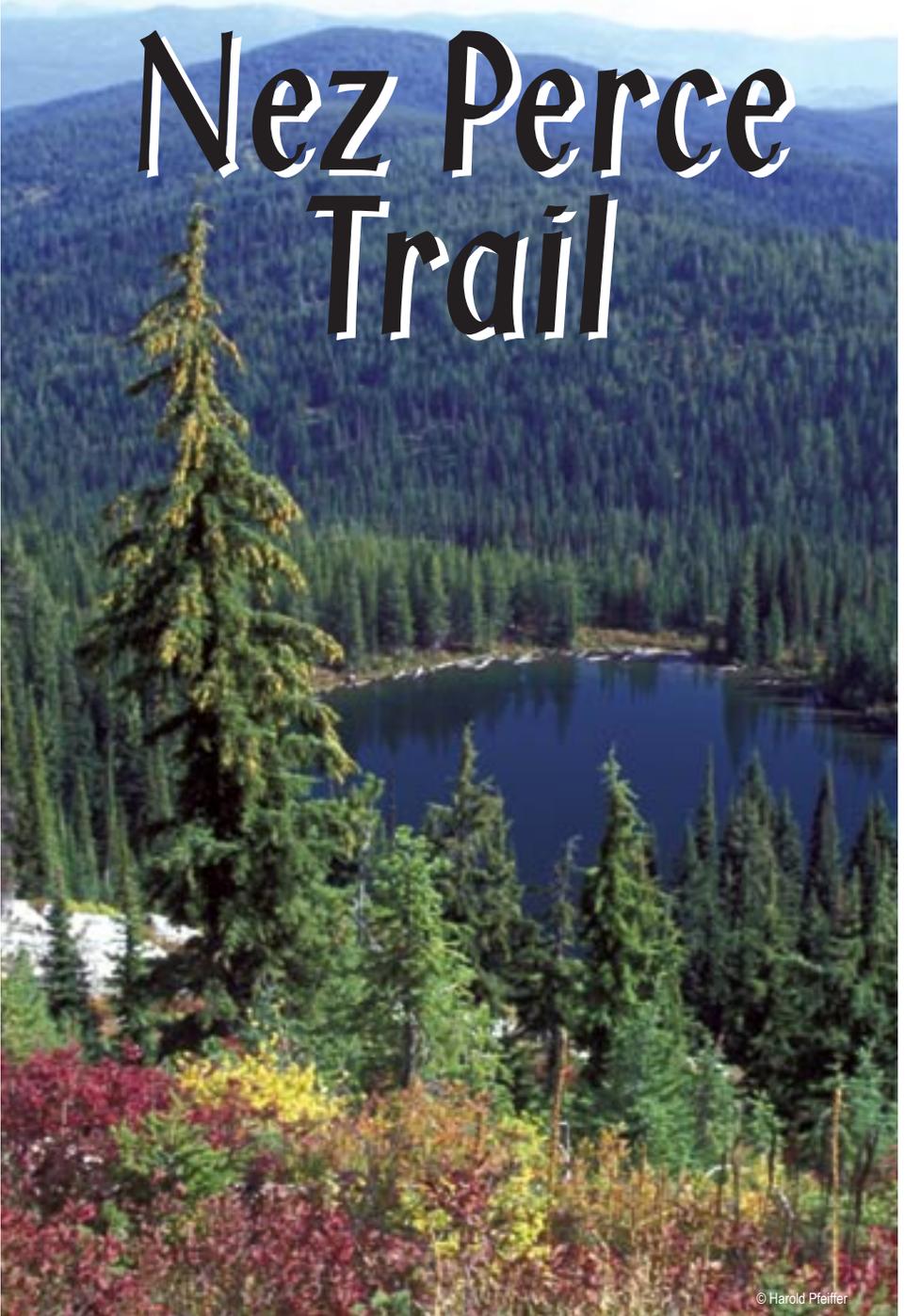


Orofino, Idaho to Lolo, Montana



Discover the

Nez Perce Trail



© Harold Praiffer

AUTOTOUR





The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo)

National Historic Trail

Designated by Congress in 1986, the entire Nez Perce National Historic Trail stretches 1,170 miles from the Wallowa Valley of eastern Oregon to the plains of north-central Montana.

This segment of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail will take you from **Orofino, Idaho to Lolo, Montana**, one of five available tours. As you travel this historic trail, you will see highway signs marking the official Auto Tour route.

