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LEWIS and CLARK TRAIL
Through
The National Forests



Prepared for:

**LEWIS and CLARK
TRAIL COMMISSION**

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Forest Service
Northern Region • Missoula, Montana 59801

1965



GATES OF THE MOUNTAINS

Helena National Forest

"...from the singular appearance of this place

I called it the gates of the rocky mountains."

(LEWIS July 19 1805)

GENTLEMEN:

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was more than a milestone in the growth of this Nation. It has become a part of our American heritage. Every American youth dreams of this adventure and its tests of skill, endurance, and courage.

Many of the significant events occurred on land now administered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. The Forest Service recognizes the opportunity and responsibility we have in helping today's and tomorrow's generations understand and relive this important episode in America's history. The Forest Service is grateful for the opportunity to present this brief description of our plans for interpreting the Lewis and Clark route through the National Forests of the Northern Region.

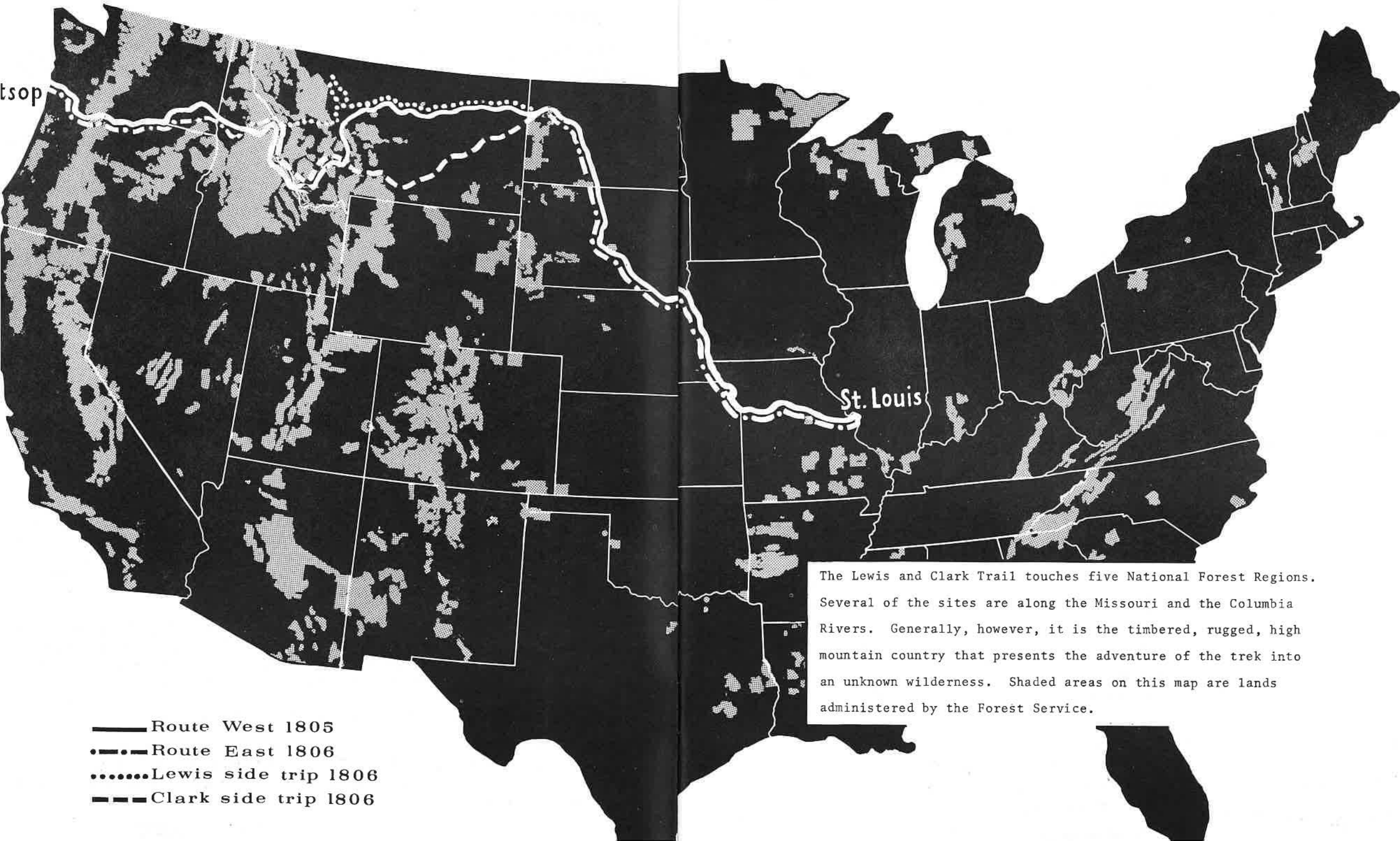
For more than 30 years the Forest Service has been cognizant of the historical and recreational significance of the Lewis and Clark Trail. In 1935 a road was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps along the Lolo Trail from Weippe Prairie to Powell Ranger Station, near Lolo Pass. Three years later Elers Koch, one time supervisor of the Lolo National Forest, prepared and implemented the first interpretive plan for this historic route. Koch and, in later years, Ralph S. Space, supervisor of the Clearwater National Forest from 1954-63, personally walked the Lolo Trail and located all of the Lewis and Clark campsites and several sites associated with the Nezperce War of 1877.

