we request your support and want to explain why our endeavor is critical.

On their return trip to the east, the two captains split up at Traveler's Rest near Lolo, Montana. Clark's party went south to explore the Yellowstone River while Lewis took his men up the Blackfoot River, crossed the Continental Divide and proceeded down the Sun River.

As Lewis neared the Missouri River bottoms, he headed southeast to White Bear Islands to retrieve his buried caches. The party traversed the MROLP parcel and camped along the west side of the river opposite the islands. It was a pivotal time for the Expedition at this location, as the Lewis contingent prepared for the downstream journey and the exploratory side-trip up the Marias River drainage.

About 1/4 mile of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (LCNHT) traverses this historical parcel which is owned by the State of Montana. The parcel represents one of the last vestiges of the Trail in an area where nearly all of the documented LCNHT corridor has been lost to private ownership or development. This site retains most of its natural characteristics and a visitor could easily imagine Lewis' party camped along the river here on their return trip.

MROLP, a nonprofit 501(c)3 group, has been working to raise funds to prevent the inevitable development of the land by purchasing a permanent public recreation park easement for the north parcel (approximately 48 acres) of Lot 6 from the State of Montana. If our campaign is successful, MROLP will be able to preserve the site in an undeveloped condition and keep it open for

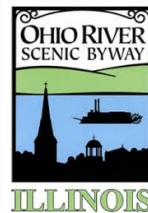
public access, including access to the Missouri River and nearby Taylor Island.

The easement will provide an opportunity for the adjacent Great Falls community and visiting tourists to experience the landscape and environment of the LCNHT in its natural condition. A public recreation park would also provide a convenient opportunity for local schools to host outdoor field trips to learn about the Expedition and the eventful six days that the Corps of Discovery spent at this location.

There is great urgency associated with this project because unless the proposed easement is acquired, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation intends to pursue other options for generating revenue from the land, such as leasing it for various forms of development or resource extraction. MROLP is keenly aware of developer interest in this parcel, and the window to preserve it is rapidly closing. We are dependent upon the generosity of public and private donations to achieve success.

To date, MROLP (missouririveropenlands.org) has raised nearly \$580,000. The group now has until March 2027 to raise the final \$176,000 to secure the easement. We are exceedingly grateful to those who share our passion and are willing to support our mission.

LCTA CorSponsors



[TRAVEL](#)

[ALLIANCE](#)

[EDUCATION](#)

[Sign up to receive the Trail News](#)



Try email marketing for free today!