

The Lewis & Clark Trail

The Greatest American Off-Road Trip



It was an epic journey into the unknown West; an adventure of danger! excitement! – of courage and perseverance. Two hundred years ago it was U.S. Army captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, who with their intrepid Corps of Discovery ventured by keelboat up the Missouri River from then-frontier St. Louis, MO in search of a Northwest Passage that didn't exist. By turns enthralled and severely tested by their encounters, they traveled over the plains – “beautiful in the extreme” – where they befriended warring Indian tribes, crossed Montana's treacherous Bitterroot Mountains, and battled the Snake and Columbia rivers to

what they discovered instead: the Pacific. “O! the joy,” wrote Clark at first sight of the ocean they found “most romantic.” And when Lewis and Clark returned home triumphant 28 months and 8,000 miles later, American history had its icons of vision, of daring; theirs is a legend that endures.

Today the Lewis and Clark “trail” is an aviation sensation. Fly it and thrill to spectacular scenery – the colorful West at its dramatic best. Land anywhere along its changing route and be welcomed by towns eager to share Lewis and Clark lore in the form of special celebrations, museum exhibitions and historical sites of the

Ten to 14 miles per day at best, by poling or rowing, made hard slow going for Lewis & Clark as they ventured upstream along the beautiful wide Missouri (at left, in Nebraska); the Columbia (above right, in Idaho) confronted the explorers with very real risk of losing their boats and/or lives in sudden encounters with rapids they found treacherous to negotiate.

Lewis and Clark, styling in dress uniform, often would parade their men and offer beads and other gifts on behalf of their “chief” in Washington in an effort to impress and befriend those whose lands they traveled.



Corps' greatest trials and conquests.

Fly the trail and feel the same sense of adventure that inspired Clark to declare to Lewis at the outset: “I will cheerfully join you and partake of the dangers, difficulties and fatigues...” – without the danger, difficulties and fatigues. How? Start in St. Louis, MO (SUS). It was here the captains and their crew of “stout, healthy, unmarried

men, accustomed to the woods” put in to the muddy Missouri River their supply-laden fleet: a 55-foot wooden keelboat, two flat-bottom pirogues, and the first of 15 hand-carved canoes. Here, the Missouri will become your route – but hopefully not before stops at the city's Museum of Westward Expansion (at the Arch) and the Missouri Historical Society: both feature

facts and artifacts of Lewis and Clark's phenomenal feat; here, too, at the Bellefontaine Cemetery, is William Clark's grave. Fly upriver via St. Charles, Jefferson City and Independence to Kansas City, KS; upriver still, over Platte City, Leavenworth and Atchison (site of the Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum) to Shubert, Nebraska: in town after town are commemorative

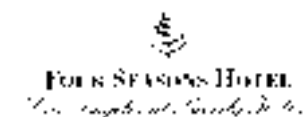
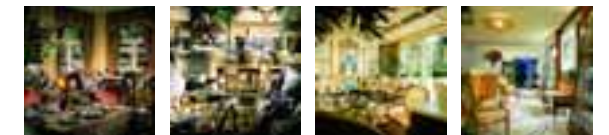


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Our Modern Day Lewis & Clark

Ramona Cox on the Hunt for Adventure



Laptop and satellite phone for the ultimate wilderness office

You remember Skychick. Ramona Cox (Fall 2002) is an aviator/skier/rock-climber/diver, a boogie-boarder/belly dancer/formation flier and, oh yeah, underwater videographer. Ramona is, all told, an adventurer. A Lewis & Clark kind of gal. In fact, the trek West that intrigued two of America's greatest early explorers today finds Ramona inspired – and hot on their trail. In her Cessna 206 with the big red lips-in-a-kiss painted on its nose, "Skychick" is flying into the land of Indians and wilderness; Idaho, Montana – for the California pilot the Great Unknown – and the journey of daring and courage that Lewis & Clark undertook two hundred years ago is as we speak drawing Ramona to its modern-day promise: one heck of a great adventure.

Will she confront bear? Peacemake with Indians? Will she ford rivers, portage around falls, and once in the wild, we will be eager to know, will she survive a lack of serviceable restaurants? Will she need a Sacagawea to show her the way back home?

