

USDA United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Rocky
Mountain
Region

National
Grasslands

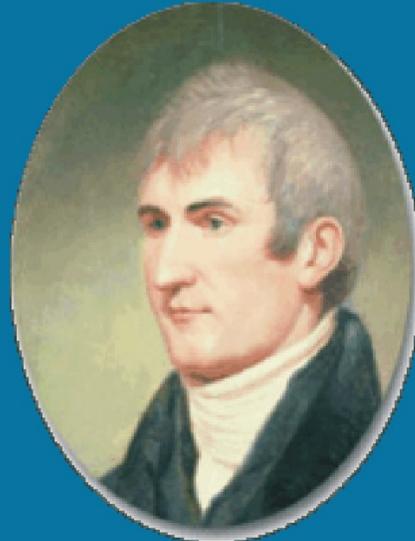


Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Strategic Interpretive Plan

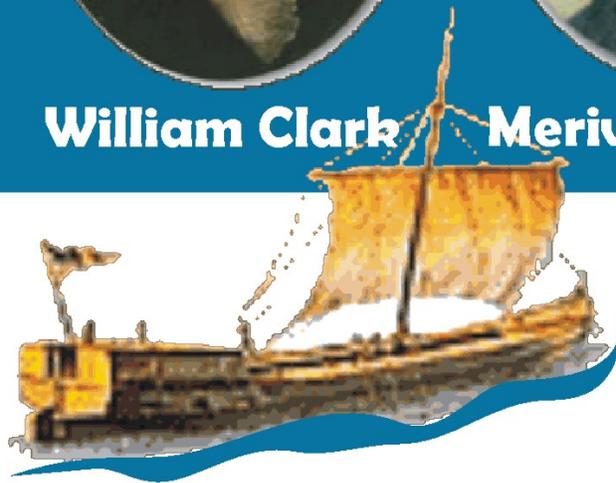
For the National Grasslands



William Clark



Meriwether Lewis



June 2001

USDA Forest Service
Center for Design & Interpretation





Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	
Purpose of the Strategic Interpretive Plan	4
Legislative History	5
Visitor Use	5
Existing Facilities and Services	7
<i>Interpretive Statements</i>	7
Statements of Significance.....	7
Interpretive Theme Statement.....	8
Interpretive Goals and Objectives.....	8
<i>Media Recommendations</i>	10
Target Markets	10
<i>Personal Interpretive Program Recommendations</i>	12
Potential Program Opportunities.....	12
<i>Cost Estimates</i>	14
<i>Appendix A—Brief Historical Account of the Expedition</i>	16
<i>Appendix B—Existing Facilities and Services</i>	18



Introduction



*A*s Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery ventured further west they began noticing there were fewer and fewer trees until finally a sea of grass surrounded them. What was this place they had come across? It was teeming with wildlife, many species never before recorded by Euro-Americans. They called this place “America’s Eden”- we call it the “Great Plains”. The Great Plains extended over a thousand miles from east to west and over two thousand miles north to south. As you travel from east to west, the decreasing rainfall causes the grass to become shorter the further west you go. As a result the grassland ecosystems are identified as tall grass, mixed and short grass.

The grasslands played a significant role in the Lewis and Clark expedition. The majority of their new findings of plants and animals came from this region. The abundant wildlife provided ample food for the expedition. Had it not been for this vast food supply the expedition may not have survived.

The Great Plains also had a diversity of American Indian Nations. The nations individually received and helped the expedition throughout their journey. They provided critical supplies, expertise and friendship to the Corps, which contributed greatly to the success of the expedition. The nations hoped their new relationship would prove profitable through increased trade and assistance in fighting against other tribal nations.

In the 200 years since the expedition, a lot has happened to the Great Plains. Much of the grassland ecosystem has been replaced with farming and ranching. The rich fertile soil of the Great Plains made it possible for this region to become the breadbasket of America, producing enough food to feed much of the world. Only small patch works of grassland



ecosystems remain today. The loss of habitat has resulted in a reduction of both plants and wildlife species, placing many of them on the sensitive and threatened and endangered lists.

