



About the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Geotourism Program

Geotourism: "Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents."

"The Lewis and Clark Expedition is more than the story of two men. It is the story of many: individuals and groups, military men and scientists, a president and a slave, women and men, French-speaking boatmen and American Indians. It is a story of loss and hope. It is a story of changes that began in 1803 and that continue today."

U.S. National Park Service

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT) (Trail) offers modern travelers a way to explore the unique nature and history of the Trail as well as authentic local cultures and communities. Lewis and Clark NHT was designated in 1978 to commemorate the 1804 to 1806 Corps of Discovery expedition and protect the trail and now boasts many agencies, organizations, and individuals that support these efforts. However, the connectivity of the Trail to tourism businesses, itineraries, and routes along its length is something that the partners involved in the Trail would like to enhance. The goal of this program, therefore, is to engage a larger community of tourism stakeholders than are presently engaged with the Trail that can be linked to, and benefit from, tourism along Lewis and Clark NHT.

The Geotourism project for Lewis and Clark NHT is designed to support the public's use and enjoyment of the Trail without adversely impacting the resources along it. This will be achieved through three primary undertakings.

1. The first activity is to develop a public engagement methodology that leads to the formation of an ongoing Geotourism Stewardship Council of stakeholders. This council will be made up of representatives from Trail partners, American Indian Nations, local, state, and federal agencies, and the public at large.
2. The second major part of this project is to develop a sustainable tourism strategic plan. The strategic plan will inform the third stage, implementation.
3. The exact outcome of the strategic plan isn't known at this time, but one likely approach would be to follow the model deployed for the Mississippi River and other places around the globe with a project to bring stakeholders together, such as a participatory on-line Geotourism MapGuide or hard copy publication. MapGuides feature the holistic range of destinations' attractions, activities, and place-based authenticity by promoting community based small and medium business that provide unique services to visitors.

How the Geotourism Program will work for Lewis and Clark NHT

The project will engage recipients, partners, communities, American Indian Nations, and visitors in shared environmental and cultural heritage stewardship. The information, products, and services identified or developed by this project will be shared through a variety of strategies to increase public awareness, knowledge and support for stewardship of the nation's cultural and historical heritage along the Trail.

This program combines Solimar International's expertise in sustainable tourism and the involvement of local residents to facilitate wise stewardship of cultural, historic, and natural resources, enhance local economies, and help destinations tell their story internally and to their target travel markets. The program will use a stakeholder-driven process to create destination branded communication tools for the Trail, build a local constituency of destination ambassadors and storytellers, and work with them to support wise stewardship and promotion of the Trail.



Hiking in the Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument. Photo by Tommy LaVergne, courtesy of Rice University



Solimar International is a specialist sustainable tourism development and marketing firm that believes in the transformative power of sustainable tourism to help destinations sustain and enhance their natural, cultural and social authenticity. Through innovative partnerships Solimar delivers integrated solutions that create jobs, build businesses, protect ecosystems and celebrate and preserve local culture.

Since 2010 Solimar International has been the principal architect of the ever-evolving Geotourism program in collaboration with National Geographic – Maps which founded the program in 2005. Solimar International lead the field project implementation for Geotourism projects including in the U.S.A. for the Four Corners (AZ, CO, NM, UT), Heart of the Continent (MN, ONT), Mississippi River (nine states), Scenic, Wild Delaware River (NJ, NY, PA), Sedona Verde Valley (AZ) and internationally for the Bahamas – Family Islands, Eastern Sri Lanka, and Tequila, Mexico.



United Tribes International PowWow. Photo by Tom Wandel



Cannon Beach, Oregon. Photo by NPS