

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Markup Memorandum

May 11, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Mark-Up: **H.R. 3045 (Rep. Luke Messer)**, To amend the National Trails System Act to extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and for other purposes.
May 16, 2018; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 3045 “*Eastern Legacy Extension Act*”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 3045, introduced by Representative Luke Messer (R-IN-06), amends the National Trails System Act to extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail to 4,900 miles, from the origin of the Ohio River in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to the mouth of the Columbia River near Astoria, Oregon.

Cosponsors

Rep. Susan W. Brooks [R-IN-05]
Rep. Bill Johnson [R-OH-06]
Rep. John A. Yarmuth [D-KY-03]

Background

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, established in 1978, commemorates the opening of the American West by the Corps of Discovery in the early 19th Century. In 1803 President Thomas Jefferson charged Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark with finding a water route to the Pacific Ocean across the United States’ newly purchased Louisiana Territory, and with seeking out and identifying wildlife, vegetation, and native populations along the way. The journey contributed greatly to scientific knowledge and helped to foster profound political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental changes to the lands and the peoples of the North American continent. Today the trail provides visitors with connections to this historic event through recreational and educational opportunities.¹

The current 3,700-mile National Historic Trail follows the route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition west of the Mississippi River from Wood River, Illinois to Astoria, Oregon. The Eastern Legacy Extension recognizes the significance of the planning, preparation, and beginning stages of the Expedition. H.R. 3045 will extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic

¹ “History & Culture”. Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail website.
<https://www.nps.gov/lecl/learn/historyculture/index.htm>

Trail by 1,200 miles, with a new eastern boundary at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania following the path of the Ohio River.

The Eastern Legacy Extension of the trail encompasses important history and key moments for the Expedition: from the spot where Lewis and Clark first joined together, the location where Lewis purchased his keelboat, the site where the full Corps of Discovery was formed, and to the spot where the crew turned their boats upstream for the first time. After leaving Pittsburgh, the men initiated hands-on activities that prepared them for the hardships of the long trip west which helped provide confidence that their technology and techniques would work correctly to support the planned exploration, as well as to allow for their desired documentation. While traveling the eastern portion of the route, Lewis and Clark gained a better understanding of the number of men needed for the later Expedition, how to operate the new vessels, how to navigate the sandbars prevalent in the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, which allowed them to refine their techniques in order to map, document, and investigate the surroundings.²

In February 2018, at the direction of Congress, the National Park Service (NPS) completed a study on the proposed extension of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (*See* Public Law 110-229, Section 343). The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Extension Study found the route proposed for inclusion in H.R. 3045 to be nationally significant, suitable, and feasible for inclusion in the existing Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. The study was conducted in accordance with the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.). The study noted that there would be additional costs expected to be covered by the NPS and trail partners to manage the trail extension.³

The Eastern Legacy Extension is supported by the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and the Lewis and Clark Trust, both partner organizations of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Several local organizations contacted NPS during the public comment period for the study and expressed an interest in partnering in trail activities along the extended route.⁴

The Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a legislative hearing on H.R. 3045 on April 11, 2018.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

At the Subcommittee on Federal Lands hearing, Joy Beasley, the Acting Associate Director of Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science at the National Park Service testified

² National Park Service. (2018). Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Extension Study. <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=155&projectID=32773&documentID=86024>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. (page 53)

on H.R. 3045. Ms. Beasley testified that the “Department recognizes that the extension of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail proposed by H.R. 3045 meets the criteria for inclusion in the National Trails System. However, due to the National Park Service’s \$11.6 billion deferred maintenance, the Department does not support enacting an extension of the trail at this time.”

Anticipated Amendments

Congressman Bishop (R-UT) will offer an amendment to add references to a map created by the National Park Service depicting the additional trail segments authorized to be added to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail by this legislation.

[Effect on Current Law \(Ramseyer\)](#)