Missouri River Basin
Lewis and Clark Interpretive Trail & Visitor Center
Shortage of Funds Causes Concerns for Visitor Center
by Mark Weekley, Superintendent

One of the true gems on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail is the Missouri River Basin Lewis & Clark Interpretive Trail & Visitor Center (Center) located in Nebraska City, Nebraska. The Center opened in July of 2004 and is a 12,000 square foot building located on 79 acres of forest and grasslands. It sits on top of a high bluff overlooking the Missouri River. Several hiking trails guide visitors to views of the river. The educational focus of the Center is the flora, fauna, and scientific work of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. It is like no other along the Trail.

A variety of exhibits have been added over the years that further enhance the Center’s value, such as “Undaunted Anglers,” which was featured in the Spring 2011 issue of The Trail Companion. This exhibit was donated to the Center by the International Federation of Fly Fishers of Livingston, Montana (http://www.undauntedanglers.org) and exquisitely shows the diversity and quantity of fish on the many rivers of the expedition, but also the expedition members’ dependence on this food source, particularly in times of scarcity of other food sources. The newest to arrive is precisely crafted scale models of the expedition’s pirogues and keel boat done by master builder, Butch Bouvier. Many of the exhibits are interactive and appeal to all ages.

Unfortunately, the future of this wonderful Center may be in jeopardy due to a lack of operating funds. It was originally developed with a mix of private funds and tax dollars, including over $2 million provided by the National Park Service. In 2008, Congress passed legislation (Public Law 110-229, Sec 342) that transferred the ownership of this property from the National Park Service to the Missouri River Basin Lewis & Clark Visitor Center Foundation. This legislation also authorized future grants of $150,000 per year for ten years. The intent was to get the Center up and running on a solid footing while allowing the Visitor Center Foundation time to raise funds and establish an endowment.

The act of authorizing funds, however, does not always lead to the appropriation of funds. These are two completely separate actions – and laws that rely on the action of Congress. The funds for the Missouri River Basin Lewis & Clark Interpretive Trail & Visitor Center were authorized with a set amount per year and time limits for the use of funds, but Congress never took the next step to actually provide the money. The National Park Service has provided as much assistance as it has been able to scrape together, but this may not be enough for the Center to meet its needs. While the Center’s Board of Directors is working hard to raise additional funds, it is a tough environment to raise money. The fear is that without the necessary funds, this important center may have to close in the near future.

Recent news articles indicate that the Visitor Center Foundation has found an anonymous donor who has pledged up to $50,000 for the Center if other donors will provide a match. The next time you get a chance, head to Nebraska City and show your support. If you wish to make a day of it, Nebraska City has a number of interesting shops, museums, parks, and great places to eat. For more information, please visit the Center’s web site at www.mrb-lewisandclarkcenter.org.
Do you like National Trails? Are you interested in mapping, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and other technologies? If you answered yes to one or both of these questions, then you should join the National Trails System GIS Network!

The network was formed in 2011 to facilitate information sharing and discussions with interagency staff and partners who are interested in national trails system mapping efforts. Webinars and teleconferences are hosted on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. The network is open to anyone and membership includes representatives from agencies that administer national trails as well as members of trail associations, scholars conducting trail research, and affiliates from educational institutions.

Though GIS and mapping are the focus of the network, the monthly webinars cover a wide range of subjects and feature presentations on both national scenic and historic trails found nationwide. Some past topics of these webinars have included:

• Discussion of the Auto Route Sign Inventory on the Lewis and Clark NHT
• Data Development and Information Sharing Strategies at Overmountain Victory NHT

To find out about upcoming webinars and connect with National Trails System GIS Network members, join the NTS GIS Network Email List, send an email to: ntsgis@webmail.itc.nps.gov.

NTS GIS Network Mission:
We established the NTS GIS Network as a way to connect the diverse array of National Trails System staff and partners who use GIS systems and products in their work. One of our goals is to facilitate the sharing of information and tools that help us do our jobs more efficiently and innovatively. Because the national trails system is managed as a collaboration of agencies and partner organizations, the NTS GIS Network is open to anyone.
The Trailhead
Jefferson River Canoe Trail
by Neal Bedlan, Outdoor Recreation Planner

The Jefferson River Canoe Trail Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation is working to establish a network of public campsites along the Jefferson River.

