

# Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail

## *Historic and Administrative Context*



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## Foreword

The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail traverses a landscape of history and carries understanding to those who travel it. For thousands of years the Nez Perce, who call themselves Ni Mii Pu (The People), followed this trail across the mountains to visit friends and relatives on the plains, to trade and to hunt buffalo.

Then in 1877, it became a trail of sadness. More than 750 Nez Perce, mostly women, children and elderly, made a heroic yet futile flight seeking freedom and peace far from their homeland. They found only bloodshed and suffering as U.S. soldiers relentlessly pursued them.

Congress established the 1,170-mile Nez Perce route as a National Historic Trail in 1986 to ensure significant sites will be preserved for future generations. Since then many people in many states have joined together to preserve the trail and share its history. This document is a history of these efforts and of the events that brought people together to begin with. Support for this document came from various individuals. We want to thank all those present and former FS employees who granted us their time and expertise in developing this administrative history. We hope that this historic and administrative context will help current and future trail administrators, staff, and volunteers understand and appreciate the significance and development of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

*U.S. Forest Service*

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# Introduction

## Overview

Congress authorized the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT) in 1986 to commemorate the 1877 War and Flight of Nez Perce people. The trail, including associated sites and auto tours, crosses a mix of local, county, state, federal, and tribal jurisdictions and agencies in four Forest Service regions, across Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. It links some 33 sites associated with the 1877 War and Flight. These are managed by the Nez Perce National Historical Park (NEPE).

This historic and administrative context of the NPNHT is a summary of the trail's significance, its establishment, administrative evolution, and some of its current and future challenges. The NPNHT is a nationally significant cultural landmark that spans 1,170 miles across four states—from northeast Oregon and north-central Idaho through Montana and northwestern Wyoming. This historic corridor is a testimony to the diversity of the nation's rich cultural and natural heritage. Its designation resulted in eight auto tours.

The Nez Perce people's flight from their homeland is a story of courage—a story that gives both meaning and guidance to this study. Today's NPNHT administrator, governmental partners, tribes, volunteers, and non-governmental advocacy organizations are the standard bearers of a legacy that enriches us all (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## Organization

This document has been organized into five chapters. Chapter I: Historic Context and Significance tells the broader historic significance of the resource. This context is in no way a complete history of the Nez Perce people or the events leading up to and following the 1877 Nez Perce War and Flight. Its purpose is to provide those working on the NPNHT with a general sense of the trail's history. Chapter II: Administrative Context explores the national and local movements that led to the trail's initial recognition and development and the history of the trail's administration since its establishment just over 29 years ago in 1986. Chapter III: Partners, describes, very generally, the many federal, state, local, tribal, and private partners who assist the NPNHT administration with trail management. Finally, Chapter IV: Conclusions and Future outlines some of the ongoing challenges faced by the NPNHT and some important future goals. Appendix A: Trail Description and Associated Features, provides a segment-by-segment description of the trail and the associated historic events that make respective portions of the trail significant. It also explores the many other historic trails directly associated with the NPNHT.



Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail  
 Historic and Administrative Context

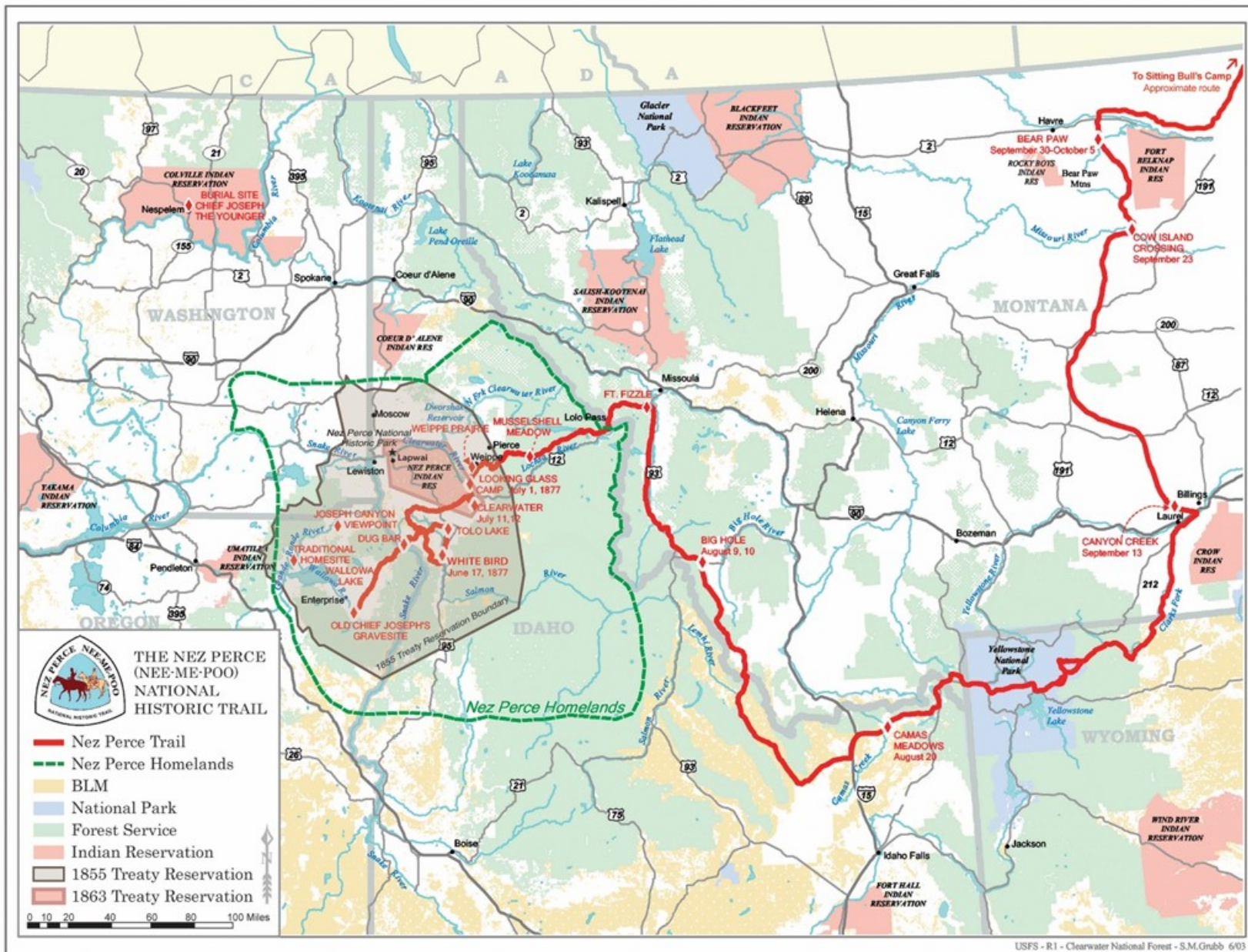


Figure 1. The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail location map



## Chapter 1: Historic Context and Significance



Figure 2. Canyon Creek near Molt, Montana (USDA Forest Service-Roger Peterson)

## Overview

There are few stories of the American West that capture the heart and imagination more than the flight of the Nez Perce in 1877. For 106 days, the Nez Perce overcame tremendous hardship and heartbreak as 800 or so men, women, and children traveled nearly 1,200 miles in an attempt to escape pursuing military forces with orders to place the Nez Perce onto a new, and much smaller, reservation. From White Bird Canyon in western Idaho County to the wind-blown plains of northcentral Montana, the Nez Perce outran, out-foxed, and in most cases, out-fought a well-armed and far larger military contingency. All the while they moved swiftly and deftly across a vast, rugged, and sometimes treacherous landscape. Today, the heroic yet tragic story of the Nez Perce flight is commemorated in the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT) (Brown 1971). But the story of the Nez Perce does not begin and end with the 1877 War.

According to Nez Perce legend...

There was once a monster which lived in the valley of the Clearwater River near Kamiah. This beast devoured all the animals that lived in the country for miles around and became such a menace that Coyote, that clever hero of many an Indian myth, decided it must be killed. Arming himself with a flint knife, he jumped down the animal's throat and stabbed it in the heart. Then he cut the body up into pieces and from them fashioned tribes of Indians, which he sent to occupy the mountains and plains round about. Finally, he discovered that he did not have a tribe for the beautiful valley in which the monster had lived, so he squeezed a few drops of blood from the heart and from this made the Nez Perce. Thus from the lifeblood of this strange animal came a tribe having many of the most admirable qualities possessed by human beings (Brown 1971).

And so it was that Coyote created the Niimípuu ... "the real people," though they also call themselves Ni Mii Pu ("The People") or Tsoop-Nit-Pa-Loo ("The Walking Out People"). From their earliest days, the Nez Perce lived within a vast homeland covering more than twenty-five thousand square miles of the inland Pacific Northwest located in northeastern Oregon, southeastern Washington, and north central Idaho. Anthropologists call this the Plateau cultural area of the Northwest. It is a land of geographical diversity covering three geological provinces: the northwestern Columbia Plateau region, the Rocky Mountains (including the Bitterroot Mountains) to the east, and the Blue Mountains province running north and south across northeastern Oregon. These rugged mountains pour melting snow and rain into several major rivers, including the Grande Ronde, Salmon, and Clearwater. These in turn empty into the Snake River that then merges with the Columbia River and together flow westward to the Pacific Ocean (West 2009).

## Pre-Contact Period

Exactly when the Nez Perce first arrived in their traditional homeland is uncertain. One theory suggests that people speaking a Macro-Penutian dialect migrated southward from Alaska approximately 10,000 years ago and settled on the western side of the Rocky Mountains. Eventually, they encountered other migratory travelers in the mountainous region north of the Great Basin and formed small groups or family units, some of which drifted towards present-day Nez Perce country. These nomadic groups lived among the canyons, plateaus, and mountains of this region 10,000-11,000 years ago. Using stemmed lanceolate spear points they hunted deer, elk, antelope, small mammals, and birds, while numerous rivers and streams provided fish, turtles, frogs, mussels, and other aquatic fare. From the rich soil they harvested roots, berries, and an assortment of wild foods that sustained them through winter months when fish and game were less attainable. Archaeological evidence points to human presence in the lower Snake River Valley region of the Nez Perce homeland dating back 10,000 to 11,000 plus years, while artifacts such as combs, woven grasses and spear points indicate that native people used caves and rock shelters 3,000 to

4,000 years ago (Josephy 2007 and Josephy 1965). New excavations will undoubtedly refine these dates; however, it should be noted that Nez Perce people believe they were always in this area.

The Nez Perce and other speakers of the Penutian language stem from one of the oldest known language groups in the United States. From this parent stock various languages developed, including the Sahaptin dialect spoken by the Nez Perce, Cayuse, Umatilla, Walla Walla and Yakama, and the Salish dialect of the Flathead and Spokane tribes. Inter-marriage and social interaction between these groups helped the Nez Perce become fluent in several dialects and allowed them to assimilate a variety of tribal traditions, including a belief in naturalistic spiritualism (West 2009).

For the Nez Perce and many Native American peoples, spiritualism found its expression in the form of animism—the belief that everything in nature, not just humans, had a spirit. And these spirits could help guide and influence a person’s life for good or for bad through dreams, visions or real-life events. The Nez Perce called this spirit a *wéeyekin* and it protected an individual throughout his or her life based on its particular powers and inclination. A hunter, for example, could summon his *wéeyekin* to protect him during a hunt or give him access to wild game. Women, too, had a *wéeyekin* that guided them in the same way and with the same power as a man’s. Both good and bad could come from one’s relationship with their personal *wéeyekin* and its powers were deeply respected (Josephy 1965).

The Nez Perce organized their societies into bands, relatively autonomous communities each led by a headman, who gave council and leadership as needed or requested, and spoke for his village only. Villages, as well as individuals, were free to make their own decisions and take action as they saw fit. Acquiescence through persuasion was the primary route to compliance but there were no reprimands or repercussions for those who disagreed with the consensus of a headman, shaman, elder, or even the entire village. In later years, missionaries and government officials challenged this “laissez-faire-style” approach to tribal management and arbitrarily assigned leadership roles to individuals within the tribe that the Nez Perce never wanted, understood, or recognized (Josephy 1965).

The Nez Perce experienced a monumental shift in their culture following their acquisition of the horse from the Shoshoni sometime between 1700 and 1730. The lush meadows and sheltered valleys of the Grand Ronde, Imnaha, and Wallowa valleys proved ideal for raising horses and the herds grew quickly. The Nez Perce earned a reputation for breeding and raising a strong and durable horse well adapted to the country in which they lived. These horses proved a valuable trade item sought by other tribes, fur traders, explorers, and later, white settlers (Josephy 1965).

The horse gave the Nez Perce the ability to travel greater distances in search of big game, fish, and edible plants and roots. Being nomadic, their quest for food took them west to fish for salmon and to trade with other Plateau tribes living near or along the Columbia River, including the Yakama, Umatilla, Palouse, and the river-dwelling Wanapom—all of whom spoke a Sahaptin dialect similar to their own. Closer to home, their trade network included the Shoshoni, Flathead, Kalispel, Coeur d’Alene, and Cayuse. Their sturdy horses also took them east across the Bitterroot Mountains to the plains of Montana to hunt bison, elk, bear, and other large game. There they traded and interacted with more distant tribes such as the Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara, as well as Cheyenne, Cree, Crow, Arapaho, and Utes. The Nez Perce brought with them dried fish, salmon oil, pressed cakes of huckleberries, and camas, as well as shells, woven mats, and stout bows and arrows. They traded for dried meat, buffalo robes, rawhide covers for their lodges, as well as beads and stone pipes from east of the plains gained through intertribal barter. But for the Nez Perce, the single most sought-after trade items were guns, which they first acquired through trade with the Hidatsa prior to Lewis and Clark’s arrival. Because the balance of power among tribes favored those who possessed guns and ammunition, the Nez Perce began to seek trade with those they knew had firearms—the whites living to the east (Josephy 1965).

No doubt the Nez Perce had knowledge of European-Americans prior to the arrival of the Lewis and Clark expedition in the fall of 1805, but this was their first face-to-face encounter. Initially wary, the Nez Perce welcomed the hungry and bedraggled explorers, fed them, traded horses for guns and ammunition, helped them prepare for their journey to the coast, and were pleased when the captains' talked of opening trading posts across the West. Though their contact with Lewis and Clark had little immediate impact upon the Nez Perce, a burgeoning fur trade followed in the expedition's wake (West 2009).

## Early Contact Period 1805 to 1847

The Nez Perce first learned of Christianity through their interaction with white fur traders. Trappers and traders ventured into Nez Perce country within a few years after the arrival of Lewis and Clark in 1805. While their brief interaction with Lewis and Clark had little immediate impact upon the Nez Perce, the mountain men who followed had a larger impact. These rugged entrepreneurs served as the spear point for large-scale multinational enterprises such as the American Fur Company, the British North West Company, and the Hudson's Bay Company, all of whom were pushing deep into the mountains and river valleys of the West. Trappers brought with them rifles, black powder, ammunition, knives, blankets, metal pots, glass beads, and other goods that the Nez Perce wanted and were eager to trade for, particularly weapons. Furthermore some carried with them a Bible, what the Nez Perce called the "white man's book," that told of the power of a one true God. The Nez Perce drew a connection between the white man's possession of the goods they wanted and the spiritual world of the Bible. They clearly understood that supernatural relations (*wéeyekin*) were tied directly to worldly success or failure, so embracing certain aspects of Christianity could compliment, but not replace, their own animistic beliefs (West 2009 and Josephy 1965).

In addition, the Nez Perce hoped that by seeking out a teacher they could open better trade relations with the Americans beyond what had been primarily a British connection through the Hudson Bay Company and a few individual trappers and traders from the north. They felt they could improve their trading position by dealing with the Americans rather than the British, who were losing power in the Northwest, and thereby gain access to their vast wealth of goods, including rifles and ammunition needed to protect themselves from neighboring tribes (Josephy 1965).

In 1831, the Nez Perce sent four young men to St. Louis to find a teacher that would return with them to their homeland, teach them to unlock the power of the Bible, and help open up trade relations. Among the first people they met was famed explorer William Clark, now serving as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Without a translator to assist them, the meeting between Clark and the Nez Perce proved challenging. The Nez Perce did not speak English and it is believed that a good deal of important information was not communicated. What came across to those with whom the Nez Perce met, and what evangelical publications later reported, was that these "four wise men from the west" had journeyed a great distance seeking God's salvation, with no mention of trade prospects. The results of this misunderstanding came to have a profound effect on the Nez Perce and other Plateau tribes (Haines 1972 and Josephy 1965).

The story of the Nez Perce quest for salvation spread east, most notably among religious groups in upstate New York where the Second Great Awakening was reaching its fevered peak. From this movement came missionaries who saw their role in society as that of purifying the world through the individuals to whom they could bring salvation. The role of the missionary was not simply to convert souls to Christianity but to make productive citizens of the Indians by stripping them of their native customs and turning them into agrarian settlers—an approach fully supported by the U.S. government (Josephy 1965).

## Missionary Period 1836 to 1849

Five years after the Nez Perce mission to St. Louis, two Presbyterians ministers named Marcus Whitman and Henry Spalding traveled west to deliver the salvation they believed the Nez Perce sought. Marcus Whitman and his wife, Narcissa, arrived at the Green River rendezvous in Wyoming in May of 1836 to find the Nez Perce and their neighbors, the Cayuse, friendly and eager to escort them back to their homelands. Accompanying the Whitman's was another missionary couple, Henry and Eliza Spalding. The missionaries received a raucous welcome by a large contingency of Nez Perce and Cayuse, among them a Nez Perce leader that Whitman baptized as Joseph, or Old Joseph. His son, Young Joseph, would later become one of the most recognized figures--throughout and after the 1877 War and Flight--of the Nez Perce people (Haines 1972).

The Whitman and Spalding families traveled west with the Nez Perce and Cayuse to Fort Walla Walla in Washington Territory, arriving there in September of 1836. Throughout the long journey from New York, tensions festered between the two couples and it culminated in the decision to establish separate missions, in part to better serve both the Cayuse and the Nez Perce. Marcus and Narcissa settled among the Cayuse just west of Fort Walla Walla at a place called Wailatpu. Meanwhile, Henry and Eliza followed the Nez Perce up the Clearwater River from its junction with the Snake River to a site along Lapwai Creek. There, in the bottom of a rocky canyon, they built a mission that today stands only a short distance from the headquarters of Nez Perce National Historical Park (Josephy 2007).

The impacts of the missionary period upon the Nez Perce and other Plateau tribes proved in many ways detrimental. In his effort to convert the Indians to farmers and faithful servants of God, Marcus Whitman also helped set in motion a vast migration of white settlers. The first surge pushed westward by the hundreds along with nearly five thousand head of cattle and horses. Whitman led the settlers as far as Ft. Walla Walla, from which point most made their way to Oregon. The event proved significant, as the first wagon train ever to complete the arduous journey travelled along what became the Oregon Trail. Their success opened the door for thousands of immigrants to push westward in the search of a new beginning. Add to that the 1844 election of President James Polk, an ardent expansionist, and the Congressional establishment of the Territory of Oregon in 1848, sowed the seeds of Manifest Destiny thereby changing forever the West and the lives of the Indians who lived there (West 2009).

The arrival of so many outsiders disrupted the Nez Perce and Cayuse societies. The immigrants often carried small pox, measles, and scarlet fever, diseases to which the Plateau tribes had no natural immunity. Sickness spread quickly among them and many died. Living closest to the Oregon Trail, the Cayuse suffered the greatest impact from communicable disease while the Nez Perce, who lived further away, were not affected as severely (West 2009 and Haines 1972).

Within their new settlements, both Whitman and Spalding struggled to gain tribal acceptance of their religious teachings. The strict laws they established clearly favored the missionaries and white settlers and the agrarian lifestyle. A rift grew between the Nez Perce who embraced the teachings of the missionaries and those who did not. The power and prestige the Nez Perce hoped to gain from increased trade with the whites never fully materialized and most saw little improvement in their lives as a result of the missionaries' presence. Anger grew among the Nez Perce and Cayuse as travelers and settlers continued to encroach upon their lands. When false rumors spread among the Cayuse that Whitman and Spalding were infecting them with small pox in order to steal their land, a small group of Cayuse lashed out violently against the missionaries.

