



Lewis and Clark
National Historic Trail

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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ACROSS THE TRAIL	4
VISUAL RESOURCES INVENTORY	6
COLLABORATING	8
INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING	10
IMMERSIVER LEARNING	12
TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT	14
WORKING WITH PARTNERS	16
OMAHA VISITOR CENTER	18
BY THE NUMBERS	20
TRAIL HIGHLIGHTS	22
INTERN PROGRAM	24
STAFF DIRECTORY	26

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Visit the news tab on www.nps.gov/lecl.



Above: Beaverhead Rock, MT. NPS- K. Schlawin
Cover: Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Photo: Cathy Milne.

from the Superintendent

Hello Friends!

Once again it was a great year on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and at the National Park Service Trail headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska. We have an outstanding annual report that highlights the projects we have done with our many amazing partners. Trails like ours are very different than most places in the National Park Service where the parks are owned and directly managed by the federal government. The successful *management* of the Lewis and Clark NHT is based not on federal ownership, but on a model of shared responsibility and collaboration with many individuals and organizations who work together to protect, promote, and study the Lewis and Clark Expedition and its trail.

This management team is made up of a wide network of individuals and employees in local, state, and federal governments as well as nonprofit organizations, Tribes, and many others. The trail staff and I are proud to be a part of this network, and proud of the work done by the National Park Service and the many volunteers and partners who share in this work.

I want to thank you for your work protecting the trail, conducting research, teaching, and sharing your time, talents, and treasure year after year.

I am now in my 15th year as the Superintendent of the Lewis and Clark Trail. Like most of you, once the trail and the stories of the expedition capture our imagination, we want more. We just cannot let it go! I feel incredibly fortunate every day to work with all of you and the amazing staff here in Omaha.

I am excited for the future and I hope you are too!

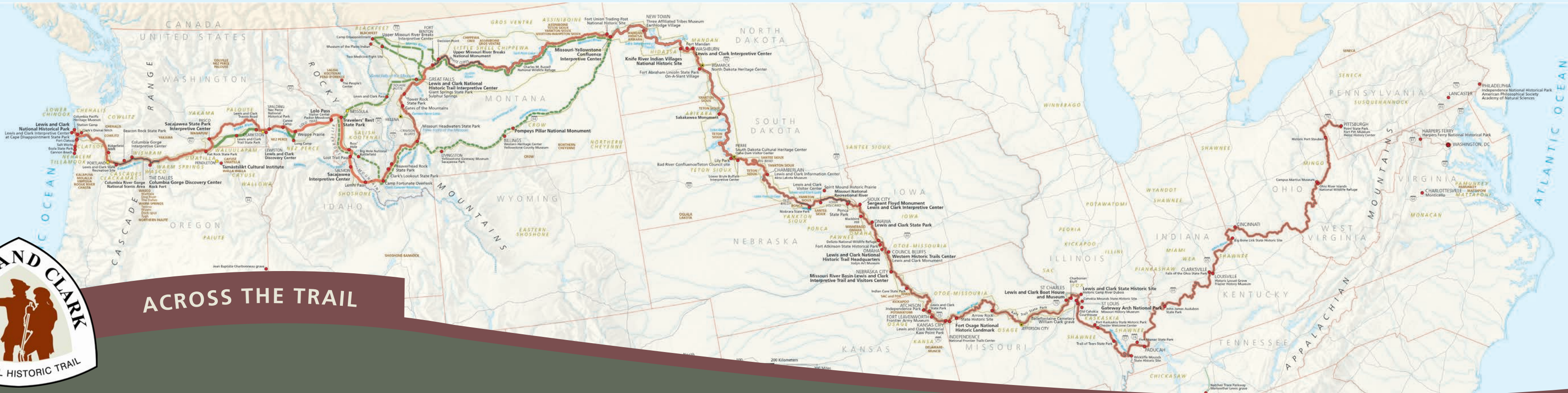
Mark Weekley
Mark Weekley

Superintendent,
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail





ACROSS THE TRAIL



Lemhi Pass, MT. Volunteer Kent Schlawin visits key trail sites in Montana and Idaho.

Missoula, MT. Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Annual Meeting. Trail staff float the Blackfoot and Clark Fork Rivers.

Sioux City, IA. Sioux City Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center demonstrates how they use their distance learning equipment for educational programs.

Omaha, NE. Former Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey stops by to meet Superintendent Mark Weekley and Interpretation Manager Karla Sigala.

