Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Weippe Prairie

AND/OR COMMON: Weippe Prairie

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: __NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Weippe __ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: first

STATE: Idaho CODE: 16

COUNTY: Clearwater CODE: 035

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	X AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	X BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
X SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Mayor, City of Weippe

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: Weippe __ VICINITY OF

STATE: Idaho

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: STATE:

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: None Known

DATE: __FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN: STATE:

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	__ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

At the western end of the Lolo Trail across the Bitterroot Mountain Range, Weippe Prairie in Clearwater County, Idaho, elevation 3,000 feet, is still a beautiful upland prairie of about nine by twenty miles of open farmland bordered by pine forests. In 1805 and 1806 the Lewis and Clark expedition spent considerable time camping and visiting with the Nez Perce who frequented the area.

Lewis and Clark called the prairie the "camas flats," "quawmash flats," or "quawmash ground," and were fed cakes made of the camas root, gathered by the Nez Perce on Weippe Prairie, where the plant still grows. The strange meal of camas cakes, dried fish and berries, while very welcomed by the starving explorers, made the entire party very sick.

The prairie is still relatively undisturbed and remotely located, used primarily for wheat farming, except for the small town of Weippe in its center. The paved highway 11 cuts east-west across the center of the prairie and runs through the town of Weippe before turning northeasterly. The area most associated with Lewis and Clark is located south of the highway and town, only a few farmhouses, small roads and fences interrupt the natural character of the countryside there.

As seen on the USGS map, three specific areas have been identified as the probable areas of the Lewis and Clark campsite of 1806 and the two Nez Perce villages visited by them in 1805, within the general area of the southern half of Weippe Prairie which provides the historic setting for the camps and the various activities of the explorers during their two visits to this area. The specific sites are necessarily approximate since descriptions of the areas are not precise and, because of the temporary nature of the campsites, there are no obvious, and probably few archeological remains of the camps.

The approximate areas of the three specific historic sites are identified with circles on the accompanying USGS Weippe South Quadrangle. The eastermost site, in Section 25 (T35N, R4E) is the Lewis and Clark campsite of June 10-24, 1806, their last camp before recrossing the Bitterroot Mountains. It was described by Clark June 12, 1806:

> . . . . our camp is agreeably situated in apoint of timbered land on the eastern borders of an extensive leavel and butifull prairie which is intersected by several small branches near the bank of one of which our camp is placed. (De Voto, p. 402)

This natural meadow in the southeasterly section of the prairie, about two miles southeast of the town of Weippe is still divided by the branches of Jim Ford (called Collins by the explorers) Creek.

About one mile west of the expedition's 1806 camp, in Section 26 (T35N, R4E), is the easternmost of the two Nez Perce village sites, where the expedition met with the Nez Perce in September 1805. About two miles northwest of this eastern village site, and about one mile southwest of the town of Weippe, in Sections 15 and 22 (T35N, R4E) is the western site of the Nez Perce villages of 1805. The national historic landmark plaque commemorating Weippe Prairie is mounted north of this third site, on the south curb of Route 11.

The Weippe Prairie site is interpreted by the National Park Service at Nez Perce National Historical Park. The 1963 feasibility study for establishment of that park recommended that a National Park Service interpretive marker be placed at the same point on the right-of-way as the DAR marker, and that sufficient scenic easements be established over the farmland to the southeast to keep the view open. No known easements have been accepted to date and the national historic landmark plaque identifies, but does not explain, the importance of the area.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	X EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES September 20-24, 1805 June 10-24, 1806 BUILDER/ARCHITECT N/A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On the morning of September 20, 1805, William Clark with six men, in advance of the main body of the Lewis and Clark expedition, came out of the Bitterroot Mountains onto the southeastern corner of Weippe Prairie, the western terminus of the Lolo Trail. This elevated and open area of several thousand acres had long been a favorite camas root digging ground of the Nez Perce Indians. The south half of the prairie, which is still open land rimmed with forests, contains three historic campsites associated with the expedition's visits there during both their west and eastbound journeys.

It was on Weippe Prairie that the expedition first met the Nez Perce, who had never before seen white men, but who proved to be the most helpful of the tribes which the explorers encountered in their travels. The Nez Perce gave the explorers food as well as much-needed help and directions during the two and a half week period spent in their territory.

