66E003.3

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86) Theme X: Westward Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 10 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lemhi Pass

other names/site number North Pass

2. Location

street & number Salmon, Idaho and Dillon, Montana vicinity ☐ not for publication

city, town ☐ vicinity

state Idaho/Montana code 16, 30 county Lemhi/Beaverhead code 059/001 zip code 83467

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
☐ private	☐ building(s)			buildings
☐ public-local	☐ district			sites
☐ public-State	☒ site	4		structures
☒ public-Federal	☐ structure		2	objects
	☐ object			Total
		4	2	

Name of related multiple property listing:

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ 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 ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☒ other, (explain:) ~~NHL boundary~~ study

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action 6/20/91

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation: pedestrian	Transportation: road
Landscape: natural feature	Agriculture
	Domestic: camp

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
N/A	foundation N/A
	walls N/A
	roof N/A
	other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

A long gap of about two miles--with about a mile, fairly level ridge top opening between gradually ascending slopes on its north and south sides--Lemhi Pass has a flat, grassy top with a modest grade down its Montana side and a steeper, canyon approach on its western, Idaho, side. Higher, continental divide ridges run north and south, with some timbered slopes interrupting a more arid lower desert. At an elevation of 7373 feet, Lemhi Pass is lower than other continental divide openings in that region. Two power lines cross its northern side, but they are more than half a mile away from Lewis and Clark's old Indian road. A rail and barbed wire fence divides Idaho from Montana, and a rather primitive modern road crosses there. But neither of these features distract significantly from a scene that does not differ very much from Lewis and Clark's view. A distant ranching valley is visible in Montana, but a much higher, often snow-capped range farther west in Idaho has not changed much, aside from timber that varies with a change in climate that has come since 1840. A campground in Montana at Sacajawea Spring is not too obtrusive, and Idaho's Copper Queen mine is concealed by a ridge. Except for timber, seasonal changes in vegetation are greater than differences in plants that have come since Lewis and Clark came by. Very little impact has modified their old Indian road, because recent access has been over a new grade on a different route.

Contributing sites include (1) Meriwether Lewis' upper Missouri fountain on Trail Creek, NE corner of Section 16; (2) Lemhi summit between Idaho and Montana; (3) point for a western view of Lemhi range and Idaho mountain barriers; and (4) Agency Creek Columbia water source in NW 1/4, section 14.

☐ See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

JUL 10 1989

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

[X] nationally [ ] statewide [ ] locally

Applicable National Register Criteria [X] A [X] B [ ] C [ ] D NHL Criteria: 1 and 2

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) [ ] A [ ] B [ ] C [ ] D [ ] E [ ] F [ ] G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Exploration	1805	August 12-24, 1805

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Significant Person: Meriwether Lewis, William Clark

Architect/Builder: N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

On their transcontinental journey of western exploration, Lewis and Clark encountered their most difficult problem--a complication that impeded them for hundreds of miles--at Lemhi pass. They got there by following their instructions carefully, but after ascending appropriate upper Missouri streams, they ran into impassable mountain barriers and canyons that blocked their westward progress. Exceptional resourcefulness was essential in order to get around obstacles there, and their significance as explorers depended entirely upon their ability to respond to an unexpected challenge that they met at Lemhi pass. In conjunction with their difficulty in reaching and managing a Lolo trail crossing, Lemhi pass represents their greatest obstacle as well as most spectacular achievement of their expedition. By itself, Lemhi pass did not constitute too severe an obstruction. Because of its location in Shoshoni territory where they could receive essential guidance and help, it also represented an opportunity for eventual success. They quite properly regarded Lemhi pass as a high point of their trip.

