

# JOURNEY THROUGH THE BLACKFOOT *LEWIS' RETURN TRAIL*

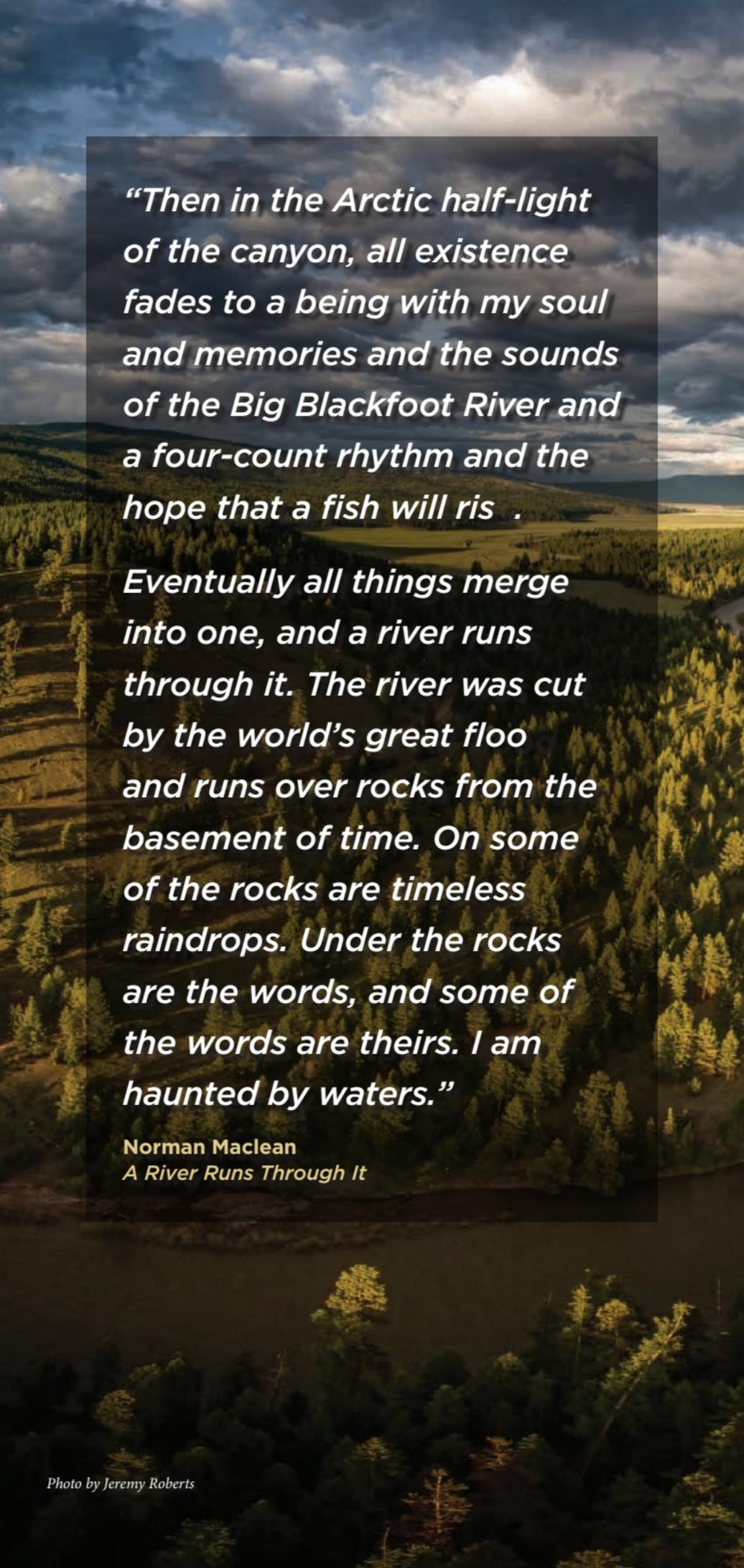
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A MONTANA GUIDE TO...

- Meriwether Lewis' return trip east
- The Road to the Buffalo
- Local history and wildlife



*m. haynes* © 2016



*“Then in the Arctic half-light  
of the canyon, all existence  
fades to a being with my soul  
and memories and the sounds  
of the Big Blackfoot River and  
a four-count rhythm and the  
hope that a fish will rise .*

*Eventually all things merge  
into one, and a river runs  
through it. The river was cut  
by the world’s great flood  
and runs over rocks from the  
basement of time. On some  
of the rocks are timeless  
raindrops. Under the rocks  
are the words, and some of  
the words are theirs. I am  
haunted by waters.”*

**Norman Maclean**  
*A River Runs Through It*

*“For this river is the storyteller of our valley.”*

Land Lindbergh,  
Blackfoot Valley  
landowner

**The Blackfoot River flows with the stuff of American legends.** If its swirling currents could speak, we would hear first of the American Indians. The Kootenai, Salish, Nez Perce and Shoshone followed the “Road to the Buffalo”—well-worn trails of their ancestors to buffalo hunting grounds east of the Continental Divide. The Blackfeet and Crow rode west from the Plains on horse capturing ventures.



*Photo by Joe Zimbric*

### Notes to travelers

Camping sites are limited—first come, first served. See map for campgrounds.

Please respect private property rights, and follow the site guide to public access areas.

In July of 1806, a band of newcomers arrived from the west. Captain Meriwether Lewis and his party of nine men split from Captain William Clark and the rest of the Expedition at Travelers Rest, near today’s Lolo, Montana. Rather than heading back to St. Louis the way they came, Lewis took the shortcut to the buffalo country up the Blackfoot River, over the Continental Divide, and into trouble with the Blackfeet. Clark explored the Yellowstone River before meeting up again with Lewis on the Missouri River.