Two major changes have taken place since the Forest Service initiated its Lewis and Clark Trail interpretive program in the 1930s. First, the people of the United States have expressed a growing demand for preservation and interpretation of the Nation's heritage. Second, public access has been improved so that people can visit more of the remote historic areas.

Today the Forest Service is planning the development of seven historical areas on that portion of the Lewis and Clark Trail within the National Forests of the Northern Region. Our objective is to recreate for today's motorized visitor a mood of pioneering adventure and an appreciation of the historical significance of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

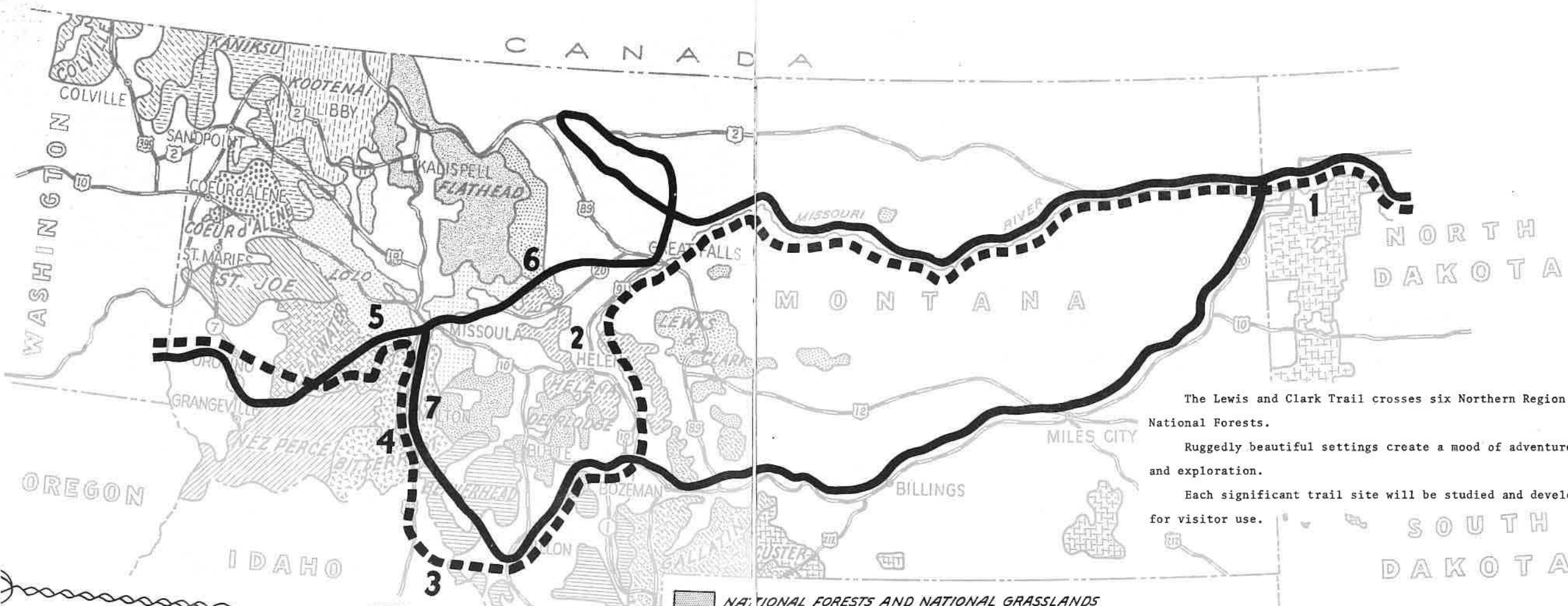
The Forest Service is pleased to have the opportunity to work with the Lewis and Clark Trail Commission to make the expedition of 1805-1806 come alive for Americans today and in the years ahead.