The Indian nations, who generously helped the expedition, ironically have almost been eliminated as a result of what came after the expedition. For them the expedition marked the beginning of the end of their way of life. The majority of them lost their traditional homelands and were relocated to reservations with the expectation that they wouldn't survive. The plants and wildlife that supported their lifestyles and economies became difficult if not impossible to attain. Their traditional lifestyle, social structure and economies were compromised to the point of almost being lost forever.

In recent years efforts have been made to reclaim and restore grassland ecosystems. The National Grasslands were created in 1960 to reclaim land that had failed as homesteads. These lands, stripped of their vegetation and parched by the nation's worst drought, in the 1930's, contributed to what was called the "Dust Bowl" days. Precious topsoil blew away leaving behind barren ground. With the creation of the National Grasslands these lands have been revegetated and turned back into productive grasslands. Efforts are ongoing by the Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, state and local agencies.

As the land regenerates there is a parallel correlation with the restoration of the American Indians. Although, the possibility of reclaiming their traditional homelands and lifestyles remains unlikely, there are current efforts of reconciliation between various tribal nations and within the tribes themselves. Seeing the restoration of the land brings hope and encouragement to the indigenous people. As more land is taken out of agricultural production and placed into land trust, conservation easements and other reserves the fragmentation of the ecosystem lessens—moving towards wholeness. This restoration of the land is creating revitalization within many of the American Indian tribes. Providing opportunities for American Indians to participate in land and resources management may also help aid in their personal restoration.

The USDA Forest Service continues to play a vital role in the restoration of the prairie ecosystem as well as help sustain rural economic viability

Purpose of the Strategic Interpretive Plan

The purpose for developing a strategic interpretive plan for the National Grasslands is to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition. This anniversary is an opportunity to interpret the grassland story, historical events and the role of the Forest Service to visitors interested in the expedition's history and grassland management. Lewis and Clark's documentation of the grasslands surprised much of the



world with the revelation of plants and animals previously known only to the indigenous people.

The grassland story is a dynamic one with new chapters being written daily. Unlike mountains and oceans, whose beauty and splendor are breathtaking and dramatic, grasslands are subtler revealing their beauty and splendor to those who are willing to seek them out. As the Wall/ E. Half Buffalo Gap National Grassland District Ranger Bill Perry states, “Anyone can love the mountains but it takes soul to love the prairie.”

This plan will guide the development and implementation of interpretive media and services for the Rocky Mountain Region. This plan establishes interpretive goals, objectives, themes and media recommendations. Future development of interpretive media will be consistent with this plan and evaluated against the goals and objectives presented in this document.

Legislative History

The National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 and the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act of 1935 allowed the federal government to purchase and restore damaged lands and to resettle destitute families as a result of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression.

On June 23, 1960 the National Grasslands were established as a result of Secretary of Agriculture’s Administrative Order, Title 36; Chapter 2; support 211; part 213.

Visitor Use

The following visitor information is a result of observation. None of the information was collected using scientific or statistical methods. These segments identify the main user groups currently visiting the grasslands.

Tourism Industry

- Tour Providers
- Media Developers
 - Filmmakers
 - Advertisers
- Service Providers
 - Hotels/motels
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Restaurants



Highway departments
Outfitters and Guides

Teachers/School groups

Curriculum Developers

Seniors

Seniors with grandchildren
Seniors with tour groups

Families with children





Existing Facilities and Services (Forest Service and others)

See **Appendix B** for list.

Interpretive Statements

Statements of Significance

These statements are written to capture the interpretive significance of the resources within the grassland ecosystems that are significant to visitors and private landowners.

Topic: Biodiversity

The tremendous biodiversity of these remnant grasslands provides critical habitat for hundreds of plant and animal species, including the most sensitive, threatened and endangered species in the world.

Topic: Recreation

The national grasslands provide multiple recreational activities including outstanding bird watching, mountain biking, hunting, hiking, fishing, camping, and other opportunities.

Topic: Water

Water determines grassland viability by maintaining plant life, which in turn supports the soil and protects watersheds, water tables and fisheries. The amounts of water dictate what species of grass will grow (tall, mixed or short).

Topic: Paleo-resources

Buried within the soil, lays the most complete fossil record on earth. Research reveals previous chapters of the grasslands history including the prehistoric prairie, calderas of volcanoes and inland sea.

