

Spirit Mound Trust News

Norma C. Wilson, editor

August 2004

National Designation for Spirit Mound Summit Trail

Jim Heisinger

In 2003 Linda Sandsness of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department contacted me suggesting that Spirit Mound might be eligible for recognition as a National Recreational Trail. I submitted several pages describing the reasons why this trail should receive this designation, and Linda filled out the application forms and submitted them to the Interior Department.

On June 5 the Secretary of the Interior announced the 2004 National Recreational Trails designations. The Spirit Mound Summit Trail was among 27 new trails to earn that distinction. National Recreational Trails may be designated by either the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture to recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance.

Only three trails in South Dakota have received this recognition. The George S. Mickelson Trail twists through the Black Hills, spanning 114 miles. It was awarded this designation in 2004. The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Trail, located along the Missouri River in Pierre and Fort Pierre, and linking over 30 miles of trails with approximately 50 historic, cultural, and recreational sites, was designated in 2002. The Spirit Mound Summit Trail is less than one mile long. However, it offers visitors a chance to glimpse a beautiful tall grass prairie, with its fauna and flora, and to stand where Lewis and Clark once stood.

Governor's Organizational History Award

The Spirit Mound Trust received the 2004 South Dakota State Historical Society's Governor's Organizational Award for History at the annual history conference in Pierre last May. The award is presented to honor an organization "whose efforts demonstrate outstanding dedication to the collection, sharing and preservation of South Dakota History." Mark Wetmore accepted the award on behalf of the Trust.

Recent South Dakota Game, Fish and Park Department Work at Spirit Mound

Mark Steck

The Spirit Mound project continues to progress. However, there are some challenges that still lie ahead. The native prairie restoration in the feed lot area is one of them. Soil studies by Professor Karen Olmstead showed extremely high levels of nitrogen in this area. This is probably the reason the prairie plants have done so poorly on the east side of the Mound. The Game, Fish and Park Department will start from scratch on this portion of the site. Alfalfa will be planted for two to three years, and then the area will be reseeded with the prairie mix. The east side of the mound was burned this spring. Crews then interseeded and broadcast seed on the burned area.

The drinking fountain and vault toilet are now installed, and the kiosk and signs provided by the National Park Service are in place.

The Kiosk

The Trust was asked to prepare a narrative and photos for one of the three panels on the interpretive kiosk placed at the trail head. Our panel describes the history of Spirit Mound since Lewis & Clark and the Trust's participation in the cooperative project that has resulted in the Spirit Mound Prairie. The text, along with a portrait, also honors our past president, Larry Monfore.

Clay County Historical Preservation Award

On June 29, Mark Steck, of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Park Department, was presented an award from the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission in recognition of his work as director of restoration at Spirit Mound.

Indigenous Naming

Norma C. Wilson

Spirit Mound shone in the sunlight north of us as we sat under the shade of the maples. Gentle breezes touched the audience of twenty-five on Sunday the eighteenth of July as we listened to the stories of Jerome Kills Small. The Lakota language teacher said, "Our root words are in the plants and the animals and also in the abstract." As an example of the descriptive quality of Lakota words, he explained that the name for frog is *gnaska*, meaning "the animal that jumps itself forward."

Kills Small shared with us the indigenous names of places in South Dakota and the surrounding states of Wyoming and Nebraska that are part of his Lakota homeland. For example, he said the mountain in the Black Hills known today as Harney Peak, the Lakota called *Peslela* for the bare crown of the head, which they held dear to their hearts. He spoke of Black Elk going to *Peslela* on his vision quest. Kills Small told stories of many other places with historical and sacred significance, such as Gray Horn Butte, *He Hohula*, to the Lakota, but labeled on maps today as "Devil's Tower." He speculated that the reason for the derogatory names, such as this one, was that the Europeans did not understand the significance of such places, so they belittled them.

Kills Small helped the audience to better understand that not only must we respect the places we find sacred and beautiful, but also the rights of indigenous people to pray at those sites in peace, according to their traditions.

Spirit Mound has spiritual significance to the indigenous people of our region, including the Yankton Mandan, and Lakota. Their regard for such places helps everyone, including those who have come long after, to appreciate the enduring Earth and to respect it as our common home.

Kills Small's presentation at Spirit Mound was a part of Chautauqua 2004, "From Sea to Shining Sea," a project of the South Dakota Humanities Council. Cultural projects such as this are no less important than our planting of grasses and forbs. As we restore natural vegetation to Spirit Mound, we are restored. The Native voices also restore us. As we walk up the path to the summit and look out at the view, we think of ourselves in relation to all those who've been here before, acknowledging the ancients' regard for this place and sharing their awe.

Tribute to Loren Carlson

The Board of the Spirit Mound Trust lost founding member Loren Carlson, who passed away January 26th. Born November 23, 1923, in Mitchell, South Dakota, Loren held a bachelor's degree from Yankton College, a master's degree from University of Wisconsin and a law degree from George Washington University. He was a Professor of Political Science and Dean of Continuing Education at the University of South Dakota, and served on the Vermillion City Council for twelve years, as president for eight years. He served in the state budget office for five years and as director of the Legislative Research Council.

