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Local kayaker Janet Moreland completes trip from Montana to Gulf of Mexico

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Janet Moreland kayaked from the source of the Missouri River in Montana, to its connection with the Mississippi River near St. Louis, and finally to the mouth of the Mississippi near New Orleans. Her 236 day trip began on April 14 and finished Dec. 5. | [Megan May](#)

BY [Caleb O'Brien](#)

COLUMBIA — After waiting a day in Pilottown, La., for dense fog to lift, Janet Moreland paddled her final miles to the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday.

Moreland's quest to travel the entire length of the Missouri River began April 24, when she left the river's source at Brower's Spring, Mont., on skis. She then biked 100 miles from Hell Roaring Canyon to Clark Canyon Dam, where she pushed her kayak, Blue Moon, into the cold waters of the Missouri River.

Steve Schnarr of Missouri River Relief said Moreland was the first American and the first woman to traverse the entire length of the Missouri River and down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. While many people have traveled the length of the Missouri River, Schnarr said, most do it from Three Forks, Mont., nearly 300 miles downriver from Brower's Spring.

From there, the river winds 2,341 miles to St. Louis, where its waters mingle with the Mississippi. From St. Louis it's another 1,003 miles to New Orleans and a final 103 miles to the Gulf of Mexico.

Moreland documented her journey on a [Facebook page](#) and on her blog, loveyourbigmuddy.com.

Mike Cooper, the owner of Cooper's Landing, said he hoped Moreland would be back in Columbia in time for the SEC Championship game on Saturday. Moreland used to work at Cooper's Landing, Cooper said, where she started a tradition of Saturday morning pancakes.

"She's pretty much family," Cooper said.

Moreland [stopped at Cooper's Landing on Sept. 16](#), five months after starting her journey to the gulf, where she was greeted by friends, family and music.

Two nights ago, Moreland's friends gathered again at Cooper's Landing to show their support and toast the end of her journey.

"It's been a really meaningful thing for everyone back here," Schnarr said.

"She's taken on this journey with such grace and determination."

Schnarr said Moreland will give a talk about her trip after her return to Columbia as part of the [Big Muddy Speaker Series](#). Moreland is a River Relief crew member, Schnarr said, and one of the goals of her journey was to spread the word about Missouri River Relief.

Supervising editor is [John Schneller](#).

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