This guide highlights the places mentioned in Lewis’ journal from July 4-7, 1806. A hurried pace (120 miles in 3-1/2 days) likely contributed to sketchier entries than in other parts of the Expedition. To fill in details, place yourself in



Photo by Laura Verhaeghe

the role of the explorers. Where would you select a camp or a lunch break? Cross the river? Climb a hill? What keen observations can you make now? Lewis collected 12 plant species and noted birds, animals, wild horses, signs of buffalo and Indian encampments.

Today, outfitters and recreationists—in the spirit of Lewis and Clark—explore the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Anglers cast for cutthroat trout. Ranchers irrigate, cut hay and herd cattle. Loggers head into the hills for work. Children attend small schools and neighbors lend helping hands—come blizzard or wildland fire.

### How to Use this Guide

As you journey through the Blackfoot, take an extra hour, day or several days. Return in different seasons. Stop along the way, open the car doors and listen to the river. This guide is designed for use heading upriver, but you can find the sites downriver by paying close attention to mile markers and signs. Note, too, the points of divergence where Lewis and the Party's trail leaves today's Highway 200—offering route choices for your own explorations.

#### Key to Site Guide

Site Number

2

Approx. Milepost

MP  
3

Additional Directions to Site



**LOWER RIVER—  
CANYON CORRIDOR**  
*Bonner to Clearwater Junction*

Enter river time—where the currents and twists of the Blackfoot dictate the lives of its inhabitants. The lower section takes you through a forested river canyon and across open prairies. Canoeists and rafters navigate rapids and anglers cast from shore. In winter, bighorn sheep descend from the peaks to the riverbanks near Bonner.



Photo by Jennifer Schoonen

**1 Blackfoot Gateway Kiosk—  
Bonner**

► *From I-90, take Highway 200 exit. Kiosk is on the east side before entering the town of Bonner.*

To whet your appetite for a journey upriver, pause at this wayside exhibit. Three colorful signs feature Meriwether Lewis' trip, the Blackfoot River and Bonner history.

**2 Marco Flats Fishing Access Site**

**MP 3 Milepost 3**

Only 3 miles from town, you can skip stones or fish from a small river beach in the shade of ponderosa pines and cottonwoods at this public river access site.

Lewis described his first 8 miles on July 4, 1806:

**Rainbow Trout**



*“... up the north side of the Cokahlahishkit R, through a timbered country, mountains high and rocky, river bottoms narrow and land poor.”*

Photo by Bruce Andre

### 3 Angevine Park: Close to Lewis' campsite—July 4, 1806

#### MP 6 Milepost 6

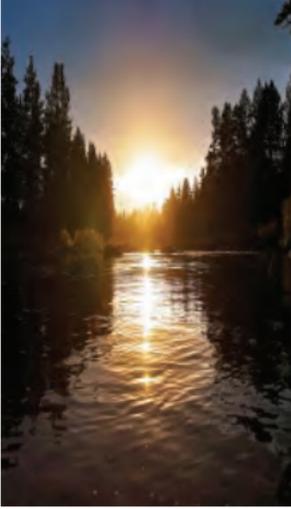


Photo by Lindsey Mulcare

When Lewis and party reached his first camp on the Blackfoot, they had at least one reason to celebrate the July 4th Independence Day—no mosquitoes!

*“thus far a plain or untimbered country bordered the river which near the junction of these streams spread into a handsome level plain of no great extent: the hills were covered with long leafed pine and fir. I now continued my route up the N. side of the Cokahlahishkit river through a timbered country for 8 miles and encamped in a handsom bottom on the river where there was an abundance of excellent grass for our horses. the evening was fine, air pleasent and no musquetoos.”*

*Lewis, July 4, 1806*

### 4 Site of Indian encampment

#### MP 10 Milepost 10

▶ On flat across the river. Drive-by only (no pull-out—located on private land).

If you rode with Lewis on the morning of July 5, 1806, you would have seen:

*“an old Indian encampment of 11 lodges of bark and (leather?).”*

The lodges served as tangible reminders to Lewis of the warnings he had received the day before. His five Nimi'ipuu (Nez Perce) guides would not come further than the confluence with the Clark Fork River for fear of meeting up with their tribal enemies.

**5 Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor**—16-mile scenic detour

**MP 11 Milepost 11:** Johnsrud Park Road

▶ *At Johnsrud Park. Rejoins Highway 200 near Milepost 27 at the Roundup Fishing Access Site.*

**Caution:** Much of the route is narrow, rough gravel road. Not suitable for large RVs and buses.

Popular for floating, angling and camping, the recreation corridor also traces parts of the Road to the Buffalo and Lewis' route. There are more than a dozen developed sites, including multiple campgrounds. Several sites feature interpretive signs on cultural and natural history. The road eventually winds through Ninemile Prairie before meeting back up with Highway 200. The latter Lewis campsite can be accessed from Ninemile Prairie Road near Milepost 27 for those not driving the entire scenic route.



*Photo by Jeremy Roberts*

As you head up the Blackfoot corridor from Bonner, bighorn sheep on the cliffs may be visible from the road, particularly in winter.

**6 Potomac Valley**—Historic camas digging grounds

**MP 12 Between Mileposts 12 & 16**

▶ *Highway 200 Route*

Where ranchers irrigate hayfields, the Salish people once dug the nutritious roots of the camas—a wildflower that can paint a valley purple in spring. You won't see the camas in cultivated fields, but watch for blooms along Alice Creek in late June and early July on the way to Lewis and Clark Pass.

