

Lewis and Clark

National Back Country Byway & Adventure Road

Welcome to the place where the Euro-American exploration of Idaho began. The peaks of the Bitterroot, Lemhi, and Salmon River ranges line the horizon. Pine and fir forests, deep canyons, and rolling foothills look much the same today as when the Lewis and Clark Expedition crossed Lemhi Pass [Shoshoni: Wey-yah-vee] two centuries ago.



Shoshoni Pipe by Meriwether Lewis

Exploration

The Byway provides access to portions of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Stop and stretch your legs while retracing the footprints of the Expedition.

Gaze westward from Lemhi Pass upon the “immense ranges of high mountains” that confronted Captain Meriwether Lewis and his advance party as he crested the pass on August 12, 1805. At that moment the dream of the Northwest Passage, the easy water route to the Pacific Ocean, was shattered. It was critical that Lewis contact Sacajawea’s people, the Lemhi Shoshoni [Agai-dika, or “salmon-eaters”] to buy the horses the explorers would need to transport their baggage.

In the Lemhi Valley [Pah-dye] visit the area where the Expedition found the village of the Agai-dika band led by Chief Cameahwait, the brother of Sacajawea. Here they spent summers catching and drying salmon. Through the leadership of Lewis and Cameahwait, the Corps of Discovery acquired horses and a Shoshoni guide to help them cross the mountains.



Lewis and Clark “Flag Unfurling” Monument

Traveling the Byway

Begin the tour by turning left [north] at the “T” intersection .2 mile east of Tendoy. At 3.5 mi. turn right on the Warm Springs Wood Road to start the ascent of the Bitterroot Range. Stop first at the Byway Information Kiosk at 3.7 mi. for route information and historical markers.

From the kiosk the byway climbs steadily across hillsides that in early summer are vibrant with wild flowers, including lupine and arrowleaf balsamroot. Enjoy spectacular views as your vehicle climbs more than 3,000 feet up to the continental divide. At 8.5 mi. read the monument that recalls Lewis’s first unfurling of the American flag in Idaho. At 9.5 mi. an overlook allows you a hawk’s-eye view of the rugged area through which the Corps of Discovery traveled after they crossed Lemhi Pass.

Just beyond the overlook the Byway enters the deep, forested Pattee Creek canyon. Ascend this small stream to its source in green meadows just below the divide. You can witness firsthand how nature and humans have shaped this land-

scape. Wildfires have helped orchestrate the forest’s vegetation patterns. Wood for your homes, clean drinking water, healthy wildlife habitat, forage for cattle and meat for the table are some of the many products these public lands produce.

At 18 mi. the Byway reaches the continental divide. Time for a break! The meadows and forests here along the spine of the continent are great places for picnicking or a short stroll. If you’re not used to an elevation above 8,000 feet, don’t over-do it.

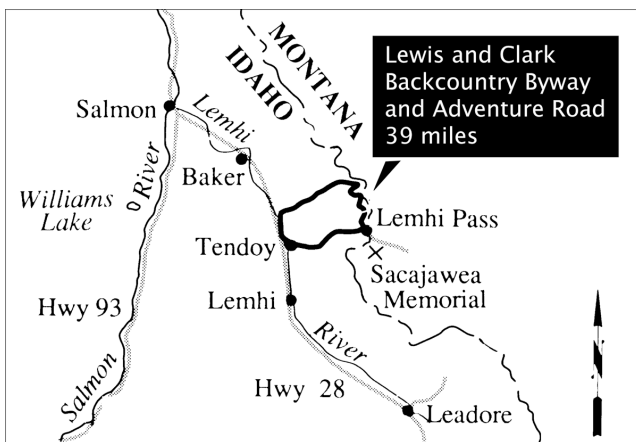
At 23 mi. you reach the source of Horseshoe Bend Creek, from which the explorers had their “first taste” of the waters of the Columbia. The vista toward the south takes in the heart of the hundred mile long Lemhi Range. It’s only three miles from this point to 7339’ high Lemhi Pass. Before you leave this historic site, go .2 of a mile down to the Sacajawea Memorial at what Lewis and Clark considered the “head spring” of the Missouri. Please sign the visitor register and enjoy the Laura Tolman Scott wildflower trail.

Use your lowest gear and good sense as you plunge down the steep road into the Agency Creek canyon. At 29.5 mi. is a sign indicating the point at which the Indian road Lewis and Clark followed climbed out of the canyon and into the foothills. The BLM Agency Creek campground is found at 33 mi. From there it’s another six miles back to Tendoy.

Getting Here

The Lewis and Clark Back Country Byway and Adventure Road is located in Lemhi County, about twenty miles southeast of Salmon, Idaho,

on state highway 28. The Byway is thirty-nine miles long and takes about half a day to drive. Full services are available in Salmon, partial services in Tendoy, Lemhi, and Leadore.



You Need To Know

The Byway is single lane, with occasional pullouts for passing. It has a gravel surface which can be safely driven in an automobile equipt with good, sturdy tires. Grades in some areas exceed 5%; use lower gears. Snow usually closes the road from November until June.

Early mornings and evenings are best for spotting wildlife. Look for deer, elk, moose, bear, pronghorn antelope, and many bird species. If you stop for a walk at lower elevations, be alert for rattlesnakes!

Before You Go

Take:

Plenty of gasoline.

A good supply of water. Don't drink water from streams without treating it.

Camera and film.

Lug wrench and jack for changing a flat.

First aid kit.

A properly inflated spare tire



For More Information

Bureau of Land Management
Salmon Field Office
50 Highway 93 South
Salmon, Idaho 83467
(208) 756-5400
www.id.blm.gov/offices



or

U.S. Forest Service
Leadore Ranger District
P.O. Box 180
Leadore, Idaho 83464
(208) 768-2500
www.fs.fed.us/R4/sc



A cooperative effort
of the BLM Salmon Field Office
and the Salmon and Challis National Forests