Six months ago an important parcel of land along the water trail was put on the market. The property is located just outside of the City of Three Forks, Montana and is owned by the local Masonic Lodge. The location is ideal for access and camping on the Jefferson River, adjacent to a public road and near the Old Town Bridge. The site also has a long history of informal use by the townspeople.

The Jefferson River Canoe Trail is a nonprofit organization and the only water trail that is also a chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. Chapter member Thomas Elpel says the proposed name for the location is “Shoshone Landing,” as this was the tribal area of the Shoshone Indians and the landing is near the area where Sacajawea was captured.

Elpel believes that this access site would be an important addition to their efforts to establish a network of seven or eight campsites along the length of the river. Three campsites already exist on Bureau of Land Management lands; if this property is acquired it would become the fourth campsite. Elpel believes that “Shoshone Landing” will provide a much needed floater’s camp and walk-in park on the Jefferson River segment of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The Jefferson River Canoe Trail has always embraced the strong Lewis and Clark connection as an important part of the water trail experience.

Eighty percent of the Lewis and Clark Expedition took place via water, with canoes serving as the primary vessels to move up and down rivers. Retracing the Expedition’s route by water is one of the most authentic ways to experience the Lewis and Clark story.

~Thomas Elpel

The water trail committee is looking to purchase the land and have it available and open for public access in perpetuity. The committee has submitted a grant application to the Montana Fish & Wildlife Conservation Trust to help pay for a portion of the land. Elpel and the committee are working out the logistics of long-term management and ownership, but they are under a quick timeline to acquire the land. The committee has secured a written agreement to hold the property until mid-June.

To find out more information about the Jefferson River Canoe Trail and progress on acquiring the land, go to www.jeffersonriver.org.
This year marks the 40th Anniversary of National Volunteer Week, demonstrating the enduring importance of recognizing volunteers for their vital contributions. Volunteering is an American tradition and now more than ever, people are getting involved and giving back. The National Park Service has had a long-standing tradition of volunteerism. Last year, more than 250,000 participants in the Volunteers-in-Parks Program donated 6.7 million hours to the National Park Service. Of that total, 154,056 hours were donated by Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail volunteers. Tracking volunteer hours along the Trail is critically important to the volunteer, the National Park Service, and the Trail community.

Record keeping is often thought of as boring, time-consuming, and unrelated to the more rewarding aspects of the day-to-day work of volunteers. However, recording and reporting volunteer hours benefits not only the organization but also the volunteer. One of the most important reasons for the individual volunteer to keep a record of his/her hours is that without a written record of participation, it is difficult to be effectively recognized for his/her service.

In 2012 the Trail developed the Partner Networking and Data Collection Portal, a free and secure web-based system accessible to program managers, partner organizations, and volunteers. The primary purpose of the Portal is to provide partner organizations with a systematic process for entering statistics, networking with trail sites, and sharing resources.

The program is simple and easy for program managers to use to quickly update records from anywhere at any time, track volunteer hours for recognition, engage volunteers, recruit volunteers for special events, post upcoming trainings, etc.

Give it a try! The Portal has been designed so that you can customize the program to fit your needs. Don’t delay, get started recording your statistics today!

What Do You and Lewis and Clark Have in Common? They Recorded Statistics and So Do You!

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail announces the newly developed Partner Networking and Data Collection Portal which was designed for partner organizations to collect data for various visitor statistics and volunteer hours. The Portal is a free, secure, web-based system accessible to program managers, partner organizations and volunteers. The Portal’s primary purpose is to provide Lewis and Clark organizations with a systematic process for entering statistics, networking with trail sites, and resource sharing.

