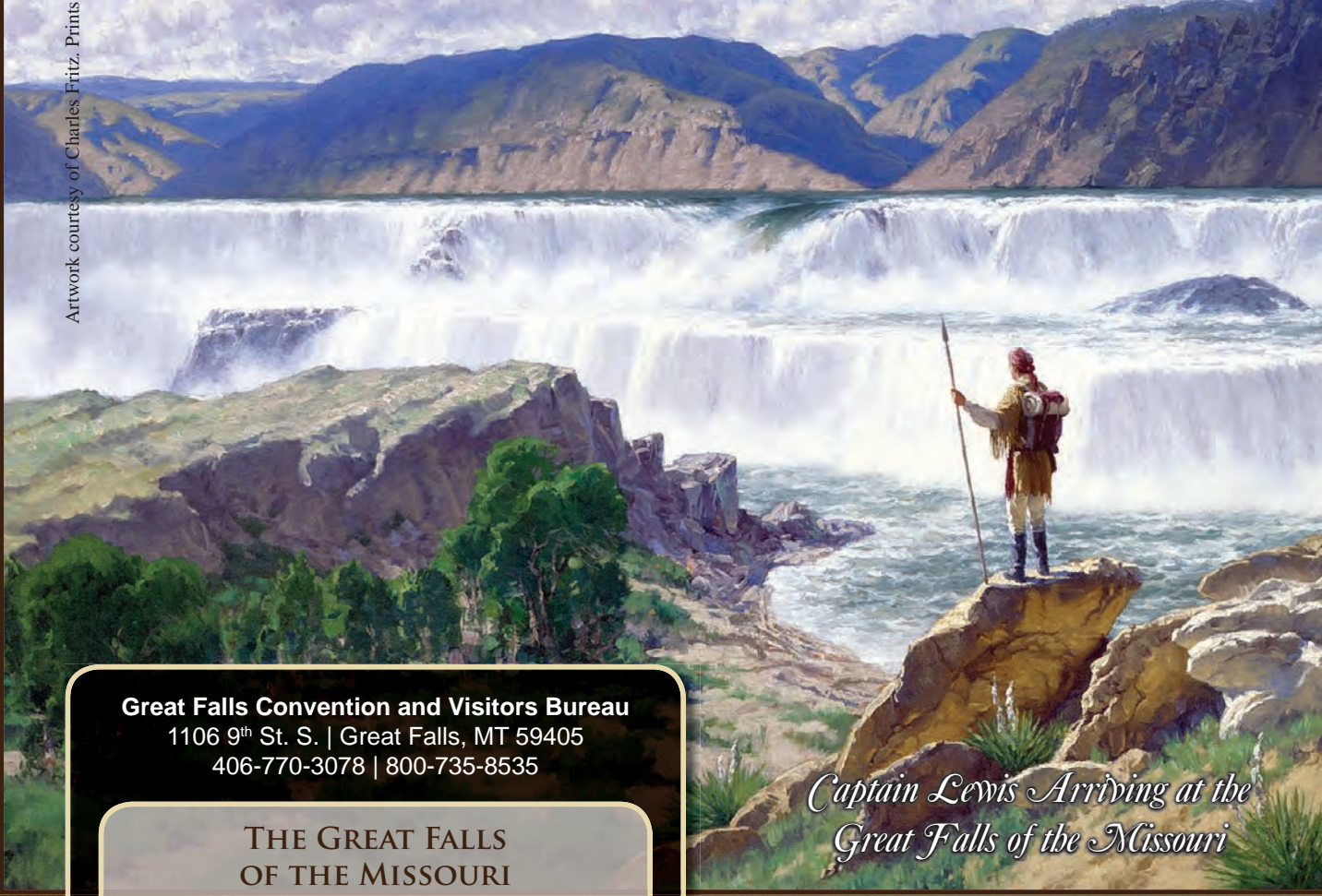


Artwork courtesy of Charles Fritz. Prints available at charlesfritz.com

the GREAT FALLS of the Missouri



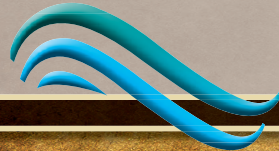
*Captain Lewis Arriving at the
Great Falls of the Missouri*

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THE GREAT FALLS
OF THE MISSOURI
- GREAT FALLS, MT -

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GREAT FALLS OF THE MISSOURI

At sunrise on June 13, 1805, Captain Meriwether Lewis, leader of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, left his campsite at what is now Black Coulee in search of the falls of the Missouri. After traveling about 15 miles he sighted 2 small flat-topped hills, and using them as landmarks he turned south. In about 2 more miles...

