

Northwest Passage Scenic Byway

The Lewis and Clark Expedition journeyed through north-central Idaho 200 years ago in search of the Northwest Passage. The sparkling rivers, deep canyons, and rugged mountains they encountered are relatively unchanged. Experience the culture, recreation, and scenery in this breathtaking land of the Nez Perce.



Length: 202 miles / 323.2 km

Time Six hours to drive or three to days to enjoy the entire

Allow: byway

Local Information

North Central Idaho Travel Association

877-364-3246

Send E-mail

Visitor Services

Fees



Expect to pay fees at the various campsites and attractions along the byway.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities



Beautiful nature and cycling trails can be found all along the byway. You can experience backpacking, horseback riding, hiking, and river rafting in this uncrowded land. Pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists all use the byway. In many cases, however, there may not be sufficient amount of shoulder room along all portions of the byway, so non-motorized travelers use a portion of traffic lanes, making this mode of travel challenging. Recently, there has been much interest particularly by bicycling organizations to follow the Lewis and Clark journey via bicycle. In response to this, community organizations are currently exploring "rails to trails" opportunities.

Camping



There are places to camp along this byway.

Food



There are places to buy food along this byway.

Gasoline



Gasoline is available.



Information

A variety of tools assist travelers, including face-to-face instruction at visitor centers, signs, maps, and brochures. Four key wayfinding tools include: + Byway logo signs along the route + Mapboards of the byway showing key features + US 12 and Idaho Highway 13 signs because they are the same as this byway + Historical trail signs because the byway parallels these routes. Maps and brochures to assist travelers in finding their way include: + A map included in the broadly distributed "Discover" magazine showing the byway, key features, points of interest, contact numbers, and web sites + An audio cassette tour and brochure that travelers can listen to along the route + The state of Idaho Scenic Byways map "Taking the Scenic Route" + The L-C Trail and Nez Perce National Historic Trail brochures



Lodging

There is overnight lodging along this byway.



Retail

There are places to shop along this byway.

Special Considerations

Two-wheel drive vehicles are accommodated along the entire route of US Highway 12 and Idaho Highway 13. The entire route is paved with at least two lanes and occasional paved passing lanes.

All of the visitor centers are accessible to people with disabilities. Most of the campgrounds and RV parks have accessible facilities and camping areas. Most of the wayside interpretive areas are also accessible and many can be enjoyed without leaving the vehicle.

Restrictions

During winter months drivers may experience some snow-covered roads near Lolo Pass at the Montana border.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

Visitors traveling the byway from Memorial Day to Labor Day will have greatest access to visitor services and interpretive/educational opportunities.

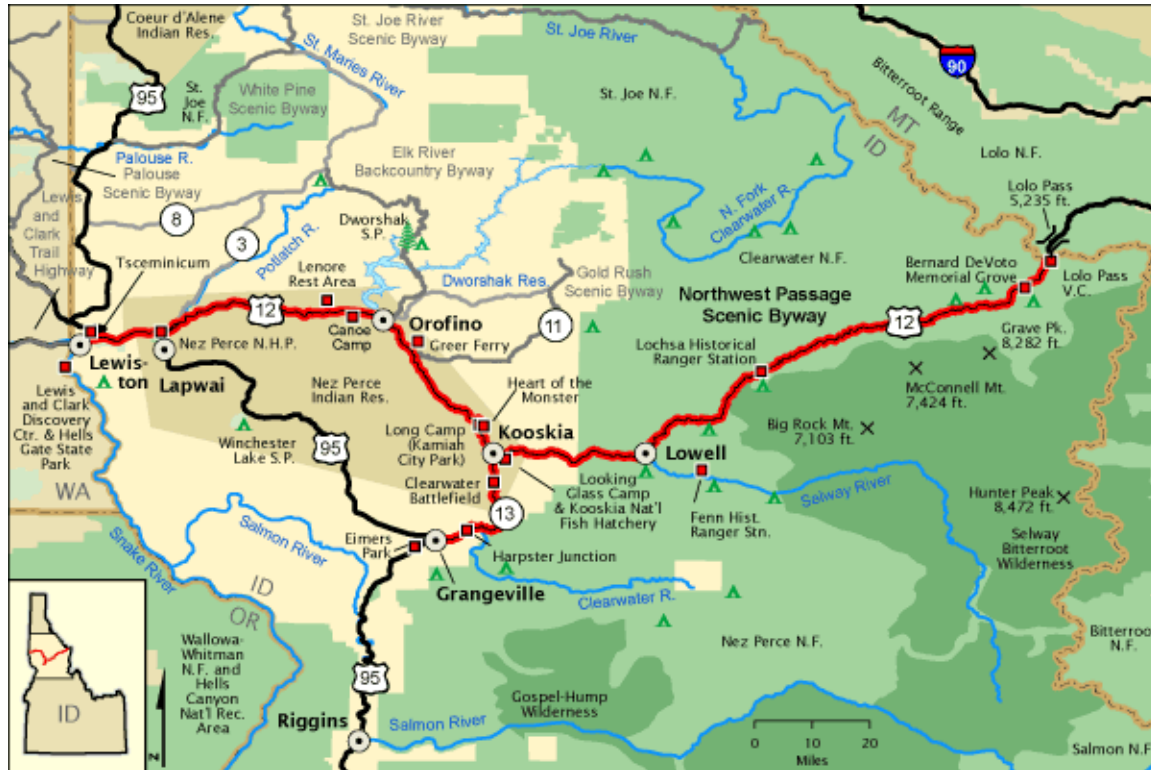
High Season

Because destinations along the byway provide great opportunities for escape and recreation, summer holiday weekends can be more crowded.

