

# THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL ARBORETUM

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## HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS, OVERSIGHT, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

OCTOBER 21, 2003

**Serial No. 108-19**



Printed for the use of the Committee on Agriculture  
*agriculture.house.gov*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

90-355 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2003

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# THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL ARBORETUM

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS,  
OVERSIGHT, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY,  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:30 a.m., in room 1300, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Gil Gutknecht (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Gutknecht, Smith, Ose, Rehberg, Nunes, Goodlatte [ex officio], Dooley, Baca, Ballance, Thompson, Davis and Stenholm [ex officio].

Staff present: Sam Diehl, subcommittee staff director; John Goldberg, Callista Gingrich, clerk; Teresa Thompson and Andy Johnson.

## OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GIL GUTKNECHT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Good morning. As I mentioned to some of you, when I went to auction college, one of the things they taught us to do was start on time. And unfortunately Congressman Frelinghuysen is not here yet, but we are going to go ahead and start with our opening statements, and I will call this hearing of the Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and Forestry to order. We are going to hear testimony today from the U.S. National Arboretum, and I want to welcome everyone to this very important hearing.

Over its 76-year history the National Arboretum has provided the District of Columbia with spectacular beauty and has provided the Nation with a wealth of valuable research. It is a national treasure both as a public garden and as a source of fundamental tree, shrub and plant information.

The Arboretum Research Program supports numerous agricultural sectors including the landscape and horticultural industry. Its research has provided over 650 official plant introductions. It is a critical support to horticulturists, private gardeners, and nursery and landscape professionals in America and around the world. Arboretum research is one of the few public investments and one of the fastest-growing multibillion-dollar sectors of agriculture.

I recently made my first trip to the Arboretum, and I can assure you it will not be my last. It is a magnificent facility with hundreds of acres of gardens and forests. It includes such diverse collections as a grove featuring all of the State trees from around the United

States, to the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. It is an oasis in this busy city, providing pastoral scenes and open green space in a crowded urban environment. It is well worth the trip for those who have never been to the public grounds.

I hope this hearing will provide some insights both to the committee and to USDA on how we can better leverage the unique public asset that is the National Arboretum. We need to better understand how it serves the nursery and landscape industry, how it might support important fields such as forestry and farming, and how it can better serve this city by becoming both a more public and a more sought-after destination.

I am hopeful that through the interest of members of this committee and throughout Congress, we will provide USDA the support needed to successfully manage the Arboretum. Through this hearing, the first to my knowledge, on the National Arboretum by the Agriculture Committee, I am hopeful that we can together to work to improve and guide this national treasure into the future.

Let me say personally that had it not been for the efforts of the subcommittee's Ranking Member, Mr. Cal Dooley, I may never have made the visit to the Arboretum. I want to recognize him for his opening statement and thank him for his leadership on this important issue.

Mr. Dooley.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CALVIN M. DOOLEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. DOOLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you holding this hearing. And I along with a few of our other colleagues had an interest in trying to expand the use and utilization of the Arboretum for a number of years, and I think this hearing is a terrific opportunity for us to make progress on that.

My whole objective with this hearing is that we can recognize the tremendous work that the Arboretum and USDA has done in terms of using the Arboretum for a research facility and the increasing importance of horticulture in the agriculture sector nationally, but what I am hopeful is that through this hearing that we can also understand how we can better utilize the National Arboretum for public use. And I am one who feels very strongly that it is not incompatible for USDA to continue their research activities at the Arboretum, but also find ways in which we can expand public use just to the tremendous resource that the Federal Government owns.

In order to maximize both research as well as the public use components, though, I think we have to acknowledge that we are going to always be facing some financial restraints, and the question there is how can we generate the public resources which are needed, but at the same time find ways which we can be more creative in tapping into some private sector resources.

And we are going to be hearing from Tuckie Bartlett with FONa, which has just done a terrific job, but I am concerned that a lot of their activities have been impeded because of a concern among some of the personnel at USDA about the extent of which FONa can be involved with other private entities in generating the re-

sources that can really complement the research work and also the public use of the National Arboretum.

So I am hopeful at the end of this hearing we will have a better road map in terms of how we can complement the vision that was recently developed in terms of the new master plan for the Arboretum, how Congress can be a stronger partner in charting the course where we can generate the resources, both public and private, that can really enhance the National Arboretum as a national treasure.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Dooley.

I want to second something that he just said, and that is I always feel as if there is something that I don't know much about it, then I assume there are many of my constituents who don't know much about it. And one of the things that intrigued me in my visit is that it is just a wonderful story, and we need to help you in making certain we tell that story; and then secondly, looking for ways that we can better market this amazing treasure so that more Americans can take advantage of what is out there, and bringing more of the public/private partnership to play at the National Arboretum.

With that, I think what we will do is we will call up the second panel. Dr. Brown and Ms. Westfall, welcome to the hearing, and we are happy to hear your presentations.

**STATEMENT OF RODNEY J. BROWN, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Mr. BROWN. Chairman Gutknecht and members of the subcommittee, we thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of the U.S. National Arboretum. My name is Rodney Brown, and I am Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics at U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Many of you may recall in March 2002 here on the Capitol grounds, Secretary Veneman launched the Arboretum's 75th anniversary celebration at a tree planting ceremony. At that event the Secretary said, quote, "The Arboretum is truly a national treasure located right here in our Nation's Capital," end of quote. I could not agree more, and would add that we are very proud to have the Arboretum in the research, education, and economics mission area at USDA.

On a personal note, I would mention that while working at Utah State University, I was deeply involved in the efforts to establish a botanical garden there in many ways patterned after this National Arboretum.

Congress chartered the Arboretum in 1926 to be a research and education facility devoted to the study of plants. Since that time the Arboretum has emerged as one of the premier research-oriented gardens and arboreta in the United States. In addition, it houses the finest collection of bonsai and penjing in North America. Yet, with all the scientific activity on its 446-acre Washington, DC, campus, the Arboretum affords one with beauty and calm in the midst of an urban setting. It is truly a green oasis.

The Arboretum has become the country's leading institution for the development and improvement of flowering trees, shade trees,

flowering shrubs and floral plants. More than 660 new or improved plants have been released to the nursery and floral industry since it began its operation 76 years ago. National Arboretum releases are currently grown in 42 States around the Nation. The wholesale growers, in turn, increase the number of plants and release them to retail outlets.

According to the most recent statistics, the average nursery or greenhouse farmer can expect an annual return of over \$53,000, which is more than the return from any other commodity. There is a continuing demand not only for novel landscape plants, but also for plant varieties with improved tolerance to pests and diseases. There is little capacity in the industry to develop these products. However, because the industry is comprised mostly of small operators, the long time necessary to go from seedlings to mature plants bred for increased disease and pest resistance make this an unprofitable venture for small farmers and businesses in the horticulture industry. The germplasm, molecular and integrated pest management research conducted at the Arboretum is vital to this industry.

Two important Arboretum introductions are disease- and pest-resistant American elms. They were named Valley Forge and New Harmony and represent 20 years of research in the Arboretum's Tree Genetics Program. As many of you know, over 90 percent of the Native American elms covering a range from the eastern States to Illinois and Missouri were lost to Dutch elm disease. The Valley Forge and New Harmony cultivars are excellent candidates to return these prized trees to U.S. yards and landscapes and indeed to U.S. towns.

Arboretum scientists recently played a critical historic role in preserving a national treasure at the Tidal Basin. Most of the original cherry trees presented in 1912 as a thank you gift to President Taft reached maturity several years ago and died. Arboretum researchers propagated the few remaining ones to grow seedlings. In 1999, USDA gave the Department of Interior over 400 cherry trees for planting around the Tidal Basin. More than 600,000 visitors admire these trees each spring.

Another example of the Arboretum's flowering cherry tree research is a new release called First Lady. It was selected for its strong upright growth habit and dark pink single flowers. The plan is for future releases to be named in honor of First Ladies of the United States.

The Arboretum is a leader in the study of viral diseases of ornamental and floral plants. Its contributions in the identification and detection of specific viruses have earned national and international recognition. Arboretum scientists also developed the proper formulation of Neem oil as an effective alternative to synthetic pesticides.

I know that funding for the Arboretum is a concern for this subcommittee, but I would like to point out that modest budget increases over the last 10 years have helped the research programs that have developed these superior quality plants and new technology.

Indeed, among the major research-oriented gardens and arboreta in the United States, the National Arboretum ranks among the very top in investment of research dollars. The Arboretum devotes

40 percent of its annual operating budget to research, which is nearly twice the financial commitment of other horticultural research-oriented institutions, including the Missouri Botanical Garden, Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami, the New York Botanical Garden, the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and the Morton Arboretum in Chicago.

Maintaining large and diverse stocks of living materials—particularly trees and shrubs—for use in research projects, breeding and improvement studies, and in the identification and understanding of the relationships of plants to each other is an important role for the Arboretum. Living collections of hundreds of different types and thousands of species of trees and shrubs are vital to the continued long-term health of the nursery industry in the United States.

The Arboretum, with strong public support, has complemented its Development and Research Program with beautiful and diverse garden displays and collections that provide meaningful educational experiences for the public. Each year approximately 500,000 people visit the Arboretum, particularly in spring and autumn. They come for many reasons, but primarily to enjoy and learn about plant life.

This concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman. I will be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have regarding the Arboretum and its valuable contribution to serving the horticultural needs of the country.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Brown appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Dr. Brown.

Ms. Westfall.

**STATEMENT OF TUCKIE WESTFALL, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. WESTFALL. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to provide the views of the Friends of the National Arboretum, FONA, to the subcommittee this morning. My name is Tuckie Westfall, and I am currently the chairman of the board of directors of FONA. FONA is a nonprofit organization started 25 years ago with the mission to enhance support for the National Arboretum. FONA raises funds from the general public and acts as an advocate for sufficient levels of Federal funding as well for the Arboretum.

FONA has been extremely successful in raising funds, increasing public awareness and initiating new activities at the Arboretum that benefit the public. Some examples are included in my written statement. One highlight, however, was FONA's pivotal role in protecting the country's heritage by raising funds to move the long lost Capitol steps and columns to their current dramatic setting on the Arboretum grounds in 1990.

The National Arboretum was established for the purpose of research and education concerning tree and plant life. The Arboretum continues to fulfill this dual role both as a center of scientific research and as a place for the public to see and learn from the public display of trees, shrubs and flowers. USDA's approach to the



public use of the Arboretum, however, has been ambivalent. While encouraging public access through active volunteer programs, seasonal weekends, tram tours, lectures, training courses, et cetera, the Department's appropriations request to the Congress have consistently shortchanged funding for the two units which deal with its public aspects, the Education and Visitors Unit and the Gardens Unit.

