



# Partners and Friends

## Big Hole Superintendent Jon James Moving On To A New Position

In February 2004, Jon James left Big Hole National Battlefield for his new position working as Deputy Superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Washington, D.C. "I want to thank everyone for their generous and long-standing assistance and support while I've served as the Superintendent of Bear Paw and Big Hole National Battlefield" said James, "This assignment was my first Superintendent position, and it will always be my most loved."

Since 1996 Jon has served as Superintendent of Big Hole as well as managing the Montana sites of Nez Perce National Historical Park. During his tenure at the battlefield, Jon has had a hand in a host of projects and a number of initiatives that are beginning to bear fruit. A short list of his accomplishments include:

Rehabilitating the homes in the park's residential area.

Rehabilitating the Big Hole Battlefield Visitor Center.

Restoring and maintaining the cultural landscapes and historic features of the Big Hole battlefield area.

Increasing the operational budgets of Bear Paw and Big Hole Battlefields by \$166,000.00.

Co-writing the award winning film for the battlefield entitled *Wéet'u Ciklilitukt* (There Is No Turning Back).

Hosting the 125th Anniversary of the Nez Perce War at Bear Paw and Big Hole.

Establishing a "sister park" relationship with Fort Walsh National Historic Site of Canada.



**Superintendent Jon G. James (fourth from left) with Nez Perce and Northwest Mounted Police friends from Fort Walsh National Historic Site of Canada.**

Initiating and nurturing the formation of "Friends of Bear Paw, Big Hole, and Canyon Creek Battlefields".

Strengthening ties and understanding between the American public, the Montana battlefield areas, and especially, the Nez Perce people.

Jon's new position will take him to the nation's capital. The George Washington Memorial Parkway preserves the natural scenery along the Potomac River. It connects various historic sites including the Arlington House, Clara Barton's Home, and the Iwo Jima Memorial and begins at Mount Vernon, to the Great Falls of the Potomac where the President demonstrated his skill as an engineer. George Washington Memorial Parkway receives 7.3 million annual visitors, has a budget of 9.8 million dollars, and a permanent NPS staff

of thirty people with an additional 100 to 150 seasonal employees.

Over the course of his twenty-eight year career with the National Park Service, Jon has served as a historian and manager in eight different NPS areas, including Golden Spike National Historic Site in Utah; the National Mall in Washington, D.C.; Scotts Bluff National Monument in Nebraska; Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (Gateway Arch) in St. Louis, Missouri; Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area in Wyoming; and Big Hole National Battlefield in Montana.

Jon is excited about the new challenges and opportunities his new position will offer. Jon will be missed and we all wish the best of luck for Jon and his family at their new home.

## Bear Paw Battlefield

Beginning in January, 2004, Robert West joined the ranks of the National Park Service (NPS) and is now the new fulltime park ranger at Bear Paw Battlefield. A recent graduate of the University of Idaho, he moved to Chinook with his family to begin his new job. A number of developments related to the battlefield will keep Robert busy in 2004.

Negotiations continue with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks for the NPS to purchase the 190 acres that comprise the battlefield proper. Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks are committed to transferring ownership to the NPS and Nez Perce National Historical Park. The goal is for the transfer of ownership to occur before September 2004.

Meetings or "summits" continue to be held in relation to building a resource protection/visitor orientation facility near the battlefield. Meetings were held in Missoula, Montana and Spokane, Washington. Input from tribal members, interested parties, and stakeholders has been valuable to the NPS planning team. Changes to the proposed design and the overall planning process have come about in response to these meetings. Additional meetings will be announced and attendance is encouraged.

On January 16, 2004, the Bear Paw administrative offices moved to 301 Ohio Street in Chinook. This move was brought about in order to facilitate a year-round Ranger presence. The mailing address and phone numbers for the battlefield will not change:

Bear Paw Battlefield  
P.O. Box 26  
Chinook MT 59523  
406-357-3130  
406-357-3140 (fax)

To contact Robert West by e-mail, his address is [Robert\\_West@nps.gov](mailto:Robert_West@nps.gov)



The new administrative office for Bear Paw Battlefield

# Weippe Prairie

- The park obtained improved directional signing for guiding visitors to its new site at Weippe Prairie, to be posted this spring with the assistance of the Clearwater County highway district office in Weippe. Motorists will be guided to the vicinity of the Lewis and Clark Expedition's meeting with the Nez Perce, identified by a traffic pullout on Larson Road two miles from town.

The 275-acre tract will remain in agricultural use pending future development. The pasture and hay meadows were examined last fall by Scott Eckberg, Idaho unit manager; Bruce Hansen, NRSC conservationist; and area farmer Roy Lacey, with the view to develop a comprehensive resource

management strategy.

An aggressive weed management program, accompanied by limited rotational grazing, hay meadow restoration, and preservation of native camas fields, are the park's immediate objectives for this site. Lacey will manage agricultural activities for the park under the terms of a special use permit in 2004.

In addition, a noxious weed identification workshop for area landowners is tentatively proposed at the site next June, to be cosponsored by the Clearwater County Weed Supervisor and the park. For further information, contact county weed supervisor Dennis Williams at 208-476-4918.



Lewis and Clark met the Nez Perce near this spot on the Weippe Prairie in September, 1805.

## Updating the General Management Plan

Since its appearance in September 1997, the General Management Plan has served the National Park Service well in guiding the management of Nez Perce National Historical Park and Big Hole National Battlefield.

But in recent years, land acquisitions at Buffalo Eddy, Weippe Prairie, and Canoe Camp, as well as proposed development at Tick Hill and Bear Paw Battlefield, call for amending this core park management document.

As a relatively recent document shaped through extensive public consultation, the General Management Plan remains essentially sound. As we bring the plan up-to-date we will keep you informed of its status and substance in future issues of Friends and Partners.

