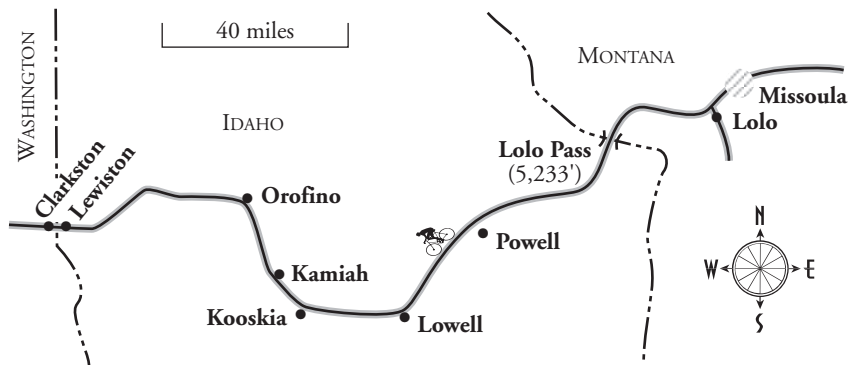




## I. OVER THE BITTERROOTS

### MISSOULA, MT TO LEWISTON, ID



Although September days can sometimes be warm and beautiful in the Rockies, the Corps of Discovery encountered an early snowstorm that almost wiped them out. The twelve days from Traveller's Rest (Lolo, MT) to the Weippe Prairie (Weippe, ID; pronounced Wee-ipe) were the most difficult of the entire expedition. Today this part of the Trail is arguably the most beautiful.

In 1854 John Mullan considered Lolo Pass for the Army road he built across the Rockies, but instead he decided to follow the Clark Fork River northwest from Missoula. When the railroad came, it also followed the Clark Fork, and the highway later followed the railroad.

It wasn't until the 1930s and the Great Depression that the Civilian Conservation Corps built a single-lane dirt road across Lolo Pass. They mostly followed an ancient trail along the ridges known to the Nez Perce as "the road to buffalo country," and to the Montana Salish as "the trail to the Nez Perce." This is the trail followed by Lewis and Clark, and it is now called the Lolo Motorway (Road 500). Even today this is a rough single-lane dirt road, often clear of snow for only a couple of months each year. It is accessible to four-wheel drive vehicles and mountain bikers prepared for several days of remote wilderness. Contact the Forest Service (Powell Ranger Station below) if you want to pursue this route, since access will be limited during the coming bicentennial years.

Our route along Highway 12, which follows the Lochsa (meaning "rough water") River, was not completed until 1962. Once you cross Lolo Pass, it's 77 miles of glorious downhill and spectacular scenery along the rushing river.

But it was different for the Corps of Discovery. Instead of leading the group along the established Native American trails that followed the ridges, Old Toby, the Shoshoni guide, led them down the steep slopes to the river in the rugged canyon.

The expedition struggled along the south side of the canyon and camped near Powell on September 14. Clark wrote, "*Here we wer compelled to kill a Colt for*

*our men & Selves to eat for the want of meat & we named the South fork Colt killed Creek. . . The Mountains which we passed to day much worst than yesterday the last excessively bad & Thickly Strowed with falling timber & Pine Spruc fur Hackmatac & Tamerack, Steep & Stoney our men and horses much fatigued."*

By this time, the captains knew they couldn't make it on the route along the river. Near Whitehouse Pond they climbed 2,000 feet back up to the ridge and camped September 15 at Snowbank Camp on what is now the 500 Road.

On September 16 they struggled along the ridge all day in a snowstorm. Clark wrote, "*I have been wet and as cold in every part as I ever was in my life, indeed I was at one time fearfull my feet would freeze in the thin mockersons which I wore.*" That night they killed a second horse for dinner at Lonesome Cove Camp.

On September 17 they awoke to find their horses scattered, and they couldn't get started until 1 pm. Another horse for dinner.

