

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Expedition Island

AND/OR COMMON Expedition Island

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
On the Green River in Green River, Wyoming

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Green River

__ VICINITY OF

001

STATE
Wyoming

CODE
56

COUNTY
Sweetwater

CODE
037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Town of Green River (Mr. John Ogden, Public Services Supervisor)

STREET & NUMBER

Box 127

CITY, TOWN

Green River

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Wyoming 82935

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Sweetwater County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Green River

STATE

Wyoming

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1968

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In 1871, Expedition Island was covered with cottonwood trees and undergrowth. In a small clearing, Powell and his men outfitted their four boats, and practiced their steering and signalling. They left the island May 22, 1871.

In 1975 the island had been divided in two by current action. The northern section, the larger and, undisturbed, is still covered with dense foliage. The southern section contains the sites of Powell's encampment and debarkation. The interior has been made into an open, grassy mall surrounded by a gravel drive which circles most of the island. At the southeast end a deteriorating community hall stands near a parking area and outdoor rest rooms. Foliage still covers the banks of the island, screening visitors from the adjacent town of Green River. New housing developments on the south bank of the river, however, run right up to the edge of the bluffs and are unscreened.

Green River seeks to remodel its community center, but proposals to remove the driveway from the southern island and put footpaths through the undisturbed northern one have met with little support.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1869, 1871

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Expedition Island was the starting point for the two expeditions down the Green and Colorado Rivers led by Maj. John Wesley Powell in 1869 and 1871. On these expeditions Powell completed the exploration of the last, large, unknown land area in the Continental United States. No conclusive information has been found to indicate the precise campsite or embarkation point of the first expedition, but the second camped on Expedition Island and left from there May 22, 1871.

Penetration of the unknown Colorado by Powell and his crew opened up a new era for the nation. New concepts of conservation, reclamation, forestry and water management, geological and geographical surveys, and a whole new and scientific approach to the western lands ensued.

BIOGRAPHY:

John Wesley Powell was born in New York, but his father, a Methodist-Episcopalian minister, soon moved his family to Ohio. As a young boy Powell became interested in natural history, and he associated with learned men in the field. He began making river trips--down the Ohio, the Illinois, the DesMoines, and Mississippi Rivers. During these trips he learned boat-handling and how to read a river's current.

Powell was a high school teacher when the Civil War broke out, although he never received a college degree. Powell joined the Union Army as a private but was an officer within a few months. At the Battle of Shiloh a Mini ball tore through his right arm and the doctors could do nothing but amputate. Powell then returned to teaching in natural history, but soon grew restless. In 1867 and 1868 he organized two scientific expeditions into Colorado, where the unexplored Grand (now Colorado) River captured his imagination. When he learned the new transcontinental railroad was to cross the Green River in southwestern Wyoming he decided his next expedition would begin there.

The 1000 mile journey began in May 1869 and was filled with incredible hardship. Fifteen days after leaving Green River one of their four unwieldy boats was wrecked, taking one-third of their rations and all of Powell's notebooks with it. A fire one week later completed the destruction of their mess kit. Heavy rains gradually spoiled the remaining rations. Three men were killed by Indians when they left the party to travel overland. The others continued and on August 30 arrived at the mouth of the Virgin River where they found three Mormons fishing. The canyon had been

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dole, Hollis M., "Remarks at the John Wesley Powell Centennial Celebration," 1969.
 Works Project Administration, Wyoming: A Guide to its History, Highways and People, 1941.
 Yocheolson, Ellis, "Expedition Island," 1968, Historic Sites Survey Report.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 20

UTM REFERENCES

A	12	627240	4598300	B	12	627830	4597640
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	12	627650	4597520	D	12	627740	4598220
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary includes the two islands on the Green River north of Wyoming Route 530 and south of the Union Pacific Railroad bridge. These were one island in 1871. The northern island is covered with cottonwoods as it was in 1871. The southern island contains the debarkation point for the Powell Expedition and cottonwoods along the banks. The community center, roads, parking area, monuments and playground equipment do not contribute to the national significance of the landmark.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Stephen Lissandrello, Historian, Landmarks Review Project

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

1/3/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<i>[Signature]</i>	DATE <u>1/26/76</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE <u>1/25/76</u>
ATTEST: <i>[Signature]</i>	
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

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conquered, and the last unknown area in the United States had been traversed.

Although much of the scientific data that was to be gathered on this trip was lost, it would be regained by the 1871 expedition. The journey had profound effects on the future course of science and public policy in the west.

During this trip Powell began to study the nature of arid country and saw clearly that unless land policies and political and social institutions were changed, the fragile ecology of the region would break down disastrously. As Director of the newly formed U.S. Geological Survey from 1881 to 1894 he fought hard for a sane land and water-use program in the arid West. No real success crowned his efforts until a few months before his death in 1902. In that year President Theodore Roosevelt signed into law the Reclamation Act, creating what is now the Bureau of Reclamation. Since 1902 the Bureau has built 259 dams and the value of crops irrigated with Reclamation projects now comes to about \$1.8 billion each year.

Expedition Island thus commemorates not only the exploration of the last unmapped region in this country, but also the prescience of the explorer-scientist who prepared the foundation for many of the Nation's modern concepts of land and water conservation.