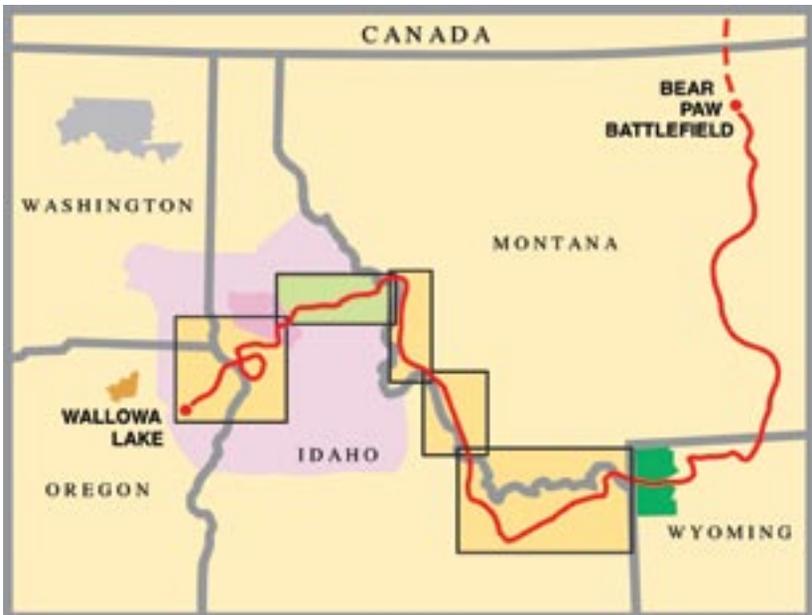
Each designated Auto Tour route stays on all-weather roads passable for all types of vehicles. Adventure Routes are an alternative for those seeking the most authentic historic route. They are often on gravel or dirt roads, so plan ahead.



Check weather and road conditions before embarking on your journey.

Current Auto Tour Opportunities

See the available Auto Tour brochure for each trail segment indicated on the map below for specific route information.



- Nez Perce National Historic Trail
- Orofino, Idaho to Lolo, Montana Segment
- Trail Segments (Auto tour brochure provided)
- Traditional Nez Perce Tribe Homelands
- Nez Perce Indian Reservation
- Colville Indian Reservation
- Yellowstone National Park
- Umatilla Indian Reservation



Experience the Nez Perce Trail



U.S. Highway 12

The Auto Tour route is a designated auto route that stays on U.S. Highway 12 (Lewis and Clark Highway). It allows you to experience the Nez Perce National Historic Trail from a distance.

U.S. Highway 12 is a paved two-lane highway. It is a winding road with speed limits 50 mph or less with few turnouts and limited opportunities to pass. Access to the U.S. Highway 12 corridor is from Lewiston, Orofino, Greer, Kamiah or Kooskia, Idaho; or Lolo or Missoula, Montana.



How Do I Get There?

U.S. Highway 12

The U.S. Highway 12 tour begins in Greer, Idaho, on the west end and ends 150 miles east at the Fort Fizzle interpretive site in Montana. A short 4 mile detour on Idaho State Highway 13 at Kooskia will take you to the interpretation of the Clearwater Battle .2 miles south of Stites at milepost 21.2.

Lolo Motorway

From the East

Take Parachute Hill Road, Forest Road 569, a double-lane gravel road that leaves U.S. Highway 12 near milepost 162 just east of the turnoff to Powell Ranger Station. Or take Saddle Camp Road 107 near milepost 140 on U.S. Highway 12, 27 miles west of Powell Ranger Station. Caution! You may encounter logging traffic on these roads.



13

11

569

Lolo Motorway

An Auto Tour on a primitive road

Lolo Motorway (Forest Road 500) is a narrow, winding primitive road that dips into saddles and ascends again onto ridgetops. This single-lane road, partially built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, offers the more adventurous traveler a more tangible experience of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

The road is generally free from ice and snow by mid-July and usually accessible into October. A vehicle with high clearance is recommended. Taking RVs or towing trailers on the road is not recommended. You'll find no services along the Motorway; be sure you take plenty of fuel, food and water.



From the West

Follow the National Forest access sign posted alongside U.S. Highway 12 by the bridge that crosses the Clearwater River at Kamiah. Turn right onto Kamiah-Pierce Road 100 and proceed to Lolo Forks Campground. You'll cross a bridge and turn right onto Forest Road 500. Fourteen miles and 45 minutes later you'll come to Canyon Junction, a five-point intersection. Road 500 turns into a narrow, unsurfaced road at this junction, and remains that way as you continue eastward along the route. It's 73 miles from Canyon Junction to Powell Junction where Road 569 meets Road 500. This segment is the historic Lolo Motorway. From Kamiah to Powell, you'll travel 119 miles. Also, from the west, access Road 100 by driving east from Weippe, off Idaho State Highway 11.



