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Sent: Thursday, November 08, 2012 5:42 PM
To: Rule, SW (DDOE)
Cc: Aker, Scott; Tammy_Stidham@nps.gov
Subject: Stormwater Guidebook public comment

November 8, 2012
District Department of the Environment
Attn: Brian Van Wye, Natural Resources Administration
1200 First Street, NE, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20002

RE: Stormwater Rule public comments

Dear Mr. Van Wye,

The U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) appreciates this opportunity to give comments to the District of Columbia Department of the Environment (DDOE) on its proposed stormwater rulemaking. We are pleased that DDOE will implement a set of standards to prepare for stormwater management needs of this century and look forward to utilizing these standards in future work to mitigate stormwater impacts. This proposed rule is an important opportunity to build on a growing effort to improve District water bodies by reducing unnecessary stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces.

While we are supportive of the rule, we believe that some areas, particularly federal properties, will be asked to accept responsibility for mitigation that is far beyond the contribution of these properties to stormwater impacts. We hope to prevent this misalignment by proposing a waiver process that will remove some impervious surface areas provided that they do not contribute significantly to stormwater volume and therefore stormwater impact. A small number of stormwater utility users practice land use that inherently reduces runoff well beyond the 1.2 inch requirement. These users should have a course by which they can document infiltration and remove limited and specific impervious areas from their runoff calculation. We are aware of the tradable credit opportunities and see opportunities within this program for USNA. We are also concerned that pressure will be brought upon Federal properties to accept these trades under conditions that may become onerous in terms of maintenance burdens, and leave other parts of the Anacostia River perhaps upstream of USNA, vulnerable to pollution.

As a stormwater utility user with significant green space that includes large areas of native surface soil, USNA is unusual among District stakeholders. Much of our impervious surface drains to areas that do not use District infrastructure for stormwater conveyance. Therefore we propose a waiver opportunity for specific impervious areas that exceed 1.7 inches of infiltration (95% percentile storm) in 24 hours. We would ask that these areas be removed from impervious surface calculations. Doing so will eliminate the possibility that the USNA would be pressured to accept a trade that would result in construction of a stormwater management feature of questionable benefit at the USNA, and losing the runoff from small storms at the remote Land Disturbing Activity.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide these comments. We would be glad to further discuss our recommendations with you at your convenience.

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