Join us in upcoming issues as we follow Ramona into the land of Lewis & Clark. As we receive her dispatches we will share them here. Already, Skychick has checked-in:

"I am in Bullfrog, Utah," she reports, "camping on a remote shore of Lake Powell." Not quite in Lewis & Clark country yet, but it's a start. "After carrying my gear from my plane WAY around an inlet (through deep sand, mud, and sticker bushes), I decided it was easier and faster to swim directly to my site. So I put my things in a dry bag and that's what I do. It's 104 degrees during the day so to eat I place a can of soup on the ground and wait 30 minutes until it's hot enough. And I love my fish finder!!! I take the kayak (which I've had to patch after an encounter with a sticker bush) out in the morning and it's so much fun looking at the fish finder and actually seeing fish below, which MAY or may not hit my bait. But it sure beats casting the line blindly and wondering, Are there really fish down there?"

"Went wake boarding today with a bunch of kids who were fascinated with my having flown in. Anyway," she signs-off, breathlessly, "I'm on my way!"

Godspeed, Skychick. Until next time, beware of bear and remember: the Indians, er, the *Native Americans*, are friendly.

markers of the expedition's highs and lows, whether it's the terrific windstorm that almost dashed the keelboat to bits and tested the Corps with to their limit, or the dramatic encounters with the Oto, Sioux and other native tribes. Though their orders from President Jefferson were to claim the West and its riches for the U.S., Lewis and Clark, styling in dress uniform, often would parade their men and offer beads and other gifts on behalf of their "chief" in Washington in an effort to impress and befriend those whose lands they traveled.

As the Missouri River arrives at Ford Mandan in Washburn, ND (5C8) Lewis and Clark's epic adventure practically turns epic disaster. Bitter winter months were spent camped among hundreds of Indians, along with British and French traders, and in the freeze "the situation of our boat and pirogues is now allarming [sic]," wrote Clark. "they are firmly enclosed in (river) Ice and almost covered with snow." Though the explorers couldn't yet fathom other difficulties to come – grizzly bears, near-starvation, portage around the falls of the Missouri and the looming Bitterroots, "the most terrible mountains ever beheld," Lewis and Clark were not without the grace of a fortuitous destiny that helped to guide their way: they signed-on a French-Canadian interpreter whose young Shoshone wife, Sacagawea, convinced her tribe's kinsmen to help the Corps conquer the rugged Rockies, another mastered challenge on their intrepid way west. At the North Dakota Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Fort Mandan, catch the collection of Karl Bodmer watercolors; these are a compelling eyewitness account of the Indian culture at the time of Sacagawea.

Fly the trail and behold, as did Lewis and Clark themselves, "the grandest and most pleasing prospects (our) eyes ever surveyed" in country marked by endless interest and breathtaking awe: the West. And when the expedition's route next twists through Montana's Great Falls, the "excessively dangerous" Lolo Trail, and along the Columbia River to the sea, know that here's a flight sure to rev those jets that whine *let's take off soon for an epic good time!*

For further details and travel planning visit www.lewisandclark.com and www.lewisclark.geog.missouri.edu. ✕



Forward Ho!

Along the Lewis and Clark Trail

Traveling the Lewis & Clark trail (Summer '03) continues to be a wilderness trek of outsize adventure – of “fatigues,” “dangers” and “honors,” according to Lewis & Clark themselves. For aviatrix Ramona Cox, aka *Skychick*, our intrepid explorer who is flying certain sections, the trail is cougar sightings, “gigantic dive-bombing kamikaze moths” and, oh my!, bears that “not only tear things up,” she reports, “but also slobber all over everything.” The trail is sparkling azure lakes, the brilliance of stars, sunsets “monumental” and, as she says, “the bliss of utter solitude.” What’s more, wires Ramona, there is the most

beautiful wilderness you’ll ever see and...*what?* An evil squirrel? Hordes of topless girls on a bucking bronco?

Skychick! What gives?

When Lewis & Clark’s Corps of Discovery departed Fort Mandan, ND (Y19), where we left you last issue, they spent three weeks (mostly lost) climbing the Lolo Pass through the Bitterroot Mountains. “We are weacked and much reduced in flesh as well as Strength,” complained Clark of the ordeal. As the trail heads west to Great Falls, MT (GTF), today’s flyer can gawk at the five sets of falls that cost Lewis & Clark 28 days of

portaging canoes and cargo overland, a task so exhausting the men fell asleep on their feet. Farther west in Wolf Creek, MT, there are “the most remarkable cliffs that we have yet seen”; here, the camping and fishing of Howser Lake are almost as fun as a stay at Blacktail Ranch (www.blacktailranch.com), a working ranch only a quick buzz from both Glacier and Yellowstone parks. Follow the Missouri River still west: As you soar above Tenduy and Salmon, ID, imagine the Corps below, hastily carving dugout canoes in an anxious effort to cross the Rockies before winter’s blizzards (alas, they didn’t). North Fork’s Indian Creek

Ranch (www.indiancreekranch.com) will put you up if you want to wing in and walk around. And why wouldn’t you? “This place,” wrote Lewis, “wore the impression on my mind of enchantment.”