- Access, maintain, and update records quickly
- Create professional reports
- Reduce the amount of data entry time
- Record hours
- Recruitment
- Special Program announcements

To Establish Your Account and to Get Started Recording Your Statistics Contact:

Nichole McHenry
Volunteer Program Manager
Nichole_McHenry@nps.gov
(402) 661-1810
A Lewis and Clark Kite Flying Festival on May 3, 2014 marked the start of a summer-long kite exhibit entitled, “Visions of Lewis and Clark” in the Omaha Metro Area.

An estimated 2,000 people gathered at Tom Hanafan River’s Edge Park in Council Bluffs, Iowa to learn about Lewis and Clark history and enjoy the beautiful spring day.

Visitors were treated to kite building and flying with a Ranger, a rock climbing wall, bounce house, art projects, a replica keelboat, face painting, and button making. Families were able to go inside a tipi and listen and learn about tribal drumming. Entertainment was provided by Rivertown String Band who played period music.

Visitors were welcomed by the National Park Service’s Midwest Acting Regional Director Patty Trap. A brief introduction to the exhibit was given by its curator Terry Zee Lee of Billings, Montana. Mayor of Council Bluffs, Matt Walsh, greeted visitors to the riverfront before he and other special guests competed in a kite decorating and flying contest that included Superintendent of Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Mark Weekley, Council Bluffs Parks and Recreation Director Larry Foster, and Director Trap.

Patty Trap, Midwest Acting Regional Director explains her kite artwork: “Be a Ranger!”

The festival was hosted and organized by the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail but its success was due to the many partners who participated. Thank you to all involved: City of Council Bluffs Park and Recreation, Omaha Parks and Recreation, Joslyn Art Museum, Western Historic Trails Center, Omaha Public Library, Midwest Winds Kiteflyers, Western National Parks Association, Council Bluffs Public Library, Butch Bouvier and the keelboat, and Steve Tamayo youth drum group.

The fun isn’t over – visitors have all summer to see the exhibit, “Visions of Lewis and Clark” throughout the Omaha Metro Area. The Lewis and Clark themed kites are on display at 10 different locations. Visit www.lewisandclarkkites.org for more information and to learn how to become a Kite Explorer!

One thing is for sure, kites bring people together. People of all ages and from both sides of the river came together and partook in the festivities. Every generation gets a chance at discovering the wonder of seeing a kite lifted up high and takes special pleasure when that kite is one they made. What better way to learn about Lewis and Clark – outdoors flying a kite!
March did not bring spring weather to Omaha, the headquarters of Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. However it did bring the story of Lewis and Clark to over 150 students from Cottonwood and Sunflower Elementary Schools in Andover, Kansas. These children did not arrive at headquarters in the traditional yellow busses nor fill the headquarters’ Visitors Center with their echoing laughter; instead they appeared as tiny pixels of color combined and compressed over 300 miles of time and space and appeared on a video screen in full color and high definition!

Ranger Byrony Forbes traveled to them the same way and presented a program using multiple props and accoutrements of the Trail to highlight fascinating and little known aspects of the well-known expedition. She brought in a pound of fresh meat to illustrate that expedition members needed 10 pounds a day to stay nourished, she shared replica uniforms of U.S. Army officers similar to those Captains Lewis and Clark would have worn (until these were piecemealed out as trade goods for much needed supplies and food!); she even donned a grizzly bear pelt and told of near mythical tales of these gigantic and ferocious creatures.

The students of Andover did not come to this program un-prepared. They sent a list of “Essential Questions” that they wished Ranger Byrony to address. These questions were:

• Why was Sacajawea chosen to be their guide? Weren’t there other Native Americans that could have lead them? What made her different?
• What kind of dangers did The Corps of Discovery encounter? Bears? Snake bites? Illnesses? Attacks?
• What were different duties members of The Corps of Discovery performed? Hunters? Cooks? Soldiers? Doctors?
• Did Lewis and Clark have any family members that joined them on their journey?
• What is one of your favorite stories of Lewis and Clark that we may not be aware of?

Then of course there were the spontaneous questions! One of the most profound was, “What would the United States be like if the Louisiana Territory deal was never made?”