Omaha, NE. Karla Sigala and Caitlin Campbell visit with sculptor Benjamin Victor while he puts on finishing touches to the Chief Big Elk statue.

Omaha, NE. Administrative Assistant Shaunielle Mosley tours the newly-opened Kiewit Luminarium, a science museum just down river from Trail Headquarters.

Louisville, KY. Freshly installed Auto Tour Route signs in the downtown area.



Visual Resource Inventory

Over the past year, resources staff at Lewis and Clark NHT revitalized our Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) program. The program uses a methodology developed by the NPS national VRI lead, Mark Meyer. The methodology involves fieldwork performed at a viewpoint to establish a Scenic Quality Rating. Later, an interdisciplinary team works to establish a View Importance Rating. The Scenic Quality Rating and View Importance Rating combine to create the overall Scenic Inventory Value. That value along with other data is uploaded to the online NPS database, *Enjoy the View*. Cataloging the scenic views associated with the Lewis and Clark NHT will assist with preservation efforts in changing landscapes threatened by development.

In spring of 2023, several Lewis and Clark NHT employees attended initial training with Mark Meyer. Later in May, a group of employees joined with our partner Missouri National Recreational River to conduct VRI at a variety of sites near the Nebraska/South Dakota state line including Spirit Mound. Moving forward, we hope to continue this program every year, accumulating data to better protect the trail.



Spirit Mound, SD.



Tabor State Lakeside Use Area, SD.



Team conducts a visual resources inventory at West Platte Game Production Area, SD. From left: Brye Lefler - Tribal Partnerships Specialist | Mitch Meyer - Ecologist | Harrison Freund - Missouri National Recreational River Outdoor Recreation Planner | Dan Wiley - Integrated Resources Stewardship Manager | Nate Hess - Cultural Resources Program Manager | Tom Smith - Education Specialist.

A transition Geotourism

Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation now manages the Geotourism Program. The Advisory Committee met twice in 2023 to assist with decisions for the program. The outreach team surpassed the listing goal by reaching 3,682 business/sites enhancing visitor experiences. Of those, 160 listings are Native entities.

A major overhaul of LewisandClark.Travel transformed the look and functionality of the site. Time to load maps, photos and videos is now measured in milliseconds. Social media presence expanded by 75% over 2022. An additional 1,054 water-based and 233 land-based miles of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Panoramic Mapping are now posted.

◀ Bear grass (*Xerophyllum tenax*) in bloom. Lolo, MT.



Open House *Midwest Region Trails*

In April 2023 Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT) staff hosted the first Trails Open House for the three national trails administered out of the NPS Midwest Regional Office. Lewis and Clark NHT staff collaborated with North Country National Scenic Trail (NST) and Ice Age NST staff to communicate projects; help regional leadership and staff understand the significance of each of the three trails; introduce the dedicated partners who strongly support these trails to regional leadership and staff; and provide opportunities for socializing, idea sharing, and collaboration. Trail staff and trail partners presented project highlights and provided interactive exhibits to facilitate information exchange and collaboration.

◀ North Country National Scenic Trail information table.



▲ Staff from both Ice Age National Scenic Trail and Ice Age Trail Alliance.

◀ Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail information table and presentation.



York Project Telling York's Story

The Lewis and Clark NHT Interpretation team has embarked on a five-year, inclusive storytelling project to recenter York as a valued and integral member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. He was an outdoorsman and a highly skilled enslaved African American. His story has largely been lost to history. We know from website analytics and discussions with trail partners that there is a high demand for interpretation on York's life.

Phase one of the project was completed in April of 2023. We worked with Mr. Hasan Davis, renowned York interpreter and activist, to produce a high-quality filmed version of his presentation, *My Name is York*. Mr. Davis has honed this presentation over the past 25 years and has presented it countless times across the trail.

Upcoming phases include the *York's Story Expedition* where Black educators and activists will participate in a 4-day river trip along the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, MT to discuss York's life and legacy. Future project components include community dialogues, and an interpretive guide to assist partners to accurately, effectively, and courageously interpret York.



Ashley Danielson grins with excitement to call out, "ACTION!"



Caitlin Campbell does a sound check with Alex Wiles of NEW Multimedia.