NEAL M. RAHM



- Route West 1805
- - - - Route East 1806
- Lewis side trip 1806
- . - . Clark side trip 1806

The Lewis and Clark Trail touches five National Forest Regions. Several of the sites are along the Missouri and the Columbia Rivers. Generally, however, it is the timbered, rugged, high mountain country that presents the adventure of the trek into an unknown wilderness. Shaded areas on this map are lands administered by the Forest Service.



The Lewis and Clark Trail crosses six Northern Region National Forests.



Ruggedly beautiful settings create a mood of adventure and exploration.

Each significant trail site will be studied and developed for visitor use.

 NATIONAL FORESTS AND NATIONAL GRASSLANDS

NORTHERN REGION
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 FOREST SERVICE

Route of LEWIS & CLARK

1805 
 1806 

MISSOURI RIVER
 MOUNTAINS OF THE MOUNTAINS
 WYOMING PASS
 WEST TRAIL PASS
 NORTH TRAIL

6- LEWIS & CLARK PASS
 (Head of Blackfoot)
 (LEWIS 1806)
 7- GIBBONS PASS
 (CLARK 1806)

Up from "...the most distant fountain of the waters of the Mighty Missouri..." to the first view of the Columbia River headwaters. Lewis' spirits were high; another goal had been reached. The omen of "immense ranges of high mountains" went almost unnoticed. The expedition would be in these mountains for two months.



LEMHI PASS

Beaverhead National Forest

"we proceeded on to the top of the dividing ridge
from which discovered immense ranges of high mountains
still to the West of us..."

(LEWIS, August 12, 1805)

"As our guide inform me that we should leave the river at place and the weather appearing settled and fair I deterred to halt the next day, rest our horses and take some scilicet Observations." (Lewis, September 9, 1805)

It was a well-earned rest. The expedition's hunters shot and the horses found plenty of food in the surrounding woods. When they left the Bitterroot river, September 11, the Lewis and Clark Expedition followed what is now called Lolo Trail. The trail led to the Columbia River over obstacles much more difficult to conquer than the winter at Fort Vancouver or the current of the mighty Missouri.

Yesterday, the rugged Bitterroot Mountains challenged the ingenuity and ability of those courageous explorers. Today challenges our ingenuity and ability to interpret this important episode in Western history.

Lolo Trail and the Lewis and Clark Highway (U.S. 12) pass through National Forest land for more than 100 miles. The Forest Service has prepared an interpretive plan for the Lewis and Clark Highway Interpretive Complex with three objectives in mind:

To interpret human history so that the visitor may relive some of the dramatic episodes that are now a part of our American heritage.

To interpret natural history to the visitor so that he can become familiar with the outdoor environment.

To interpret the National Forest to the visitor so that he can understand the inter-relationships of forest resources, (wood, water, forage, wildlife, and recreation) and their value to him as an American.



TRAVELERS REST

Private Land

"we called this Creek Travellers rest...."

a fine bould clear running stream..."

(LEWIS, September 19, 1805)

LEWIS and CLARK HIGHWAY

INTERPRETIVE COMPLEX

Visitor Information Services

AN HISTORY

The Nezperce Indians of the Snake River Valley used the trail across the Bitterroots for many years before Lewis and Clark made their exploration. Known as the North Nezperce trail, it was the main route to the buffalo hunting grounds in eastern Montana.

Most historians describe the rugged mountains of Lolo Creek and the Lochsa River as the most difficult barrier Lewis and Clark encountered. This feeling is expressed in Captain Lewis' journal when, after eight days in the wilderness, they could see the plains in the distance: "...We to our inexpressable joy, discovered a large tract of prairie country lying to the S.W... the appearance of this country, our only hope for subsistence was suddenly revived the spirits of the party..." On the return in the next spring the expedition was plagued with waiting out the snow. Two attempts were made before the expedition could pass the mountains. Six days of snow and near starvation preceded the party reached their old camp at Travelers Rest on the Bitterroot River.