By September 18 they were desperate, and they decided that Clark should go ahead with some hunters. Lewis and the main party ate a concoction of portable soup, bear oil, and twenty pounds of candles. Unappealing as this sounds, keep in mind that candles were made from animal tallow, and they contained at least some nourishment. On this day Clark's party ate nothing, but they came upon a place where they could view a plain in the distance. They named this spot Spirit Revival Ridge. It took two more miserable days to reach the Nez Perce village on the Weippe Prairie. Clark was able to send food back to the main party on September 21, and the next day the main party arrived at Weippe.

After their twelve-day ordeal, the men stumbled into the Nez Perce village more dead than alive. Gorging themselves on an unfamiliar diet of roots and fish compounded their starvation with massive dysentery.

According to oral legend, the Nez Perce held a council to decide what to do with these pathetically weak strangers. Living too far to the west to trade with white

Americans, the Nez Perce had only a few old guns and iron goods, like pots, pans, and tools. They were constantly harassed by every surrounding tribe—all of whom were better armed and equipped. The modern guns and ammunition of the Lewis and Clark expedition would make them the best armed tribe west



June in the Bitterroots near Darby, MT

of the Mississippi River, and the horses and other equipment and supplies would be a bonus.

Their decision was easy, quick, and rational; kill the strangers and take their equipment. However, before they could execute this decision, a respected elderly woman named Watkuweis (meaning “returned from a far country”) stepped forward and convinced the chiefs to treat the strangers well. She had previously been kidnapped by Blackfeet Indians and later treated well by white men.

Watkuweis carried the day, and the Nez Perce became loyal and helpful friends to the expedition—resupplying them and holding their horses until they returned the next Spring. Once again, the expedition was saved by a woman. A related tragic irony of this happy experience is the terrible way the United States treated the Nez Perce 70 years later—a story that can be seen and heard at both the Big Hole National Battlefield near Wisdom, Montana, and the Nez Perce National Historical Park near Lewiston, Idaho.

## Fort Fizzle, MT

About five miles west of Lolo is a sign commemorating Fort Fizzle. It was here that Captain Rawn of the U.S. Army, along with some reluctant recruits from Missoula, erected a barricade to stop Chief Joseph and his Nez Perce band of warriors, women, and children in their attempt to escape to Canada.

When the Indians became aware of this, they climbed over the ridge to the north and proceeded down the next valley—neatly bypassing the barricade and the soldiers. Hence the name, “Fort Fizzle.”

## Lolo Hot Springs, MT

Population: 20

Lolo Hot Springs consists of a huge parking lot, natural hot spring pools, restaurant, convenience store, motel, RV park, and campground. It is attractive to many cyclists because of its hot springs and its convenient location 25 miles west of Lolo and 20 miles east of Powell.

Zip: 59847

- 🏠 1) The Fort at Lolo Hot Springs Motel (\$\$), 406-273-2290
- ▲ 1) Lewis and Clark NFS Campground, 10 mi. east of Lolo Hot Springs; woods, privacy, water, pit toilets
- 2) Lolo Hot Springs RV Park and Campground, 406-273-2290
- 3) Lee Creek NFS Campground, 1.4 mi. west of Lolo Hot Springs; woods, privacy, water, pit toilets

## Powell Ranger Station

Although Powell Ranger Station is not an official town in Idaho, it's a valuable place for cyclists because of its strategic location and the services it offers. If you're not camping, the next indoor lodging is 68 miles west in Lowell. Even if you choose to camp at one of the many National Forest Service campgrounds along the river (listed below), the store and restaurant at Lochsa Lodge are the only ones for many miles.