Blue Camas





Photo by Sara Schmidt

**7 Garnet Ghost Town**

**MP 22 Milepost 22**

▶ *Garnet Ghost Town is 11 miles from Highway 200. Open year-round with winter access by snowmobile or skis.*

Once these Garnet Mountains echoed with the blasts of dynamite and the shouts of men out to find fortune. Today, you can follow a gravel road 11 miles to Garnet—one of Montana’s best-preserved ghost towns.

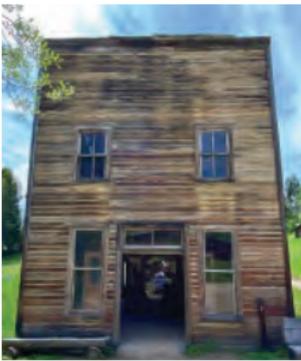


Photo by Pam Marlin

**Kelly’s Saloon**

*“These hushed woods once echoed with the rumble of wagons chock-full of gold ore. Teamsters urged horses down muddy streets. Mine hoists clanged. Whistles blew. Children raced to school. In January of 1898, some 1,000 people knew Garnet as home. By 1905, only 150 remained. Each empty building tells a story. Step into Kelly’s saloon. Can you hear the piano tinkling? Enter Billy Liberty’s blacksmith shop. Can you feel the heat?”*

—Welcome sign at Garnet Ghost Town



**8 Lubrecht Experimental Forest—University of Montana**

**MP 23 Milepost 23**

Here foresters study tree growth and harvest in a landscape shaped by logging. Visitors are welcome to stop in to picnic, hike or ski the cross-country trails.



## 9 Ninemile Prairie—Corrick's Riverbend Campground

### MP 27 Milepost 27

*"From its headwaters to its mouth it was manufactured by glaciers. The first sixty-five miles of it are smashed against the southern wall of its valley by glaciers that moved in from the north, scarifying the earth; its lower twenty-five miles were made overnight when the great glacial lake covering Montana and northern Idaho broke its ice dam and spread the remains of Montana and Idaho mountains over hundreds of miles of the plains of eastern Washington. It was the biggest flood in the world ..."*

Norman Maclean  
A River Runs  
Through It

► *If on Highway 200, turn onto Ninemile Prairie Road to drive to Corrick's Riverbend Campground.*

The river beckons today's picnickers, but Lewis and his party chose to take their break "at the mouth of a little drane." That point could be on Bureau of Land Management land off a small dirt road across from the west end of this campground. Take a stroll to the small aspen grove through native bunchgrasses and wildflowers. Look, too, for signs of early homesteading and farming.

*"...halted and dined in the mouth of a little drane on the left of the plain where there was a considerable quantity of quawmash. saw a gang of antelopes here of which we killed one. the does at this season herd with each other and have their young. the bucks are alone n there are many wild horses on Clarkes river about the place we passed it we saw some of them at a distance."*

*Lewis, July 5, 1806*



Lewis and his party saw antelope near Ninemile Prairie

*Photo by Joe Milmo*



More than 15,000 years ago, Glacial Lake Missoula covered an area the size of Lake Ontario.

*Photo by Joe Milmo*



A “high insulated knob” like Lewis noted when passing this spot in July 1806.

**10 Blackfoot Gateway Kiosk—**  
Clearwater Junction

**MP 32 Milepost 32**

▶ *At Rest Area across from junction with Highway 83 (north to Seeley-Swan Valley)*

The rest area features a visitor information kiosk at this modern rest stop where teepees had graced the landscape seasonally for hundreds of years. Step back 15,000 years and you would have been swimming in Glacial Lake Missoula. A gargantuan ice dam near Lake Pend Oreille, Idaho, blocked the Clark Fork River, creating a body of water the size of Lake Ontario that extended up the Blackfoot River to the Clearwater Junction area. When Lewis passed here, he noted a glacial feature, “a high insulated knob.”

## MIDDLE RIVER - GLACIAL VALLEYS

### *Clearwater Junction to Highway 141*

The river leaves the canyons after Russell Gates Fishing Access Site and flows under vast skies across what Lewis called the “prairie of the knobs.” You’ll pass by a series of these hummocky glacial moraines and smooth outwash plains—reminders of a cold, ice land. Some of the glacial features date to the Bull Lake ice age (between 70,000 and 130,000 years ago). Others are more recent; the Pinedale ice age ended 10,000 years ago.



Photo by Eliza Wiley

Trumpeter swans have been reintroduced to the Blackfoot Valley in recent years.

### **11** Blackfoot-Clearwater Wildlife Management Area

#### **MP 32** Milepost 32

► Turn north on Highway 83 to mile marker 2 (also noted on Highway 200).

*To read interpretive signs, take a short side trip north to the pull-out on Highway 83. Back on Highway 200, heading up river, you will see the east entrance to the WMA at Woodworth Road, which leads to an unstaffed field headquarters.*

#### Rocky Mountain elk



Photo by Joe Zimbric

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks protects critical winter range for approximately 1,000 elk, 800 mule deer and 800 white-tailed deer. Elk descend from the Bob Marshall Wilderness to take refuge from

deep snows. Acquired in 1948, the Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA now spans 67,000 acres of prime wildlife habitat.