The Lolo Trail became the main route to the Snake River and the Columbia Plains for trappers and settlers. The Army improved the trail in 1866. Major Truax, with a detachment of troops, removed fallen timber and widened the more treacherous sections.

Chief Joseph, the great leader of the Nezperce Nation, used the Lolo Trail for part of his famous running battle with the U.S. Army in 1877. The Nezperce Indians had revolted against the greedy white man when he continued to steal their horses. General Howard was dispatched to quiet the upstart Nezperce. They met in two fierce battles--Chief Joseph was victor in both. Chief Joseph led his people over the Lolo Trail towards a hopeful sanctuary in Canada. General Howard pursued him from the West with a detachment of troops. Howard camped along the Lolo Trail for several nights but only one of his campsites has been located. A few discarded cannon balls have been found at Bald Mountain. There are stories that a small cannon was abandoned along the trail but each tale gives a different location.

Miners, trappers, surveyors, hunters, and many others walked and rode along the Lolo Trail and the Lochsa River. Every story adds to the depth of human history that lies over the Lewis and Clark Highway Interpretive Complex.

NATURAL HISTORY

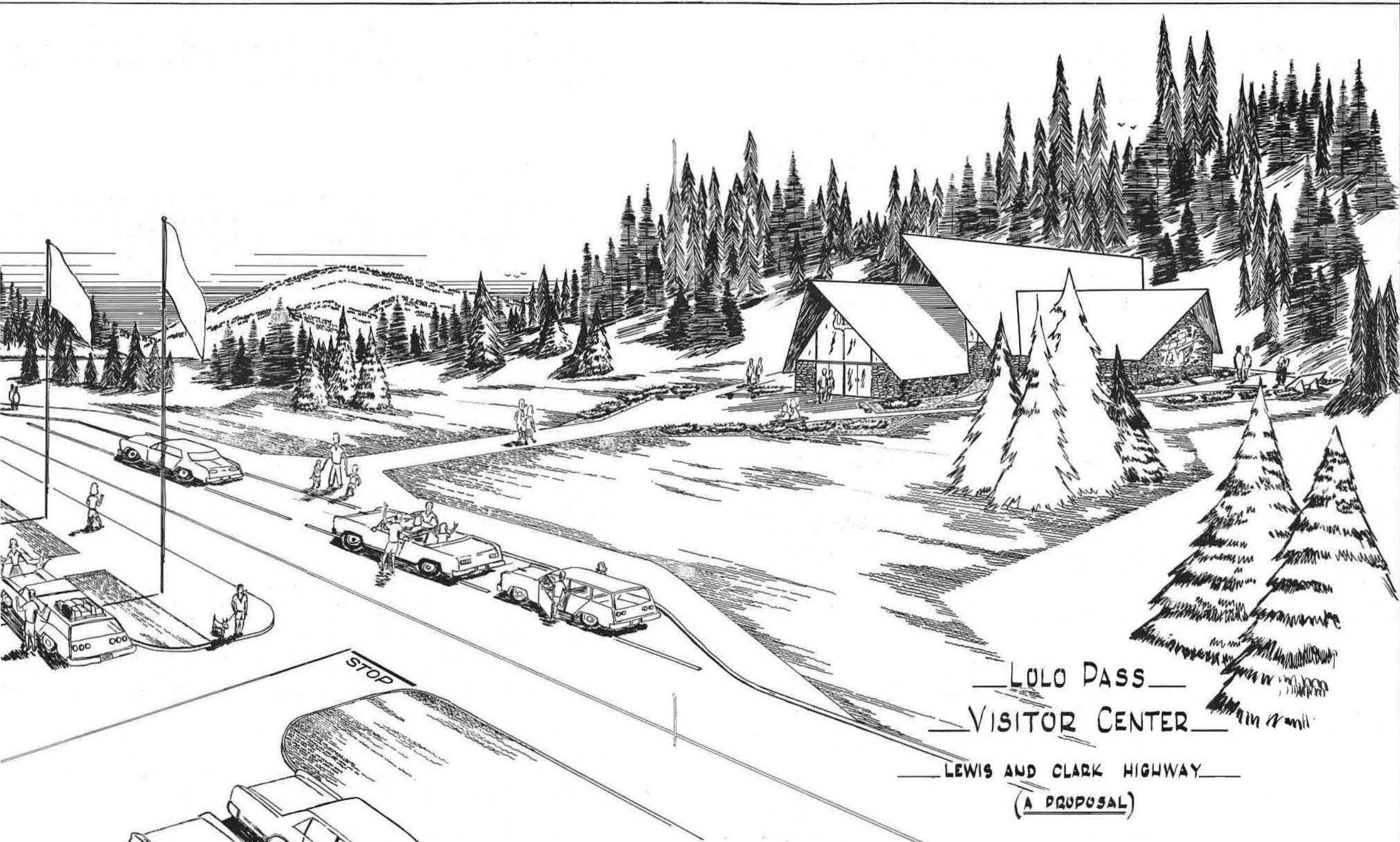
Natural history along the Lewis and Clark Highway is interesting. There is a wide variety of things to see. Much of the area was burned in the great forest fires of 1910, 1919, and 1934. Fires changed the vegetative cover of vast areas from generally timbered slopes to brush fields and isolated patches of timber. Over the years young timber stands have begun to appear. Today there is a full range of age classes culminating in the ancient stand of cedars in the DeVoto Memorial Grove along U. S. Highway 12 and the Clark Grove along the Lolo Trail. Many species of ferns, forbs, grasses, and brush compete for visitor's attention. One of the most unique plants in the area is the western flowering dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*). This beautiful shrub, usually found in the moist coastal mountains, flourishes along the Lochsa River.

