

News Release

The Conservation Fund
1800 North Kent Street, #1120
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (703) 525-6300
Fax: (703) 525-4610
www.conservationfund.org

Contact: Jena Thompson
(703) 908-5809

LAND CRITICAL TO CONSTRUCTION OF FORT TO SEA TRAIL BECOMES PART OF PUBLIC LEGACY

The Conservation Fund Transfers 921 Acres of Historic Forestland to National Park Service for Incorporation into Lewis and Clark National Historical Park

Astoria, OR (September 19, 2005) With the transfer of more than 900 acres of historic forestland to public ownership, The National Park Service and The Conservation Fund announced today the permanent protection of the western edge of the Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery's journey to the Pacific Ocean. The newly protected coastal forestland safeguards scenic vistas, preserves historic resources and expands public recreation areas at the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

"Thanks to the leadership of the Oregon Congressional delegation, the dedication of the National Park Service and the commitment of Weyerhaeuser Company, we are protecting some of the nation's most historic lands for future generations," said The Conservation Fund's president, Larry Selzer.

The transfer ensures the permanent protection of land critical to the construction of the Fort to Sea Trail – a 5.5-mile hiking path that will connect the historic Fort Clatsop to the Sunset Beach State Park and the shores of the Pacific Ocean. In 1805, the Corps of Volunteers for Northwest Discovery built Fort Clatsop at the mouth of the Columbia River near Astoria, Oregon, where they spent the winter of 1805-1806 exploring the nearby woodlands and preparing for their return journey across the continent.

The Conservation Fund purchased the 921-acre parcel in December 2004 from Weyerhaeuser Company. The Fund agreed to hold the property for the National Park Service until more than \$5 million in federal funding could be approved by Congress.

"Protecting this land is helping to fulfill a 50 year-old vision for the park," said Chip Jenkins, superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. "Once completed, this legacy project will serve as a living memorial and outdoor classroom to commemorate the historic events associated with the journey of Lewis and Clark."

Since the purchase, scores of volunteers have been working feverishly to finish construction of the trail in time for its public dedication at the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Celebration in November.

"This land transfer increases the size of Oregon's newest National Park and the profile of its most storied explorers," said U.S. Senator Gordon Smith. "Hundreds of acres of historical scenery will be available as a result of the transfer, and ultimately Oregon's visitors and tourism economy will benefit."

In addition to preserving the park's historic value, this acquisition will also ensure that the forestland surrounding Fort Clatsop will continue to safeguard wildlife habitat for bald eagles, beaver, mountain lion, black bear and Roosevelt elk.

"This project is a perfect example of the government and private enterprise working together to protect our state's heritage and preserve our natural environment," said U.S. Senator Ron Wyden. "The transfer of this land and the development of the Fort to Sea trail will ensure that this historic site, which embodies the pioneering spirit of Lewis and Clark, will remain alive and well for generations of Oregonians to come."

The protection of the Weyerhaeuser parcel is part of the Fund's larger effort to preserve the lands and waters explored by Lewis and Clark. Working on behalf of the National Park Service, and with bi-partisan financial support from Congress, the Fund is negotiating with willing sellers to preserve one additional site in Oregon and two historic properties in Washington: Station Camp and Clark's Dismal Nitch.

"As someone who cares deeply about the completion of the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, I thank the Conservation Fund, Weyerhaeuser, the National Park Service, and the many volunteers who have made conserving this piece of history a reality," said U.S. Congressman David Wu. "I join Oregonians and the thousands of visitors to come in looking forward to the day when we can relive part of our nation's history by experiencing the final steps of the Corps of Discovery."

Since 1985, The Conservation Fund, through its Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Initiative, has helped to preserve more than 20,000 acres—including 26 miles of river frontage—along the route that the explorers followed. In addition to Fort Clatsop, major sites conserved through the Fund's initiative include the famed campsite known as Travelers' Rest, historic views of Montana's Crimson Bluffs, Devil's Elbow, Sulphur Springs - where mineral waters were used to cure Sacagawea - and the Charbonneau Gravesite in Oregon, where Sacagawea's son is buried.

About The Conservation Fund

The Conservation Fund is the nation's foremost environmental nonprofit dedicated to protecting America's land and water legacy for current and future generations. Seeking innovative conservation solutions for the 21st century, the Fund works to integrate economic and environmental goals. Since its founding in 1985, the Fund has helped its partners safeguard wildlife habitat, working landscapes, community "greenspace," and historic sites totaling more than 4 million acres. With 1% fund raising costs and 96% program allocation, The Conservation Fund is recognized as the nation's top rated environmental nonprofit by the American Institute of Philanthropy. www.conservationfund.org

###