## 12 Big Blackfoot Railroad— Historic sign and old grade

### MP 32 Between Mileposts 32 and 33

A little over a century after Lewis and party rode through the Blackfoot, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company built a railroad to supply logs to the Bonner sawmill. Construction on the line took from 1911 to 1936 and then stopped short of Ovando at Cottonwood Creek. After 1978, the rumble of trains ceased altogether.

*“Charles and Helen Sperry family homesteaded near here in 1899 and became known for growing the fine t strawberries in the valley. One of their eight children later wrote of their father: ‘He was so taken with the country’s beauty and abundance of water and grass, that he returned to Helena, sold his property, brought the family, stock and equipment to the Blackfoot Valley.’”*

**Rachel Sperry Grace**  
*Profile f Early Ovando, 1878 to 1900*

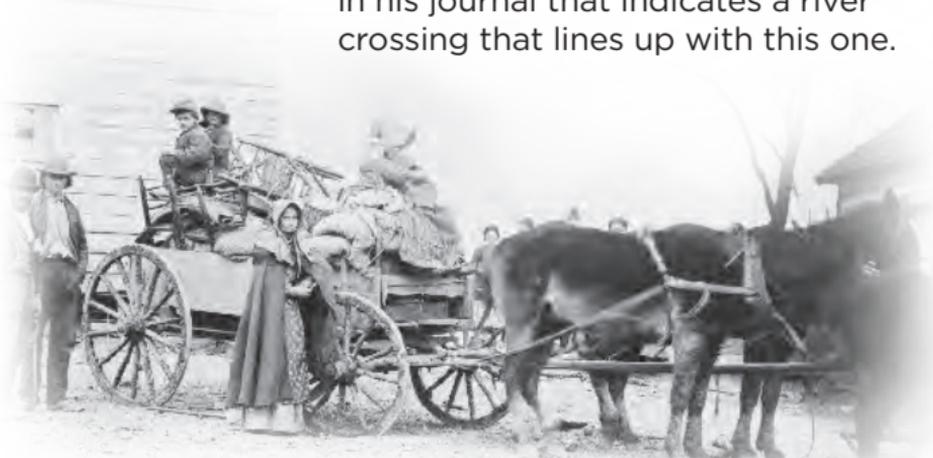
*Homesteaders in the 1860s*

## 13 Sperry Grade River Ford Site

### MP 34 Before Milepost 34

► *Turn at the Clearwater State Forest sign and drive 1/2 mile to the fishing access site. Note this day-use site is not maintained and lacks facilities.*

Stand below the spreading branches of a huge ponderosa pine on the bank—a tree that has witnessed centuries of river crossings. Although the Journals make no mention of fording the river here, it is possible the Lewis party crossed to avoid a rocky cliff on the north side of the river. Lewis drew a map in his journal that indicates a river crossing that lines up with this one.



## Spotted sandpiper



Photo by Wikimedia

## 14 Russell Gates Campground

## MP 35 Between Mileposts 35 and 36

Look for spotted sandpipers at water's edge and osprey soaring overhead. At this campground, consider the many Indian camps that once dotted the valley. Some were hasty shelters meant for overnight rests on the way to the buffalo hunting grounds. Others were teepees set up for days as tribes harvested camas, picked berries, or dug for chert (rock used for tools and arrowheads).

## 15 Monture Creek Fishing Access and Campground—Vicinity of July 5, 1806, Lewis campsite

## MP 40 Milepost 40

Lewis with his dog, Seaman, at the monument near the Bonner kiosk.



Photo by Montanatom1950

Lewis named this stream “Seaman’s Creek” after his companion Newfoundland dog, but it was since named for George Monture. Descending to the creek, you will first cross the abandoned railroad grade—before the cattleguard—and then the old highway. Somewhere in the vicinity is the Road to the Buffalo. How you experience the Blackfoot depends on your mode of travel. It’s tough to see the details at 70 mph—a speed possible only since 1957 when Highway 200 was paved. Lewis and his party rode hard on July 5, 1806, covering 31 miles to the camp. How far have you traveled today? What have you noticed along the way?

*“the road passing through an extensive high prairie rendered very uneven by a vast number of little hillucks and sinkholes {holds}. we encamped on the lower side of the last creek just above it’s entrance. here a war party had encamped about 2 months since and conceald their fires.”*

*—Lewis, July 5, 1806*

Blackfoot Commercial Company was established in 1897.



Photo by Blackfoot Challenge

## 16 Historic Ovando and Museum

### MP 44 Between Mileposts 44 and 45

► Turn south between mileposts 44 and 45.

A weathered wood trading post, angling shop, café and the Blackfoot Commercial Company (a store and inn founded in 1897) cluster on the Road to the Buffalo. The original Trixi's Saloon is now the Ovando Museum—overflowing with historic photos and artifacts. The community dates to 1878 and was named for Ovando Hoyt—employed as its first postmaster at an annual salary of \$2.25. This is also the home base for the Blackfoot Challenge.

Photo by Blackfoot Challenge



The Ovando Museum contains a wealth of area history.

## 17 Ovando Scenic Route— On Lewis' Trail

### MP 44 Ovando-Helmville Road leaving south out of Ovando, Between Mileposts 44 and 45

Take a leisurely detour through the quaint town of Ovando to Harry Morgan Fishing Access Site (along the Ovando-Helmville Road)—site of Lewis' river crossing. From here, head southeast following signs to Browns Lake, popular with anglers and waterfowl. After circling the lake, re-enter Highway 200 at milepost 53. The route via Browns Lake is 13 miles, 4 miles farther than the Highway 200 route.



Photo by Jeremy Roberts

What Lewis called “prarie of the knobs” – also called a “knob and kettle” landscape.