On the morning of November 29, 1847, several Cayuse came to Whitman's home and attacked, killing Marcus, his wife Narcissa, and a dozen others. They took another forty-six people hostage, including Spalding's daughter, Eliza. Other Cayuse set off in search of Spalding, who at the time was on his way to

Waiilatpu to see his daughter and meet with Whitman. Spalding got word of the attack and quickly returned to his family at Lapwai Creek. After losing his horse, and then his shoes, Whitman traveled ninety miles on foot, arriving at Lapwai five days later bleeding and nearly frozen. Concern that the local Nez Perce might also attack (and in fact a few were pillaging his home when he arrived) led Spalding to move himself and his family to a nearby settler's cabin to await help. The Spalding's finally left Lapwai under Nez Perce escort in late December and arrived at Fort Walla Walla on January 1, 1848, where they were reunited with daughter Eliza. Soon after, Spalding and his family left for Oregon, not to return to Lapwai until 1859. In the wake of the Whitman's deaths and Spalding's departure, the missions at Lapwai and Waiilatpu were closed, marking the end of the first Protestant ventures among the Plateau tribes (Joseph 2007 and Joseph 1965).

The attack at the Whitman mission had far reaching effects upon the Nez Perce and other Plateau tribes. It triggered a military response from outposts in Oregon that caused fear, anger, and anxiety among the local tribes who, unlike Indian tribes in the east, had yet to experience armed intervention from the U.S. military. The Oregon volunteers arrived at Waiilatpu and converted the mission to a military outpost before seeking the Cayuse responsible for the killings at the Whitman mission. When they learned that the Cayuse had spread out among the other tribes, the volunteers went after them, searching even the Nez Perce camps. For the first time in their lives, the Nez Perce experienced a military invasion of their homeland (Joseph 2007).

In the years that followed, tensions eased among the Nez Perce. Many now prospered through farming and the sale of livestock. Those who embraced Christianity held regular worship services, learned to read and write, and gained the favor of the Indian agents sent to oversee them. Others benefited from ongoing trade with travelers along the Oregon Trail (Joseph 2007).

## The Treaty of 1855

Tensions grew again as settlers moved on to Indian land they could not legally hold title to while Indian agents and government officials did little to stop them. When the Territory of Oregon was divided in 1853 to create the Territory of Washington, the U.S. government decided to remove Indians from their land to make room for white settlement. That effort began in May of 1855, when newly appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs and Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens, along with Joel Palmer, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Oregon Territory, invited the Nez Perce and other Plateau tribes to attend a council at Mill Creek, just six miles from the site of Marcus Whitman's old Waiilatpu mission near Walla Walla. Most were aware of Governor Stevens' ambitions and distrusted his motives, but the tribes reluctantly agreed and arrived in numbers totaling more than five thousand, with the Nez Perce making up half that number (West 2009).

Over the next twelve days, Stevens and Palmer harangued tribal leaders in an effort to convince them to concede large portions (or in some cases the entirety) of their homelands, and move on to a reservation. Once on a reservation, they told them, they'd be safe from further encroachment and potentially violent interaction with white settlers whose numbers Palmer assured were certain to increase "... like grasshoppers on the plains." Stevens initially proposed the creation of two reservations; one which would contain the Spokane, Wallawalla, Umatilla, Cayuse, and the Nez Perce. The second reservation, located in the Yakama country, consisted of land Stevens knew was unsuitable for cultivation and there he intended to place the remaining Plateau tribes. Not surprisingly, his plan met with hostile rejection by all parties and Stevens soon found himself negotiating three separate treaties: one with the Wallawalla, Cayuse and Umatilla, a second with the Palouse, Yakama and twelve smaller bands, and the third with the Nez Perce (Joseph 1965).



At the time, the various bands of Nez Perce had little to lose in signing the treaty because the treaty with Stevens left the boundaries of their homelands mostly intact. Still, the Nez Perce chiefs were skeptical of everything that Stevens promised. Among the few who supported the treaty was Chief Lawyer, a Christian Nez Perce schooled under Henry Spalding who strongly advocated tribal compliance with the demands of missionaries and government officials alike. As Lawyer told Colonel George Wright, all he wanted was “peace, plows, and schools.” (Manring 1912). Feeling he could rely on Lawyer’s support, Stevens chose to recognize him as the primary leader and sole voice of all the various bands of Nez Perce, though few other tribal members accepted him as such. The government’s assumption of Lawyer’s leadership role proved fateful to the Nez Perce in future negotiations and created a chasm between pro-treaty and anti-treaty, effectively Christian and non-Christian Nez Perce, that has never fully healed to this day (Joseph 2007).

In the end, Governor Stevens secured reluctant acceptance from the leaders of the Plateau tribes, including the Cayuse and Nez Perce, and together they signed the Walla Walla Treaty of 1855. In return, the tribes relinquished more than 31 million acres of land in exchange for the promise of cash, schools and teachers, lumber mills, a hospital, and other facilities—little of which ever materialized. The Nez Perce accepted a reservation 7.5 million acres in size. Although the treaty language made clear that the tribes had one year from the date of its ratification to withdraw from their lands, Stevens and Palmer immediately sent word to newspapers in Oregon and Washington Territories announcing that newly ceded lands were now open for settlement (Jopsephy 2007).

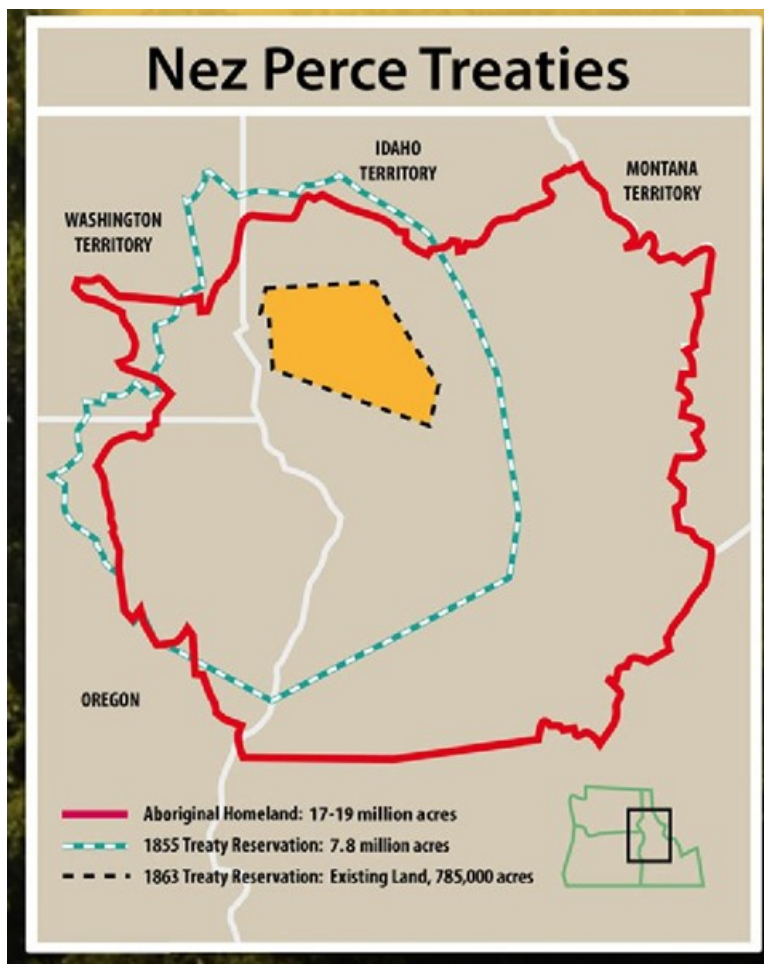


Figure 3. The Nez Perce Treaties location map

A land rush followed that triggered deadly clashes between white squatters and Indians. In one instance, troops called in to quell fighting between white settlers and the Wallawallas, Cayuse, and Yakamas. Settlers retaliated by attacking a Cayuse and Wallawalla camp in Oregon's Grande Ronde Valley, killing old men, women, and children. Meanwhile, it took Congress until June of 1859 to finally ratify the treaty. And in that time, the discovery of gold deep within the rugged Nez Perce homeland brought dozens of prospectors to an area that, until then, had remained mostly untouched by outsiders. The Walla Walla Treaty of 1855 failed to protect the Indians who signed it and instead intensified the conflict between whites, Indians, and the government (Joseph 2007).

As miners and settlers continued pouring in, the treaty's inability to provide a secure reservation for the Nez Perce became obvious. The government failed in its promise to build homes, a hospital, and sawmills, or to make payment for lands purchased from the Indians. Provisions were slow to arrive and the few goods that did arrive fell pitifully short of what was promised and needed. One year, instead of tools, the Nez Perce received several yards of cloth, one blanket for every six people, and useless items that one agent called "gewgaws and trifles." (West 2009). Chiefs Old Joseph and Eagle-in-the-Light denounced the treaty, saying they'd been deceived by Governor Stevens and that Chief Lawyer acted illegally when he supported the treaty on behalf of all Nez Perce. By 1862, even Congress, now preoccupied with a U.S. Civil War, recognized the failings of the 1855 treaty and that all-out war with the Indians could erupt if the problems were not addressed. But rather than address the failures of the existing treaty, Congress instead appropriated \$50,000 to negotiate a new one.

## Treaty of 1863

The Nez Perce were summoned to attend a council at Lapwai on May 25, 1863. Of the sixteen hundred Nez Perce that arrived, none of the non-treaty bands, including Old Joseph, White Bird, or Toohoolhoolzote were in attendance when the council opened (Joseph 2007). The council convened under Calvin C. Hale, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Washington Territory, and two Indian Agents, Charles Hutchins and L.D. Howe. Hale selected as interpreters Robert "Doc" Newell and, ironically, former missionary Henry Spalding, both of whom were later replaced by Perrin Whitman, nephew of the late Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. The Nez Perce, all of them followers of Lawyer, arrived on May 22nd. Three days later, Hale opened the council by explaining that he had drawn a new reservation boundary that would be ten times smaller than the 1855 boundary and that all Nez Perce bands would live together on it. Tribal groups that lived outside of the new reservation boundary, which included Old Joseph's and several other Nez Perce bands, would have to relinquish their homelands and move to the smaller reservation where 20-acre lots would be available for settlement and farming. Hale would later boast to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. that he acquired almost seven million acres from the Nez Perce at a cost "not exceeding eight cents per acre" and left them with only 785,000 acres (Joseph 2007).

For Lawyer and his followers, accepting the new reservation had little impact since their lands already existed within its boundary. Because of that, Hale knew they would be more amenable to the new treaty and, because Hale considered the Nez Perce to be a single tribe with Chief Lawyer as their spokesman, persuading him and his followers to accept the treaty became his primary goal. But Lawyer balked at the idea of sharing his homeland with the non-treaty bands forced to move in with them, fearing imminent conflicts. An impasse ensued and Superintendent Hale and the treaty Nez Perce stepped away from the meeting for several days (Joseph 2007).

When the council resumed on June 3rd several of the non-treaty bands, including those of Old Joseph and White Bird, were now in attendance. Angered by what Lawyer had agreed to in their absence, they and the other chiefs had little to say to Hale, who urged their participation. Instead, during the night of June

4th-5th the fifty-three chiefs of both factions gathered together and talked on their own. In a manner described by Captain George Curry, who attended the meeting, as showing “dignified firmness and warmth” (West 2009), Lawyer and his followers made it clear they would accept the treaty while Old Joseph, White Bird, and the other non-treaty chiefs firmly indicated they would not (West 2009). A confidential Senate report later stated that “all the leading chiefs and head men of the friendly bands signed the treaty. None of the disaffected chiefs were present.” The one-sided nature of the 1863 treaty was succinctly captured by Captain Curry who said, “Although the treaty goes out to the world as the concurrent agreement of all the tribe, it is in reality nothing more than the agreement of Lawyer and his band... not a third part of the Nez Perce tribe.” (West 2009). According to Curry, the chiefs all shook hands and “declared the Nez Perce nation dissolved.” How a single “Nez Perce nation” that existed only in the eyes of the U.S. government could be dissolved, Curry did not explain. Regardless, the two groups vowed to remain friends but agreed that they were now two distinct tribes. The group that became known as the non-treaty Nez Perce consisted primarily of five distinct bands; Chief Joseph’s Wallowa band, the Alpowais band led by Chief Looking Glass (Elelimyete’ qenin’ [Wrapped in Wind]), the Lamatama band led by Chief White Bird, the Pikunan band led by Chief Toohoolhoolzote, and the Wawawai band living in two separate villages, one led by Hahtalekin and the other by Husishusis Kute. Most lived west and north of the Salmon River, while the Looking Glass band lived along the Clearwater River south of present-day Lewiston, Idaho (Joseph 2007).

The years of struggle between Christian and non-Christian, pro-white and anti-white, treaty and non-treaty factions brought about a very distinct division among one of the largest and most respected tribes in the Plateau region. In disgust, Old Joseph tore up his copy of the 1855 treaty, along with the Gospel of Matthew given to him by Henry Spalding following his baptism, and led his group home to the Wallowa Valley. The remaining non-treaty bands left the council as well. On June 9th, Chief Lawyer and his followers signed the 1863 treaty relinquishing all Nez Perce land outside of the new reservation and with that set the stage for the flashpoint that would launch the flight of the Nez Perce people in the spring of 1877 (West 2009).

In the decade that followed, the non-treaty Nez Perce struggled to hold on to their traditional homelands in the face of continued encroachment. Settlers considered the 1863 treaty binding upon all Nez Perce people, not just the treaty bands, and continued to lay claim to the lands. At that time, the Wallowa band was led by Young Joseph, or simply Joseph, who assumed that role following his father’s death in 1871. Joseph and his group, which included his brother, Ollokot, found themselves quickly losing ground within their own homeland despite an Executive Order signed by President Grant in 1873. The order set aside parts of the Grande Ronde, Imnaha, and Wallowa Valleys as grazing regions for exclusive use by the Joseph band on the pretext that they would give up their traditional lifestyle of migratory hunting and fishing to settle down and start farming. What the government really wanted was for the non-treaty band to relinquish their homeland and move on to the Lapwai reservation, but Joseph refused. He took strongly to heart his dying father’s words: “This country holds the bones of your father’s body. Never sell the bones of your father and your mother.” (Joseph 2007).

## **Non-treaty Nez Perce ordered to Reservation—1876 Council.**

Pressure on the Joseph band continued to build as more settlers arrived with herds of livestock and wagonloads of belongings. Despite the ongoing incursions, Joseph pledged his friendship while insisting the immigrants had no right to settle in his Wallowa country. John Monteith, the Indian agent assigned to the Nez Perce, agreed with Joseph but was torn between what Joseph demanded and what the 1863 treaty specified. By the fall of 1873, Monteith decided to support the relocation of the non-treaty Nez Perce to the Lapwai reservation and informed them of his decision. To quash any lingering hopes the Nez Perce might have of government support for their treaty rights, President Grant rescinded his Executive Order in

1875, effectively opening all non-treaty lands to homesteading, an act that further fueled tensions between settlers and the Nez Perce. The murder of Joseph's friend, Wilhautyah (Wind Blowing), in June of 1876 by two white settlers and their subsequent acquittal enraged many within Joseph's band. At about this same time, news arrived of the annihilation of General George Custer's 7th Cavalry at the hands of Sioux, Arapaho, and Cheyenne warriors near the Little Big Horn River in eastern Montana. With Custer's crushing defeat fresh in their minds, the threat of an Indian uprising in their midst forced the government to address the relocation of the non-treaty bands once and for all (Joseph 2007).

On November 13, 1876, a five person commission met with Joseph and other chiefs at the Lapwai agency to assess the situation and push for a resolution. General Oliver Otis Howard led the meeting. Howard, a Civil War veteran who had once expressed support for the Joseph band's claim to their homeland, now found himself applying pressure to the Nez Perce to accept the government's purchase of their lands and to move on to the Lapwai reservation. Again Joseph refused, arguing that this land was "sacred to his affections" and that selling it was incomprehensible. Howard remained equally resolute in the government's demand, and with the two men unable to compromise the meeting ended in failure after just one day. Facing yet another stalemate, the commission recommended that the Nez Perce be forced to sell and to relocate to the reservation "within a reasonable time." They presented their recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, who agreed, and the non-treaty bands were given an impossible deadline of April 1, 1877 to comply. As that deadline approached and then passed, Chief Joseph requested one more meeting with Howard in hopes of changing the General's mind to allow the Joseph band to retain their homeland. Mindful of Custer's failed attempt to force the Sioux on to a reservation, Howard agreed and on May 3rd he met with the non-treaty bands. Only this time instead of Chief Joseph serving as the primary voice of the non-treaty bands they chose Toohoolhoolzote, an able orator but uncompromising negotiator (West 2009).

If the previous meeting between Joseph and General Howard had been contentious, the meeting between Howard and Toohoolhoolzote almost came to blows. Over and over, Toohoolhoolzote spoke of the law of the earth and how he belonged to the land out of which he came; the land was his Earth Mother. Howard quickly tired of his refrain and told Toohoolhoolzote that he wanted to hear no more of it, but that he must "come to business at once." Neither man would compromise until finally, frustrated by Toohoolhoolzote's continuing defiance, Howard ordered him to be held in the guardhouse overnight. Released the following day, Toohoolhoolzote rejoined the meeting and reluctantly came to terms with the fact that General Howard's threat of military intervention gave he and the other chiefs little choice but to return home, gather their belongings, and move to the Lapwai reservation by the new June 15th deadline (West 2009).

Before leaving Lapwai, the non-treaty chiefs spent several days choosing parcels of land within the reservation on which to live. But despite a seeming acceptance of Howard's demands, the grief, despair, and rage felt by many of the non-treaty Nez Perce simmered and soon a fight with the military that the chiefs had always hoped to avoid broke out (West 2009).

For Joseph's Wallowa band, the task of moving themselves and their extensive herds of cattle and horses so early in the spring proved especially daunting. Livestock give birth at this time of year and their offspring needed time to gain strength and stamina ahead of such a difficult journey. Their stamina, and that of the Joseph band, was sorely tested as they crossed the Snake and Salmon Rivers, now swollen with spring runoff. Many head of livestock perished in the raging waters, along with a number of personal possessions, but no lives were lost. On June 2nd they reached an ancient council site set among the camas meadows called Tepahlewam (Split Rocks or Deep Cuts) near Tolo Lake, approximately six miles west of present-day Grangeville, Idaho. There they joined three other non-treaty bands led by White Bird, Hahtalekin, Husishusis Kute, and Toohoolhoolzote and prepared for the final leg of their journey to the

Lapwai reservation. The remaining non-treaty band, led by Chief Looking Glass, was still at their traditional camp located near the Clearwater River well to the northeast of Tolo Lake (Josephy 2007).

At this point, the five non-treaty bands totaled approximately six hundred, two-thirds of which were women, children, and elderly men, with perhaps two hundred warriors among them. On June 13th, White Bird's band held a tel-lik-leen, a parade-like ceremony in which the men rode horses around the camp and recounted their past triumphs in battle. Two young warriors named Wahlitits (Shore Crossing) and Sarpsis Ippilp (Red Top Moccasins) rode together on a horse at the end of the circling column in a position symbolizing protection from attack. At some point in the procession, Wahlitits was chastised for assuming such a position of bravery when he'd failed to avenge the death of his father, Eagle Robe, killed a few years earlier by a white man named Larry Ott (West 2009).

## The War Begins

Stung by the insult, Wahlitits, Sarpsis Ippilp, and another young warrior named Wetyetmas Wahyakt (Swan Necklace) set out the next morning to find Ott, who lived to the north along the Salmon River. Their search failed to locate Ott, but the three young warriors did find four other men known for their mistreatment of Indians and killed them. They also shot and wounded a storekeeper named Samuel Benedict, known to have killed an inebriated Nez Perce and cheated others at his store. As darkness fell, the warriors journeyed back towards the Tephalewam camp but stopped short, fearing their actions would draw the remaining Nez Perce into the fray. Instead, they sent Wetyetmas Wahyakt back to camp to break the news of the attacks and tell them that the other warriors intended to kill more settlers. Just as word of the attack spread throughout camp, a group of chiefs and elders were in council discussing whether or not to accede to Howard's demands and move on to the reservation or take up arms against the troops they knew would be sent to force their compliance. In the midst of their discussion a voice shouted to them from outside, "You poor people are talking for nothing! Three boys have already started war! They killed a white man on Salmon River and brought his horse to this camp. It is already war!" (McWhorter 1986).