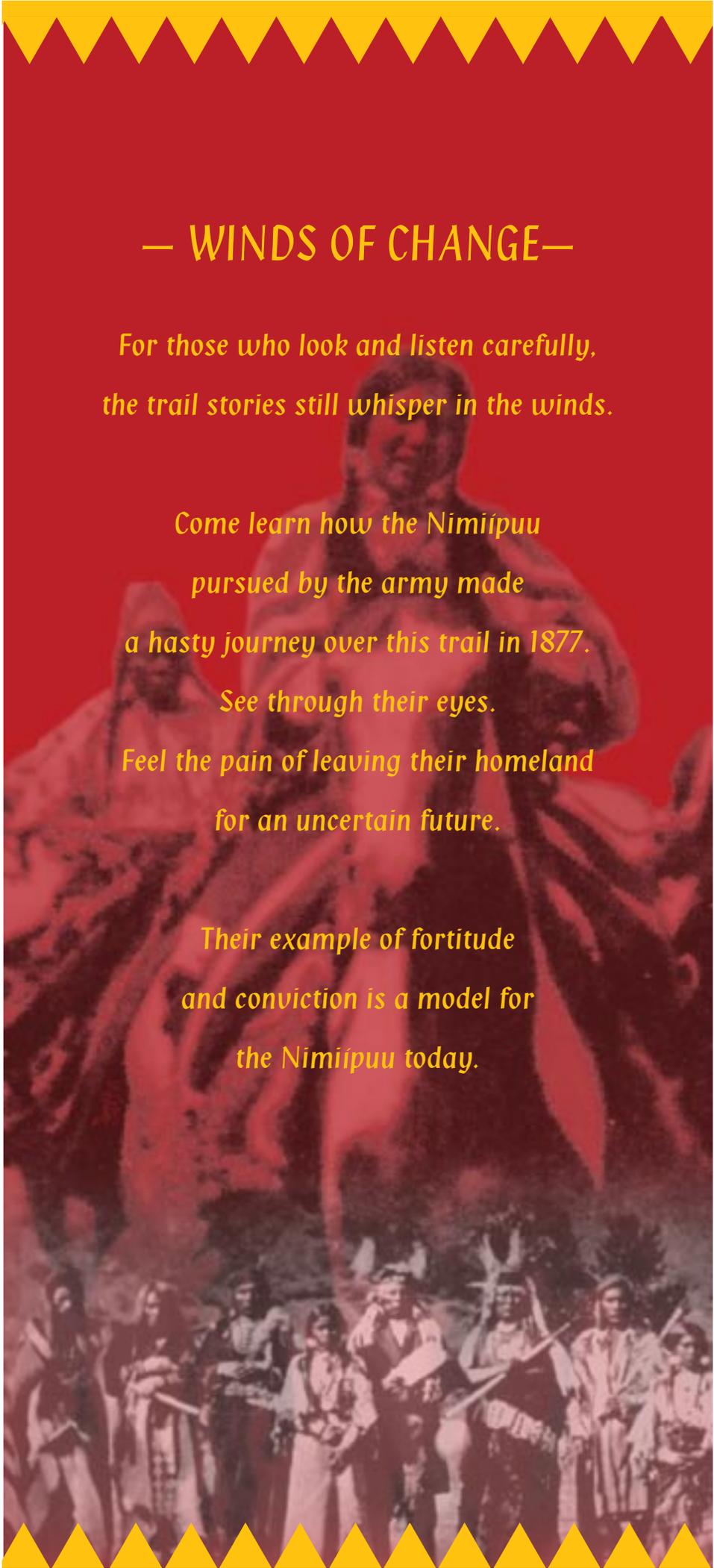
The Nez Perce War of 1877 symbolizes the dramatic collision of cultures which continues to shape the West and its people. A native people were forced to flee their homelands in a futile attempt to avoid war and save their traditional ways. Immigrated European people found themselves fighting neighbors who had been their friends for many years. Traditional trails, which had long been a source of joy and sustenance, became a trail of flight and conflict, a trail of sorrow.

