NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 13 1991

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lolo Trail

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Lolo, Montana to Weippe, Idaho ☐ not for publication

city, town ☐ vicinity

state		code		county		code		zip code
	Idaho		16		Idaho		49	83553
	Montana		30		Missoula		63	59847

3. Classification

(See continuation sheet)

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
[X] private	☐ building(s)		248	buildings
[X] public-local	☐ district			
[X] public-State	[X] site	32	2	sites
[X] public-Federal	☐ structure			structures
	☐ object			objects
		32	250	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Nez Perce 1877 Campaign

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

[XX] other, (explain:) NHL Boundary Study

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action 2/1/93

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape: forest

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape: forest
Agriculture: field

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls
roof
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

When Lewis and Clark turned westward up Lolo creek, they traversed an open mountain valley for a little more than ten miles. Following close to its north edge, they then ascended a flat ridge, where scarred yellow pine (where traveling Indians had stripped and eaten bark) were more easily noticed by William Clark, September 12, than they are now. Subsequent logging has removed most of those traces, but some still survive on a ridge before Graves creek as well as near Howard creek. Beyond Howard creek, long stretches of deep old trail mark their ridge-side course. Some portions of valley trail remain, particularly near Lolo Hot Springs, but a series of ridges gave access to a large summit meadow they encountered after entering Idaho.

Two routes were available then. One led along a series of ridges to a fishery near Powell, a choice that seemed appropriate to their Shoshoni guide, who saw that they really needed to go fishing for supplies. (Lewis and Clark thought their guide got lost several times including their Salmon Bitterroot valley crossing as well as their fishing detour. But Toby, their guide, actually knew exactly what he had to do to get them through an exceptionally confusing country. A number of more recent Lewis and Clark specialists also have been misled by ignorance of Toby's situation, and their misguided comments should be ignored.) West of their fishery, they ascended Wendover ridge to a long stretch of ridge trail from which they deviated near Indian postoffice and west of Sherman peak. Again, Toby had not led them astray, because their Nez Perce guides used his route (aside from omitting his Powell fishing detour) when they returned in 1806. They normally had to follow ridge routes to avoid windfalls of timber and to stay clear of brush that made stream bottoms impassable. Their ridgetop segments often were narrow and well defined, but in many places their route was more of a trail zone than a single, clearly defined track. On that account they could not find their way west, nor even their return route in 1806, without competent, experienced Indian guides. Lewis and Clark were skilled explorers, and their problems in returning over a trail they already had crossed indicate what complex route difficulties they faced. Now that their Shoshoni and Nez Perce guides are long gone, modern specialists continue to have difficulty identifying some segments of their trail zone. In that respect, Lewis and Clark's Lolo route retains its integrity. If a broad, clear trail were cut through there, integrity would be lost and Lewis and Clark's landmark adventure could not be experienced any more.

[X] See continuation sheet

Some Montana farming, along with logging in both states, has affected some Lolo trail segments, but modern highways are absent from most of their Lolo route. Compared with most of Lewis and Clark's route, this portion retains high integrity and is being preserved. Lewis and Clark could still get lost in enough places to feel right at home. Constant change in timber patterns characterized that era then and now, and no one can stop trees and brush from growing, maturing, falling, or, in many cases, from burning. That pattern still continues.

Some, but not very many, buildings or other properties that do not contribute to National Historic Landmark significance of this 86,000 acre historic landscape are eligible for National Register recognition as ranches, United States Forest Service installations, recreational sites or structures, or archaeological sites with values of state or local importance. These have not been evaluated in connection with this National Historic Landmark boundary investigation.

This unusually large National Historic Landmark includes 319 identifiable parcels of land in Idaho and 63 in Montana. Each one of these 382 segments has been identified and evaluated in a time consuming process that has required several years for completion. In a corridor of significant travel extending well over a hundred miles in length, this avenue of nationally significant discovery and communication has retained its integrity to a remarkable degree. Although modern markers and occasional trails help to facilitate travel there, preservation of a Lolo Trail zone of wilderness travel is provided for in this landmark area that contributed an inspirational chapter to United States history.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

[X] nationally [ ] statewide [ ] locally

Applicable National Register Criteria [X] A [X] B [ ] C [ ] D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) [ ] A [ ] B [ ] C [ ] D [ ] E [ ] F [ ] G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Ethnic heritage: Native American	1805-1806	
Exploration/settlement	1877	