Topic: Cultural Resources

From indigenous American Indians to fur traders, explorers and homesteaders to today's ranchers, farmers and urban dwellers the grasslands have supported them all through a variety of uses and economic opportunities.



Interpretive Theme Statement

The survival of the American prairie is critical for the survival of grassland dependent species and sustaining the cultural lifestyles of American Plains Indians, ranchers, farmers and rural communities.

Sub-Themes

Grasslands have always had an important role in providing economic benefits to the people living on the prairie.

Grasslands hold remnants of plants, animals and indigenous people that Lewis and Clark recorded in their journals.

The Plains Indians' knowledge of the resources contributed to the success and survival of the expedition.

Restoration of the grasslands demonstrates the resiliency of the prairie.

The National Grasslands play an essential role in sustaining the American prairie and rural economic opportunities through ecosystem management and recreation opportunities.

The American prairie holds mysteries of the past within the buried fossil record.

Interpretive Goals

To provide a safe, positive and memorable recreation experiences for visitors to the prairie.

To develop interpretive opportunities that expose visitors to historic, prehistoric and paleo events, open space and cultural heritage.

To gain support for Forest Service grassland management strategies by education visitors on prairie ecosystems, sustaining lifestyles and conservation techniques.



Interpretive Objectives

The function of the interpretive objectives is to determine what it is we want visitors to know, feel, and do while they are visiting National Grasslands. The following objectives have been established.

We want visitors to know:

Prairie ecosystems are critical for the survival of grassland dependent species and sustaining cultural lifestyles (American Indians, ranchers, farmers).

Grassland management is essential in conserving the prairie ecosystems.

We want visitors to feel or experience:

The vastness of the open space

Solitude

The hidden beauty

The vulnerability of being exposed to the elements and begin to comprehend what it must be like to survive the harshness of the environment.

We want visitors to do:

Recreate--hike, hunt, fish, disperse camp, mountain bike, etc.

Explore

Study nature

Watch wildlife/birding

Discover the undiscovered—participate in a PIT, paleo, prehistoric and/or historic project

Visit the National Grasslands Visitor Center



Media Recommendations

The recommendation is to develop media that targets identified market segments. In addition, develop and work with partners to leverage services and resources to enhance the overall experience for the visitors.

Tourism Industry

Develop a briefing packet that can be customized for each of the segments within this market segment. Standard components would include the National Grassland brochure and briefing papers on relevant subjects (i.e.: suggested stops, talking points, etc.).

Segments

Tour Guides

- Develop talking points
- Provide suggested stops
- Provide web information
- Provide recreation fee demonstration step-on interpreters for bus companies

Media Developers

- Provide information on filming on public lands. Run as a recreation fee demonstration—many movie companies need someone to help the find locations. They pay several thousand dollars for this service.
- Provide themes for exhibits
- Provide sign standards
- Provide key messages/ talking points

Service Providers (hotel, motels, restaurants etc.)

- Provide briefing packets
- Provide order forms for brochures and other products
- Develop a placemat for restaurants—work in partnership with restaurants to cover the cost

Teachers/School Groups

- Update Sod Boxes to include Lewis and Clark materials
- Advertise services and products in school district newsletters and on Forest Service websites.
- Provide live web casts from various Forest Service grassland locations



Curriculum Developers

Provide briefing packet with key messages

Highway Departments

Provide temporary exhibit on the grasslands to the visitor centers

Provide National Grasslands brochure

All Visitors

Provide a book list and other resources

Provide suggested stops and sites to fit varied timeframes

Develop additional Conservation Connection spots for NPR

Expeditions (PIT, Recreation fee demonstration, Elderhostel)

Seniors with grandchildren and Families with children

Provide family expeditions (PIT, tours)

Provide interpretive association package sales on Lewis and Clark and grassland material

Develop patches and pins (sale items)

Develop a Jr. Ranger Adventure Pack containing: (sale item)

Map of sites

Journals

Checklist of plants and animals

Bird checklist

Bird call tapes

Bug box

Disposable camera

Magnifying glass

Binoculars

Plant press kit

Lewis and Clark booklet

Plains Indian booklet

Forest Service facilities

National Grasslands Visitor Center

Enhance exterior of the center with a bronze sculpture of prairie wildlife, replica of a sod house and new sign

