



WHEN THE BORDER VANISHES

The Federal Government and the Environment: A Data-Based Question

Standard:

- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- III. People, Places, and Environment
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
- IX. Global Connections

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives:

The student will:

- Determine the interaction of the U.S. Government with the natural environment
- Analyze government policies related to the environment
- Examine primary documents

Time: 1–2 class periods

Materials: Handouts of DBQ question and primary documents

Procedures:

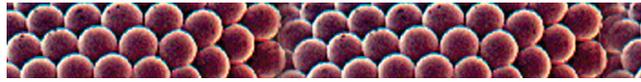
1. Use materials (Documents A–I) for a document based question (DBQ) in Advanced Placement U.S. History, other U.S. History classes, or in courses related to environmental affairs.

2. Document-Based Question:

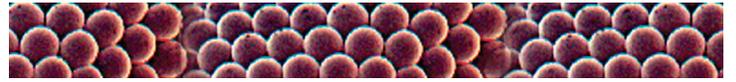
The impetus for environmental protection and preservation in the United States came primarily from NGOs (non-governmental organizations) rather than from the Federal Government.

Extension Activities:

1. Divide documents among students. Have each student or small group determine if the document represents an NGO or a government action. Have students with NGOs combine in one large group. Do the same with the government documents. Each group should arrange its documents chronologically. The two groups should prepare a statement indicating why either NGOs or the government acted as the primary initiator of U.S. environmental actions. Who deserves the most credit? Is it possible to distinguish one side only as exclusively responsible for efforts to improve/ conserve the environment?
2. Have students access the site:
<http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/greenest-presidents-460808>
for a subjective analysis of presidents and their environmental records.
 - *Which presidents are considered the "greenest" presidents, and which have the worst environmental records?*
 - *What reasons are given for their rankings? Which president is on BOTH lists?*



2



Do additional research to determine if these choices are accurate.

- 3.** Identify other NGOs that work for the environment. For example:
The National Geographic Society, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, The Wilderness Society, Worldwatch Institute, and Keep American Beautiful.
Have students name both U.S. and international groups. ■

Kyoto Accord

Negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) were completed December 11, 1997, committing the industrialized nations to specified, legally binding reductions in emissions of six “greenhouse gases.” This treaty would commit the United States, if it were to ratify the Protocol, to a target of reducing greenhouse gases by 7% below 1990 levels during a “commitment period” between 2008–2012. Because of the fact that “sinks,” which remove and store carbon from the atmosphere, are counted and because of other provisions discussed in this report, the actual reduction of emissions within the United States that would be required to meet the target was estimated to be lower than 7%.

The United States signed the Protocol on November 12, 1998. However, the Clinton administration did not submit the Protocol to the

Senate for advice and consent, acknowledging that one condition outlined by S.Res. 98, passed in mid-1997—meaningful participation by developing countries in binding commitments limiting greenhouse gases—had not been met. In late March 2001, the Bush administration rejected the Kyoto Protocol. The United States continued to attend the annual conferences of the parties (COPs) to the UNFCCC, but did not participate in Kyoto Protocol-related negotiations. In February, 2002, President Bush announced a U.S. policy for climate change that will rely on domestic, voluntary actions to reduce the “greenhouse gas intensity” (ratio of emissions to economic output) of the U.S. economy by 18% over the next 10 years.

http://www.eoearth.org/article/Kyoto_Protocol_and_the_United_States

**B**

State of the Union Address

Richard M. Nixon January 22, 1970



[Excerpt]

“. . .The great question of the seventies is, shall we surrender to our surroundings, or shall we make our peace with nature and begin to make reparations for the damage we have done to our air, to our land, and to our water?

“Restoring nature to its natural state is a cause beyond party and beyond factions. It has become a common cause of all the people of this country. It is a cause of particular concern to young Americans, because they more than we will reap the grim consequences of our failure to act on programs which are needed now if we are to prevent disaster later.

“Clean air, clean water, open spaces—these should once again be the birthright of every American. If we act now, they can be.

“We still think of air as free. But clean air is not free, and neither is clean water. The price tag on pollution control is high. Through our years of past carelessness we incurred a debt to nature, and now that debt is being called. . .

