

Trail Talk Minutes

Tuesday, May 17, 2011

3:00 – 4:00 pm CST

I. Introductions

Trail talk began with introductions of Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (LECL) hosts:

Jill Hamilton-Anderson, Education Specialist (jill_hamilton_anderson@nps.gov, 402-661-1824)

Nichole McHenry, Volunteer Program Manager (nichole_mchenry@nps.gov, 402-611-1810)

II. Trail Talk Purpose

The purpose of Trail Talk is to connect interpreters, educators, and volunteer professionals so they can learn from each other, share ideas and resources, and build relationships. It is also to weave places and people together along the National Historic Trail. Trail Talk will also be used as a conduit for information dissemination regarding policy changes, administration needs, grants and other funding opportunities.

Trail Talk is an informal way to assist partners by providing a conduit for communication.

III. Guest Speaker: Debbie Wilson, Executive Director, Lewis and Clark National Park Association



Debbie began working for the Lewis & Clark National Park Association in 1995. She has been the association's executive director since 2007. A love of educating kids of all ages plus running a non-profit association has been the best work experience for her. Being a partner to a National Park site has been very rewarding because of the collaboration with park staff and witnessing the development of new additions to the park. She loves the challenges of keeping the inventory relevant to today's interests, and also creating new products which promote Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

Thanks to Debbie who graciously accepted our offer to share with the Trail Talk audience her experience as the Executive Director of the Lewis and Clark National Park Association. The association has a long history of partnership with Lewis and Clark National Historical Park going back to when the park was first established as Fort Clatsop National Memorial in 1963. The association works to raise revenue to support the park's education and interpretive programming through Debbie's tireless effort to carrying title's relevant to the story as well as carrying hard to find and unique items. Carrying a variety of items, items specific to your locality, and obscure items seem to be a good recipe for the success of

her bookstore. The bookstore expanded three-fold recently, which has allowed for increased availability of such items, but Debbie cautioned that expansion results in the need for more people to help run the operation and more overhead costs to carry the increased stock. She has to be as diligent as ever in assessing what to keep and what to clear off the shelves. A barometer for Debbie is the quality to cost ratio. If she finds an item increasing in cost, but the quality is not improving or is in fact declining, she will make the decision not to carry that item. By far, the determination to stock an item is its relevancy to the story of Lewis and Clark. The relevancy relates to the partnership the association has with the national park. Items must support the mission and interpretive themes of Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and must meet with their approval and in Debbie's case, also the approval of the eight-member board of directors of the association. Needless to say, the items found in Debbie's bookstore have been thoughtfully selected.

Lewis and Clark Park Association contributes significantly to the interpretive operation of its host park. Many times during periods of low visitation or low National Park Service (NPS) staffing, it is association staff that are the "front-line" interpreters. It is essential that any cooperating association be included in annual NPS interpretive training to maintain a consistent message and to acknowledge and honor this unique partnership.

An issue plaguing the association's bookstore and many Trail bookstores is when popular titles go out of print. Independent associations rarely have the resources to establish a "print-on-demand" relationship with a press. Associations who can print for themselves generally cannot order enough of a title to bring down the cost per book so books that may have been \$15.00 when in print are now \$30.00 plus. Is there a way for Trail bookstores to work together on this issue? If you have ideas and want to brainstorm about it, let us know. We can dedicate a Trail Talk to the issue or look into creating a forum for Trail bookstores to begin sharing ideas, helping each other find creative solutions to issues and promoting each other's stores to visitors who are traveling the Trail.

VI. Trail Notes

From the National Trails Systems Bulletin

- National Trails Day June 4th. If you have any plans for this special day connected to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, please let us know. We will put it on our website calendar and forward it to the National Trails Office for their accounting purposes.

Other Notes:

- **For NPS partners:** Do you have a project or program that relates to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail? Did you know that through the Servicewide Comprehensive Call there is a funding source entitled "Connect Trails to Parks," the purpose of which is to "increase the awareness, appreciation, and public use of the National Trails System through new linkages to national park areas and other federal lands and facilities associated with National Park Service administered components of the National Trails System"?

As a NPS site along the LECL Trail you can input these projects on your own into the project management system (PMIS), however, you will need "concurrence" from the LECL superintendent. If you are planning a project of this type, we highly recommend talking with someone on our Partner Support Program team for assistance. We are available to review your application and give technical assistance if requested. Please contact the PSP at LECL_PartnerSupport@nps.gov.

- **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Partner Support Program (PSP):**
- Through the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Partner Support Program, staff and partners work together to protect resources, communicate the stories, and enhance the visitor experience; leaving a legacy for future generations.

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Partner Support Program staff provides a broad spectrum of support to partners to further the mission of the Trail. Such support includes but is not limited to:

- ·Consultation
- ·Facilitation
- ·Funding
- ·Training
- ·Liaisonship and Network Development
- ·Technical Assistance
- ·Customer Service
- To receive support in any of the areas above for a Trail related project, please email us at LECL_partnersupport@nps.gov. In collaboration with you, we will assess your needs and discuss ways in which we may help you achieve mutually beneficial goals. Depending on your situation this may require an official application for assistance.
- - ***The PSP is currently collecting information about ways that we can better serve you. Are there materials or resources you need that we can provide? Are there topics you'd like to learn more about? Do you have ideas for future Trail Talk discussions?***

PSP Resource Tidbit:

Are you located along an American Byway or working on byway status? Check out this great resource:

- America's Byways Resource Center: <http://www.bywaysresourcecenter.org/>

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