The next morning sixteen warriors, most from White Bird's band, rode out to join those who initiated the attacks. Over a two day period they carried out assaults on whites living between the tiny settlement of White Bird and Slate Creek, located to the south along the Salmon River. Along the way they looted a store, burned a home, and killed several more settlers. They moved on to Camas Prairie where they set upon a roadhouse and a wagon team hauling supplies from Lewiston to Mount Idaho. In the end, the raids took the lives of eighteen whites and one Nez Perce warrior, and left six seriously wounded settlers (West 2009).

General Howard received word of attacks on June 15th, the day he expected to meet the non-treaty bands as they arrived at the reservation in Lapwai. The following morning, he ordered Captain David Perry to take troops from the First Cavalry, along with several treaty Nez Perce and citizen volunteers, to march south towards Grangeville and Mount Idaho to assess the situation. As they marched on they encountered dead horses, burned haystacks and homes, and a looted supply wagon with remnants of an empty whisky barrel lying about. They continued on and soon received word from locals that the Nez Perce, including Joseph's band, were now camped at the bottom of White Bird Canyon with the other non-treaty bands. Joseph had earlier moved his people to White Bird's camp for better protection and with the slim hope that military retaliation might be avoided. Fearing the Nez Perce might escape across the Salmon River, Perry gathered his troops and, along with ten more civilian volunteers, conducted an all-night march to reach White Bird Canyon at midnight. At around four a.m. on June 17th, Perry and his men descended the canyon and approached to within a half mile of the Nez Perce camp. But before they could get into position to attack, four Nez Perce lookouts spotted them and immediately sent a rider back to camp to warn of Perry's arrival (West 2009).

Word of an impending attack prompted Joseph, his brother, Ollokot, White Bird, and Toohoolhoolzote to seek a peace parley. They had little choice since most of the warriors were still effectively incapacitated from the whiskey they'd consumed after attacking the supply wagon several days earlier. Under a white flag the Nez Perce, led by a warrior named Vicious Weasel, rode out to meet the approaching soldiers. Exactly what happened next has been contested by both sides, but the most widely accepted story is that a civilian volunteer named Ad Chapman saw the approaching Nez Perce and opened fire. With the first shots fired between the non-treaty Nez Perce and U.S. military troops, the war between the U.S. Government and the Nez Perce people was launched (West 2009).

Following the opening shots, Captain Perry ordered the attack, but a series of missteps and miscalculations quickly turned the tide in favor of the vastly outnumbered Nez Perce. The Nez Perce were soon able to compromise Perry's flanks. In a last moment of desperation, Perry tried to rally his men to make a stand on the high ground. However, confused and suffering numerous casualties, Perry's order was misinterpreted as a general retreat. Sensing victory, Ollokot's mounted warriors pursued the retreating soldiers (West 2009).

By mid-morning, 34 U.S. Cavalry soldiers had been killed while only 3 non-treaty Nez Perce warriors had been wounded. Following battle, the warriors seized approximately 63 carbines, many pistols, and hundreds of rounds of ammunition from the defeated cavalry. These weapons greatly enhanced the Nez Perce arsenal for the remaining months of the war. The battle in White Bird Canyon was a lopsided victory for the Nez Perce. Outnumbered two to one and fighting uphill with inferior weapons, the Nez Perce still managed to win the first battle of the War (West 2009).

## The Flight

After receiving word of the cavalry's defeat, General Howard and a force of over 400 soldiers began their pursuit of the non-treaty bands. In the village of Clear Creek, Chief Looking Glass (Elelimyete' qenin' [Wrapped in Wind]) and his band had just awakened on the morning of July 1st when they saw troops approaching. Until this time they had maintained their neutrality in the escalating conflict between the non-treaty Nez Perce and the U.S. government. The soldiers opened fire on the village. Within a few days, Looking Glass joined the bands of Joseph, White Bird, Hahtalekin, Husishusis Kute, and Toohoolhoolzote. By July 11, General Howard surprised the Nez Perce and the Clearwater battle begins. The Nez Perce people quickly withdrew, crossed the Clearwater River, and camped at the Weippe Prairie.

From White Bird Canyon, the Nez Perce made a clockwise circle and headed east through the Clearwater country. They struggled over Lolo Pass and entered Montana Territory. Portions of this trail were so rugged and thick with trees that the pursuing soldiers reportedly found blood and horse hair stuck to broken branches. As they descended Lolo Creek and approached the Bitterroot Valley, the Nez Perce encountered a small, fortified breastworks hastily built by soldiers of the 7th Infantry to halt their advance. Hoping to avoid further bloodshed, several Nez Perce chiefs negotiated with Capt. Charles Rawn for passage, promising to harm no one if they were allowed to move on. Despite Capt. Rawn's refusal, the Nez Perce simply rode up and over a nearby ridge and bypassed the fortification, earning this site the inauspicious title of "Fort Fizzle."

As promised, the Nez Perce rode peacefully through the Bitterroot Valley, crossed the rugged Continental Divide near what is today called Gibbon Pass, and camped at a favorite site along the North Fork of Big Hole River. Believing they'd left the war behind them in Idaho, the Nez Perce rested, cut teepee poles, and cooked camas in preparation for their journey to the buffalo country of eastern Montana. Little did they know that Colonel John Gibbon and his 7th Infantry secretly approached their camp.



Gibbon's attack on the sleeping camp took place at dawn on August 9th. Despite suffering terrible casualties during the initial assault, the Nez Perce warriors rallied and soon had Gibbon and his men pinned down behind hastily dug rifle pits. They held the soldiers at bay for two days while the Nez Perce packed up their wounded and moved southward.

After leaving the battlefield, the Nez Perce pushed through the Big Hole and Horse Prairie valleys. They crossed the Continental Divide at Bannock Pass and traveled south through the Lemhi Valley, bordered east and west by 10,000 foot peaks of the Lemhi and Bitterroot Mountain ranges. They then entered the broad sagebrush plains of western Idaho. Here, amongst the sagebrush and black lava rock outcrops, the Nez Perce executed a pre-dawn raid on General Howard's camp. Intending to steal the army's horses, the warriors instead came away with most of the mule herd, a fact they did not realize until the sun rose. However, the plan worked to stall General Howard's pursuit for several days while he replaced his stolen pack train.

On August 23rd, the Nez Perce entered Yellowstone National Park, established only five years earlier. They captured and released several park visitors, including one who found himself guiding the Nez Perce through portions of the park they were unfamiliar with. They moved quickly along the Madison River, followed the Mary Mountain trail to the Hayden Valley, passed just north of Yellowstone Lake, and exited the park through Hoodoo Basin.

The final weeks of the Nez Perce flight found them crossing the rugged boundary where the mountains meet the plains north of Cody, Wyoming. As the Clarks Fork River led them northward, they passed just west of Billings, Montana and headed north. After failed attempts to seek refuge with the Crow Nation, the Nez Perce decided to try to reach safety in Canada. They hoped to reach Canada and find safety and asylum among Chief Sitting Bull's Sioux tribe. After crossing the mighty Missouri River, little stood between them and the Canadian border. They had traveled a distance of approximately 1,170 miles.

In the end, however, the Nez Perce were captured on a cold, snowy October morning near the banks of Snake Creek in the foothills of the Bear Paw Mountains just south of present day Chinook, Montana—and only forty miles from the border. They believed that they had shaken off Howard and their pursuers, but they were unaware that the recently-promoted Brigadier General Nelson A. Miles, in command of the newly created District of the Yellowstone, had been dispatched from the Tongue River Cantonment (Fort Keogh near Miles City, MT) to find and intercept them. Miles led a combined force made up of units of the 5th Infantry, the 2nd Cavalry, and the deceased George Armstrong Custer's former command, the 7th Cavalry. Accompanying the troops were Lakota and Cheyenne Indian Scouts, many of whom had fought against the Army only a year prior during the Sioux War (Malone et al. 1991).

The attack by General Miles on the morning of September 30th turned into a six-day siege that ended with the arrival of General Howard's forces on October 5th. With most of the chiefs and many warriors dead, Chief Joseph surrendered his rifle to Miles and Howard and reportedly uttered the now famous words "From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."

Approximately 250 Nez Perce warriors, 500 women and children, and more than 2000 horses and other livestock, participated in the fighting retreat. Throughout the flight, the relatively-small number of Nez Perce fighters, defeated or held at bay a much larger Army in several battles (West 2009). In total, the Nez Perce engaged 2,000 American soldiers of different military units, as well as their Indian auxiliaries. They fought eighteen engagements, including four major battles and at least four fiercely contested skirmishes.

## Aftermath

The story of the Nez Perce flight for freedom does not end in Montana, though. Chief Joseph and about two-thirds of the non-treaty Nez Perce surrendered to the U.S. Army with the promise that they would be sent to the Lapwai Reservation. However, this did not happen. Four hundred and eighteen Nez Perce were taken as prisoners (Greene 2000), sent to Fort Leavenworth, and then on to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Chief White Bird and the remaining third of the Nez Perce succeeded in reaching Canada where they sought refuge at Fort Walsh. On October 22, 1877, Canadian mounted police met at Sitting Bull's Sioux camp. The mounted police superintendent James Walsh counted 290 Nez Perce people, less than half of those who traveled the long trail (Ojibwa 2012, Wilfong 2006, and Joseph 1965).

Chief Joseph lived for 27 years after the war. Though he was not the leader of all the Nez Perce during their historic flight, the perception that he was the leader was held by the army, the media, and the American public. Joseph was an anchor for his people during and after their exile to Indian Territory. He traveled to the nation's capital on their behalf, and his positive image aided in the final determination to move his people back to the Northwest in 1885. That year, the survivors were allowed to return to the Northwest—some to Lapwai, Idaho, others with Chief Joseph to the Colville Indian Reservation in Washington, and still others to the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon. In 1897, Joseph journeyed again to Washington, D.C. to protest the opening of a substantial portion of the Colville reserve to whites. In August 1899, Joseph returned to visit his homeland in the Wallowa Valley for the first time since his banishment. Unable to purchase any property in the Wallowa Valley, however, he returned to Nespelem, Washington. Chief Joseph died on September 21, 1904 sitting in front of his tipi fire (Joseph 1965).

The current tribal lands comprise parts of four counties in northern Idaho, primarily in the Camas Prairie region. These counties include Nez Perce, Lewis, Idaho, and Clearwater. The total land area is 1,195.1 square miles. The reservation's population at the 2000 census was 17,959 residents (US Census Bureau 2000). Its largest community is the city of Orofino, near its northeast corner. Lapwai, is the seat of tribal government. The Nez Perce people remember, respect, and hold dear the route their elders and ancestors were forced to take during that summer of 1877. As Nez Perce descendent, Frank B. Andrews explains (USDA Forest Service 2016b):

We the surviving Nez Perces want to leave our hearts, memories and hallowed presence as a never-ending revelation to the story of the events of 1877. These trails will live in our hearts. We want to thank all who visit these sacred trails, that they will share our innermost feelings. Because their journey makes this an important time for the present, past, and future.

## Chapter 2: Administrative Context



Figure 4. Bears Paw Battle Commemoration 2010 (Joni Packard-Forest Service Northern Region)

## Early Efforts to Preserve America's Historic Sites

The establishment of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail (NPNHT) was part of a much larger national tradition to preserve, protect, and interpret the nation's most significant natural and cultural resources. America's effort to protect and commemorate its significant historic places and events dates back more than 150 years to a time when the Revolutionary War and the signing of the Declaration of Independence were still fresh in some people's minds. Early on, the effort to recognize, protect, and preserve historic sites took place under the aegis of private citizens and civic organizations.

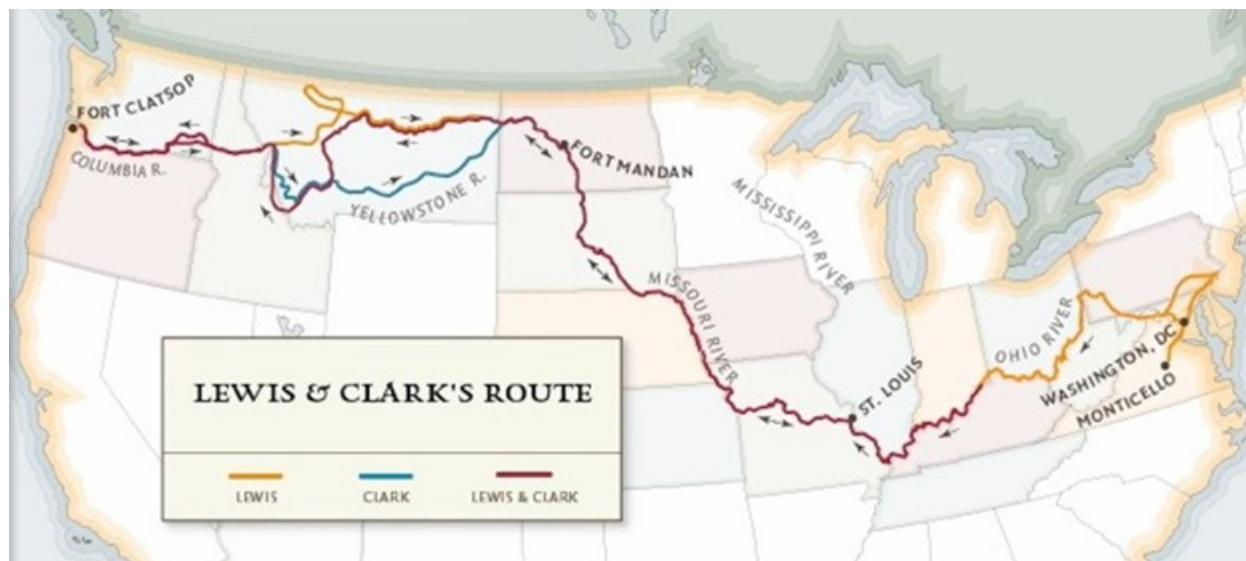


Figure 5. Lewis and Clark's route location map

The federal government began taking an active role in historic site preservation in the aftermath of the Civil War when the task of acquiring, preserving, and commemorating historically significant battlefields became the responsibility of the War Department. Then, in 1916, the newly created National Park Service took over those duties as part of its overall mission to conserve and protect specific natural and cultural resource sites on federally-managed lands throughout the United States. Meanwhile, the management of longer linear features such as scenic and recreational trails became the domain of the USDA Forest Service, established in 1905. Perhaps the most notable trail the Forest Service managed early on was the Lolo Trail. This ancient Indian route gained widespread notoriety after the Lewis and Clark Expedition used it to cross the Bitterroot Mountains in 1805 and 1806. It gained public attention again in 1877 when the non-treaty Nez Perce followed the Lolo Trail as they fled pursuing military forces during the war and flight of 1877. In 1907, the Bitter Root Forest Reserve was divided to create the Clearwater National Forest and the Lolo National Forest, both of which encompass the historic Lolo Trail (Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Interpretive Committee 2001).

### Lolo Trail

The Lolo Trail (ID/MT) is an ancient Native American crossing between the Bitterroot Valley in Montana and the Weippe Prairie in Idaho. The Nez Perce called it K'useyneisskit (The Trail to the Buffalo Country.) The Salish (Flathead) people called it Nap-Ta-Nee-Sha (The Trail to the Nez Perce.) When explorers Lewis and Clark encountered the Shoshones, Sacagawea's brother Chief Cameahwait suggested that an old member of his tribe would be able to guide the Corps over the Bitterroots. Lewis and Clark hired the man they called Old Toby. The Lolo Trail segment of their journey begins in the Bitterroot Valley.

On September 11, 1805, Lewis and Clark left the Bitterroot Valley and began one of the most difficult and demanding legs of their journey – the 120-mile trek across the Bitterroot Mountains on the Lolo Trail.

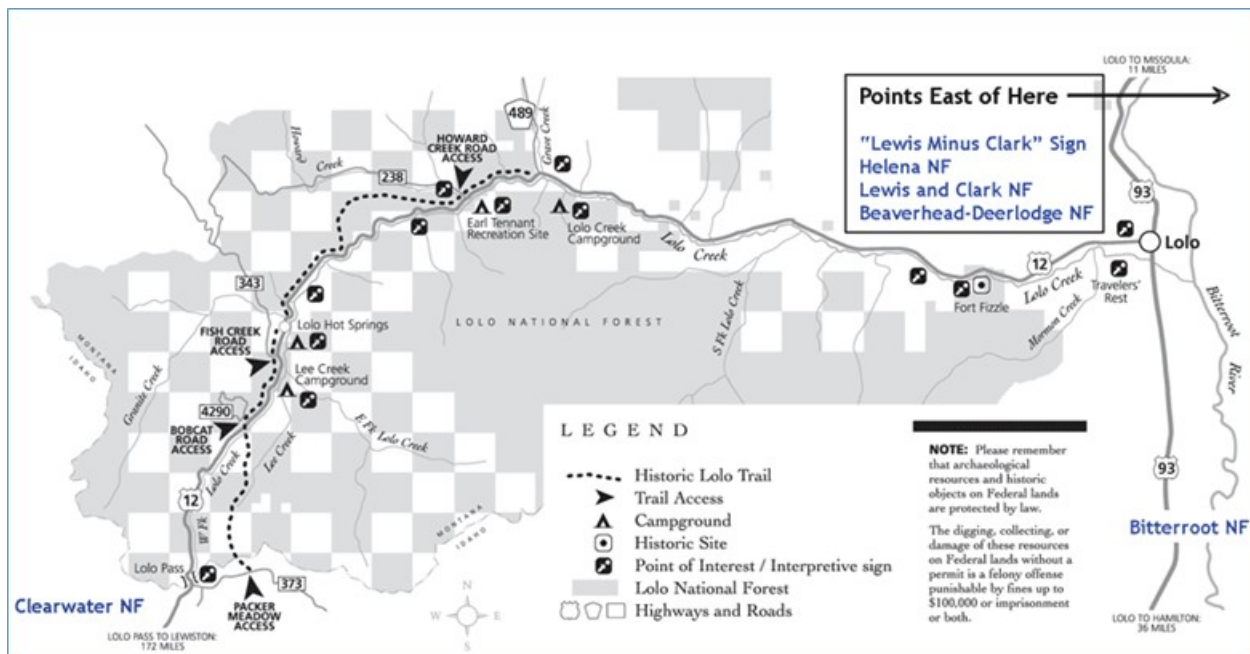


Figure 6. Map of The Lolo Trail ([http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5090633.htm](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5090633.htm))

This trail had been used for centuries by the Salish, Nez Perce, and other tribes to cross the mountains for trade and hunting. This corridor of interwoven trails was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960.

“Portions of the Lolo Trail, though located on National Forest System Lands, are also a designated site in the Nez Perce National Historical Park,” said Chris Jenkins, former Heritage Program Manager on the Clearwater National Forest. “There are three park sites within the Landmark: Musselshell Meadows, the Nez Perce portion of the Lolo Trail, and Lolo Pass. The Forest Service has management responsibility, the National Park Service has oversight responsibility, and the two agencies work in cooperation to manage the landmark.” [Jenkins, 2006: personal interview]

## National Historic Trails

One of the problems with the National Trails System Act (NTSA) was that it only provided a designation category for scenic and recreational trails; it did not include a category for historic trails, such as the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. Those involved recognized this shortcoming in the NTSA but they also knew that developing criteria for designating historic trails was complicated. Many felt historic trails needed to have national significance but also offer viable recreational opportunities in order to meet NTSA standards. In June of 1971, a debate took place at the first National Trails Symposium in Washington, D.C. on how best to formulate a category for national historic trails. Among the concerns expressed was the fact that the original routes of most historic trails had evolved over time to become modern transportation corridors passing through urban settings or lying beneath paved highways or railroad beds. In other cases, the right-of-way necessary to create historic trails would be difficult to obtain. And for most historic trails, the precise locations proved difficult to ascertain because they had become heavily segmented or, in many cases, completely obliterated. Finally, the location of historic routes did not always prove conducive to recreational use or hold significant scenic value. The issue of how best to deal with historic trails continued to be debated for the next several years (Elkinton et al. 2008).



