After the fantastic year we had during the National Park Service (NPS) centennial in 2016, I really did not think 2017 would be anywhere near as exciting. Boy was I wrong. In 2017, a greater number of Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT) staff spent more time on the Trail interacting with our partners and the public during any year since the bicentennial commemoration. Visitation in Omaha and at many sites along the Trail hit new highs by all accounts. Sales at our Western National Parks Association bookstore in Omaha hit a new record as well.

In January 2017 we issued our first annual report which was very well received. I expect you will find this one just as impressive. Over 1,500 printed copies were distributed and many more were viewed and downloaded electronically.

Especially exciting was the sale of 7,972 America the Beautiful Senior Passes during the month of August. Our total for the year was 11,428 sold. The influx of thousands of visitors coming in to buy their senior pass over the course of just a few days required the help of every Lewis and Clark NHT employee and a great many more from the NPS Midwest Regional Office. The good news is that this massive increase in visitation occurred with only positive outcomes. I received numerous compliments from the thousands of visitors who were very pleased by the level of organization and professionalism they experienced in our Omaha Visitor Center.

One of the most complex and significant undertakings in 2017 was the launch of our trail-wide Long Range Interpretive Plan. This multi-year project will provide a plan that will help us work more effectively with other Lewis and Clark interpretive operations along the Trail.

We also coordinated with the Omaha Visitor and Convention Bureau to add the Omaha Visitor Center to the itineraries of several charter bus companies. This has been a great success for expanding interpretive opportunities. Additionally, we launched a social media campaign in an effort to better promote Lewis and Clark related events and activities. The Division of Integrated Resource Stewardship also initiated some outstanding projects. After much discussion and evaluation, an agreement was established with Solimar International to develop a trail-wide geotourism program. While this is a multi-year effort, we are off to an exciting start.

In 2017, we engaged with Historical Research Associates, Inc., to research and write a history focused on the efforts to care for and bring attention to the Trail. This history covers the early efforts to commemorate and designate the Lewis and Clark NHT, and the history of its administration by the NPS from its creation in 1978 to present day. The first draft has been completed; we look forward to sharing it with you in the near future.

Notably, we also reached an agreement with the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation to help engage the same firm to write a history of the Foundation. We also have worked with the Foundation in many other ways in 2017. The Foundation staff, Board of Directors and individual members are all critical to the preservation of the Trail and its history. We
Looking Back

Superintendent Mark Weekley visits Seaman the Dog at Fort Mandan/North Dakota Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center.

look forward to continuing this relationship in the coming year, particularly as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act and the Foundation itself.

Our partnership with Western National Parks Association (WNPA) and their staff in Omaha and Tucson remains strong and positive. In particular, their efforts to support our education and visitor programs has been outstanding. Financial assistance provided for our Long Range Interpretive planning efforts and other needs has been very helpful. We also benefited greatly from their leadership and direction in the transition of the Omaha Bookstore to a new Point of Sale system. In 2018, we will be working with WNPA to consider and develop new ways to collaborate with partners and tribes.

Our friends group, the Lewis and Clark Trust, Inc., remains a vital partner and advocate. Their unique role focuses not only on the Trail, but on the needs of the NPS Lewis and Clark NHT operation. As a federal agency working on an extensive historic trail we often face complex and unique challenges. This past year we called on the Lewis and Clark Trust frequently to help us meet important challenges that we could not otherwise have addressed. Every time we called, they delivered. Their support and friendship has been invaluable. Their advocacy for the extension of the Lewis and Clark NHT (Eastern Legacy) has been as tireless and persistent as were the members of the Corps of Discovery.

While I wish I could list every friend, partner, visitor, and agency who helped protect the Trail and tell the Lewis and Clark story in 2017, the list is simply endless. However, all efforts are greatly appreciated. Finally, I want to give a special shout-out to the staff at the Trail Headquarters. These folks are among the very best I have had the privilege of working with in my NPS career. While it is fun to look back at 2017, it is even more enjoyable to look forward to what lies ahead for us next year along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

Mark Weekley, Superintendent
LCTHF Missouri-Kansas Riverbend
Chapter President Yvonne Kean with
Chief of Interpretation Neal Bedlan as
the guest speaker at their January 2017
meeting in Kansas City.

Rangers Karla Sigala and Julie Blanchard
at an Omaha Parks and Recreation event.

Volunteer and Partnership Specialist Ashley
Danielson listens as Interpretive Coordinator Rob
Hanna gives a tour of Fort Mandan following the
Long Range Interpretive Plan Workshop in
Washburn, ND.

Chief of Integrated Resources Dan
Wiley visits with Clark's Canoe Camp
archeologist Tom Rust.