Chronology of the 1877 Flight of the Nez Perce from Orofino, Idaho to Lolo, Montana

July – August, 1877

- 1 July** Captain Whipple's troops attack and plunder Looking Glass's village near Kooskia. The Looking Glass band joins Red Owl's camp on the South Fork of the Clearwater accompanied by the Palouse band of Husishusis Kute.
- 6 July*** Looking Glass joins the bands of Joseph, White Bird and Toohoolhoolzote.
- 8 July** 75 volunteers leave Mount Idaho to look for the Nez Perce. They encamp on a hill west of the South Fork of the Clearwater.
- 9 July** General Howard camps at Walls, east of the South Fork of the Clearwater River.
- 11 July** General Howard surprises the Nez Perce, and the Clearwater Battle begins.
- 12 July** The Nez Perce withdraw from the Clearwater Battle and camp that evening near Kamiah. Troops occupy and plunder the former Nez Perce camp on the South Fork of the Clearwater River.
- 13 July** The Nez Perce cross the Clearwater River at Kamiah.
- 15 July** The Nez Perce move to and camp near Weippe.
- 16 July** Returning from Montana, Red Heart's band of 35 people is arrested at Weippe.
- 16 July** The nontreaty bands head east on the Lolo Trail.
- 17 July** A scouting party is ambushed south of Weippe by the Nez Perce rear guard.
- 25 July** Fort Fizzle is constructed four miles west of Lolo, Montana.
- 26 July** The Nez Perce meet with Captain Rawn at Fort Fizzle.
- 28 July** The Nez Perce detour around Fort Fizzle.
- 30 July** General Howard leaves Kamiah and camps at Weippe.
- 31 July** General Howard's command camps at Musselshell Meadows.
- 2 August** Captain Spurgin's 50 axe men join General Howard's command.
- 6 August** General Howard's command camps at Lolo Hot Springs.

* This date is approximate.



— WINDS OF CHANGE—

*For those who look and listen carefully,
the trail stories still whisper in the winds.*

*Come learn how the Nimiípuu
pursued by the army made
a hasty journey over this trail in 1877.*

*See through their eyes.
Feel the pain of leaving their homeland
for an uncertain future.*

*Their example of fortitude
and conviction is a model for
the Nimiípuu today.*

1

Dunwell's Ferry

Mile 52 U.S. Highway 12

Gold Rush Ferry – In 1877 Dunwell's Ferry was located at present-day Greer, Idaho. General Howard had originally planned to have a detachment of volunteers cross here, go to Weippe, and squeeze the Nez Perce between the force from Weippe and his force from Kamiah. Those plans were foiled when the Nez Perce left Kamiah before volunteers could reach Weippe.

The volunteers had other problems getting to Weippe. The ferry house had been burned and the boat cut adrift. Without a means to cross the river, the volunteers returned to Kamiah to rejoin General Howard.

Following the Clearwater Battle, the Nez Perce crossed the Clearwater River on July 13, 1877 while Nez Perce warriors kept advancing U.S. soldiers at bay.

“When they reached the riverbank they fired across at them. Many soldiers jumped from their horse and ran to any shelter they saw. Others galloped fast back toward the hills, we laughed at those soldiers.”

*–Yellow Wolf
(Hemene Moxmox)
Nez Perce Warrior*



Yellow Wolf (Hemene Moxmox)



U.S. HIGHWAY 12

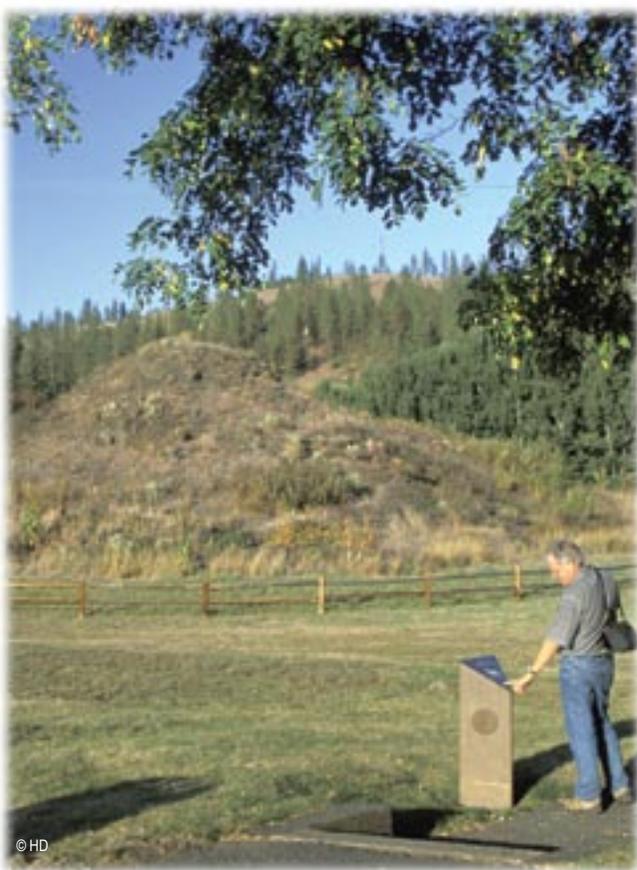
2

Heart of the Monster

Mile 68 U.S. Highway 12

A historic landmark in the homeland of the Nimiípuu

Travel back in time to the creation legend of the Nimiípuu. You will find the landmark along U.S. Highway 12 two miles east of Kamiah. An audio station recounts the monster and the coyote legend that led to the Nimiípuu's origin.