### 18 Prairie of the Knobs

Driving the Ovando-Helmville Road toward Harry Morgan offers a good opportunity to study what Lewis described as “knobs.” These rumples small hills are moraines left from glaciers that plowed through the valley about 10,000 years ago from the northeast and east. Moraines formed from the sediment and rocks dumped from glacial ice. You can also see lake lines along some of the hills that suggest Glacial Lake Missoula extended this far.

*“these plains I called (the knob plains) the prarie of the knobs being irregularly scattered through it.”*

*—Lewis, July 6, 1806*

### 19 Harry Morgan Fishing Access— North Fork Crossing

Named for an early game warden in the Depression era, this site also marks the put-in for a popular river float to Russell Gates. It’s a peaceful spot for picnicking, fishing and birding.

Lewis and men crossed the North Fork Blackfoot “45 yards wide, deep and rapid” near today’s bridge upstream from the fishing access site.

## Red-necked grebe



Photo by Jeremy Roberts

## Sandhill crane



Photo by Jeremy Roberts

## Long-billed curlew



Photo by Frank Schulenburg

## 20 Browns Lake Campground

▶ Follow signs to Browns Lake. Go 1-1/2 miles further to rejoin Highway 200.

Lewis and party rode close by Browns Lake and noted passing “a large crooked pond.” Lewis observed plentiful wildlife in this area and today Browns Lake is known as a birding hot spot. Spring is an excellent time to see ducks as well as red-necked grebes, sandhill cranes and even loons.

*“great Number of the burrowing squirrels in this prairie of the species common to the plains of Columbia. saw some goats and deer ... same some Curloos. bee martains, woodpeckers, plover, robins, doves, ravens, hawks and a variety of sparrows common to the plains, also some ducks.”*

*—Lewis, July 6, 1806*



Photo by Joe Zimbric

Browns Lake, managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, offers camping, a boat launch and excellent fishing and birding.

**21** **Bob Marshall, Scapegoat and Great Bear Wilderness Areas**

*Pioneer forester and conservationist Bob Marshall*

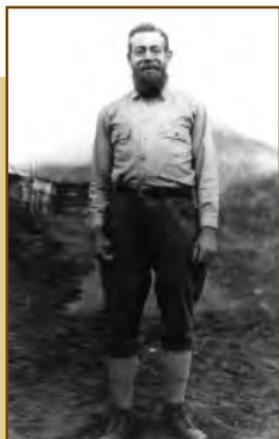


Photo courtesy of Forest History Society

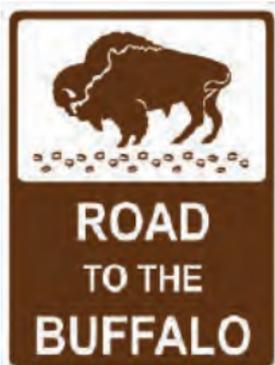
**MP 52** **Milepost 52, historic sign**

► *Note: You will need to backtrack on Highway 200 if coming out from Browns Lake.*



*“Someone once asked Bob Marshall how much wilderness America really needs. In reply he asked, ‘How many Brahms symphonies do we need?’”*

—Excerpt from historical sign



View from the Cokahlarishkit Trail, or “Road to the Buffalo” Overlook

**22** **Road to the Buffalo Overlook**

**MP 53** **Milepost 53**

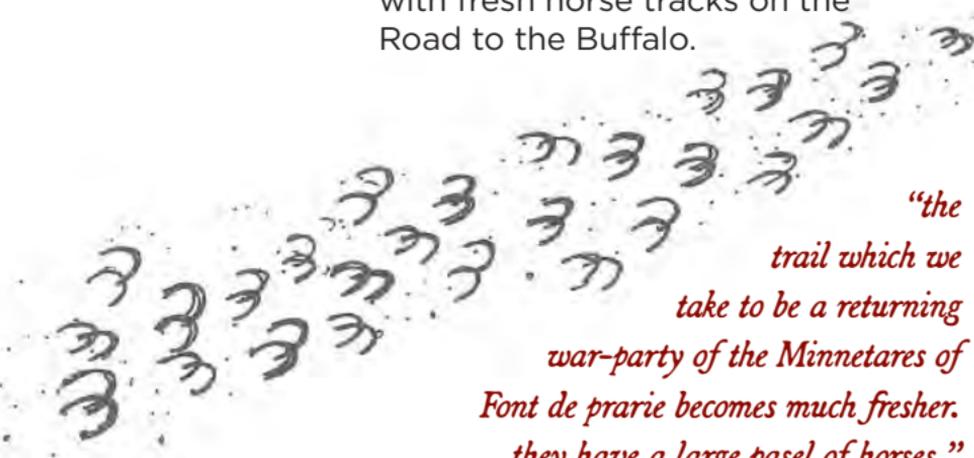
► *Small pull-off with a gate north of Highway 200 across from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Blackfoot Waterfowl Production Area.*

Park and walk past the gate up a two-track road on public land. You’ll soon be rewarded with views of Kleinschmidt and Browns lakes. Imagine watching Lewis and party riding across these plains and into



Photo by John Lambing

the forested river canyon on July 6, 1806. They rode with increasing anxiety, especially when they met with fresh horse tracks on the Road to the Buffalo.



