

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL
REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Clark's Lookout, August 13, 1805

other name/site number: 24BE

2. Location

street & number: One mile north of Dillon

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: X

city/town: Dillon

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Beaverhead

code: 001

zip code: 59725

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Marcell Shuff MT SHPO 1-25-94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register see continuation sheet
- other (explain): _____

ⁱⁿ Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Paul H. Frazier

3-10-94

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public - State

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing Noncontributing

Category of Property: Site

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register: 0

____ building(s)
____ sites
____ structures
____ objects

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

____ 1
____ TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:
LANDSCAPE: Natural Feature

Current Functions:
LANDSCAPE: Natural Feature

7. Description

Architectural Classification:
n/a

Materials:
foundation: n/a
walls: n/a
roof: n/a
other: n/a

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Clark's Lookout is an observation site used by William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition on August 13, 1805. Clark described the site as "a high point of limestone rock on the Stard. side [of the river]."¹

Situated on the north bank of the Beaverhead River, Clark's Lookout is located atop a rocky limestone outcropping rising 75-80 feet above the surface of the river. The elevation of the site is slightly over 5,100 feet; the surrounding terrain slopes to northwest, north, east and south. The promontory is composed of Madison limestone, a marine deposit of the Mississippian System dating to the Paleozoic Era. This strata lies deeply buried throughout the area; however, erosion of the valley floor by the Beaverhead River over the ages exposed this natural feature. The ground surface is characterized by outcroppings of limestone, and ground cover of native grasses, prickly pear cactus and weeds. There is a north-south ridge, about 5,700 feet in elevation, approximately one mile to the west.

William Clark ascended the rock outcropping and took compass readings to the Beaver's Head Rock, the course of the Wisdom (Big Hole) River, and to the gap where the Beaverhead River (which they were committed to follow) passed through the mountains.² At the time of Clark's observation from the site, there would have been an unobstructed view up and down the Beaverhead River and especially of the Beaver's Head Rock and the Rattlesnake Cliffs.

See continuation sheet

¹Moulton, Gary E., ed., The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 11 vols., (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press), vol. 5, p. 84.

²Moulton, Ibid.

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At the present time, the Clark's Lookout land form stands bounded on the north and northwest by a large irrigation canal, and lies west of a frontage road that is designated as old U.S. Highway 91. There is a 100-foot railroad right-of-way and a 60-foot county road right-of-way between the property and Highway 91. The south side of the property is bounded by a county road designated as Lover's Leap Road. There are no structures on the site. A pole fence partially encloses the property, which is now owned by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Integrity

Today, despite changes which have taken place over the past two centuries, the view from atop Clark's Lookout remains much as it was in 1805 with expansive views to the north, east and south, while the ridge to the west blocks the view in that direction. The limestone outcropping which composes Clark's Lookout is itself extremely well preserved; no development has occurred on this promontory or within the historic property boundaries. Native vegetation and ground surfaces are intact, marked only by erosion and an old two-track trail ascending the back side of the lookout from the north. The lookout's relationship to the river and the surrounding natural environment is still clear and strong; at the foot of the lookout where the river's floodplain unfolds, the rivercourse which William Clark's party travelled remains largely open and natural, stretching away from the site to the east and southwest.

Historic period development does affect the viewshed, however, and thus the integrity of the site. Skirting the landform now are a pole fence which partially encloses the property, a county dirt road and a ditch for the West Side Canal. Along the east side of the lookout lie the Union Pacific Railway tracks and Montana Highway 91. While these features do intrude into the setting, the expansive rangelands and the river corridor dominate the setting. Still largely undeveloped and natural, they strongly convey a sense of the grand, open landscape which Clark's party traversed in 1805.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, B

Areas of Significance: Exploration/Settlement

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1805

Significant Person(s): William Clark

Significant Dates: August 13, 1805

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: n/a

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Clark's Lookout is an important promontory along the Lewis and Clark Expedition's 1804-1806 route, a place where William Clark is known with certainty to have stood and made observations of the surrounding terrain and the route which lay ahead of the party. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for associations with this most historic exploration of the American West, and under Criterion B, for associations with William Clark, a leader of the expedition.

