



# A WALK IN THE WOODS

## DESTINATION:

Cape Disappointment State Park, a unit of the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, and Long Beach Discovery Trail

*“Other objects worthy of notice will be the soil & face of the country, it’s growth & vegetable productions, especially those not of the U.S.... the dates at which particular plants put forth or lose their flower, or leaf...”*

*-- Thomas Jefferson, Instructions to Captain Meriwether Lewis, 20 June 1803*

One of the tasks President Thomas Jefferson gave to the Lewis and Clark expedition was to “...obtain specimens...for further study.” Before Lewis embarked on his journey across the country, Jefferson asked him to learn how to observe, identify and prepare botanical specimens. The training he received from botanists was put to good use: Lewis and Clark provided the first written descriptions of 178 plants.

## ADVENTURE:

The Lewis and Clark expedition spent the winter on the Pacific Coast, but even at that time of year, the old-growth forests were filled with trees and plants. To get into the spirit of the Corps, **take a nature walk through the places the Corps traveled, such as Cape Disappointment and the Long Beach Discovery Trail.**



Photo: Andrew Cier

*Cape Disappointment Lighthouse*

Depending on the time of year, you may encounter many of the same types of trees and plants that Lewis identified. Observe, identify and responsibly collect samples of some of the plants you find. You can observe them in many ways — simply look, draw them in a journal, take photographs, or carefully collect a few specimens and save them in a plant press, as Lewis did. (To make a simple plant press, see “Activities to Try With Your Children.”)

## OPB'S LEWIS AND CLARK EXPLORER GUIDE

### GETTING AROUND:

**Cape Disappointment State Park (formerly Ft Canby):** Take Highway 101 through Chinook to Ilwaco, Washington. Stop at the light in Ilwaco. Go one block straight ahead and follow the sign to Ft Canby. Parking is difficult and limited at Cape Disappointment. Consider parking your car at the Port of Ilwaco or taking the Lewis and Clark Explorer Shuttle. Cape Disappointment also runs an intra-park shuttle from its primary parking facilities to the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center.

**Ilwaco Heritage Museum:** Take Highway 101 through Chinook to Ilwaco, Washington. Just before you get to the stoplight in downtown Ilwaco, you will see a sign for the museum. There is a \$3 fee. Restrooms available. [www.ilwacoheritagemuseum.org](http://www.ilwacoheritagemuseum.org)

**Long Beach:** Continue heading north along Highway 101, which runs right through town (about 14 miles from Ilwaco).



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## MORE TO DO AND SEE:

- **Visit Cape Disappointment State Park.** Enjoy breathtaking views of the Columbia River, North Head Lighthouse and Cape Disappointment Lighthouse, and see the Pacific Ocean. As you look at the ocean, imagine how far the Corps had to travel to see this view. The park has old-growth forest, lakes, freshwater and saltwater marshes, as well as tidelands and dunes near the ocean.
- **Visit the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center,** perched on a 200-foot-high cliff. This wonderful exhibit tells the story of Lewis and Clark and their journey from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean. While you are there, be sure to examine the beautifully preserved plant samples displayed in presses.
- **Hike or bike the Long Beach Discovery Trail.** The Trail runs from Long Beach, where a bronze tree marks the northernmost point along the trail, to Beards Hollow and Ilwaco. A section runs through Cape Disappointment State Park. As you travel the trail, you'll see monuments, whale bones and sculptures that tell the story of the Corps' journey along the coast.
- **Spend some time at the Ilwaco Heritage Museum,** an official site on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. This small museum features a changing array of exhibits on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Chinook Indians and local history. Through 2007 you can explore the exhibit "Don't Bother Me With the Facts: Uses and Abuses of the Lewis & Clark Theme in Popular Culture."
- **Grab lunch or have a picnic in Ilwaco.** The Port of Ilwaco offers cafés, shops, art galleries, and a very scenic port as a backdrop for your lunch. A robust Saturday market features a wide range of art and local produce.
- **Explore the waters of the Columbia and catch a fish.** The Port is home to an extensive charter boat fleet offering a range of tours where you can see the landscape like Lewis and Clark did — from the river! The tours take you by Dismal Nitch, Station Camp and Cape Disappointment with the chance to see abundant wildlife. For more information, call 360-642-3143.
- **Go shopping in Long Beach, Ilwaco Pier and Chinook.** There are lots of galleries, shops, restaurants and fun family activities to enjoy.
- Explore the numerous towns along the Long Beach Peninsula, including historic **Oysterville.**



*For his collection, Lewis clipped plant parts or uprooted whole specimens and placed them in a dry oilskin bag. Later, he laid the plants flat on a specimen page and sandwiched them between pages of blotting paper. He recorded details about each specimen on its blotter: where it came from, date and habitat, and occasional comments on how the Native Americans ate or used the plants. Then Lewis would place a stack of blotter-encased plants between two boards and tie the bundle together with straps. This "plant press" was probably placed near the evening fire where the warm air could help dry the plants.*



Photo: Tobi Kibel Piatek



# A WALK IN THE WOODS

## ACTIVITIES TO TRY WITH YOUR CHILDREN:

*You will need: A large piece of cardboard, four thick rubber bands, sheets of old newspaper, scissors, flowers and leaves (the fresher the better)*

Your children can take on the role of Meriwether Lewis and observe and identify some of the plants they come across on your trip. So that they have fun at the same time, turn a nature walk into a treasure hunt. Give each child (or team of kids) a list of items to find on their walk. Depending on their ages, the lists can be specific or general. Small children can find a pinecone, a leaf, a flower, and a nut or seed. Older children might find a salmonberry leaf, red alder leaf, Sitka spruce cone, salal berries, or a sword fern frond. Be sure to take advantage of the numerous resources at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center to learn how to identify specific plants.

### MAKE YOUR OWN SIMPLE PLANT PRESS:

Once you return home, older kids may also enjoy making a simple plant press.

1. Cut the cardboard into four 4" x 4" squares.
2. Cut the newspaper into twelve 4" x 4" squares.
3. Place four sheets of newspaper in between each cardboard piece. Place the four rubber bands around the outside of the cardboard, so that the contents are secure and tight.

### PRESSING THE PLANTS:

1. Gather the flowers and leaves that you would like to press.
2. Cut the plants so that they are no bigger than 4" x 4."
3. Separate the sheets of newspaper and neatly place the plant in between four sheets of paper (two sheets on top, two on the bottom). Spread out the flower petals and leaves. F.Y.I.: Newspaper absorbs excess plant moisture.
4. Place the newspaper between two pieces of cardboard.
5. Repeat this process until the plant press is full.
6. Secure the press with rubber bands. The tighter the press, the better.
7. Place the press in a dry place and do not open for at least 48 hours. (More time would be better).

After 48 hours, you may remove the plants and mount them on paper using glue or tape.

Courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/)

