The Dog Commons

*Nature-Based Therapeutics at the Arboretum*

Nature is essential for human health and well-being. At the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, a program of Nature-Based Therapeutics utilizes active partnerships with nature – plants, animals and natural landscapes – to improve and promote physical, social, psychological and cognitive quality of life.

**Dog Commons overview**

As part of the Nature-Based Therapeutics program at the Arboretum, the Dog Commons will be a place where two-legged and four-legged visitors discover opportunities for physical activity, education, socialization and emotional restoration. It will incorporate trails, model landscapes and interpretive messaging, located in the West District by the proposed Woodland Performance Center. Key features will include:

- **Woodland and prairie trails** with opportunities for seasonal outdoor activities with a canine companion.
- **Demonstration plots** with examples of “dog-friendly” plants, turf and ground covers.
- **Model dog waste** disposal practices.
- **Agility play course** for dogs and their humans.
- **Dog training activities**.
- **Educational displays** and events about canine care.
- **Restroom and shelter facilities** for humans.

**Giving opportunities**

Financial support is needed to make the Dog Commons a reality at the Arboretum. Facilities and programs are expected to be implemented in phases as funding becomes available.

- **Preliminary phase** – Preliminary schematic design; preparation of woodland and prairie trails and parking area; waste receptacles; interpretive signs: **$40,000. → Fully funded!**
- **Phase 1** – Paving of road and parking surfaces; installation of water and electrical utilities; additional signage; first year’s trail maintenance (summer and winter): **$145,000.**
- **Phase 2** – Picnic shelter, tables and benches; water stations along trails; sensory play area: **$70,000.**
- **Phase 3** – Dog waste demonstration; model dog-friendly landscapes; demonstration plots of dog-friendly turf: **$80,000.**
- **Endowment** for ongoing maintenance: **$350,000.**
- **Endowment** for position of part-time program specialist: **$900,000.**