Immersive Learning Montana Trip

In July 2023 four staff members traveled to Great Falls, Montana, joining Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation members from across the US and Canada on a three-day canoe trip through the remote White Cliffs section of the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. The group read 218-year-old journal entries about expedition camp sites and geologic wonders they passed, and even visited the site of a Karl Bodmer landscape painting. Returning to land, the group visited several high potential historic sites, including a somber trip to the possible location of the Two Medicine Fight Site, where one or more Blackfeet youth were killed in a skirmish with Expedition members. Powerful immersive experiences such as these, help develop personal connections to these important sites, enhancing our work in interpretation and resource stewardship.



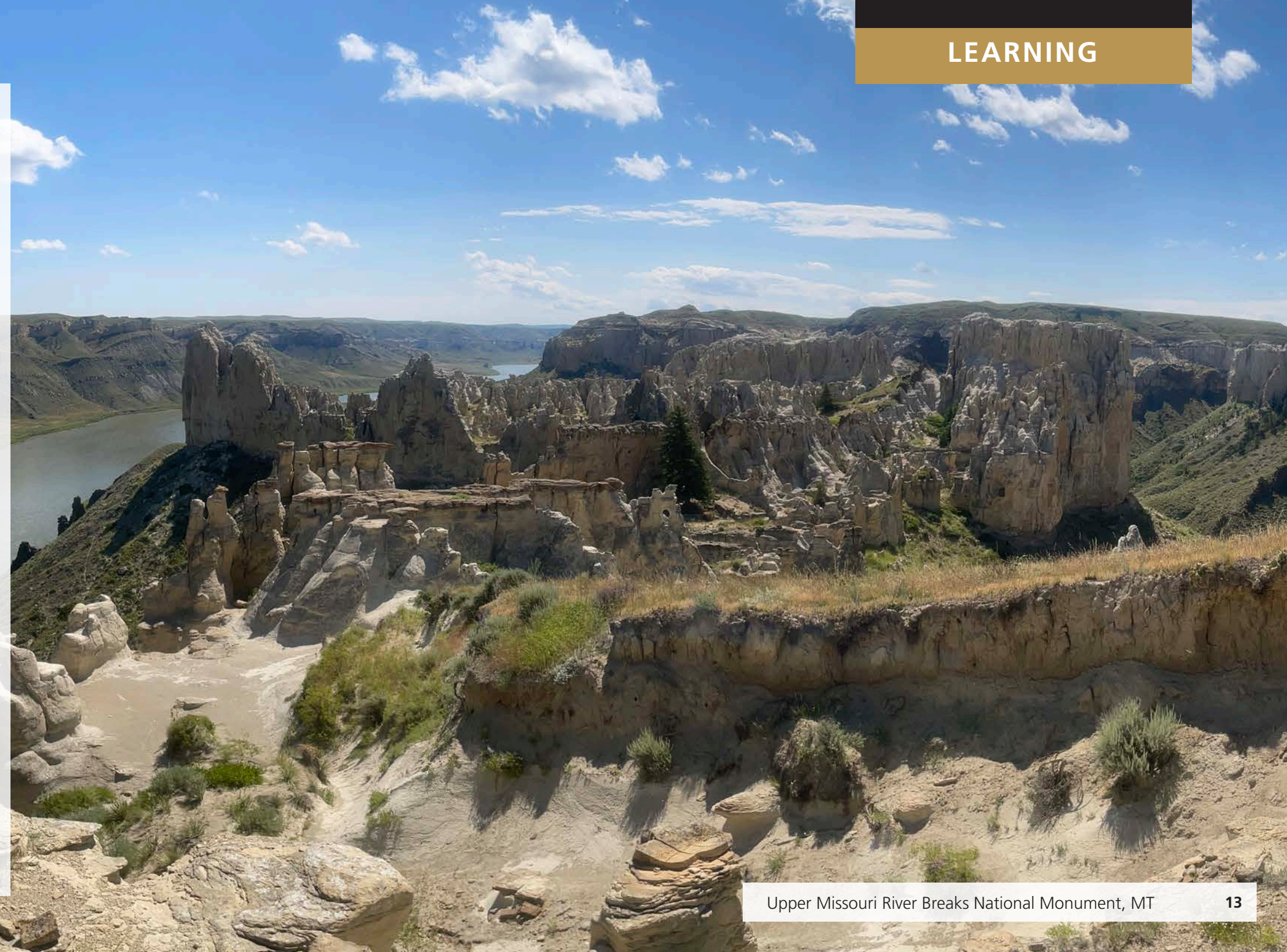
From left: Caitlin Campbell - Interpretive Specialist, Brye Lefler - Tribal Partnerships Specialist, and Mitch Meyer - Ecologist.