"...whin my ears were saluted with the agreeable sound of a fall of water and advancing a little further, I saw the spray arrise above the plain like a collumn of smoke...which soon began to make a roaring too tremendous to be mistaken for any cause short of the great falls of the Missouri...."

The falls were more than 80 feet high, giving him a view that he described as

"...the grandest sight I ever beheld..."

The next day, Lewis continued upstream another 7 miles and discovered a second falls, this one was 19 feet high and 300 yards across. Because of the irregular shelf, he named it "Crooked Falls." Upon climbing a hill, he saw a third waterfall, this one straight and regular, which he described as being

"...one of the most beautifull objects in nature, a cascade of about fifty feet perpendicular..."

On his maps Lewis named it "Beautifull Cascade." It is now called Rainbow Falls. Upstream, he could see another falls a half of a mile away. While smaller in height – only about 6 feet – it stretched more than a quarter of a mile across the river. Named "Colter Falls," it is now under water behind Rainbow Dam.

Captain Lewis kept exploring, and 2.5 miles above Rainbow Falls he came upon a fifth cataract. It was 26 feet high and nearly 600 yards wide. Just below the falls, nesting in a tree on a small island, was an eagle. Lewis called the falls simply "the upper pitch." It was later named "Black Eagle Falls." From the hill north of the Missouri, Lewis sighted the "Medicine River", now called the Sun River, entering the Missouri about 4 miles upstream. He began his return trek to camp, using the north bank of the river. Clark would later determine that the best route for a portage would be south of the river. Giant Springs was not discovered until June 18, while Clark was exploring the south banks. Clark later described it as

"...the largest fountain or Spring I ever Saw..."

GIANT SPRINGS STATE PARK

This state park along the river includes one of the largest springs...and one of the shortest rivers in the world. Every 24 hours, 156 million gallons of water bubbles up from these springs and flows into the Missouri via the Roe River... recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records as one of the shortest rivers in the world.

THE DAMS

Despite the dams being built, much of the Missouri River here is just as it was when the Expedition came through. The first dam constructed was Black Eagle Dam (1890). Next came Rainbow Dam (1910), which left the original cascade untouched but covered Colter Falls. Ryan Dam (1915) was built at the Great Falls, raising the water level so that the falls are now 148 feet high. Morony Dam (1930) is the farthest downstream of the 5 dams. The newest, Cochrane Dam (1958), is situated between Crooked Falls and the Great Falls. Runoff from melting mountain snow makes early spring and summer viewing of the falls quite spectacular.

RIVER'S EDGE TRAIL

Walk, jog, bike or rollerblade on 48 miles of trail along both sides of the Missouri River. A 20 mile portion of the trail is paved, has restrooms and provides easy access to spectacular views of the river, dams and waterfalls. Some of the unpaved trail is more physically challenging.

LEWIS & CLARK INTERPRETIVE CENTER

The Interpretive Center is a premier stop for anyone interested in the history of our country. Through film, dioramas and interactive displays, you'll experience the journey of the Expedition as they explored this new land.