The Lewis and Clark story, the landscape they traversed, the people they met, their adventures and misadventures are all part of our American heritage, so although the students in Andover, Kansas do not live along the Trail, this is their history too and it was wonderful to be able to provide them with the opportunity to talk with a Park Ranger and learn first-hand about this important tale.

We hope to provide similar distance learning opportunities to more classrooms on and off the Trail!

---

Thank you so very much for hosting a fantastic web chat. Our students were totally impressed by your presentation and gained a TON of information that they did not get from the stories we have been reading in class. ~Teacher

The real world connection you gave our kids is priceless. It was like we were right there with you. Introducing students to this type of 21 century learning is one of my goals as an educator. Thank you for helping me reach my goal and thank you for sharing the history of Lewis and Clark with students from Cottonwood Elementary. Very cool! ~Teacher

Thank you for hosting a fantastic web chat. Our students were totally impressed by your presentation and gained a TON of information that they did not get from the stories we have been reading in class. ~Teacher
The National Trails System Act (the Act), as amended, requires historic trails added to the National Trails System to identify “High Potential Historic Sites” (HPHS) and “High Potential Route Segments” (HPRS) in each trail’s comprehensive plan. However, this requirement was not clearly in place when the first four historic trails were established in 1978 and HPHS and HPRS have never been identified for the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

The NPS is working to remedy this, beginning with the identification of historic sites related to the Expedition 1804-1806 route that meet the definition of a HPHS in the Act.

High potential sites are those historic sites related to the route or sites in close proximity thereto, which provide opportunity to interpret the historic significance of the trail during the period of its major use; criteria for consideration as high potential sites include historic significance, presence of visible historic remnants, scenic quality, and relative freedom from intrusion.

Using the HPHS definition that applies to all national historic trails, we have developed some additional guidance specific to the Lewis and Clark Trail. The guidance doesn’t change the definition, but applies it more directly to the Lewis and Clark Trail. For example, a criterion for consideration as HPHS in the Act is the presence of visible historic remnants. Many might interpret this as meaning overland ruts carved from heavy and/or prolonged use; while the Expedition didn’t leave much of any physical trace behind. In our criteria guidance for Lewis and Clark Trail HPHS, landscape features documented in the journals could qualify as a remnant.

Using this guidance and with the assistance of individuals with knowledge and expertise in historic sites related to the Corps of Discovery Expedition, a preliminary list has been compiled that will be shared with the public for input and comment in the near future.

The National Park Service has determined that the release of this list and accompanying maps constitutes a federal action due to the potentially sensitive nature of some of the sites. Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the publication of the list for public use has the potential for indirect effects to these sites or to sites in their near vicinity.

We are beginning formal consultation with Indian Tribes, other federal agencies, and State Historic Preservation Offices to consider these effects. Some of these sites may be sacred sites or sites of cultural significance that we may not be aware of.

While we are not proposing any action on these sites beyond the publication of this list, we do need to consider impacts in collaboration with Tribes before we make the list public. Please stay tuned!
The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 had a direct bearing on the Lewis and Clark Expedition that President Thomas Jefferson set in motion that same year. The stunning land deal resulted from diplomatic negotiations between two sovereign nations, France and the United States. The final version of the treaty covering the sale of the vast Louisiana Territory was signed in Paris on April 30, 1803, and as provided in the constitution was ratified by a two-thirds majority of the U.S. Senate in late October that same year, well before the expedition reached St. Louis and the mouth of the Missouri River in December.

Upon reaching that point in its journey, the expedition was stopped dead in its tracks by the refusal of Spanish Lieutenant Governor Carlos Dehault Delassus to grant to the explorers permission to enter the Missouri, even though it was now a river wholly within U.S. territory according to provisions of the recently concluded treaty. Lieutenant Governor Dehault Delassus professed ignorance of the transaction between France and the U.S. and would not relent until he received official confirmation and approval from his superiors.

Rather than trigger ill feelings and an international incident, Captain Lewis agreed to the governor’s requirement that the expedition remain on the American side of the Mississippi River until such time as the situation could be clarified to his satisfaction. Prevailing modes of transportation and communication, as well as the great distances involved, ensured the delay would be, at best, months in duration.

