

**STATEMENT OF DAVID BORLAUG, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF THE LEWIS & CLARK BICENTENNIAL,**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC
LANDS, CONCERNING H.R. 2643, REGARDING FORT CLATSTOP NATIONAL MEMORIAL**

FEBRUARY 7, 2002

Mr. Chairman and honorable Members, my name is David Borlaug, and I am President of the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial; as well as President of the North Dakota Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Foundation, which operates the Fort Mandan replica.

In both of my positions, I have the opportunity to travel all across America, promoting the upcoming Bicentennial commemoration of the Lewis & Clark Expedition of 1803-1806.

Throughout my travels, and in all of my other activities relative to the story of Lewis & Clark, from the porch of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, to the Arch at St. Louis, to Fort Mandan, the Great Falls of Montana and on to the Pacific, the value of the Fort Clatsop National Memorial is obvious, all across America.

The story of the Lewis & Clark Expedition is a uniquely American story, that binds that front porch of Monticello with the gates of Fort Clatsop.

Here was the culmination of Jefferson's dream, although it may have seemed more a nightmare to the Captains, as they faced incredible obstacles in their quest for a water passageway that didn't exist, and then made do with the paths and rivers that they confronted. The members of the original Corps of Discovery were among this nation's first patriots, "with courage undaunted," in the words of Jefferson.

Noted historian and author Donald Jackson once said, "every generation re-discovers Lewis & Clark." He's right, and this generation's interest is magnified by the power of a Bicentennial commemoration, which kicks off less than a year from now, at Monticello.

Millions of Americans and visitors from around the world are already doing what Lewis & Clark did, on their own "voyages of discovery" across the Lewis & Clark Trail. Where I work, at Fort Mandan, in a small town in North Dakota, we saw visitation rise 27 percent this past year, with visitors from all 50 states, every Canadian province, and over 50 foreign countries. And, to my constant surprise, many of those visitors are on a Lewis & Clark adventure, all the way to Fort Clatsop. And, all this is happening in what has been a flat to down year for tourism across most of the country. Lewis & Clark is making a difference in communities, from Washburn, ND to Astoria, OR and McGowan, WA.

Those of us on the Lewis & Clark Trail have this incredible spotlight shining on us right now, and the benefits of this illumination will go on, far beyond the Bicentennial. That is the beauty of heritage tourism. After visitors come and go, they tell their friends, neighbors and relatives back home what a wonderful experience they had, and more visitors come in their wake.

With this spotlight, comes great opportunity, to be sure. Opportunity in the form of economic development, especially in areas where traditional sources of employment and commerce are dwindling. And opportunity

to tell our uniquely American story, with its multi-cultural components. Within those components, the educational opportunities are tremendous, and must be exploited to great advantage for students and visitors of all ages.

With this opportunity, comes a great responsibility, however. Fort Clatsop, and other major attractions on the Lewis & Clark Trail must be ready for this increase in visitation. We must be ready to meet, indeed to exceed, the expectations that visitors have when they arrive. This Bicentennial is a great national commemoration. Already, the National Council is working with major media outlets, and there will be significant national media attention on the Lewis & Clark Trail, beginning this spring, months before the launch of the Bicentennial.

Your committee today, has the opportunity to ensure that millions of future visitors to the Fort Clatsop area, in both Oregon and Washington, will have their expectations met, and will fully enjoy the spirit of re-discovery that they are seeking.

As National President of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, and as the President of a Foundation devoted to telling this story in North Dakota, I encourage you to support this legislation, to increase the boundaries of this great American treasure, to preserve it, to allow it to be nurtured by the local interests, who working hand in hand with the National Park Service, have done such a remarkable job for so many years. Their greatest achievements still lie before them.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

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