Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, S. 2326, the bill before you today would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to designate the Nez Perce National Historical Park in the State of Idaho, to commemorate, preserve and interpret the rich and varied history of the area significant in the development of the American West.

The Department of the Interior, in its report to your Chairman, dated May 21, 1964, heartily endorsed this legislation and recommended its enactment, with certain perfecting amendments. In taking this position, the Department followed the recommendations of the President's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, which had indicated its support of the measure at its meeting in Texas last November.

After reviewing the National Park Service's feasibility report, a copy of which has been furnished to the Subcommittee, the Advisory Board commended the proposal as an "imaginative new concept of historic preservation."

The characterization of this project as in "imaginative new concept of historic preservation" by the National Advisory Board deserves emphasis. I myself know the area very well; I know the
richness of its history and the relative freedom from the encroachment of civilization of the evidences of this history.

I know also quite a bit about what it takes to make a national park, after almost four years of working with that great segment of the Department of the Interior, and with the committees of Congress as they consider park proposals.

The magic ingredient of "national" status can economically transform an area. The American people love their park system, they have confidence in its integrity, and they plan their vacations to visit parks, secure in the conviction that whether from the interpretive or the scenic standpoint, their confidence will be rewarded.

It has been my feeling for a long time that in the northern part of Idaho, a happy combination of circumstances challenges us to make a breakthrough, and to come up with "imaginative new concepts."

What, for example, do we have in our Park System which really interprets the history of the development of the West, to match the fine work in interpretation of colonization, of the struggle for independence, and of the Civil War?

It is neither necessary nor desirable that this task of interpretation be carried on only under the management of the National Park Service. With local support, agreements can be entered into with other Federal agencies, with Indian tribes, with local and State historical associations, and local and State governments which will assure conformity with concepts of interpretive integrity, and a unity of concept, for each of the separate sites not planned for Park Service acquisition.
We've had magnificent cooperation from all concerned. This imaginative new concept is bringing about a breadth of support almost without precedent in park proposals.

The Nez Perce National Historical Park would actually involve 22 separate sites in the northern Idaho "panhandle" together with certain scenic easements around them—easements to prevent destruction of historic and scenic values by signs or incompatible developments.

Only the most significant 3 of the 22 sites would necessarily be in direct ownership and control of the National Park Service. The remaining 19 might remain in the ownership of the U.S. Forest Service, the State of Idaho, its political subdivisions, the Nez Perce Indian Tribe, or private individuals. However, the bill makes possible the utilization of the National Park Service's proficiency in the techniques of interpreting historic, scenic and other outstanding features. This interpretative proficiency, gained during decades of experience in all types of areas, will be made available on a cooperative basis to the agencies administering these other sites.

The historic values involved include the early Nez Perce Indian culture, the tribe's "war" of 1877 with United States Cavalry troops, the Lewis and Clark expedition through the area early in the 19th century, subsequent fur trading, gold mining, logging and missionary activity.

The Idaho area containing these 22 sites has an average north-south width of 60 miles and an average east-west length of 110 miles.
Archeological evidence has established that man has occupied this area of the Pacific Northwest for at least 10,000 years. But only after the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1805 did America's white settlers have any realistic concept of the area's existence, to say nothing of its impressive scenery and wealth of resources.

Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark found the Nez Perce Indians to be a handsome, intelligent tribe that treated the whites with generous hospitality. Shortly after the explorers' visit a party of Overland Astorians arrived and established fur trading in the area. Christian missionaries and gold miners followed, and each group left its imprint on the land and its native Indian people.

The 1877 Nez Perce War resulted from the growing conflict between these normally peaceful Indians and the whites, whose exploitation of the region's resources brought increasingly restrictive treaties.

Three Indian youths, bent on avenging a slaying, killed four white settlers. Then they recruited other nontreaty Indians and launched a series of plundering raids. General O. O. Howard, commander of the Department of the Columbia, dispatched two troops, about 100 men, of the First Cavalry under Captain David Perry to White Bird Canyon. The Indians lay in ambush, and when they opened fire the first soldier to fall was a bugler. Reports indicate that a group of citizen volunteers panicked and bolted first. Then Perry's regulars turned and fled in headlong retreat. The Nez Perce warriors
had scored a smashing victory, killing 34 soldiers while only two or three warriors were wounded.