There are three prominent warm springs along the Highway. Lolo Hot Springs, on private land, has been developed as a resort. Colgate Warm Springs and Jerry Johnson Hot Springs, small saline springs on National Forest land, attract elk and deer. They can be seen near the springs during most of the spring and summer months.

Wildlife is plentiful throughout the entire area, in contrast to the few animals that Lewis and Clark encountered. Mountain goat, deer, elk, and moose can be seen from the highway at any time of the year. Deer and elk congregate along the south-facing slopes during the winter. It is common to see more than 100 head of elk along the highway in February or March. Bear, coyote, and bobcat roam the Lolo Creek and Lochsa River drainages.

Steelhead trout, an ocean-going trout, fights its way back to the Lochsa River to spawn and offers good fishing during the fall run. Skillful fishermen also catch rainbow, cutthroat, and young steelhead trout during the summer.

The natural attractiveness of the area lies in the steep rugged mountains. All of the adjectives that describe an out-



— LOLO PASS —

— VISITOR CENTER —

— LEWIS AND CLARK HIGHWAY —

(A PROPOSAL)

T RESOURCES

Lewis and Clark were sent by President Jefferson to find able waters between the Missouri and the Columbia. Water important in those days to carry trade; today, water is tant as the life blood of the Nation.

Lewis and Clark left few tracks as they traveled through watershed of the Lochsa River. Today's uses have an impact requires watershed protection and management. Water is nly important to people but it is also important to the ries potential of the Lochsa River which is a spawning m for salmon and steelhead trout and the life-time home ther forms of aquatic life.

Hillsides that filter nature's water also support millions ard feet of timber--timber that is managed to provide a tual supply of wood through local industry, to the Nation's my.

A unique and important resource of the Lochsa watershed is elway-Bitterroot Wilderness. There is easy access from Highway 12 over hundreds of miles of Forest Service trails the inspirational solitude of 1.2 million-acres of Wilder-Wilderness that affords an opportunity for modern day rers to experience the physical challenge of foot or horse-travel similar to the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805.

The explorers almost starved because of the lack of game the Lolo Trail. The large fires that have occurred since expedition have changed the climax timber stands of the a watershed into vast brush fields filled with palatable e for big game. Today, the Lochsa watershed supports one e largest elk herds in the United States. Thousands of rs flock to this area each fall in search of game. They uch more successful than Lewis and Clark were.

Outdoor recreational opportunities run the full range of e's desires, from a simple picnic outing to two-week camping in one of the modern campgrounds along the Lochsa River. opment of the recreational potential has begun. Full devel-t will enable thousands of people to enjoy the recreational rtunities in the Lewis and Clark Highway Interpretive Complex.