Historical Background

Thomas Jefferson had a long-standing interest in the huge area of land that extended west from the Mississippi River. He had expressed his fears that either France or England would seize the region and block the westward expansion of the United States.

When Jefferson became president, he took positive action regarding the area. He asked for and got permission from Congress for an expedition to the west. He received word from his ministers in France early in 1803 that they had negotiated a treaty for the purchase of Louisiana from France. Jefferson appointed Meriwether Lewis to lead the intended expedition. The necessary planning for the expedition progressed and the size of the company that was originally intended was increased. Jefferson thought it was prudent to add a co-leader in case of an accident or the possible death of Lewis. Lewis chose William Clark, a Kentucky frontiersman, as his fellow commander, and instructed him to recruit some young, experienced woodsmen for the trip.³

The responsibility for the expedition was turned over to the War Department and the leaders and men were enlisted into the U.S. Army. Jefferson named the group the Corps of Discovery and defined their mission. The president's written instructions to Lewis told him to "explore the Missouri River, and such principal streams of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent for the purpose of commerce."⁴

Also included in the instructions was the following:

Beginning at the mouth of the Missouri, you will take observations of latitude and longitude, at all remarkable points on the river, and especially at the mouths of rivers, at rapids, at islands, and other places and objects distinguished by such natural marks and characters of a durable kind, as that they may be with certainty recognized hereafter, the course of the river between these points of observation may be supplied by the compass.⁵

See continuation sheets

³Eide, Henry Ingvard, The Journey of Lewis and Clark, (Rand McNally and Company, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, 1969), p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 5.

⁵Jackson, Donald, ed., Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, (2 vols., Urbana, 1978), "Jefferson's instructions to Lewis," Vol. 1, pp. 61-62.

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The Lewis and Clark Expedition left its winter camp at Wood River, Illinois, on May 14, 1804. They spent the summer of 1804 traveling up the Missouri River and reached the Mandan Indian villages near present day Bismarck, North Dakota, in the fall. They built winter quarters there and remained until the spring of 1805. In the early spring of 1805 they acquired the services of Touissant Charbonneau as a guide and interpreter. When they left the Mandan villages on April 7, 1805, they were accompanied by Charbonneau, his Indian wife, Sacajawea, and their son, Jean Baptise.

The expedition headed up the Missouri River and reached the mouth of the Yellowstone River on April 27, 1805. After considerable difficulty with bears, prickly pear cactus, mosquitoes and the Great Falls of the Missouri, they reached the Three Forks of the Missouri River on July 25, 1805. Here, Sacajawea, a Shoshoni Indian who had been captured by Minnetare Indians at the Three Forks about five years earlier, began to recognize the surroundings.⁶

From this juncture, the Lewis and Clark Expedition sought a route up the river's headwaters, and across the mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Clark observed that the north fork of the three rivers that formed the Missouri River had the most water and appeared to be the one to follow.⁷ When Lewis and the main party arrived at the Three Forks, it appeared to him that the middle fork and southwest fork (Clark's north fork) were of equal size and the name Missouri should be discontinued. After consultation, the captains decided to call the middle fork Madison's River, the southeast fork Gallatin's River and the southwest fork Jefferson's River in honor of that illustrious personage Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States.⁸

The party left the Three Forks on July 30, 1805. The journey up Jefferson's River became increasingly difficult. The river was much smaller than the Missouri and was filled with rapids. There was no bank to walk on in most places and it became necessary for the men to wade in the water in order to push and pull the canoes upstream.