Develop temporary exhibit on Lewis and Clark's experience on the prairie

Develop an audiotape tour (sale item)

Provide step-on interpreters (recreation fee demonstration)



Ft. Pierre

Provide copy of temporary exhibit on Lewis and Clark
Develop recreation fee programs on Prairie Chickens and wildlife
tours

Develop wayside exhibits with the topics of:

Hwy 44 site-- prairie dogs

Bad and Missouri Rivers Confluence site—Lewis and
Clark's encounter with Teton Sioux Indians.

Work with the town to develop text and placement.

Nebraska

Develop Paleo Corridor for Hwy 71

Provide step-on interpreters (fee demo)

Construct Prehistoric Discovery Center

Enhance programming at Hudson-Meng

Provide guided tours of Bessey Nursery and their project to help
restore the Missouri River by the propagation and revegetation of
native plants.

Sheyenne

Develop wayside exhibits with topics of:

Tall grass prairie

Little Missouri—unique on the corridor

1st grizzly bear seen by Lewis and Clark

Thunder Basin

Develop wayside exhibits with topics of:

Coal mining

Geology

Personal Interpretive Program Recommendations

Potential Program Opportunities

Establish and support several new recreation fee demonstration projects under the Rocky Mountain Region's interpretive umbrella.

Step-on Interpreters: Forest Service Interpreters step-on to buses at the visitor center or district office and provide a guided tour of the area to the group. The Fees, collected through the bus tour companies, pay for interpreters. Tour companies need about 18 months lead time to make the changes in their pricing and publications.



FS Adventure Tours: Forest Service interpreters provide 2 hour, ½ day, and full day “expeditions” of the grasslands. Designed for families with children with the emphasis on experience and hands-on activities.

Filming Production Assistance: Forest Service employees help large movie companies locate ideal filming locations. They also assist the movie companies with compliance to the permit and provide resource/management expertise



Cost Estimates

Briefing Packets	Research and development Layout and Design Printing	\$5,000
Audio Tape Tour	Research and development Scripting Production Duplication FS-\$20K IA-20K	\$40,000
Sod Boxes	Add new materials	\$250/box
Temporary Exhibits	4'x8' NGVC 24"x36" 36"x48" vertical	\$15,000 \$7,400 \$8,700
Wayside Exhibits	24"x36" with frame	\$3,700/each
Adventure Pack	Checklist production And printing IA sales materials	\$500 IA
Radio Spots	5 @ \$1,500 each	\$7,500
Interpreters	GS 3	\$9000/each
Bronze sculpture	Design and fabrication	\$20,000
Sod House Replica	Design and construction	\$10,000
Place Mats	Research Layout and Design	\$500
Web cast	currently free through	AniVision
Patches and Pins		Interpretive Assoc.
Develop the Hwy 71 Corridor in Neb.	TBD	TBD



Construct the
Pre-historic
Prairie Discovery
Center

\$6 million

\$3 million to be
raised by locals
Congress has already
provided 3 million
and extensive
planning has occurred





Appendix A

Brief Historical Account of the Expedition on the Prairie

In 1803, partly as the result of the United States government purchase of the Louisiana Territory from the French, Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark organized an expedition to explore what U.S. President Jefferson had just purchased plus look at points west. In addition to exploration, President Thomas Jefferson charged them to map the route, make contact with the indigenous peoples and record ethnographic information, describe the different physical land features and record and/or collect new species of flora and fauna. The expedition, called the Corps of Discovery, followed the Missouri River drainage system to its source near the Continental Divide, then passed overland through the Rocky Mountains and finally down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. With minor deviations, they returned by the same route. Lewis and Clark's journey has become one of the great adventures of modern man and its saga one of America's national epics.

After wintering near St. Louis, the Corps of Discovery began moving up the Missouri River on May 14, 1804. They traveled upriver by poling or towing the keelboat and two pirogues. Upon entering "Indian Country", the party became more cautious and mounted guards and camped on islands at night. The weather turned warm hatching swarms of biting insects. Clark recorded, "several men with dysentery, and two thirds of them with ulcers or Boils, Some with 8 or 10 tumors" (Moulton 1987 (3): 304). The increasing summer's heat compounded everyone's misery, as the expedition continued to toil upriver. They camped one night opposite an abandoned Kansas Indian village, which stood at the beginning of a vast prairie. The expedition was later to discover and describe prairie dog, coyotes, pronghorn, mule deer and magpie species.

