

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE

WO

*Mr. McGuire*

*1000 files*

*John*

REPLY TO: 1620 Programs, Cooperative  
(1630)

MAY 22 1975

SUBJECT: World's First Planting of a "Moon Tree"



TO: Director, Rn Mgmt.

On May 6, I accompanied Chief John McGuire to Philadelphia where he participated with State, local, and other officials in Bicentennial ceremonies built around the world's first official planting of a "moon tree." I believe it important that this event be officially recorded, hence this report.

The tree planted was a sycamore grown by Forestry Research from seed carried on the Apollo 14 moon mission by Col. Stuart A. Roosa, ex-Forest Service Smokejumper and Command Module Pilot for the mission. It was planted in the northeast corner of Washington Square Park, which is diagonally across from Independence Hall. It is planted beside a wide park walkway, is about 3 1/2 feet tall and has a 4 1/2 foot high iron grill type protective fence around it.

A bronze plaque, 16" x 20" imbeded in a small boulder at the base of the iron guard fence reads:

"BICENTENNIAL MOON TREE - Sycamore planted  
May 6, 1975, from seed carried by Astronaut  
Stuart A. Roosa on Apollo 14, February 1971.  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration,  
Forest Service, USDA, Pennsylvania Horticultural  
Society. HONORING EARTH'S GREEN WORLD OF TREES."

Participating in the actual planting of the tree were Chief McGuire, Colonel Roosa, the acting Mayor of Philadelphia, and Mrs. Ernesta D. Ballard, President of the Philadelphia Horticultural Society.

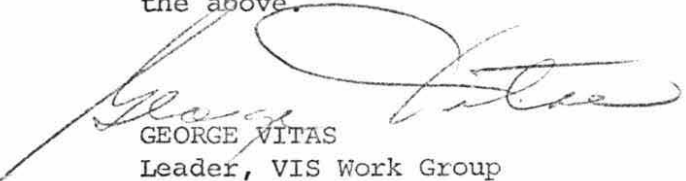
The audience of about 250, seated in chairs in front of the speaker's stand, was about 90 percent Philadelphia school children and their teachers. Woodsy Owl made two featured appearances before the children. Among the dignitaries on the platform were State Forestry representatives from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey.

Arrangements for the ceremony, including rendering and provision of the plaque, was the result of team work by the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, Northern Area S&PF Office, and the R-9 Regional Office and the Office of Information, WO. After the ceremony, the Society provided a luncheon in its nearby headquarters building for guests and official participants. A list of supporters and workers in the project is enclosed.

Chief McGuire, in his address at the ceremony, announced that the Forest Service would furnish individual moon trees to each State Forester for official ceremonial Bicentennial planting in their State. He stated that

he hoped that, in honoring our Bicentennial, each State Forester would use his "moon tree" to help generate a dynamic revival of Arbor Day tree planting in his State.

In a conversation with the Chief in Philadelphia, Colonel Stuart A. Roosa, recalled the semi-private ceremony (unpublicized) in the Secretary's Conference Room in 1971, when upon his return to the earth, he presented the original gold-faced container in which the tree seeds went to the moon and back, to then Secretary of Agriculture, Hardin. It was Colonel Roosa's understanding that this container and other related items were to be presented to the Smithsonian Institute for appropriate public exhibition, commemorating this first in world event. Apparently, this has not been done and Colonel Roosa asked Chief McGuire if he knew what happened to the container that carried the tree seeds on the moon mission. The Chief plans to check this out with Henry DeBruin who, being the I&E Chief at that time, was in charge of the 1971 presentation ceremonies. Please note that in a recent letter from Colonel Roosa to me, he mentions that he is anxiously awaiting the Chief's response to the above.



GEORGE VITAS  
Leader, VIS Work Group

Enclosures