National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Clatsop
National Memorial

92343 Fort Clatsop Road
Astoria OR 97103

503-861-2471 phone
503-861-2585 fax
superintendent_focl@nps.gov

Fort Clatsop National Memorial News Release

October 4, 2004

New Exhibits Open at Fort Clatsop

Come, enlist and explore along side the members of the Corps of Discovery with three new exhibits at Fort Clatsop National Memorial. Two permanent displays, a traditional cedar canoe and "The Plants of the Lewis and Clark Expedition highlighting the "discoveries" by the expedition are now available for the public. A new traveling exhibit," End of our Voyage" produced by the Washington State Historical Society is now on display.

Okulam: The Sound of the Ocean

Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark noted in their journals the excellent craftsmanship and seaworthiness of the Chinookan canoes. To help tell the stories of past and present life's of the people whose skill the Captains praised the National Park Service worked with Tony Johnson one of the few remaining traditional canoe builders in the Pacific Northwest, to have the canoe carved. Johnson is Chinook tribal member, artist, and Chinook Jargon language instructor at the Grand Ronde Tribal Center in Oregon. The canoe is estimated to be one of the top five traditional cedar canoe replicas in the Pacific Northwest. The canoe was constructed from a single old growth Western Red Cedar log following traditional Chinookan methods. The canoe was completed by being blessed and named during a traditional Chinookan naming ceremony, at the park, in September of 2003. The canoe is named Okulam, which in Chinook Jargon means "sound of the ocean."

The canoe is on display under a new shelter constructed by the maintenance staff from Fort Clatsop and North Cascades National Park through the leadership of Ron Tyson, a park maintenance worker. The shelter is a simple design of poles and planks with echos of traditional Chinookan cedar shelters for outside activities. The shelter and canoe is in a bed of kinnikinnick in front of the park's Visitor Center. Kinnikinnick is a shrub native to Oregon and southern Washington. The plant was used by native coastal groups to ease medical problems, and as a smoking mixture for both ceremonial and social activities.

Plants "Discovered" at Fort Clatsop

For thousands of years the Native American residents have and continue to use the abundant variety of plants found in their home that is the Lower Columbia region. But to Lewis and Clark many of these plants were "new discoveries." Park Staff, Lynn Johnson and Nancy Eid, recently refurbished and updated an exhibit that commemorates the valuable contribution that the Corps of Discovery made to western science and describes how these plants were used by the long time residents of the region.

The display holds 28 newly preserved, framed specimens of plants found at the park that were collected or described by Captain Lewis or Captain Clark during their 1805-1806 winter stay. Fact sheets on the backs of the frames detail information about the plants, their ethnobotancial applications and Lewis and Clark's journal descriptions and collection notes concerning each

species. The display is located in the park's visitor center and is available for use by students, researchers and the general public.

"End of our Voyage"

Imagine the explorer's jubilation as they rounded that last bend in the Columbia and saw for the first time the majestic Pacific Ocean. Captain William Clark declared, "Great joy in camp we are in View of the Ocian, this great Pacific Octean which we been So long anxious to See."

A compact traveling exhibit, on loan from the Washington State Historical Society, tells the compelling story of the six week rush down the Snake and Columbia Rivers where Lewis and Clark had an encounter with a surprisingly diverse environment. The exhibit opens a window to the past with excerpts from the explorers' journals, and various maps, plus historic photographs and graphics illustrating the course of their journey. The exhibit is on display through January 1, 2005.