Mitch Meyer, Ecologist



Kassey Trahanas, Visitor Center Manager





◀ Tribal outreach team members Brye Lefler (far left) and Lorraine Gala Lewis (far right), meet with Marie Torosian, Executive Director of the Three Chiefs Culture Center (2nd from right), her granddaughter (middle), and Gearaldine Hewankorn, Curation Technician (second from left).

All Photo Credits: Bruce Rettig/AIANTA

Tribal Engagement in Montana

In July 2023, Brye Lefler (Tribal Partnerships Specialist/Cultural Anthropologist), conducted a week-long Tribal engagement trip in Montana with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA). For the past five years, AIANTA has partnered with the Lewis and Clark Trail to provide Tribal engagement assistance for the Geotourism Program (www.lewisandclark.travel). The goals of the trip included integrating Tribes into initiatives to grow and manage tourism’s economic benefits, and to develop travel itineraries for Lewis and Clark Trail visitors focused on Tribal perspectives and supporting Native-owned businesses.

The team started their trip on the Flathead Reservation, where they met the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) Chairman and Executive Officer; experienced a tour with the Director of the Kootenai

Culture Committee of important sites including the CSKT Bison Range; conducted interviews with the Director of the Three Chiefs Culture Center; and met about future collaborations with the Tribal Historic Preservation Department.

From there, the group traveled to Blackfoot Nation, where they conducted interviews with Tribal Ambassadors, met with the Campground Supervisor/Events Coordinator, participated in a Native-perspective tour of Glacier National Park by Sun Tours, and experienced many events associated with North American Indian Days.

Thanks to CSKT, Blackfoot Nation, and the individuals who met with our team. We look forward to exciting future collaborations.



(From left) Shawn Real Bird, Lorraine Gala Lewis, Duane After Buffalo, and Gayle Skunkcap Jr.



Darnell Rides at the Door, Blackfeet Nation Tribal Ambassador of Goodwill



Lorraine Gala Lewis, AIANTA (left) and Brye Lefler, NPS (right) with Darnell and Smokey Rides at the Door, Blackfeet Nation Tribal Ambassadors of Goodwill (middle left and middle right).



Kevin Kicking Woman, Sun Tours Guide and Blackfoot Nation Tribal Member (standing) shares cultural perspectives at Glacier National Park.



Brye Lefler (NPS) poses with then-Chairman Tom McDonald (left) and Executive Officer Rick Eneas (middle) inside the CSKT Administrative Headquarters.



◀ **Lewis and Clark Trust signs new agreement.** Trail Superintendent Mark Weekley (left), with Lewis and Clark Trust, Inc. Chairperson Stephenie Ambrose-Tubbs and Vice Chairperson Jim Mallory meet in Omaha to sign a new General Agreement.

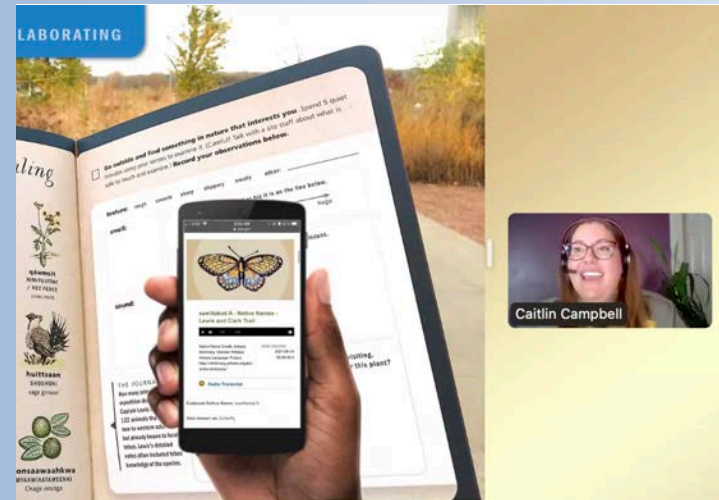
Learn more at lewisandclarktrust.org.



◀ **Terrain360 visits Omaha.** Ryan Abrahamsen, CEO of Terrain360 and crew leader for a Missouri River filming project visits with Regions 3, 4, 5 Regional Director Bert Frost and Lewis and Clark Trail Superintendent Mark Weekley about his mapping efforts and partnership with the Lewis and Clark Trust.



