

Wind-swept kayaker struggles through South Dakota

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Enterprise is covering Livingston resident Norm Miller kayaking adventure as he retraces Lewis and Clark's journey up the Missouri River and to the Pacific Ocean.

By Jason Lehmann
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Norm Miller has lived in Livingston for years, so it takes a lot for him to complain about the wind.

"They should put 'The Windy State' on the South Dakota license plate. It doesn't make any sense which direction



it's coming from," said Miller, who is retracing Lewis and Clark's 1804 journey to the Pacific Ocean from St. Louis.

Miller said a tornado passed 50 miles from his campsite along the Missouri River, but he could still feel its effects.

"It was all I could do to keep my tent up," he said. "The wind rules the day. If you wake up and there are white caps on the river, you stay put."

As of last Thursday, Miller was at Fort Thompson, S.D., portaging the Big Bend Dam.

The dam is near the area where George Shannon, at 19 the youngest member of the Corps of Discovery, became lost and was separated from the Corps for three weeks.

Clark noted Shannon's absence in his Aug. 26, 1804



Photo courtesy of Norm Miller

Norm Miller portages his kayak around the Big Bend Dam in South Dakota recently. Miller will encounter several more dams on his way to the Pacific Ocean, part of his trip retracing Lewis and Clark's 1804 journey westward from St. Louis.

journal entry, and on Aug. 28, he wrote: "This man not being a first rate Hunter, we determined to Send one man in pursute of him with some Provisions," the unedited entry reads.

"He ran out of ammo," Miller said. "There was plenty of game, but he couldn't shoot anything. He did kill one rabbit, but basically he starved for three weeks."

The Corps found Shannon Sept. 11, 1804, which John Ordway recounts in his jour-

nal entry of the same day.

"George Shannon who had been absent with the horses 16 days joined the Boat about one oclock. he informed us that the reason of his keeping on so long was that he see some tracks which must have been Indians. he took it to be us and kept on," the unedited entry stated.

Shannon was trying to "catch up" to the Corp, but was in fact ahead of them the entire time he was gone.

Miller said he expects to gain some ground over the next couple of weeks since he'll be paddling over three large lakes on his way into Montana and the Fort Peck Reservoir.

"I have about 600 to 800 miles of flat water, and I'm going twice as fast as I was," he said. "I think I'm right on schedule time-wise."

Miller's progress can be viewed online at www.lewisandclark-2004.com.