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark

Sacajewea and Toby (Shoshoni Indians)

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

One of four traditional eighteenth century Indian routes around or through a 200 mile long Bitterroot Mountain barrier separating Northwest Plateau Indians from Montana's buffalo plains, Idaho's Lolo Trail provided Lewis and Clark a difficult, but not impossible, route for access to navigable Columbia river streams. They rejected a much more distant Clark's fork-Pend d'Oreille route partly because it was impassable to salmon, and did not hear about a Montana trail (Saint Joe-Clearwater divide) route that also would have been a lot longer. Their Shoshoni guide lacked experience with their best choice--a Salmon and Clearwater divide Nez Perce trail--because he had no occasion to penetrate Nez Perce country that way. So they wound up with a circuitous Lolo Trail route that offered access to an upper Lochsa fishery patronized by Flathead bands that their guide was familiar with. Their expedition's success depended entirely upon identifying a Bitterroot crossing, and they were fortunate to find a Shoshoni guide who could make a late-season trip that way. Although their route was later examined by Hudson's Bay Company trappers and John Mullan's road and railway surveyors, it turned out to be useful only for Nez Perce Indians who continued to employ it to reach Montana's buffalo country. Seven decades later, an updated version of Lewis and Clark's Lolo Trail route gained a second phase of national significance when hundreds of Oregon and Idaho Nez Perce Indians had to traverse it in order to get away from General Oliver Otis Howard's army that had embarked upon more than a four month campaign against them. Recognized as a National Historic Trail by Congressional legislation, October 6, 1986 (100 Stat. 1122) that Lolo Trail variant--which mostly follows Lewis and Clark's version--needs identification where it diverges from earlier alternates. In 1866-1867, Major Sewall Truax, funded by a special federal appropriation, constructed an improved military road for better west-end access as well as for superior grades past difficult places, and his route proved useful to General Howard during his 1877 campaign. Howard hardly could have transported heavy military equipment over some portions of Lewis and Clark's route. This aspect of Lolo Trail significance was recognized in a 1976 National Historic Landmark nomination form, and is considered in developing this form also. A vast Lewis

[X] See continuation sheet

and Clark as well as Nez Perce campaign literature elaborates both phases of Lolo Trail significance, so all of that does not need to be recapitulated here. Because it was essential for Lewis and Clark's success and for General Howard's campaign, that formidable route has exceptional national importance. A multiple property documentation form provides contextual information for Howard's campaign.

In adopting a Lolo Trail route from Montana's Bitterroot valley to Idaho's Weippe prairie, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark brought national recognition to an already significant avenue for western travel. As an extensive historic landmark largely unaltered by subsequent modification or structural intrusion, their route gained exceptional national significance because it represented their most difficult passage of their entire journey from Saint Louis to Fort Clatsop: without a successful crossing there, they never could have achieved their expedition's primary objective to discover a road connecting navigable Missouri and Columbia headwaters. Regarded as an essential component of western expansion, their Lolo Trail experience, more than any other feature of their long journey, gave them a well-deserved national reputation. Two other people also contributed in an essential way to their Lolo Trail success, and merit national recognition for their association with this historic landmark Toby, their Shoshoni guide and Sacajewea, their Shoshoni interpreter. They also contributed major services in other places, but their most remarkable test and achievement came during their Lolo Trail passage. Without Toby's participation Lewis and Clark never could have found their way through that confusing country. This was their only route segment where they depended entirely upon a guide. Aside from providing valuable services in translating messages that allowed communication with Indian peoples, Sacajawea identified their expedition as a non-military venture that would not embark upon Indian warfare. Sacajawea's ability to survive that hazardous crossing identifies her skills and contribution more with this landmark than with other places. So both Toby and Sacajawea need to be recognized for exceptional national achievement associated with this landmark site.