“I shall propose to this Congress a \$10 billion nationwide clean waters program to put modern municipal waste treatment plants in every place in America where they are needed to make our waters clean again, and do it now. We have the industrial capacity, if we begin now, to build them all within five years. This program will get them built within five years. . .

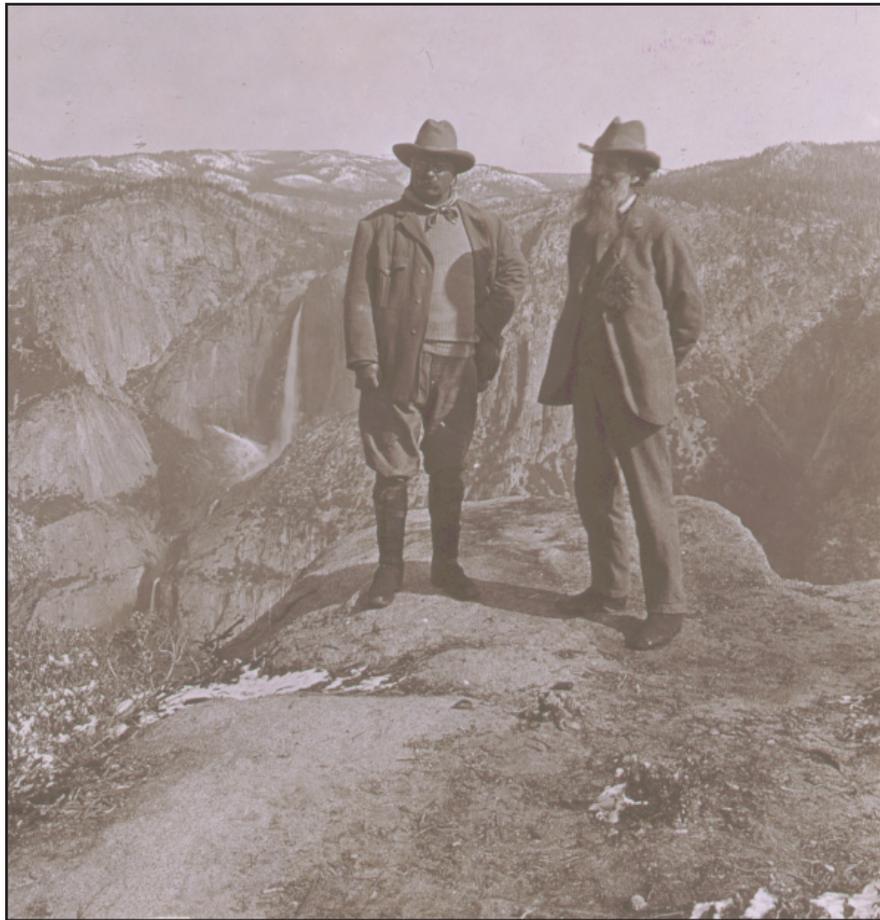
“We can no longer afford to consider air and water common property, free to be abused by anyone without regard to the consequences. Instead, we should begin now to treat them as scarce resources, which we are no more free to contaminate than we are free to throw garbage into our neighbor’s yard.

“This requires comprehensive new regulations. It also requires that, to the extent possible, the price of goods should be made to include the costs of producing and disposing of them without damage to the environment. . .

“The answer is not to abandon growth, but to redirect it. For example, we should turn toward ending congestion and eliminating smog the same reservoir of inventive genius that created them in the first place.” ■



Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir
Glacier Point, Yosemite Valley, CA 1906



Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir, *Library of Congress*

"...The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem it will avail us little to solve all others."

Theodore Roosevelt
Address to the Deep Waterway Convention
Memphis, Tennessee, October 4, 1907

According to the National Geographic, the area of the United States placed under public protection by Theodore Roosevelt, as National Parks, National Forests, game and bird preserves, and other federal reservations, comes to a total of approximately 230,000,000 acres or about 84,000 acres per day.

<http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/conservation.htm>

"Brought into right relationships with the wilderness, man would see that his appropriation of Earth's resources beyond his personal needs would only bring imbalance and begat ultimate loss and poverty by all.