One of the three original signers of our Articles of Incorporation in 1986, Loren remained an active member of the board, serving as vice president at the time of his death. Last year, he and his wife, Midge, stuffed our newsletters into envelopes and mailed them. Loren was devoted to our work, and we will miss him.

Spirit Mound Bicentennial Commemoration

Come one, come all to Spirit Mound on **Wednesday, August 25, 2004** to commemorate the Bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery visit to Spirit Mound.

Schedule

7:30 a.m.	Early Morning Bird Hike
12:00 p.m.	Reenactment of Lewis and Clark hiking to the summit
12-5:00 p.m.	Vermillion Post Office will cancel cards and envelopes with a Spirit Mound bicentennial postmark stamped for use on August 25, 28 or 29, 2004.
1:00 p.m.	Birds of the Mound, Food of L&C, Prairie Restoration
2:00 p.m.	Food of Lewis and Clark, "Where two Worlds Meet," Native American Stories, Mammals of the Mound
2-5:00 p.m.	Craft Corner for kids
3:00 p.m.	Literary Responses to Spirit Mound, Food of L&C, Guided Prairie Hike, Geology of the Mound
4:00 p.m.	Prairie restoration, History of Spirit Mound after Lewis and Clark, Clothing and Equipment of Lewis and Clark
5:00 p.m.	Birds of the Mound, Geology of the Mound, Native American Stories, Guided Prairie Hike
6:00 p.m.	Mammals of the Mound, Mapping by the Expedition, Prairie Restoration
7:00 p.m.	Evening with the Swallows Hike

Local artist, Paul Peterson will be painting a picture of Spirit Mound throughout the day. Peterson also drew the image on the Spirit Mound postmark and will be available to sign cancelled envelopes if collectors wish.

Information booths will be occupied by Spirit Mound Trust, WH Over Museum, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Lewis and Clark artifacts and the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center of Sioux City, IA. Lewis and Clark stamps, passports and prints will be for sale throughout the day.

Presenters and Educators:

St. Charles Corp of Discovery; Dave Huebner (Lewis and Clark re-enactor); Kent Scribner (University of South Dakota Foundation); Brian Hazlett (Briar Cliff University Biology Department), Mary Gunderson (author and national award winner for *The Food Journal of Lewis and Clark*); Dave Swanson (USD Biology Department); Karen Olmstead (USD Biology Department); Norma Wilson (USD English Department); Jerome Kills Small (USD Institute of American Indian Studies); Mark Steck (South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks); Dennis Tomhave (South Dakota Geological Survey); Paul Peterson (Clay County artist); Mike Manning (Vermillion Post Office)

Lewis and Clark Festival, W.H. Over Museum, August 28-29

The events will include a walk to Spirit Mound leaving Cottonwood Park at 8 a.m. on the 28th, a powwow and evening meals both days. The Museum is looking for volunteer workers and contributions. See the enclosed flyer.

Spirit Mound Race

On September 11, The Spirit Mound 10K Race will benefit the W.H. Over Museum. The race starts at 8 a.m. at the junction of Highway 19 and the 50 bypass and goes north on 19. A Native American smudging ceremony will be held for those who wish to climb Spirit Mound. The course is USA Track and Field certified. Register on-line at www.allsportcentral.com or by contacting either the W.H. Over Museum or Judy Clark (605-624-3170). The entry fee is \$20 before August 24 and \$25 after that date.

Feedlot to Prairie

Justin Elhoff, a University of South Dakota student in the Honors Program, recently completed a history of the Spirit Mound Trust. "From Feedlot to Prairie: The Recent History of Spirit Mound and the Spirit Mound Trust" describes the twenty-year effort of a team of dedicated citizens who persevered in their efforts to retransform Spirit Mound into a natural prairie. Copies may be viewed at the Vermillion Public Library or secured by contacting the Spirit Mound Trust.

D.A.R. Plaque Reproduced and Reinstalled

The bronze plaque, installed on the mound summit by the Vermillion chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1921, remained there, attached to a granite boulder, until it was stolen in 2001. The National Park Service had a reproduction made and remounted on the original stone. The project plan called for the monument to be removed from the summit and placed somewhere near the trail head. It has been set along the mound trail about forty yards south of Spirit Mound Creek. A brief sign, explaining the history of this artifact, will accompany it. The Trust's \$1,000 reward for the apprehension and conviction of the thieves still stands.

Contact us

If you have questions or suggestions, contact any member of the board listed below. It costs only \$10 to support our newsletter and projects by joining Spirit Mound Trust or renewing your membership. See the enclosed membership form. You are always welcome to write a letter to Spirit Mound Trust, Box 603, Vermillion, SD 57069, or e-mail jheising@usd.edu for a quick response.

Board members:

Jim Heisinger, President
 Mark Wetmore, Vice President
 Norma Wilson, Secretary
 Amond Hanson, Treasurer
 Margaret Cash

Wayne Evans
 Bill Farber
 Jennifer Jones
 Jim Peterson

