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Media Advisory

“Clarks Crossing” River Island Designation Open for Public Comment

For Immediate Release

Billings, MT, February 21, 2014: The Billings Chamber of Commerce has made an application to the U.S. Board of Geographic Names to officially name an island/locale in the Yellowstone River near Billings. The requested name “Clarks Crossing” cannot be formally recognized on government maps until it has been approved by the U.S. Board. Comments regarding the name should be submitted to the Montana State Geographic Names Advisor, Gerry Daumiller of Helena, (address listed below) who will in turn make recommendations to the U.S. Board.

Interest in this formal name recognition is now even more relevant since the site will likely play a key role in the completion of a bike path around Billings. The historical attraction of this island/locale would present opportunities for interpretive signs and further explanations of the Lewis & Clark Trail in this area. More extensive information regarding the bike path is available under the name ‘Yellowstone Riverfront Trail Feasibility Study.’

If you want to comment on the name, “Clarks Crossing,” either in support or in opposition to, please send such to Gerry Daumiller, gdaumiller@mt.gov or P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800. The comment period ends April 5, 2014. Comments received after that date will be considered if there is time to get them to the Board before they make their decision. For further information on the Geographic Names Advisor, [click here](#).

History of “Clark’s Crossing:”

The name “Clarks Crossing” was first suggested for the island/locale by Jeff Bollman, planner for the Southern Land Office of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. His suggestion has its roots in the documented history of the return trip of the Lewis and Clark Expedition down the Yellowstone River in July, 1806. The location is south of Billings, where Captain Clark “had the horses drove across the river,” 26 in number, to the south side. The plan was for Sergeant Pryor and 3 more men to take a short-cut with the horses to Ft. Mandan, while Clark and the rest of his Corps continue down the river in their two dugout canoes. Unfortunately, Pryor's party lost the horses the second night after separating from Clark. After returning to the Yellowstone River near Pompeys Pillar, they made two bull boats out of buffalo hides, and then continued down the river to meet Clark.

“Setting the horses across the river” was a significant event during the Expedition, and the location is well documented in Clark's river-survey logs and on his large-scale map, where he wrote “Crossed the Horses.” For historical purposes, the Rochejhone Chapter of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation confirmed the location as in the proximity of the north/south section line between sections 14 and 15, Township 1 South, Range 26E, east of Riverfront Park and north of the motorcycle club property.

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The Billings Chamber/CVB represents you, our 1,200 members who employ more than 44,000 people. We help you grow your bottom line by connecting you to opportunities and advocating for your business and our community.