

**Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs**  
**Approved, August 28, 2005**

EXPANSION OF HAT ROCK STATE PARK, OREGON

Hat Rock, six miles east of McNary Dam, was named on October 19, 1805 in one of the journal entries for the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Lewis and Clark were on their way to the Pacific Ocean, having recently reached the Columbia River. Clusters of Native American lodges dotted the route, with salmon outside curing over fires. People have been living here along the banks of the Columbia for 10,000 years. Willow trees and islands in the free-flowing river were indicated in the journals, including rapids upstream. Remarked repeatedly in the journals for October 19 was their fortune in having along their guide, Sacajawea, who placated groups of Native Americans and the Western nomads they met here. Their meeting was an event, with music played.

Today a landscape of sage brush and native grasses remains, unaffected by gorge winds, reminding us of these experiences at the waters' edge. Only 755 acres now protects this small natural basalt mesa, once an unspoiled land beside snow-charged water. It is one of the few remaining landmarks of the Corps of Discovery that is above the flood-line, following construction of dams in the twentieth century. Paint, applied in modern times, hides the graffiti put there by vandals on parts of the basalt monolith, which is surrounded by chain-link fencing, enclosing large grass lawn areas, picnic tables, a pond, boat launch, and parking lots. Local development sits within feet of its small boundary.

Hat Rock is an isolated state park in Umatilla County, Oregon. It should be expanded to protect this site visited by the Lewis and Clark Expedition, as well as their route. Its boundaries could extend from the shoreline of the Columbia River a mile or more inland to land a half mile or more on the opposite side of state highway 730. It should continue for at least five miles west along the river to the McNary Nature Wildlife Area. This area ought to be left in its natural state so that future generations can retrace the explorers' steps as they saw it.