The desire to establish historic trails was nothing new. Pioneer Ezra Meeker, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Lewis-Clark Tourway Association all advocated for recognition and protection of routes they deemed important to the nation's history. The idea surfaced again as a primary topic of discussion at the 1971 National Trails Symposium in Washington, D.C. While many saw the need for recognizing historic trails, the details of how to fit them into the existing national trails legislation proved difficult. A main sticking point was that historic trails did not always lend themselves to recreational uses or scenic wonderment. Routes of such trails stretched over vast distances, which today's NPNHT is a good example. Many segments of these historic routes proved difficult to locate, verify, and designate. Many, like today's NPNHT, retained little lasting evidence of passing and many segments of their routes had been lost or obliterated by humans or other natural processes. Therefore, historic interpretation and appreciation, rather than basic recreation or unparalleled scenery, are the hallmark of historic trails. For these and other reasons, it became clear that historic trails required a separate designation within the national trail system (USDA 1990).

The excitement over America's bicentennial celebration in 1976 helped bring greater attention to, and appreciation of, the nation's historic places and events. Across the country cities, counties, and states looked for ways to add their stories to the diverse tapestry of America's 200-year history. Recognizing and researching historic trails provided excellent opportunities to connect people, places, and events. During the years leading up to and beyond the Bicentennial, several nationally recognized trails were authorized for feasibility studies, including the Nee-Me-Poo Trail in 1976, the Oregon Trail in 1977, and the Mormon Pioneer Trail in 1978 (Elkinton et al. 2008).

President Jimmy Carter provided additional momentum for the designation of a national historic trails category during a speech before Congress in May of 1977, in which he noted that in the nine years since the NTSA was signed into law only two trails, the Appalachian and Pacific Crest, had thus far been added to the National Trails System. Carter told Congress that he planned to submit legislation adding three new trails to the list – the Continental Divide, North Country, and Potomac Heritage Trails, and promised he would soon present legislation establishing a new category for national historic trails (Elkinton et al. 2008).

President Carter's promise came to fruition in 1978 when he signed the National Parks and Recreational Land Act (P.L. 65-625), which included an amendment to the National Trails System Act designating a National Historic Trails (NHT) category. The act further required the Secretary charged with the administration of each trail to establish an advisory council and to submit plans to the House and Senate's respective committees. That year, four National Historic Trails were established: Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, Lewis and Clark, and Iditarod. And in October of that year, congress authorized the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) Trail Study, a cooperative feasibility study by the National Park Service and the Forest Service for the purpose of determining whether the trail should be added to the National Trails System (see Appendix B) (Elkinton et al. 2008).

## Early Efforts to Commemorate the Nee-Me-Poo Trail

However, national efforts to establish NHTs throughout the U.S. sometimes obscure the equally significant efforts by local individuals and organizations to see that significant resources were provided their due recognition and treatment. Local efforts have been instrumental in the establishment of the NPNHT.

Efforts to recognize and commemorate the route of the 1877 War and Flight, and the historic sites located along its length began within a few years after the Nez Perce surrendered to General Howard and General Miles on October 5, 1877. In 1883, a granite monument was erected overlooking the Big Hole battlefield honoring the soldiers and civilian volunteers killed during their attack on the Nez Perce on August 9,



1877. Exactly who promoted the idea for a soldier's monument at the Big Hole battlefield is unknown, but it is speculated that Colonel John Gibbons, who led the attack on the Nez Perce camp on August 9th, may have first suggested a monument be placed to commemorate the members of his command killed on that day. Despite its imposing presence, the six-ton obelisk contained no mention of the dozens of Nez Perce men, women, and children who lost their lives in the attack by Colonel Gibbon's forces (Catton and Huber 1999).



**Figure 7. Soldiers monument at Big Hole Battlefield**

At another location, a commemoration of the final siege of the 1877 War and Flight took place at the Bear Paw Battlefield. In August of 1902, the *Havre Plaindealer* carried a story of an impending visit by a Colonel Maus who, as the Chief of Staff for General Nelson Miles, had been sent to “thoroughly acquaint himself with the location of the graves of the brave men who fell in the battle of the Bear Paw in the campaign against the Nez Perce Indians during the fall of 1877.” The article goes on to say that General Miles would arrive at Fort Assiniboine about September 1st and would pay a visit to the battlefield. However, there are no further accounts of that event ever taking place. While the article talks of honoring the fallen soldiers there is, yet again, no mention of the Nez Perce men, women, and children who died during the battle or those who escaped in its aftermath (Lewis, R.X. and G.W. Richardson 1907).

Interest in memorializing battle sites continued during the 1920s when Lucullus V. McWhorter placed a series of monuments at six sites associated with the Nez Perce War and Flight of 1877. Jason Lyons (2003), Nez Perce National Historic Park, writes:

McWhorter, sometimes accompanied by Nez Perce War survivors and the sculptor Alonzo Lewis, placed these monuments at Nez Perce sites across Idaho and Montana (Bear Paw Battlefield, Big Hole Battlefield, White Bird Battlefield, Looking Glass Camp at Clear Creek, Rains Encounter Site, and the Clearwater Battlefield) throughout the spring and summer of 1928.

The monuments were designed by a renowned sculptor of the time, Alonzo Victor Lewis from Seattle, Washington. The monuments were each composed of three individual pieces (shaft, bust, and plaque). The shaft is approximately seven feet tall and four inches on a side. It is a cast material made to look like sandstone with an orange to pink color. On top of the shaft was mounted a warrior bust wearing an eagle-feather headdress approximately 18 inches in height cast of the same material. At around six feet above the ground on the shaft, a brass plaque was placed with an inscription dedicating the monument. The text on the plaque reads: To the everlasting memory of the brave warriors Chief Joseph's Band who fought on these grounds in the Nez Perce War of 1877. Based on the visual observations of surviving components, it seems the shaft, bust, and plaque were transported to each site and then installed and assembled on-site.



**Figure 8. McWhorter Monument**

Lucullus V. McWhorter then published the book *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story* in 1940 that attempts to present the Nez Perce perspective of the events of 1877. In it, an aging warrior named Himíin Maqsmáqs, better known as Yellow Wolf, tells of how he took part in the war. In 1877, Yellow Wolf was a young man of 22. He was involved from the first encounter with the military at White Bird Creek in June to the final battle and Nez Perce surrender at Bear Paw in October. Wounded several times during various skirmishes along the way, Yellow Wolf fought hard at the final battle at Bear Paw before escaping to Canada with other survivors. He returned to the United States a year later, surrendered to authorities at Lapwai, and was sent to Oklahoma to join several hundred other Nez Perce captured at Bear Paw (Josephy 1965).

During their nearly thirty year friendship, Yellow Wolf shared his amazing story with McWhorter and together they retraced the route of the flight—where Yellow Wolf detailed the battles at Big Hole and Bear Paw and staked out locations where key events occurred. With the help of his friend and interpreter, 'iléXni 'éewteesin' also known as Many Wounds, Yellow Wolf's account offered the first insight into the 1877 War and Flight, the skirmishes, the surrender at Bear Paw, and exile to Oklahoma from the Indian point of view. Yellow Wolf died in 1935 and is buried on the Colville reservation at Nespelem, Washington near his old friend, Chief Joseph. His story recognizes and honors the effort, bravery, sacrifices, and accomplishments of the non-treaty Nez Perce during this most turbulent period of their long history (McWhorter 1986).

## Nez Perce National Historical Park

It was these early efforts at commemoration that eventually coalesced into the concept of a Nez Perce National Historical Park (NPNHP). The establishment of NPNHP resulted from the efforts of two diverse groups, each pursuing separate though parallel causes. In the early 1920s, a group of residents from the Clearwater Valley of Idaho sought to recognize their local history by commemorating and preserving the historic site of a mission and school built in 1838 by Protestant missionaries Henry and Eliza Spalding. A local pioneers association wanted the site of the Spalding mission preserved and wrote letters asking officials in Washington, D.C. for their help, though little appears to have come at that point. Then, in 1922, a state regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) named Mrs. James Babb gained

state-wide attention on behalf of the Spalding site when she stood in opposition to an Idaho State Highway Department plan to build a new bridge and approach road that would have decimated the mission site. She succeeded in having the construction plans altered to avoid the Spalding property and her passion for this site caught the attention of the Alice Whitman Chapter of the DAR, who threw their support behind the Spalding mission preservation concept. The efforts of the DAR to protect and commemorate the Spalding mission were finally recognized in 1936 when Idaho Governor C.C. Moore dedicated the home site and several acres surrounding it as Spalding State Park (Catton 1996).



**Figure 9. Mrs. Babb and unknown man standing at cabin (Image courtesy of National Park Service, Nez Perce National Historical Park, C7918)**

A key step in the movement towards creation of a national historical park came in 1953, when the DAR gathered local support and formed the Spalding Museum Foundation. The foundation lobbied Congress for money to build a museum and raised funds locally to purchase land to build it on, which was then donated to Spalding State Park. Just as importantly, the foundation coordinated the effort to collect and store artifacts and museum pieces that would one day become part of the collection held today at NPNHP (Catton 1996).

The development of Spalding State Park and the museum gained support from local booster organizations, such as the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce and Advance Idaho, a tourism promotion group. They saw the Park as a resource that could draw in tourists to share with them a piece of Idaho's rich history, as well as opportunities for recreational pursuits marketed under a brand name such as "Nez Perce Country" or "Nez Perce historic country." With that in mind, they reached out to the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho and together initiated an effort to establish a national historical park (Catton 1996).

For the Nez Perce Tribe, the idea of a national historical park presented opportunities on several levels. It was a chance to create jobs on the Lapwai reservation, both at the park and through tourism. The subsequent increase in their economic base would allow them to buy back lands within the reservation owned by non-Indians and restore tribal ownership. And a park could provide a showcase for Nez Perce

to share their rich heritage and history with visitors while strengthening cultural roots within the tribe—including the preservation of their native language (Catton 1996).

Money for tourism development on the Lapwai reservation came in part from three separate cash settlements received through the Indian Claims Commission in the late 1950s and early 1960s totaling \$10 million dollars. Following the settlements, a major issue arose within the tribe as to how it should be used. Some wanted the money apportioned to all tribal members while other wanted to make discretionary use of the funds for long term economic development. Initially, cash payments went out to tribal members in the amount of \$1400 each but the economic benefits as a whole proved to be short-lived for the tribe (Catton 1996).

To better manage their settlement money and promote long-term economic growth, the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) established the Nez Perce Tribal Development Advisory Committee (NPTDAC) in 1961. NPTEC also saw an opportunity to improve economic conditions on the reservation by marketing “Nez Perce Country” as a historical artifact. With that in mind, NPTEC Chairman Richard Halfmoon looked to the National Park Service for technical assistance. Meetings between the Nez Perce and the NPS resulted in development of a possible project list that included construction of a museum, a historic Nez Perce village, western-style fort with stores for selling Nez Perce arts and crafts, an amphitheater for performing dances, ceremonies and other customs, and a community center for tribal meetings and other activities. They hoped to capitalize on traffic along U.S. Hwy. 95 between Boise and Lewiston and State Route 9, once a gravel road that became U.S. Hwy 12 stretching the length of the Clearwater and Lochsa Rivers from Lewiston, Idaho to Lolo Pass. Known as the Lewis and Clark Highway this modern new highway runs parallel to the ancient Lolo Trail (Catton 1996).

The NPTDAC included Nez Perce and non-Indian members alike, which served to unite the non-Indian preservation movement that created Spalding State Park with the Nez Perce Tribe who sought tourism development and job growth on the reservation. Together the committee worked towards building consensus among tribal and government officials, as well as the general public, which in turn, led to a feasibility study and set in motion the creation of NPNHP (Catton 1996).

A feasibility study drafted in 1963 suggested that the completion of the Lewis and Clark Highway justified the tribe’s investment in the idea of a “tourist and historical facilities program” and identified a joint commission of Indian and non-Indian area residents as the best way to accomplish this goal. The report went on to suggest three program components including 1) a museum or visitor center, 2) an amphitheater and Indian village, and 3) a tourist services complex. The study concluded that money for the construction and operation of a Nez Perce village would need to come from the tribe itself but that Federal funds could likely be secured to build and operate a museum or visitor center. The museum/visitor center concept was a primary component of the Park because it would serve not only to tell the story of Nez Perce Country but direct visitors to outlying historical sites as well. A museum would provide for safe storage and presentation of historical and ethnographic objects that were currently scattered at various locations throughout the area and in danger of being lost or damaged (Catton 1996).

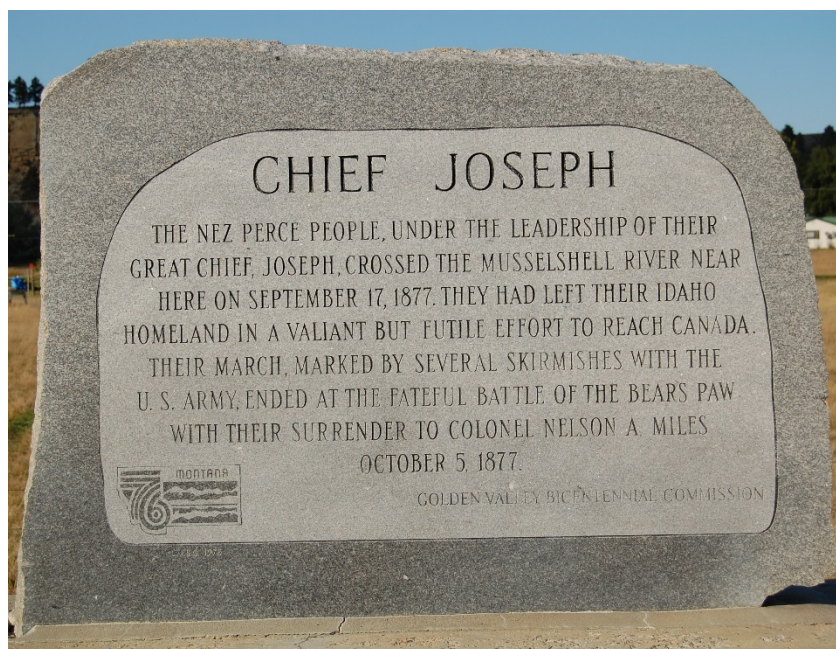
By the spring of 1963, the Department of the Interior began theorizing how the concept of Nez Perce Country could be brought into the national park system, where it could serve to interpret a number of distinct yet intertwining stories. Initially, the three primary themes involved the Lewis and Clark expedition, the mining frontier, and the 1877 War and Flight of the Nez Perce. Rather than representing a single historic site, this national park would encompass and interpret a series of historical sites scattered across Nez Perce Country. Working closely with the NPS, the NPTADC drafted a bill and submitted it to all four members of Idaho’s congressional delegation where it received overwhelming support. Following several hearings and clarifications, the bill to create Nez Perce National Historical Park (P.L. 89-19) was approved on May 15, 1965. The NPNHP originally focused on historic sites located within “Nez Perce

County,” meaning the Spalding mission and Nez Perce sites within Idaho. The Park subsequently added sites outside of Idaho in 1991, including Big Hole National Battlefield (1993) and Bear Paw National Battlefield in Montana (2005), among many others (Catton 1996).

As the Nez Perce National Historic Park was being developed, the Lolo Trail was included as a site in the park and designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1965. At this time, “the feasibility studies for the park recognized the historical significance of the Nez Perce Tribe’s traditional trail across the Bitterroot Range which Lewis and Clark followed in 1805 and 1806. Like other sites in the park, the Lolo Trail was not designated by boundaries; indeed, portions of it remained obscure.” (Catton 1996).

## Designation of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail 1975-1991

Over the years, individual Nez Perce conducted commemorations at various sites along the Nee-Me-Poo Trail. These are generally private affairs, sacred in nature, and little is spoken of them. Others are more public in nature, such as a commemorative event at Bears Paw battlefield that started as a simple pipe ceremony conducted each year by members of the Assiniboine Tribe from the Fort Belknap Reservation. Nez Perce tribal member and NPS employee, Otis Halfmoon, became aware of the pipe ceremony sometime around 1974 or 1975, though he believed it had been going on long before he learned of it. Otis recalls that a medicine man from Canada took part in the ceremony and food was left for the spirits. He also indicated that the Nez Perce themselves were supposedly aware of this pipe ceremony and began taking part in it as an annual event in 1976. One year later, in October 1977, a large-scale commemoration took place to mark the 100th anniversary of the conflict in which a large number of Nez Perce, along with state and local officials and riders from the Chief Joseph Appaloosa Trail Ride took part. That event continues to take place at the Bears Paw Battlefield each October (Halfmoon 2012).



**Figure 10. Monument to the Nez Perce at Ryegate, Montana**

Communities along the Nee-Me-Poo Trail sought to acknowledge their own unique connection to the Nez Perce story. One example comes from a letter sent by the Montana Bicentennial Administration to Montana Senator Mike Mansfield in April of 1976, informing him that the Golden Valley Bicentennial Committee would dedicate a monument in Ryegate, Montana denoting where the Nez Perce crossed the



Musselshell River in 1877 (Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library 1976). Today, ceremonies take place at Canyon Creek near Laurel, Montana, Big Hole National Battlefield, and at other locations along the length of the NPNHT (Olson 2014).

Eventually, most of the places where people were killed in battles and skirmishes became sites managed by NPNHP. The Joseph Band of the Colville reservation, however, pushed for recognition and protection of the entire trail and the sites found along it. One major contributor to the trail's initial recognition was the Chief Joseph Trail Ride. Beginning at Wallowa Lake, Oregon in 1965, the Chief Joseph trail ride event continues to this day. Every summer riders travel over a portion of the 1170-mile route of the 1877 War and Flight of the Nez Perce people. The entire length of the trail is covered every 13 years in 100-mile intervals. The annual trail rides brought attention to the story of the 1877 War and Flight and historic sites located along the trail. Nez Perce National Historic Park Superintendent Jack Williams discussed with the members of the Appaloosa Horse Club what requirements and criteria would need to be addressed in evaluating a trail's suitability for designation as a national historic trail. Williams explained to the members that for a study to be initiated "a request to the Secretary of the Interior by your Congressman recommending various outstanding segments of the Nez Perce War Trail is needed." (USDA Forest Service 2006) And in 1975, George Hatley approached Idaho Senators Frank Church and James McClure asking them to introduce legislation to conduct a feasibility study of the trail. They did so and, along with co-sponsorship from Senators from Montana, Wyoming, and Oregon, passed legislation in 1976. The Forest Service and the NPS began work of the feasibility study soon thereafter.

## **Feasibility Study**

Tom Kovalicky, the Nez Perce National Forest Supervisor, brought in Tom Spolar, Pacific Northwest Region, and Ray Thompson, Stevensville Ranger District, in 1978 to complete the feasibility study. The Forest Service and NPS worked together to prepare the study report. Beginning that year, under the direction of Thompson, the team held meetings with affected federal, state, and local government agencies, the Nez Perce Tribe (Lapwai), private groups and corporations, and interested individuals along the length of the four-state route. The team also conducted site visits along the newly-defined trail corridor from June 22 to November 17, 1978 to explore ideas and identify significant historic features. By October of 1978, the group produced and distributed a public information brochure to interested parties. Bob Neaves of the Forest Service Northern Region designed and drafted prototypes for future road and trail signage along the trail. Additionally, the NPS completed an initial appraisal of non-government trail sections for possible acquisition. From November 28 to December 7, 1978, the study team held public open-house meetings in Lewiston, Idaho, and in Missoula and Billings, Montana (USDA Forest Service 2006). The team completed the feasibility study in 1982 (Federal Register 1985).

