

Project Completion Report

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU)

Project Title: Lewis and Clark National Historical Trail Auto Tour Route Wayshowing Assessment and Plan

Project Code : CSURM-168, 203, 234

Type of Project : Technical Assistance

Funding Agency: National Park Service

Partner University: Colorado State University

NPS Agreement Technical Representative: Neal Bedlan-, National Park Service, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, 601 Riverfront Drive, Omaha, NE 68102-4226; (402)661-1816; neal_bedlan@nps.gov

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Start Date of Project: 8/15/2009

End Date of Project: 3/1/2013

Funding Amount: \$160,000

Project Summary

The Lewis and Clark NHT includes a designated 6,000+ mile auto tour route consisting of interstate, state and local roads paralleling the historical trail. The auto tour route provides access to the Trail's historic, cultural, natural and recreational resources. The auto tour route is one of the longest auto tour routes in the nation.

Since 1965, the Auto Tour Route has been designated and signed by various state agencies and private foundations. The last official inventory was completed in 1991 and since then much has changed. During the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial (2003-2006) the trail increased the number of road signs, interpretive panels, various visitor centers, historical markers, and certified sites. The current signage has inconsistent wayfinding principles throughout the entire trail.

Colorado State University, in cooperation with the Lewis and Clark NHT staff, and a wayshowing professional expert will complete a comprehensive wayshowing plan for the Lewis and Clark NHT.

During this three year project, CSU and NPS worked together on the following activities:

1) Key Stakeholder Assessment (State DOT and Tourism Offices)

Data collection from stakeholders, received approximately 80 responses from more than 200 stakeholders identified through a snowball sampling technique. These stakeholders include key players in the each of the 11 states through which the Trail and Auto Tour Route transit. They are staff members from state departments of transportation, state tourism offices, by-way committees, and a host of other “experts” and interested citizens that have been referred by interviewees. Developed a qualitative analysis protocol to categorize and interpret the extensive qualitative data that has been received in response to our email survey format.

2) Certified Asset Manager Assessment

Snowball sampling of the population provided by the National Park Service. Email survey included much of the wayfinding and wayshowing information included in the initial survey, along with additional questions intended to address the goals of the project surrounding interpretation and visitor services.

3) Visitor Assessment Survey

OMB approved a series of graduate student teams to administer the survey onsite in each of the 11 states with a response of 400-800 completed surveys. Visitors will be surveyed about the Lewis and Clark NHT and their understanding of the auto tour route.

4) Auto Tour Route Wayshowing Plan

Developed the *Effective Wayshowing for Enhanced Visitor Experience* plan, which provides a reference manual for the National Park Service and its many collaborative partners and stakeholders to enhance the visitor experience offered by the Lewis and Clark Auto Tour Route. The wayshowing plan provides guidance on roadside directional signs, route-marking signs, signing systems and other signs along the National Historic Trail.

5) CSU Assessment Final Report

The final report will be completed in the near future. The final report will be sent electronically to Kathy Tonnessen and Pei-Lin Yu.

Products will include:

- 1) Analyses and final report for Stakeholder, Certified Asset and Visitor Assessment**
- 2) Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Auto Tour Route Wayshowing Plan**

Number of students participating in this project: undergraduates, graduate students, degrees conferred.

2 PhD students, one working on an hourly basis.

Lessons Learned from this project:

| Pre-planning and Planning were important to make this project a success. Increased communication with more routine meetings could have aided in the project, but overall project was very successful.

Other RM-CESU agencies or research partners who participated in this project:

Research Partners included David L. Dahlquist Associates, LLC and Breann Bye + Associates.