

LEWIS AND CLARK SIGHTED BY THE ASSINIBOINE INDIANS

May 26, 1805

Missouri Breaks

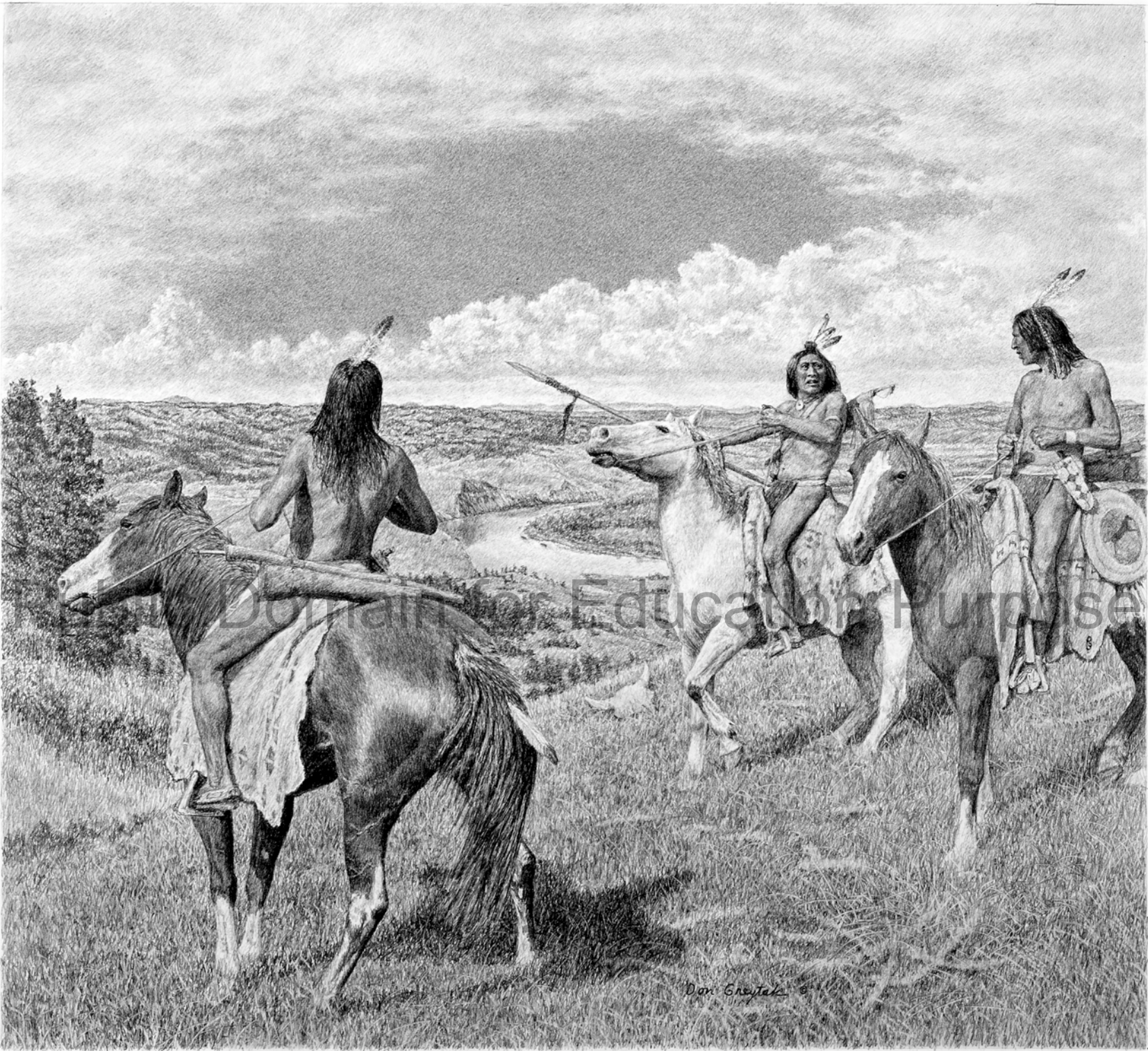
"...from this point . . . when I reflected on the difficulties which this snowey barrier would most probably throw in my way to the Pacific, and the sufferings and hardships of myself and party in them, it in some measure counterballanced the joy I had felt in the first moments in which I gazed on them . . ."

