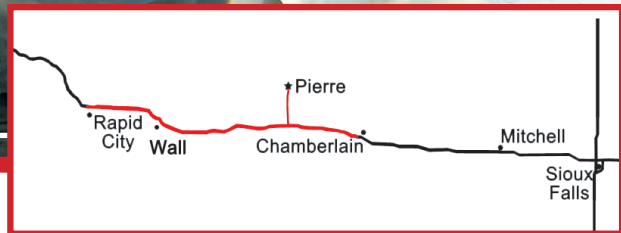




DISCOVER *The River*



Our forefathers would be surprised by today's Missouri River. When Lewis and Clark passed this way in 1804-1806, the river ran fast and brown, hence its former nickname, the Big Muddy. Settlers who came here in the 1870s and '80s quipped that the Missouri was "too thick to drink, too thin to plow."

It was flood-prone, full of snags and dangerous to cross.

Today's Missouri River is nothing like that. Thanks to a series of dams constructed in the second half of the 20th century, the Mighty Mo is deep, blue and inviting. Dams at Pierre, Fort Thompson, Pickstown and Yankton have created four massive lakes, widely regarded as the Great Lakes of South Dakota.

With more than 400 miles of river within South Dakota alone – and 3,000 miles of shoreline – there's plenty of room on the cool Missouri River

for everyone who has an urge to camp, boat, swim or just enjoy a beautiful South Dakota sunset.

Even if the Missouri wasn't a recreational paradise – which it is – it still would be one of South Dakota's most popular destinations, thanks to the bustling fishing industry it has spawned. Walleye are king on the Missouri, but numerous other catchable fish species live here as well, including huge salmon and trout, which thrive in the deep water created by the dams.

Beyond the river, westward travelers emerge into South Dakota's West River region, which is markedly different from the East River part of the state. The high plains, buttes and rolling terrain characteristic of the American West are abundant west of the Missouri, as are Western-themed tourist attractions.