Grand Valley State University
ScholarWorks@GVSU

Features | Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies

5-6-2005

# Conservationists in Chief

Brian Flanagan
*Grand Valley State University*

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/features

Recommended Citation
Flanagan, Brian, "Conservationists in Chief" (2005). *Features.* Paper 73.
http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/features/73

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Features by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.

# Conservationists in Chief

U.S. Presidents and the Environment, Part II

*By Brian Flanagan*

President Theodore Roosevelt brought conservation to the forefront of public consciousness at the turn of the century. After him, each of his successors would follow in his footsteps working with Congress to establish national monuments and parks, wildlife and forest preserves, and later national recreation areas, national seashores, lakeshores, and grasslands, and national scenic trails -- always with one eye toward public enjoyment, and another toward protecting America's natural resources. The result was that from the end of TR's administration to the end of LBJ's, the United States would benefit from the establishment of 91 new national monuments, 25 new national parks, its first 9 national recreation areas, 7 national seashores, 2 national lakeshores, and its first national scenic trail.

+ **William Howard Taft, 1909-13**

The relationship between conservationists and the government quickly deteriorated following Roosevelt's administration. More and more, conservationists were forced to rely on the public for support rather than an administration that no longer saw conservation as a cornerstone of good government. In 1910, Taft dismissed Gifford Pinchot, TR's right-hand man on conservation issues, from government services.

But President Taft continued to establish national monuments at a fast rate. He issued proclamations creating 10 national monuments, including the Colorado National Monument in Colorado, Devil Postpile in California, Gran Quivira in New Mexico, Mukuntuweap in Utah, Navajo in Arizona, Oregon Caves in Oregon, Rainbow Bridge in Utah, Shoshone Cavern in Wyoming, and Sitka in Alaska. He also established Glacier National Park in Montana.

President Taft signed two major pieces of environmental legislation -- the Weeks Act, allowing national forests to be established in the East, and the Public Health Service Act, allowing the government to conduct investigations into water pollution for the good of public health.

Learn More:

Colorado National Monument, Colorado

Devils Postpile National Monument, California

Glacier National Park, Montana

Navajo National Monument, Arizona

Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon

Rainbow Bridge National Monument, Utah

Salinas Pueblos National Monument, New Mexico (incorporated Gran Quivira National Monument, 1980)

Shoshone Cavern National Monument, Wyoming

Sitka National Historical Park, Alaska (formerly Sitka National Monument)

Zion National Park, Utah (incorporated Mukuntuweap National Monument in 1918)

+ **Woodrow Wilson, 1913-21**

President Woodrow Wilson issued proclamations establishing 13 national monuments, including Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico, Cabrillo in California, Capulin Mountain in New Mexico, Dinosaur National Monument in Utah, Katmai in Alaska, Lod Kasssan in Alaska, Papago Saguaro in Arizona, Scotts Bluff in Nebraska, Sieur de Monts in Maine, Verendrye in North Dakota, Walnut Canyon in Arizona, Yucca House in Colorado, and Zion in Utah. He also established 6 national Parks including Grand Canyon National Park, Hawaii National Park, Lassen Volcanic in California, Mount McKinley in Alaska, and Rocky Mountain in Colorado.

In 1916, President Wilson signed legislation creating the National Park Service, within the Department of the Interior. The National Park Service grew into the goliath that now manages all national parks, monument, seashores, lakeshores, recreation areas, and fish and wildlife reserves. Wilson also signed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Mineral Leasing Act, regulating hunting of migratory birds and mining on federally-owned lands.

Learn More:

LOC American Memory on the foundation of the National Park Service

Acadia National Park, Maine (formerly Sieur de Monts National Monument)

Bandelier National Monument, New Mexico

Cabrillo National Monument, California

Capulin Volcano National Monument, New Mexico (formerly Capulin Mountain National Monument)

Denali National Park & Preserve, Alaska (incorporated Mt. McKinley National Park in 1980)

Dinosaur National Monument, Colorado, Utah

Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii (formerly Hawaii National Park)

Katmai National Park & Preserve, Alaska (formerly Katmai National Monument)

Lassen Volcanic National Park, California

Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado

Saguaro National Park, Arizona

Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska

Walnut Canyon National Monument, Arizona

Yucca House National Monument, Colorado

Zion National Park, Utah (formally Zion National Monument)

+ **Warren G. Harding, 1921-1923**

President Warren G. Harding designated 8 national monuments including Aztec National Monument, Bryce Canyon in Utah, Fossil Cycad in South Dakota, Hovenweep in Colorado, Lehman Caves in Nevada, Pipe Spring in Arizona, and Timpangos Cave in Utah. (He also created the Mound City Group National Monument, which was later designated a National Historical Site.)