Come in, Skychick? “Three months, 11 states, 70 hours of flying...all enjoyed with no schedule, no reservations, no commitments and a plane loaded with gear to fit most any situation.” That, reports Ramona, was the m.o. *And?* Well, after daytripping off course to meet friends at Oshkosh, and then flying to Sturgis, SD (49B) only to find the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in full throttle, our modern day Lewis & Clark



Ramona on the go. Skychick and her trailbound accomplice, a Cessna 206

“generated laughs” in her T-shirt proclaiming *Testosterone – Got Some?* She then swooped away from the 80,000 bikers engaged in “the Oshkosh of the Harley world” (complete with the topless girls above mentioned) and reconnected with the wilderness that drew her to the trail in the first place.

She survives turbulence – “like being placed in a dryer on tumble.” Forest fires and thunderstorms. She suffers a tent “flattened” by a sudden squall, lightning striking so close “I felt a jolt run up my body and my hair stand on end”; she triumphs over the menace of her nemesis, “Evil Squirrel.” “He looked like a mangy

Flying Adventures



Along the Clearwater River, Idaho.
Monday, 9:00 a.m. The CEO/Adventurer
at her tent-desk (inset)



dog from Tijuana,” she says, “and had the loud awful chattering sound that clearly stated, *beat it, camper.*” But when Ramona arrives in Cavanaugh Bay, ID (66S) after incredibly eventful days camping next to her Cessna 206, she is as awed as Lewis & Clark by Idaho’s beauty. “This was by far my favorite location of all time,” she says of the 23,000-acre azure lake by the Selkirk Mountains. “Magnificent.”

To be sure, Lewis & Clark arduously poled their boats along the Clearwater, Snake and Columbia rivers, where Nez Percé Indian chief Twisted Hair served as guide through the abundant, salmon-rich land. And Skychick, easily soaring above enjoyed the luxury of seeing more of the territory than the Corps ever could. Still. The explorers of yesterday and today share the thrill of the trail.

Aviators following the route of Lewis & Clark – or Ramona’s variation – will find lots of sights worth discovery. The

Nez Percé Nat’l Historic Park in Spaulding, ID affords a colorful look at the namesake nation’s culture; in the heart of Washington’s best wine-producing region (swing by the many wineries of Walla Walla), the Sacagawea State Park near Pasco, WA brings to life details of the expedition. Trout fish in Lake Wallula, OR; sailboard in Hood River, OR. Lewis & Clark ventured west, ever west, finally to the coastal inlets where at Fort Clatsop in Astoria, OR, Clark carved in a pine tree his name and *By Land from the U. states in 1804 & 1805.* “O! the joy,” he wrote. They had reached the Pacific. The end of the trail that made heroes and icons of two of the greatest men of American history.

Skychick, you still with us? “I decided I neither want to be an entrée for a Wyoming mountain lion or an appetizer for a Montana grizzly,” Ramona notes after encounters with both. In the backcountry, “there is no calling 911, nowhere

to run and a scream will do no more than echo through the pines.” So after being mesmerized by moose while camped in Magee, ID (S77), enjoying an ambiance “with the depth and mood of an Ansel Adams photo” in Johnson Creek, ID (3U2), and thrilling to the petrified forest beneath the crystal clear surface of Sullivan Lake, WA (09S), she winds down her days of making like Lewis & Clark.

“I rev up my little engine with glee” and head home, goes Ramona’s final report. Her Cessna 206 with the big red lips painted on the nose in a kiss skims the very land the explorers found, as Lewis wrote, “beautiful in the extreme.” Neither bear, nor moose, nor Evil Squirrel detain her on her way. She is Skychick, and like Lewis & Clark and all great explorers before her, and since – maybe you? – she is undaunted.

For info on the Lewis and Clark Trail, visit www.lewisandclark.com and www.lewisclark.geog.missouri.edu. ✕