The internal budget process within USDA has added to the difficulty of providing sufficient funds for public access because the Arboretum must submit all of its funding requests under broad scientific topics such as germplasm research and invasive pest species research, neither of which relate in any way to providing services to visitors. And there is no separate line item in the Department's budget for the Arboretum, further complicating the task of identifying whether appropriate funds have been provided. The result, in our view, has been an appalling lack of funds for needed maintenance, repair and upkeep of the grounds and public buildings. Some examples of the negative consequences of this underfunding are also described in my written statement.

FONA and the other stakeholders organizations have attempted to make up for these shortfalls by providing gardeners and interns for maintenance. Only two Arboretum gardeners have been assigned to the sections of the Arboretum representing almost half of the Arboretum's 446 acres. FONA funds three full-time gardeners to try to fill this void.

Like all nonprofits, FONA has experienced recent difficulties in fund-raising. We do not honestly know whether we will be able to maintain the level of funding that we have provided to the Arboretum in the past, and we think that basic jobs such as gardening should be provided by the Federal Government so that monies we raise can be used for unique projects.

We believe that enhanced emphasis must be given to the mandate to provide education in the broadest sense of the word. The research and education roles need not be inconsistent. The National Arboretum can and should be a window to the world for agricultural research and public enjoyment. FONA can be an essential bridge in the public/private partnership that will be required for the future growth and development of the National Arboretum. To date, this vision has been hampered by what we believe is an over-rigid interpretation of Government regulations. Similarly, the Arboretum has not been able to effectively leverage its incredibly beautiful site to host events that could bring needed funds to assist in carrying out its mission. This seems to stem partly from the fear of conflicts and partly from a fear of the extra workload that might be involved in preparing the grounds and staffing for events.

In late 2000, the Arboretum completed an extensive master plan which outlines a wonderful vision. National Arboretum's master plan provides for much-needed capital improvements and enhanced public services, but to date it has not been funded.

FONA would like to make the following recommendations to Congress regarding the Arboretum: Clarify the National Arboretum's mandate to serve the general public through enhancing public access services and education. Next, create within the USDA budget a separate line item for the National Arboretum so that

both congressional appropriators and the public have a clearer understanding of the amount of Federal funds going into the Arboretum and their purpose. Next, clarify that the National Arboretum has the authority and is encouraged to rent its space and facilities either directly or through support organizations such as FONA as a means of raising additional funds. Next, request that the USDA provide a long-term budget plan in its fiscal year 2005 request for implementation of the National Arboretum master plan so that it will be fully resourced.

I hope that the subcommittee, the committee, Congress, USDA and the National Arboretum understand that these recommendations are made with full recognition and deep appreciation for the incredible dedication and work ethic of the Arboretum staff. FONA's goal today is simply to assist them in carrying out their mission, and our intent is to make the recommendations that will enhance that effort.

Again, as I close, I would like to submit a stakeholders letter for the record and an attachment, and I would like to thank the members of this subcommittee for this opportunity to present the views of the Friends of the National Arboretum. And I would be happy to answer questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Westfall appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you Ms. Westfall. Without objection, the stakeholders letter and the attachment will be made a part of this committee hearing.

I did take notes and was paying attention to your recommendations, and I have to say that I—having been out there only once—I strongly agree with your recommendations. I think in some respects the Arboretum has become sort of the foster child of the USDA, and with no disrespect to Dr. Brown. It doesn't see it as part of its core mission, and as a result it is sort of left out there on its own. And it strikes me that we have to figure out a way, and perhaps if we clarify the mandate and create a separate line item in the budget, it would probably really work to the advantage of everyone.

But I really do want to thank you for what you do for the Arboretum in terms of attracting attention and trying to bring together the public and private sector to work to improve the Arboretum, to increase its visibility and to make it more usable for all Americans.

Dr. Brown, I want to come back to one of the issues that I was intrigued with, and a couple of us are also members of the Science Committee, and we have spent an awful lot of time talking about invasive species. And I was interested, and you mentioned in your prepared remarks, Dutch elm disease. But we have got an awful lot of other problems, the gypsy moth and all kinds of kudzu, and lots of other invasive species.

First of all, and perhaps you can talk a little bit about what you have done, and perhaps we could do more to underscore just how expensive all of these invasive species really are to our economy. And I think in making that case, for example, we continue to hear estimates in the billions of what some of these invasive species are costing our economy today. And it may well be that an ounce of

prevention is worth a pound of cure. Perhaps we can find some cures.

Perhaps you can talk a little bit about what the Arboretum has done to date particularly on issues like Dutch elm, and then perhaps we can work together to look at ways that we can better use the Arboretum to perhaps help us solve some of those other invasive species problems.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Of course, the invasive species problem goes across all of agriculture, all of natural resources, all of the whole country. And as you mentioned, we see various estimates that are literally in the billions of dollars per year of damage from invasive species.

One of the reasons that we feel it is important to have the Arboretum located where it is in organization, and the logic in it being there, is that associated with all of these problems like invasive species. So even though we are working in the Arboretum with Dutch elm disease, with all the different diseases and viruses and invasive species related to the nursery industry, this is also complemented by work at our different ARS labs around the country and even outside of the country where we try to work with invasive species before they get here.

Budgetwise we have tried in the Arboretum to increase the operating budget to take care of these problems. For example, in the last 2 years, USDA's budget, this would be fiscal year 2002 and 2003, USDA's budget for salaries and expenses and operating increased 2 percent. The National Arboretum's budget we increased 14 percent. In the last 3 years for buildings and facilities, the Beltsville area of ARS had \$20,400,000 in facilities spending. Of that, \$9.6 million was at the Arboretum. A third of all the facilities spending for the whole of BARC was spent at the Arboretum.

As Congressman Dooley mentioned, there are always more things to do than there are funds. But this new master plan, which is designed to take care of some of these problems, has facilities and the ability to handle 700,000 visitors at the Arboretum annually, and we are working desperately to get to that point. Thank you.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Dr. Brown, my time is about expired, and I won't try to go on too long, but it would be helpful, I think, to all of us, particularly on the Budget Committee, if you could help at USDA—begin to help us to get our arms around how big some of these problems are.

For example, our national forests, we have got 190 million acres in our national forests. I don't know how many of them are currently suffering from some kind of disease or invasive species, but if we could somehow get our arms around how big the problem is, I think it will be easier for us to talk about increasing the budget or doing whatever we need to do with the Arboretum to search for answers as they did with Dutch elm. I mean, in discovering two native species which are immune to Dutch elm, it seems to me that they made a huge contribution to the tree industry in the entire United States.

My time has expired, and I will yield to the ranking member, Mr. Dooley.

Mr. DOOLEY. Thank you very much.

And thank you, Dr. Brown and Ms. Westfall, for attending today.

Dr. Brown—and I also understand that Dr. Elias, who is the Director of the Arboretum, is here, too, and if you feel like he might be able to offer some insights, I know the committee would welcome that.

One of my issues is that there seems to be a difference between the way the Smithsonian and other Federal facilities have partnerships with the private sector in terms of the utilization of their facilities in order to generate outside income. I mean, we have all been to events at the National Air and Space Museum, the Archives, that have corporate sponsors, which, as I understand, in Smithsonian, the way that they handle this is that there is a donation, basically a sponsorship, which then allows them to use the facility. Those funds are reinvested in the upkeep of that or upkeep or ongoing activities of that facility.

This doesn't appear to be the case at the Arboretum, and I just need to understand, if this is a decision that was made by USDA, too. Do you feel that you do not have the flexibility to do this, and if so, what do we need to change? Or is this something that you don't think is compatible with the mission?

Mr. BROWN. In the Federal Register, May 2003, CFR part 500, there was a request for suggestions about the fees, et cetera, that would be charged for use of the Arboretum facilities, the grounds and so on. That schedule is published, and we do follow that schedule. It doesn't provide the kind of fund-raising activities that I believe you are thinking of. It does provide for the costs of upkeep and the costs of the events.

Mr. DOOLEY. How is that different than what the Smithsonian does?

Mr. BROWN. I don't know what their authorities are and so on, but I know they are a nonprofit organization. They are a 501(c)(3), I believe. We, of course, are not. And we have challenges, for example, quite frequently people would like to hold events and invite me to come to those events. At the same time they are talking to me about spending money on other activities. That is part of the challenge, and probably the biggest part. But we are trying to work with this and come up with a solution that makes as many people happy as possible.

Mr. DOOLEY. Could they have the event and not invite you?

Mr. BROWN. Well, I suspect that—

Mr. DOOLEY. Sounds like something you would be able to handle with the guest list.

Mr. BROWN. I probably would be pleased in most cases if they did just that.

Mr. DOOLEY. Is there any interest on behalf of the USDA as well, and maybe Dr. Elias might want to comment on this, to find a way that we can generate more private sector resources? I mean, I am even concerned in Ms. Westfall's testimony she even cites that FONA, which is solely dedicated to supporting the Arboretum, has been declared by USDA attorneys as a prohibited source, which is a term, I guess, to describe groups or individuals who might have conflicts of interest. Well, we have one of the groups that is solely dedicated to trying to help support it. USDA attorneys are saying they are a prohibited source. Somehow this seems to be a little bit

inconsistent with trying to achieve this objective of generating additional revenues to support the activities at the Arboretum.

Mr. BROWN. We are currently working on a new M.O.U. with FONA. I can't tell you how much we appreciate the support of FONA for the Arboretum. And we are working on a new agreement with FONA to help get through some of these legal issues.

Mr. DOOLEY. Is there some direction that this committee could give to USDA that would help you if this committee decided and determined that was in the interest of maximizing the use of the National Arboretum that we would give you additional flexibility or suggest that you already have the existing authority through administrative interpretation to seek private funding through expanded public use of the institution, is that something that you folks would then respond to, or have you guys made up your mind that this is not something you really are not interested in?

Mr. BROWN. No. I think that would be a gross misunderstanding. We would be very pleased to do whatever you would ask us to do. We believe that we are doing right now what we have been asked to do according to the laws and the interpretation of those who are—I am not an attorney, and they are.

Mr. DOOLEY. I will wait until another round then, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Dooley. And we are going to pursue this point later in the hearing.

Mr. Smith of Michigan.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Maybe I missed it. What is the total annual budget for operating the Arboretum?

Mr. BROWN. It is \$10.2 million this year.

Mr. SMITH. Where in the agricultural budget—inasmuch as my understanding is that it is not a line item in the appropriation bill, where does the money come from?

Mr. BROWN. It is in the Agricultural Research Service.

Mr. SMITH. And how is the decision made on how much money will be budgeted?

Mr. BROWN. On how much would be spent at the Arboretum?

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. BROWN. Well, as the budget is prepared, of course, it is divided out into all of the hundreds of different categories. In fact, the Arboretum, within the Agricultural Research, ARS Programs, is lumped together with the area where the plant diseases and so on are, genomics and so on. Part of the logic there is that is the area that has grown most rapidly in recent years.

