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Review of Lewis and Clark and the Geology of the Great Plains and Lewis and Clark and the Geology of Nebraska and Parts of Adjacent States

Harmon D. Maher Jr.

University of Nebraska at Omaha, harmon_maher@unomaha.edu

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Review of *Lewis and Clark and the Geology of the
Great Plains and Lewis and Clark and the Geology of
Nebraska and Parts of Adjacent States* by R. F.
Diffendal, Jr., and Anne P. Diffendal

Harmon Maher Jr.
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Lewis and Clark and the Geology of the Great Plains. By R. F. Diffendal, Jr., and Anne R Diffendal. Lincoln: Conservation and Survey Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2003. iv +126 pp. Photographs, maps, tables, references, appendixes, glossary. \$20.00 paper.

Lewis and Clark and the Geology of Nebraska and Parts of Adjacent States. By R. F. Diffendal, Jr., and Anne P. Diffendal. Lincoln: Conservation and Survey Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2003. iv +32 pp. Photographs, maps, tables, references, appendixes, glossary. \$15.00 paper

When it comes to science in general, and the geology of the Great Plains in particular, there is arguably an imbalance between the wealth of material written for experts and the relative paucity written for the general public. These publications help correct that imbalance at a time when the various Lewis and Clark celebrations create an especially receptive and engaged audience.

These companion publications are principally organized around specific sites along or close to Lewis and Clark's route through the Great Plains. Each of the over 100 sites was chosen for some geologic point of interest. The description of each includes a titled color photograph or photographs, a figure caption, a paragraph explaining the site's geology, and a pertinent quote from Lewis and Clark's observations. Sometimes illustrative air photos or satellite imagery are included. The reader is invited to compare present views and understanding with what Lewis and Clark noted. To help with this endeavor, the Diffendals provide an introductory section offering basic geologic concepts and knowledge

regarding the Great Plains. Additional help can be found in a list of suggested readings and a glossary. The authors also provide information on field etiquette and safety (such as: don't trespass; you can't collect anything just anywhere; watch out for poison ivy).

These books will serve well as field guides for those retracing Lewis and Clark's explorations who are uninitiated in Great Plains geology. Substantial room for marginalia on most pages invites the reader to become much more actively engaged in investigating Great Plains history. Succumbing to the temptation not only to take the books on the road but add personal observations to their pages should be particularly rewarding. Teachers of natural history are likely to find the volumes useful for planning field trips. Those interested in the history of human thought can get a feel for how changed are the ways people have come to see the Great Plains.

Lewis and Clark, immersed in cataloging what they encounter with an eye to utility, spend little time wondering about geological time and processes. The Diffendals provide insights into how enormously the Great Plains intellectual landscape has been transformed. Lay readers will find in these publications a good introduction to the rich and fascinating geologic history that yielded today's Great Plains and should find themselves encouraged to connect with the underlying literature. **Harmon D. Maher, Jr.**, *Department of Geography and Geology, University of Nebraska at Omaha.*