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Testimony  
Before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Committee on Resources  
United States House of Representatives

Hearing on the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the potential extension  
of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail  
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There are important historical facts regarding the meeting of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and the formation of the Corps of Discovery at the Falls of the Ohio which generated an immense amount of interest, pride, educational programs, and lasting legacies during the Lewis and Clark National Bicentennial. Because of this, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail should include the Eastern Legacy to extend from St. Louis, Missouri to Charlottesville, Virginia, including the Falls of the Ohio in Indiana and Kentucky.

In 2001, the Falls of the Ohio State Park in Clarksville, Indiana became the first site east of the Mississippi River to be designated a certified site on the National Park Service's Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, paving the way for other significant Eastern Legacy sites to be certified, including, Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia and Historic Locust Grove in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Falls of the Ohio State Park has played a major role in the Lewis and Clark Expedition and has numerous historical, natural, and cultural features. The Lewis and Clark River Festival has been held at the park each autumn since 1997, with the country's second , National Bicentennial Signature Event being held there in 2003, and the Return of Lewis and Clark to be held there in November of 2006.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark physically met at the Falls of the Ohio in October of 1803, forming one of the most famous partnerships in history. It was here that William Clark recruited the nucleus of the Corps of Discovery. These nine men from the Falls of the Ohio area made up almost one third of the permanent party of the Corps of Discovery. These men were Joseph and Reubin Field, Charles Floyd, John Shields, Nathaniel Pryor, George Shannon, George Gibson, William Bratton, and John Colter. From October 14-26, Lewis and Clark spent time at the Falls enlisting the men in the army, gathering supplies, and making preparations for their departure. One of the men from the Falls who accompanied them was York, William Clark's slave. York contributed to the success of the expedition and was the first African-American to cross what is today the United States from coast to coast, and the North American continent north of Mexico. It was at Mill Creek in Clarksville that Lewis and Clark, along with the nucleus of the Corps of Discovery, departed on October 26, 1803, to begin the expedition's journey west. Lewis and Clark depended on the men of the Falls of the Ohio for the success of the expedition, and they gave these men some of their highest praise – describing them as men of *much merit, solid service, and honor*. Lewis, Clark, York, and some of the men returned to the Falls of the Ohio on November 5, 1806. A few days later, Lewis headed east to meet with President Jefferson while William Clark stayed here. The Falls of the Ohio was where Lewis and Clark met in 1803 to begin the Expedition and departed from one another in 1806 after the Expedition.

The Falls of the Ohio State Park's George Rogers Clark Home Site is where William Clark was living with his older brother, General George Rogers Clark, when Meriwether Lewis arrived in October of 1803. It was George Rogers Clark whom Thomas Jefferson first asked to lead an expedition to the Pacific in 1783. This home site is the only home that General Clark ever owned and was the remaining parcel from land granted to him for his service in the American Revolution, securing the Northwest Territory. Today, a cabin of the early 1800s, similar to the original Clark cabin, stands on the site overlooking the Ohio River.

Another section of the Falls of the Ohio State Park is the original town site of Clarksville which was the first American settlement in the Northwest Territory established in 1783. William Clark and George Rogers Clark owned parcels of land at this site.

The Falls of the Ohio State Park's Interpretive Center site includes a 16,000 square foot museum, which is fully accessible to visitors with disabilities. The \$5.1 million facility opened in

1994, and chronicles the natural and cultural history of the Falls of the Ohio beginning 390 million years ago. An exhibit titled *Lewis and Clark-Men of Discovery* is included which provides visitors with information about the Falls connection to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. This facility overlooks one of the largest exposed Devonian fossil beds in the world, the McAlpine Dam, and Ohio River. Over 600 species of fossils have been identified here, with 400 of them being type specimens, meaning they were identified here for the first time. In 1966 this site was designated a National Natural Landmark and is part of the 1404-acre Falls of the Ohio National Wildlife Conservation Area, designated in 1981 by Congress. The Falls of the Ohio State Park is open from sunrise to sunset and has an annual attendance of approximately 500,000.

The Falls of the Ohio region's pride in our historical role in the Lewis and Clark Expedition brought together organizations, governments, and individuals from southern Indiana and Louisville, Kentucky, forming a unique partnership – the Falls of the Ohio Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee. Citizens began meeting in 1997 to discuss and plan activities for the National Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Because of the region's historical connection to Lewis and Clark and the enthusiasm of its citizens, the Falls of the Ohio was designated the country's second National Signature Event from October 14-26, 2003. There were over 125,000 people (including school children) participating in over 45 events and programs during this Signature Event. In addition to these events and programs, several lasting legacy projects were developed and completed at the Falls in preparation for 2003 including the *Spirit of the Land* film, statues of Thomas Jefferson and York, and a Lewis and Clark at the Falls of the Ohio brochure. From November 3-12, 2006, the community will celebrate the *Return of Lewis and Clark* with numerous activities.

It is our responsibility to preserve and interpret the role played by the Falls of the Ohio and all Eastern Legacy sites in what historians recognize still today as the most famous exploring venture in the history of the United States. The lessons revealed by the Lewis and Clark Expedition two hundred years ago have universal relevance to us and our world today, just as they will in our children's world tomorrow. These lessons in leadership and teamwork, communication and commitment, natural resource discovery and conservation, diplomacy and foreign policy, cultural understanding and acceptance are timeless lessons, as we continue the eternal quest to live in harmony with each other and our world. We must recognize this past that shaped the life we enjoy today and leave an important legacy for our children tomorrow by including the Eastern Legacy on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.

As with all of the sites along the Lewis and Clark trail, the Falls of the Ohio has its own unique natural beauty and cultural character. It is at this place – one of the only places on earth – where you can see and touch a 390 million-year history written in the limestone banks of the mighty Ohio River. This limestone outcropping – known as the Falls of the Ohio – became the stopping, meeting, and crossing place for many, including Lewis and Clark. The Falls of the Ohio State Park Interpretive Center's orientation film states “*the Falls of the Ohio was the crossroads for events that would shape the fate of an emerging nation.*” It was this rugged river frontier landscape that shaped the personal characters and special skills of Clark, York, and the nucleus of the Corps of Discovery. Although our river landscape has changed over the past 200 years, some things remain the same. Today, the Falls of the Ohio region includes 23 counties in the great states of Indiana and Kentucky – and like those of the expedition, we are still a people on the threshold of discovery.

With the National Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, we launched new journeys into discoveries about our history, our environment, and each other. Now, we must

complete the journey by extending the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail from St. Louis to Monticello. By including the Eastern Legacy and connecting this important history across the country, we will give our citizens the opportunity to learn about and be enlightened by the full story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.