Trail staff with Great Falls,
Montana Lewis and Clark
Interpretive Center Director
visiting Spirit Mound, SD.
The Trail

Taking in the view at Double Ditch Indian Village, ND.

Superintendent Mark Weekley and Chief of Resources Dan Wiley get a tour of the ND Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center collection by Director Kevin Kirkey.

Visitors learn about sweet grass during a summer speaker series program outside the Omaha Visitor Center.

Trail staff learn about On-A-Slant Indian Village at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, ND.

Geographer Ryan M. Cooper visits with Lewis and Clark Scholar Ralph Saunders near the Yellowstone River in Montana.
Honoring Tribal Legacies at Yellowstone National Park

In the spring of 2017, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT) staff collaborated with the Youth Programs Office at Yellowstone National Park to host a regional workshop to support respectful and holistic methods in interpreting historical and contemporary indigenous perspectives. The two-day workshop in Yellowstone brought together more than 30 managers and education staff from the National Park Service (NPS), US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Parks, and the Yellowstone Forever Institute—which also provided lunches and transportation during the workshop.

The Lewis and Clark NHT has been supporting partners all along the Trail in utilizing the Honoring Tribal Legacies program to advance the interpretation of indigenous perspectives across the country. The workshop was facilitated by Lewis and Clark NHT Training Specialist, Tom Smith, and featured presentations by recognized Crow Tribal Historian and Lead Ranger at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Marvin Dawes. In addition, Dr. Shane Doyle, also of the Crow Nation, presented stories and cultural traditions of the Crow people in traditional Crow Country.

Participants had an opportunity to learn tribal stories, perspectives, and experiences. Utilizing the lessons, they evaluated their current interpretive programming, and built themes to improve their interpretive programming for the future.

“It was wonderful for education staff from several agencies to come together and to learn more about Crow perspectives. It was a great opportunity to explore ways we can improve education programs to better honor their legacy and traditions respectfully,” said Beth Taylor, NPS Education Program Manager in Yellowstone. “Both the time we spent outside learning Crow stories connecting people to the landscape and the time spent indoors sharing ideas and planning programs were valuable and rewarding. The Apsáalooke (Crow) are one of many tribes with a strong connection to Yellowstone and we hope to build upon what we learned.”

Lewis and Clark NHT is exploring the potential to have similar workshops in the future to support Trail partners and tribes in utilizing Honoring Tribal Legacies for both formal and informal education settings.
Working in Partnership to Further Educational Programming

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail collaborated with Missouri River Relief (MRR) to help connect 4th graders to the Missouri River. MRR is a grassroots, volunteer, and equipment-based nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting people to the Missouri River through hands-on river clean-ups and education programs. Since 2001, MRR has conducted 160 river clean-ups, enlisting the help of more than 24,000 volunteers to clean up over 876 tons of trash from the banks of 1,144 miles of the river, and provided educational opportunities to more than 18,500 students and teachers from St. Louis, Missouri to Yankton, South Dakota.

Being on the Lewis and Clark National Trail has its benefits. MRR was able to secure a Recreational Trails Program Grant (RTP) to rehabilitate multiple sections of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail by hosting education programs with students and teachers in the communities of St. Charles, Washington, Boonville, and Kansas City, Missouri. These programs provided the opportunity for 240 students and teachers the experience of cleaning up trash and learning about their very own Missouri River watershed. MRR also secured an Every Kid in the Park (EKiP) grant to fund education programs for Columbia, Missouri students.

Kristen Schulte, Missouri River Relief Education Coordinator appreciated the assistance provided by the Trail staff, “We feel very lucky to be supported by the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The staff including Ashley Danielson, Tom Smith, and Neal Bedlan have always been responsive when we have asked for assistance. Often going out of their way to be helpful during a program or event. They have not only been wonderful partners but also great friends. It’s amazing what we can accomplish when we’re in it together!”