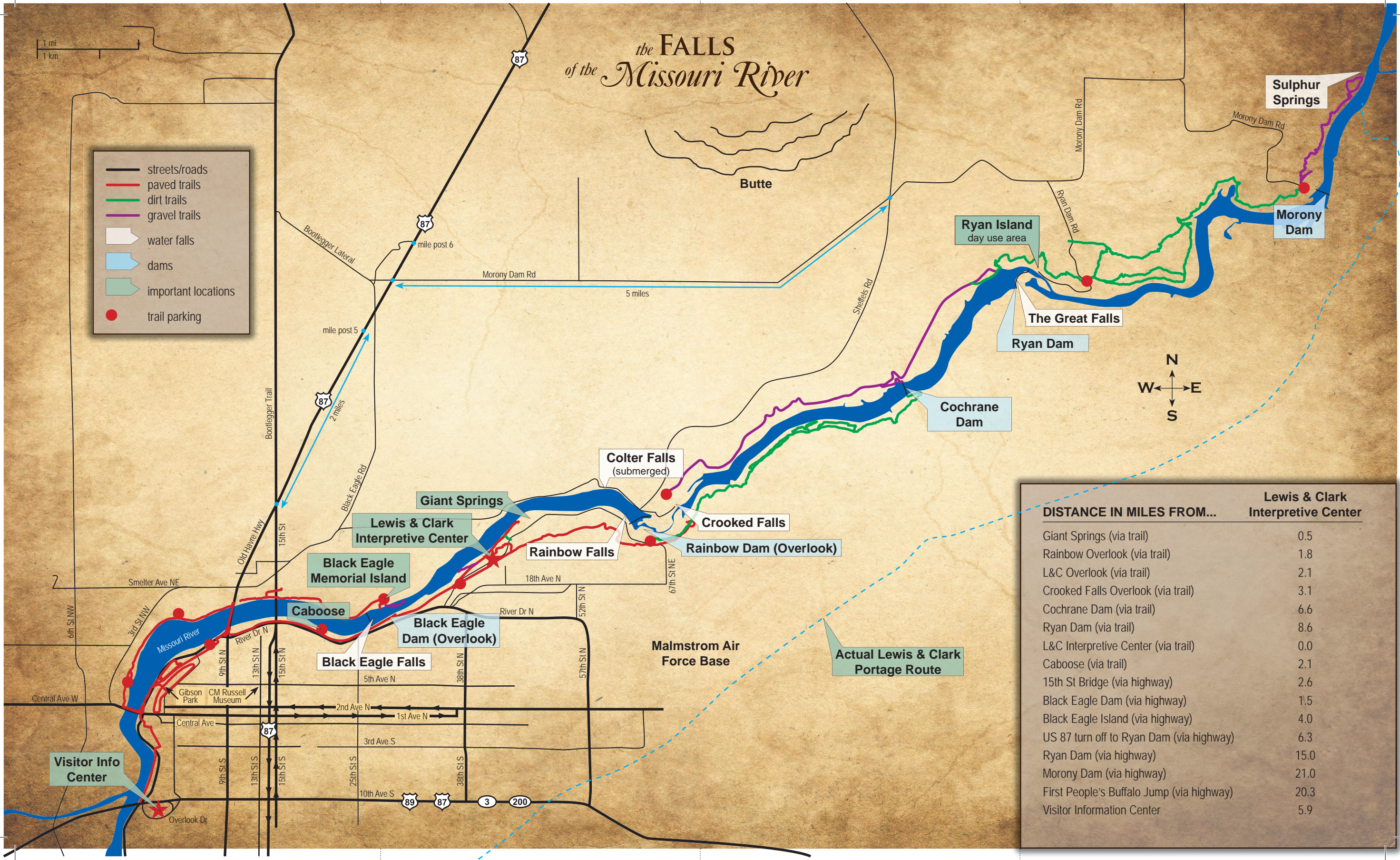
VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

If you are looking for things to do, places to visit, or any kind of information about the Great Falls area, the visitor facility atop the Broadwater Overlook (look for the big flag) has a friendly helpful staff, information on just about everything, and a great panoramic view of the city.



the FALLS of the Missouri River

- streets/roads
- paved trails
- dirt trails
- gravel trails
- water falls
- dams
- important locations
- trail parking



DISTANCE IN MILES FROM...	Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center
Giant Springs (via trail)	0.5
Rainbow Overlook (via trail)	1.8
L&C Overlook (via trail)	2.1
Crooked Falls Overlook (via trail)	3.1
Cochrane Dam (via trail)	6.6
Ryan Dam (via trail)	8.6
L&C Interpretive Center (via trail)	0.0
Caboose (via trail)	2.1
15th St Bridge (via highway)	2.6
Black Eagle Dam (via highway)	1.5
Black Eagle Island (via highway)	4.0
US 87 turn off to Ryan Dam (via highway)	6.3
Ryan Dam (via highway)	15.0
Morony Dam (via highway)	21.0
First People's Buffalo Jump (via highway)	20.3
Visitor Information Center	5.9