All of these resources are important to the American way fe. It is equally important that Americans should learn understand how each resource is related to the other and each is managed to provide the most public benefit from



PACKER MEADOW

Clearwater National Forest

"...we fell on a Small Creek from the left

which Passed through open glades

Some of which 1/2 a mile wide,"

(CLARK, September 13, 1805)

IC USE AND ACCESS

The Lewis and Clark Highway, (U.S. 12) was dedicated in . The first reliable traffic counts were not made until when about 59,000 recreationists visited the area. Forest vice engineers have projected 425,000 annual visits by 1973, and on the 1963 use and national trends. This does not take consideration the public interest created by nationwide icity given to the Lewis and Clark Route by the Lewis and k Trail Commission and the establishment and development he Nez Perce National Historical Park.

We have only an estimate of use along the narrow road adjacent to the Lolo Trail. It is a conservative projection expect that 25% or more of the recreational visitors in this will spend some time along the actual Lolo Trail.

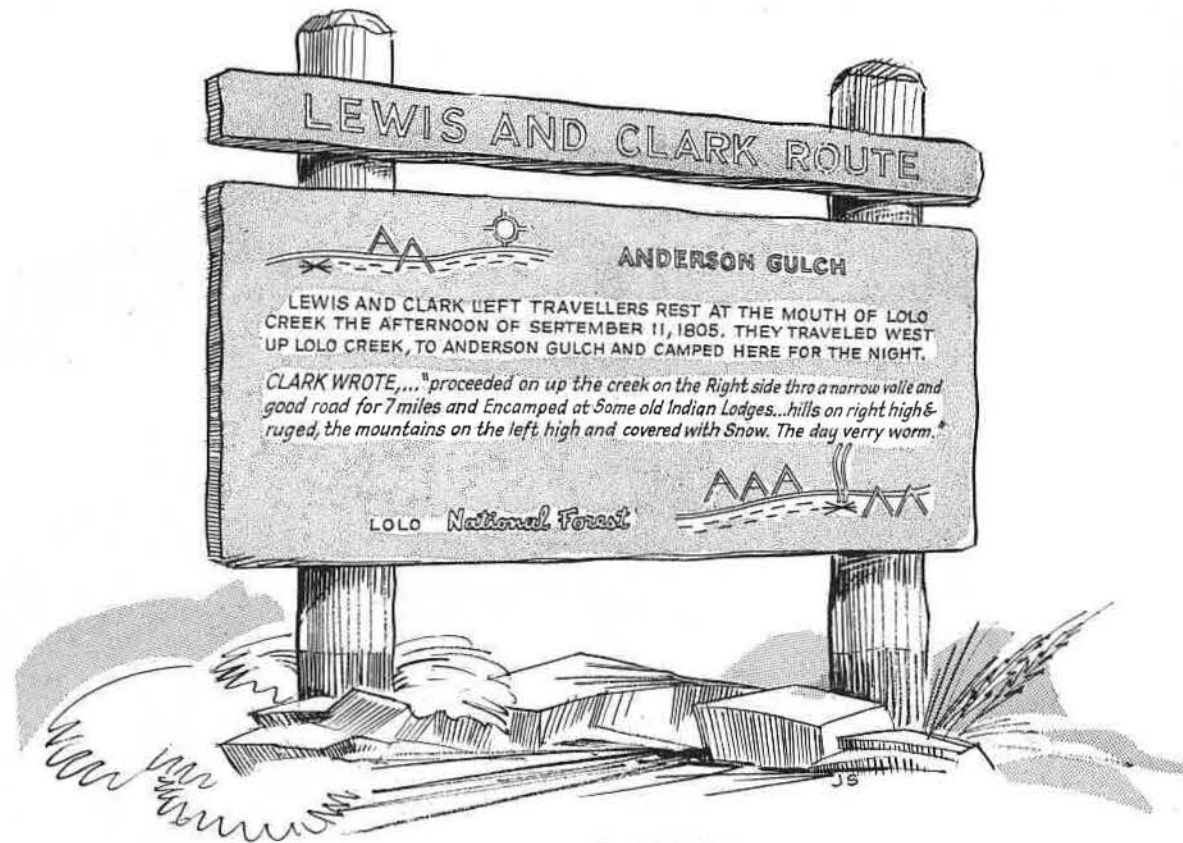
The projection of future visitor use is not complete with- an estimate of the visitors' interest level. The Lewis and k Trail will receive national publicity as a historic raction. It is, therefore, a logical assumption that the rity of visitors to this unique area will be oriented to- l historical information.