More information about MRR can be found at: www.riverrelief.org
78 sites

Cahokia Courthouse (Illinois)
Winter Camp at Wood River (Missouri)
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (Missouri)
Bellefontaine Cemetery (Missouri)
Fort Belle Fontaine (Missouri)
Charbonier Bluff (Missouri)
St. Charles Historic District (Missouri)
Tavern Cave (Missouri)
Clark’s Hill State Historic Site (Missouri)
Sugar Loaf Rock (Missouri)
Moniteau Creek at Manitou Bluffs (Missouri)
Fort Osage (Missouri)
Sergeant Floyd Monument (Iowa)
White Catfish Camp (Iowa, Nebraska)
Leary Site (Nebraska)
Platte River Confluence (Nebraska)
Fort Atkinson (Nebraska)
Blackbird Hill (Nebraska)
Omaha Big Village (Nebraska)
Ionia Volcano (Nebraska)
Bow Creek (Nebraska)
The Tower (Nebraska)
Spirit Mound (South Dakota)
Big Bend of the Missouri (South Dakota)
Bad River Encounter Site (South Dakota)
On-A-Slant Village (North Dakota)
Double Ditch (North Dakota)
Fort Mandan (North Dakota)
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site (North Dakota)
Yellowstone River Confluence (North Dakota)
Milk River Confluence (Montana)
Lewis and Clark Camp at Slaughter River (Montana)
White Cliffs (Montana)
Decision Point (Montana)
Great Falls Lower Portage (Montana)
Rainbow Falls (Montana)
Giant Springs (Montana)
Great Falls Upper Portage (Montana)
Square Butte (Montana)
Tower Rock (Montana)
Gates of the Mountains (Montana)
Crimson Bluffs (Montana)
Yorks Islands (Montana)
Three Forks of the Missouri (Montana)
Beaverhead Rock (Montana)
Clark’s Lookout (Montana)
Ross’ Hole (Montana)
Alice Creek Historic District (Montana)
Gibbons Pass (Montana)
Bozeman Pass (Montana)
Sacajawea Park (Montana)
Clark’s Canoe Camp on the Yellowstone (Montana)
Camp Disappointment (Montana)
Two Medicine Fight Site (Montana)
Pompeys Pillar (Montana)
Travellers Rest (Montana)
Lemhi Pass (Montana, Idaho)
First Flag Unfurling Site (Idaho)
Packer Meadow (Idaho)
Colt Killed Creek Campsite (Idaho)
Smoking Place (Idaho)
Weippe Prairie (Idaho)
Lewis and Clark Travois Road (Washington)
Snake River Confluence (Washington)
Walla Walla River Confluence (Washington)
Beacon Rock (Washington)
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (Washington)
Dismal Nitch (Washington)
Middle Village – Station Camp (Washington)
Cape Disappointment (Washington)
Celilo Falls Portage (Washington, Oregon)
Sandy River Delta (Washington, Oregon)
Hat Rock (Oregon)
Rock Fort (Oregon)
Willamette River Confluence (Oregon)
Tongue Point (Oregon)
Fort Clatsop (Oregon)
Ecola Creek/Cannon Beach (Oregon)
High Potential Historic Sites Finalized

In 2017, the High Potential Historic Sites Addendum to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan was finalized for publication. A limited number of hard copies will be printed and an electronic version will soon be publicly accessible through the Trail’s website. The culmination of an undertaking that began in 2011, the project represents years of truly collaborative teamwork among Trail staff, and invaluable support from our network of Trail partners.

View the sites on the Interactive Trail Atlas: www.lewisandclarktrailmap.com

- Click on the “Layers” tab at the bottom left corner of the webpage. A dropdown list of layers will open on the panel above the tab.
- Click to check the box next to the “Cultural” layer.
- Then click on the “+” to the left. This opens a sub-list of cultural resources-related layers.
- Check the box for the “Cultural_HPHS” heading. The High Potential Historic Sites layer will now be displayed on the atlas map.

Left: St. Charles Historic District, Missouri
Right: Walla Walla River Confluence, Washington
Administering flame retardant.
Liberty Fire - Arlee, Montana

Environmental impacts in the aftermath.
Alice Creek Fire, Montana

Wildland firefighters mopping up.
Liberty Fire, Arlee, Montana
Fire and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

During the summer and early fall of 2017, wildfires rapidly spread throughout the United States. Near perfect conditions (drought, low humidity, high winds) made this one of the worst fire seasons in recent history. Many of these wildfires were on or near the Trail. Even fires that weren’t in close proximity to the Trail impacted the visitor experience due to thick smoke blanketing forests and nearby communities, as well as road closures preventing Trail access due to safety concerns.

Post-fire, cumulative effects generated by the wildfires placed fire-affected Trail segments at risk. Native plant vegetation recovery was threatened by an increased spread of noxious weeds. Loss of ground cover reduced soil productivity and hydrologic function, as well as increased run-off and erosion from upslope burned areas. Water quality and fish inhabiting the lakes and streams were jeopardized from increased sediment flows.

To date, it is unknown exactly how many segments of the Trail were affected by these wildfires; however, rehabilitation and restoration efforts have already begun on several of the national forests hosting the Trail. At the Trail Headquarters, our team will be closely monitoring those efforts to ensure they not only meet environmental compliance but that they also maintain the Trail’s historical integrity.