Ascending Lemhi pass, August 12, 1805, Meriwether Lewis, accompanied by Hugh McNeal, John Shields, and George Drouillard, attained their expedition's primary goal of discovering a Missouri river-Columbia river crossing. Lewis regarded that as a major achievement, explaining that "I had accomplished one of those great objectives on which my mind had been unalterably fixed for many years." From an upper Missouri (Trail creek) spring to an upper Salmon (Agency creek) spring, he followed a well-traveled Indian trail, across Lemhi pass in search of a Lemhi band of Shoshoni Indians whom he needed to find in order to obtain horses to transport his expedition to a navigable western stream. After noticing that Salmon river could not be navigated satisfactorily by canoe (or any other kind of eighteenth century equipment), he also needed to employ a Shoshoni guide to get through a vast mountain wilderness that extended for hundreds of miles and blocked his westward route. His trip to Lemhi pass had not been difficult. But his view westward was not promising. He noted that from Lemhi ridge, "I discovered immence ranges of high mountains still to the West of us." At that point, he left United States territory, entering an uncharted wilderness of Indian land not controlled by any European power. Finding a Lemhi valley Shoshoni band, he persuaded them to accompany him back across Lemhi pass to his base camp. His Shoshoni escorts

[X] See continuation sheet

had a great deal of suspicion of a detachment of four white men with an improbable story (that they could communicate only by sign language) that they needed help in getting a larger party westward to a Pacific ocean beach, but after they finally reached William Clark and their main expedition camp, Sacajawea managed to explain matters more skillfully and to serve as interpreter. Lewis had encountered his own band (from which she had been abducted by Blackfoot raiders in 1800), and could deal effectively with Camehwait, her brother or cousin (no distinction is made in Shoshoni language between brothers and cousins, so Lewis and Clark could not tell which relation he was) who led her Shoshoni people whom Lewis had met. With Shoshoni horses, assistance, and guidance, Lewis and Clark returned through Lemhi pass to reach some Lemhi and Salmon river campgrounds and to continue their westward exploration. Lemhi pass has national significance for their entrance into Columbia river drainage, their beginning of exploration of Oregon country resources, and for their success in finding Shoshoni Indians (for whom they had been searching for a long time) who could provide assistance essential for their expedition's success. Lemhi pass (Lewis and Clark's North pass, as distinguished from a subsequent trappers and emigrants South Pass in western Wyoming--also a National Historic Landmark), also represents an exceptional problem in western expansion, because its utility was limited to Indians and fur hunters, so that later, more practical northern routes of transcontinental travel had to be discovered.

Along with Bannock pass--located about 14 miles further south--Lemhi pass provided access for eighteenth century Shoshoni Indians from their upper Salmon homelands to upper Missouri and Great Plains buffalo country after they began to travel on horseback and expand farther into Montana and Alberta. Lemhi Shoshoni bands had a route connecting their upper Salmon and Big Hole territories, allowing them to fish for salmon in Idaho and to pursue buffalo in Montana. Shortly before Lewis and Clark arrived, Blackfoot Indians armed with guns from Canadian sources used Lemhi pass for raids into Shoshoni country, so that Lewis and Clark were feared as disguised Blackfoot agents when they followed what soon would be known as a Blackfoot road. Finnan MacDonald's Hudson's Bay Company expedition retaliated against Blackfoot forces just west of Lemhi pass in a celebrated battle in 1823, but hostilities continued to endanger that whole region until 1832.

After 1866, when an important Leesburg gold rush brought ranchers as well as miners to Lemhi valley, stage service through Lemhi pass continued until Gilmore and Pittsburg railroad construction diverted traffic to Bannock pass. Later highway construction also brought an improved road that way, so Lemhi pass fell into disuse, with only a somewhat difficult, lightly used mountain road accommodating local ranchers or travelers interested following Lewis and Clark's route.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Gary E. Moulton, ed., Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 5:74.

John J. Peebles, "Rugged Waters: Trails and Campsites of Lewis and Clark in the Salmon River Country," Idaho Yesterdays (Summer 1964), 8/2: 2-17.

☐ See continuation sheet

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property about 620

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	307920	4982090
B	12	307980	4983780
C	12	305700	4983860
D	12	305630	4982250

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Idaho's portion includes NW 1/4 and E 1/2 (except for N 1/2 N 1/2 and S 1/2 S 1/2 of E 1/2) of section 14, T19N, R25E;
Montana's segment includes S 1/2 S 1/2 of section 9 west of Trail creek and N 1/2 N 1/2 of section 16, T10S, R15W.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This area includes that part of Lemhi pass that Lewis and Clark's route traversed, and those springs in Montana and Idaho that constitute integral components of their Lemhi pass crossing. Any further reduction in size would create excessive risk of omitting significant National Historic Landmark cultural resources or would create unnecessary problems in boundary identification for administrative purposes.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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