# News From the Field

## Lewis and Clark Bicentennial

The Hog Heaven Muzzleloaders, Inc. has asked permission of the park to conduct a living history encampment at Canoe Camp in September 2005. The encampment would coincide with the 10-day period the expedition built dugout canoes for the downriver journey to the Pacific in 1805, and is contingent upon the status of proposed NPS development at that site.

The Muzzleloaders is one of several groups working in partnership with Nez Perce National Historical Park in planning Bicentennial observances. Scott Eckberg, the park's Idaho unit manager, is helping coordinate the visit of the federal interagency exhibition, Corps of Discovery II, to the communities of Kamiah and Clarkston in 2005; and, with the Nez Perce Tribe Lewis and Clark bicentennial committee for the exhibition's visit to the Lapwai area in 2006.

The park is similarly involved with Lewis-Clark State College in preparing for its sixth annual Lewis and Clark Symposium, "Lewis and Clark Among the Nez Perce," June 17-19, 2004.



The Tent of Many Voices is an important element of Corps II. Community groups have a ready made venue to provide Lewis and Clark programming. Here an NPS ranger demonstrates a traveling trunk in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in September, 2003.

To learn more on the about the symposium, check [www.lcsc.edu/cp/symposium.htm](http://www.lcsc.edu/cp/symposium.htm); for Corps of Discovery II, [www.nps.gov/lecl](http://www.nps.gov/lecl); or contact Scott at 208-843-2261 ext. 151 or [Scott\\_Eckberg@nps.gov](mailto:Scott_Eckberg@nps.gov).

## Friends of Nez Perce Battlefields

In May 2003, a series of conference calls ini-

tiated by superintendent of Big Hole National Battlefield Jon James led to formation of the 'Friends of Bear Paw, Big Hole & Canyon Creek Battlefields'.

Modeled after the Friends of Little Big Horn Battlefield, the organization exists to advance the preservation of the Bear Paw, Big Hole, and Canyon Creek battlefields. "Our organization was formed as a support group to these battle sites," says Robert Luppi, President of the group, "It is our plan to promote the history of these battles, with an eye toward balance and diversity in the views and stories told about them and their participants."

An interim board of directors has formed and met for the first time in January 2004. The group is currently pursuing 501(c)3 status as a nonprofit organization for tax purposes and is working toward signing an agreement with the National Park Service, the primary agency responsible for the management of the battlefields. For more information visit the group's new website at: [www.friendsnezpercebattlefields.org](http://www.friendsnezpercebattlefields.org).

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Nez Perce National Historical Park offers for all Americans an important perspective about our history as a people. It is not the view from the Mississippi River looking west; it is a view from a homeland looking out, witnessing the march of history and change, yet continuing today and tomorrow to commemorate and celebrate Nez Perce culture and traditions. It is a park about a people for all people.

### Nez Perce National Historical Park

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[www.nps.gov/nepe](http://www.nps.gov/nepe)

### Big Hole National Battlefield

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Wisdom, MT 59761  
(406) 689-3155  
[www.nps.gov/biho](http://www.nps.gov/biho)

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## Canoe Camp Update

Following public and agency review, the National Park Service announced in February a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the environmental assessment proposing its disposal of the Riverview Estates Manufactured Home Park. The assessment, a requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act, clears the way for disposal of the 1.8-acre tract, which was acquired as an uneconomic remnant accompanying NPS purchase of land adjoining the park's Canoe Camp site at Orofino in 2002. Riverview Estates will transition to private ownership, and continue operating as a senior citizens residential community.

In November NPS relocated two residences from the 1.5 -acre property it is retaining for site improvements. The park is preparing a second environmental assessment (EA) for structural demolition and construction of improved parking and restroom facilities. The removal of structures is proposed in the EA to occur in summer 2004. Pending funding, installation of new facilities is anticipated by the time of the exploration's 200th anniversary of its arrival in September 2005.

The environmental assessment is expected to be available for public review sometime this spring. To obtain a copy upon its release, contact park resource manager Jason Lyon at 208-843-2261 ext. 117 or [jason\\_lyon@nps.gov](mailto:jason_lyon@nps.gov).



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## Volunteers in Parks

### White Bird Battlefield

Park volunteer coordinator Alyse Cadez conducted an interpretive presentation at the White Bird Library in January, 2004. Participants included neighbors of the park's White Bird Battlefield site, who aid the NPS in patrolling the battlefield, stocking brochure boxes, and providing summer visitor contact at the battlefield overlook on US Highway 95.

As the largest site owned by the NPS within the Idaho Unit, the park is looking for individuals and groups interested in advancing battlefield preservation and maintenance under the auspices of the Volunteers-in-Park (VIP) program.

### Volunteer Day At Spalding

In partnership with the Unilever Corporation and Wal-Mart, Nez Perce National Historical Park is hosting a Volunteer Day at Spalding on June 5, 2004.

The park will address several beautification activities, including those particularly suited to youth organizations. A luncheon will be provided.

To learn more about these or other park volunteer opportunities, contact VIP coordinator Alyse Cadez at 208-843-2261 ext. 138 or [alyse\\_cadez@nps.gov](mailto:alyse_cadez@nps.gov).

### Big Hole Battlefield

Timothy Fisher coordinates volunteer projects at Big Hole and the park is always looking for volunteers through the summer months. Volunteers can work with visitors in the visitor center and out in the Battlefield. Also a number of maintenance projects and resource management activities in the park rely on volunteer assistance. For more information please call Tim at (406) 689-3155 or by e-mail at [Timothy\\_Fisher@nps.gov](mailto:Timothy_Fisher@nps.gov). For opportunities at Bear Paw Battlefield, please call Robert West at (406) 357-3130.