Mr. SMITH. Explain to me the research and science efforts or goals as far as the operation of the Arboretum.

Mr. BROWN. The Arboretum, of course, develops new germplasm, your new seed stocks, new plants for the green industry in the United States; preserves what is already in existence. It is important to preserve all of these various varieties and species so that they are available for breeding in the future. And, of course, a lot of this has to do with the developing resistance to diseases and viruses and other things that are constantly coming along.

Mr. SMITH. How would the Department feel about making the operation of the Arboretum a line item? I am sort of curious on how

structured the budget is. How much is it adhered to, or do you just spend more money as needed?

Mr. BROWN. Personally I feel that the changing of the location of the Arboretum in our budget would not change the way it is handled or the amount of the budgets. I think that moving it around on the sheet is not going to change things as much as I am sure some would hope.

Mr. SMITH. So that it doesn't go without saying, it is just such a magnificent facility and such a wonderful addition to our Capitol Hill environment. So my compliments on the reorganization.

Was the building project line item, in the budget for the building project, where did those funds come from?

Mr. BROWN. It wasn't a separate item. It was in the regular USDA facilities budget for modernization.

Mr. SMITH. And, again, following up on Mr. Dooley's comments, would you maybe—Mr. Chairman, is it possible that they could let the committee know whether an official, for lack of a better word, direction, interpretation of the law in terms of allowing you to rent a facility, would that accommodate your legal beagles in USDA, or do you think it takes a law change?

Mr. BROWN. No. I think anything that came from the committee we would immediately put into the system and put in place as soon as we possibly could.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. WESTFALL. May I make a comment?

Mr. SMITH. Oh, yes, please.

Ms. WESTFALL. In the Federal Register notice that Dr. Brown referenced of May 27, it states, facilities and grounds are available by reservation at the discretion of the USNA Director or designee and may be available to individuals or groups in furtherance of the mission of the USNA, and yet we still have trouble getting there from here.

Mr. DOOLEY. Dr. Brown, or Dr. Elias, can you tell me how many times the Arboretum has used this discretion to allow independent groups to use the facilities in the last year?

Mr. BROWN. There are about 200 such events a year.

Mr. DOOLEY. I would really appreciate then—you must have a list of those. If you can just provide the committee the list of those events, too.

Mr. BROWN. We will be happy to do that. Thank you.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS. I would like to make a brief statement. I apologize for being late and not hearing the entire testimony. I represent the Fourth Congressional District which has McMinnville, or the county of Warren. Several counties around there do considerable nursery industry business.

I appreciate the two staff members that work with the Tennessee State University Nursery Project Research Station there in McMinnville, and appreciate the funding that has been allocated for that area for those two scientists that are working there. And as we see that research being productive, I think it certainly will be, it will be very helpful to the industry.

The Fourth Congressional District not only has a huge nursery industry, but when you look at the Cumberland Plateau, the eastern and western boundaries of it that is carved into the slopes, we find the best hardwood timber in America. So I applaud the work that you are doing and certainly appreciate the research and development that is occurring there in the facilities in the Fourth Congressional District.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. The gentleman yields back.

Chairman Goodlatte.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And first of all, let me thank you very much for holding this hearing, which I am very enthusiastic about, to shine the spotlight on a very important part of the Department of Agriculture and a wonderful resource for our country. And I want to thank both of our witnesses for their contribution not only today, but in support of the National Arboretum.

Ms. Westfall, I read your testimony. I thank you for your leadership on the Friends of the National Arboretum, and I wanted to ask a question about your recommendation that we have legislation or something else that clarifies the National Arboretum's mandate to serve the general public through enhancing public access, services and education. Tell me about the problems that you encounter now in terms of that aspect of the organization.

I go out there. I love the National Arboretum, and I literally oftentimes, particularly if I go out there on the weekday, have the place to myself, which makes me feel very, very special, but also makes me feel as though the Arboretum isn't getting the attention it deserves. And it also makes me feel that the public does not know about this incredible resource. It is a little away from the rest of the things that people coming to Washington visit. But if we had a mechanism to tell people what they were missing, I think we would see a lot more people there not just from the Washington area, but from all over the country, because this is a tremendous resource. There are few places in the world that can match the diversity of plants and the experience that a visitor can have at the National Arboretum.

Ms. WESTFALL. Mr. Chairman, I agree with everything you just said, and I think everyone who is involved in the Arboretum shares that. We feel that clarification is needed, because, as Dr. Brown described, and as is evidenced by the Federal Register notice and the working on a new memo of understanding between FONIA and the USNA, there are real barriers, whether inadvertent or otherwise, I don't know to go further there. We find it very difficult to do what we do best, which is try to help the Arboretum. We find roadblocks, when, in our view, we are solely dedicated to the mission of the Arboretum.

So when we try to hold events to raise monies, we find it difficult—one idea of—just by example, was to have a marathon, a race out there. It came back to us that there was fear that plants would be stolen and plants would be tampered with. Yes, they might be tramped on when people ran off the path a little bit, but I don't think that kind of mindset is what prevents us.

We find it very difficult to get clearance to have events. We have not been able, even though we have had an M.O.U., to have fundraising events out there. We all appreciate it is a Federal property.

There are certain restrictions that go with a Federal property. We by no means ever want a Pepsi-on-the-Mall type of event. But we want to be able to have tasteful corporate and otherwise events to further expand what the Arboretum can do, even if it means that the monies we raise go to repairing the restrooms at the far end of the Arboretum so that people who are way out in the hinterlands of the Arboretum can avail themselves of them.

There is a lot we can do if we can get past the mindset of this is just a research institution and not a public place for people to enjoy.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. I mean, it certainly is a research institution. It is very, very important in that regard. But it is also set up in such a way that it is a wonderful resource for a public which does not know it exists.

Ms. WESTFALL. That is right.

The CHAIRMAN. And that concerns me greatly.

Is there the ability right now to work cooperatively with the Smithsonian, with various tourism organizations, and places around Washington, and hotels; and wherever I go where I find a rack of brochures, am I going to find a National Arboretum brochure in there, too, or am I going to miss that because they are not linked in with the rest of Washington in that regard?

Ms. WESTFALL. I would defer to Dr. Brown on that.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN. First of all, we do have the ability to work with the Smithsonian and others this way. We are working with, the television programs and so on. We can't use appropriated money for advertising as such, so that is one of the benefits of working with FONNA.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me interrupt you there for a second. Is that true of all Government entities? Is that true of the National Park Service or other elements of the Government? Can they not publicize their parks, or is this something that is unique to the Arboretum?

Mr. BROWN. I don't know what their authorities are, but I am sure there are some differences.

The CHAIRMAN. And is that something, again, that we should like to try to correct so that we can bring more attention to the facility?

I think your scientific mission is enhanced by having more public participation at the facility of all kinds, and not just necessarily folks coming there to see the Arboretum, as Ms. Westfall notes. If you were to have some kind of a 5K, 10K race or something like that, it is a beautiful, well-paved area. And, yes, you would need to have a lot of volunteers out there to make sure that the property is protected and respected and so on, but bringing people out there is a part of the education process even if they don't come out there thinking they are going to learn about your scientific mission or receive a specific educational message about plants.

It is, in my opinion, the initial exposure that is often very, very important to make people say, well, I want to come back here sometime when there aren't a few thousand people here and check it out more carefully. And then you are going to see donations to FONNA increase. You are going to see public support for your appropriations requests increase and that sort of thing.



Let me ask you with regard to your scientific inquiry, Dr. Brown, you mentioned the outstanding work that you have done with elms and Dutch elm disease. Is there also work ongoing with regards to chestnuts and chestnut blight?

Mr. BROWN. Yes. We haven't been successful with chestnuts. There is work with maples going on specifically.

The CHAIRMAN. You may want to check your microphone there.

Mr. BROWN. Oh, I am sorry. There is specific work going on with maples and lilac and elm right now that I am aware of. Chestnut we have done work in the past. We have not been successful thus far.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope you will persist, because this is the other side of the coin. We spend a lot of time in this committee and in the Congress and the new Department of Homeland Security trying to keep various invasive species out of the country, and some of these are native, and some of these problems are native, and some of them are non-native. But in either case, we are not going to be completely successful, and we are going to continue to face challenges from all kinds of plants and pests and so on that get into the country that are harmful to our environment, and your efforts to find cures to find defenses is in many respects every bit as important as the efforts to keep them out in the first place. And yet, again, we don't put the resources into it that I think that we should because we know the problems are out there right now. We know we are going to face new unknown problems in the future, and yet we are not doing enough to combat that.

So I view this as a synergy. What Ms. Westfall is trying to do is not only to bring more visitors to the facility, but I think it has a direct relationship to the core function of the Arboretum, the scientific function, by educating the public not only about what you learn there, but also about what you are doing there. And that, to me, is very, very important.

So we will look very seriously at any specific proposals that you have that help to bring greater public attention to what you are doing, as well as to your requests for additional resources to pursue your mission.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate very much. I don't know if either one of you want to respond to anything I said.

Mr. BROWN. I would like to respond to just a couple of points. The hint that you might suggest appropriated funds for promotion, we would certainly be happy to work with that.

The other point is that I am not aware of any event that has ever been turned down to be held at the Arboretum except corporate fund-raisers.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you in that regard, what is the policy regarding corporate fund-raisers? Again, I agree with Ms. Westfall, we don't want to have the corporate aspect of it swallow up the underlying purpose of the event, but nonetheless, the corporate sponsorship hopes to publicize events without taxpayers' resources being used. And if there is a balance to be achieved, Doctor, I am interested in pursuing that. If, on the other hand, there is an absolute prohibition on any kind of corporate event there, tell me your

thinking about why that would be, and is that, again, something that is through the Government, or is that unique to the Arboretum?

Mr. BROWN. There isn't an absolute prohibition, but there is a concern when we have corporate entities who are seeking grants and rule changes and regulatory matters with the Department particularly or even with the Congress and at the same time requesting to hold events at the Arboretum or elsewhere.

The CHAIRMAN. Help me through that conflict. I can see it arising in some circumstances, but in other circumstances if a corporation is sponsoring an event to raise money for a charity or even to raise money for Friends of the National Arboretum, and they have business with other parts of the vast Government, but don't have any business with the Arboretum, I take it that is nonetheless still banned, and what would be the reason for that?

Mr. BROWN. I wouldn't say that it is banned. I think this is a very difficult judgment constantly.

The CHAIRMAN. So what is the policy? I mean, under no circumstances will you allow a corporate sponsorship of an event at the Arboretum, or will you make exceptions if there is no direct relationship between the corporation and the work being done by the Arboretum?

Mr. BROWN. There is no absolute ban of any kind, and we look at each one of these individually.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. And have there been events that have been sponsored by corporations at the Arboretum? Either one of you know?

