

Lewis & Clark - Spirit Mound Trust News

P.O. Box 603, Vermillion, SD 57069



Edited by Tom Gasque & Mark Wetmore

July 2001

Tim Johnson at Spirit Mound July 29

On Sunday, July 29, 2001, Senator Tim Johnson will visit Vermillion to make a formal presentation of the check for the purchase of Spirit Mound and the surrounding land.

Representatives of the National Park Service, South Dakota State Game, Fish and Parks, and the Lewis & Clark – Spirit Mound Trust will participate in the ceremony, scheduled for 1:00 to 1:30 pm at Spirit Mound.

Immediately afterwards, at approximately 1:45 pm, the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce will host a punch and cookies reception at the W. H. Over Museum.

Members of the Lewis & Clark – Spirit Mound Trust are encouraged to attend both events, which are open to the public.

Spirit Mound Historic Prairie

The future of Spirit Mound looks bright, and we are on the way toward achieving the goals that the Trust set many years ago.

As noted in our February 2000 newsletter, Senator Tim Johnson from South Dakota and Governor Bill Janklow both began an effort late in 1998 to procure grant funds and other resources for the Spirit Mound Project. Both were acutely aware of the historical importance of this special site, which Lewis and Clark visited almost 200 years ago, on August 25, 1804. Late in 1998 \$600,000 was added to the National Park Service budget to be used for acquisition of the 320-acre Spirit Mound site.

Officers of the Spirit Mound Trust realized it would not be enough to purchase the site and hope that it would return to a native condition.

Last summer we hired Mr. David Breyfogle of the Prairie Stewardship Project to develop a plan for the restoration of a native tallgrass prairie. The plan outlined what needed to be done and established cost estimates for the removal of buildings and trees, restoration of contours, and the re-establishment of native species.

The plan was used as the basis of discussion during several meetings with staff from Senator Johnson's and Governor Janklow's offices, as well as representatives of the National Park Service and the Parks and Recreation Division of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department. Last August a project plan was approved by all participants.

The land acquisition funds were transferred to the private, nonprofit South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation, which completed purchase of the 320 acres in April 2001. Governor Janklow approved a \$348,400 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) grant, along with significant in-kind contributions by the state, primarily in the form of staff time and expenses that will be devoted to the project.

The National Park Service will provide all the interpretive signs for the project, which will be similar to their other signage along the Lewis and Clark Trail. The Spirit Mound Trust successfully applied for an additional \$80,000 National Park Service grant, which will also be dedicated to project costs. Grant matching funds were contributed by the City of Vermillion, \$9,600; Clay County, \$5,000; and the Vermillion Chamber of Commerce, \$2,000. The Trust also contributed \$20,000 to a state endowment for on-going maintenance costs. By the time the project is completed, total costs could easily equal \$1,500,000.

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Membership Renewal

To faithful members, we thank you for your support over the years and hope that you will renew; to new members, we urge you to join us. And tell your friends about our important work to preserve this historic treasure. The purchase of the land and the grants to develop it into a historic prairie are just the beginning. The Spirit Mound Trust has a continuing commitment to support the restoration by adding to the endowment fund and to remind the world of the importance of this site long after the bicentennial comes and goes.

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Lewis & Clark – Spirit Mound Trust
PO Box 603

The National Park Service will also assume responsibility for maintaining the Spirit Mound interpretive installations in the future. The South Dakota Division of Parks and Recreation is responsible for project management, as well as future general maintenance and administration of the site, which will be known as *Spirit Mound Historic Prairie*.

Meanwhile, now that Spirit Mound is public property, the public may go on the property without landowner permission. Visitors should be careful to stay clear of any work being done and should stay off planted areas, both those being seeded in native prairie grasses and those leased for crops for the next year or two.

Pins to be Available

The Trust has ordered a supply of souvenir pins depicting Spirit Mound and noting that Lewis and Clark were here in 1804. The pins, approximately one inch by two inches, should be available for sale at the time of the annual com-

memoration on August 24-25, 2001. The price is yet to be determined, but should be around \$6. The pin, shaped like the state of South Dakota, depicts the mound from the west, incorporating the photograph, by Charles Wetmore, used on the postcard that the Trust sells. The pin also includes the official logo of the National Park Service



Lewis and Clark Trail and the following text: **Spirit Mound, Lewis and Clark Were Here — August 25, 1804, Vermillion, South Dakota.**

The trust still has the postcards available for sale (\$1) at Deb's Hallmark and at USD Book and Supply. Prints of Ron Backer's painting of Lewis and Clark ascending Spirit Mound are available (\$100) at USD Book and Supply.

New Look for Spirit Mound

If you have driven by Spirit Mound this summer, you will have noticed many changes. Crews have cleared many of the small trees and

are removing or dismantling the buildings. A new sign has also gone up at the edge of South Dakota Highway 19.

Here is the text of the sign:

COMING SOON

A NEW LOOK FOR SPIRIT MOUND

Over the next few years change will come to Spirit Mound Historic Prairie. Modern Buildings and intrusions will disappear and a tallgrass prairie will gradually reemerge. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks has acquired the 320-acre site. It will restore it as closely as possible to what Lewis and Clark Expedition members saw when they came here on Aug. 25, 1804, stood atop Spirit Mound, and "beheld a most butifull landscape." Except for the ongoing prairie restoration, the rest of the work is projected to be completed by 2004 – the bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery's visit here. A brochure describing Spirit Mound's new look is available at the W. H. Over Museum in Vermillion.

Project partners are:

- South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks
- National Park Service
- Spirit Mound Trust
- City of Vermillion
- South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation
- Clay County
- Vermillion Chamber of Commerce
- South Dakota Department of Transportation



Lewis & Clark – Spirit Mound Trust Membership Renewal.

Please add my name to the membership rolls of the Lewis & Clark - Spirit Mound Trust. I enclose my check for \$10.00 (tax deductible*).

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone (optional)

e-mail (optional)

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