Any fool can destroy trees. They cannot run away; and if they could, they would still be destroyed—chased and hunted down as long as fun or a dollar could be got out of their bark hides. Branching horns, or magnificent bole backbones. Few that fell trees plant them; nor would planting avail much towards getting back anything like the noble primeval forests. It took more than three thousand years to make some of the trees in these Western woods—trees that are still standing in perfect strength and beauty, waving and singing in the mighty forests of the Sierra. Through all the wonderful, eventful centuries God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand straining, leveling tempests and floods; but he cannot save them from fools—only Uncle Sam can do that."

John Muir, Founder of the Sierra Club

**D**

Rachel Carson, "Silent Spring"
September, 1962



"The chemicals to which life is asked to make its adjustment are no longer merely the calcium and silica and copper and all the rest of the minerals washed out of the rocks and carried in rivers to the sea; they are the synthetic creations of man's inventive mind, brewed in his laboratories, and having no counterparts in nature.

"To adjust to these chemicals would require time on the scale that is nature's; it would require not merely the years of a man's life but the life of generations. And even this, were it by some miracle possible, would be futile, for the new chemicals come from our laboratories in an endless stream; almost five hundred annually find their way into actual use in the United States alone. The figure is staggering and its implications are not easily grasped—500 new chemicals to which the bodies of men and animals are required somehow to adapt each year, chemicals totally outside the limits of biologic experience.

"Among them are many that are used in man's war against nature. Since the mid-1940s over 200 basic chemicals have been created for use in killing insects, weeds, rodents, and other organisms described in the modern vernacular as "pests";

and they are sold under several thousand different brand names. These sprays, dusts, and aerosols are now applied almost universally to farms, gardens, forests, and homes—nonselective chemicals that have the power to kill every insect, the "good" and the "bad," to still the song of birds and the leaping of fish in the streams, to coat the leaves with a deadly film, and to linger on in the soil—all this though the intended target may be only a few weeds or insects. Can anyone believe it is possible to lay down such a barrage of poisons on the surface of the earth without making it unfit for all life? They should not be called "insecticides," but "biocides."

"The whole process of spraying seems caught up in an endless spiral. Since DDT was released for civilian use, a process of escalation has been going on in which ever more toxic materials must be found. This has happened because insects, in a triumphant vindication of Darwin's principle of the survival of the fittest, have evolved super races immune to the particular insecticide used, hence a deadlier one has always to be developed—and then a deadlier one than that...."



E Clean Air Act (1963) Amended (1970, 1990)



"The Clean Air Act (CAA) is the comprehensive federal law that regulates air emissions from stationary and mobile sources. Among other things, this law authorizes EPA to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health and public welfare and to regulate emissions of hazardous air pollutants.

"One of the goals of the Act was to set and achieve NAAQS in every state by 1975 in order to address the public health and welfare risks posed by certain widespread air pollutants. The setting of these pollutant standards was coupled with directing the states to develop state implementation plans (SIPs), applicable to appropriate industrial sources in the state, in order to achieve these standards. The Act was amended in 1977 and 1990 primarily to set new goals (dates) for achieving attainment of NAAQS since many areas of the country had failed to meet the deadlines.

"Section 112 of the Clean Air Act addresses emissions of hazardous air pollutants. Prior to 1990, CAA established a risk-based program under which only

a few standards were developed. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments revised Section 112 to first require issuance of technology-based standards for major sources and certain area sources. "Major sources" are defined as a stationary source or group of stationary sources that emit or have the potential to emit 10 tons per year or more of a hazardous air pollutant or 25 tons per year or more of a combination of hazardous air pollutants. An "area source" is any stationary source that is not a major source.

"For major sources, Section 112 requires that EPA establish emission standards that require the maximum degree of reduction in emissions of hazardous air pollutants. These emission standards are commonly referred to as "maximum achievable control technology" or "MACT" standards. Eight years after the technology-based MACT standards are issued for a source category, EPA is required to review those standards to determine whether any residual risk exists for that source category and, if necessary, revise the standards to address such risk."

