**Remarks by Jonathan T. Ward**

**Principal Commercial Officer, U.S. Consulate General**

**On Occasion of Press Preview of “America Wild: National Park Adventure”**

**Science City, Kolkata**

**July 21, 2016**

* Mr. A.S. Manekar, Director General of the National Council of Science Museums
* Mr. A. Dutta Choudhury, Director, Science City
* Consul General of the United States Craig Hall
* Esteemed members of the media
* Travel & Tourism Sector Leaders

In the Joint Statement of Prime Minister Modi and President Obama, issued on June 7, after their meetings, under the category of people-to-people ties, the leaders announced that the United States and India will be Travel and Tourism Partners in 2017 aims to develop joint efforts and programs to grow these people-to-people and economic linkages.  Similarly, the implementation of the Global Entry Program will facilitate travel between the two countries.

So, it is indeed timely that the assembled directors of Science Cities across India selected “America Wild: National Park Adventure” for screening across India. Thank you for inviting us to be here today. I am especially proud as my agency, the U.S. Department of Commerce was involved in the production, through an organization known as Brand USA. I would like to share some background on this organization, as its function may stimulate ideas here in India.

Brand USA is the destination marketing organization for the United States with the mission of increasing incremental international visitation, spend, and market share to fuel the nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide.

Established by the Travel Promotion Act as the United States' first public-private partnership to spearhead a globally coordinated marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and communicate U.S. entry policies, Brand USA began operations in May 2011.

As one of the best levers for driving economic growth, international travel to the United States currently supports 1.8 million American jobs (directly and indirectly) and benefits virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. Brand USA works in close partnership with more than 600 partner organizations to invite the world to explore the exceptional, diverse, and virtually limitless travel experiences and destinations available in the United States of America.

P.T.O.

According to studies by Oxford Economics, in the past three years Brand USA’s marketing initiatives have helped welcome more than 3 million incremental international visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with more than $21 billion in business sales, and supporting, on average, nearly 50,000 incremental jobs a year.

Brand USA’s operations are supported by a combination of non-Federal contributions from destinations, travel brands, and private-sector organizations, plus matching funds collected by the U.S. government from international visitors who visit the United States.

Brand USA partnered with Expedia, Subaru, and the REI Group to work with MacGillivray Freeman to produce the film. Headquartered in Laguna Beach, California – in the Los Angeles area, MacGillivray Freeman was founded in 1963. It is the world’s leading producer of large-screen and IMAX films. I remember the thrill of seeing their first IMAX film, “To Fly!” in 1974, which they produced for the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum.

While the history of the U.S. system of national parks dates back to 1872 when the U.S. Congress established Yellowstone National Park in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming “as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people,” President Woodrow Wilson signed an act creating the National Park Service on August 25, 1916, 100 years ago next month.

Robert Redford, star of Broadway, TV, and film, as an Actor and Director, narrates America Wild. He has won Emmy, Golden Globe, and Academy Awards, among many other honors. I first knew him from movies in the 1970s to include “The Sting” and “All the President’s Men.” Of course, he’s done a lot more since then! Mr. Redford is also the founder of the Sundance Film Festival. Time magazine named him one of the 100 most influential people in the world in April 2014, declaring him the “Godfather of the Indie (or independent) film.

I couldn’t bring Robert Redford here today, but I am proud to introduce, in its India premiere, “America Wild: National Park Adventure.”