*“the trail which we take to be a returning war-party of the Minnetares of Font de prarie becomes much fresher. they have a large pasel of horses.”*

*Lewis, July 6, 1806*

### Plant “Discoveries”

Despite their haste in the Blackfoot trek, Lewis and his men collected yellow monkeyfl wer on the way to the July 4 camp. They lingered in the “Prarie of the Knobs” to pick Missouri iris, bitterbrush, silverberry and shrubby cinquefoil. They added elephant’s head and fern-leaved lousewort after leaving the July 5 camp. Enroute to Lewis and Clark Pass on July 7, Lewis noted in his journal these wildfl wers: bearberry honeysuckle, blanketfl wer, silvery lupine and showy death camas.



Missouri iris

*“the bois rague in blume – saw the common small blue flag and peppergrass.”*

*Lewis, July 6, 1806*

**Note:** The red osier dogwood is the “bois rague.” The western blue flag or *Iris missouriensis* was new to science. Peppergrasses are members of the mustard genus.



Photo by Darlene Troutwine

## Osprey

### UPPER RIVER SITES: BLACKFOOT HEADWATERS *Highway 141 Junction to Alice Creek*

The road winds through the Blackfoot Canyon close to the river and beneath towering trees that shelter bald eagles and osprey. Stop at pull-outs to scan for beaver, moose and trout rising from the river. You'll enter the town of Lincoln and then ascend to the Continental Divide—via Alice Creek and a hike to Lewis and Clark Pass, and then a return to Highway 200 to Rogers Pass.

#### **23** Arrastra Creek

##### **MP 58** Between Mileposts 58 and 59

► *Turn north past bridge over Arrastra Creek. Take a short spur dirt road to a primitive campsite by the creek. Unmarked turn and road.*

Lewis dined about a half-mile before he reached Arrastra Creek, but he did take note of the stream “wide shallow and clear.” How does the creek look today?

*“here we halted and dine and our hunters overtook us with a deer which they had killed. River bottoms narrow and country thickly timbered. Cottonwood and pine*

*grow intermixed in the river bottoms mosquitoes extremely troublesome. we expect to meet with the Minnetares and are therefore much on our guard both day and night ... passed several old Indian encampments of (stick) brush lodges ... passed a creek on the N. side 12 yds. wide shallow and clear."*

—Lewis, July 6, 1806

Photo by Robb Kendrick



"Culturally Scarred Ponderosa Pine Tree" by GlacierNPS

**24 Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Ponderosa Pine Grove**

**MP 59** **Between Mileposts 59 and 60.**

► *Unmarked turn. Large grove of trees clearly visible from the road.*

Breathe in the scent of vanilla from the centuries-old ponderosa pines. Touch the great scars on trees that bear witness to an age-old Native American custom—peeling bark to harvest the sweet cambium layer—nature's candy. The practice left the trees unharmed. Lewis made no mention of these particular trees, but it's likely they passed close to them as they headed upriver.

Native Americans peeled the bark from these ponderosas to harvest "nature's candy."

**25 Upper Blackfoot Historical Museum**—Near July 6, 1806, Lewis campsite

**MP 69 Milepost 69**

► Turn at Hi Country Trading Post.

Read interpretive signs and displays on the Corps of Discovery and the history of the Upper Blackfoot. From the Monture Creek campsite, Lewis and party rode through the Prairie of Knobs, across the North Fork, and followed the Road to the Buffalo over a “steep high ball topped hill” and down through a “thick wood,” to Beaver Creek—a 25-mile day.

*“...encampment on a large creek some little distance above it a mouth through a beautifull plain on the border of which we passed the remains of 32 old lodges ... much sign of beavers in this extensive bottom.”*

*—Lewis, July 6, 1806*

**26 Blackfoot Gateway Kiosk**—Lincoln, Hooper Park Pavilion

**MP 72 Milepost 72**

The third Blackfoot interpretive kiosk gives you a chance to appreciate Lincoln before and after it was a town. Imagine buffalo loping by or Native American lodges among the pines. That changed by the late 1800s when a mining boom gave rise to Lincoln and its hardy residents.

*“... Reubin Fields wounded a moos deer this morning near our camp. my dog much worried ... saw some sighn of buffaloe early this morning in the valley where we encamped last evening from which it appears that the buffaloe do sometimes penetrate these mountains a few miles.”*

*—Lewis, July 7, 1806*

Moose



Photo by Lindsey Mulcare

This cairn above Alice Creek is attributed to a sheepherder from many decades ago, but it is an accurate replica of how indigenous people marked important landmarks, graves and trails.

*Photo by Montana Historical Society*



## 27 Lander's Fork Cairns

### MP 77 Between Mileposts 77 and 78

► Turn north and follow Copper Creek Road approximately 1.5 miles. Watch for signs directing you to the cairns.

*Just east of Lincoln you'll find **Sculpture in the Wild**—an outdoor sculpture park that celebrates the history of this area—from the influence of Native Americans to the mining and logging industries that built Lincoln. It brings together art and nature for a unique perspective on the Blackfoot watershed.*

The Road to the Buffalo Trail headed up Landers Fork and into Alice Creek. Today it's not possible to drive this route through to Alice Creek. But you can visit two of the eight prehistoric cairns that marked the ancient trail. Native Americans placed these rock piles carefully there hundreds of years ago both as trail markers and as points of spiritual significance—a way to assure a safe and bountiful journey. As you walk along the terrace, picture yourself following the cairns and the hoof prints of horses 200 years ago.

**Please be responsible visitors**—Access is provided by a private landowner and the State of Montana. Respect the spiritual and historic nature of the cairns by not disturbing them.



*Photo by Jennifer Schoonen*



Photo by Jennifer Schoonen

Beaver dams play a key role in keeping the watershed healthy—creating deep pools for trout and helping to store water and control flooding.

