

Missouri River Exposed *A Photographic Exhibition*

Introduction of Joe Riis

– John Ordway

John Ordway – Joined the Corps of Discovery in November 1803 and in April of 1804 wrote to his "Honored Parents" telling them of his new enlistment:

"I am now on an expedition to the westward, with Capt. Lewis and Capt. Clark. . . . We are to ascend the Missouri River with a boat as far as it is navigable and then to go by land, to the western ocean, if nothing prevents" He also told them that "I am So happy as to be one of them pick'd men from the army, and I and all the party are if we live to Return, to Receive our Discharge when ever we return again to the united States if we chuse it." Ordway found his place among the Corps of Discovery as a leader – one of steadiness, diligence and dependability.

Much like Ordway, Joe Riis joined in a "Corps of Discovery" of his own in May 2006 - has also ascended the Missouri River and began to find that it ran through his soul. He has become a Leader through his steadiness, diligence and his dependability.

I can imagine if he were writing to his family what it might read like. It may go something like this –

Spring of 2006

Dearest Parents – I am coming home to explore the river of my childhood. I am happy to have been chosen to receive a grant for a conservation project. I will dedicate myself to the river so people will know of it and its sensitive nature. I will return from college in May to explore, and to learn and to document the incredible beauty of the Missouri River. I will visit with the Tribes and I will work side-by-side with fisheries biologists, hydrologists and naturalists of the Big Muddy. I will find solitude in the places that hold the stories of beauty, history, sacredness and change – It is my hope to touch the lives of many through the work I do - I will work toward the conservation of the river – it's habitats and it's inhabitants.

Thank you for your encouragement and your teachings of the importance of the Missouri River in my life.