

Project Summary

Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

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

Discipline: Social Science
Type of Project: Research
Funding Agency: National Park Service
Other Partners/Cooperators: Colorado State University
Effective Dates: 8/15//2009 – 3/1/2013
Funding Amount: \$160,000 [FY11: \$40,000; FY10: \$50,000; FY09: \$70,000]

Investigators and Agency Representative:

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Project Abstract: The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (Lewis and Clark NHT) was established by the National Trails System Act Amendment of 1978 with administrative responsibility assigned to the National Park Service. The enabling legislation describes the trail as approximately 3,700 miles from Illinois to the Pacific following the outbound and return routes of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

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. In 2009 the Lewis and Clark NHT commissioned an inventory of all Lewis and Clark NHT road signs, and the primary interpretive panels, various visitor centers, historical markers, Artwork, Cultural Resource Centers and certified sites along the Lewis and Clark NHT. These areas were considered "assets" along the trail. All trail assets will be documented and the GPS coordinates recorded on a GIS layer. Nearly all of the assets are primarily owned and managed by other federal, tribal, state, and local partners. The wayshowing plan objectives are to do the following:

- Determine the perception travelers on the existing auto tour route
- Increase awareness of the auto tour route and the selected assets along the route by travelers, local residents and stakeholders
- Increase reliability of wayshowing standards
- Provide a plan to advance consistent signage on the auto tour route
- Assist Lewis and Clark NHT travelers to successfully and safely self-navigate the auto tour route, find Lewis and Clark resource assets and return to the auto tour route and other destinations
- Assist individual state DOTs and tourism offices with information to increase the effectiveness of travel information related to the Lewis and Clark NHT

Outcomes with Completion Dates: November 15, 2012

Keywords: wayshowing, inventory of trail assets, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Colorado State University