Mr. BROWN. The annual garden fair that FONIA does, plant sale, the cookouts, those are all corporate events. So there is certainly not a blanket ban on such event. We are in complete agreement with your comments on the importance of bringing the public into the Arboretum, and certainly not just so we can sit people down and tell them about the research going on. Just coming to look at the trees and flowers is very valuable.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I want to encourage you to move in that direction.

I certainly understand the importance of protecting the scientific research and protecting, frankly, the dignity of a fabulous facility so you have to have standards and you have to have rules. But I hope you will look at them from the standpoint of the flexibility that is needed to encourage more people to get out there. Because I really think that would be on your side if the thousands and thousands of cars that go by on New York Avenue. I don't like to use the word New York as a Boston Red Sox fan right now.

In any event, the ability to let people know that are passing by who may have no idea what is inside those gates what a wonderful experience awaits them is something that I hope you will explore very aggressively; and in the ways that we can try to be of assistance to you, we are interested in doing that.

Ms. WESTFALL. Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Westfall.

Ms. WESTFALL. May I comment on the examples of fund-raisers that was just presented? The garden fair and the State-honoring cookouts are long-time events that are basically organized and ad-

ministered and engineered by FONA to raise monies for the Arboretum. I believe what we are talking about here is expanding, and I believe that was your point, that we were trying to go beyond what is comfortable and very cooperative with the Arboretum.

I don't want there to be any misunderstanding about the support we get from the Arboretum in executing these events, which are crucial to the financial situation. But trade associations, corporations should be able to have meetings out there to honor personnel or if they have a meeting in this area; and this is the step we are having trouble taking to work toward increased funding.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much. I certainly agree with that. Don't hide your light under a bushel basket. Shine out there and bring people in.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I have way more than used up my time.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you. I think the fact that you and the Ranking Member are here I think indicates that this is an issue that deserves serious attention by the Congress.

With that, I would yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Stenholm.

Mr. STENHOLM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just would associate myself with the remarks that I heard from the chairman very strongly today. I think one of the best-kept secrets of this town and this Nation and USDA is the National Arboretum. I gather that is the discussion today.

I guess one question that I would ask in light of the questioning of the chairman: Can you give me a couple of examples of groups that were turned down for purposes of fund-raising for benefit? What have been some of the standards that you have used to turn down a group that might be interested in working with FONA for purposes of raising funds for the National Arboretum? If you have that. If not, you can furnish it for the record if I doesn't come to mind. But I would just be curious what has been the standard.

Mr. BROWN. Okay. I think we can give a more complete answer if we just send the answer.

Mr. STENHOLM. That would be fine with me.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Stenholm.

With that, I would ask unanimous consent that Mr. Frelinghuysen be allowed to join the dais. We would certainly welcome any opening remarks that you may want to make and if you have any questions or comments that you would like to make for the benefit of the panelists. Chairman Frelinghuysen.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Chairman Gutknecht, thank you very much; Ranking Member Dooley, thank you very much for conducting this hearing on the National Arboretum. I welcome the opportunity to be here to express support for the work of National Arboretum.

I was recruited by the late Larry Coughlin, as have some Members of Congress, in the interest of full disclosure, to serve on the

Friends of the National Arboretum, which is known as FONA. And for those Members of Congress—I say that to new Members of Congress—who have not visited the National Arboretum or participated in one of the FONA events, they have indeed missed something spectacular and wonderful. So I am here today somewhat to be a cheerleader for the Arboretum, but also I am here on behalf of Congressman Jerry Lewis, Congressman Porter Goss, Congressman Tom Petri, Congressman Sam Farr, Congressman Doug Bereuter, all of whom have joined me at particular points over the last 6 or 7 years in writing letters relative to much of what you have been discussing over the last hour or so: How we raise the visibility of the National Arboretum, this incredible national asset.

I have to be quite blunt. It has been very frustrating to many of us who serve on FONA, and a lot of it has been expressed well by Ms. Westfall prior to my arrival, particularly that paragraph on page 8 of her testimony, and I quote:

FONA believes that it can be an essential bridge in the “public-private partnership” that will be required for the future growth and development of the National Arboretum. Yet there are barriers to this vision which exist today and need to be overcome. To date, this vision has been hampered by what we believe is an overly rigid interpretation of Government ethics rules. This interpretation has resulted in the strange anomaly of FONA, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated solely to providing assistance to the National Arboretum, being considered by USDA attorneys as a “prohibited source,” a term used to describe groups or individuals who might have conflicts of interest in dealing with Federal agencies and employees. Other Federal agencies, such as Fish and Wildlife within the Interior Department, have developed more workable rules that allow more effective support by private individuals and corporations.

There are so many people that have come to the plate, that are prepared to come to the plate to support the work of the National Arboretum, particularly—the research arm is doing some fantastic work, but the public education area has been badly deficient. FONA has done some good things in terms of lobbying for bus service and for the raising of a private bus. We have not been able to get through the legal beagles at the Department of Agriculture. I think it is unconscionable, myself, that they have found ways to somewhat impugn the motives of a great group of people who want to help the Arboretum state its case and more warmly embrace visitors to Washington.

So if there is a plea that I could make—and I am not articulating it well. If the committee has it within its jurisdiction to overcome whatever this state of semi-paralysis there is in the Department of Agriculture hierarchy, our plea is that you use your wisdom and resources to do it. It is very frustrating. I have gone when I think Texas had their wonderful barbecue, Massachusetts, and there are corporate entities that step up to the plate. Well, whether there are individual contributions of \$50, \$500, or \$5,000 that people have been willing to make either as individuals or corporations, there is no desire on anybody's part other than to salute and celebrate and accentuate and publicize the fantastic work that the Arboretum is doing. There is no other hidden agenda; and, for some reason, the Department of Agriculture has just been stonewalling FONA. They should celebrate the fact that they have so many people that want to raise money and help them do a better job educating the people.

So I have been somewhat estranged, but I feel very strongly about it, and I am so appreciative of you giving me and the other

four mentioned our opportunity to sort of put our oar in the water here. It is such a huge asset. We need to better educate people about its availability and make it more accessible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Frelinghuysen. I think you did a very good job of articulating some of the frustration that is being felt here in this subcommittee and in Congress and the Agriculture Committee as well as the DC Oversight Subcommittee that you chair.

Would you like your written statement to be part of the record?

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. I would. It will probably be a little more articulate than whatever came through the microphone. That would be great. Thank you.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Without objection, it will be added to the record.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Frelinghuysen follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS  
FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

I want to thank you for conducting this hearing on the National Arboretum and welcome the opportunity to express support for the valuable work of the Arboretum. I want you to know that you will be receiving a letter to this effect co-signed by several of my colleagues—Jerry Lewis, Porter Goss, Tom Petri and Sam Farr. While not speaking for them, I believe they share my views on this important subject.

Since its establishment by Congress in 1926, the National Arboretum has become an internationally renowned center for horticultural research. Its 446 acres have also been a magnet for visitors to its collections of bonsai, azaleas, the Asian plants and its Herb Garden. It is truly a national treasure and a welcoming green space in the midst of the Nation's Capitol.

Mr. Chairman, Congress authorized the U.S. National Arboretum and placed it in the Agriculture Department with two purposes in mind: scientific research and public education.

There is no question that the National Arboretum has fulfilled its research mandate that has been of great value to country's scientific community and to the horticultural industry. It has also, with a limited staff and budget, maintained its tree and garden collections well.

It is my understanding that the staff has sought to increase public use of the Arboretum by developing a Master Plan outlining future growth. Included in this Plan are an Education and Visitors Center and a new, more accessible entrance gate on Bladensburg Road. The Master Plan would greatly enhance the Arboretum's educational role.

Over the years, however, the great bulk of appropriated funds have gone to research. In order to meet its obligations to the public at large, the Arboretum has been forced to look to private support groups and individual donors.

In this regard, allow me to say a few words about the Friends of the National Arboretum—FONA. Over the years, this valuable organization has raised significant funds in support of the Arboretum and served as the Arboretum's unofficial ambassador in the community at large. Clearly, FONA is a major asset as the Arboretum strives to execute its mission and a compliment to the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Chairman, in the past there has been a persistent feeling that the USDA staff at the Arboretum has not always worked seamlessly with FONA and I would appreciate it if you could convey our feelings to the Department of Agriculture.

In closing, those of us who support the Arboretum in the House hope you will urge the Agriculture Department to give needed attention to funding and support of the public education role of the Arboretum and execution of the Master Plan and to the continued maintenance and expansion of its tree and plant collections for the enjoyment and education of the general public.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to bring the story of the National Arboretum to the committee's attention.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. I might just say that what you said was from the heart, and I think that it is heartfelt. I think the more people learn about this valuable treasure, the more Members really want

to highlight it—for example, one of my recommendations would be you ought to have a weekly television show with PBS. I mean, it would top *This Old House*, in my opinion, because the number of gardeners and people who are interested in these issues number in the millions here in the United States. And it seems to me we could call it, “It Is Our Arboretum,” and every week you could focus on and never run out of ideas to really make a national story of what a treasure it really is and how much there is to learn about various species.

I am just fascinated to see a 400-year-old tree that is no more than about 2½ feet tall. It is just amazing to me. And the bonsai collection there is priceless. And so there is so much to see.

We will do a quick second round here in case Members want to make last points, but I just want to for the record point out a few things that we learned, and in some respects the Department of Agriculture is not separate from the GSA, and the GSA has demonstrated that Government authorities have wide authority and amazing latitude to rent out facilities. Let me give you some examples.

The Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium down the street here a few blocks allows everything from weddings to corporate events at its Washington, DC, facility. It utilizes a private contractor to manage its facilities and charges \$12,000 to use the space for 14 hours. The Smithsonian, while they don’t rent the museums per se, they do allow sponsors to use the facilities for specific donations, in effect a rental.

Let me give you an example. The Air and Space Museum requires somewhere between a \$25,000 and \$50,000 donation, which includes the museum’s support costs. The Natural History Museum charges between \$15,000 and \$25,000 plus any additional support cost the museum might incur. The rental fee in this case is a tax-deductible donation. The Department of Defense also allows the use of its facilities and charges fees which can go into the morale and welfare accounts to support the troops.

There are plenty of examples inside the Federal Government where we not only allow but in some respects I think encourage corporate events. I do understand, at least to a certain degree, the USDA’s reluctance to find itself in a compromising situation, but it strikes me that, working with FONA and others, that a reasonable compromise can be worked out so that we can make better use of those facilities.

I started those hearings by saying I always assume that if I don’t know much about something that most of my constituents don’t know much about it; and until a week ago, when I got my first official tour of the National Arboretum, I didn’t know much about it. But now that I do, I intend to do what we can on this side of the desk to encourage the Department of Agriculture to do more to utilize that facility.

Now my own view is it should not require an act of Congress. But if that happens to be the case, I think we have people around this table who are more than willing to pick up that oar and pull it.