Wildfire activity as of September 5, 2017.
Staff from the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and scholar Steve Russell investigate trail treads, culturally modified trees, and rock cairns along the Meriwether Lewis return route in Montana.
Meriwether Lewis Return Route Archeology Project

Staff at the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT) worked in collaboration with scholar Steve Russell and archeologists from the Bureau of Land Management Missoula Field Office to map and document the route taken by Meriwether Lewis along the Blackfoot River in Montana. During their return voyage in 1806, the Corps of Discovery split into smaller parties at Travellers Rest, near present day Lolo, Montana. Lewis and a small party left Travellers Rest and followed a well-worn path along the Blackfoot River known as the Cokahlarishkit, or Road to the Buffalo. For thousands of years, the Cokahlarishkit was used by tribes to access buffalo hunting grounds. Lewis and his party followed this trail, collecting plant specimens and observing animal life, geographic features, and American Indian encampments. Over several field seasons, Bureau of Land Management archeologists have been using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data developed by Trail staff and partners to help locate and gather evidence of this ancient trail and its offshoots on public lands east of Missoula, Montana. Archeological sites consisting of cultural use of the trail, including trail treads, cultural modified trees, and rock cairns were located and documented. This information will be used to further refine maps of the Lewis and Clark NHT and complete a resource management plan that will help protect sensitive resources.
Lewis and Clark Interpretive Wayside Exhibits

We continued to distribute the updated interpretive wayside exhibits to replace the older, dated panels. Sites in Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and California have installed new panels. Is there an old panel at your site that needs to be replaced? We’ll be happy to send you a replacement at no cost. It’s easy - just send an email to: lecl_communications@nps.gov

Interpretive Specialist Karla Sigala—so happy to showcase the new and updated interpretive wayside exhibit.
Geotourism

The National Park Service continues to develop the Geotourism Program for the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT).

Featuring a comprehensive interactive map, the Lewis and Clark NHT Geotourism website will highlight historic sites, artisan studios, public lands, festivals, authentic locally owned accommodations and restaurants, small or regionally focused businesses, family-friendly amenities, visitor centers, museums and much more. Website users will be able to create accounts that let them organize and save trip plans and points of interest.

Check out https://lewisandclark.travel to see the website’s progress! Meetings were held along the length of the Trail this summer and fall to provide information on the project to tourism leaders and communities as well as to gather local perspectives. Over 500 recommendations were made at the meetings for inclusion on the website.

We hope to publicly launch the website in fall of 2018 and look forward to sharing the amazing places and experiences along the Trail with new travelers.

Geotourism is tourism that sustains or enhances the geographic character of a place, its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.

https://lewisandclark.travel
Solar Eclipse 2017

On August 21, 2017, a solar eclipse crossed the continental United States. An unprecedented number of visitors flocked to national and state parks to get a glimpse of this natural phenomenon. Along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT), visitors were treated to partial or total solar eclipse views along with special programming and events.

The trail headquarters office coordinated the distribution of over 4,500 pairs of glasses to 36 sites along the Trail for safe eclipse viewing. These glasses allowed sites to hold viewing events or increase the number of visitors they could accommodate. More than 400 eclipse junior ranger books were also sent to partners and supported school groups who visited partner sites for the eclipse.

A poster was developed to market the Trail as a prime eclipse viewing location. This poster was distributed hard copy and digitally and was used on many partner social media sites.

We coordinated with NASA to have the Lewis and Clark NHT included in their outreach materials and on their map of best National Park Service sites to see the eclipse. The Trail was written up as a prime location for viewing in the Washington Post, Space.com, and a variety of regional and local publications (Kansas City Star, Omaha World Herald, Bismarck Tribune, and others). A trail-wide news release drew attention to events along the Trail.
Long Range Interpretive Plan

In 2017, we kicked off the first-ever Long Range Interpretive planning effort. This multi-year effort started with critical feedback from stakeholder meetings. The goal of the workshops was to seek the input of subject matter experts, partners, and community members in defining the future of interpretation and visitor experience along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. These workshops also provided a great opportunity for stakeholders to share experiences and to network.