3

Looking Glass

Mile 75.9 U.S. Highway 12

Interpretive sign, “Peet-Kehk-Yoot (Attacked) Destruction of Looking Glass Village”

In the village of Clear Creek, Chief Looking Glass (Elelimyete' qenin' (Wrapped in Wind)) and his band had just awakened on the morning of July 1 when they saw troops approaching. Until this time they had maintained their neutrality in the escalating conflict between the non-treaty Nez Perce and the U.S. government.



Chief Looking Glass,
Elelimyete' qenin' (Wrapped in Wind)



U.S. HIGHWAY 12

Looking Glass sent Peopeo Tholekt to parley with the soldiers.

"I am Peopeo Tholekt. Looking Glass is my Chief. I bring you his words. He does not want war! He came here to escape war. Do not cross our side of the little river. We do not want trouble with you whatever!"

*—Peopeo Tholekt (Bird Alighting),
Nez Perce Warrior*

While they were talking, a gunshot rang out, and a villager was wounded.

Captain Winters and Lieutenant Rains and a large majority of the soldiers were eager for the fight, but were held in check by the Colonel. Our boys finally became indignant and opened fire. They killed a few Indians, burnt their lodges, and drove off about a thousand ponies.

Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman
July 14, 1877



Peopeo Tholekt
(Bird Alighting)

4

Looking Glass Village

Mile 75 U.S. Highway 12

In the area of Kooskia, take the east exit off U.S. Highway 12 at Mile Post 75. Cross the bridge and take a left to the Kooskia National Fish Hatchery. Travel approximately 2 miles until the road forks. One road leads to the hatchery, the other has a DEAD END sign. Follow the DEAD END road for about a tenth of a mile.

There is a self-guided trail that tells the story of the morning of July 1, 1877. Be sure to stop and see the solitary monument that marks the site of the attack on Chief Looking Glass's camp. This is one of six sites marked by a monument along the trail commemorating the 1877 War.

5

Clearwater Battle

Mile 21.2 Idaho State Highway 13

As you drive along U.S. Highway 12, venture to the second battle site known as the Clearwater Battle. Take the Idaho State Highway 13 exit. Drive through the towns of Kooskia and Stites. The Clearwater Battle site is approximately 1.5 miles from the junction of U. S. Highway 12 and Idaho State Highway 13.





