



## Lewis & Clark in Washington State

The Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-06 has been recorded as one of the great feats of American exploration. President Jefferson commissioned the

Expedition to map the way west through the recently purchased Louisiana Territory. He instructed it to look for any navigable passage to the Pacific Ocean and establish an overland link for the United States to the point of Captain Gray's Columbia River discovery.

Thomas Jefferson was motivated in part by his desire to capture some of the western fur trade for the United States. He also was anxious to expand the country westward.

Several members of the group documented the journey by keeping daily records about events and the country through which they traveled. Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark were particularly meticulous about entering every detail.

Although the Expedition often experienced great hardship and suffering, only one fatality occurred. It is presumed that the death of Sgt. Floyd was caused by a ruptured appendix.

The Corps of Discovery, as the Expedition was commonly known, started up the Missouri River on May 14, 1804, in three river boats. The party consisted of 45 men, 16 of whom were engaged to go only as far as the Mandans in North Dakota, where the party spent the winter of 1804-5.

Sacagawea, a Shoshone Indian woman, joined the Expedition at the Mandan Villages on the Missouri River and accompanied it to the Pacific Coast and back. Her presence conveyed to tribes the peaceful intentions of the Expedition.

On October 10, 1805, after 17 arduous months, the Expedition entered what is now the State of Washington. The group canoed down the swift and hazardous Snake River, making as much

as 40 miles a day. On October 16th, the Expedition finally reached the Columbia River, at the present Sacajawea State Park.

Clark and two men explored up the Columbia in a light canoe, visiting along the way with Indians who were busy splitting and drying salmon. After nearing the mouth of the Tapteal (Yakima) River, Clark and his party turned back to rejoin the others and continued the journey down the Columbia.

The spirits of the men rose with each swiftly passing mile. The two captains now realized their mission would soon be accomplished. Eagerly they watched for signs of tidewater—the Pacific was not far away. When they had to portage several rapids their enthusiasm made the canoes seem lighter.

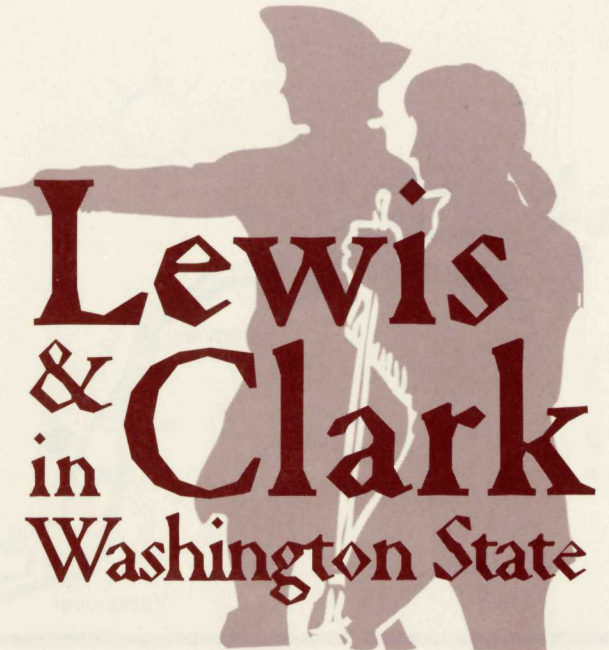
As they approached the Pacific, the Expedition experienced heavy morning fog drifting up the Columbia. From November 10th through 14th, the Expedition was pinned to the rocky shore by extremely foul weather on Point Ellice. The party was in a thoroughly miserable situation, it rained almost continuously, clothes and bedding were saturated. At last, the storm subsided and the party was able to go around the rocky point of land where it found a long sandy beach. Here the group camped about 1 mile east of the present Fort Columbia State Park. From this camp, members of the Expedition proceeded along the beach to Cape Disappointment. Thus, in mid November, the Lewis and Clark Expedition achieved its principal goal of reaching the Pacific Ocean, at the present Fort Canby State Park.