RECREATION FACILITIES

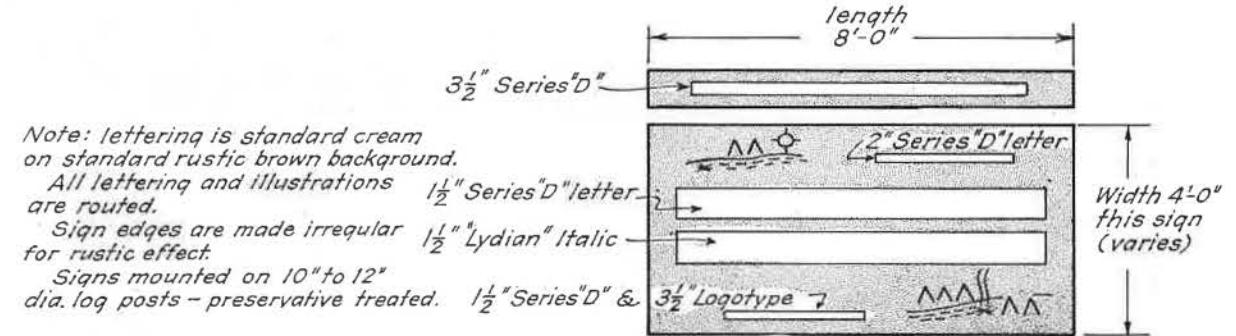
The Clearwater and Lolo National Forests have inventoried eational sites along U. S. Highway 12, in accordance with procedures of the National Forest Recreation Survey. The hernal Region Division of Recreation and Lands is preparing rdnated recreation development plan for U. S. Highway 12 the Lolo Trail. When completed, it will be incorporated, the interpretive plan, into an overall recreation area to guide full recreational development.

There are 165 family units in 12 completed camp sites along . Highway 12. More than 850 additional family units are ned for future construction. A few camping sites have been ntoried along the Lolo Trail; however, development is not ned until the Lolo Trail road has been improved. Several he interpretive sites along the Highway will be designed as stops for tourists.

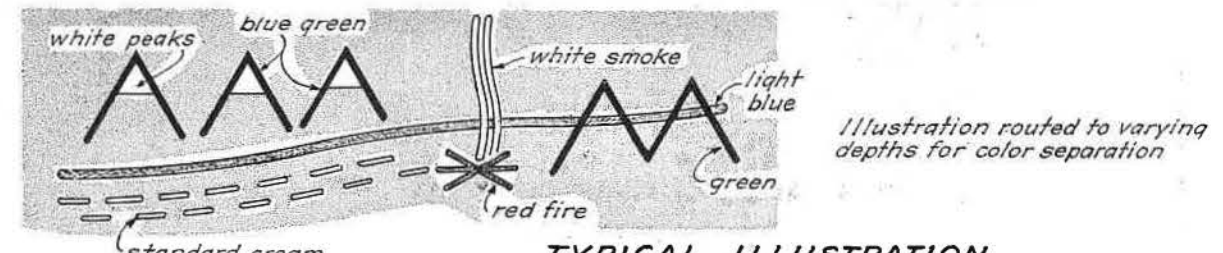
Information stations, a visitor center, the Lochsa Museum re trails, and campfire programs will add to the recreation-



SKETCH



PANEL CHARACTERISTICS





HISTORIC INTEREST POINT

LEWIS AND CLARK HIGHWAY

(A PROPOSAL)

Handwritten notes and signatures in cursive script, including the name 'Merrill' and other illegible text.

INTERPRETIVE PLAN

Several basic principles have guided preparation of the interpretive plan. Our first objective has been to maintain integrity of the Lewis and Clark Route. The Forest Service, therefore, has not diluted the historical importance of the Lewis and Clark Trail by more than the essential number of historical signs or resource interpretive signs. Natural historical and resource interpretive signs, for the most part, have been planned for the Lewis and Clark Highway west of the Expedition's Route. Each installation, site, and device will be designed by competent landscape architects and exhibit planners.