On August 8, 1805, during the next day's travel after camping the previous night about two miles below the mouth of the Philanthropy River (present day Ruby River), Sacajawea recognized the point of a high plain to the right which she "says her nation calls the beaver's head from the conceived resemblance of its figure to the head of that animal."⁹

At this point, Lewis--noting the importance of finding the Shoshoni Indians, obtaining horses and aid from them and crossing the mountains before winter set in--made the decision that he would take a few men and proceed ahead of the main party. Accordingly, Lewis and three men left the main party on August 9, 1805, and traveled directly overland.

Clark, in charge of the remainder of the party, continued up Jefferson's River (present day Beaverhead River) with the boats and passed the rock Sacajawea called the Beaver's Head.

On August 11, 1805, Clark and his party passed 3000 Mile Island, estimating that they were that far from the mouth of the Missouri. This island has since disappeared because the river has changed course. They spent most of that day dragging their canoes over the shoals and riffles of the river.

⁶Thwaites, Reuben G., ed., Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-06, (Arno Press Edition, New York, 1969), 8 vols., vol. II, p. 260.

⁷Moulton, Gary E., ed. The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 11 vols., (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press), vol. 4, p. 428.

⁸Ibid., vol. 4, p. 437.

⁹Ibid., vol. 5, p. 59.

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On August 12, 1805, the Clark party had a difficult time. Clark wrote that the men were in the water most of the day and were getting weak, sore and much fatigued. They complained of the difficulty navigation subjected them to and wished to go by land. Clark said he pacified them. At noon, they were drenched by a thunderstorm that lasted half an hour. In all, they traveled twelve miles by water and gained four miles by land that day.¹⁰

On August 13, 1805, Clark's party spent three-fourths of the time dragging their canoes over the rapids in the river. They came to a stream that flowed into the river from the left opposite a high point of limestone rocks. They called the stream McNeal's Creek, naming it after Hugh McNeal, a member of the party. Clark described the creek as a bold running stream seven yards wide on the larboard side below a high point of limestone rocks 70 feet high on the starboard side.¹¹ The stream is now called Blacktail Deer Creek and the limestone rocks are Clark's Lookout.

The dugout canoes were pulled up on the bank. Clark climbed the rocks and viewed the region through a telescope, made a number of compass readings, and sketched a map of the region.¹²

Clark recorded that the "beaver's head boar N. 24 degrees, E. 12 ms. [miles]. The course of the Wisdom River is N. 25 degrees W. The gap at the place the [Beaverhead] river passes thro' a mountain in advance is S. 18 degrees W. 10 ms."¹³ Clark's magnetic compass bearings are very close to present day readings.¹⁴ The Clark party camped that night a few miles southwest of present day Dillon after traveling sixteen miles by water, only five miles by land.¹⁵

From here they continued upriver, crossed the Continental Divide and dropped down the other side along the Lemhi River. On the banks of the Lemhi, they rejoined Lewis and party, establishing friendly relations with a band of the Shoshoni, including Sacajawea's brother Chief Cameahwait. Critical aid for the expedition was supplied by the Shoshoni, in the form of horses, provisions and a knowledgeable guide, who led them across the Lolo Trail and on into the Columbia Basin by which they succeeded in their quest to reach the Pacific Ocean.

Historical Significance

Clark's Lookout is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its associations with the exploration and settlement history of the American West in general, and with the accomplishments of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in particular. The expedition's accomplishment in charting and exploring the Upper Missouri and Columbia River basins, identifying a western route to the Pacific, chronicling this vast region and its abundant resources, and establishing relationships on behalf of the United States government with many of the native peoples in the region made it perhaps the most important national undertaking of the 19th century. A landmark along the route and a well-preserved site of activities important to the success of the expedition's mission, Clark's Lookout is clearly eligible for the National Register

¹⁰Ibid. vol. 5, p. 76.

¹¹Ibid, vol. 5, p. 84.

¹²Thwaites, op. cit., vol. 8, Map #29-A.

¹³Moulton, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 84.

¹⁴Bergantino, Bob, (Telephone interview on geographical locations along the Lewis and Clark route), April 1993.

¹⁵Moulton, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 84.

