

**Statement by Congressman David Wu**  
**HR 2643, the Fort Clatsop National Memorial Expansion Act**  
**Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation & Public Lands**  
**February 7, 2002**

Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by extending my sincere thanks to you for holding a hearing today on this important bill.

HR 2643, the Fort Clatsop National Memorial Expansion Act, would authorize the National Park Service to expand the boundaries of Fort Clatsop National Memorial in accordance with the recommendations of the 1995 National Parks Service General Management Plan.

The National Memorial System is the commemorative division of America's National Parks System. Our 28 National Memorials are reserved to commemorate the lives of great Americans, and the great sacrifices and heroic deeds of our countrymen.

The Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials honor our greatest leaders. The Wright Brothers Memorial commemorates American ingenuity. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the USS Arizona Memorial remind us of the sacrifices our military veterans have made on America's behalf.

Mr. Chairman, Fort Clatsop National Memorial is a monument to the spirit of American exploration and discovery and reminds us all of the rewards that come from determination and perseverance.

Located near Astoria, Oregon, Fort Clatsop marks the spot where the Corps of Discovery, commanded by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, spent the winter of 1805-1806. The Fort was a 50-foot square structure located in a beautiful forest of Spruce, Douglas fir, and Western Red Cedar. It provided shelter for Lewis and Clark and 31 of their companions, including Sacagawea and her infant son, for 106 continuous days while they waited for the snows of the Rockies to melt.

Fort Clatsop was the first army outpost west of the Rockies and it is the only unit of the National Parks System solely dedicated to the Lewis and Clark expedition.

The persistent rainfall of the Pacific Northwest caused the original Fort to rot away by the mid nineteenth century. In 1955, to coincide with the sesquicentennial celebration of the expedition, Oregonians built a near-exact replica of the Fort out of logs donated by a local timber company.

In 1958 Congress added Fort Clatsop to the National Park System. In 1978 Congress added to the Memorial a site on the Pacific coast where members of the expedition spent the winter making salt through the laborious process of boiling off sea water. With the addition of the salt works, Fort Clatsop had effectively reached its congressionally authorized acreage limit.

By raising the acreage limit from 130 to 1,500 acres, HR 2643 would allow the Park Service to add land between the replica of the Fort and the Pacific Ocean. This area includes the historic Lewis and Clark trail allowing visitors to the Memorial to retrace the historic steps of Lewis and Clark from the Fort to the ocean.

As the committee is well aware, Mr. Chairman, we are quickly approaching the celebration of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. During the bicentennial, the National Parks Service estimates that well over one million people will visit Fort Clatsop. In fact, the Park has already begun to notice an increase in its

visitation.

This bill is strongly supported by the State of Oregon, Clatsop County, city governments in the region, nearby tribal authorities, state and local Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration Organizations, and the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Fort Clatsop will be the centerpiece of the Oregon Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration and will be the site of one of the five national signature events.

This bill is also supported by Willamette Industries, the principal landowner, which worked closely with the National parks Service to design the expanded boundary. An identical bill sponsored by Senator Wyden passed the Senate by unanimous consent this past October.

When President Jefferson, in 1803, laid out a challenge to a group of brave men to search for a navigable water route to the Pacific Ocean, he set a precedent for the great American expedition into the unknown. The clearest echo of Jefferson's challenge came when President Kennedy set a national goal to put a man on the moon within a decade.

As America ventures further and is lifted by the spark of discovery, today and in years to come, it behooves our nation to look to those who have paved the way before us. Whether pushing the frontiers of freedom here on earth, the frontiers of exploration in the heavens, or the frontiers of knowledge everywhere there is ignorance, the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition is one that demonstrates the power of what is possible when a people, and a nation, have the curiosity to ask, "why?"; the sense of unbounded possibility to ask, "why not?"; and the resolve to remake the world.

Again, I thank the Chair for holding this hearing today, and I ask the committee to support this bill, which will help to inspire our country with this great American story.

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