

# Kayaker on epic river journey nears Great Falls

By Jason Lehmann  
Enterprise Staff Writer

Norm Miller isn't the only one paddling the Missouri River this summer.

The erstwhile Livingston resident is kayaking from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean to mark the 200th anniversary of Lewis and Clark's expedition west, and along the way he's met a few people with the same idea in mind.

Miller has met a husband and wife team paddling to St. Louis; a kayaker floating from Three Forks to St. Louis; and two guys named Wolfman and Freight Train canoeing to New Orleans with a black lab they found along the way.

Wolfman and Freight Train recognized Miller from his Web site.

"I'm not sure how they're keeping that thing under control in the canoe," Miller said Tuesday afternoon after about the dog.

He also spent an afternoon with another kayaker from Texas who also is paddling down the Missouri River to St. Louis.

The Texan said he was recently assaulted and robbed near Wolf Point and had some teeth knocked out in the process, so Miller and the man talked kayaking over ice cream and pizza.

Miller said he and his fellow kayakers usually trade stories about their respective journeys.

"I try to find out if they've had any problems up the river, what the current is like, if there's bugs or if they've encountered any interesting things to see," he said.

"Mainly I'm just trying to get

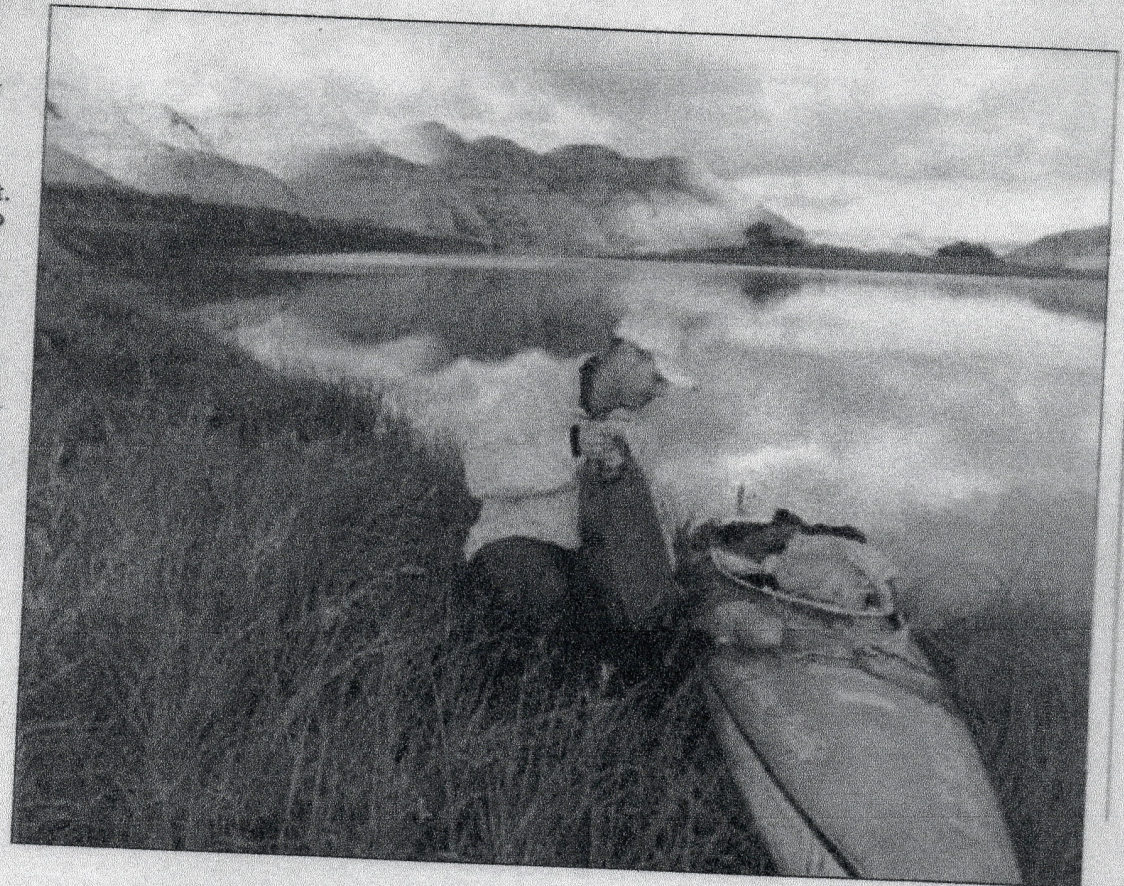


Photo courtesy of Norm Miller

Livingston resident Norm Miller unloads equipment July 6 near Soft Shell Turtle Creek in Blaine County. Miller is approaching Great Falls and is a little more than half way through his kayak trip from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean.

a feel for what their trip has been like."

Miller currently is about 125 miles east of Ft. Benton, just about where Lewis and Clark and the rest of the Corps of Discovery saw the Rocky Mountains for the first time.

Lewis recounted the experience in this unedited May 26, 1805 journal entry:

"While I viewed these mountains I felt a secret pleasure in finding myself so near the head of the hereto-

fore conceived boundless Missouri; but when I reflected on the difficulties which this snowey barrier would most probably throw in my way to the Pacific ... it in some measure counterbalanced the joy I had felt in the first moments in which I gazed on them," Lewis wrote.

Miller will be heading to Great Falls, where he'll portage his boat around the waterfalls and then canoe south to Three Forks.

"Physically I think I'm on

track, but mentally I'm tired, to be honest with you," Miller said. "I'm excited to get to Three Forks where I can take my paddle out of the water and start walking."

Miller is meeting a friend when he arrives in Three Forks and the two will hike the Lolo Trail over the Continental Divide, through the Bitterroot Range and onto the Columbia River drainage.

Miller's progress can be viewed online at [www.lewisandclark-2004.com](http://www.lewisandclark-2004.com)