Had the Nez Perce been hostile, it is doubtful if the members of the expedition could have defended themselves effectively in their weakened condition. At Weippe Prairie they rested and recovered from the exhausting westbound crossing of the Lolo Trail which had reduced them to near starvation. In the spring of 1806, the eastbound expedition spent nearly seven weeks in this vicinity, including two weeks on Weippe Prairie itself, waiting for the snow to melt enough to make a re-crossing of the Bitterroots possible.

On September 20, 1805 the Clark party met some friendly Nez Perce, living in two villages, separated by two miles of Weippe Prairie. From the western of these villages, Clark sent back Reuben Field and an Indian with food for the main party. Then later on the twenty-first, Clark set out for a Nez Perce fishing camp on the Clearwater River 20 miles to the northwest, where he met in council late that night with then-ranking Nez Perce Chief Twisted Hair.

On the morning of September 22 the Clark party returned to the Nez Perce villages on Weippe Prairie, where late in the day Lewis and the main body of the expedition staggered into the eastern of the two Indian villages. September 23, at the eastern village, Lewis and Clark held a council with Twisted Hair and other chiefs, using sign language to communicate without translaters. The explorers distributed medals and other gifts, explained their mission and requested help in building canoes. The Nez Perce assured Lewis and Clark that a water route to the Pacific via the Clearwater and its tributaries to the Snake and Columbia was possible, and they provided the explorers with a chart of the river system. On the evening of September 23 the expedition traveled with Twisted Hair to his home in the western village.

The next day, September 24, the expedition left Weippe Prairie with Twisted Hair and some Nez Perce and moved north to the Clearwater River. The following day they moved farther downriver to begin building canoes, at a site which came to be known as Canoe Camp (about 5 miles west of present Orofino, Idaho, and now interpreted by the National Park Service as part of Nez Perce National Historical Park). There, with the help of the Indians, they constructed large canoes and, leaving their horses for safekeeping with the tribe, they began their descent of the Clearwater River on October 7, 1805.

On their return trip in 1806, the eastbound explorers were forced by a late spring to spend about seven weeks with the Nez Perce, waiting for the snow to melt in the Bitterroots. On May 4, 1806, on the Snake River, near the Clearwater, the expedition chanced to meet a party of Nez Perce, including Chief Tetoharsky, their downriver guide of the year before. With the Chief again acting as their guide, the group proceeded southeasterly toward the Nez Perce camps. May 8 they met Chief Twisted Hair who had befriended them the autumn before, and a Chief Cutnose who had been away at that time. The horses left by the expedition with Twisted Hair had apparently been a quarrelsome issue between Twisted Hair, Cutnose, and Broken Arm, who was probably the principal chief, but the majority of the horses were finally rounded up and returned to the explorers.

Lewis and Clark met in council with the Chiefs, then May 13 moved north of the Clearwater and set up camp at a wooded site on the river bottom, nearly opposite the present town of Kamiah. Utilizing an old Indian habitation, the explorers erected a shelter where they remained for about a month. Unnamed by the expedition, the site became known as Long Camp, Camp Kamiah, or Camp Chopunnish (their name for the Nez Perce), and the expedition stayed there longer than any place on their journey except Forts Mandan, Fort Clatsop, and Camp Wood. Unfortunately, the integrity of the Camp Chopunnish site has been destroyed by the large sawmill which now covers it and the numerous other buildings in the vicinity.

During their long stay in Nez Perce territory that spring, the expedition joined the tribe in many activities, including dances and races. The explorers developed considerable friendliness and admiration for the Nez Perce, and were particularly impressed with their fine horses, including the Nez Perce-bred Appaloosa. Clark had developed quite a reputation as a medicine man by treating a few Indians the previous year, and he was kept busy ministering to many of the tribe suffering from variety of common ills.

On June 10 the expedition moved their campsite about 10 miles to Weippe Prairie. In his journal entry for that date, Clark related their plans to remove the camp to the "quawmash fields":

> ...at which place we intend to delay a fiew days for the laying in some meat by which time we calculate that the snows will have melted more off the mountains and the grass raised to a sufficient height for our horses to live. (De Voto, p. 401)

Their campsite was at a "point of woods" near the more easterly of the two Nez Perce villages they had visited the previous year. This last campsite before recrossing the Bitterroots was located about two miles south of the present town of Weippe, in the meadows surrounding Collins (now Jim Ford) Creek.