The feasibility study report recommended that Congress designate the entire 1,170-mile route as the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail. It suggested that the trail be developed starting with components located on federally-administered lands, but left open the possibility of acquiring state and local lands and, at least initially, even private lands. The study also suggested that the trail follow as closely as possible the original historic route "diverging only as necessary to provide for safety, recreation appeal, and economic and political considerations, and to reduce environmental impacts." Perhaps most significantly, the study recommended that the Forest Service, with the largest federally-managed portion of the trail route, be granted the responsibility of overall trail administration (USDA Forest Service 2006).



The report also recommended:

- a maximum corridor width of 200 feet for components of the trail located on public lands
- a uniform set of standards to ensure that management practices are well defined and uniformly applied regarding trail development and management, the trail corridor, and general setting
- the trail remain a simple facility for the hiker and horseman
- the most minimal development standards be employed
- prohibition of motorized vehicles on the trail except as specifically recognized
- low key interpretive development with emphasis placed on self-guiding publications, trailhead orientation/information displays, and simple, sturdy on-trail devices
- a standardized system of signs to give identity and recognition to the trail
- close coordination with local, state, and federal agencies, Indian tribes, private organizations, and individuals along the trail route
- the development of a comprehensive management plan (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Initially, the feasibility study identified 464 miles of what it termed “high potential route segments” out of the entire 1,170 mile route. According to the report, high potential route segments exhibited the following five characteristics:

1. Trail integrity (original trail tread);
2. Historic integrity (presence of historic sites related to the Nez Perce flight or culture);
3. Significant recreation potential;
4. Scenic quality; and
5. Significant opportunities for interpretation.

These high potential route segments were located on federal, state, private, and local government lands. Eventually, all high potential route segments on local government and private lands were removed from the total leaving 319 miles of federal and state lands designated for development.

In addition to the feasibility study, the team prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and made it available for public comment in April of 1981. The purpose of the EA was to identify and evaluate any potential negative impacts associated with trail designation. The draft EA was mailed to a cross-section of stakeholders, including elected officials, federal and state representatives, tribal governments, recreational advocates, and other educational venues.

The EA concluded that trail designation would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and thus did not recommend the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). On July 1, 1985, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Peter C. Myers issued a NEPA Decision Notice recommending that congress designate the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) Trail as a national historic trail and a component of the National Trails System. The NEPA decision notice accepted the feasibility study’s recommendations with one modification to reduce costs to the government and potential conflicts with private landowners along the trail corridor: The EA recommended the development of only specific portions of the trail identified as high potential route segments located on federal lands or lands managed by the states (Federal Register 1985).

## Designation and Comprehensive Plan

On October 6, 1986, congress amended the National Trails System Act by designating the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) Trail as a component of the National Trails System. Congress further amended the act (Section 5a) which allowed for the future designation of high potential route segments outside federally administered lands. According to the amendment, the NPNHT would not acquire lands or interests outside the exterior boundaries of the federally administered area. However, states and local governments would be allowed to add to the trail if they met the following conditions: 1) the state or local governments already owned the land where the trail crossed or 2) the land had been previously purchased or donated by private citizens. The Secretary of Agriculture would then be allowed to designate these non-federal lands as trail segments upon application from the states or local governmental agencies provided that the federal government did not incur additional expense or management responsibility for these additional segments (US Congress 1986).

The NTSA further required the Secretary of Agriculture to establish an NPNHT Advisory Council (Council) to aid in the initial development of the trail. In 1989, Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter authorized the Advisory Council for a term not to exceed 10 years. The Council formed in May of that year. John Mumma, Forester for the Northern Region (Region 1), chaired the Council. Additional members included representatives from the Department of Interior (BLM and NPS), a representative appointed by the Governor of each state (Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Wyoming), members from the Nez Perce Tribe in Lapwai, Idaho and Nespelem, Washington, and public representatives from each of the four states. The Council made recommendations regarding which trail segments would be considered for formal addition to the NPNHT system and monitored the development and concerns of specific user groups and governmental entities on a state-by-state basis. The Council's most important task, however, was to assist with preparation of NPNHT Comprehensive Management Plan (CP). The CP's purpose was to establish and provide guidelines for planning, development, management, protection, and sensitive treatment of the NPNHT. The Council brought together multiple federal and state agencies, local governments, private organizations and citizens, and tribal officials to review and assist with the CP (USDA Forest Service 2006 and USDA Forest Service 1990). It was completed in 1990.

The principal federal agencies involved in the NPNHT's management, the Forest Service, NPS, Bureau of Reclamation, Federal Highways Administration, Army Corp of Engineers, and the BLM, approved the new CP in October of that year. The CP outlined management objectives and practices. It identified significant natural and cultural resources to be preserved, established a basis for cooperative agreement opportunities with state and local governments, and guided implementation of the eventual trail marking plan (USDA Forest Service 1990). It was developed as a tool to guide decisions made by each national forest, as well as other federal and state agencies along the trail. The plan granted each management unit along the NPNHT a large degree of operational independence with regard to management of each organization's respective segments. As a result, it was assumed that aspects of trail administration such as interpretive design would reflect varied program goals as opposed to a more uniform program. Considering the diversity of the federal presence along the trail, NPNHT management was designed to be decentralized (USDA Forest Service 2006).

However, the Forest Service Northern Region (Region 1) in Missoula retained responsibility for coordinating all the players and setting standards for trail development. Responsibilities included:

- coordinating with the federal and non-federal managing authorities in the preparation and approval of management plans for each segment
- assisting private organizations, federal, state, and local agencies with the development of agreements to facilitate management and development of the NPNHT

- reviewing and approving state applications to designate segments of trail that lie outside of federally administered areas
- consulting with the Council concerning matters relating to designation, marking, and administration of the trail
- participating in the NEPA process including review and commenting on proposed actions that may affect the trail
- ensuring compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA for all potential undertakings
- coordination of trail marking including providing material sources and guidance to national forests, other federal agencies, state governments, and local authorities
- providing technical assistance to cooperating management authorities in all aspects of trail planning, acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance
- monitoring the trail segments to ensure compliance with CP
- promoting and providing technical assistance with publication of reports, maps, brochures, and interpretive materials relating to the NPNHT (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Jim Dolan of the Northern Regional Office in Missoula, Montana served as the first coordinator for the trail and he asked Superintendent Roy Weaver to help him establish an advisory council for the trail. An organization meeting was held at the Nez Perce National Historic Park on February 11, 1987 and included a representative of the Nez Perce at the Colville Indian Reservation on the council (Catton 1996).

With the CP completed, the Council had fulfilled its charter. In October of 1990, Council members met in Chinook, Montana to begin the process of disbanding. While having fulfilled their mandate, many Council members felt that they could continue to contribute to trail development. Thus, at the same meeting, the former Council also began to organize the new Nez Perce Trail Foundation (Foundation) that would eventually take over the work of the Council as the NPNHT's primary non-federal advocacy group (USDA Forest Service 2006).

In May of 1991, the Foundation adopted bylaws and shortly thereafter the Council disbanded. The Foundation's purpose was to promote public knowledge and awareness of the historical, social, and cultural significance and heritage of the NPNHT and to stimulate public interest in the Nez Perce peoples' contributions to American history. The first meeting of the Foundation's Board of Directors took place in Missoula, Montana later that year. Its first officers included Harry Fritz (President), Richard L. Adams (Vice President), Sandi McFarland (Secretary), Leroy Anderson (Treasurer), and Cheryl Wilfong (Editor) (USDA Forest Service 2006). It gained nonprofit status in 1994.

## **Beginnings of Interpretation 1991-2002**

With the CP in place, the Forest Service began developing their organizational structure to meet the requirements of trail management. Michael R. Beckes, Northern Region Archeologist was the first NPNHT Coordinator/Administrator—a role he fulfilled amidst his other duties. Initially, Beckes focused his efforts on the July 19, 1991 NPNHT Dedication Ceremony that was held at Packer Meadows, just south of Lolo Pass in Idaho. The ceremony included a festival where hundreds of trail supporters came together for the celebration which included a prayer pipe ceremony conducted the Nez Perce Tribal spiritual leader, Horace Axtell and attended by many descendants of Chief Joseph, Looking Glass, Five Wounds, and Many Wounds. The ceremony attracted not only many Nez Perce tribal bands, but also leaders and representatives from other tribes including the Chief Joseph Band of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation (USDA Forest Service 2006 and USDA Forest Service NPNHT Misc. files).



**Figure 11. Michael R. Beckes, the first NPNHT Coordinator/Administrator**

Throughout his tenure as NPNHT Coordinator, Beckes and the Forest Service focused on the initial interpretive development of the trail to make the resource more visible to the public. In the winter of 1991, a planning meeting took place in Bozeman, Montana to develop strategies for NPNHT interpretation. The NPNHT hired the Bozeman planning firm, Charrette Collaborative to facilitate the session and provide the atmosphere necessary to generate new ideas. Those involved in the two-day meeting included members of the Nez Perce Tribe, the Joseph Band of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Foundation, federal, state, and local agencies, scholars, and private citizens. Group members explored possible contextual themes, sites to interpret, and methods of interpretation for media such as signs, exhibits, and publications (USDA Forest Service 1999). In 1992, with a new interpretive strategy in place, staff from the Forest Service and BLM began the process of marking and mapping High Potential Route Segments on public lands. In 1993, the Forest Service completed the first version of the NPNHT video *Landscape of History* and distributed the video to various agencies, schools, and visitor centers to stimulate interest in preserving the trail and its many associated sites. Interpretive Specialist, Keith Thurlkill and Forest Service videographer Gene Colling were instrumental in moving this production forward. Multiple revisions of this film followed, the latest produced in 2004 (USDA Forest Service NPNHT Newsletters and Progress Reports from 1993-2010).

However, with rapidly expanding trail development and interpretive planning duties, Beckes soon realized that he would need a dedicated team of professionals to help with implementation. In 1995, the Forest Service and the Park Service jointly funded a “core team” of three individuals to address projects of concern to both agencies and implement the interpretive plan. Without the initial funding of \$200,000.00 from the Park Service, which was matched by the Lolo National Forest, the core team could not have happened. The core team included Mary Horstman (Heritage Program Manager, Lolo National Forest), Sandi McFarland (Clearwater National Forest Archaeologist), and Dan Gard (University of Montana graduate student in historical archaeology). The team worked under the direction of Beckes and Region 1 interpretive program leader, Keith Thurlkill. The core team designated and created signage and two brochures for auto routes on existing roads paralleling the trail segments, an annotated bibliography of materials, books, articles, and documents related to Nez Perce culture and history, facilitated agreements with the states of Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming regarding the development of the NPNHT auto tour route, redesigned and reprinted the NPNHT for-sale map, and much more (Drake 1995 and USDA Forest Service 2006).



Figure 12. Examples of early auto tour covers

Over the next few years, the core team conducted research for an NPNHT auto tour brochure *titled Flight of the Nez Perce through the Big Hole, Horse Prairie and Lemhi Valleys - 1877*. The team also produced NPNHT highway signs, and with the cooperation of state highway departments and county commissioners in the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana, nearly 1,700 miles of federal, state, and county roads were designated in 1995 as the Nez Perce National Historic Trail Auto Route. The route roughly paralleled the course traveled by Nez Perce bands in 1877, beginning near Wallowa Lake, Oregon and ending at Bears Paw Battlefield near Chinook, Montana. The auto route consisted of three-season, all-weather roadways ranging from high-standard gravel segments in Idaho's Fremont and Clark Counties, to portions of Interstates 15 & 90 in Montana (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Perhaps one of the most significant activities conducted during this time was the planning and coordination of the first NPNHT Symposium scheduled for October 16-19, 1995 in Lewiston, Idaho. Sandi McFarland, then archaeologist for the Clearwater National Forest, coordinated the event which hosted 150 people. A diverse group of scholars, agency professionals, and tribal members presented papers and participated in panel discussions focused on research, management, logo design, and trail interpretation. Steve Elkinton, National Trails System Leader with the NPS served as keynote speaker. The Foundation also held its meeting during the symposium and held elections for its new officers. Steve Russell was elected President and Charlie Moses Jr. was elected Vice-President. Revealing the Foundation's close connection with the federal agencies involved in trail administration, core team members Dan Gard and Sandi McFarland were elected Treasurer and Secretary, respectively (USDA Forest Service 1995).

In 1997, Keith Thurlkill, Northern Region Interpretive Specialist, replaced Beckes as the NPNHT Coordinator. However, the coordinator position remained a part-time duty amidst Thurlkill's other job requirements (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Over the next few years, the core team under Thurlkill's direction completed several more interpretive tools including the auto-tour brochure from Gibbon Pass to Leadore, ID (completed by the core team in 1997), the auto-tour brochure from Bighole to Lemhi Valley (completed in 1998), and a revision of the NPNHT video. In 1998, they completed trail signage along the entire primary route. By 1999, seven "high potential routes" and 79 historic sites had been certified as components of the NPNHT. Also during 1999, a comprehensive NPNHT Interpretive Plan was drafted with assistance from all federal partners (USDA Forest Service NPNHT Misc. files).

In addition to the interpretive work completed by the core team, several volunteer organizations got involved and assisted with interpretive efforts. In 2000, the West Yellowstone and Island Park Historical Societies completed the trail's third auto-tour brochure, this one covering a segment of trail from Leadore, Idaho to West Yellowstone, Montana. It was the first of its kind to be developed and completed by a citizen organization. Volunteers, working in conjunction with the Forest Service, NPS, and BLM (which provided a \$5,000 grant for the project), gathered historical research, surveyed and traveled the highway routes, contracted for artwork, and assembled a rough draft. In November, volunteers Kathleen Durfee, B.J. Hultz, and Nancy Stratford met with the core team in Missoula to work out a final draft. Carol Evans, Region 1 illustration and design specialist, completed the final layout and design, while Margie Lubinski, cartographic technician on the Lolo National Forest, developed maps of the route (USDA Forest Service NPNHT Newsletters and Progress Reports from 1993-2010).

As trail interpretive efforts led by the Forest Service, the Foundation, and other volunteer organizations expanded and public interest in the NPNHT grew, it became clear that a part-time NPNHT trail coordinator could no longer meet the needs of the burgeoning project. Furthermore, the regional forester wanted to ensure that the NPNHT achieved adequate visibility during the Lewis and Clark bicentennial (2003-2006), especially on those portions of the trail that paralleled or overlapped the Lewis and Clark Trail. At the repeated urgings of the Forest Service and the Foundation, the Regional Office acquiesced and began the search for a full-time trail administrator (Bosworth 2000 and USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **Interpreting the Trail in the 21st Century**

On January 13, 2002, the Regional Office selected Sandi McFarland, former Council member, core team member, Foundation officer, and former government tribal liaison for Regions 1, 4, and 6 as the first full-time NPNHT Administrator—a position she holds to this day. That year, NPNHT headquarters moved to the Supervisor's Office in Orofino, Idaho where McFarland was duty-located. As a Forest Service archeologist, McFarland had been immersed in NPNHT management activities since the trail's official designation (USDA Forest Service 2006).

As plans developed for the pending Bicentennial of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, the NPNHT and its partners explored ways to capitalize on the publicity and interest surrounding the bicentennial events. In 2003, the NPNHT administration contracted with Heritage Design, a Forest Service Enterprise Unit (no longer extant), to produce some promotional items for the Trail. Heritage Design developed two traveling displays for use at meetings, fairs, visitor centers, schools, museums, and special events. They also assisted the Clearwater National Forest in the development of the NPNHT's fourth auto-tour brochure for the segment of the route from Orofino, Idaho, to Lolo, Montana, along Highway 12. McFarland also oversaw the design, production, and distribution of yearly desk planners and posters, coloring and activity books for children, several videos, educational trunks, new displays, and updates to existing auto-tour brochures (USDA Forest Service NPNHT Newsletters and Progress Reports from 1993-2010).

In 2003, the NPNHT website won a national award from American Trails. There were 88 websites nominated and the award for "Best Site for Kids and Families" went to the NPNHT. "We looked for sites that really make trails come alive, and provide effective information delivery, support volunteers, and



engage the public,” said American Trails. “In short, we want to showcase ways that advocates and agencies are making a difference for trails.” That same year, the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) awarded the NPNHT a certificate of commendation for its website. The website was also nominated for a MAESTRO Award, granted to websites that fulfill strict criteria including functionality, presentation, content, creativity, and professionalism.

Interpretive efforts continued to be a top priority for the NPNHT. By 2006, the NPNHT featured along its 1,170 mile length a total of 66 wayside panels in three states (42 panels in Idaho, 5 in Oregon/Washington, and 19 in Montana), over 150 interpretive signs, and hundreds of highway and trail markers. One interpretive sign was placed far from the trail at the Nez Perce Cemetery at Tonkawa, Oklahoma with a ceremony involving Tonkawa and Nez Perce tribal members. In 2012, the NPNHT began a speaker series called “Voice of 1877.” Interpreters dressed in period outfits presented at different locations along the trail.

Starting in 2005, interpretive efforts were part of the NPNHT connecting with students. A Youth Employment service, Summer Stay in School program, Preparing for Academic Excellence Math and Science Camp, and Lolo Tribal Youth Program all provided various ways to engage Native students in a variety of ways to the NPNHT.

### Certification

McFarland also helped advance the “certification” process, as allowed by the National Trails System Act of 1968 (as amended), for sites associated with the NPNHT that helped to tell a more complete story of the trail. To be certified as part of the NPNHT, a site or segment must meet the following general criteria: (a) it should have at least one significant and direct tie to the NPNHT, (b) be along the trail route, (c) be suitable and available for reasonable public access, (d) have some historic value and/or provide an opportunity for significant interpretation of historic Nez Perce resources. A series of site certifications began when Crystal White, then vice president of the Foundation, and U.S. Army employee Matthew Nowak, retired natural resource specialist, of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas contacted the NPNHT about the certification process. In November 2004, the initial site certification occurred at Fort Leavenworth. In 2005, sites at Baxter Springs, Kansas and Quapaw, Oklahoma were also certified. The NPNHT certified a site at Fort Benton, Montana, in June of 2006, followed by certification of a site at Tonkawa, Oklahoma in November of 2006 (USDA Forest Service 2006).

### Ambassadorship

Ambassadorship has been a key component of McFarland’s tenure as NPNHT Administrator. In 2003, she and other Nez Perce Tribal members rode in the Pegasus Parade, a favorite feature of the Kentucky Derby—a Lewis & Clark Bicentennial event. (William Clark’s grandson was one of the originators of the Derby in the 1800s.) A number of tribal members made the trip to Louisville, and McFarland made presentations to local Lewis & Clark Bicentennial tourism committees, city councils, and the public (USDA Forest Service 2006). In 2006, NPNHT participated in the National Park Service sponsored Corps of Discovery II: 200 Years into the Future exhibit in Lewiston, Idaho. In 2009, NPNHT Administrator Sandi Broncheau-McFarland was invited to attend the White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy in Reno, NV and the Inter-Agency Outdoor Ethics Conference in Desert Hot Springs, California. These are but a sampling of the wide and varied involvement of the NPNHT representatives in Ambassadorship activities.

### Changing Management Needs

Interpreting in the 21st century has not been the only challenge. The last fifteen years have had multiple new pressures on the trail and its landscape including:

- cell towers, wind mills, and wind farms
- increased oil and gas development and increased pipelines
- increased usage on the Auto Tour Route
- geocaching as a form of recreation
- commercial overharvesting of plants that are important to Nez Perce culture (Some are plants being harvested for foods such as mushroom, huckleberries, serviceberries, and elderberries; others include the Labrador Tea Bush [tea and medicine], Downey Fruited Vervain [medicine], Pacific Yew [medicine] and Bear Grass [decoration])
- activities destroying habitat where plants and trees grow that are important to the Nez Perce culture
- increased impacts to culturally important sites, such as destruction of rock art and cutting culturally modified trees for fire wood, and damage after fire
- commercial use of hot air balloons landing on historic sites and trails.

