

‘Honor and recognize’ tribes in Lewis and Clark commemoration

Question: *How should Americans commemorate the 200-year anniversary of Lewis and Clark’s journey of the Corps of Discovery in a way that is least objectionable to our Native American Indian tribes?*



By Representative Denny Rehberg

The people of our magnificent state have given Americans every reason to copy our own exemplary celebration of the 200th anniversary of Lewis and Clark’s expedition into the scenic lands that later became known as Montana.

I’m so proud of the thought and effort our state’s volunteers have put into this commemoration.

Those who have donated their time and resources to make this year’s commemoration such a success have included tribal and community leaders, historians, the media and especially children, who will now benefit from these lessons of history they’ve proudly put on display.

This careful attention to detail on the part of our citizens and communities deserves our applause and gratitude. It has also prompted me this month to include, in the Congressional Record, my thanks for all the work they’ve done, and to tell the story of Montana’s success to the rest of the country.



By Senator Conrad Burns

The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial will offer countless opportunities to bring people together and better understand our shared history. As a proud Co-Chair of the Congressional Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Caucus, I have worked on the

commemoration of the bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery over the past several years. One of the most impressive components of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial has been the incredible cooperation between communities, federal agencies and Tribes along the Trail. Montana will host two of the 12 nationwide signature events, and I was happy to be

a part of the opening ceremonies for the “Explore! The Big Sky” Signature Event in Fort Benton on June 3. In addition, the Corps of Discovery II is making its way through Montana this summer. Corps II is a collaborative effort headed up by the National Park Service involving more than 25 federal agencies, 40-plus American Indian nations, dozens of state and local agencies, private and nonprofit organizations and thousands of individual volunteers. Its central feature is the “Tent of Many Voices.” This 200-seat auditorium is a venue for living history, cultural arts demonstrations, folklore, music and dance, readings from the expedition journals, panel discussions and more. The schedule for the exhibit can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/lecl/CorpsIII/Corps2Schedule05.htm>. I urge you to go see it if you can.



By Senator Max Baucus

As we celebrate the journey that Lewis and Clark took 200 years ago, it’s important to highlight not only their accomplishments but also to acknowledge the role of American Indians and the sacrifices that they made. There is much joy surround-

ing this event but there is also sadness.

Lewis and Clark were sent on a mission and they opened up portions of the country that had never been seen by people who were exploring the United States themselves. Lewis and Clark faced many obstacles along the way such as slim supplies, small number of explorers in their party, harsh weather conditions and the uncertainty of what they might find. Lewis and Clark were able to complete their missions largely due to the help they received from Native American

tribes along the way—and their role must not be understated. Sacagawea and her son John Baptist traveled with Lewis and Clark and their party and served as their native guides. They helped the explorers navigate and avoid difficulties along the way.

As we honor Lewis and Clark, we must also honor and recognize the sacrifices made by our Native American friends. Whether by their own choosing or not, they played a large role—they were “discovered” by Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery, they provided guidance and assistance along the way. Sacagawea and her son serve as symbols for the many faceless and nameless who played roles in this chapter of our country’s history.

As the celebration and commemoration move forward for the 200-year anniversary of Lewis and Clark’s journey of the Corps of Discovery, we must be sensitive to all of those who were involved and honor all of them.