July 25, 1806
Pompey’s Pillar

Joan Baptiste, son of the Indian
woman Sacajawea, was nicknamed
“Tomp” by William Clark.

Clark climbed the pillar along the
Yellowstone on July 25, 1806, and
signed “Wm Clark” in the soft sandstone.

1806 — Sgt. Pryor and two other men built ball
boats at Pompey’s Pillar to catch up with William
Clark. Sgt. Pryor with three other men had separated
earlier from Clark and were traveling across country
with horses; however, the horses were stolen and
that is why they needed to build the ball boats to
catch up with Clark and the others. Clark’s canoes
used to travel down the Yellowstone were built, near
what is now Park City, east of Cottonwood trees.

Today — As you stop along the Yellowstone River
and inspect William Clark’s signature at Pompey’s Pillar,
you will observe invasive plant species like saltcedar,
Canada thistle, and common mulegrass. These invasive
weeds arrived at Pompey’s Pillar with unsuspecting
travelers along the Yellowstone. Wildlife, livestock,
people, and pets transport seeds on their coats, clothing,
slopes, treads, vehicles, and boats.

Once introduced, invasive species thrive in Montana’s
climate. Canada thistle adapts to many habitat types
and spreads rapidly. Common mulegrass invades disturbed sites.
Saltcedar reduces water availability and displaces native
and desirable riparian species. Invasive plants have the
trend to out-compete native plants and reduce
wildlife habitats.

You can help protect pristine areas from invasive plant
species by not walking or driving through infestations.

Native Plant Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buffaloberry</th>
<th>Red Oser Dogwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>height: 3 to 6 feet habit: not too dense woods; to or slightly above timberline</td>
<td>height: 3 to 6 feet habit: moist places, prairie, marshy areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The yellowish flower are clustered in the leaf ax. The ripe scarlet juicy fruits are astringent or sour and provided food for Lewis and Clark at Pompey’s Pillar.</td>
<td>Red Oser Dogwood has bright red stems and white pith in the center of the twigs. The fruits are white to grayish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prairie Turnip

height: 12 to 18 inches habit: dry or rocky prairie

The large, starchy root that is said to taste like turnips was a favored food among native Americans. Roots were eaten raw, boiled, roasted, or pounded into meal and mixed with other foods.

Invasive Plant Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canada thistle</th>
<th>Mullien</th>
<th>Saltcedar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>height: 1 to 4 feet habit: wide range</td>
<td>height: 2 to 6 feet habit: gravelly soil requires 140 day growing season</td>
<td>height: 5 to 20 feet habit: streams, canals, reservoirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada thistle is an aggressive perennial plant with an extensive creeping root system. It forms dense patches and crowds out desirable plants.</td>
<td>The woolly-leaved common mullien has a capsules fruit, occurring from June to August, which splits to release an average of 600 seeds.</td>
<td>Saltcedar was introduced as an ornamental and escaped its garden home. Stands of this plant can consume large quantities of water, drying up riparian areas that are home to many native plant communities and wildlife species.</td>
</tr>
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Montana artist Don Greytak interprets the vista at Pompey’s Pillar as it was viewed by William Clark when he arrived at the Yellowstone River landmark in 1806.