In compliance with the Spanish governor’s directive, Captain Clark established the expedition’s winter encampment at the confluence of the River Dubois with the Mississippi just east of the mouth of the Missouri in an area known as the “American Bottom.”

Some observers might logically ask: “If France could legally sell the Louisiana Territory to the U.S., then why were Spanish authorities ensconced in St. Louis within that territory and in a position to block the expedition’s passage into the Missouri River?” It’s an intriguing question the answer of which requires a quick review of a complex of international political maneuvers dating back to the conclusion of the French and Indian War in colonial America. Put simply, France and her allies lost to Great Britain in that war. The peace treaty ending the conflict in 1763 provided for the transfer of French possessions in the Great Lakes area and Canada to Great Britain.

However, in a separate earlier treaty France contrived to transfer her claims to territory west of the Mississippi River to Spain in order to block British domination of the continent and perhaps keep alive the prospect of recovering that territory at some future date.

That time arrived in 1800 when Napoleon Bonaparte, who rose to power in France after the turmoil of the French Revolution, succeeded in pressuring a weak Spanish monarch, Carlos IV, into signing the secret Treaty of San Ildefonso ceding the Louisiana Territory back to France. Due to the outbreak of civil war in Haiti, its Caribbean possession, France had not managed to replace Spanish officials in New Orleans, St. Louis and elsewhere in the region with French military and administrative personnel.

Eventually, the toll in blood and treasure became too costly and Napoleon decided to sell the whole of Louisiana to the U.S. in order to cut his losses and to raise much-needed funds to resume his war with Great Britain. That, in a nutshell, is why Lewis and Clark confronted intransigent and officious Spanish authorities, instead of French, upon their arrival at St. Louis.

The official transfer of the Louisiana Territory from France took place in two phases. On December 20, 1803, the first transfer ceremony unfolded in the Cabildo and in the Place d’Armes in New Orleans accompanied by much pageantry, pomp and circumstance. The transfer of Upper Louisiana occurred in St. Louis almost three months later on March 9 – 10, 1804, amid similar ceremonial formalities. Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark attended the proceedings.

Without question, they were now at liberty to ascend the Missouri River into a vast new American territory. The expedition resumed its historic journey on May 14, 1804, when it left Camp River Dubois, crossed the Mississippi and entered the mouth of the Missouri “under a jentle brease.”
A Lewis and Clark Legacy
SAYING GOODBYE

I, too, have found my way in Indian Country because of the kindness of the Tribal and non-Tribal people along the route of Lewis and Clark. I have spent nearly 13 years on the Trail with the National Park Service and it is now time that I proceed on to another calling. I have finished my journey, I have met the good people of the Trail and I have seen great accomplishments across the many miles that make up the route of Lewis and Clark’s journey. I have been asked to work for the National Park Service out of our Washington, D.C. office. I will be taking a brand new position working on Tribal programming – a true passion of mine.

When I arrived in Omaha, Nebraska, the Trail’s National Headquarters, I was welcomed as the Chief of Logistics for the Corps of Discovery II. I had much to learn and was immediately sent out on the Trail. I spent four months traveling and meeting community leaders and tourism directors, Lewis and Clark enthusiasts and historians, Tribal leaders, elders and scholars, and many people from our sister parks and federal agencies. From that travel experience forward I found my place; I had become a part of the story and the story a part of me. The work was consuming, yet rewarding – a chance of a lifetime.

Planning a four-year tour route, managing the transportation contract, logistically placing a 53-foot show trailer and associated tents in communities, state fairs and Reservations, and planning travel routes and lodging for the Corps of Discovery II crew of NPS park rangers was, to put it simply, my job. Technically speaking it was my job. However, building relationships and providing a place, a platform, the “Tent of Many Voices,” for the telling of the whole story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, including the Tribal stories that had long been forgotten by a nation - now that was my joy. The heart of what I did and what we all did during the bicentennial commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

I am proud to say that since the bicentennial the National Park Service has continued to work to help the Trail Community protect the places of the journey and to continue to tell the whole story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

As the Chief of Interpretation, I believe that there are endless opportunities to build meaningful and sustainable connections between our past, our contemporary lives, and our future. We must live and teach others to live in a place of humility and understanding of the importance of including all voices in our history. We must tell the difficult stories of our human existence as well as the easy stories; we must engage in new meaningful relationships, we must come together as a nation of Lewis and Clark educators to instill in our audience a desire to understand how we as human beings fit into, not only the history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, but also into all of our American natural and cultural history.