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on a national level. With many Lewis and Clark sites being lost due to meanders of rivers, natural erosion and modern encroachment, recognizing the significance of well-preserved sites such as Clark's Lookout becomes increasingly important.

Sites associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition gain significance for their associations with the explorers themselves, illustrious figures in the history of the region and the nation, and the prodigious contribution these two individuals made to the knowledge of and ensuing history of the American West. A place associated with the activities and accomplishments of the expedition, the top of Clark's Lookout is one of a few locations on the entire Lewis and Clark route where it is known with certainty that William Clark actually stood and made observations while carrying out the intent of President Thomas Jefferson's orders. An experienced frontiersman and engineer, William Clark's skills served the party well throughout the expedition. Responsibility generally fell to Clark to sketch and chart maps along the route; the observations made at Clark's Lookout were incorporated into the exhaustive maps he made of the region and the riverways the expedition traversed. Clark's accuracy in charting the route is impressive, his magnetic compass bearings taken at this site are very close to present day readings.

Today, Clark's Lookout is managed as an undeveloped state park by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.¹⁶ The property containing Clark's Lookout first came into private ownership in 1889 when Susan A. Orem was granted ownership from the United States government by the terms of the Desert Land Act.¹⁷ The land was used for agricultural purposes, i.e., grazing, by subsequent owners until 1985 when it was sold to the State of Montana. Protected in the public trust, it now commemorates the achievement of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the pivotal role that the expedition played in the history of the American West.

¹⁶Warranty Deed, recorded December 26, 1985, Beaverhead County Clerk and Recorder, Book 243, pp. 109-110, Dillon, Montana.

¹⁷Desert Lands Certificate No. 692. Recorded November 6, 1890, vol. 6, p. 126, Title Records, Beaverhead County Recorder, Dillon, Montana.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Beaverhead County Clerk and Recorder records of deeds.
Bergantino, Bob, Telephone interview on geographical locations along the Lewis and Clark route. April 1993.
Eide, Ingvard Henry. The Journey of Lewis and Clark, Rand McNally and Company, Chicago, New York and San Francisco, 1969.
Jackson, Donald, ed., Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 2 volumes, Urbana, 1978. "Jefferson's instructions to Lewis," vol. 1.
Moulton, Gary E., ed., The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 11 volumes, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1983 to present.
Saindon, Bob, "Clark's Lookout," We Proceeded On, February 1989, pp. 18-21.
Thwaites, Reuben G., ed., Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-06, Arno Press Edition, 8 volumes, New York, 1969.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other -- Specify Repository: Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Helena, Montana

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property: approximately seven acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	371790	5010160
B	12	371880	5010200
C	12	371840	5010050
D	12	371910	5010060

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): Section 7, T07S, R08W.

Verbal Boundary Description

Clark's Lookout is located in the SE¼ SW¼ of Section 7, T07S, R08W. The property boundary is delineated on the accompanying topographic map.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary was determined topographically to encompass the landform known as Clark's Lookout in its entirety.

11. Form Prepared By

name: Charles Cook and Bobbie Scott
organization: Camp Fortunate Chapter, Lewis & Clark Trail Foundation date: October 1993
street & number: 5 N. Arizona
city or town: Dillon state: MT zip code: 59725

Property Owner

name: Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
street & number: 1420 E. Sixth Avenue telephone: 406/444-3750
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