So I didn’t have any specific questions. Perhaps either one of you would respond to some of these examples where the various depart-

ments under GSA do rent out their facilities and in so doing bring people who might never have seen some of these spectacular facilities we have here in Washington. It really gives them an opportunity to showcase the entire efforts of the Smithsonian and other entities that we have here in Washington.

Dr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN. First, I would like to again thank FONA for their efforts and assure you that we agree with what you are saying, that we are working with an M.O.U. to solve the very problems you are talking about. I agree that it really shouldn't take an act of Congress, and we think that we are well on the way.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. We will hold you to that, Dr. Brown; and we thank you for that comment.

Mr. Dooley.

Mr. DOOLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would just like to preface my remarks. This is a problem that just hasn't been inherent or just with the Bush administration. I mean, Rodney and a few of us had meetings with Secretary Glickman under the Clinton administration, and we didn't see any progress there. We haven't seen any progress now.

Part of my concern is—and even the way in some of the responses to some of the questions that we have had today, that this is an issue that is more of a culture within the USDA or maybe even within ARS, that there is a cultural bias within the agency against reaching out and finding ways to be a little more creative in their approach to how they have a partnership with the private sector. Even when we are talking about, well, there hasn't been that many events turned down, well, the only event that I have ever been really invited to that was a fund-raiser event out there is the annual FONA event that was honoring a particular State. I wouldn't really say that covers what the potential is in terms of the partnership of the private sector to generate some funds.

This whole idea that, well, we have to be concerned about this conflict of interest and all that, I mean, if we set a standard such as that, I mean, you are going to walk out of this room and be approached by entities that have an interest in legislation before you. I mean, you can't have a criteria, I think, that you are applying just simply to the Arboretum when you know that everything that happens in this town and, hopefully, the people that are in these public positions have the ability to distinguish between what is undue influence and what would not be appropriate.

Ms. Westfall, in terms of, in the memorandum of understanding which is being negotiated now, is there any reason why we should have any confidence that USDA is proceeding in a manner that is going to achieve the objectives that every member on this committee has talked about to date or this morning?

Ms. WESTFALL. I hope so. I have only been chairman of the FONA board 3 and a half weeks, and I am very encouraged by the conversations and just change in sort of climate that I feel with the Department. I can only say to you, Congressman Dooley, that I will have to come back to you and tell you if we can work through this in the manner which has been I think very positively described here several times by the Department.

Mr. DOOLEY. Well, I know there is a number of our colleagues that are on the board; and I know that a number of us would like to be aware of how those negotiations are going on before they are finalized. Because I, as well as Chairman Gutknecht, would hope that we could achieve our objectives short of legislation.

But I would also echo Mr. Gutknecht's comments, is that I think we can put together legislation very easily that we can move on suspension that would achieve our outcomes and our hopes here if we cannot see this achieved through an M.O.U. or through the administrative discretion of USDA.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Dooley.

Mr. Goodlatte, any questions?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I want to thank Congressman Frelinghuysen for an excellent summation of the nature of the problem and to say that we are very interested in solving this problem. If it does take legislation, we will move legislation.

I want to ask Dr. Brown: Chairman Gutknecht has cited some examples from other very reputable parts of our national Government that have successfully raised significant funds. Is that simply not allowed today, the type of arrangement that the Natural History Museum or the Air and Space Museum have? You would not do that under your current means of operation, to essentially take a significant donation plus the costs of providing and protecting the facility against the use of the facility by an entity that did not have a conflict of interest with the Arboretum?

Mr. BROWN. We have no rules that prohibit us from doing such things, as long as it is done in a way that is within the law and within the authorities that we have.

The CHAIRMAN. But no active program to do it, either. If FONA came to you tomorrow and said that IBM wanted to use the facility for a purpose unrelated to the purpose of the facility and were willing to make a contribution of a large sum of money and you knew of no conflict that existed there, would that easily be done, or would that be a major difficulty?

Mr. BROWN. I don't think it would be a major difficulty, And this M.O.U. we are working on is to make it even easier to do those kind of things.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Westfall, what would be your observation about that?

Ms. WESTFALL. I think it would be longer than we think to get the clearance for it. But I think, as I mentioned before, there seems to be a sea change, and there is a willingness now to work toward having those kinds of events. But I can't tell you that it would be done swiftly.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, good. Well, I commend both of you and I encourage both of you to find a way to make those kind of things work, because I think it is critically important to the mission of the Arboretum.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Davis, questions?

Mr. DAVIS. No further questions. Thank you. I yield back the rest of my time.



Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Frelinghuysen.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. I made reference in my opening remarks to some—at least in my statement I submitted for the record—to a letter. I have a copy of that letter. With your permission, could we enter it in the record?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Without objection.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. If I could just sort of reemphasize, I think memorandums of understanding are fine. But having worked with the late Larry Coughlin, a Member of this House, Congressman Be-reuter, Woody Price who had the job before you, you can work on memorandums of understanding until the cows come home, but given the inclination—and I don't think there has been a sea change in the legal staff of leadership of the Department of Agriculture—quite honestly, I think you need a law to get this done. I don't think you are going to get beyond the state of paralysis we are in now. Even given the hammer of the wisdom of the Chair and the ranking member, you have got to do something here to clear the decks.

FONA is an ally. Putting aside the IBMs and major corporations, FONA is bringing a tremendous amount of resources and assistance and has over the years done things to enable the Department of Agriculture and the Arboretum to function better than they ever could have. I think we need to expand on—just the issue of public education is so critical here, and I am thrilled by the notion of the chairman that we could literally be on television in an extremely positive way. I can't think of a better national asset to celebrate in the public eye through that type of mechanism.

But we need to give FONA the recognition and support. They are an ally of the Department of Agriculture and the Arboretum, have always been. The legal part of the Department of Agriculture has somehow assigned them oftentimes into an adversarial role, and that is unfortunate. It needs to be changed, I think, by law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. WESTFALL. Congressman, I appreciate the counsel; and I am very mindful of it. If it doesn't turn out to be an easy negotiation, we will come back to the subcommittee.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Thank you, Chairman Frelinghuysen.

Mr. Stenholm.

Mr. STENHOLM. Just another question, not for answer. But perhaps one of the problems is that the Congress has been a little shy on public funding support for that which we are critical of others for not doing today that we might find as we get further into this discussion.

On an optimistic note, I would just say that if Ms. Westfall is half as successful in her new job as she has been in increasing the consumption of cheese in the United States, this problem is going to go away real quickly.

Ms. WESTFALL. Thank you.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Ms. Westfall does thank you for that public statement on the record. Her boss will certainly get a copy of that.

Well, I just want to thank all of you for coming today. I particularly want to thank Mr. Dooley, because it really was his pleasant persistence that brought us to this hearing. I want to thank Ms. Westfall, because I think in your new role with FONA, clearly we

are going to make a difference. I believe that a goal is a dream with a deadline.

I just want to state for the record in terms of this subcommittee that we would like to see some resolution of this question by sometime next early spring. It would be my hope that perhaps sometime when the azaleas are in bloom that we would take this subcommittee and any other interested Members of Congress out there to spend a few hours, perhaps have a reception out there, so that they can see and celebrate the new agreement where we can bring a more public-private partnership to play at the National Arboretum. It is a national treasure. We need to share it with not only other Members of Congress but with the people here in the United States and the rest of the world.

So thank you again for this hearing. This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:54 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

#### STATEMENT OF RODNEY J. BROWN

Chairman Gutknecht and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of the U.S. National Arboretum on behalf of the Department of Agriculture. My name is Rodney J. Brown and I am the Deputy Under Secretary for the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) at USDA.

Many of you will recall that in March 2002, here on the U.S. Capitol grounds, Secretary Veneman launched the Arboretum's 75th anniversary celebration at a tree planting ceremony. At that event, the Secretary said "the Arboretum is truly a national treasure located right here in our Nation's capital". I couldn't agree more and would add that we are very proud to have the Arboretum in the REE mission area. On a more personal note, I would also say that in my former life at Utah State University, I led the effort to establish a botanic garden at that very fine land-grant institution.

The National Arboretum was established by an Act of Congress in 1926 and is this country's only federally funded arboretum. Congress chartered the arboretum to be a research and educational facility devoted to the study of plants. Since that time, the arboretum has emerged as one of the premier research oriented gardens and arboreta in the United States. In addition, the USNA houses the finest collection of bonsai and penjing in North America. Yet, with all the scientific activity on its 446-acre Washington, D.C. campus, the Arboretum affords one with beauty and calm in the most urban of settings. It is truly a green oasis.

#### RESEARCH

The nursery and landscape industry is the fastest growing sector of American agriculture and makes up 11 percent of agriculture receipts in this country. Gardening is also the number one hobby in the United States. During the Arboretum's 76-year history, it has become the country's leading institution for the development and improvement of flowering trees, shade trees, flowering shrubs, and floral plants. More than 660 new or improved plants have been released to the nursery and floral industries since the USNA has been in operation. New plants are sent to 100 cooperators throughout the country for testing and evaluation. If, after several years of evaluation, the plants prove to be superior, then they are typically named and released free of charge to wholesale growers. National Arboretum releases are currently grown in 42 states around the nation. The wholesale growers in turn increase the number of plants and release them to the retail outlets.

There is a continuing demand not only for novel landscape plants, but also for plant varieties with improved tolerance to pests and diseases. There is little capacity for the industry to develop these products itself, however, because the industry is comprised mostly of small operators. The long periods of time it takes to go from seedlings to mature plants bred for increased disease and pest resistance means it is not a profitable enterprise for small farmers and businesses in the horticultural industry. The germplasm, molecular, and integrated pest management research conducted at the Arboretum is vital in meeting this need. In fact, Dr. Thomas Elias, Director of the USNA, estimated that between 15 and 20 million plants of the Arbo-

retum's 210-plus introductions are sold each year in numerous marketplaces. As evidence of their superior qualities, the Pennsylvania, Georgia, Mississippi, Colorado, and Florida Horticultural Societies awarded Arboretum releases 14 Gold Medals.

Two important Arboretum introductions are disease and pest resistance American elms—the Valley Forge and the New Harmony. They represent 20 years for research in the USNA's tree genetics laboratory. As many of you know, over 90 percent of the native American elms, covering a range from the eastern states to Illinois and Missouri, were lost because of Dutch elm disease. The Valley Forge and New Harmony cultivars are excellent candidates to return these prized trees to U.S. towns, yards, and landscapes.

Arboretum scientists recently played a critical historic role in preserving a national treasure at the Tidal Basin around the Jefferson Monument. The original cherry trees, planted at the Tidal Basin in 1912, were a gift from Japan to President Taft for his support during the Russo-Japanese War. Most of these trees reached maturity several years ago and died. However, the USNA propagated the few remaining ones in order to preserve the genetic material. They grew the seedlings for two years and three years ago presented more than 400 cherry trees to the Department of Interior for planting around the Tidal Basin.