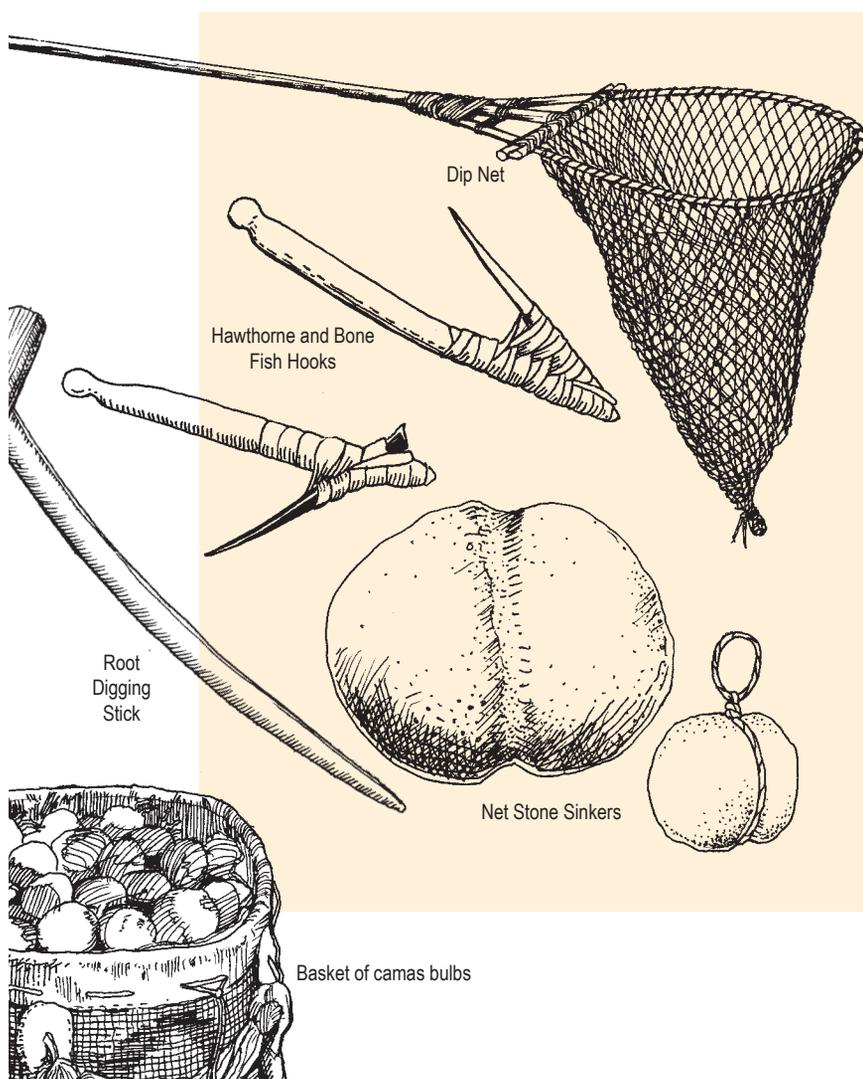
U.S. HIGHWAY 12

6

Powell Ranger Station

Mile 162 U.S. Highway 12

Turn off U.S. Highway 12 and drive to Powell Ranger Station. This area was a traditional fishing spot visited by many Nez Perce on their seasonal rounds. Fishermen used tree limbs as gaff poles and spears, fashioned milkweed into nets, and black hawthorne into hooks, and constructed rock weirs in the river. The Nez Perce and the Salish-Kootenai took advantage of the abundant fish during spawning season. Members of the Nez Perce and Salish-Kootenai Tribes ensured their survival and prosperity by working together economically, socially, and spiritually with the land.



7 Lolo Pass

Mile 174.4 U.S. Highway 12

Retrace this and other historic routes and learn their stories by stopping in and viewing the exhibits at Lolo Pass Visitor Center and Rest Area.

The site is easily accessed from U.S. Highway 12 at the Idaho/Montana border.

8 Packer Meadows

1.5 miles east of Lolo Pass Visitor Center on Forest Road 373

These meadows, as well as other favored gathering sites including the Weippe Prairie, Musselshell Meadows, the Camas Prairie, and the Big Hole Valley, were prime sources for one of the Nez Perce food staples, the Q'emes (camas) root. Families dug roots between July and September using a tukus (traditional digging stick) fashioned from mountain mahogany with a deer antler handle. The bulbs were placed in pits, layered with grasses and leaves and topped with a fire that was kept burning for about 48 hours. After bulbs turned a dark brown or black, they were pressed into loaves and dried.

On August 6 General Howard established a five-hour breakfast camp with his cavalry and infantry. It was in an area of lush grass with beautiful meadows.

“Here was the place where mule and man enjoyed a rest and a breakfast far more satisfying than inhabited regions which are replete with abundance.”

—General Oliver Otis Howard



U.S. HIGHWAY 12

9

Lolo Hot Springs

Montana Mile 7.0 U.S. Highway 12

The Nimiípuu arrived at Lolo Hot Springs on July 25 well ahead of the Army. Two young men from Stevensville were here on a summer outing. They rushed home and spread the news the Nimiípuu had arrived. Some other visitors also appeared at the camp.

“When the Nez Perce camp reached the Hot Springs on the Lolo Trail...three Indians met them in their camp. One of these Indians was Nez Perce, but his home was in the Bitter Root Valley. He told Looking Glass there were some soldiers on the trail watching for them to come.”

—Duncan McDonald
Nez Perce who worked
as a Reporter



Duncan McDonald

10

Fort Fizzle

Montana Mile 28 U.S. Highway 12

It was here Captain Rawn received word the Nez Perce were coming down the Lolo Trail into the Bitterroot Valley. He was to stop the Nez Perce with a military barricade. As the Nez Perce drew close, they detoured around the barricade. This site is one of the U.S. military failures to stop the Nez Perce and was aptly named Fort Fizzle.

LOLO MOTORWAY

ROAD TO THE BUFFALO

K'useyneisskit

A Nez Perce legend tells us about the origin of the trail. A young boy was lost in these mountains. He was approached by Hah-hahts, the grizzly bear, angry that the humans were taking over his land. When confronted, the boy said, "I can only die. Death is only part of life. I am not afraid." The grizzly, impressed with his bravery, took him to the "backbone of the highest mountains" to show him where the *quas-peet-za* (curled hairs) lived. He also showed him the huckleberry, chokecherry and serviceberry. When they returned to the Kamiah Valley, before leaving him, the bear said, "Here your people are living. Go tell them what you have learned about this great land, the food that has been provided for them and the trail that will take them across the mountain."