Photo by Randy Smith



Beaver at work



Lewis and Clark Pass signpost

## 28 Alice Creek—Road to the Buffalo

### MP 82 Milepost 82, Road Number 293

- ▶ Drive 10.4 miles up Alice Creek to the trailhead to access a 1.7-mile hike to Lewis and Clark Pass. Clock the driving miles so you can find the points mentioned.

Watch for camas blooming in early summer, as well as signs of beaver and deer. Lewis and party entered Alice Creek from Landers Fork at mile 5.2 (marked with a sign). Please do not leave the road until you enter the Helena National Forest at mile 7.4 where you can stop to read interpretive signs.

*“over two ridges and again striking the wright-hand fork at 4 ms. then continued up it on the left hand side much appearance of beaver and many dams. Bottoms not wide and covered with low willow and grass. halted to dine at a large beaver dam the hunters killed 3 deer and a fawn. deer are remarkably plenty and in good order.”*

—Lewis, July 7, 1806

## 29 Lewis and Clark Pass

### MP 10.4 Milepost 10.4 at the end of the Alice Creek Road. Interpretive displays at the trailhead.

- ▶ Hike up a gently ascending two-track road to the Pass. Bring water and extra jackets for the windy Divide.

Lewis and Clark Pass marks perhaps the wildest part of the entire Trail—a place where grizzly bears still roam. When hiking in grizzly country, always use caution. Make noise as you walk so bears are aware of your



Photo by Camille Coughlin

Grizzly bears roam much of the Blackfoot today.

presence and hike with a group if possible. Carry bear spray.

When Lewis reached the Pass (a 32-mile trek from the Beaver Creek camp), perhaps he breathed a sigh of relief at the familiar sight of Square Butte (“fort mountain”). From the Divide, the party descended to camp about 3 miles east of Table Mountain where ...

*“Drewyer killed two beaver and shot third which bit his knee very badly and escaped.”*

*“from this gap which is low and an easy ascent on the W. side the fort mountain bears North Eaast, and appears to be distant about 20 Miles.”*

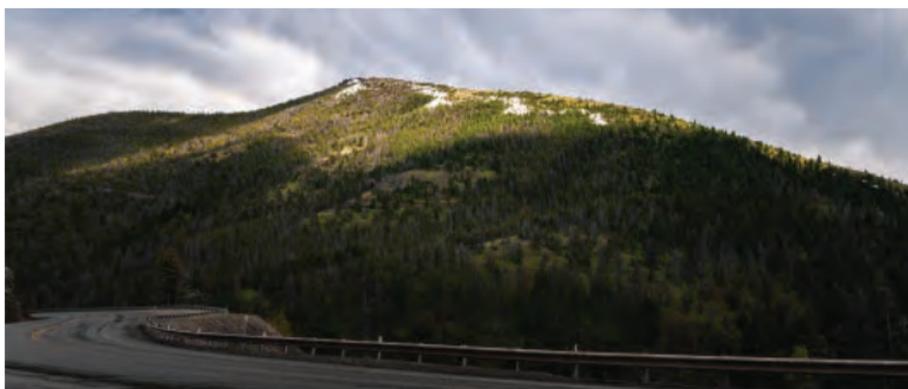
*—Lewis, July 7, 1806*

**30 Rogers Pass**—Continental Divide and Blackfoot Headwaters

**MP 87 Milepost 87, elevation 5610**

You stand on the threshold between the great Missouri and Columbia rivers. To the west, the Blackfoot River begins its 132-mile journey to merge with the Clark Fork River and on toward the Columbia. To the east, the Great Plains stretch toward what seems like infinity. The Continental Divide Trail runs north and south. From here, it’s approximately a 6-mile hike north to Lewis and Clark Pass.

Continental Divide Trail near Lewis and Clark Pass





### **John Patterson Ranch Cabin 6.3 miles up Alice Creek**

From the road, you can see one of the ranch buildings of John Patterson, who homesteaded here with his wife, Stella, in 1898. Their family recollections are sprinkled with stories of encounters with American Indians passing through on the Road to the Buffalo.

**Please stay on the road—**  
you are on private land.

*“Ranch life in 1900 was a grueling occupation and especially so in the Alice Creek area where early snows and long winters made for a very short summer work period. When Alberta was twenty-one months old, her mother told of putting Alberta into a wooden apple box used for a portable crib when she would go into the field to build fences.”*



Alberta Patterson  
about 1903

*Gold Pans and Singletrees*  
Compiled by the Upper Blackfoot  
Valley Historical Society

## A Dog's Tale



Historians learned the true name of Meriwether Lewis' Newfoundland dog "Seaman" from his journal description of present day Monture Creek (Map stop 15). When Lewis came through the middle part of the Blackfoot in 1806, he named the creek after his favored friend, "Seaman." In 1916 Lewis' handwriting was misinterpreted by a historian, and the dog's name was written as Scannon. Not until 1987 was the mistake discovered. Historian Donald Jackson was at work with the material and re-examined the journals, realizing that the dog's name was actually Seaman.



Statue of Seaman and his fellow travelers at the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana



*Photo by Wikimedia*

### **Nimi'ipuu - the real people**

Meriwether Lewis relied on American Indian guides to direct him to the shortcut to the plains, which the guides called Ooq' aax'lskit. Lewis translated the word as Cokahlarishkit. What he never knew was the true name of the tribe who helped him in this part of his journey. He called them Nez Perce (translated "pierced nose"), which came from French Canadian traders. However, the people did not follow this cultural practice and called themselves Nimi'ipuu (pronounced Nee Mee Poo), translated the "real people" or "we the people." Today, the tribe would prefer all people to call them Nimi'ipuu.