Zip: 59847

- ★ Powell Ranger District, Lolo, MT 59847, 208-942-3113
- 🏠 Lochsa Lodge (\$), restaurant, motel rooms, cabins, 208-942-3405
- ▲ NFS campgrounds below have water and pit toilets. More information can be obtained at the Powell Ranger Station (208-942-3113):
  - 1) Powell, near river and Lochsa Lodge
  - 2) Whitehouse, on river 3 mi. west of Powell
  - 3) Wendover, on river 4 mi. west of Powell
  - 4) Jerry Johnson, north side of road 11 mi. west of Powell
  - 5) Wilderness Gateway, across river 38 mi. west of Powell
  - 6) Apgar, on river 57 mi. west of Powell

### Special Attraction

Lewis and Clark Trail Adventures, Box 9051, Missoula, MT 59801, 406-728-7609, 1–6 day raft trips on Lochsa and Salmon rivers; mountain bike, driving, and hiking trips on the Lolo Trail



*Lochsa Lodge,  
Powell Ranger  
Station, MT*

## Lowell, ID

Population: 25

Lowell is the spot where the Selway (meaning “calm water”) River meets the Lochsa (meaning “rough water”) River to form the Clearwater River. Although there is no town as such, you will find a thriving community offering many services for cyclists just across the bridge at the Three Rivers Resort. You can shop or eat, stay in a cabin or camp, swim or soak, or arrange for a raft trip on the river. (Three Rivers Rafting, 888-926-4430, [www.threeriversrafting.com](http://www.threeriversrafting.com), [info@threeriversrafting.com](mailto:info@threeriversrafting.com))

Zip: 83539

- ▣ 1) Three Rivers Resort (\$\$), Box 61, 208-926-4430, <http://adventuresports.com/asap/resort/threerivers/welcome.htm>; resort on the river with camping, motel rooms, and log cabins; pool and jacuzzis; full restaurant and camp store; raft trips available.
- 2) Ryan’s Wilderness Inn Motel (\$), 208-926-4706
- ▲ 1) Three Rivers Resort, see Lodging above
- 2) Wild Goose NFS CG, 2 mi. west of Lowell on river, water, pit toilets, 208-926-4275

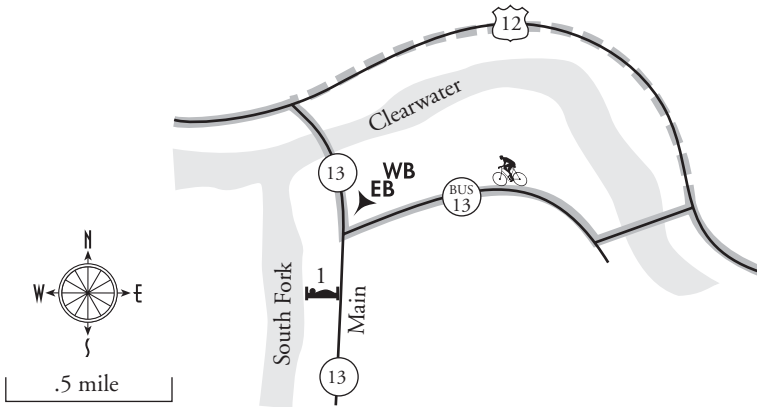


*Rafting on the Lochsa River near Lowell, MT*

## Kooskia, ID

Population: 700

Kooskia is a working town with a motel, restaurant, and medium size food market. Our bicycle route crosses the river twice to swing by the edge of downtown, although it's possible to stay on Route 12 and skip the town.



**Kooskia, ID** — Zip: 83539

- 1) Mt. Stuart Inn Motel (\$), Main, 208-926-0166
- 2) Looking Glass Lodge B&B (\$\$), 208-926-0855, 9 mi. east on Route 12
- 3) Bear Hollow B&B (\$\$\$), 800-831-3713, 5 mi. east on Route 12