Despite the events of 1877, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail is a trail of peace. Used for generations, the route offered access to hunting, fishing, and food gathering areas and enabled trade with other tribes. It led to buffalo on the eastern plains. Lewis and Clark followed the trail across the rugged Bitterroot Mountains to the Weippe Prairie, where they first met the Nimiípuu in 1805. They returned over the same trail in 1806.

These trails have been preserved through natural use. It is up to us to continue to respectfully use these trails remembering they are part of our heritage. To the Nez Perce these trails are part of their sacred land, land they still use. If we want those who come after us to have a sense of history, it is up to us to preserve and protect these special places.



© Harold Pfeiffer

LOLO MOTORWAY

1

Weippe Site of Koot-Noot (Innocent) Abduction of Red Heart's Band

Weippe, Idaho, on Idaho State Highway 11

It was here the U.S. Army came upon Chief Red Heart's (Temme Ilpíl) band. One of General Howard's Nez Perce scouts came riding in and told them, "It will be best to come on your own reservation. There you will be safe." Most of them answered, "We will go."

There were about 20 men, women and a few children returning from Montana. They had not joined the bands on the flight, but had only met and bid them farewell. They were marched 60 miles on foot in irons in the heat of July to Lapwai, then later sent by boat from Lewiston, Idaho, to Fort Vancouver, Washington, where they remained prisoners until April 1878.



'Red Heart Band' by Jo Proferes

2

Musselshell Meadows, Traditional Nez Perce Camp

Forest Roads 100 and 535

You can walk on the same route the Nez Perce and the U.S. Army took at a number of trail segments. These are clearly marked with the Nez Perce National Historic Trail Logo. Many of these segments are the same route taken by Lewis and Clark on their expedition in 1805 and return trip in 1806. Lewis and Clark Trail markers define these segments.



Musselshell Meadows is the site of the first nontreaty Nez Perce camp after leaving the Weippe Prairie. Imagine for a moment you are a young Nez Perce about to leave the land where you were born, where you played as a child, where you fished or gathered camas as an adolescent. Imagine leaving the land where your grandparents were buried, not knowing if you would ever return. These thoughts must have captured the minds of the Nez Perce as they camped in this meadow. General Howard and his men camped in this same site two weeks later on July 31, 1877.





On July 17 not far from Incendiary Creek, General Howard sent a scouting party ahead of his other troops. They were to collect as much information as possible on the fleeing nontreaty Nez Perce. The army employed Nez Perce scouts from bands who had signed the Treaty of 1863. Suddenly, shots rang out from the brush and one of the Nez Perce scouts, Sheared Wolf or John Levi, was shot and killed.

“...See, we have passed over some of the worst trails and still they keep after us...Let our families travel on while the warriors go back to where we can lay for the enemies. We hid in the brush to get them at close range. Soon the voices grew. It was Nez Perce scouts. Christians of our tribe, working for the government against their own tribe, their own blood people. Rainbow took a shot and wounded one of them. Other shots were fired and I do not know if any others of them were struck.”

—Two Moons (Lepeet Hessemduoks)

Until settlers and Christian missionaries arrived, the bands of Nez Perce had co-existed peacefully with most of their neighbors including the Salish to the east. The signing of the 1863 treaty literally turned brother against brother.

“Known to the whites as Sam Morris, I am half-brother to Yellow Wolf, having the same father. While he was with Chief Joseph, I was scout for General Howard; serving around Lapwai and to the Musselshell, Lolo Trail. It was there that I saw John Levi, or Sheared Wolf, killed about twenty miles from Weippe. He got more than one bullet from concealed warriors.”

—Horse Blanket (Seekumses Kunnin)

3

Weitas Meadows

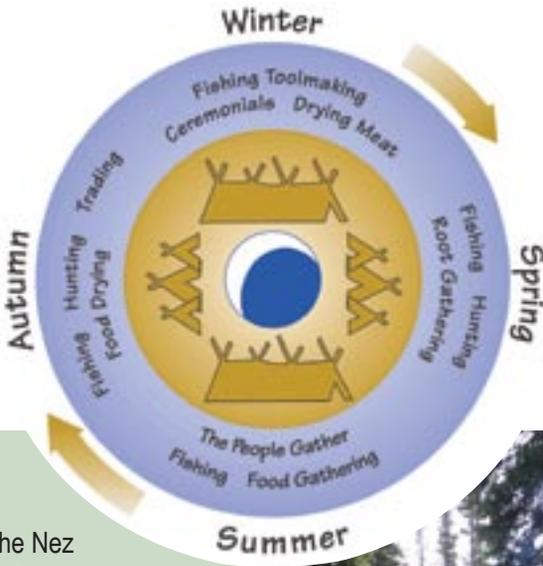
Take a Walk in the Past.