## **Blackfoot Challenge**

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The mission of the Blackfoot Challenge is to coordinate efforts to conserve and enhance natural resources and the rural way of life in the Blackfoot watershed for present and future generations.

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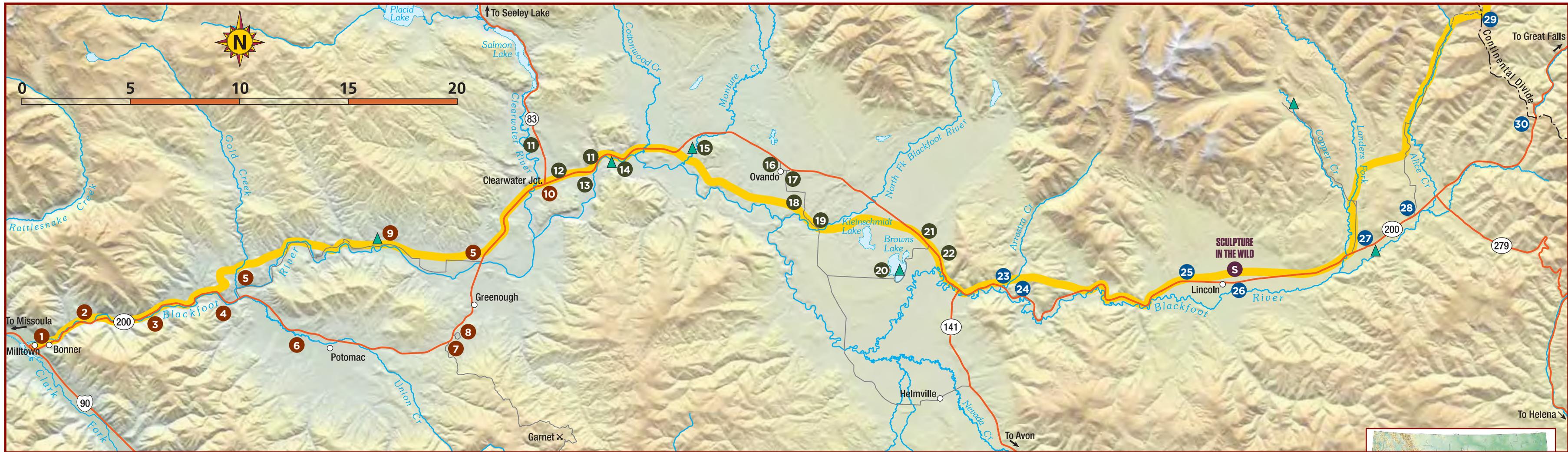
Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

Lincoln & Ovando Historical Societies

Lolo National Forest

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



**LOWER RIVER SITES**

- 1 Blackfoot Gateway Kiosk
- 2 Marco Flats Fishing Access Site
- 3 Angevine Park
- 4 Site of Indian encampment
- 5 Blackfoot River Recreation Corridor
- 6 Potomac Valley
- 7 Garnet Ghost Town
- 8 Lubrecht Experimental Forest
- 9 Ninemile Prairie
- 10 Blackfoot Gateway Kiosk - Clearwater Junction

**MIDDLE RIVER SITES**

- 11 Blackfoot-Clearwater WMA (Can be viewed from Highway 83 and Highway 200)
- 12 Big Blackfoot Railroad
- 13 Sperry Grade River Ford Site
- 14 Russell Gates Campground
- 15 Monture Creek Fishing Access
- 16 Historic Ovando
- 17 Ovando Scenic Route
- 18 Prairie of the Knobs
- 19 Harry Morgan Fishing Access
- 20 Browns Lake Campground
- 21 Bob Marshall, Scapegoat and Great Bear Wilderness Areas
- 22 Road to the Buffalo Overlook

**UPPER RIVER SITES**

- 23 Arrastra Creek
- 24 Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Ponderosa Pine Grove
- 25 Upper Blackfoot Historical Museum
- 26 Blackfoot Gateway Kiosk
- 27 Lander's Fork Cairns
- 28 Alice Creek - Road to the Buffalo
- 29 Lewis and Clark Pass
- 30 Rogers Pass—Continental Divide

- Lewis & Clark Trail
- Campgrounds
- State Primary Roads
- State Secondary Roads

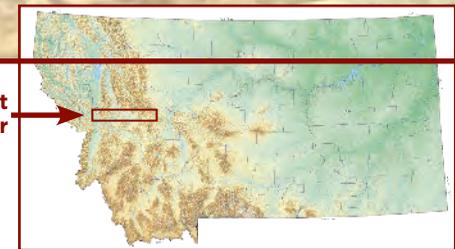
**Please Respect Private Lands**

This guide directs you to public lands where you can hike, fish, view wildlife and picnic. When driving by private ranches and residences, please respect their privacy and rights by staying on public land.

**The Blackfoot Watershed is home to:**

- Grizzly bears crossing the Lewis and Clark Trail.
- Westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout idling in river eddies.
- Bald eagles and osprey nesting in riverside trees.
- Thousands of elk wintering on the Blackfoot-Clearwater Wildlife Management Area.

**The Blackfoot River Corridor**



**Wildlife Viewing**

- Bring binoculars and look for clues—moose tracks, beaver dams, woodpecker holes, and bald eagle nests in treetops.
- Please respect the wildness of animals by not approaching or feeding.
- Keep a clean camp to keep bears and other wildlife out of trouble.