The Arboretum's work in flowering cherry trees did not end with this wonderful gift. It has an extensive breeding program. One of the newest releases is another flowering cherry tree called "First Lady". It was selected because of its strong upright growth habit and dark pink single flowers. The plan is for future releases of flowering cherries to be named in honor of First Ladies of the United States.

The Arboretum is also a leader in the study of viral diseases of ornamental and floral plants. Its contributions in the identification and detection of specific viruses have earned national and international recognition. Arboretum scientists also developed the proper formulation of Neem oil as an effective alternate to synthetic pesticides. I know that funding for the Arboretum is a concern of the Subcommittee but I would like to point out there have been modest budget increases over the last 10 years for the research programs that have helped develop these superior quality plants and new technology.

Indeed, among the major research oriented gardens and arboreta in the United States, the USNA ranks among the very top in investment of research dollars. The Arboretum devotes 40 percent of its annual operating budget to research. This financial commitment is nearly double that of other horticultural research oriented institutions including the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis (26 percent), Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami (20 percent), the New York Botanical Garden (18 percent), the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University (18 percent), and the Morton Arboretum in Chicago (12 percent).

Maintaining large and diverse stocks of living materials (particularly trees and shrubs) for use in supporting research projects, breeding and improvement studies, and in the identification and understanding of the relationships of plants to each other is another important role of the Arboretum. Living collections of hundreds of different types and thousands of species of trees and shrubs are vital to the continued long-term health of the nursery industry in the United States. The extensive collection of Asian plants, and specific groups such as conifers, dogwoods, boxwoods, redbuds, hollies, and magnolias ensure that a vast array of living genetic material will be available to meet future needs. Germplasm collections are maintained on all of the Arboretum's campuses located at Beltsville and Glen Dale, Maryland; McMinnville, Tennessee; and Washington, D.C.

#### GARDENS AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Arboretum, with strong public support, has complimented its development and research programs with beautiful and diverse garden displays and collections that provide meaningful educational experiences for the public. For example, it has built outstanding garden displays and plant collections on its Washington, DC campus. Other outstanding display gardens or collections include the azalea collection featuring the Arboretum's Glenn Dale hybrids, Fern Valley with its displays of native plants of the eastern United States, and the Gotelli Dwarf and Slow Growing Conifers Collection. Each of these displays and collections has specialized amateur and professional audiences and many of these audiences help to support the specialized collections.

Each year, approximately 500,000 people visit the Arboretum, particularly in the spring and autumn seasons. They come for many reasons but primarily to enjoy and learn about plant life. Another 1.2 to 1.5 million people visit the Arboretum annually via the redesigned and more user-friendly USNA website to learn about gardening, plant releases, specialized plant groups, or to research and access the photo gal-

leries. Visitation to this site has increased between 50 and 75 percent per year during the last several years.

We are keenly aware of the Arboretum's potential in public outreach. Recently, the Arboretum staff developed a new master plan that expands its education role as well as infrastructure improvements that will allow the Arboretum to accommodate up to 700,000 visitors annually.

This plan builds on the improved educational opportunities and better visitor services that have taken place over the last 10 years. These improvements include opening earlier on weekends with more staff to assist visitors; weekend shuttle busses from Union Station; guided tours on trams; and special events like the highly successful Big Bugs sculpture exhibit in 2000 and the Asian Arts Festival in 2001. Other improvements include education classes and workshops; food services, more restrooms and parking; and exhibits of specialized plant groups (orchids, poinsettias, South African flowers, Amaryllis, azaleas, and others).

Concerted efforts have been made to reach a larger national audience as well. The Arboretum has been featured on special television programs such as Victory Gardens, Flowering Cherry Trees of Washington, D.C., Great Gardens of the United States, programs on the Home and Garden television channel, and news programs nationally and internationally. In addition, feature and special articles have appeared about the Arboretum in U.S.A.Today, Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, Newsweek, the Washington Post, and many others. An Arboretum staff member also writes a weekly gardening section for the Washington Post. This reaches about 800,000 people. Earlier this year, the April issue of Country Living Gardener published an article, America's Top 10 Gardens to Visit, and I am proud to point out that the U.S. National Arboretum was one of the 10 institutions identified.

The role of the Arboretum's support groups, particularly the Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA), has been crucial to many of the improvements to facilities on the grounds and to the Arboretum's increased visibility throughout the country. FONA is the only organization that supports all program areas of the Arboretum. They not only raise funds for special projects such as the National Capital Columns, but FONA also supports an internship program, special events and activities, and the Washington Youth Garden—a program for inter-city children.

The significant public outreach and education roles performed by USNA do, indeed, make it a unique institution. The dramatic growth in visitors in recent years is proof of its importance and value to the community. Also, public requests for sound horticultural information and access to quality ornamental plant displays and collections are increasing each year. This demand for more services is a challenge with current resources. However, thanks to Congressional support we have been able to increase our educational functions and provide better visitor services without having to compromise any of the Arboretum's research activities.

This concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman, and I will be happy to answer any questions you or the other members of the subcommittee may have regarding the Arboretum and its valuable contribution to serving the horticultural needs of the country.

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#### STATEMENT OF TUCKIE WESTFALL

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to provide the views of the friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) before the subcommittee today. My name is tuckie westfall, and I am currently the chairman of the board of directors of FONA.

FONA is a non-profit organization started 25 years ago with the mission to enhance support for the National Arboretum through both public and private sector resources. FONA seeks to raise funds from the general public and act as an advocate for sufficient levels of Federal funding.

FONA is a membership organization with a board of directors made up of representatives of the horticulture industry, landscape designers, gardeners, as well as citizens and local residents who value the Arboretum as a place of natural beauty. FONA works with other "stakeholder" organizations that support the Arboretum's mission such as the national bonsai foundation, the federation of garden clubs, the herb society, and the garden clubs of america.

FONA has been extremely successful in raising funds and increasing public awareness and initiating new activities at the Arboretum that benefit the public. Some examples:

- FONA successfully lobbied the washington metropolitan area transit authority to provide city bus service to the Arboretum on weekends;

- FONA has raised private funding for the Washington Youth Garden, a program that provides outdoor gardening and food and nutrition education to inner city children;
- FONA has instituted an annual garden fair that brings an army of avid gardeners out to the Arboretum to learn about, and purchase, plants and trees, in particular new Arboretum introductions;
- FONA has been instrumental in protecting the country's heritage by raising funds to move the long-lost Capitol columns to their current dramatic setting on the Arboretum grounds.

Most people don't realize that horticulture is a huge and "growing" industry in this country. As the public's interest in gardening and greenspace has grown, so too has the appeal of the National Arboretum. The National Arboretum has the potential to be not only the premier Arboretum in this country, but also worldwide.

The National Arboretum was established by an Act of Congress in 1926 for the purposes of research and education concerning tree and plant life. The Arboretum continues to fulfill this dual role both as a center of scientific research and as a place for the public to see and learn from the public display of trees, shrubs and flowers. The achievements of the Arboretum's scientists are multifold—the National Arboretum is a major source of new plant introductions and research that provides tremendous benefits to our society as detailed in the testimony of the agricultural research service.

The role of the Arboretum as public educator has evolved over time. When the Arboretum was created, the 446 acre space was largely undeveloped farm land bordering the Anacostia River. Now, development has surrounded the Arboretum leaving it as one of the few large green spaces in a densely populated urban area. And the city government, civic and environmental groups are all actively encouraging greater use of it and Anacostia River and its banks for recreation and civic purposes.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's approach to public use of the National Arboretum has been ambivalent. While encouraging public access through active volunteer programs, provision of visitor services such as seasonal weekend tram tours, lectures and training courses, and the development of a master plan that envisions greater public use, the Department's appropriation requests to Congress have consistently shortchanged funding for the two units of the Arboretum who deal with its public aspects—the education and visitors—unit and the gardens unit.

The internal budget process within USDA has added to the difficulty of providing sufficient funds for public access because the National Arboretum must submit all of its funding requests under broad scientific topics such as germ plasm research and invasive pest species research, none of which relate in any way to providing services to visitors. And there is no separate line item in the Department's budget for the Arboretum, further complicating the task of identifying whether appropriate funds have been provided.

The result has been an appalling lack of funds for needed maintenance, repair and upkeep of the grounds and public buildings. Some examples of the negative consequences of this under-funding have been:

- The recent flooding in the herbarium and basement offices in the Administration Building (long before Isabel);
- The closing of Arbor House for over a year because it was found to be a "sick" building with dangerous mold and other toxins;
- The closed restrooms at the far end of the Arboretum due to lack of maintenance;
- The disrepair of the greenhouses;
- And even the occasional lack of gasoline to power the carts which are needed to transport gardens unit staff to far-flung sites of the Arboretum;
- Finally, the existing administration building, which also serves as the only visitors' center, has inadequate restrooms and other spaces for visitors.

FONA and the other stakeholder organizations have attempted to make up for these short-falls by providing gardeners and interns to do the day-to-day work required to maintain the grounds. As an example, only two Arboretum gardeners have been assigned to the sections of the Arboretum which include Asia Valley, the Kotelli collection, and the Magnolia, Holly and Dogwood collections, although this represents almost half of the Arboretum's acreage. To help with this huge task, FONA funds three full-time gardeners, and the National Farm Women's Association, the Herb Society and the Garden Federation fund two interns—it is these privately-funded persons who provide the bulk of the gardening services.

Like all non-profits in these uncertain economic times, FONA has experienced recent difficulties in fundraising. We do not know whether we will be able to maintain the level of funding that we have provided to the Arboretum in the past. And we think that the basic jobs such as gardening should be provided by the Federal Gov-

ernment. FONA would much prefer to use the funds it raises for unique projects that add value to the Arboretum such as the youth garden, and to raise major capital to add to the implementation of the master plan.

I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to the members of this committee and the congressional appropriators who have recognized the value of the National Arboretum and, for each of the last several fiscal years, have provided "earmarked" funds over and above the amounts requested by usda to simply maintain the gardens and education units. But again, just as FONA should not have to fund the day-to-day operations of the Arboretum, the congress should not have to continuously make up for the Department's failure to request adequate funding.

While FONA agrees that the scientific role of the National Arboretum is paramount, we believe that enhanced emphasis must be given to its mandate to provide education in the broadest sense of the word. These two roles need not be inconsistent. Large Arboreta and botanical gardens such as the New York Botanical Garden, the Arnold Arboretum, and Kew Gardens do important scientific work and are extensively used and visited by the public. The National Arboretum can and should be a "window to the world" for the agriculture research service to show the public at large the value and relevance to their lives of the scientific work it is doing.