*Clearwater River  
near Greer, ID*

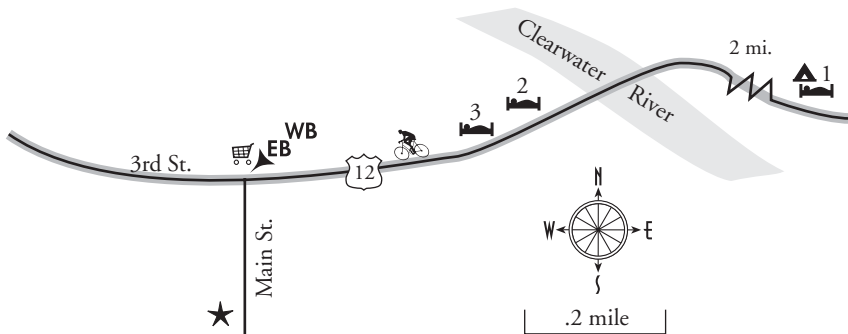
## Kamiah, ID

Population: 1,200

Legend says that the Heart of the Monster rock outcrop here was the source of all people. Coyote wrestled with the monster, killed it, and flung the parts all over, making all Native American tribes. Since there were no people here, he squeezed blood from the heart to make the Ne-Me-Poo (Nez Perce people).

Near Kamiah (pronounced Kam<sup>2</sup>-ee-eye) on Highway 12 is a sign commemorating the Long Camp, where Lewis and Clark camped from May 7 to June 10, 1806, on their return trip while they waited impatiently for the snow to melt in the Bitterroots so the Nez Perce could lead them back to the plains. Historians now believe the actual site of this camp was on the north side of the river just west of Kamiah, but the other facts are correct. It was a long time to sit around and wait, and they occupied their time preparing for the journey and engaging in various athletic contests with the friendly Indians. The wait was exacerbated by their lack of trade goods, for they were down to trading buttons, clothes, and other personal items for basic food.

Kamiah today has several motels, a private campground, several restaurants, and good food shopping.



**Kamiah, ID** — Zip: 83536

★ **Chamber of Commerce:** 518 Main, 208-935-2290

🏠 1) Lewis Clark Resort (\$\$), Hwy. 12, 800-264-9943

2) Clearwater 12 Motel (\$), Hwy. 12, 208-935-2671

3) Kamiah Inn Motel (\$), Hwy. 12, 208-935-0040

▲ Lewis Clark Resort and RV Park, Hwy. 12, showers, pool, hot tub, 800-264-9943

## Orofino, ID

Population: 3,000

The area along Orofino Creek where it joins the Clearwater River languished for 50 years after Lewis and Clark passed through. In 1836 Henry Spalding founded the Nez Perce Indian Mission at Lapwai and printed the first Bible in the Northwest. In 1848 the area became part of the Oregon Territory, and then in 1855 the Walla Walla Treaty made it part of the Nez Perce Indian Reservation.

Everything changed in 1860, when gold was discovered on Orofino Creek, leading to the establishment of the town of Pierce. “Oro fino” means “fine gold” in Spanish. Always rich in natural resources, the area later turned to logging, and the railroad was extended upriver from Lewiston in 1899. In 1972 the Dworshak Dam was built to block off the North Fork of the Clearwater River, thereby creating the 53-mile Dworshak Reservoir. This is the highest “straight-axis concrete gravity dam in the Western World” and the “largest ever constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers.” Have you ever noticed that almost every dam is the biggest and the best if you define its category carefully? As usual, it is surrounded by many boat ramps and remote camping areas, but these campgrounds are too distant to be useful to bicycle tourers.

At the confluence of the North Fork and the main Clearwater River, four miles west of town on the north side of the river, is the huge Dworshak National Fish Hatchery. This is the “largest combination producer of steelhead trout and spring chinook salmon in the world.” Another three miles beyond and up a steep hill is the dam (not damn!) visitor center, with displays, a tour of the dam, and fantastic views of the dam and reservoir. Then it’s seven miles back to town to return to the

