

# PRESS RELEASE

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[High resolution photos available upon request.]

## Lewis and Clark Exhibit Opens May 5

*"Discovering America's Natural History, The Story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition", an exhibit by nature photographer, David Saxe, opens at the Massabesic Audubon Center.*

**Auburn, NH** – In 1804, in one of the first big science efforts undertaken by this new nation, Lewis and Clark set out to explore the Missouri and Columbia Rivers. Traversing some of the most rugged and beautiful terrain in North America, the expedition observed and recorded the natural history, surveyed the terrain, and made contact with the many Native American peoples along their route. In the current exhibit on display at the Massabesic Audubon Center through June 23, 2007, photographer David Saxe tells the expedition's story with aerial and ground based images from the present day Lewis and Clark Trail. Images sample the terrain, flora and fauna along the route from St Louis, Missouri to Astoria, Oregon.

The exhibit, consisting of nearly 80 images and a printed guide, is arranged in three sections. The first section provides some background for the expedition, the route taken, and the boats used on the Missouri River system. In the bulk of the exhibit, the second section contains images from along the trail, showing the river and terrain along the route and replicas of the expedition's winter dwellings. In many cases, an aerial shot is matched with a ground-based image taken from the same spot. The final section contains images of plant and animal life along the trail. Using the printed guide, visitors may read about each image and determine its location on a trail map that provides further historical information.

Since 2001, photographer David Saxe has crossed the country multiple times documenting the Lewis and Clark Trail both from the air and from the ground. In a talk and reception scheduled for June 2, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm, Mr. Saxe will present more pictures and discuss his own adventures recording the trail. Pictures of more birds, other wildlife, flowers and plants, interior shots of reconstructed winter quarters, a real Indian canoe and additional ground and aerial shots along the trail will supplement a brief talk. Topics will include how Mr. Saxe became interested in this compelling story of American history, foods eaten by the expedition, and how to plan traveling the Trail yourself.

"I am very excited about this exhibit. The expedition is important to us today for a variety of reasons. Of course, the Lewis and Clark expedition had a major impact on the emergence and growth of this nation. As a realization of Jefferson's dream, it opened the way for the westward movement in the 1800s. In addition to the expedition's historical significance, the journals and other records tell an amazing human story of personal strength, endurance, and dedication to a mission. But to me, the most amazing aspect is the story of the land itself, written in the record of the changes of the last two hundred years. I felt this most deeply in discussing the expedition with my mother. She was 90 years old when we spoke and had experienced nearly half of the time, the changes and advances since the expedition. And while the change has been immense, there are still wild locations along the trail where you can travel, quite alone, and feel the presence of those first explorers. I hope that these images help to convey some of the feeling of exploration and reverence for the land that I have enjoyed in creating the collection." – David Saxe

## About David Saxe and USA Aloft

David Saxe is a systems architect, pilot and photographer with a strong background in scientific programming and systems design. Working for fifteen years at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, he created software for analysis, reduction and graphical presentation of astrophysics images, including data from Hubble Space Telescope. Mr. Saxe formed USA Aloft, a New Hampshire based software and photography company whose initial project was to document the Lewis and Clark Trail. When he is not working on the Lewis and Clark project, he records nature, adding to one of his fine art portfolios.

The goal of USA Aloft's Lewis and Clark Project is to document the trail in its present day condition with images and other material for use in the classroom, by the enthusiast or for serious research. Mr. Saxe began by photographing the trail from the air in detail using twin-mounted cameras to provide stereo views of the topography. The initial hope was to fly the route several times so that each region might be seen during the approximate season of Lewis and Clark's traversal. While the data collected is not survey-grade, the position and orientation of each image is known with an error on the order of tens of meters or less. This makes the database an ideal companion to cartographic works describing the route. A reconstruction of the survey points taken by Lewis and Clark was used as a guide for much of the flight path. During the summer and fall of 2002, Mr. Saxe designed and constructed a camera system for taking aerial stereo views along a GPS assisted route. In October, during an initial attempt to collect images along the Lewis and Clark route, weather closed in and limited collection to areas of Missouri. During the summer of 2003, flights were made to collect forward-looking stereo images over almost the entire westbound route. The return flight collected side looking views over the same route. Some initial ground based photography was done along the Columbia River, from the Gorge out to Astoria, including Fort Clatsop. The winter was spent performing initial processing to build a database that describes each image's position in space and time. During the summer of 2004, a ground based photographic trip collected images from along the entire trail. Starting in late June and traveling for nearly two months, Mr. Saxe added more images. With further pictures from along the Ohio River and earlier trips to the northwest, the collection now numbers nearly 60,000 images. For further information about David Saxe and USA Aloft, visit [www.usaaloft.com](http://www.usaaloft.com).

*Discovering America's Natural History*  
*The Story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*  
Exhibit by David Saxe, USA Aloft, LLC  
Open May 5 – June 23, 2007  
Talk and Artist Reception June 2, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm  
At the Massabesic Audubon Center  
Audubon Way in Auburn, N.H.

For directions, visit [www.nhauudubon.org/sanctuaries/massabesic.htm](http://www.nhauudubon.org/sanctuaries/massabesic.htm)

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