Near the mouth of the Teton River (South Dakota), the Corps had their first hazardous and potentially violent encounter with the Indians. During a council with the Teton Sioux, some of the chiefs became insolent. At point blank range, warriors aimed notched arrows and pointed trade guns at the party. Called to arms, the boat crews leveled their guns and a swivel cannon at the Indians lining the bank. Black Buffalo, the Grand Chief, intervened and barely avoided bloodshed. They camped that night at a place Clark named 'Bad Humor Island'. Considering the situation dangerous, the Corps of Discovery cautiously proceeded upriver out of Sioux territory and into the region occupied by the Arikara, who were sedentary horticulturalists.

Lewis and Clark's reception at the Arikara village was more encouraging. The natives met with the Captains and gave the party fresh and dried buffalo meat. Further north, their council meeting met with a mixed reception at the Hidatsa and Mandan villages, but the Indians remained friendly. Learning the Missouri River was about to freeze, Lewis



and Clark decided to build their winter quarters with the Mandan Indians (North Dakota). They stayed five months and were able to trade with the Indians for corn to augment their diet of wild game. During the long winter, the captains learned more about the river and lands to the west, and they added two more people to the party: Toussaint Charboneau, an independent Canadian trader and his Shoshone wife Sacakawea.

After the ice broke up on the Missouri River the following spring, Lewis and Clark sent the keelboat manned by a squad of soldiers back downriver to St. Louis. The return party carried maps, cultural and natural history specimens and dispatches back to President Jefferson. On April 7, 1805, the remaining members of the Corps of Discovery proceeded upriver in a small flotilla of two pirogues and six canoes. The party headed into a region previously unexplored by Euro-Americans. They were hopeful Sacakawea would make friendly contact with her people, the Shoshone Indians, whose territory began near the Continental Divide and the Indians would be receptive to the Corps' need for horses and other assistance. The blustery weather caused high waves on the river that prevented the party from moving at all on some days. Animals were still very lean from lack of sufficient forage over-winter. Lewis wrote, "the Elk I killed this morning, thought it fat, but on examination found it so lean that we took the tongue, marrowbones and Skin only" (Moulton 1987 (4): 55). Leaving the prairie, the expedition continued west to the Pacific Coast.

On their return the following year, the captains divided the Corps of Discovery, so they could explore more area. Lewis was accidentally shot while elk hunting in the Tobacco Gardens area on what is today Lake Sacakawea, North Dakota. Clark's group rejoined the Lewis party near the Mandan villages, and shortly afterwards returned to St. Louis and into history.





Appendix B

Existing Facilities and Services (Forest Service and others)

National Grassland Visitor Center—Located in Wall SD, this 4190 sq.ft. Visitor center focuses on the 20 National Grasslands within the National Forest System. It tells the story of the FS role in managing and restoring prairie ecosystems. Annual visitation is approximately 35,000.

Hudson-Meng Bison Bonebed- Located in Crawford NE, this 6,000 sq. ft. facility encloses an active paleo dig site of ancient buffalo. It interprets the prehistoric prairie and the flora and fauna associated with it. It complements the Crawford Museum that houses specimens of prehistoric animals such as mastodons, sabertoothed tigers, etc. Annual visitation is approximately 5,000.

Bessey Nursery—Located in Bessey, NE, this is one of the oldest tree nurseries in the Forest Service system. Currently it is propagating native plant species for use in restoring the Missouri River riparian ecosystem.

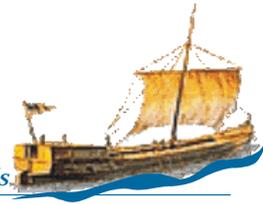
Fort Pierre National Grassland District Office—Located in Fort Pierre SD, the district manages 115,997 acres of grassland adjacent to the Missouri River. Although there are no specific accounts of the Corps being on what is now the grassland there is speculation that they hunted there as they passed through the region. Pronghorn, grouse and prairie chickens still reside in the area. Dispersed camping is also available. Also in this area is the confluence of the Bad River where the Corps had their confrontation with the Teton Sioux Indians. Annual visitation is approximately 10,000.