## **Comprehensive Plan Revision**

Soon thereafter, it became apparent that the NPNHT CP, now more than 25 years old, would need significant revision to meet these changing management needs. Additionally, changes made to the NTSA and NEPA since the trail's establishment warranted a revision of the document. While considered a good foundation document for initial trail development, many determined that the Comprehensive Plan (CP) did not comply with several key NTSA planning requirements, failing to:

- specify management objectives or practices
- identify significant resources
- incorporate model cooperative agreements
- identify carrying capacity
- include an acquisition plan
- address general or site-specific development plans with costs
- meaningfully involve the public (USDA Forest Service 2006).

These critical omissions were made clear in two reports on the trail: an Interagency Committee Review Report (2006) and a National Park Service Report (2008). These reviews identified several items that need to be updated or added to the CP to comply with the NTSA and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). To begin the complex process of revising the CP to include modern management challenges, trail threats, interpretive plans, and partnership strategies, the NPNHT brought in Recreation Solutions, a Forest Service Enterprise Unit, to set up the multi-phased project. A subsequent review in 2010 specified the following omissions from the 1990 CP:

- specific management objectives or practices
- identification of significant resources (Threatened & Endangered species, Native Plants/Noxious Weeds)
- model cooperative agreements
- land protection plan outlined by fiscal year
- identified carrying capacity

- acquisition plan outlined by year
- general or site-specific development plans
- volunteer or landowner outreach strategy
- monitoring plan or post CP resource inventories
- connection to tourism, economic development, or regional recreation issues

The NPNHT is currently revising its CP. From December 2010 to February 2012, NPNHT staff held workshops in communities along the entire length of the trail as part of the project's scoping process. As of February 2012, the NPNHT held 19 public workshops along the trail route and developed and launched a public website for the CP revision work (USDA Forest Service 2016a and USDA Forest Service ND).



## **Chapter 3: Partners**

## Overview

The NPNHT has a network of partners that have helped promote, develop, protect, and manage the resource. Partner federal agencies featuring segments or certified components of the NPNHT include the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Department of the Army. The NPNHT also coordinates with state agencies (five State Departments of Transportation, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, Red Rocks National Wildlife Refuge, Cm Russel National Wildlife Refuge), tribal governments, associated trail organizations, non-governmental organizations, local communities, heritage and historic societies, and advocacy groups. In 2007, the NPNHT began working with Parks Canada, the agency overseeing Fort Walsh Historical Site.

Resources associated with the NPNHT (i.e. trail segments, historic sites, or places directly related to the 1877 War and Flight) are managed by multiple public agencies. This has resulted in a largely decentralized management structure throughout the NPNHT's history. Because of the NPNHT's decentralized nature, most of the management activities conducted on the trail have been planned and implemented by the responsible agency or unit within the agency. The following section briefly outlines each partner's managerial responsibility and describes some their recent administrative activities. A discussion of the trail's administrative history would not be complete without an in-depth discussion of the many partners' contributions to its management.

## USDA Forest Service

The NPNHT administration in Orofino, Idaho has worked closely with the USDA Forest Service and all national forests associated with the trail including the Wallowa-Whitman NF, the Nez Perce/Clearwater NF, the Lolo NF, the Bitterroot NF, the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, the Salmon-Challis NF, the Caribou-Targhee NF, the Gallatin NF, and the Shoshone NF. Each Forest manages their respective trail segments and associated resources.

### Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has five miles of designated NPNHT—the sum total in Oregon. The known portion of the trail takes off from Forest Road 4260, the Dug Bar Road, which probably traces the original part of the trail from Imnaha, Oregon. Imnaha was once a winter village for one of the large bands of the Nez Perce. Numerous pit house villages extended both north and south. The Imnaha River, prior to the building of the dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers, was one of the finest salmon streams in the region. Dug Bar is where the Wallowa Valley Bands of the Nez Perce crossed the Snake River, swollen with the spring melts from the mountains, on May 22 of 1877. The area of the crossing at Dug Bar is a shared management site with the Nez Perce National Historic Park and within the Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area (USDA Forest Service 2006). The shared site, from the public's point of view, is a National Park Service site, with day-to-day administration by the Forest Service. The management partnership between the USFS and NPS is supported by an interagency participatory agreement.

### Nez Perce/Clearwater National Forest

The NPNHT Administration office is located at the Nez Perce/Clearwater National Forest North Fork Ranger District Office in Orofino. Nearly all of the Nez Perce/Clearwater NF falls within the traditional territory of the Nez Perce. Traditional rights of hunting and gathering and religious practices on the Forest are protected under the 1877 Treaty. During the 1877 War, the Nez Perce were able to distance themselves from the pursuing Army along the rugged Lolo Trail. There are 90 miles of the NPNHT within the



Clearwater's boundaries. The Lolo Trail National Historic Landmark also lies within the Clearwater National Forest (USDA Forest Service 2006).

### **Lolo National Forest**

There are 14 miles of the NPNHT on the Lolo National Forest. These 14 miles are maintained in a primitive condition which allows visitors to gain a greater feel for how the trail may have felt in the early-to-mid 1800s. Access points are marked and a Lolo National Forest brochure entitled "A Modern Explorers Guide" provides historical and navigational information on the trail (USDA Forest Service 2006).

### **Bitterroot National Forest**

The Bitterroot National Forest administers 3 miles of the NPNHT. This Bitterroot highway portion of NPNHT is located on the Sula Ranger District, its western trailhead close to US HWY 93 at the base of Lost Trail Pass. The trail exists as a relocated and/or recently constructed single track trail and a historic roadway as it climbs from the Camp Creek drainage up a ridgeline to near Gibbons Pass and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST). A portion of the trail was burned over during the historic fires of 2000 but is well marked and signed at each end. From its junction with the CDNST, the NPNHT follows the Continental Divide trail south for 1 mile to join the Beaverhead-Deerlodge route which leads to Hogan's Cabin and the Big Hole Valley (USDA Forest Service 2006).

### **Salmon-Challis National Forest**

There have been several collaborative efforts between the NPNHT and the Salmon-Challis National Forest. These include a Nez Perce Rifle Pits Passport in Time (PIT) project in the mid-1990s, during which the Rifle Pits sites were mapped, photographed, and described. A Nez Perce Spring PIT Project, during which three line eagle device buttons were found, in addition to an Indian gun tack, a brass military spur buckle, and lead bullet. All of these artifacts were consistent with the general time period when the Nez Perce came through the valley near present day Leadore, Idaho (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The Salmon-Challis assisted the NPNHT with a mapping and history project and the development of an auto-tour brochure through the Lemhi Valley. Staff members also attended organizational meetings and worked with the Nez Perce Trail Foundation on seminars and funding for Nez Perce Rifle Pits signage. The Leadore Ranger District has worked with the Foundation and the Appaloosa Horse Club for trail rides (USDA Forest Service 2006).

### **Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest**

Three National Trails traverse the western edge of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest: The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and the NPNHT. The NPNHT crosses the Continental Divide onto the Wisdom Ranger District at Gibbons Pass, and follows the Trail Creek Drainage 15 miles to the Big Hole National Battlefield. Southwest of Jackson, Montana, the trail reenters the Wisdom Ranger District for about 10 miles as it crosses the headwaters of the Big Hole River, into Bloody Dick Creek, Horse Prairie, and the headwaters of the Beaverhead River on the Dillon Ranger District (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest has cooperated with volunteers and NPS researchers to help draft the first NPNHT trail brochures for southwest Montana. The Forest produced one brochure for the Big Hole Battlefield and one focused on the western Big Hole Valley area, south of the Battlefield. On the Wisdom District, Nez Perce trail markers and interpretive signs have been installed along Montana

Highway 43 at Chief Joseph Pass, at the junction with Trail Creek, and at Placer Creek (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Although there are motorized routes along various trail segments on the Wisdom District, there was a desire to develop a non-motorized route, for horse or foot travel. Having hosted the Appaloosa Horse Club for their Chief Joseph Trail Ride and a Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club tour several times, a trail was needed that would allow people to ride on or near the route of the 1877 Nez Perce War and Flight, as well as the Lewis and Clark Corp of Discovery route. In 2006, the Forest Service and the Nez Perce Tribe entered into a cooperative agreement for the planning, layout, and construction of 11 miles of primitive trail. The partners completed trail work in the fall of 2008 (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **Shoshone National Forest**

The Shoshone National Forest segment of the trail extends from the Montana state line southeast towards Cody, Wyoming including portions of the Absaroka. The Shoshone National Forest contains 38 miles of the NPNHT. In 2006, the NPNHT began consultations with the Shoshone on their Chief Joseph Scenic Byway (Wyoming 296) Interpretation Plan since the road is an Auto Interpretive Tour (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **Gallatin National Forest**

Within the Gallatin National Forest boundaries, there are approximately 11 miles of the trail, on two sections of the Forest. The first section is located west of Yellowstone National Park, along period roads and Hwy 20. The trail enters Montana over Targhee Pass, onto what is currently private land. Through this area between the Gallatin National Forest and Yellowstone National Park there are no on-the-ground markers, delineations, or exact locations, except the designated auto-tour route along Highway 20. The second section of trail is located east of Yellowstone National Park, as the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway. The trail meets Highway 212 (the Beartooth NF Scenic Byway/All American Road) and heads east from the northeast Entrance of Yellowstone National Park through the Gallatin National Forest (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **Caribou-Targhee National Forest**

Jane Ruchman, Gallatin National Forest Landscape Architect, has been active with the NPNHT, placing historic markers and working with Montana Department of Transportation and federal highway engineers. They have also consulted with the Caribou-Targhee National Forest on signage and interpretation in the Targhee Pass area west of Yellowstone near Island Park, Idaho. Abraham Yearout, a Nez Perce tribal member, and local construction crews completed installation of an interpretive panel and sculpture in 2005 along the Beartooth Scenic Byway east of Cooke City and just a few miles east of the northeast Entrance of Yellowstone National Park. Ruchman worked with the Gardiner Ranger District and a Bozeman graphics company in the development and fabrication of an interpretive panel for the Chief Joseph Campground, also along Highway 212 (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

The BLM manages six percent of the NPNHT—55 miles in Idaho, 13 miles in Montana, and 2 miles in Wyoming. In Idaho, the trail crosses the Cottonwood, Upper Snake, and Salmon jurisdictional areas. The Idaho State BLM Office has administrative responsibilities for these sections of the NPNHT. Since June 2012 the Idaho State BLM Office no longer has the lead role for the NPNHT, as every state office will be tasked with that role along the trail length. In Wyoming, the NPNHT crosses land administered by the Cody Field Office. In Montana, the trail crosses lands administered by three field offices: Missoula, Butte, Highline, and Lewistown (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The BLM and the NPNHT collaborated in several areas of trail management and visitor services. Stan McDonald, Idaho BLM Cultural Resource Manager and National Historic Trails Program Lead, reported in 2003 that the Upper Snake Field Office published an auto-tour brochure with historical information about the Nez Perce Trail. This auto-tour ranges from Leadore, Idaho to West Yellowstone, Montana, covering a section of the NPNHT that traverses the upper Lemhi and Birch Creek Valleys where the Nez Perce followed the old Mormon Missionary Wagon Road and the Bannock Indian Trail. BLM staff have hosted public tours of the Birch Creek Valley sites for high school history classes during Archaeology Week. Also, each spring for nearly ten years, the Upper Snake Field Office has hosted an annual public field tour of selected archaeological and historic sites in the Birch Creek Valley, including Native American rock art sites, historic mining and town sites, and other sites associated with the NPNHT (USDA Forest Service 2006).

In June 2006, Idaho BLM provided interpretive programs and printed brochures on the history of Idaho's four national historic trails including the NPNHT during the Interagency-sponsored "A Circle of Cultures" Corps II ten-day event in Boise. Through interactive displays including an Idaho History Quiz, children and adults were provided with historical information on the NPNHT. Nearly 10,000 visitors attended the Corps II Boise events and over 3,500 students participated in field trips. The Missouri Breaks Interpretive Center in Ft. Benton, Montana contains a Nez Perce exhibit called "When Cultures Collide" and offers an education program about the 1877 War and Flight called "Must Cultures Collide." (USDA Forest Service 2006).

In 2012, NPNHT staff along with the staff of the BLM's National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming facilitated a public display at the center that was open most of that summer and was viewed by approximately 4,500 visitors. The BLM has supported the survey of the trail on BLM and private lands in Wyoming. The Wyoming State Archaeologist Office conducted the survey that is expected to be completed in 2016. Interpretive Center Management staff are interested in sharing more information about the NPNHT with visitors in the future.

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)

The NPNHT travels through Red Rocks National Wildlife Refuge, Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, Dworshak National Fish Hatchery, and Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge. Two ongoing points of interaction between the NPNHT and FWS are the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery in Kooskia, Idaho and the Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge in Stevensville, Montana. Archaeological excavations of the Kooskia Hatchery grounds have uncovered evidence of cultures dating to 6,000 to 10,000 years ago. The Nez Perce used this site on a seasonal basis. The property remains culturally significant to the Nez Perce and an annual pipe ceremony and empty saddle ceremony are held to commemorate the July 1, 1877 raid on the camp of Looking Glass (USDA Forest Service 2006).

In 2003, the NPNHT and the Kooskia Hatchery partnered to replace a vandalized marker at the hatchery. The site features a self-guided interpretive trail and informational brochures. The FWS and Forest Service dedicated a new stone monument marking the significance of the raid on Chief Looking Glass's village. The NPNHT purchased the new stone monument and provided the Nez Perce design that borders the monument. The dedication on July 1, 2003, marked the 126th anniversary of the U.S. Army attack on Looking Glass's village (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Between 2010 and 2012 NPNHT staff began discussions with both the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and the Red Rock Lakes NWR to include more information in the NPNHT literature about military movements through these areas in 1877.

## National Park Service (NPS)

The NPS is responsible for the management of the Nez Perce National Historical Park (NPNHP) created in 1965 with the headquarters at Spalding, Idaho. The Park was designed to foster job and economic growth on the reservation through tourism development, as well as to protect tribal land and to disseminate Nez Perce culture. The Park acts as a steward of the Nez Perce Tribe's heritage through onsite curation of a museum collection and archive. This includes the Spalding-Allen Collection of ethnographic materials collected by missionary Henry Spalding in the 1830s (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The Park originally consisted of 24 sites scattered across north-central Idaho. The Nez Perce National Historic Park Additions Act of 1991 added 14 more sites in Oregon, Washington, Montana, and Wyoming. Of the total 38 sites, nine (Spalding, Canoe Camp, Heart of the Monster, Weippe Prairie, White Bird, Buffalo Eddy, Old Chief Joseph's Gravesite, Big Hole National Battlefield, and Bears Paw Battlefield) are owned in fee by the NPS and the rest are cooperatively preserved, maintained, and interpreted through formal and informal landowner agreements with cooperating county, state, federal, private, and tribal entities. The Park's 1996 General Management Plan includes details on park purpose, legislation, and overlap with the NPNHT (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Today's NPS-administered sites historically associated with the NPNHT are found in five States:

### Idaho

Confluence Overlook, Coyote's Fishnet, Ant and Yellowjacket, Spalding, Lapwai Mission, Northern Idaho Indian Agency, Fort Lapwai, Craig Donation Land Claim, St. Joseph's Mission, Cottonwood Skirmishes, Weis Rockshelter, Camas Prairie, White Bird Battlefield, Clearwater Battlefield, Heart of the Monster, Asa Smith Mission, Lewis and Clark Long Camp, Canoe Camp, Lenore, Weippe Prairie, Pierce Courthouse, Musselshell Meadow, Lolo Trail, Buffalo Eddy, Camas Meadows Battle Site, Hasotino Village Site, Looking Glass 1877 Camp, Tolo Lake, McBeth House

### Montana

Big Hole National Battlefield, Canyon Creek, Bar Paw Battlefield

### Oregon

Dug Bar, Joseph Canyon Viewpoint, Old Chief Joseph's Gravesite, Traditional (Lostine) Homesite

### Washington

Nez Perce Cemetery, Nez Perce (Nespelem) Campsites (USDA Forest Service 2006).

### Wyoming

The NPNHT runs through Wyoming and it is the portion of the flight where the Nez Perce did not follow any trail per se, moving in reaction to encounters. Therefore, the location of the trail is not as defined. It is also challenging to tell the story of the Flight of the Nez Perce given the size of Yellowstone National Park and the numerous stories being told (world's first National Park, birth of conservation, the great American destination, etc.), but efforts have been made in the last ten years. In the fall of 2006, the NPS and the Forest Service entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the relationships between the NPNHT and the Park Service. This agreement also covers the Montana Units of Big Hole, Bear Paw, and Canyon Creek Battlefields. The MOU prescribes a closer working relationship between the NPNHT and NPNHP/Yellowstone National Park and is administered by the NPS. To understand the relationship between Yellowstone NP and the NPNHT, visualize the Park's various sites, from sizable

visitor centers to smaller interpretive pullouts and individual historic buildings. “The Park sites are the dots,” said Public Affairs Specialist (then) and currently Forest Service Tribal Liaison Christine Bradbury, “and the NPNHT connects them.” Many of the “dots” along the Park’s multi-state route commemorate battles that are both historically significant and sacred to tribal and non-tribal people whose ancestors lost their lives in the conflicts of 1877 (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Since the beginning of the MOU, there have been limited interpretive presentations about the NPNHT at Yellowstone National Park. However, the Park Service did assist with the Auto Tours brochure for those tours that occur in Yellowstone National Park. In 2012, the Park Service shared information about the NPNHT with visitors through social media. There are also two interpretive exhibits in the park about the NPNHT, which have been replaced and updated in the last five years. One is at the location where the Nez Perce forded the Yellowstone River, just north of Fishing Bridge on the Grand Loop Road. The other is along the Madison River east of West Yellowstone along the West Entrance Road. Archaeological survey during the last five years has been conducted in an attempt to better understand the route of the Nez Perce in the park. The survey work was carried out by Dan Eakin via a cooperative agreement with the Office of the Wyoming State Archeologist. During the archaeological survey, descendent tribal members were able to participate in field work.

## Department of the Army—Fort Leavenworth

The Department of the Army manages three sites currently on the NPNHT. The Army Corps of Engineers manage the Dworshak Reservoir in Idaho and the Fort Peck Project in Montana. Fort Leavenworth, in Kansas, is where the Army confined about 400 Nez Perce and their leader, Chief Joseph. Founded in 1827, the fort stands as the oldest continuously active Army post west of the Mississippi River. Today it is part of Installation Management Command –West Region. For eight months from the winter of 1877 through the summer of 1878, Fort Leavenworth served as an interim prisoner of war camp.

The NPNHT officially certified the Fort Leavenworth site in 2004. This certification would not have been possible without the extended efforts of Crystal White, then vice president of the Nez Perce Trail Foundation. Crystal was able to work in conjunction with Fort Leavenworth personnel to plan ceremonies, signage, and other formalities. Ceremonies were held Friday, November 19, and a reception was held at St. Mary’s University in Leavenworth. A symposium followed on Saturday, November 20, at the University (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## Federal Highways Administration

The NPNHT has traditionally worked with the transportation programs of 5 states: Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Montana and Wyoming. The various transportation programs provide and place Auto Tour Signs along the Auto Tour Routes of highways they maintain. It was originally done with a letter agreement, but a Programmatic Agreement is being drafted.

NPNHT staff developed a challenge cost share agreement (CCSA) with the State of Washington Highway Transportation to put in an interpretive kiosk at a rest area near Nespelem, WA.

## Parks Canada—Fort Walsh

In the immediate aftermath of the battle at Bear Paw in October 1877, Chief White Bird’s band eluded capture and settled in Canada around Fort Walsh in Saskatchewan. Fort Walsh, administered as a national historic site by Parks Canada, is located in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. Today, Parks Canada has restored and preserved the fort as a National Historical Site, to commemorate the role that Northwest Mounted Police played in the region (USDA Forest Service 2006).

To tell the story of the Nez Perce at Fort Walsh, Bear Paw Battlefield, Big Hole National Battlefield, and Fort Walsh National Historic Site developed an initiative to exchange staff and develop exhibits about the Nez Perce who came to Canada. This “sister park” relationship with Parks Canada loans staff from Big Hole National Battlefield to Fort Walsh; they help Parks Canada staff on the interpretation in their museum (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The exchange program, with funding assistance from the NPNHT, was initially headed up by Jon James, Superintendent of Big Hole National Battlefield. “These exchanges,” he said, “allow us to learn more about each other, share resources, and help educate the American and Canadian public about the Nez Perce War of 1877 and related educational themes.” (USDA Forest Service 2006).

