Missouri River

There are many pioneer cabin and homestead sites along the Missouri River in what's now the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge and Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument. These deteriorating remnants are what's left of an era rich in the history of human endurance and survival, with the ghost town of Rocky Point, evidence of the river’s past, and dotted with a rocky bottom. A few water levels allowed navigating buffalo to cross the river at Rocky Point. Buffalo used the route for thousands of years.

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In later decades, the settlement of Rocky Point became a refuge for buffalo hunters and their families and visitors. Tales abound of vigilante shootouts, escapees across the river, and in every walk of life. The river flows over a shale reef, which riddled with quicksand. Violence often occurred, with cattle and buffalo often being used to their death to fight off the invaders.

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Exploration and expert map reading skills are required to find the best views of the Missouri River in the Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument and Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge. One can imagine these views with tepees on the banks, as Lewis & Clark saw. The tepees are long gone, but in some areas little else has changed.