National Frontier Trails Center—Located in Independence, MO, this center focuses on the western historic trails that shaped this country. Lewis and Clark are highlighted.

Western Historic Trails Center—Located in Council Bluffs, IA this center focuses on Lewis and Clark as well as three other western emigrant trails.

Fort Atkinson State Historical Park—Located near Omaha NE, this center provides information regarding Lewis and Clark’s Council meeting with Oto and Missouri Indians. It was also a place Clark recommended for a Fort, which was built in 1820.

Lewis and Clark State Park—Located south of Sioux City, IA, this park provides Lewis and Clark signs and a full-scale keelboat replica. Living history programs are presented as well as an annual Lewis and Clark festival in late June.



Gavins Point Dam Visitor Center—Located near Yankton, SD this center provides interpretive exhibits on Lewis and Clark’s Calumet Bluff council.

Niobrara State Park—Located near Yankton, SD, this is where Lewis and Clark camped on the edge of the prairie and noted the change in the environment. The center focuses on the new plants and animals the expedition began to encounter.

Lewis and Clark Visitor Center—Located in Yankton, SD, and this center provides exhibits, programs and festivals.

South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center—Located in Pierre, this center focuses on Sioux life, French fur traders and Lewis and Clark.

Sioux Nation Alliance of Tribal Tourism Advocates—Represents the Sioux Nation to schedule visits to reservations to learn about Sioux culture.

Triple U Ranch, Lower Brule and Crow Creek Indian Reservations—locations near Pierre where visitors can enjoy tours of buffalo herds.

Theodore Roosevelt National Park—Managed by the National Park Service this region is representative of the diversity of landscape of the northern plains. The park focuses much of its interpretation on Theodore Roosevelt when he lived in the area.

Fort Abraham Lincoln—Managed by the State Parks of North Dakota this facility focuses much of its interpretation on Custer and the Calvary prior to the Battle of the Little Bighorn. It also offers 5 reconstructed earthen lodges constructed by the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians. Clark noted the village in his journal.

North Dakota Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center—Managed by the State of North Dakota this facility focuses its interpretation on the Corps 1804-05 winter spent at Fort Mandan.

Knife River Village—Managed by the National Park Service this facility focuses much of its interpretation on the Hidatsa village that once occupied the site. It goes into great detail regarding the earthen lodge and culture history of the Hidatsa. It is located adjacent to the Missouri River and was visited by Lewis and Clark during their winter stay at Fort Mandan.

Fort Mandan Park—Managed by the State of North Dakota is a replica of the 1804-05 winter quarters of the Corps. This facility is located a few miles from the original location.

Four Bears Park—Interpretive Center focusing on the Arikara, Mandan and Hidatsa Indians including information about Lewis and Clark.



Tobacco Gardens/Lewis and Clark State Park—Site where Lewis was shot. Interpretation is provided via a wayside exhibit.

Fort Union—Located at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers Lewis and Clark suggested that a fort be built at this site. The American Fur Company built Fort Union in 1828. Interpretation includes an exhibit on Lewis and Clark.

This is by no means a complete list but it does highlight many of the major existing facilities. There are also many wayside exhibits and monuments located along the river corridor that highlight specific events of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

It's clear by this list that the Forest Service does not need to duplicate what other providers already have. In addition since none of the trail is actually located on National Forest System in the Rocky Mountain Region there is no need to try and duplicate a point-by-point account of the journals. Instead we can focus on the more general comments the Corps made regarding this region of the country by providing expanded information on the significance of the prairie ecosystem, the changes that have occurred in the 200 years and the role management has on the restoration of the prairie ecosystem.

By focusing on the history of the prairie, the creation of the National Grasslands, the flora and fauna (especially the threatened and endangered species and pre-historic species), the restoration efforts and Forest Service management of National Grasslands, the Forest Service's interpretation will serve to "flesh out" the story of how the prairie was a significant discovery of the expedition.