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**Review of *Passage of Discovery: The American Rivers Guide to the Missouri River of Lewis and Clark* by Daniel B. Botkin**

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**Passage of Discovery: The American Rivers Guide to the Missouri River of Lewis and Clark.** Daniel B. Botkin. New York: Pedigree, 1999. xxii+247 pp. Maps, drawings, index. \$15.95 paper (ISBN 0-399-52510-6).

In *Passage of Discovery*, well-known ecologist and noted author Daniel Botkin takes the reader on a historic and ecological journey up the Missouri River from its confluence near St. Charles, Missouri, to its source at Three Forks, Montana, following the route of Lewis and Clark in 1804-05. Apparent throughout is Botkin's justifiably high regard for the observational, intuitive, and leadership skills demonstrated by both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark during their monumental expedition. The fact that only one member of the party died, and that due to circumstances beyond their control, is a tribute to those skills.

Starting from the expedition's preparation site at Camp Dubois (in Illinois), Botkin begins each section with clear and useful details on how to reach the sites either visited by Lewis and Clark or where the river is presently accessible. He describes the natural or cultural attractions a visitor can expect to see in those areas, usually supplementing his commentary with passages from Lewis and Clark's journals recounting their experiences at that location nearly two hundred years before. Particularly entertaining is the inclusion of direct journal quotes that give the reader some insight into the keen observational skills both men possessed (not to mention their spelling ability).

Each chapter or subsection often proceeds to an ecological interpretation of why conditions were as they were at the time and how the landscape and environment have changed, or are currently changing, as a result of both natural processes and human alterations. Botkin compares the river's forces to a painter continually changing the face of a dynamic landscape through its actions, an analogy that will ring true to anyone who has spent time along the Missouri.

The book is an easy read: its prose is clear, its overall layout straightforward. The text is accompanied by line illustrations and sketch maps, all done by the same artist. Perhaps more detailed local maps accompanying each chapter to supplement the verbal site directions would be an improvement (and possibly increase the book's attractive low price), but a reader could fill this gap easily with good county road maps. Those particularly interested in the future of this great river should appreciate Botkin's perceptive and thought-provoking comments regarding the impact of human settlement on the Missouri River's landscape and its ecological relationships.

This is not a coffee table book, but an affordable guide and traveling companion for those planning to retrace the path of the Lewis and Clark Expedition during its upcoming bicentennial. More than that, it is good reading for all Lewis and Clark history buffs and those simply interested in the changing ecology and human development within the Missouri River corridor. *Passage of Discovery* includes a foreword by author and historian Stephen Ambrose and an afterword by actor Robert Redford. **Bruce A. Barton**, *Missouri River Institute and Department of Biology, University of South Dakota*.