Learn More:

Aztec Ruins National Monument, New Mexico

Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah (formerly Bryce Canyon National Monument)

Hovenweep National Monument, Colorado

Great Basin National Park, Nevada (formerly Lehman Caves National Monument)

Pipe Spring National Monument, Arizona

Timpangos Cave National Monument, Utah

+ **Calvin Coolidge, 1923-29**

President Coolidge signed legislation creating 11 national monuments including Carlsbad National Monument in New Mexico, Chiricahua in Arizona, Craters of the Moon in Idaho, Lava Beds in California, Meriwether Lewis in Tennessee, and Wupatki in Arizona. He also created 5 national parks including Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, Great Smoky Mountains in North Carolina and Tennessee, Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, and Shenandoah in Virginia.

Coolidge signed off on legislation preventing oil pollution in coastal waters, and augmenting the federal government's ability to purchase forest land.

President Coolidge also contributed significantly to advancing discussion of conservation. He requested a national conference on outdoor recreation that convened in 1924. The conferences main priority was to "coordinate the activities of federal, state, county, municipal, and unofficial agencies in the field of outdoor recreation and to promote the development of the recreational resources of the country and stimulate their use."

Learn More:

Calvin Coolidge in the Black Hills

Carlsbad Caverns National Park, New Mexico (formerly Carlsbad Cave National Monument)

Chiricahua National Monument, Arizona

Craters of the Moon National Monument, Idaho

Glacier Bay National Park and National Preserve, Alaska (formerly Glacier Bay National Park)

Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, North Carolina, Tennessee

Lava Beds National Monument, California

Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky

Mount Rushmore National Memorial, South Dakota

Natchez Trace Parkway, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee (incorporated Meriwether Lewis National Monument in 1961)

Shenandoah National Park, Virginia

Wupatki National Monument, Arizona

+ **Herbert Hoover, 1929-33**

President Hoover created 13 National Monuments including the Arches National Monument in Utah, Badlands in South Dakota, Black Canyon of the Gunnison in Colorado, Canyon de Chelly in Arizona, Death Valley in California and Nevada, Grand Canyon in Arizona, Great Sand Dunes in Colorado, Holy Cross in Colorado, Saguaro in Arizona, Sunset Crater in Arizona, and White Sands in New Mexico. Hoover also signed off on the creation of Isle Royale National Park in Michigan.

Learn More:

Arches National Park, Utah (formerly Arches National Monument)

Badlands National Park, South Dakota (formerly Badlands National Monument)

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Colorado (formerly Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument)

Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Arizona

Death Valley National Park, California (incorporated Death Valley National Monument in 1994)

Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona (incorporated Grand Canyon National Monument in 1975)

Great Sand Dunes National Monument, Colorado

Isle Royale National Park, Michigan

Saguaro National Park, Arizona (formerly Saguaro National Monument)

Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, Arizona (formerly Sunset Crater National Monument)

White Sands National Monument, New Mexico

+ **Franklin Roosevelt, 1933-45**

President Roosevelt made, perhaps, the most significant contribution to conservation since his cousin Theodore, establishing 22 national monuments, 4 national parks, and America's first national seashore, Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina. His national parks included Big Bend National Park in Texas, Everglades in Florida, Kings Canyon in California, and Olympic in Washington. His national monuments included Capitol Reef National Monument in Utah, Cedar Breaks in Utah, Channel Islands in California, Jackson Hole in Wyoming, Joshua Tree in California, Ocmulgee in Georgia, Organ Pipe Cactus in Arizona, Pipestone in Minnesota, Santa Rosa Island in Florida, Tuzigoot in Arizona, and Zion in Utah.

FDR signed the Taylor Grazing Act allowing the creating of grazing districts, the Soil Conservation Act addressing the dangers of soil erosion, and the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act providing federal funding to the states for wildlife protection. He also created two offices of great importance to conservation (and to relieving the stresses caused by the Great Depression): the Office of Emergency Conservation, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Office of Emergency Conservation included the Civilian Conservation Corps and would employ hundreds of thousands of men in national parks and forests. The Tennessee Valley Authority was created to bring

electrification projects and environmental stewardship to the Valley.