On November 26th, the Expedition crossed the Columbia to the south side. There it established the winter camp, Fort Clatsop, near the present Astoria, Oregon.

As soon as they felt the mountains would be passable, Lewis and Clark started the return journey to St. Louis—March 23, 1806. They retraced their route up the Columbia as far as the

present community of Wallula. Near this point the Expedition left the Columbia River to travel overland through the present cities of Waitsburg, Dayton, and Pomeroy. The Expedition joined the Snake River at the present Chief Timothy State Park. On May 5, 1806, the party departed what is now the state of Washington.

On September 23, 1806, the Expedition arrived back at St. Louis. It had accomplished an extraordinary task under difficult circumstances. These men had made many vital discoveries regarding the geography, animal life, plant life, and geology of the area. They had created an atmosphere of friendliness with the Indians. They contributed to the opening of a vast and unknown territory to settlement and development.



# Lewis & Clark in Washington State

## Washington State

### Parks and Recreation Commission



P.O. Box 42650  
Olympia, WA 98504-2650  
1-800-233-0321 • TTY 1-800-833-6388  
<http://www.parks.wa.gov>

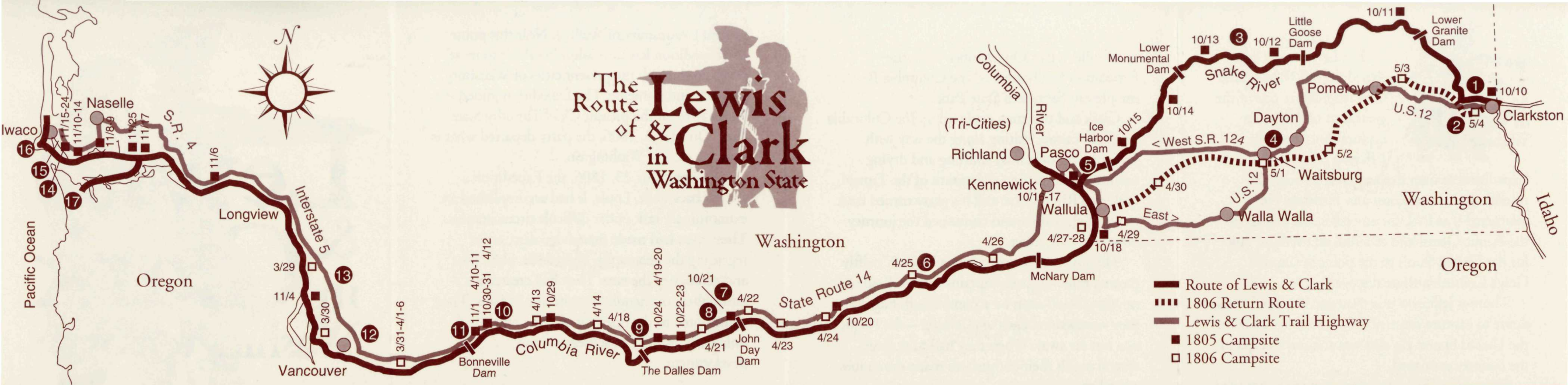
*Commission Members:*

Clyde Anderson	Jack Shreve
Mickey Fearn	Joan Thomas
Bruce Hilyer	Mel Wortman
Bob Petersen	

*Agency Director: Cleve Pinnix*

*All Washington State parks are developed and maintained for the enjoyment of all persons, regardless of age, sex, creed, ethnic origin, or physical limitation.*

This brochure is available in alternative formats by calling the Public Affairs Office at 360-902-8562 or using the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf at 360-664-3133.  
P&R 317-2(6/97)



## Lewis and Clark Trail Highway

By action of the Washington State Legislature, the highway between Clarkston on the Idaho border and Ilwaco at the mouth of the Columbia River has been designated an official Lewis and Clark Highway. Markers have been erected intermittently along the entire route. East and west highways have been designated in the Waitsburg–Walla Walla–Tri-Cities area.