◀ Western National Parks Association (WNPA) funds a new Junior Ranger exhibit area. Omaha, NE. A special thank you to WNPA for their generous support of a new Junior Ranger area at the Lewis and Clark NHT Trail Headquarters Visitor Center that now serves as a comfortable dedicated area for Junior Rangers of all ages to work on earning their badge.



◀ **Junior Ranger Webinars.** Interpretive Specialist Caitlin Campbell hosts a webinar with the 35+ hosts of the Lewis and Clark Junior Ranger Program.



◀ **Volunteers-in-Park Management Training Pilot.** Volunteer and Partnership Specialist Ashley Danielson was part of a national cohort that redesigned a volunteer management training course. In January of 2023, Ashley traveled to New Orleans, LA to present the pilot course to attendees from across the country.



◀ **Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Annual Meeting.** Lolo, MT. A group representing Lewis and Clark NHT (NE), Big Bone Lick State Park (KY), Lewis and Clark State Historic Site (IL), Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural & Ed Center (ID), Missouri River Relief (MO) and Travelers' Rest State Park (MT) end their week together with this photo op.

Working with our Partners

We thank all of our partners for their work in 2023 to commemorate and protect the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Pictured below is merely a snapshot of the many organizations Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail is proud to work with.



Supervisory Park Ranger Kassey Trahanas (left) with the interpretation team doing community outreach at Horning State Farm, NE.



From left: Supervisory Park Ranger Kassey Trahanas, with Park Guides Audra Pflug, Rowyn Collister, and Josh Hennings.

Pathways as career path

Over the years, the Omaha Lewis and Clark Trail Visitor Center has been able to provide opportunities for students to start their careers with the National Park Service through the Pathways Program. In 2023, we welcomed University of Nebraska at Lincoln student Bradley Clark (pictured top right) and University of Nebraska at Omaha Cartography student Joshua Hennings (above right).

Audra Pflug (second from left) also got her start in the Pathways Program in August of 2022. Upon graduation, with a degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, she transitioned into a Park Guide term position.



Park Guide Trainees Bradley Clark (left) and Josh Hennings pose for the camera at an outreach event.



Park Guide Audra Pflug was captured by a news crew at a very chilly Earth Day Omaha 2023.



AmeriCorps member, Rowyn Collister, completed a four-month internship through a partnership with Conservation Legacy.

Programming at Headquarters

Omaha, Nebraska is home to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trails Headquarters and Visitor Center. Park Rangers deliver interpretive programs, participate in special events, and conduct outreach serving both the local community and a national audience. Over the summer, a routine ranger-led program schedule was introduced. Programs were presented every Saturday and Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. from June through October.



Two very enthusiastic young visitors proudly recite the Lewis and Clark Trail Junior Ranger oath.

LEWIS AND CLARK SPENDING 2023

● AGREEMENTS, CONTRACTS, AND PARTNER SUPPORT	\$ 356,500
● PUBLICATIONS & SIGNS	\$214,479
● SUPPLIES AND TECHNOLOGY	\$51,240
● TRAVEL	\$65,400
○ TOTAL	\$689,619*

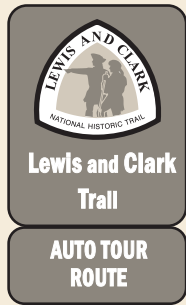
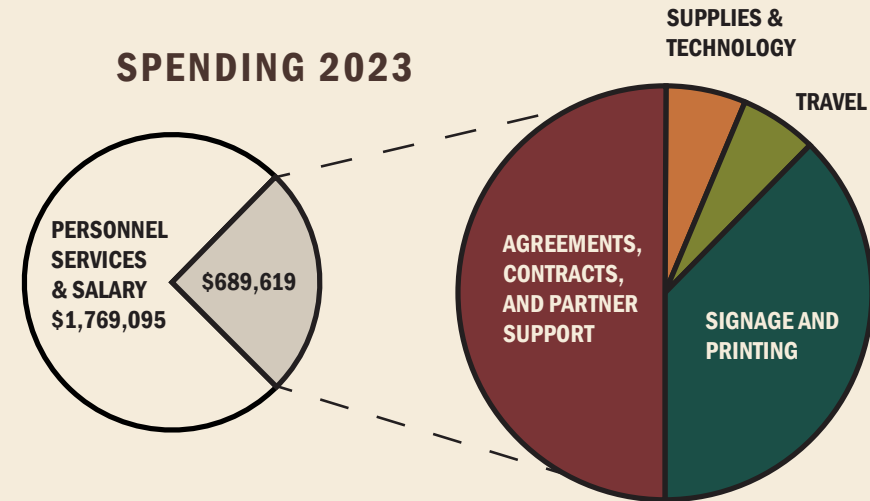
*OUTSIDE OF PERSONNEL SERVICES & SALARY