NPS Park Ranger, Kevin Peters, a member of the Nez Perce Tribe and employee of Nez Perce National Historical Park in Idaho, has spent time interpreting the tie between the Nez Perce and Fort Walsh. Ranger Tim Fisher also participated in the program, addressing the relationship between Fort Walsh and the Big Hole Battlefield. Robert West, University of Idaho graduate student, interpreted the Nez Perce Bear Paw Battlefield and its relationship to Fort Walsh (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## Tribal Governments

NPNHT administrators consult with the Tribal Councils and/or representatives of local and regional tribes as mandated by Forest Service policy, but also as a consideration to the original inhabitants of the land and the keepers of its legacy. These tribes include the Chief Joseph Band of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Nez Perce Tribe. The NPNHT has also consulted other tribes on a project-by-project basis; these include the Salish-Kootenai Confederated Tribes, the Crow Tribe, the Eight Tribes of Ottawa County Oklahoma (Eastern Shawnee, Miami, Modoc, Ottawa, Peoria, Quapaw, Seneca-Cayuga, and Wyandotte), the newly formed Neutral Lands Cherokee, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Northern Cheyenne, Rocky Boy Chippewa Cree, Blackfeet, Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux, Fort Belknap Assiniboine and Gros Ventre, Eastern Shoshone, North Arapaho, Cheyenne and Arapaho of Oklahoma, Coeur D’Alene, Kootenai of Idaho, Blackfeet, Standing Rock Sioux, the Tonkawa Tribe, and the Canadian Sioux (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The Nez Perce Tribe is headquartered at Lapwai, Idaho. Some members are direct descendants of Chief Joseph or others who struggled along the NPNHT. The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) consists of nine elected officials who administer the affairs of the Nez Perce Tribe and represent the tribe in negotiations. The NPTEC also promotes and protects the health, education, and general welfare of tribal members, administers unrestricted tribal funds, and prescribes rules governing nominations and elections of NPTEC (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The Nez Perce Tribe and NPNHT share a government-to-government relationship. The NPNHT consults with the Tribe on projects, including projects carried out by non-federal partners. The Tribe reviews interpretive projects for accuracy and sensitivity (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The Forest Service consulted with the Nez Perce Tribe in March of 1982 regarding the NPNHT Study Report and again upon issuance of the Decision Notice and EA in July 1985. They were invited to have two representatives serve on the Advisory Council and they were consulted on the completion of the CP in 1990. The representatives were Allen Slickpoo, Sr. and Sandi McFarland. Since then, all matters that require consultation are handled by each forest or respective agency. The NPNHT Administration consults directly with the tribe’s Natural Resource and Cultural Resource Program, Circle of Elders, Language Program, and the Natural Resource Sub-Committee, and NPTEC (USDA Forest Service 2006).



The Nez Perce Tribe and NPNHT collaborate on many youth programs designed to help Indian students. These programs are not exclusively for Nez Perce Youth; they have included youngsters from a number of tribes, Samoan, and other indigenous backgrounds. Youth Programs have included PACE (Preparing for Academic Excellence), Students for Success and the Intertribal Natural Resources Camp (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The Nez Perce Tribe and the Forest Service also share several formal agreements for work along the NPNHT. Some are challenge cost-share projects in which the Nez Perce Tribe provides at least a 50 percent match in resources. Cost-share projects include trail maintenance and Global Positioning System inventory on the Nez Perce/Clearwater National Forest. Several Participating Agreements provide job training in natural resource skills for tribal members including construction, maintenance, and interpretive projects on the Clearwater National Forest, construction projects on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, and general interpretive projects for the NPNHT (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Tolo Lake is a joint component site of the NPNHP and the NPNHT near Grangeville, Idaho. The site is managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and is popular with local anglers and hunters. New signage developed in 2008 informs visitors of its association with Nez Perce history in partnership with the NPNHT administration (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## Nez Perce Trail Foundation

In 1991, the Nez Perce National Historic Trail Foundation was formed. The name was changed to Nez Perce Trail Foundation in 2003. The first officers elected were Harry Fritz, President; Richard L. Adams, Vice President; Sandi McFarland, Secretary; Leroy Anderson, Treasurer; Cheryl Wilfong, Editor. The group has been involved in memorials and interpretive kiosks at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, outreach to Native Americans, educational tours for students and teachers, and many other projects over the years.

## The Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club

With headquarters in Lapwai, Idaho, the NPAPHC honors Nez Perce tribal culture and the Appaloosa horse, although membership is not limited to Appaloosa riders. The Club has a partnership agreement with the USFS for activities on the NPNHT. The club was formed on the Nez Perce Reservation in 1991 by tribal member Allen Pinkham and Bob Browning of Farmington, New Mexico (Chief Joseph Trail Foundation). Browning donated more than a dozen Appaloosas to the Nez Perce people because of his desire to help reintroduce and promote the breed among the Nez Perce, who are historically credited with selectively breeding Appaloosa horses. Browning also hoped to help revive the horsemanship skills for which the Nez Perce were once renowned. In addition to a focus on youth, NPAPHC activities have been expanded to include the entire family in riding clinics, trail and endurance rides, camp-outs, horsemanship clinics, community service, parades, and participation in tribal cultural events (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## Other Partners

Bureau of Indian Affairs	Northwest Passage Scenic Byway
Bureau of Reclamation	Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Committee
Army Corps of Engineers	Partnership for the National Trails System
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks	Tread Lightly
Oregon Department of Transportation	Leave No Trace
Washington State Department of Transportation	Lolo Trail, Inc
Idaho Transportation Department	Oregon California Trails Assn
Montana Department of Transportation	McCormack Landscape Design
Wyoming Department of Transportation	The American Girl's Collection
8 Tribes of Ottawa County	Mountain Visions
Neutral Lands Cherokee	Harold Pfeiffer, photographer
Canadian Sioux	Joe Proferos, artist
Salish-Kootenai Confederated Tribes	Abe Yearout, artist
Shoshone-Bannock Tribe	Stan Hoggatt, private benefactor
Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma	Meera Censor, artist
Nez Perce Tribe	Montana Preservation Alliance
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, OR	North Central Idaho Travel Association
Colville Confederated Tribes, Chief Joseph Band	Appaloosa Museum
Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club	Blaine County Museum
Lewis-Clark State College	Ravalli County Museum
Arkansas City High School Music Department	Washington State University Library - McWhorter Collection
Steele's Scouts Commemorative Troop	University of Idaho
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	Lewis and Clark College
Fort Leavenworth Historical Society	Yellowstone Business Council/Top Ten Scenic Drives
Baxter Springs Heritage Center	Ravalli County Museum
Friends of Bear Paw, Big Hole and Canyon Creek Battlefields	Rocky Mountain Museum of Military History
Idaho Historical Society	Discovery Your Northwest Interpretive Association
Weippe Community Club	Island Park Historical Society
Wallowa Band Nez Perce Trail Interpretive Center	Yellowstone History Center (USDA Forest Service 2006)

## **Chapter 4: Conclusions and Future**

Since its establishment in 1986, the NPNHT has survived and developed thanks in part to volunteer organizations, partnerships with state and federal agencies, tribal representatives, civic groups, and other associated trails. Over the last two-and-a-half decades, these partnerships have continued to grow, while trail administrators have implemented important advancements in education, outreach, and interpretation (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Yet there is still much to do, and the challenges are numerous. Specific areas of responsibility present ongoing challenges in administration, budget, and land use (USDA Forest Service 2006).

### **Administration:**

- Limited staff with growing responsibilities to meet the demands of national and regional policies
- The need to manage complex networks of partnerships and lines of authority among agencies, tribes, and civic organizations
- Balancing recreation with protection of sensitive cultural and natural resources
- A growing need for volunteer outreach and training
- Continued site certification projects which will lead to extending the NPNHT

### **Budget:**

- Shrinking budgets requiring more cost-share, fundraising, tracking, etc.
- Increased need for trail sanitation, maintenance, protection, and standards
- An increased need for trail promotion and community outreach
- The need for new trail interpretation and the renovation and maintenance of existing interpretation

### **Land Use:**

- Planning for increased heritage and recreational tourism
- A growing number of public events, festivals, and reenactments
- New site development and visitor products
- Renovation of existing infrastructure and products and on-going maintenance
- Accommodating and managing competing recreational and heritage interests

Participants at inter-agency coordination meetings have identified necessary work that includes revisions of the existing Comprehensive Management Plan and Strategic Interpretation Plan. Action items for interagency coordination strategy include the identification of contacts along the route, finding ways to streamline communications, and updating the grants and agreements process (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Other items under discussion at interagency meetings include the assistance available from the NPNHT Administrator, such as using tribal elders as consultants, supporting travel to coordinating meetings, assisting with grant writing, and creating standard branding elements for use by all partners. Regarding inter-agency relationships with the Nez Perce Trail Foundation, meeting representatives were asked to define how they wished to interact with the Foundation by means of volunteer programs, fundraising and grant opportunities, and future collaboration. All agreed that there is a need to work together in a shared purpose and to speak as one voice (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Adaptive partnership building among stakeholders is perhaps the only leadership path to follow, yet it can be a difficult path. Clearly it is through partnership building, decentralizing of administrative tasks, and listening to the voices of all stakeholders--and particularly of the tribal elders--that the NPNHT can continue to help keep the Nez Perce culture and history alive while passing it on to the next generations.

International interest has grown in recent years in the NPNHT and could be a focus of future development. The Canada Transcontinental Trail is where the NPNHT has been identified and located across the border. At one time there were 32 different countries who contacted the Nez Perce NHT staff on a regular basis wanting information. There are international clubs focused just on the Nez Perce people, and the trail is a big part of that story. Some clubs do reenactments and some come to actually visit the trail and associated sites on the ground.

As Gary Werner, director of the non-profit organization Partnership for National Trails System, has said, “The Nez Perce National Historic Trail offers a positive opportunity for diverse people to collaborate with one another. This trail can be seen as a living thing. Unlike other national historic trails, which are more interested in the details of the past than in the present, this trail is incredibly alive and exciting. The NPNHT is truly keeping history alive. But it goes deeper than that. This is a multi-cultural trail, with conflicts and challenges. We have worked with the trails and the Institute for Conservation Training Leadership, which has resulted in strategic planning tools, and effective Leadership building.” (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Sandi McFarland says that trail advocacy is central to the NPNHT’s future. In an administrative statement she wrote, “The Nez Perce Trail is an important key to our past, and to our present. We use these routes created by our forebears daily. We drive to work on them, hike on them, and travel to favorite recreation spots on them. Many visitors to our trail are drawn here hoping to experience the outdoor recreation and historical places of interest that are a part of our daily lives.” (USDA Forest Service 2006).

If there is one essential ingredient to creating trails and trail systems, it is the people. All the land and financing in the world will not protect and maintain a trail if there are not people championing the project. These essential people perform the toughest task in the trail-building process: Advocacy. They take on the people-to-people communication, education, and problem solving necessary to succeed in the complex multi-owner, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-user environments – characteristics of many local, regional, and national trail projects today, like those found along the NPNHT. They build teams, educate others, and create and maintain partnerships among different players in the community (USDA Forest Service 2006).



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## **Appendix A – Description and Associated Features**

### **Overview**

The 1,170-mile Nez Perce National Historic Trail passes over federal, tribal, state, local, and privately-owned lands across four states, 20 counties, and more than 75 communities. The route has been administratively divided into seven segments for descriptive purposes beginning with the gathering in Oregon and ending with the surrender site in Montana's Bear Paw Mountains. The NPNHT crosses the deeply incised Columbia River Plateau, the Continental Divide, and a succession of mountain ranges, canyons, and valleys, through forests and plains, across thermal areas and major rivers. It winds through some of the most rugged and spectacular scenery in the western United States. The NPNHT, tracing the unfolding events during the summer of 1877, symbolically starts at Wallowa Lake, Oregon, then heads northeast and crosses the Snake River at Dug Bar. It enters Idaho at Lewiston and cuts across north-central Idaho, entering Montana near Lolo Pass. It then travels through the Bitterroot, Big Hole and Horse Prairie Valleys, after which it re-enters Idaho at Bannock Pass. The route then heads east through Camas Meadows and back into Montana at Targhee Pass, crossing the Continental Divide. It crosses Yellowstone National Park heading east, and then follows the Clark Fork of the Yellowstone River out of Wyoming and back into Montana. The trail then continues north to the Bear Paw Mountains, ending 40 miles from the Canadian border.

The Trail crosses nine National Forests: Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bitterroot, Caribou-Targhee, Nez Perce/Clearwater, Gallatin, Lolo, Salmon-Challis, Shoshone, and Wallowa-Whitman. It also traverses two National Parks: Nez Perce National Historical Park and Yellowstone National Park. In addition to Forest Service and NPS lands, the Trails cross lands managed by the BLM, USFWS, Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game (IDFG) and 27 tribes. Of the total 1,170-mile Trail, the Forest Service retains 234 miles, the NPS manages 86 miles, the BLM holds 68 miles, the states of Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming have 54 total miles, and 728 miles are on private lands.

### **The Trail**

The entire trail has been administratively divided into seven Descriptive Route Segments along its 1,170 mile distance. Trail administrators have identified 79 historic sites associated with the 1877 War and Flight of the Nez Perce people.

#### **Segment 1 (Wallowa Valley, Oregon to Weippe Prairie, Idaho)**

It was here, south of present-day Grangeville, that a majority of the non-treaty Nez Perce gathered to await the final move on to the reservation. These last few days of freedom were marred by the flaring of pent-up emotions precipitating the Salmon River raids in which several young warriors avenged the deaths of tribal members killed by miners and settlers a few years before during settlement of the Nez Perce homeland (USDA Forest Service 1990).

The Nez Perce bands camped near Tolo Lake and knew they must move to more defensible terrain in the event of an Army reprisal. They moved into Chief White Bird's camp on a creek that now bears his name, and waited for Army action. On June 17, 1877, Companies F and H of the 1st US Cavalry and volunteers under General Howard's orders arrived at the White Bird camp to quell the raids and escort the Indians onto the reservation. In violation of a truce flag, a single shot from a volunteer's rifle began the bloody Battle of White Bird Canyon (USDA Forest Service 1990).

In a series of moves and river crossings, the Nez Perce outdistanced the Army and outfought settlers (the Cottonwood Skirmishes), and arrived near the Looking Glass Camp on the South Fork of the Clearwater River. The military, under Howard's personal command, circled in behind and above the Nez Perce camps. There, on July 11, 1877, the Battle of the Clearwater confirmed the war between the Nez Perce and Army, which resulted in many dead and wounded on both sides, and a considerable loss of tribal possessions and food. It brought to a head the Nez Perce's need to move either onto the reservation or to the east to seek asylum with their Crow allies. The latter was decided upon and confirmed at the Kamiah and Weippe Prairie camps (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Sites along this segment include:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Chief Joseph Monument                   | 13. Lt. Rain's Skirmish                   |
| 2. Imnaha River Canyon Trail               | 14. Scout Foster's Grave                  |
| 3. Lone Pine Saddle                        | 15. Cottonwood House                      |
| 4. Dug Bar Crossing                        | 16. Cottonwood Skirmish                   |
| 5. Salmon River Crossing                   | 17. Clearwater Battlefield                |
| 6. Tephalewam Camp                         | 18. Southern Nez Perce Trail              |
| 7. Tolo Lake                               | 19. Looking Glass Camp and Skirmish       |
| 8. White Bird Battlefield                  | 20. Misery Hill and McConville's Skirmish |
| 9. Lahmotta Camp                           | 21. Clearwater River Crossing             |
| 10. Settlers Graves                        | 22. Original Tread                        |
| 11. Salmon River Crossing at Horsehoe Bend | 23. Weippe Prairie                        |
| 12. Salmon River Crossing at Billy Creek   |   |

## **Segment 2 (Weippe Prairie, Idaho to Lolo, Montana)**

Seeking to avoid further bloodshed, the Nez Perce moved along the Lolo Trail into the Bitterroot Range, hoping to leave General Howard and the war behind them. The arduous 10-day march over formidable mountains and down Lolo Creek was interrupted by a bloodless confrontation with Captain Rawn and a small command of Regular Army troops, the 7th US Infantry, and a complement of civilian volunteers from newly commissioned Fort Missoula. In answer to Rawn's demand for surrender, the Nez Perce stated, "We are going by you without fighting if you will let us, but we are going by you anyhow." In a bold move, the Nez Perce flanked the log barricade now known as Fort Fizzle and proceeded down Lolo Creek to Lolo on July 28, 1877 where they entered the Bitterroot Valley (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Sites along this segment include:

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 24. Musselshell Meadow | 27. Lolo Pass        |
| 25. Howard Camp        | 28. Lolo Hot Springs |
| 26. Weitas Meadows     | 29. Ft. Fizzle       |

## **Segment 3 (Lolo, Montana to Bannock Pass, Idaho/Montana)**

Entrance of the Nez Perce into western Montana Territory caused anxiety to local residents and settlers throughout the territory who had not yet recovered from news of the Custer defeat of 1876. With traditional amity, the Nez Perce passed through the Bitterroot Valley and over Gibbons Pass without incident, much to the relief of the settlers (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Concerned with the Nez Perce's presence in Montana, the Territorial Government organized units of civilian militia and pressured the military commands to pursue the Indians. The Nez Perce, however, considered themselves in peaceful country and enjoyed the leisurely pace ordered by Chief Looking Glass. They stopped at the Big Hole camp on the North Fork of the Big Hole River to rest, gather food, and cut and dry tipi poles for their long trip through the treeless regions of Idaho and Montana (USDA Forest Service 1990).

In the early morning of August 9, Army troops and civilians under Colonel John Gibbon attacked the Nez Perce at the Big Hole camp. A 24-hour battle ensued with heavy casualties on both sides. The Nez Perce knew war was now inevitable on all fronts and moved rapidly from the Big Hole Battlefield under the leadership of Lean Elk (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Lean Elk had met and joined the non-treaty Nez Perce in the lower Bitterroot where he and his band intended to stay for the summer. He believed Wahlitits' premonition and the warning to move rapidly, but could not persuade Looking Glass to hurry through friendly country. It was not until after the Big Hole battle that other chiefs recognized the truth of the warning and replaced Looking Glass, who did not regain a position of leadership until after the Cow Island skirmishes (USDA Forest Service 1990).

As the Nez Perce hurried through the Big Hole valley, they had several skirmishes with settlers. Stories of these encounters caused panic in the mining town of Bannack. Residents prepared for war as did the Nez Perce. Rifle pits dug by the Nez Perce near their Horse Prairie camp tell of their vigilance and expectations as they moved south over Bannock Pass and re-entered Idaho (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Sites along this segment include:

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 28. Ft. Owen                      | 33. Gibbons Pass                  |
| 29. Ft. Corvallis (Ft. Skadaddle) | 34. Big Hole National Battlefield |
| 30. Ft. Skalkaho (Ft. Run)        | 35. Skinner Meadow                |
| 31. Southern Nez Perce Trail      | 36. Montague-Winters Ranch        |
| 32. Scarred Trees                 | 37. Bannock Pass                  |

#### **Segment 4 (Bannock Pass, Idaho/Montana to Targhee Pass, Idaho/Wyoming)**

After losing many of their people during the Big Hole battle, the Nez Perce chiefs made a considerable effort to reach their Crow allies without further incident. Crippled by the effects of battle, they wanted no more war and often passed by white settlements pausing only long enough to secure provisions. The sparsely populated area aided their travel and the barrier of mountains on their left flank added to their security. Only a chance meeting with supply wagons at Birch Creek on August 15, and the resulting bloodshed marred their journey to Camas Meadows. The lush Camas Meadow country was likely a welcome sight as it offered good water and grazing -- similar to that of their homeland (USDA Forest Service 1990).