Pursuit of the Indians and other skirmishes followed through the summer and into the autumn of 1877. In October hostilities came to an end. Many of the great fighting chiefs had been slain. Other Nez Perce had fled into Canada. Only about 1,000 remained on the reservation from which the white man had removed choice lands and hunting grounds.

At the site of that opening battle of the Nez Perce War, White Bird Canyon, 3 miles northeast of the town of White Bird in Idaho County, about 1,000 acres would be acquired and developed as one of the three principal areas in the Nez Perce National Historical Park. Most of the land is now unimproved and in private ownership, utilized for grazing and crops. The National Park Service would erect a small interpretive center and a few museum exhibits.

The principal interpretive center for visitors to the Historical Park would be at Spalding, some 80 road miles north of the White Bird site, in Nez Perce County at the junction of U. S. Highways 12 and 95, and the confluence of Lapwai Creek and the Clearwater River.

The Spalding site was observed by the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805. Some 33 years later, the Reverend Henry Spalding established a mission among the Nez Perce here, calling the place Lapwai. In the 1860's and '70's it was the site of the
Nez Perce Indian Agency and today it contains the small village of Spalding with some 200 inhabitants.

About 100 acres, including Spalding Memorial State Park, would be acquired here to serve as the main contact point and administrative headquarters. Ownership is now in the State, the Nez Perce Tribe and private individuals. The tribe maintains a cemetery here, containing the graves of Henry Spalding and his wife, Eliza, who taught the Indians school subjects and homemaking.

The third area proposed for acquisition is the East Kamiah site, some 58 miles southeast of Spalding in Idaho County. This area has been occupied by the Nez Perce since prehistoric times and it contains the "Heart of the Monster," a low, stony hill which according to Indian mythology was involved in the tribe's creation.

Here the National Park Service proposes to acquire 60 acres, where a small interpretive center will be constructed. The East Kamiah site acquired properties would also include a small house reputedly occupied in the mid-1800's by Susan and Kate McBeth, devoted and renowned missionaries to the Nez Perce. Ownership of this acreage is now in private individuals, the Presbyterian Church and possibly the Nez Perce Tribe.

The 19 sites proposed for cooperative interpretation, but not for acquisition, are as follows:

Coyote's Fishnet and Ant and Yellow Jacket, two areas intimately related to Nez Perce religion and mythology.
Fort Lapwai, Cottonwood, Camas Prairie and Clearwater Battlefield, four areas relating to the Nez Perce War of 1877.

St. Joseph's Mission, the First Presbyterian Indian Church, East Kamiah and the Asa Smith Mission, three sites significant to missionary activities among the Nez Perce.

Lolo Trail, Lolo Pass, Long Camp, Weippe Prairie and Canoe Camp, five sites extending southwestward from the Montana-Idaho border, all of importance to the Lewis and Clark expedition.

The Northern Idaho Indian Agency, Craig Donation Land Claim, Pierce and Log Drive, four sites where evidences of early activities of the white explorers and settlers can be discerned and interpreted.

Weis Rockshelter, an archeological site where strata reveal nearly continuous human occupancy from about 5500 B.C. to about 1400 A.D.

The amendments proposed by the Department of the Interior are outlined in detail in our report to the chairman of this Committee.

We believe that the story of the Nez Perce Country—as it relates both to the Indians themselves and to the activities of white men here during the 19th Century—is one that merits telling. This goal can be accomplished, at relatively minor expense, by establishing a Historical Park in compliance with S. 2326. Through minimal land acquisition, scenic easements and cooperative agreements with non-Federal owners—and by erection of interpretive exhibits and markers and removal of nonsignificant structures—it will be possible to
display in Northern Idaho an important period in our Nation's history and heritage.

Essentially, this would be a historical park of great interest. Nonetheless, it is also an exciting country of great scenic beauty offering unusual outdoor recreational opportunities. The countryside remains much as it was in frontier days and many of the old structures still stand.

This proposal has broad support from the area. It is almost unique in having no opposition from any source. The Nez Perce Indian Tribe is enthusiastically supporting the proposal. It will present and interpret its cultural heritage and will offer opportunities for the economic development of the Tribe and its members residing in the area.

Thank you.

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