LEWIS AND CLARK BUDGET

ONPS BASE FUND	\$2,456,714
GRANTS RECEIVED PMIS, VIP, NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION	\$260,000

5 YEAR ONPS BASE TREND

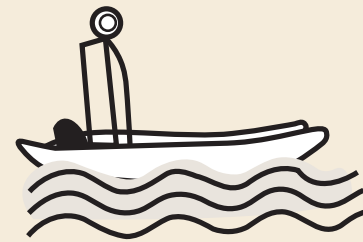
2018	\$2,022,747
2019	\$2,008,032
2020	\$2,103,000
2021	\$2,301,138
2022	\$2,365,511



1,400 miles
of Auto Tour Route
SIGNED IN 6 STATES



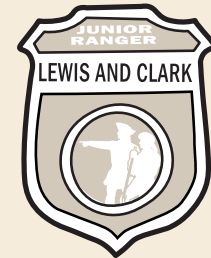
7 Active Cooperative Agreements
WITH PARTNERS ALONG THE TRAIL



1,720 miles
OF HISTORIC RIVER ROUTE
AND OVERLAND ROUTE CAPTURED
WITH panoramic mapping



1,000,000 page views
ON THE LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL'S
OFFICIAL WEBSITE
WWW.NPS.GOV/LECL



4,090
Junior Ranger
books & badges
DISTRIBUTED TO HOST SITES



56 proposed actions
EVALUATED FOR POTENTIAL
TO IMPACT TRAIL
RESOURCES

By the Numbers

In 2023, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail staff continued work on programs to commemorate and protect the trail and embarked on new projects with new partners. These efforts have a measurable impact.

- 32,000+ visitors to Lewis and Clark Trail Visitor Center in Omaha, NE
- 18,290 hours contributed by trail interns
- 119,995 views on NPS Mobile App
- 108 Native-owned points of interest added to LewisandClark.Travel





PNTS

Trail Ecologist Mitch Meyer and Volunteer and Partnership Specialist Ashley Danielson attended this year's Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS) meeting in Orlando, Florida to network with other trail professionals from around the country.

Mitch and Ashley presented on a panel as part of the Climate and Resiliency session. Ashley discussed the Lewis and Clark Trail climate team and how we center climate change in our work. Mitch presented on natural resources planning and how we are using climate data to inform our decision making.



Climate Team

In January 2023, an interdisciplinary group of employees from the trail came together to form the Lewis and Clark NHT Climate Team. The goal of this group is to center climate change in our work.

Current projects include reducing energy consumption in the office, incorporating climate change data into natural resources strategic planning, and working to develop a climate change interpretation web page. By meeting once a month, we have been able to keep a focus on addressing and communicating about climate change and look forward to future projects.

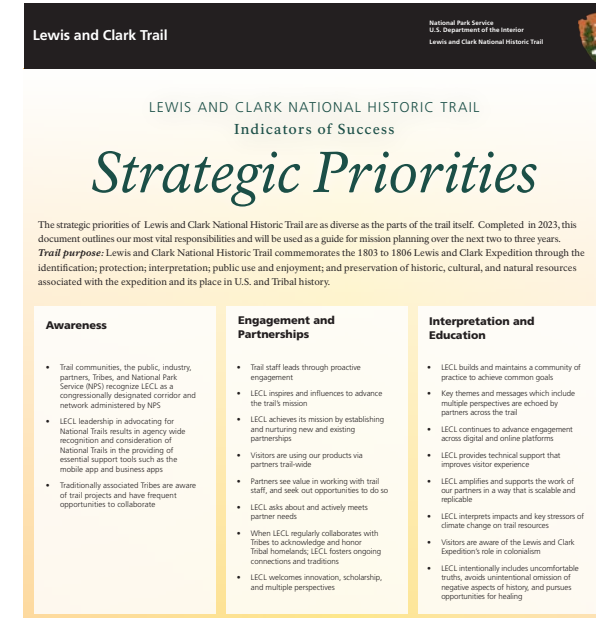


1 million page views

One million page views!! The Lewis and Clark NHT webpage hit a milestone in 2023 as we hosted more than one million pageviews. This accomplishment was only possible with the hard work and contributions of many staff and volunteers, but especially Volunteer Kent Schlawin who researches and writes content daily for the website and social media.