At this campsite the expedition collected provisions and prepared themselves for the arduous mountain crossing, as well as planned how to expedite their eastward explorations, having lost a considerable amount of valuable time because of the late spring. Saturday, June 14, 1806, Meriwether Lewis recorded:

> from hence to traveller's rest we shall make a forsed march; at that place we shall probably remain one or two days to rest outselves and horses and procure some meat. we have now been detained near five weeks inconsequence of the snows; a serious loss of time at this delightfull season for traveling. (De Voto, p. 402)

On June 15 the expedition made its first attempt to cross the Lolo Trail which had been their greatest ordeal on the trip west. However, the nearly impassible terrain of steep mountains and thick forests, still deep in snow and ice, extreme weather, and lack of food forced them to turn back June 17. Clark wrote, "under these circumstances we conceived it madness in this stage of the expedition to proceed without a guide who could certainly conduct us to the fishwears on the Kooskooske, as our horses could not possible sustain a journey of more than 4 or 5 days without food." (De Voto, pp. 404-405).

They returned, following the route along Hungry Creek and Clark further related the party's discouragement:

> the party were a good deel dejected, tho' not as much so as I had apprehended they would have been. this is the first time since we have been on this tour that we have ever been compelled to retreat or make a retragrade march. (De Voto, p. 405).

They arrived back at Weippe Prairie, "the flats," on June 19 and made camp in the same vicinity as their campsite of a few days earlier.

On June 24, 1806, with 65 horses, ample food and about six Nez Perce guides, the expedition again set out across the difficult Lolo Trail, and after a fairly short six day journey, arrived at Travellers Rest on June 30.

John Bakeless, Lewis and Clark (New York, 1934).

Elliot Coues, Editor, History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark, 4 vols. (New York, 1905-06).

Robert G. Ferris, Editor, Lewis and Clark; Historic Places Associated with their Transcontinental Exploration (1804-06) (Washington, D.C., National Park Service, 1975).

Patrick Gass, A Journal of the Voyages and Travels of a Corps of Discovery (Pittsburgh, 1808).

John Hussey, Erwin N. Thompson, Daniel F. Burroughs and Alfred C. Kuehl, "Feasibility Report: Nez Perce Country National Historic Sites, Idaho" (National Park Service, mimeographed, San Francisco: October, 1963; revised June 1964).

Milo M. Quaife, editor, The Journals of Captain Mereweither Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway (Madison, 1916).

Reuben G. Thwaites, editor, Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804-1806, 8 vols. (New York, 1905-06).

Olin D. Wheeler, The Trail of Lewis and Clark, 2 vols. (New York, 1904).

with the east section line of the same Section 15; thence south along the east section line for about 2000 feet; thence east about two miles along the north lines of section 23 and 24; thence south about two miles along the east lines of Sections 24 and 25; thence west for about two miles along the south lines of Section 25 and 26; thence north for about one and one-half miles along the west lines of Sections 26 and 23; thence west about one mile across the center of section 22; thence north about one mile along the west line of Sections 22 and 15 to the beginning point.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 3120 acres

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	11	585440	5135380	B	11	585490	5132110
C	11	580570	5132030	D	11	580520	5136250

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The national historic landmark boundary has been drawn on USGS Weippe South and Weippe North maps, to enclose 3120 acres of the relatively undisturbed southern section of Weippe Prairie, including three historic campsites within a general setting of open tree-edged prairie. Beginning in the northwest corner of the boundary, where the west section line of Section 15 (the entire area is located within T35N, R4E) intersects with the Weippe town limits (dotted line on map), just south of Route 11, the boundary runs in a southeasterly direction following the town boundary to its intersection

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Blanche H. Schroer, Landmark Review Project; William Everhart, 1958; Charles Snell, 1964

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service — DATE 9/15/76

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

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION — DATE 4/24/79

ATTEST: William Everhart — DATE Feb 23, 1979

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)