This is a large and very complicated program. The Forest Service has phased construction program over a period of five years.

A graphic representation of the interpretive plan is included in the back cover pocket of this report. A wide variety of interpretive devices have been planned to tell the various stories along the route. The interpretive plan includes 27 historical signs about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Most of these signs will be located at known campsites.

It is not intended, however, to create a "Lewis and Clark were Here" image. Interesting accounts of the Expedition will be quoted from the Journals to add color to the sign text. An example of one of the Lewis and Clark Historical signs is shown on page 19 of this report. Nine other historical signs refer to General Howard, Chief Joseph, Indians, and the early settlers. The text for all signs will be checked with accepted authorities, such as the Idaho and Montana Historical Societies.

The official Lewis and Clark Trail Commission insignia will be used to mark the approaches to all signs telling of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

A Visitor Center, at Lolo Pass, will serve two important functions. First, it will be the eastern entrance to the Nez Perce National Historical Park. Second, it will tell the high-altitude travelers about the rugged mountains that faced Lewis and Clark and their battle to cross them. An architect's conception of what the Lolo Pass Visitor Center might look like appears on pages 14 and 15.

The old Lochsa Ranger Station will be developed into a museum of early Forest Service activities. The Ranger Station was hand-built from native timbers. It was supplied by pack



WEIPPE PRAIRIE

Clearwater National Forest

"...we to our inexpressable joy discovered a large tract

of prairie country lying to the S. W. "

nal Historical Park theme of North Idaho development. The
nal Forests have been a very important supplier of raw
ials to the timber, mining, and cattle industries of North

The original Lolo Trail strays away from the Lolo Trail
in several places. This offers an opportunity to provide
visitor with an "Adventure Trail" hike with Lewis and Clark.
Adventure Trail" in the Bitterroot Mountains will be a
e experience, unavailable to the visitor anywhere else
the Lewis and Clark Route.

As construction proceeds, the program will be expanded to
de personal contacts, evening campfire talks, and a series
ochures.

OWNERSHIP

Approximately 75 miles of U. S. Highway 12 and 86 miles of
olo Trail are in solid National Forest ownership. An addi-
l 30 miles of U. S. Highway 12 and 41 miles of the Lolo
run through mixed National Forest and private ownership
n the National Forest boundary.

Private land is shaded on the plan map in the back of this
t. The principal private land holder within the proclaimed
onal Forest boundary is the Northern Pacific Railway. The
nda Company and several other land owners control a small
on of the private land adjacent to the Lolo Trail and U. S.
Four important Lewis and Clark expedition sites are located
ivate land. The Forest Service plans to acquire as many of
e sites as possible through acceptable land exchanges or by
ase. Purchases would be financed with Land and Water Con-
tion Act funds. Scenic easements will be negotiated for
remainder of the private land along U. S. Highway 12 and the
Trail.

At the present time there is little commercial development
le the National Forest boundary. Lolo Hot Springs is being
loped by private interests as a recreational center. There
e other commercial resort under special use permit near the
ll Ranger Station. More than 90 miles of the Highway is
of commercial advertising. The Forest Service intends to
tain this natural atmosphere along Highway 12 by close
rol on National Forest lands and scenic easements from
ate owners.



LOLO HOT SPRINGS
Lewis and Clark Campsite
June 29, 1806

Private Land
Lolo National Forest

COOPERATION

The Forest Service interpretive program is designed to com-
plement the Lewis and Clark Trail Commission's nation-wide devel-
opment of the Trail. The image of the Lewis and Clark Expedition
must be coordinated along the entire route. In the same way the
interpretive program of the Forest Service and the National Park
Service within the boundaries of the Nez Perce National Histori-
cal Park will be coordinated. The Forest Service will establish
continuing liaison with the Superintendent of the Nez Perce
National Historical Park to ensure coordinated development of
interpretive programs.

Cooperation is important at State and local levels. State
Highway Departments will be consulted about highway approaches
and traffic safety. The Idaho Historical Society and the Montana
Historical Society have been and will continue to be major sources
of accurate material for historic interpretive programs. The
Idaho State Department of Commerce and the Montana Advertising

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LEWIS AND CLARK PASS

Helena National Forest

"...passing the dividing ridge between the waters

of the Columbia and Missouri rivers at 1/4 of a mile."

(LEWIS, July 7, 1806)