Publication of Gary Moulton's definitive set of Lewis and Clark expedition journals offered coverage of their westbound Lolo Trail travel subsequent to preparation of this National Park Service form. Another volume, covering Lewis and Clark's 1806 Lolo Trail experience, is about to appear. No future Lolo Trail bibliography will be complete without inclusion of these two distinguished volumes.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Boundary justification: Lewis and Clark's Lolo trail route presents some unusual problems in National Historic Landmark boundary identification and definition. A horse trail utilized by Nez Perce buffalo hunters and Flathead salmon fishers, it was obscure enough two centuries or so ago that Lewis and Clark had to employ an experienced Shoshoni guide to find their way through a difficult mountain country, and their own tracks have mostly disappeared, although their trail can be recognized in some stretches with little or no difficulty. Clark's surveys, complete with bearings and distances, along with a number of expedition journals, make recovery of their route possible. Generally a ridge route typical of travel in that era, it has some segments subject to easy identification. Other portions resist precise definition. In this situation, a narrow route corridor that widens to a mile or more in portions that have a greater range of error, is delineated. Largely in an unsettled forest country, their Lolo trail grade can be given boundaries only in terms of cadastral survey, utilizing section, range, and township lines. A boundary approaching 400 miles in length has to be employed in order to accommodate a trail that runs close to 200 miles in length, and a National Register polygon of exceptional shape, but with only 26 coordinates, is required to enclose such an area. Some of these are on maps (West Fork butte, Grave peak, Savage ridge, Bear Mountain) that have no trail route. A map more than 20 feet long and nearly 10 feet high, supplied on 24 United States Geological Survey 24000 scale topographic sheets, displays a boundary defined along section lines and subdivisions. Although a boundary could be indicated in terms of section corners and quarter corners, starting and concluding in Bitterroot valley or at Weippe prairie, more than a thousand angles would have to be turned in order to accomplish that, and except for portions at either end, boundaries directly opposite each other would appear on different continuation pages that could be matched up only with great difficulty. In order to have a boundary definition in which land included or excluded can be identified with ease, all sections or parts of sections are listed by range and township. That arrangement provides convenient reference, along with a large map that delineates all land identified in this National Historic Landmark registration.

A trail corridor at least a half mile wide generally is necessary to avoid an excessively long list of land parcels that are included. Reducing that corridor by half would increase this list by at least four times and create excessive difficulty in determining what tracts are included. In many places where trail routes diverge or wander about because of difficult terrain, a wider corridor is advantageous. Other trail segments where an exact location cannot be ascertained require a wider corridor, which is proportional to uncertainty in route information. Lewis and Clark followed more than one variant in places on their journey back and forth, as did eighteenth century Indian hunters and fishers who developed their trail. In every case, a corridor of minimum width consistent with precision of definition and accuracy of information has been employed. Most Lolo trail segments occupy Forest Service lands or major lumber company lands that are managed with attention to cultural values.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Because such a vast Lolo Trail literature is available on other forms only four items are listed here:

John Peebles, Lewis and Clark: Trails and Campsites in Idaho (Boise, 1966), 40p.

C. M. McLeod, A Cultural History of the Lolo Trail (M.A., University of Montana, 1984), 66-85.

Roy E. Appleman, ed., Lewis and Clark: Historic Places Associated with their Transcontinental Exploration, 1804-1806 (Washington: National Park Service, 1975), 164-178, 208-213, 272-284, 372-375.

Ralph S. Space, The Lolo Trail (Lewiston, 1984).

[X] See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [X] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:
- [X] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: Idaho State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: More than 86,000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			

[X] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Merle W. Wells, Historian

organization: Idaho State Historical Society — date: September 13, 1988

street & number: 610 N. Julia Davis Drive — telephone: (208) 334-3428

city or town: Boise — state: Idaho — zip code: 83702

★U.S.GPO:1988-0-223-918

View of Sherman Peak, the highest point on the Lolo Trail, from the west. Clark recorded on September 18, 1805: "... from the top of a high part of the mountain at 20 miles I had a view of an eminence Plain and leavel Countrey to the S.W. & West." Note the burned over timber in this area. Photograph by Ray H. Mattison, July 1958. Negative in Region Two Office Library, Omaha, Nebraska

This photograph shows the high, rugged landscape of the Bitterroot Mountains of Idaho along the route of the Lolo Trail. The trail passed along the high backbone of the mountain divide between the North Fork of the Clearwater River on the north and the Lochsa River on the south. The crest of the ridge seen in the left center of the picture,and about two miles away, marks the location of the trail in the vicinity of Indian Post Office. This view looks north. Photograph by Ray H. Mattison, July 1958, National Park Service.

Lolo Trail, Idaho
View of one of the two rock cairns
known as the Indian Post Office.
N.P.S. Photo, 1958

Rock formation near the site of Hot Springs, near which Lewis and Clark camped on the return trip over the Lolo Trail. Lolo Creek may be seen on the right. South view. Photograph by Ray H. Mattison, July, 1958. Negative in Region Two Office Library, Omaha, Nebraska.