As I depart the Trail and as I reflect on the past chapter of my life I am saddened, yet satisfied, by the good work and lasting relationships that I have experienced. I leave behind a team of National Park Rangers with great skills, compassion and sensitivity for telling the whole story of the expedition. Their respectful nature as human beings guides them as they work to tell the stories of a diverse nation. Please call on them as you are planning for programming, education, volunteerism and interpretation – they will love to hear from you as the National Park Service continues to build meaningful and productive relations across the trail.

I will be leaving Lewis and Clark to share with the a broader audience the importance of working with our First Nations and building relationships and platforms for further engagement of the indigenous voice in our country. Today I understand more than ever what Alan Pinkham was saying to me that day.

Carol McBryant, Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Volunteer Services

A dear friend and tribal scholar of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Alan Pinkham, once told me that through his studies of the expedition he believes that the Corps of Discovery returned to St. Louis in 1806 more Indian than American. He continued to say that the 28 months of the expedition were arduous and full of many challenges but, because of the friendship and assistance from the Tribes, they found their way in Indian Country.

As I depart the Trail and as I reflect on the past chapter of my life I am saddened, yet satisfied, by the good work and lasting relationships that I have experienced. I leave behind a team of National Park Rangers with great skills, compassion and sensitivity for telling the whole story of the expedition. Their respectful nature as human beings guides them as they work to tell the stories of a diverse nation. Please call on them as you are planning for programming, education, volunteerism and interpretation – they will love to hear from you as the National Park Service continues to build meaningful and productive relations across the trail.

I will be leaving Lewis and Clark to share with the a broader audience the importance of working with our First Nations and building relationships and platforms for further engagement of the indigenous voice in our country. Today I understand more than ever what Alan Pinkham was saying to me that day.

Carol McBryant, Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Volunteer Services
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail
Interactive Trail Atlas

Explore the Trail! Plan your trip!
Create and export your own custom maps.
Dynamically display dozens of map layers, including the historic route and campsites of the Corps of Discovery, river channels, tribal homelands, auto tours, visitor centers, historic sites, and more.

www.lewisandclarktrailmap.com

Lewis and Clark Trail Brochure

Visitor centers can order Lewis and Clark NHT brochures free of charge from Trail Headquarters. Brochures come in boxes of 500 and are limited to two boxes per visitor center, based on availability. Smaller amounts can be requested to meet your needs.

To have brochures shipped to you, please email LECL_Information@nps.gov, or call 402-661-1804 and provide number of brochures desired and visitor center address.

Lewis & Clark Trail on Social Media
Join the Conversation

We’re on board and we’re ready to join the conversation. We look forward to interacting with you and sharing in all things Lewis and Clark!

@LewisClarkTrail
/lewisandclarknht
/lewisandclarknhtnps

Subscribe or Update Your Profile

In an effort to better serve you, we are taking steps to improve our mailing list. To conserve resources, much of our communication efforts have transitioned to digital format. Periodically we still send hardcopy announcements on various topics. Having an accurate email and surface mailing address will ensure that we can reach you effectively. Please take this opportunity to either subscribe or update your contact information and provide us with your interests.

For questions, contact Karla Sigala, Editor at (402) 661-1826 or at: lecl_communications@nps.gov.

Click Here to Subscribe or Update Your Profile

your e-mail address
Would you like to contribute an article or feature to The Trail Companion? Share the good work you are doing.

We will be happy to accept your article for consideration in future issues. The Trail Companion is published quarterly in February, May, August, and November.

Please contact the Editor, Karla Sigala at: lecl_communications@nps.gov