The workshops were a great success because of the participation from scores of participants. The next steps for this process is to compile the stakeholder input and develop the recommendations into a final Long Range Interpretive Plan. We are hoping to have it completed by the fall of 2018. Opportunities for input were offered both in-person and via webinar. Completed workshops are as follows:

- Omaha, Nebraska: Friday, April 14, 2017
- Webinar - Tribal Focused: Thursday, April 20, 2017
- St. Charles, Missouri: Monday, May 15, 2017
- Washburn, North Dakota: Tuesday, June 13, 2017
- Ilwaco, Washington: Tuesday, June 27, 2017
- Great Falls, Montana: Friday, July 28, 2017
- Webinar Workshop: Tuesday, September 19, 2017
- Webinar Workshop: Thursday, September 21, 2017
Visitor Experience

After the visit, they say:

- Emotional rewards of free time
  - worthwhile, social, comfortable
  - now, fun: Raffling cleanup trip that ends w/ beer

- Engagement: In Great Falls we learned about story in log, hooked -
  - Historical engagement - talk w/ Tangier, 8 in exhibit

- I still remember the names today.
FY17 Volunteer Report

Volunteers are vital to commemorating and protecting the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. This year volunteers donated nearly 142,000 hours supporting interpretive centers, interpretive programming, living history, maintenance, and administration.

In 2017, volunteers helped support special events related to the solar eclipse. Sites all along the trail hosted special viewing events and volunteers assisted with crowd control, interpretation, distribution of viewing glasses, and maintenance.

The data above is based on the reporting from the following partners:

Knappton Cover Heritage Center (OR)
Missouri River Basin
Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center (NE)
Lewis and Clark State Historic Site (IL)
Lewis and Clark Trail
Heritage Foundation (trailwide)
Lewis and Clark Trust (trailwide)
Missouri River Relief (Missouri River)
Lewis and Clark Omaha Visitor Center (NE)
Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural and Educational Center (ID)
Sacajawea State Park (WA)

Friends of Pompeys Pillar (MT)
Upper Missouri River Breaks Interpretive Center (MT)
Fort Osage National Historic Landmark (MO)
Fort Walla Wall Museum (WA)
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center (MT)
State Historical Society of North Dakota (ND)
Sgt. Floyd River Museum and Welcome Center (IA)
Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center (WA)
Beacon Rock State Park (WA)
Columbia Hills State Park (WA)
Maryhill State Park (WA)
Omaha, Nebraska is home to Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail’s Headquarters and Visitor Center. Rangers offer interpretive programming, special events, and outreach to the local area. They are also involved in the community at Earth Day Omaha, with the Boy Scouts of America, Completely KIDS, home school groups and local school districts.

54,571 VISITORS

43 SCHOOL PROGRAMS GIVEN TO
1,978 STUDENTS

7 COMMUNITY EVENTS
3,377 VISITOR CONTACTS
The line to purchase a Senior Pass wrapped around the NPS Midwest Regional Office, also the headquarters of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.
Senior Pass Rush 2017

In 2017, rangers sold an unprecedented number of America the Beautiful Senior Passes, a 1,632% increase over 2016.

We saw more people in the week leading up to the cut-off date than we normally see in an entire summer month. Despite the high volume of visitors, no one had to wait longer than one hour to purchase their Senior Pass.

It is our hope that the new pass owners make the fullest use of their pass to visit federal recreational lands across the country and especially along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.
Achievement Awards

Ranger Julie Blanchard accepts an outstanding achievement award from Downtown Omaha INC for the Trail's participation in Bridge Beats, a community concert series.

In April of 2017, Ranger Ryan Kephart received the Regional Director’s Outstanding Service Award for Advancing Sustainability for his role in the 2016 American Solar Challenge.
In 2017, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail staff completed a project in collaboration with The Wilderness Society using GIS to analyze the composition of land cover and status of vegetation condition and identify conservation protections along the 3,700-mile Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Much Trail research has focused on the history of the expedition and has provided qualitative evaluations that vaguely refer to dramatic landscape changes throughout vast portions of the Trail over the last two centuries. Little has been done to quantitatively evaluate ecological conditions or assess land management areas of the contemporary landscape along the Trail.

Ryan M. Cooper and Rachel Daniels of the National Park Service along with Dr. Travis Belote of The Wilderness Society used spatial data to analyze land cover and vegetation composition, examine conservation status, and identify the wildest remaining areas along a buffered area extending one mile on either side of the Trail. The results show that while much of the Trail has been altered through agricultural development and land use in the past 210 years, small areas remain relatively wild and offer visitors the opportunity to experience a landscape with some degree of historical fidelity.

The majority of the Trail passes through lands with no known conservation protections and wilderness areas and national parks comprise very little of the area. However, two significant spots in the Northern Rockies — the mountains west of Lolo Pass and the upper Blackfoot River watershed — were identified where the Trail passes through “roadless” areas of federally administered lands and where legislative protections could keep remaining wild lands intact and preserved for future generations. The study and results were published in the January 2017 issue of *Natural Areas Journal* 37(1).
Happy New Year!

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail
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www.nps.gov/lecl