MERIWETHER LEWIS

May 26, 1805—Traveling through what is now the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, Lewis and Clark glimpsed their first views of the outlying mountain ranges of the Rockies. Since early May the party had seen evidence of the native people who lived in the Missouri Breaks. Some of the signs likely belonged to the Assiniboinés, and Lewis recorded in his journal “we do not wish to see those gentlemen just now as we presume they would most probably be the Assiniboinés and might be troublesome to us.” The Missouri Breaks form steep, dry, rugged cliffs along the river and vegetation is sparse except along the river bottom.

Native Plant Species

Foxtail barley	Primrose	Buffaloberry
height: 1 to 2 feet habitat: wide range, prefers moist areas	height: less than 1 foot habitat: dry hills, rocky and clay soils	height: 6 to 15 feet habitat: open woods and stream banks
When foxtail barley grass cures, its purplish-tinged, nodding seedhead resembles a fox's bushy tail. It grows in blue-green clumps.	Gumbo evening primrose usually lacks stems. However, occasional plants may be up to 10 inches tall. Showy white flowers age to pink. Gumbo evening primrose prefers clay soil that turns to "gumbo" when wet.	Silver buffaloberry gets its name from its silvery-green oblong leaves. Edible berries are a shiny yellow-red. Buffaloberry's branches are spine-tipped.
Hordeum jubatum	Oenothera caespitosa	Shepherdia argentea



Montana artist Don Greytak artistically interprets three Assiniboiné braves watching from high bluffs above the river as the explorers paddle, pole, row, and tow dugouts and two pirogues up the Missouri.

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Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign
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The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail weed education project was initiated and developed in 1997 by Montana's Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign Task Force. The project grew to eleven locations by 2003 with the addition of Tower Creek Pyramids site cooperating with Idaho's Weed Awareness Campaign. By 2008 collaboration increased to the diverse entities shown on the reverse side of this sheet.

Today — As you rediscover nature at Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge you will observe non-native plant species like Russian knapweed and whitetop that were not present when Lewis and Clark towed their dugouts up through the bluffs of the river. Invasive plant species we find today on the refuge were brought by unsuspecting travelers along waterways, roads, and trails. Wildlife, livestock, people, and pets transport seeds on their coats, clothing, shoe treads, vehicles, and boats.

Once introduced, invading species thrive in Montana's climate. Russian knapweed forms dense colonies, crowding out native plants and reducing forage for wildlife. Saltcedar takes up salt from deep in the soil profile, drops its foliage, and increases salinity on the soil surface. Whitetop easily invades where natural and man-made disturbances occur.

You can help protect pristine areas from invading species by not walking or driving through infestations and by washing your clothing, gear, and vehicles between site visits.

Invasive Plant Species

Knapweed	Saltcedar	Whitetop
height: 1.5 to 3 feet habitat: prefers moist areas	height: 5 to 20 feet habitat: streams and floodplains, dry saline flats	height: up to 2 feet habitat: pastures, disturbed areas
Russian knapweed prefers shallow water tables such as floodplains and river bottoms, and can survive in dry, rangeland sites. It spreads by creeping roots.	Saltcedar is a woody shrub with feathery, cedar-like leaves, reddish-brown stems, and pink flowers at branch tips. One plant can consume large amounts of water.	Whitetop, or hoary cress, has many small white flowers that give this plant a flat-topped appearance. Shiny, dark blue-green leaves are slightly toothed.
Centaurea repens or Acroptilon repens	Tamarix ramosissima	Cardaria spp.