FONA believes that it can be an essential bridge in the "public-private partnership" that will be required for the future growth and development of the National Arboretum. Yet there are barriers to this vision which exist today and that need to be overcome. To date, this vision has been hampered by what we believe is an overly rigid interpretation of government ethics rules. This interpretation has resulted in the strange anomaly of FONA, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated solely to providing assistance to the National Arboretum, being considered by usda attorneys as a "prohibited source," a term used to describe groups or individuals who might have conflicts of interest in dealing with Federal agencies and employees. Other Federal agencies, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service within the Interior Department, have developed more workable rules that allow more effective support by private individuals and corporations.

Similarly, the Arboretum has not been able to effectively leverage its incredibly beautiful site to host events that could bring needed funds to assist in carrying out its mission. This seems to stem partly from a fear of conflicts (if corporations were to rent the facility) and partly from a fear of the extra workload that might be involved in preparing the grounds and staffing for events. While I respect such concerns, I believe that they can be accommodated in a way that increases the fund-raising ability of both FONA and the Arboretum itself.

In late 2000, the Arboretum staff completed an extensive master plan which outlines a wonderful vision of the National Arboretum as a showplace for the Nation and beyond. The master plan provides for much needed capital improvements, repairing deteriorating buildings and gardens, even proposes new improvements in the Arboretum and its public services. The roadmap for saving the Arboretum is waiting for the usda to move forward with its implementation. Clearly long-term budgeting for the master plan should be a high priority. We believe it should begin in the department's fy05 budget request, with dedicated funding to initiate implementation of the master plan included in a specific line item for the Arboretum.

FONA would like to make the following recommendations to congress regarding the future of the Arboretum:

- Clarify, preferably in legislation, the National Arboretum's mandate to serve the general public through enhancing public access, services and education. This could be accomplished by amending the purposes section of the enabling legislation to include "access/services for the general public."
- Create within the usda budget a separate line item for the National Arboretum so that both congressional appropriators and the public have a clearer understanding of the amount of Federal funds going to the Arboretum and their purpose. Within this identified line item, assure that Arboretum requests no longer have to be pigeon-holed into funding categories that relate only to the scientific mission of the organization.
- Clarify that the National Arboretum has the authority, and is encouraged, to rent its space/facilities, either directly, or through support organizations such as FONA, to private individuals and entities for events as a means of raising additional needed funds; provided that the income from such activity raises sufficient funds over and above any incremental departmental costs associated with such activity.
- Request that the usda provide a long-term budget plan in its fiscal year 2005 request to support implementation of the National Arboretum "master plan" so that it will be fully resourced. Funding for phase one of this plan should be included in the fy05 request as a specific Arboretum line item.

I hope that Congress, USDA and the National Arboretum understand that these recommendations are made with the full recognition of and appreciation for the incredible dedication and work ethic of the Arboretum staff. FONAs goal is simply to assist them in carrying out their mission and our intent here today is to make recommendations that will enhance that effort.

Again, I want to thank the members of this subcommittee for this opportunity to present the views of the friends of the National Arboretum and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3011

October 17, 2003

COMMITTEE  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, CHAIRMAN  
ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT  
DEFENSE

The Honorable Gil Gutknecht  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1407 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6001

Dear Mr. Chairman:

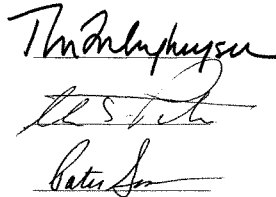
As members with a long time interest in the U.S. National Arboretum, we applaud your Subcommittee's plans to hold an oversight hearing on the Arboretum and welcome this opportunity to express our support for its valuable work, as well as our concerns about its future development.

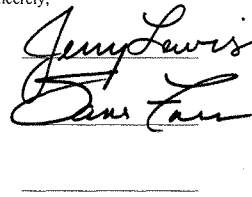
Since its establishment by Congress in 1926, the National Arboretum has become an internationally renowned center for horticultural research. Its 446 acres have also been a magnet for visitors to its collections of bonsai, azaleas, the Asian plants and its Herb Garden. It is truly a national treasure and a welcoming green space in the midst of the nation's capitol.

We believe that Congress authorized the U.S. National Arboretum and placed it in the Agriculture Department with two purposes in mind: scientific research and public education. There is no question that the National Arboretum has fulfilled its research mandate that has been of great value to country's scientific community and to the horticultural industry. It has also, with a limited staff and budget, maintained its tree and garden collections well. Its Director and his staff have sought to increase public use of the Arboretum by developing a Master Plan outlining its future growth. Included in this Plan are an Education and Visitors Center and a new, more accessible entrance gate on Bladensburg Road. The carrying out of the Master Plan would greatly enhance the Arboretum's educational role.

Over the years, however, the great bulk of appropriated funds have gone to research. In order to meet its obligations to the public at large, the Arboretum has been forced to look to private support groups and individual donors. We hope you will urge the Agriculture Department to give needed attention to funding and support of the public education role of the Arboretum, to the carrying out of the Master Plan and to the continued maintenance and expansion of its tree and plant collections for the enjoyment and education of the general public.

Sincerely,







WESTBALL

October 21, 2003

The Honorable Gil Gutknecht  
Subcommittee Chairman, Department of Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and  
Forestry  
Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Gutknecht,

The U.S. National Arboretum is among the most important horticultural institutions in this country and the world. In this role it is a resource for the international plant science community, and the American ornamental and horticultural industry. The National Arboretum is also the place where any citizen seeking plant information and gardening assistance can turn for help and advice. These are diverse activities and they make the Arboretum an institution without peer in the plant world.

As stakeholders in this unique institution we have privately supported the work of the U.S. National Arboretum in a range of capacities for many years. Now we would like to present to the Subcommittee our interest in the future growth and development of this excellent organization. Over the more than 75 years of the National Arboretum's history, non profit private organizations have provided thousands and thousands of hours of volunteer service to help the Arboretum maintain its outstanding plant collections and magnificent gardens. We have also raised millions of dollars in funds to build buildings that have enhanced the Arboretum's position in the horticultural community. And we have even raised large sums to supplement the salaries of federal employees. Without support from the private sector through service and donations, the U.S. National Arboretum's gardens and collections would be jeopardized and the outreach to an expanding public through educational services would be imperiled.

Under its original Congressional mandate the Department of Agriculture was authorized "to establish and maintain a national arboretum for the purposes of research and education concerning tree and plant life." As part of the Agricultural Research Service the Arboretum receives significantly more funding for the research facet of its mandate than for the educational aspect, especially as this relates to visitors. At the same time visitation and use of Arboretum services continues to increase as more and more people discover the treasures of this institution.

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In the city of Washington D.C. the U.S. National Arboretum provides an important link between the natural world as a green oasis in this busy urban area. It is also a magnet for visitors from around the world with its internationally recognized gardens and collections beckoning students of botany and lovers of bonsai, azaleas, conifers, herbs and Asian plants, to name just a few. These visitors come with high expectations for the plants and gardens and they are not disappointed by what they find here in that respect. Rather their reservations center on deficiencies in normal visitor services.

In March 2001 an important meeting was held at the Arboretum when over 70 stakeholder organizations were invited to the Arboretum for two days to evaluate the gardening and educational services provided to visitors. The intention of the participants was to focus on how the Arboretum can improve its interaction with a wider public audience and how it can attract greater public and private support for this institution. We have attached those recommendations to this letter for the committee's consideration. However for the purposes of this hearing we would like to direct your attention to what we believe are three important concerns:

- 1) We believe that the U.S. Arboretum is an institution of excellence and that it does make great contributions to the scientific community and at the same time it provides superior services to visitors who seek plant and gardening information. However, to maintain this high level of service, the gardens and educational aspects of this organization need to be adequately funded. Therefore we ask that the Department of Agriculture take the steps necessary to insure the future of the whole institution by addressing the existing imbalance in the funding.
- 2) We believe that the U. S. Department of Agriculture needs to forge more creative partnerships with its interested stakeholders to attract more private dollars to flow to the National Arboretum to help augment public funding. In order for this to occur the Department will need to reexamine existing procedures and regulations reflecting on how they might be rewritten to allow for a more expansive policy of stakeholder participation in the work of the Arboretum.
- 3) We believe that the Master Plan which the Arboretum has developed after years of work is a historic document for the future of this institution. It is our hope that the Department of Agriculture will work with Arboretum staff and stakeholders on the implementation of this plan so that the visitor services that are so needed will be provided to the public in the near future.

Page 3, October 21, 2003

As Stakeholders we are proud of our contribution to help foster the growth of the U.S. National Arboretum and we pledge to work and support it in the future. We hope that at this important juncture in its history that the Department of Agriculture will work with us in that endeavor.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rindy O'Brien, Executive Director  
Friends of the National Arboretum

Johann F. Klodzen, Executive Director  
National Bonsai Foundation

Deborah Gangloff, Executive Director  
American Forests

Dr. David Meyers  
Department of Natural Resource Science  
And Landscape Architecture  
University of Maryland



United States Department of Agriculture  
Research, Education, and Economics  
Agricultural Research Service

October 22, 2002

RECEIVED OCT 24 2002

SUBJECT: U.S. National Arboretum Stakeholder Meeting for the  
Gardens and the Education and Visitor Services Units

TO: U.S. National Arboretum Stakeholders

FROM: Thomas S. Elias *TSE*  
Director

Earlier this year, we hosted a workshop for the stakeholders of the Gardens Unit and the Education and Visitor Services Unit. The immediate outcome of this meeting was the formation of a coalition of many of the organizations represented at this meeting followed by a very successful congressional outreach effort on the part of this coalition and individual organizations. As a result, the proposed elimination of the last two years of congressional add ons for the U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) was not successful and the add ons were restored in the House version of the Agricultural Appropriations Bill. Not only was this funding restored, but an additional \$300,000 was designated in the House version for improved visitor services at the Arboretum. We are eagerly waiting the final outcome of the appropriation process after the November elections or, perhaps, even early in 2003.

The spring meeting can be considered somewhat as an historic one. This was the first time we have brought together such a range of organizations that relate to our Gardens and Education and Visitor Services Units. Furthermore, this was a major step in having these organizations recognized by the Agricultural Research Service as stakeholders in addition to the traditional floral and nursery industries. The Arboretum serves diverse audiences ranging from producers and consumers, professional and lay organizations, and government agencies at all levels. The USNA has a good track record of accomplishments; however, we can do a better job of serving our stakeholders. We can accomplish that by working closely with you

Enclosed is a copy of the transcription of the notes taken at the spring meeting. We will be using this material and the priorities established at that meeting when we are updating our strategic plan and planning activities and programs for the next several years. Members of the USNA staff will be meeting this fall and winter to work on these two objectives. We would like to meet



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Stakeholders

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with you again in the spring of 2003 to review our revised draft strategic plan and plans for future direction. It will be exciting to review our plans with you and together chart a course for the Arboretum.