Weitas Meadows is where you will find a boardwalk that takes you on a segment of the trail.

Living in this area the Nez Perce became very resourceful in their use of the land's offerings. They engaged in 'seasonal rounds' traveling to where food and other supplies were plentiful during different times of the year.

Their seasonal movements occurred among their winter villages, fishing locations, hunting grounds and plant collecting areas.

The Nez Perce typically lived in villages of around 35 people. These villages were usually located near water sources. Generally in the summer months the villages broke up into camps of 15–20 people, or 2–3 nuclear families.



Today the Nez Perce continue to use these meadows and forests, sharing their rich resources.

This land is still an important source of spiritual strength for all races of people, including the Nimiipuu, and its natural and historic sites should be left undisturbed by all who visit.



© Harold Pfeiffer

General Howard arrived here with his troops on August 2, 1877.

“Awake by 5 a.m. but did not march until 11 a.m. and then only went 8 miles and made the nicest camp we have yet had in among partially wooded hills, or rather mountains. We had some fine mountain views yesterday and today. We were so high up that the whole extent of mountainous country was spread among us.”

—Dr. John FitzGerald

“Bald Mountain – from going over the hill. According as the tents were pitched, or beds made in them, we slept almost erect or standing on our heads.

...A “slow trail,” owing to mountainous country and fallen timber. The summit of the hills was covered with rough granite boulders, making the path quite difficult.”

—Thomas A Sutherland
General Howard’s Military
Correspondent



4

Howard Camp

Both the Nez Perce and General Howard's troops camped here during the 1877 flight.

Howard and his men frequently wrote about how the Indian horses had eaten all the feed, leaving nothing for their horses when they arrived.

Near Howard's Camp, and at other points along the trail system, there are trees showing the scars of bark peeling, primarily on lodgepole pine. Scientists can determine when trees were peeled by taking core samples and counting rings. Indians and trappers peeled the trees as a food source as early as the 1630s. General Howard's troops peeled trees during their pursuit of the Nez Perce across these mountains.



General Oliver Otis Howard

One of Howard's soldiers recorded this practice in his diary:

"...Our American horses were not used to the fodder of the native Cayuse. We carried no forage. If we should chance upon one of the little mountain valleys where there should be grass, we found it either trampled down by Joseph's ponies or destroyed in some other way. Many is the time we have cut bark from the tree for our horses."

—Private William Connolly



5

21 Mile Camp

The soldiers take advantage of a good meal.

“We passed the last of the Clearwater, where we at night, after twenty-one miles of the roughest country, with Spurgin’s pioneers ahead cutting out the trail, we came into camp in the twilight, where we heard loud echoes of firing by the advanced scouts, and thought they had come upon Joseph’s rear guard.

Then we spurred up the weary animals into a tired trot, and along this narrow trail descended for miles through the almost impenetrable forest, for a horse or mule, but the nicest of salmon for the men, in water about knee deep, water as clean as crystal, rushing and splashing over the rocks. The echoes which deceived us into thinking the enemy was near, were from the scouts carbines, shooting the bigger fish, as they were swimming up the Clearwater (Crooked Fork).”

—General Oliver Otis Howard

Captain William Spurgin and 50 “skilled laborers” were hired to help clear the trail with axes and crosscut saws.



This Trail is a Sacred Trust for All Americans

“We the surviving Nez Perces, want to leave our hearts, memories, hallowed presence as a never-ending revelation to the story of the event of 1877. These trails will live in our hearts.”

“We want to thank all who visit these sacred trails, that they will share our innermost feelings. Because their journey makes this an important time for the present, past and future.”

—Frank B. Andrews, Nez Perce descendant

For more information on the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail visit www.fs.fed.us/npnht or contact:

Nez Perce National Historic Trail
12730 Highway 12
Orofino, ID 83544
208.476.8334

Clearwater National Forest
Supervisor’s Office
12730 Highway 12
Orofino, ID 83544
208-476-4541
TDD 208-476-0129
www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater

Lolo National Forest
Building 24, Fort Missoula
Missoula, MT 59801
406-329-3750
www.fs.fed.us/r1/lolo

Nez Perce National Historical Park
39063 US Hwy 95
Spalding, ID 83540
208-843-2261
www.nps.gov/nepe

Nez Perce Tribe
P.O. Box 365
Lapwai, ID 83540
208-843-2253
www.nezperce.org

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