12

7

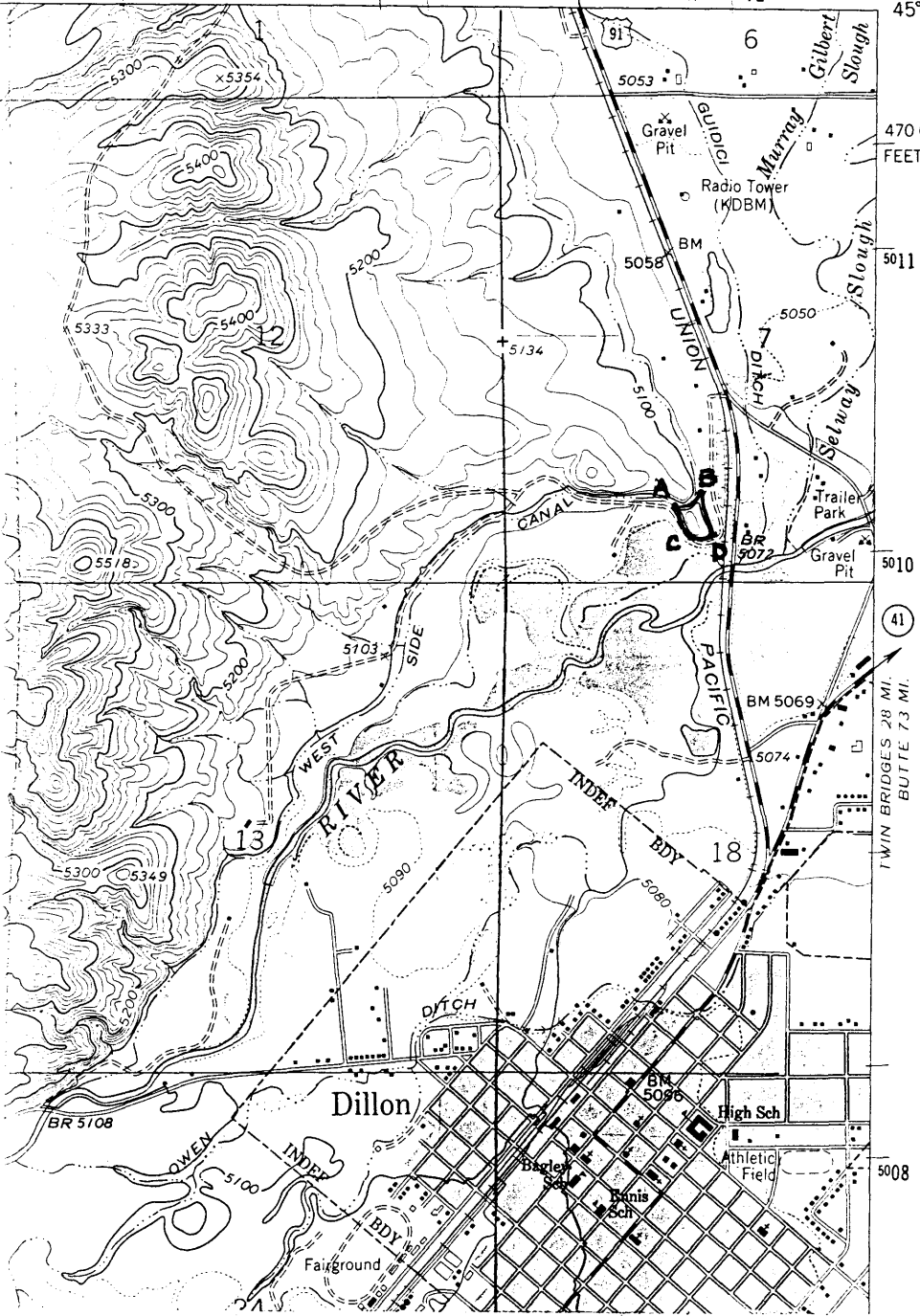
5001

DILLON WEST QUADRANGLE
 MONTANA - BEAVERHEAD CO.
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

3474 1 SE
 (GLEN SE)

2

370 1 190 000 FEET 371 R. 9 W. R. 8 W. BUTTE 61 MI GLEN 17 MI. 372 112°37'30" 45°15'



Clark's Lookout
 Dillon vicinity
 Beaverhead County
 Montana
 UTM's: All in zone 12
 a) 371790E/5010160N
 b) 371880E/5010200N
 c) 371840E/5010050N
 d) 371910E/5010060N
 Located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of
 Section 7, T7S, R8W.

