

RE-DISCOVER NATURE AT RAINBOW FALLS

June 14, 1805
Rainbow Falls

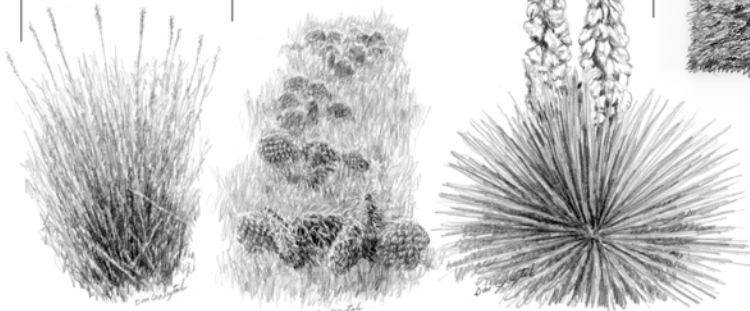
"...hearing a tremendous roaring above me I ... was ... presented by one of the most beautifull objects in nature, a cascade of about fifty feet perpendicular stretching at rightangles across the river from side to side to the distance of a least a quarter of a mile ... wher dashing against the rocky bottom [it] rises into foaming billows of great hight and rappidly glides away, hising flashing and sparkling as it departs."

MERIWETHER LEWIS

June 14, 1805—Meriwether Lewis ventured away from the group into this fierce territory laden with grizzlies, bison, and rattlesnakes. Lewis experienced thick prickly-pear cactus spines penetrating the soles of his deer skin moccasins and gazed across the Falls from his vantage point on the north bank of the Missouri River. Prickly-pear cactus is only one of the native plant species that Lewis observed and documented at Rainbow Falls.

Native Plant Species

Wheatgrass	Prickly-pear	Yucca
height: 1 to 3 feet habitat: plains and dry slopes	height: 6 to 12 inches and 3 feet wide habitat: dry, sandy soil	height: 1 to 4 feet habitat: dry sandy plains and prairie
Wheatgrass is also known as Blue-bunch wheatgrass. Bluebunch wheatgrass is Montana's state grass. It is a key forage species on many ranges.	Prickly-pear is also known as Plains Prickly-pear. Prickly-pear did not yet have its lemon-yellow to orange flowers when Lewis and Clark arrived in mid-June.	Yucca is also known as Great Plains Yucca. Yucca leaves are used to make baskets and roots are used in soap.



Agropyron
spicatum

Opuntia
polycantha

Yucca
glauca



Montana artist Don Greytak has masterfully portrayed Rainbow Falls at the arrival of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on June 14, 1805.

www.dongreytak.com
www.mtweed.org
www.mtwow.org
www.weedcenter.org
www.stopans.org
www.weedawareness.org
www.whatsinyourworld.org



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 re-discover nature at Rainbow Falls, you will observe invading plant species like leafy spurge and spotted knapweed that were not here when Lewis and Clark arrived on the Missouri. Non-native plant species we find today at many areas around Great Falls were brought by unsuspecting travelers along waterways, roads, and hiking trails. Wildlife, people, and pets transport seeds on their coats, clothing, shoe tread, vehicle tires, and boat bottoms.

Once introduced, invading species thrive in Montana's climate. Spotted knapweed quickly crowds out native plant populations, reducing food and cover for wildlife. Leafy spurge adapts well to a wide variety of soil types. Purple loosestrife forms solid stands in wet areas and along river and stream banks, changing the way water systems work.

You can help to protect our pristine areas from invading species by learning what to look for. Avoid driving and walking through infestations; and wash clothing, gear, pets, and vehicles between site visits.

Invasive Plant Species

Knapweed	Leafy spurge	Loosestrife
height: 1 to 3 feet habitat: variety	height: 1 to 3 feet habitat: variety	height: 6 to 8 feet habitat: aquatic
One of these pinkish-purple flowering plants can produce a thousand seeds.	This invader takes over banks along rivers and streams and easily adapts to dry rocky mountain land, prairie, range, and wetland.	Escaping flowerbeds, this invader forms solid stands in ponds, along streams, and in wetland areas. Its presence can reduce habitat for fish and wildlife.



Centaurea
maculosa

Euphorbia
esula

Lythrum
salicaria