General Howard caught up with the Nez Perce at Camas Meadows, but on August 20 the Indians took the offensive and captured nearly all of the army pack mules. This slowed Howard's advance and allowed the beleaguered Indians to escape over Targhee Pass into Yellowstone country (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Sites along this segment include:

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 38. Junction City              | 44. Sam Glass Grave        |
| 39. Nez Perce Creek Rifle Pits | 45. Howard's Camp Callaway |
| 40. Birch Creek Skirmish       | 46. Bugler Brooks Grave    |
| 41. Corrine-Bannock Stage Road | 47. Camas Meadow Battle    |
| 42. Hole-in-Rock Stage Station | 48. Targhee Pass           |
| 43. Dry Creek Stage Station    |                            |

## **Segment 5 (Targhee Pass, Idaho/Wyoming to Clark Fork Yellowstone, Wyoming)**

Shortly after entering the then 5-year-old Yellowstone National Park, the Nez Perce became confused about which route to take through the wilderness to reach the Crow's homeland east of the Absaroka Mountains. The advice of a prospector and park tourist, whom they captured, guided them across the Absaroka Divide. Once across the divide, they proceeded into the Clark Fork of the Yellowstone Canyon (USDA Forest Service 1990).

General Howard did not immediately follow the Nez Perce through Yellowstone Park but ordered Captain S.G. Fisher and his Bannock Indian scouts to follow them. Howard went to Virginia City, Montana to replenish supplies and secure livestock lost to the Nez Perce in the skirmishes at Camas Meadows. While in Virginia City, he telegraphed the military in eastern Montana to inform them of the Nez Perce's activities. The strategy was for Colonel Samuel Sturgis and Major Hart to block escape routes into the plains while Howard's forces pushed in from the Park (USDA Forest Service 1990).

The Seventh Cavalry under Sturgis was anxious to regain its reputation which suffered during Custer's defeat. In his haste, Sturgis misjudged the Nez Perce's intention and ordered his troops to leave their position on the Clark Fork River and proceed south toward the Shoshone River. His decision allowed the Nez Perce to escape the "Absaroka Blockade." (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Their escape did not guarantee the Nez Perce's good fortune. They soon learned that the Crows had no intentions of giving them asylum or assistance; rather, their intentions were more along the lines of stealing the Nez Perce horses. For the Nez Perce, the only hope for peace seemed to be to follow what Sitting Bull and the Sioux had done a year earlier—go to Canada (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Leaving the box-like Clark Fork River Canyon, the Nez Perce moved rapidly northward hoping to avoid contact with Howard and his forces (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Sites along this segment include:

- |                                      |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 49. Campsite                         | 56. Bart Henderson's Ranch Burned  |
| 50. Shively's Capture                | 57. Dietrich Killed at Mammoth     |
| 51. Radersburg Party Capture         | 58. Baronette's Bridge Burned      |
| 52. Cowan Shot (Radersburg Party)    | 59. Weikert and McCartney Attacked |
| 53. Helena Tourist Skirmish          | 60. Sturgis' Scouts Ambushed       |
| 54. Captain Spurgin's "Beaver Slide" | 61. Campsite                       |
| 55. Radersburg Party Release         | 62. Dead Indian Hill               |



## **Segment 6 (Clark Fork Yellowstone, Wyoming to Judith Gap, Montana)**

As the Nez Perce exited the rugged Absaroka Range, their thoughts and efforts focused on the long ride across the central Montana prairies to Canada. They knew the Crows would not claim them as friends and the Army would do anything in its power to stop their final flight toward Canada (USDA Forest Service 1990).

When Sturgis realized the Nez Perce had started down the Clark Fork River to Montana, he hurried to join Howard's forces who had just crossed Yellowstone National Park, hoping to find the Nez Perce stalled ahead of them. Both commanders, marveling at the Nez Perce's escape of the "blockade," realized their shrinking opportunities to catch the Nez Perce before they crossed into Canada. Howard dispatched messengers to Colonel Nelson Miles at Fort Keogh requesting him to move rapidly to the northwest and intercept the Nez Perce before they reached Canada and joined forces with Sitting Bull (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Sturgis, anxious to capture the Nez Perce, moved ahead of Howard and caught the Indians' rear guard just north of the Yellowstone River near present day Laurel, Montana on September 13. In a brief skirmish, the rear guard effectively held off the much-advantaged military force, permitting the Nez Perce's main cavalcade to escape through the rimrocks of Canyon Creek to the high plains above the Yellowstone (USDA Forest Service 1990).

The trail-weary Nez Perce knew Howard's troops were well behind them, but pushed northward as fast as their foot-sore horses could carry them. Only occasionally did parties of Crows harass them, intent on stealing horses (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Traveling through these familiar buffalo hunting grounds, the Nez Perce widened the gap between them and the military. The pace was too swift for Sturgis who temporarily abandoned pursuit at the Musselshell River to wait for and reunite with Howard. With the Missouri River ahead, the Nez Perce considered the remaining miles to Canada a small hurdle compared to what they had been through the past 3 months (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Sites along this segment include:

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 63. Bill Brockway Ranch      | 67. Crow Indian Raid         |
| 64. P.W. McAdow Sawmill      | 68. Musselshell Crossing     |
| 65. J.M.V. Cochran Ranch     | 69. Sturgis and Howard Camps |
| 66. Canyon Creek Battle Site | 70. Judith Basin Raid        |

## **Segment 7 (Judith Gap, Montana to Bear Paw, Montana)**

The Nez Perce pushed rapidly through Judith Gap northward. The plains country between the Judith and Snowy Mountains provided good water and forage which gave the Nez Perce's horses a chance to regain their strength. Wild game was abundant. Some of the Nez Perce warriors knew this area as it was a traditional hunting ground. Trails to the Missouri were easily followed. They stopped briefly on September 21 at the Reed and Bowles Trading Post Stockade near Lewistown, Montana to trade before heading north into the Missouri River Breaks. In just 36 hours, the Nez Perce covered 70 miles through the rough breaks country, arriving at Cow Island crossing. This crossing provided easy access to the north bank of the Missouri. The Nez Perce had passed the last major physical barrier between them and Canada (USDA Forest Service 1990).

After establishing camp a few miles up Cow Creek, several Nez Perce rode back to the Cow Island steamboat landing for supplies. Denied their request for provisions, the Nez Perce ran off the landing attendants, took what supplies they needed, and burned the rest (USDA Forest Service 1990).

The Nez Perce again placed Looking Glass at their head for the final leg of their flight. Again, against the warnings from Lean Elk, Looking Glass slowed the pace. The Nez Perce were weary, and Howard and Sturgis were several days' journey behind. However, the Nez Perce did not know of Howard's message to Miles, who was fast closing upon them. The Missouri River proved no obstacle to Miles. He chanced upon a steamboat at Carroll Landing (located in the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge) and used it to carry his troops across (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Miles' cavalry with a large contingent of Sioux and Cheyenne swept down upon the Nez Perce's Snake Creek camp on September 30. They succeeded in running off most of the Nez Perce horses, but suffered 60 casualties in the initial assault. Seeing that direct assault was too costly, Miles laid siege to the camp (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Miles negotiated daily with the Nez Perce. Joseph of the Wallowa band was now the only chief left to speak for the Nez Perce. Toohoolhoolzote, Lean Elk, Ollokot, and Looking Glass were dead. White Bird managed to escape past military outposts and eventually got to Canada. When Howard and Miles stated through interpreters that there would be no more war, Joseph thought he could surrender on his own terms as an equal to the generals. The terms were, should the Nez Perce give up their arms, they would be returned to the Lapwai Reservation with what stock they had left. Joseph's famous surrender speech on October 5, 1877 is a fitting conclusion to the flight of the Nez Perce:

Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Toohoolhoolzote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are -- perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever. (USDA Forest Service 1990).

The apparent terms for surrender were never kept. Eight years passed before Joseph and 267 of the 400 Nez Perce who surrendered with him were allowed to return to the Pacific Northwest. Joseph himself was never again permitted to settle on his homeland or the reservation at Lapwai (USDA Forest Service 1990).

Sites along this segment include:

- |                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 71. Reed and Bowles Stockade | 76. Burning of Bull Wagon     |
| 72. Cow Island Crossing      | 77. Bullwackers Graves        |
| 73. Cow Island Skirmish      | 78. Miles Butte Military Camp |
| 74. Cow Creek Camp           | 79. Bear Paw Battlefield      |
| 75. Ilges Skirmish           |                               |

## Associated Trails

The NPNHT is linked with several other historic and/or scenic trails. The routes most closely connected within the Nez Perce historic corridor are the Lolo Trail in Idaho and Montana and the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, which crosses Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. These trails overlap in parts of Forest Service Northern Region. Other significant trails associated with the NPNHT include the

Southern Nez Perce Trail, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the Bannock Trail, the Bozeman Trail, the Carroll Trail of 1875, the Cow Creek Freight Road, and the Northwest Passage Scenic Byway.

## **The Lolo Trail**

Used only once in its entirety the 1,170-mile long NPNHT is not a single path but the synthesis of individual trails that were used before, during, and after the Nez Perce flight of 1877. Perhaps the oldest and most discernible of these trails, encompassed within the NPNHT, is the Lolo Trail. Designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1962, the Lolo Trail stretches approximately 140 miles from Lolo, Montana to Weippe Prairie in Idaho. It served as a passageway across the rugged Bitterroot Mountains for generations of northwestern tribes such as the Cayuse, Palouse, Umatilla, Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, Nez Perce, and others who crossed the Lolo Trail on their journey to and from the buffalo grounds of eastern Montana. The Nez Perce called it "Khusahna Iskit" – the buffalo trail (Josephy 2007).

In the fall of 1805, the men of the Lewis and Clark expedition struggled across the snow-covered Lolo Trail to reach a Nez Perce camp located near Weippe Prairie. Here, the first white men ever to meet the Nez Perce were welcomed and cared for while they built dugout canoes and prepared for their continuing journey to the Pacific. On their return trip in 1806 the explorers crossed the Lolo Trail again, this time traveling eastward towards St. Louis and the conclusion of their epic expedition. In their wake came trappers, traders, missionaries, and miners who used the Lolo Trail repeatedly over the next sixty years. In 1866, Congress appropriated \$50,000 to conduct a survey and construct a wagon road across this formidable route; an effort that ultimately failed and resulted in little more than a modest widening of the original trail (Idaho State Historical Society 1970).

In July of 1877 a group of approximately 750 non-treaty Nez Perce men, women and children, along with an even larger number of horses, traversed the Lolo Trail as they fled eastward from Idaho and entered Montana just ahead of pursuing military forces under the command of General Otis Oliver Howard during the ill-fated war of 1877. As they descended the Lolo Trail, a group of soldiers and citizen volunteers from Missoula attempted to halt the Nez Perce at a hastily constructed barricade near Lolo Creek. The attempt failed and the barricade quickly earned the nickname "Fort Fizzle", which it still bears to this day.

Today, segments of both the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail are both located within the historic boundaries of the Lolo Trail. The rich history of the Lolo Trail makes it deserving of its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1962, its inclusion as a part of Nez Perce National Historical Park in 1965, and its listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 (McLeod 1982).

## **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail**

Efforts to commemorate the route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806) began taking shape in the 1930s, when a private organization called the Lewis-Clark Trail Commission advocated marking and commemorating the trail between St. Louis and its termination point near the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon. In 1948, the National Park Service initially recommended that a "Lewis and Clark Tourway" be established between St. Louis to Three Forks, Montana. However, noted conservationist Jay Norwood Darling, better known as "Ding" Darling, pushed for inclusion of the entire route, from St. Louis to its termination point near the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon. Following his death in 1962, the J.N. "Ding" Darling Foundation presented to Congress a proposal to study what Darling called a "recreation ribbon" along the route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) began that study in 1962 and published its results three years later under the title *The Lewis and Clark Trail – A Proposal for Development*. In the meantime, Congress established the Lewis and Clark Trail Commission with a mandate to "stimulate Federal, state, and local agencies to identify, mark, and

preserve for public inspiration and enjoyment ...,” the route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Federal recognition of the trail moved forward again in 1966 when the BOR released its landmark publication titled, *Trails for America: Report on Nationwide Trails Study*. The study recommended a nation-wide series of scenic and recreational trails, one of which was the 3,700-mile route of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The National Trails Act of 1968 listed the Lewis and Clark Trail for further study and possible listing as a National Scenic Trail. In 1978, the National Parks and Recreation Act amended the National Trails Systems Act of 1968 to include the Lewis and Clark Trail as one of four new National Historic Trails (USDI Bureau of Outdoor Recreation 1966).

Focusing more closely on a specific segment of the Lewis and Clark route, key sites located on both the Lolo and Clearwater National Forests were slated for marking as early as the 1930s. In a letter dated February 15, 1933, Lolo National Forest Supervisor Theodore Shoemaker described various site locations considered “... of sufficient importance to warrant recording and marking on the ground in an appropriate manner.” In addition to key Lewis and Clark locations within the two Forests, the letter mentions Fort Fizzle, the site of a failed attempt to halt the non-treaty Nez Perce as they descended the Lolo Trail and headed east towards the Bitterroot Valley in 1877. In an unsigned document dated November 1, 1938 and titled “Plans for Marking Historic Points on Lolo Trail Through Lolo and Clearwater Forests” a list of Lewis and Clark historic sites are designated as points to be marked, along with the “Chief Joseph route” and “Howard Camp,” both of which are associated with the 1877 Nez Perce flight. These letters make clear that the route followed by those involved in the 1877 War and Flight was recognized by the Forest Service early on as an important historical asset (USDA Forest Service. NPNHT Misc. files). The NPNHT and the Lewis and Clark NHT cross each other numerous times to the point that they are the often the same trail from Big Hole National Battlefield, Montana to Weippe Prairie, Idaho.

## **The Southern Nez Perce Trail**

For hundreds of years, Nez Perce buffalo hunters traveled the route known as the Southern Nez Perce Trail. The hunters used this route for seasonal trips from their Camas Prairie homeland to buffalo hunting grounds in Montana. In the 1860s, miners, traders, and homesteaders also used this trail as the route from Montana to the Elk City area gold fields. The trail was converted to a road in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The current 101-mile, primitive Magruder Corridor Road winds through a vast wild area of expansive mountain vistas (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The landscape is much the same as when the Nez Perce and other early travelers passed through the area. The road has changed little since its construction by the CCC. It has also been known as the Elk City to Darby Road, Montana Road, and the Parker Trail. The current “corridor” was created in 1980 when the Central Idaho Wilderness Act was passed; the road enables a traveler to drive between two wilderness areas: the 1.2 million-acre Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to the north, and the 2.3 million-acre Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness to the south. Together, they comprise the largest roadless block of land in the lower 48 states (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail**

This Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) was designated in 1978 and is known as the “King of Trails”. The CDT crosses the NPNHT at Targhee Pass, Bannock Pass, and Gibbons Pass, as well as in several locations on the Shoshone, Gallatin, and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests. The CDT is a 3,100-mile trail, traveling from Canada to Mexico, through five western states—Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. It features approximately 1,900 miles of existing trails and primitive, seldom-used roads (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **The Bannock Trail**

Also known as the “Great Trail of the Indians,” the Bannock Trail is approximately 200 miles in length, traveling through the states of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. It begins at Camas Meadows, Idaho, (northeast of Dubois, Idaho), crosses through the northern portion of Yellowstone, and then on to the Clark Fork and Shoshone Rivers in northwest Wyoming. Tribes, including the Shoshone-Bannock, Nez Perce, Kalispel, Kootenai, and Flathead, have used this pre-historic trail for centuries (USDA Forest Service 2006).

Remnants of the trail exist in Yellowstone National Park; it saw heavy use after the bison herds west of the mountains were depleted. The trail enters the park from the west over Targhee Pass and heads down into the Madison Valley. It descends Indian Creek to the Gardiner River, where it turns north toward Mammoth, then east, running south of the Yellowstone River to the area of Tower Falls. From there, it crosses the Yellowstone River and follows the Lamar River to Soda Butte Creek. The trail then splits, with one branch following Soda Butte Creek and the other leaving the river route to strike out for a more direct route over the divide and into the Clark’s Fork of the Yellowstone River drainage. Both major branches and several minor ones led to good hunting areas in what is now Montana. Today’s highways through Yellowstone closely follow the Bannock Trail (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **The Bozeman Trail**

The Bozeman Trail was a long-used Indian travel corridor. Indigenous people had followed the north-south trails through Powder River country since pre-historic times. Captain William Reynolds of the Army Corps of Topographic Engineers led an expedition that covered much of the Bozeman Trail location in 1859-1860, mapping landmarks and geographic features that would become familiar to travelers during the next decade. The Bozeman Trail began as a gold-rush trail, cutting through the Powder River Basin. This basin was the last and best remaining hunting grounds of the Northern Plains Indians, which ultimately resulted in the Indian wars on the Northern Plains. In 1877 both the Nez Perce and the military crossed and followed the Bozeman Trail; some sites include Bannack, Virginia City, and Laurel (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **The Carroll Trail of 1875**

The Carroll Trail was a wagon road used to ship freight from Carroll Landing (now located in the Charles M. Russell NWR) on the Missouri River to Helena and the Montana gold fields. In the late 1860s and early 1870s, the U.S. Army had a great desire to develop shipping routes to supply the forts of Montana Territory. Several reconnaissance trips were conducted for this purpose, but the one commanded by E. W. Clift in the spring of 1869 was the most significant for the Carroll Trail because it demonstrated the feasibility of using wagon roads from the Missouri River near the mouth of the Musselshell River to Helena and the Gallatin Valley. Clift was responsible for the exploration of a wagon road route from Fort Ellis, near Bozeman, to the mouth of the Musselshell River. The Missouri river boat landing at the terminus of this route was first known as Musselshell City and later as Fort Musselshell. The portion of Capt. Clift’s route between Armell’s Creek and Martinsdale would become a part of the Carroll Trail. The history of the Carroll Trail began when Lt. Gustavus Cheyney Doane, from Fort Ellis, established a steamboat landing in May of 1874 as the Missouri River terminus of the Fort Ellis-Carroll Wagon Road. The settlement that grew around this landing became known as the “town” of Carroll (USDA Forest Service 2006).

General Howard followed the Carroll Trail from Judith Gap to Carroll Landing, where he and 100 soldiers boarded the steamer Benton for a trip of 40 miles upstream on the river to Cow Island. Army suppliers from Fort Ellis also followed this trail to the Missouri. The Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks is responsible for administration of the trail today (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **The Cow Creek Freight Road**

The Cow Creek Freight Road was used to ferry freight and supplies to and from Cow Island. The old Fort Benton and Cow Island Freight Road (now located in the Missouri Breaks National Monument) begins near the mouth of Cow Creek, follows it for about 10 miles, then leaves the creek and turns westward toward the Bear Paw Mountains. This section of the 1877 War and Flight involved both military personnel and civilians with close ties to Fort Benton. As the Nez Perce rapidly moved northward from the Judith Basin toward the Canadian border, they encountered soldiers, freighters, and traders on the Cow Creek Freight Road. The Fort Benton defensive forces were small and dispersed, and historians have largely ignored or disparaged their actions. However, the encounters at Cow Island and Cow Creek Canyon on the Cow Creek Freight Road, coupled with a decision by the Nez Perce to slow their pace, helped the pursuing cavalry and mounted infantry to catch and capture most of the Nez Perce at Bear Paw. Without these delays, it is possible that the Nez Perce would have found sanctuary across the Canadian border (USDA Forest Service 2006).

## **The Northwest Passage Scenic Byway**

Established in 1989 as a state scenic byway and a national scenic byway, before designation as an All American Road by the Federal Highway Administration in 2005, the 202 mile Northwest Passage Scenic Byway follows U.S. Highway 12 from Lewiston, Idaho to Lolo, Montana, and also Idaho State Highway 13 from Kooskia, Idaho to Grangeville, Idaho (USDA Forest Service 2006).

The All American Road designation indicates nationally significant intrinsic qualities that make this byway “a designation unto itself” and was in part due to its proximity to the Lewis & Clark and Nez Perce NHTs. The byway connects with NPNHT sites along its route or within its vicinity, including White Bird and Clearwater Battlefields, Looking Glass Village, and Tolo Lake.

## **Appendix B – Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) Trail Feasibility Study**