

# Beyond the Stony Mountains: Nature in the American West from Lewis and Clark to Today

Daniel B. Botkin

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## **Beyond the Stony Mountains: Nature in the American West from Lewis and Clark to Today**

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America's great epic of exploration--the journey of Lewis and Clark--was also one of the most successful scientific expeditions in history. In notebooks filled with vivid and remarkably accurate descriptions of rivers, prairies, forests, mountains, native Americans, and wildlife, Lewis and Clark gave the world an image of wild country that has rarely been equaled.

In this richly illustrated volume, which features more than one hundred photographs and maps, most in full color, noted ecologist and writer Daniel Botkin traces the footsteps of the two explorers as they journeyed from St. Louis, through the breathtaking vistas of the tall-grass prairie and Big Sky country, over the arduous Bitterroot Mountains on the ancient Lolo Trail, to arrive finally at the Pacific coast and its the rugged, rainy, and darkly wooded landscape. As we travel westward, Botkin introduces us to the natural wonders recorded by Lewis and Clark--still fresh portraits of a pristine land--and recounts their many dangerous, challenging, and sometimes strange adventures. Then in his own words he describes the same sites today, providing unique insights about our nation's changes to the land. For instance, the author recounts Lewis and Clark's travels through the great tall-grass prairie, vast plains that stretched to the horizon in every direction, stunningly beautiful land that, adds Botkin, with the eye of a concerned ecologist, has virtually disappeared today beneath the steel plow. This is only one of the key problems that are addressed on the trail we follow through this wonderful book. Others, such as the endangered grizzly bear and the vanishing California Condor, are brought to the reader's attention in prose both compelling and poignant. By the last page of this chronicle, we are filled with admiration for the natural beauty of the American West, a beauty that is slowly vanishing.

An exquisitely illustrated and expertly written account of the western landscape, as it was seen by Lewis and Clark, *Beyond the Stony Mountain* recounts one of the great adventures of the American past while powerfully relating it to the American present.



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