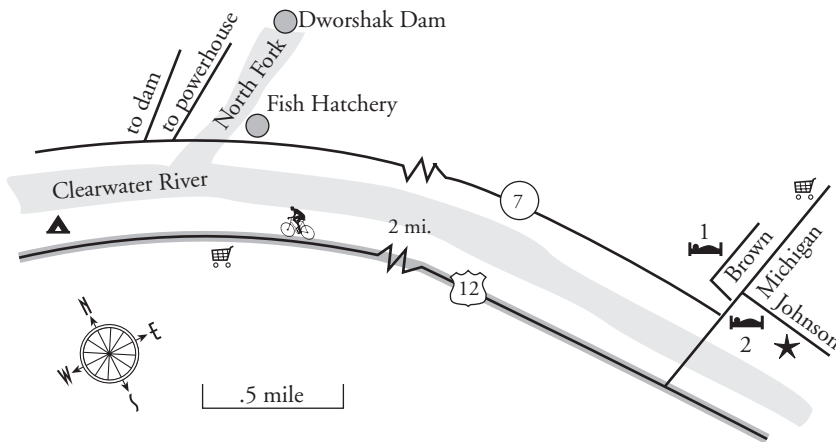


*Dugout replica at Canoe Camp, Orofino, ID*



main route. If you're wondering whether it's worth the trek, the Chamber of Commerce in town has additional information to help you decide.

While Lewis and some of the men were recovering their health and energy with the Nez Perce on the Weippe Prairie, Clark and the rest of the party moved down to Twisted Hair's River Camp on the Clearwater River near present day Orofino. Four miles downstream, at the confluence with the North Fork, they established their Canoe Camp, where they spent ten days burning and digging out five large logs to make canoes. Today there is a pleasant park at this site on the south side of the river, displaying an example of a dugout canoe. As you continue your ride down the river, ponder what it must have been like shooting the rapids in long, narrow, heavy dugout canoes.



### Orofino, ID — Zip: 83544

- ★ **Orofino Chamber of Commerce**  
217 1st, 208-476-4335, orofinochamber@clearwater.net
- 🏠 1) White Pine Motel (\$), 222 Brown, 208-476-7093
- 🏠 2) Hegelson Place Hotel (\$), 125 Johnson Ave., 208-476-5729
- ▲ Pink House Recreation Site, RVs and tenting, showers (under construction in 2000)

## Lewiston, ID, Clarkston, WA

Populations: 31,000 — 7,000

Located where the Clearwater River joins the Snake River at Idaho's western boundary with Washington, Lewiston is the only seaport in Idaho. Timber, grain, and other agricultural products are still carried downriver to the Pacific by barge. Today Potlach is the largest employer in Lewiston, producing timber and paper products.

Tourism is another important industry, and Lewiston is the gateway to the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and all its activities. Along the Idaho-Oregon border the Snake River cuts the deepest gorge in the United States for over 70 miles. More than 8,000 feet deep, it is deeper than the Grand Canyon. Although it is possible to drive around its edges for several hundred miles and catch glimpses of its majesty, or hike some of the 1,000 miles of wilderness trails, the best way for cyclists to experience it is on a 1–2 day jet boat trip or a 1–6 day raft trip. Advance reservations are a good idea, although it is sometimes possible to get last minute bookings on trips. This is a great time and place to take a break from the bike for an unforgettable experience. The Chamber of Commerce is happy to provide more information—either in advance or after you arrive.

Originally called Tsceminicum, the Nez Perce long used this sheltered canyon area as a place to spend winters. Lewis and Clark arrived here on October 10, 1805, and traded with the Indians to get more dogs. All but Clark learned to enjoy dogs as food, and they preferred this to the plentiful salmon. After their long stay upriver at Canoe Camp, they were happy to make good time racing down the river towards the Pacific. Their journals suggest they were taking more risks than usual through the many difficult rapids.

The first steam-powered sternwheeler made it up through the rapids of the Columbia and Snake all the way to Lenore in June, 1861. However, as the river level dropped during the summer, boats could only make it to Lewiston, and that's how it became the major inland port for goods transported between Portland and the mines farther upriver. It's interesting that miners came to this area from the west rather than from the east.