Updates this year include new shared content and a reorganization of information pages. The trail currently has the second highest number of pieces of shared content in the entire National Park Service.

Check it out at www.nps.gov/lecl.



Strategic Priorities

In May 2023, the entire Lewis and Clark NHT staff met to update our strategic priorities. Over the course of a daylong session, we discussed the broad parts of our work we see as most important to focus on in the coming years. A smaller three-person team refined the workshop language into exact strategic priorities and indicators of success for each priority.

The final product included these six overall priorities: Awareness, Engagement and Partnerships, Interpretation and Education, Visitor Experience, Stewardship and Protection, and Leadership.



Nate Hess - a new role

Hello! My name is Nate Hess and as of March 2023, I'm the newest Cultural Resources Program Manager (CRPM) for Lewis and Clark NHT. I began my NPS career as a seasonal interpreter at Gettysburg National Military Park in 2011, then joined the Lewis and Clark NHT Visitor Center staff in 2017.

As a CRPM, I work on our compliance processes, a variety of resource protection projects, and serve as a subject matter expert on Lewis and Clark history. Please contact me with any compliance or history related questions!

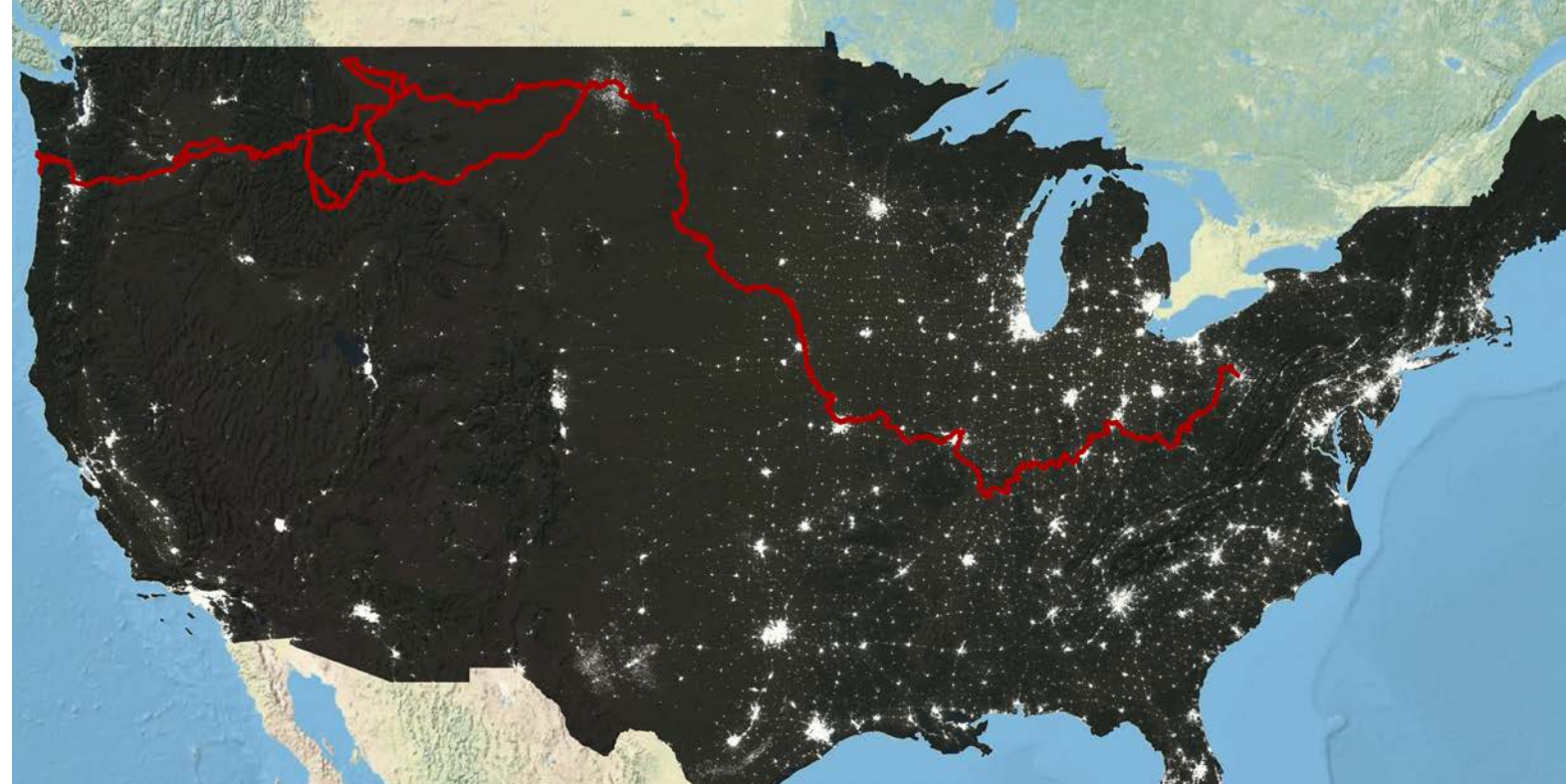


CPR/AED/First Aid Training

Omaha, NE. Lewis and Clark Trail Park Guide Trainee Josh Hennings practices his skills during a CPR/AED/First Aid certification course.

The training was offered by our very own Supervisory Park Ranger Kassey Trahanas who is a certified CPR/AED/First Aid instructor as well as a lifeguard and swim instructor. A total of 12 employees are now certified.

Student intern project map showing light pollution along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.



Integrated Resources Stewardship 2023 Intern Program

The Integrated Resources Stewardship team continued the success of the Virtual Student Federal Service Intern Program with a second year of student interns. The work produced by each of the interns was exceptional and helped further many goals of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The program also provided invaluable experience to help launch the careers of the interns into the workforce, creating the next generation of civil servants.

A total of 49 interns participated in the program during the 2022-2023 academic year committing to 10 hours per week for more than 36 weeks, with many extending their internships through the summer. For the year, a total of 18,290 hours were worked, representing an annual value of \$547,785.50.

