

Continued – by Grace Yagtug

In 1885, travel writer and photographer, Eliza Ruhama Scidmore, had the idea of planting cherry trees after her trip to Japan and recommended that our government purchase the trees. Finally in 1909 she approached First Lady Helen Taft, who was enthusiastic about the idea, with the result that First Lady Taft and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese Ambassador, planted the first two Yoshino cherry trees of the now 3,750 cherry trees, all donated by the Japanese government over 100 years ago. What a remarkable result of focused women speaking through their love of nature - a conservation miracle!

And this is what is at the very heart of the NAL conference - focused women speaking through their love of nature. One of the highlights of the trip was Zone II's meeting with Senator Blumenthal and Senator Chris Murphy at the Capitol. Zone II representatives, over 20 women, were in our meeting with Senator Blumenthal, and each woman who spoke was respectful, calm, and very specific about the bill being discussed and what element of the bill GCA was championing for support. Our discussions ended with sharing our deep concerns about the environment we are leaving for our children and our grand-children.

The 2020 NAL focus was supporting the approval of the following 6 pieces of legislation.

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Restore our Parks and Public Lands
- Save Our Seas 2.0
- American Transportation and Infrastructure Act and the Moving Forward Framework
- Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act
- The Native Plant Species Pilot Program