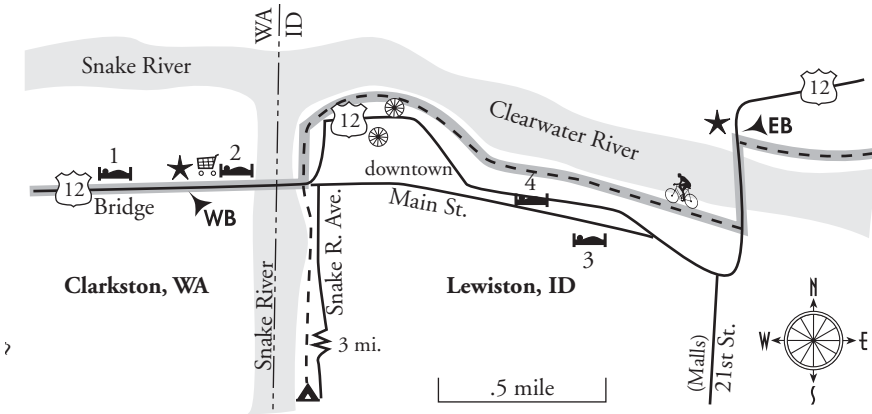
Clarkston started out as Jawbone Flats, the ferry landing across the river from its big sister, Lewiston. Later it was developed as a planned, irrigated agricultural



*Jet boat on the Snake River in Hell's Canyon, near Lewiston, ID*

community by big money from New England. Its name was later changed to Concord, and finally to Clarkston to honor William Clark. Although you might expect twin cities that face each other across both a river and a state line to be rivals, they feel more like a single town. In two visits I have yet to sense the kind of rivalry evident in other similar situations.

Twelve miles east of Lewiston is the Nez Perce National Historical Park (Box 100, Spalding, ID 83450, 208-843-2261, [www.nps.gov/nepe](http://www.nps.gov/nepe)). It's only a mile off our route, and well worth at least an hour to see their summary movie about the history of the Nez Perce, an example of a dugout canoe, and other interesting exhibits.



**Lewiston, ID** — Zip: 83051, **Clarkston, WA** — Zip: 99403



**Lewiston Chamber of Commerce**

111 Main, seasonal visitor center north of Clearwater River bridge,  
800-473-3543, [www.lewistonchamber.com](http://www.lewistonchamber.com)

**Clarkston Chamber of Commerce:** 502 Bridge St., 509-758-7712,  
[www.clarkston.com](http://www.clarkston.com)



- 1) Hacienda Lodge Motel (\$), 812 Bridge, Clarkston,
- 2) Motel 6 (\$), 222 Bridge, Clarkston, 800-466-8356
- 3) Riverview Inn (\$\$), 1325 Main, Lewiston, 800-806-ROOM
- 4) Howard Johnson's Motel (\$\$), 1716 Main, Lewiston, 800-IGO-HOJO



- 1) Hells Gate State Park, 4 mi. south of Lewiston on Snake River Ave., shade, grass, showers, 208-799-5015
- 2) Chief Timothy State Park, 8 mi. west of Clarkston on Hwy. 12, swimming beach, 509-758-9580



- Follet's Mountain Sports, 714 D St., 208-743-4200  
Pedals-N-Spokes, 829 D St., 208-743-656

## **Bicycle Guide to the Lewis & Clark Trail**

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The author and publisher of this book, and the government agencies on whose roads you bicycle, are not responsible for your riding habits, bicycle condition, and any accidents which might occur while following this route. They urge users of this Guide to wear a certified bicycle helmet, wear highly visible clothing, use reflectors and lights, obey all traffic laws, watch for pedestrians and motorists, and generally use good common sense and courtesy.

Road and trail conditions change. The routes suggested in this book may be altered due to road and trail maintenance, changes in state and local roads, and road and trail surface conditions. Surface conditions of roads and trails may change due to weather, construction, and other local factors. Every effort has been made to provide accurate information in this book at the time of publication.

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