Washington State is a contrast in nature. The wide climatic variances become evident to the traveler following the route of the famous explorers. The eastern part of the state is quite arid. Native vegetation consists largely of bunchgrass and sagebrush. Approaching the midpoint of the trail, evergreen trees dot the landscape—harbingers of the transition between desert and marine climates. From Vancouver to the Pacific Ocean the climate is definitely marine. Douglas-fir trees dominate the forested areas.

## Points of Interest

1. On October 10, 1805, the Expedition entered what is now the state of Washington. West of Clarkston, look for a heritage marker entitled “Lewis and Clark Enter Washington.”
2. ALPOWAI INTERPRETIVE CENTER is within Chief Timothy State Park, about 8 miles west of Clarkston on U.S. Route 12. Exhibits tell the story of Lewis and Clark meeting with the Nez Perce Indians.
3. DREWYERS RIVER HERITAGE MARKER is within Lyons Ferry State Park. It tells the story of the present Palouse River. Originally it was named Drewyers River by Lewis and Clark in honor of George Drouillard (Drewyer), a civilian member of the Expedition.
4. LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL STATE PARK is 5 miles west of Dayton on U.S. Route 12. An interpretive marker tells the story of the Expedition’s journey through this forested site on the return to St. Louis.
5. SACAJAWEA INTERPRETIVE CENTER is in Sacajawea State Park at the confluence of the Snake and the Columbia rivers near Pasco. Exhibits highlight the role of the Indian woman who accompanied the explorers on much of their journey.
6. CROW BUTTE STATE PARK is on an island (accessible by causeway) in the pool behind John Day Dam. It is

on State Route 14 west of Paterson and is on the route traversed by the Expedition.

7. MARYHILL STATE PARK is near the intersection of U.S. Route 12 and State Route 14. Near here the explorers noted the Indians had one blue and two scarlet cloth blankets and a sailor’s jacket. These items obviously had been traded up the Columbia River from sea captains on the coast.
8. MARYHILL MUSEUM is a few miles west of Maryhill State Park on State Route 14. It houses an impressive art collection and an outstanding display of Indian baskets and stone tools. Nearby is Stonehenge Memorial, a full scale replica of the mysterious ruin located on the Salisbury Plain in England.
9. HORSETHIEF LAKE STATE PARK is 2 miles east of U.S. Route 197 on State Route 14. Here the Expedition encountered the Great Falls of the Columbia (Celilo Falls) and the Short and Long narrows.
10. COLUMBIA GORGE INTERPRETIVE CENTER is located at the west end of Stevenson. The story of the cultural and natural history of the gorge is told under the watchful eyes of Tsagaglalal—She Who Watches.
11. BEACON ROCK STATE PARK is 35 miles east of Vancouver on State Route 14. It was here the explorers first detected the effects of the tide.
12. FORT VANCOUVER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is a National Park Service facility located in the city of

Vancouver. For two decades this stockaded fur-trading post was headquarters and depot for all activities of the Hudson’s Bay Company west of the Rocky Mountains.

13. PARADISE POINT STATE PARK is 5 miles south of Woodland on Interstate 5. In this vicinity, the explorers commented about the huge numbers of migratory birds and the noise they made.
14. LEWIS AND CLARK CAMPSITE STATE PARK is 2 miles southeast of Chinook on U.S. Route 101. This was the campsite of November 15 to 24, 1805, from which Lewis and Clark first saw the breakers of the Pacific Ocean.
15. FORT COLUMBIA STATE PARK is 2 miles southeast of Chinook on U.S. Route 101. An interpretive center is devoted mostly to the coast artillery story. There also is a large exhibit relating to the Chinook Indians. This is a National Historic Landmark.
16. LEWIS AND CLARK INTERPRETIVE CENTER is on Cape Disappointment where Lewis and Clark achieved their principal goal—the Pacific Ocean. This major center is a vital part of Fort Canby State Park and it tells a comprehensive story of the Expedition.
17. FORT CLATSOP NATIONAL MEMORIAL is 4.5 miles southwest of Astoria, Oregon. This National Park Service facility has a visitor center and a replica of the Lewis and Clark winter quarters of 1805-06.