Winter

Inclement weather slows traveling time during the winter; however, the roads are regularly maintained and plowed throughout the winter, and the highway is passable.

Map and Directions



Legend:

■ Point of Interest	▲ Campground	▬ Featured Byway	🌊 Water	📏 State Border
🌲 Park	⛺ Picnic/Rest Area	▬ America's Byways	🌿 Wildlife Refuge	🏙 Urban Area
ⓧ Mountain	🛣 Interstate	▬ Other Byway	🌿 Wilderness Area	🏘 Tribal Nation
📍 City	🛣 U.S. Highway	▬ Other Road	🌿 Other Federal Lands	🏢 Military Base
★ Capital	🛣 State Highway	⋯ Trail	🌿 Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

Formerly called the Clearwater Canyons Scenic Byway, Idaho's Northwest Passage Scenic Byway is a 90-mile corridor through some of the most scenic and historic country in the United States. The Byway follows US 12 from Spalding along the Clearwater River to Kooskia, Idaho. From there it follows Idaho State Highway 13 to Grangeville. The byway is located equidistant between Boise, ID, Spokane, WA, and Missoula, MT in a region called North Central Idaho. Allow 1 hour and 30 minutes for a straight drive;

however, if you want to visit and explore some of the Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce historical sites, give yourself more time.

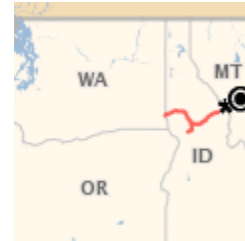
Getting to the Byway



Nearby cities

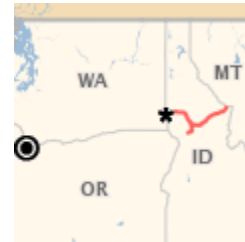
Missoula, MT (43 miles / 69.20 km, 45 minutes)

- Start:** ● Intersection of Mullan Rd and US-93 N, Missoula, MT
N 46.884° W 114.040° [?]
- Directions:**
- Take US-93 to Lolo, MT.
 - Get on US-12 and go west to Lolo Pass where you enter the byway.
- Junction with byway:** * US-12 at Idaho-Montana border
N 46.635° W 114.580° [?]



Portland, OR (345 miles / 555.22 km, 6 hours 5 minutes)

- Start:** ● I-84 eastbound, Portland, OR
N 45.525° W 122.661° [?]
- Directions:**
- Take I-84 east to Exit 179, there go north on I-82 toward Umatilla.
 - Take US 730 east to US 12 near Wallula, Washington.
 - Follow US 12 east through Walla Walla, Dayton, and Clarkston. Continue across Snake River on US 12 and follow the byway through Lewiston.
- Junction with byway:** * US 12, Lewiston, ID
N 46.431° W 116.984° [?]



Road Trip: Nez Perce Culture and History

Departure: Spalding Site Visitor Center, Idaho

Destination: Clearwater Battlefield, Idaho

Time to allow: 1 day

Following the Northwest Passage Scenic Byway will take you along the borders of the Nez Perce Reservation. Learn more about the history of the Nez Perce by visiting places associated with their past.

Day 1

- **Start: Spalding Site Visitor Center**

Begin your journey at the Spalding Site Visitor Center, where you can watch a short orientation video that tells the story of the Nez Perce Tribe. Then peruse exhibits of clothing, artifacts, and ceremonial items. Take a walk down the grassy slope to the Spalding Site, where a village was founded in the late 1800s. You'll also find the Spalding Cemetery, a sacred spot for the Nez Perce Tribe.

- **Stop 1: Heart of the Monster**

Heart of the
Monster,
between
Kamiah and
Kooskia

From previous stop: 15 minutes / 8 mi (12.8 km)

Directions: Continue south on the Byway to Kooskia.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

Visit the Heart of the Monster monument and learn the legends esteemed by the Nez Perce. The rock formation represents the heart of a monster, which according to legend is the source from which the Nez Perce sprang.

- **Stop 2: Long Camp (Kamiah City Park)**

Long Camp/
Riverfront
Park, Kamiah

From previous stop: 1 hour / 43 mi (68.8 km)

Directions: Follow SR-12 (The Northwest Passage) east as it curves toward Kamiah.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

The first white men known to the Nez Perce were Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. The Lewis and Clark Corp of Discovery waited with the Nez Perce in the Kamiah Valley almost a month in the spring of 1806 for the snow to melt so they could cross the Bitterroot Mountains on their return to the East. This site is now a city park and a great place to stop for a picnic lunch.

- **End: Clearwater Battlefield**

From previous stop: 20 minutes / 13 mi (20.8 km)

Directions: Just a few miles south, continue on SR-13 towards Harpster.

Pullout on the west side of Highway 13, approximately two miles south of Stites, Idaho to view the interpretation of the Clearwater Battlefield associated with the Nez Perce War of 1877. The battle site itself is located on private property, which makes it inaccessible to the public. However, the wide expanse of the battlefield can be viewed from points along the way.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 64 miles / 102.4 km

Total Travel Time: 1 hour 35 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 2 hours