Finally, I need to apologize to you of the delay in getting this material to you. I was on medical leave for nearly two months and then gradually worked my way back to full-time status. I am making good progress from major surgery and look forward to a complete recovery. I will be back in touch with you this winter as we plan for our spring meeting. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me at 202-245-4539 or [eliast@ars.usda.gov](mailto:eliast@ars.usda.gov) if you have any questions or concerns.

2 Enclosures:

Draft Notes from Workshop

List of Recipients

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP -- MARCH 27-28, 2002**

**U.S. National Arboretum  
Education and Visitor Services Unit  
Gardens Unit**

**April 30, 2002  
(workshopnote.wpd)**

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP -- MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**What Do You Value at U.S. National Arboretum? Why?**

- Research and education of new cultivars
- Public can focus on trees and its value
- Information resources, covers wide variety of audiences
- U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) leadership in international and national functions
- Congress opportunity to learn about horticulture
- Related to horticulture (i.e., botanical art), place to meet people
- Source of proper nomenclature and plant material
- Repository of cultivars, place to view
- Plant collections, germplasm and dissemination of material
- National standing; therefore, national obligations
- Columns and reminder of history; in the Nation's capital
- Local ecological treasure
- Offers window to public, view what ARS is developing, public interface
- Curators, knowledgeable and generous
- Window to international and national horticulture
- USNA expertise
- Beauty and expansiveness
- Staff care of grounds
- Beauty, collections, quietness -- needs to be preserved
- Ideal location for bonsai museum, in the Capital
- NCAFGC: national recognition, gives presence and standing, gives organization ability to help USNA programs
- Impact on urban children, connection to community

(What do you value at U.S. National Arboretum? Why? continued)

- Herbarium, maintains cultivars
- Diversity of landscape, viewing pleasure
- Shows what a skilled gardener can grow, inspiration to experiment with new plants, educational world of plants
- Wonderful place to visit, labeling of plants
- Place to display research outcomes
- Respite in the city -- "green"
- Appreciate existing staff, lack of staff and funding
- Excellent use of volunteers, felt that they are valued and education of volunteers
- Excellent education of public but more can be done
- Collections, include new cutting-edge materials
- International recognition, represents entire country, needs to be enhanced
- Sense of mission and excellence of the staff
- Tourist attraction in northeast section and potential for expanded visitation, key to Anacostia revitalization
- Best kept secret in D.C. through U.S., not a good thing
- Local, not known outside the Beltway
- Ever changing and new surprises
- Meet people with similar interests
- Value of the gardens
- Herb garden: instruction for all levels, joint project
- Reveal value of private support for USNA
- Long-term commitment to bonsai collection
- Range of collections, introduces people to new things
- Feel welcome, not a horticultural zoo
- Internship, cutting-edge, training the future
- Introductions, working with industry trade on new introductions
- Valued as place to exercise, walk because of beauty



**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP -- MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**Role of Units in Education**

- Information resource; need proactive role in disseminating information
- National publications; more exposure
- Presentations at subject specific meetings and exhibits
- Tours; more in-depth, variety
- Develop more promotional materials
- Nationally known speakers for lecture series
- Tree care industry as partner; offer classes
- More interpretative signage
- Conservation of endangered species; educate why important
- Relate to what can be done at home
- Book on heads of USNA
- Collection trips; what is being done with respect to education
- Planned trip to USNA for visits
- Program development and staff

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP -- MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**Role of Units in Formal and Informal Education**

- Demo areas
- More in-depth formal education (continued education) like offered at Longwood Gardens
- Collaborate with others to have educational program; i.e., Mount Vernon
- Link with USDA Graduate School
- Special tours, pubs. to send selected message
- Changing demo gardens, well-designed
- Labeling of plants, source of where to purchase (in area)
- Audio tours
- Library, art exhibits of endangered plants
- Identify which groups you are targeting for education purposes, tailor system
- Focus on products
- Increase sponsorship of trial gardens, would increase visibility and maybe funds
- Full-time PR staff
- Full-time librarian
- Use various mediums to educate, virtual and "hands on"
- Speakers bureau; go out to give talks offsite, may increase visibility and visitation
- 5-10 lumber-important trees exhibit
- Buses and transportation (pickup at hotels to USNA), brochures
- Reduce research into lay terms; why does the public care, benefit, impact
- Greater digital -- web, IT people, staff
- More organized public awareness -- radio, television, pubs., etc.
- Access to curators for kids via Internet

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP -- MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**Role of Gardens and Collections**

- Long-bloom perennial demo garden
- Display of U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) developments
- Display those still under development
- Cultivars; new, good (maybe not easily accessible)
- Highlight plant of the year
- Irrigation and other infrastructures
- Staff efficiency
- Preservation
- Maintain and strengthen collections
  - update collections
  - share cuttings/plants with others to preserve germplasm
- Signs for children
- Sunflowers
- Devote space to well-designed gardens; i.e., roof gardens, xeriscape
- Expand Youth Garden program
- Demo garden; four seasons garden using land intensively
- Increased staff resources
- Hardscaping, erosion, storm water treatment
- Invasive exotics
- Restoration projects
- Theme gardens
- Plant doctor program
- Increasing cultivars, expansion

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP -- MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**Gardens/Collections Priorities**

- Theme and speciality gardens
- Maintain, preserve, strengthen collections - infrastructure and irrigation
- Presenting and increasing staff
- Display of new and improved cultivars, including USNA introductions

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP -- MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

- Important to relay U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) history and introductions
- Landscape architects -- design gardens for the season -- attract visitors
- Irrigation exhibits, drought-tolerant plants, etc.
- Exhibits sent to other gardens, exhibit exchange program
- More high-tech equipment; library, increase web resources
- Partner with groups and education, identify focus project on Citizen Forester Program
- Virtual college for continued education/distance learning

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP -- MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**Ways to Help Research (Brainstorming)**

**Defining the Public**

- What is the target for limited staff/funds, etc?
- See beauty, what is it?
- Demand for more information
- Illustrate the impact of U.S. National Arboretum on homeowners, etc.
- Package science projects for kids

**Ways for Units to Support U.S. National Arboretum Research**

- Enlighten public about research in lay terms, less scientific
- Use units as challenges; buildup interest and support for new research products
- Education Unit; identify pots of money to researchers or ID collaborations with new groups with funding
- Focus on how research impact and environmental health needs to be packaged
- Have researchers meet with Education Unit to translate scientific information
- Gardens Unit - for kids, educational module -- Q&A with scientist, process of understanding research
- Define audience -- who is the target?
- Library is valuable support
- Define what is herbarium? Why have it?
- Educate public why germplasm preservation is important and taxonomy - why?
- How to get to public?
- Have stakeholder websites with links to USNA website
- Virtual tour
- Target collaborators for promoting introductions
- Disconnect between introduction and availability

(Ways to Help Research - Brainstorming continued)

- Target landscape designers and architects about introductions -- higher production levels
- Second press release when available to general public
- Have Unit highlight researchers and their work. Where is it going?
- Temp displays of inferior products -- understanding what makes a first-class plant
- Sign, brochure, etc. about research plantings; research facility and public garden

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP - MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**Ways to Help Research (Priorities)**

- Signage - "interpretative developed by U.S. National Arboretum (USNA)
- Defining audiences -- how to approach each
- Focus on TV, Internet, print (intro pictures)
- Feed research to landscape designers and architects -- shows plants and how can be used
- Popularize
  - Herbarium, library importance
  - Highlight researchers/projects
  - Branching introductions



**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP – MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**Threats to U.S. National Arboretum (Priorities)**

- Relevance
- Must remember that research product must be grown in real world
- Land is valuable -- could be developed?

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP – MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**U.S. National Arboretum Problems/Opportunities**

**Problems/Concerns/Opportunities**

- Funding issues – U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) viewed by USDA/ARS as research facility, education as secondary
- Integration of research – see how research works in real life, viewed as research and outreach/education
- Would like a more diverse stakeholder group
- Need plan to increase USNA visibility – need "master plan" and dedicated funding source to carry out the plan
- Should have greater outside funding – make USNA more consumer friendly and visible
- Staffing concerns – need additional federal and private funds – may need to close areas in near future
- More positive visitor experience – gift shop, food, etc., makes an enriched experience, legitimizes value of USNA
- What is vision of USNA? To visit the location or transfer of information outside the D.C. area?
- Need to publicize what USNA has contributed
- Need more educational classes
- New ways to increase funds, i.e., rentals, patents, etc.
- USNA should attend MANTS show and other shows
- Opportunity to educate educators and children nationally
- Expand mailing lists, those from afar know little about what USNA is doing
- Calculate and benefit of what USNA provides, ecological benefit of trees, etc. – present case to Congress to increase funds
- Good research needs money

(U.S. National Arboretum Problems/Opportunities continued)

- Not more funds from research, need additional monies for Gardens and Education
- Increase staff
- USNA focus on arbor and trees, research and emphasis, can't be everything to everyone
- Focus on uniqueness of USNA to serve entire nation
- Increase visitation by people visiting D.C.
- Better transportation to USNA
- Establish partnership between Botanical Gardens and USNA for better transportation and visitation
- Proper entry, sense of entrance, marks a special place
- Play tech transfer role, would like ARS presence at all trade shows
- Key role in transferring research results to users
- Need to leverage what USNA provides to get increased funds
- Stakeholder collaboration - "one voice" to increase funding
- Library -- has a unique collection -- needs to be more available
- Visibility is key
- Evolving, focus shift to visitors, burden on Gardens and Visitors Units

**NOTES FROM WORKSHOP – MARCH 27-28, 2002**  
**U.S. National Arboretum**  
**Education and Visitor Services Unit**  
**Gardens Unit**

**Ways to Improve Reaching National Audience**

- (18) Full-time PR staff – writer, contact shelter and plant mags, tv contacts, website development, source of info for questions
- (13) Capitalize on uniqueness of USNA
- (8) Increased use of web to in information center
- (8) Advocacy of stakeholders – at USDA and Congress
- (6) Separate IT from web delivery, add. resources
- (6) 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, capitalize on this
- (4) Identify partners/new funding sources for new projects (i.e., CD Rom)
- (4) Develop partnership with Dept. of Ed. to develop educational materials – interactive tv, Internet, brochures
- (4) Video – loan or purchase by garden clubs, interactive CD tour
- (3) Presence at national meetings/conferences/trade shows
- (3) Target visitors to D.C. to visit USNA, audio tours, buses from Mall to USNA
- (2) Work with growers and retailers to ID USNA intros
- (1) Use interns to tell USNA story at universities
- (1) Partner with other high visibility (zoo, museums) exchange marketing
- (1) Non-profits – feature article
- (1) Increase interactions w/ARS Info Staff and at USDA level
- (1) Photo tours via Internet
- (1) Plant USNA intros in D.C. area to educate, acquire support
- Focal point for teleconferences
- Ed. program with public tv
- Make grounds more accessible (i.e., handicapped
- Increase press releases – cooperation between groups (USDA, FONA, ARS, etc.