The work accomplished by the interns covered all aspects of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Integrated Resources Stewardship team. Interns had the opportunity to contribute to the Geotourism program, visit www.LewisAndClark.Travel to learn more about the program. Interns also had the opportunity to assist staff with the Tent of Many Voices video editing project, which seeks to provide access to presentations related to the 1803-1806 Expedition from the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration. Additionally, interns used geographic information systems to support future mapping endeavors of the 4,900-mile corridor from Pittsburgh, PA to the Pacific Ocean.

INSPIRE

Meet our intern Cassidy Wood

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Intern
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

School attended: University of California, Los Angeles
Program: GIS and Geospatial Technology Certification Program
Majoring in: Environmental Science
Minoring in: Conservation Biology

In 2023, Cassidy Wood used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to create light pollution data and map dark skies information that is being incorporated into the Natural Resources modeling project and the Natural Resources Strategy. Cassidy learned new raster analysis skills to perform analysis using light pollution datasets. She also gained experience with editing vector features and editing attributes as part of a land cover reclassification project. Her duties also included compiling climate and air quality data for use in our Natural Resources modeling. After completing her program and receiving her graduate certificate, she traveled along the Lewis and Clark Trail, visiting Fort Clatsop in Oregon. Most recently, Cassidy received a job offer to be a GIS Analyst with the Oregon State Fire Marshal.

“I enjoyed the internship and gained practical experience that I feel has prepared me for a job in GIS. I thought the tasks were interesting and both of my mentors were very kind. I’m interested in seeing the future of the Natural Resources model that we worked on!” — Cassidy Wood

ADMINISTRATION

INTEGRATED RESOURCES STEWARDSHIP

WNPA



Mark Weekley
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Miki Keck
Senior Leader of
Business Services

Miki accepted a position
with the Washington
Interpretation and Education
office. Best wishes in your
new role!



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OMAHA VISITOR CENTER

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Loren Yellow Bird
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Tom Smith
Education Specialist

Tom accepted a Park
Manager position in New
Mexico. Happy Trails!



Caitlin Campbell
Interpretive Specialist

Caiti accepted a promotion
to the Washington
Interpretation and Education
office. Wishing you the best!



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Bradley Clark
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Student Trainee

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Barb Collins
Volunteer



Kent Schlawin
Volunteer





▶ LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

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