<http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/laws/caa.html>



An unidentified student in New York on the first Earth Day. *AP Images*

Audubon's Mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

For more than a century, Audubon has built a legacy of conservation success by mobilizing the strength of its network of members, Chapters, Audubon Centers, state offices and dedicated professional staff to connect people with nature and the power to protect it.

A powerful combination of science, education and policy expertise combine in efforts ranging from protection and restoration of local habitats to the implementation of policies that safeguard birds, other wildlife and the resources that sustain us all—in the U.S. and Across the Americas.

<http://www.audubon.org/about-us>

When the Audubon Society first formed in 1886, plume hunters were decimating North American bird populations in the name of fashion. Ladies trimmed their hats and clothing with birds' exotic feathers. Shorebirds and migratory birds that stayed near the water suffered the most as hunters targeted large flocks, injuring animals indiscriminately and orphaning chicks.

George Bird Grinnell, the Audubon Society's founder, was an atypical animal activist. He ran *Forest and Stream*, a hunting and fishing journal, and enjoyed quarrying big game. But the unmitigated slaughter of birds for their feathers disturbed even the most avid hunters. Grinnell began publishing pieces against plume hunting in his magazine. His enthusiasm soon drove him to produce an independent pamphlet, entitled "Audubon Magazine," in honor of the illustrator John James Audubon.

By the turn of the century, the society had expanded across the country, unified under a national committee and encouraged federal and state legislation against plume hunting. The Audubon Society helped create the first Federal Bird Reservation which ultimately led to the formation of the National Wildlife Refuge System."

<http://animals.howstuffworks.com/animal-facts/audubon-society1.htm>



That is the concept of the energy policy we will present on Wednesday. Our national energy plan is based on ten fundamental principles.

The **first principle** is that we can have an effective and comprehensive energy policy only if the government takes responsibility for it and if the people understand the seriousness of the challenge and are willing to make sacrifices.

The **second principle** is that healthy economic growth must continue. Only by saving energy can we maintain our standard of living and keep our people at work. An effective conservation program will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

The **third principle** is that we must protect the environment. Our energy problems have the same cause as our environmental problems—wasteful use of resources. Conservation helps us solve both at once.

The **fourth principle** is that we must reduce our vulnerability to potentially devastating embargoes. We can protect ourselves from uncertain supplies by reducing our demand for oil, making the most of our abundant resources such as coal, and developing a strategic petroleum reserve.

The **fifth principle** is that we must be fair. Our solutions must ask equal sacrifices from every region, every class of people, every interest group. Industry will have to do its part to conserve, just as the consumers will. The energy producers deserve fair treatment, but we will not let the oil companies profiteer.

The **sixth principle**, and the cornerstone of our policy, is to reduce the demand through conservation. Our emphasis on conservation is a clear difference between this plan and others which merely encouraged crash production efforts. Conservation is the quickest, cheapest, most practical source of energy. Conservation is the only way we can buy a barrel of oil for a few dollars. It costs about \$13 to waste it.

The **seventh principle** is that prices should generally reflect the true replacement costs of energy. We are only cheating ourselves if we make energy artificially cheap and use more than we can really afford.

The **eighth principle** is that government policies must be predictable and certain. Both consumers and producers need policies they can count on so they can plan ahead. This is one reason I am working with the Congress to create a new Department of Energy, to replace more than 50 different agencies that now have some control over energy.

The **ninth principle** is that we must conserve the fuels that are scarcest and make the most of those that are more plentiful. We can't continue to use oil and gas for 75 percent of our consumption when they make up seven percent of our domestic reserves. We need to shift to plentiful coal while taking care to protect the environment, and to apply stricter safety standards to nuclear energy.

The **tenth principle** is that we must start now to develop the new, unconventional sources of energy we will rely on in the next century.



Vice President Al Gore



"The truth about global warming is especially inconvenient and unwelcome to some powerful people and companies making enormous sums of money from activities they know full well will have to change in order to ensure the planet's livability.

"These people—especially those at a few multinational companies with the most at stake—have been spending many millions of dollars every year in figuring out ways of sowing public confusion about global warming."

Source: *An Inconvenient Truth* by Al Gore