Learn More
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jun16.html
Big Bend National Park, Texas
Cape Hatteras National Seashore, North Carolina
Capitol Reef National Park, Utah (formerly Capitol Reef National Monument)
Cedar Breaks National Monument, Utah
Channel Islands National Park, California (formerly Channel Islands National Monument)
Everglades National Park, Florida
Gulf Islands National Seashore, Florida (included in Santa Rosa Island National Monument before it was abolished in 1971)
Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming (incorporated Jackson Hole National Monument in 1950)
Joshua Tree National Park, California (formerly Joshua Tree National Monument)
General Grant National Park, California (incorporated Kings Canyon National Park)
Ocmulgee National Monument, Georgia
Olympic National Park, Washington
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Arizona
Pipestone National Monument, Minnesota
Tuzigoot National Monument, Arizona
Zion National Park, Utah (formerly Zion National Monument)

+ **Harry Truman, 1945-53**

President Truman signed legislation creating 5 national monuments, the Grand Teton National Park, the first national recreation area -- at Coulee Dam, Washington -- and 4 other recreation areas across the country. His national monuments included Effigy Mounds National Monument in Iowa.

Truman signed the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act regulating the use of pesticides, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act regulating waste disposal, and the Dangerous Cargo Act regulating the transport of harmful substances.

Learn More:
Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming
Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, Washington (formerly Coulee Dam National Recreation Area)
Effigy Mounds National Monument, Iowa

+ **Dwight Eisenhower, 1953-61**

President Eisenhower signed legislation creating 4 national monuments, 3 national parks, and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. Included among his national monuments was Grand Partage National Monument in Minnesota. And his national parks included Haleakala National Park in Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands National Park. President Eisenhower also signed legislation creating the national grasslands to restore and preserve more than 4 million acres of grassland.

The Atomic Energy Act of 1954, signed by President Eisenhower, regulated radioactive materials in the production of nuclear power. He also signed legislation on water pollution and national forestry.

Learn More:
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Utah, Arizona
Haleakala National Park, Hawaii
Virgin Islands National Park, Virgin Islands

+ **John F. Kennedy, 1961-63**

President Kennedy signed off on 2 national monuments -- Russell Cave National Monument in Alabama, and Buck Island Reef National Monument in the Virgin Islands -- and 3 national seashores, including Cape Cod National Seashore in Massachusetts Padre Island National Seashore in Texas, and Point Reyes National Seashore in California.

In 1963 JFK dedicated the Pinchot Institute for Conservation Studies, and he kicked-off a five-day, 11 state conservation tour in September, 1963, drawing attention to the deteriorating environment, and planting the seed for the first Earth Day that would come six years later.

Learn More:
Buck Island Reef National Monument, Virgin Islands
Cape Cod National Seashore, Massachusetts
Russell Cave National Monument, Alabama
Padre Island National Seashore, Texas
Point Reyes National Seashore, California

+ **Lyndon Johnson, 1963-69**

Lyndon Johnson signed legislation creating 7 national recreational areas, 4 national parks, 3 national seashores, 3 national monuments, 2 national lakeshores, and the first national scenic trail -- the Appalachian National Scenic Trail through 14 states. He was the first president since TR who hoped to be remembered primarily for his conservation work. Of course that hope was lost during the Vietnam War.

But as part of his Great Society, President Johnson proposed and signed for than 300 pieces of environmental legislation. Included in his Great Society legislation were the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Wilderness Act, establishing the National Wilderness Preservation System and designating 9 million acres of national forest lands, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, the Solid Waste Disposal Act,

the Endangered Species Act, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, setting aside scenic areas for recreation and preservation, and the National Tails System Act.

Included among his national recreation areas were the Arbuckle National Recreation Area in Oklahoma, Bighorn Canyon in Wyoming and Montana, Curecanti National in Colorado, Delaware Water Gap in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Lake Chelan in Washington, Ross Lake in Washington, and Sanford in Texas. His national parks included Canyonlands National Park in Utah, Guadalupe Mountains in Texas, North Cascade in Washington, and Redwood in California. His national seashores included Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland and Virginia, Cape Lookout in North Carolina, and Fire Island in New York. His National Monuments included Agate Fossil Beds National Monument in Nebraska, Biscayne in Arizona, and Pecos in New Mexico. And his national lakeshores included Indiana Dunes National Lakesore in Indiana and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan.

First Lady Ladybird Johnson also made great contributions to the president's environmental record. Her capital beautification project contributed to the Highway Beautification Act and inspired similar projects across the country.

Learn More:

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, Nebraska
Appalachian National Scenic Trail
Assateague Island National Seashore, Maryland, Virginia
Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, Wyoming, Montana
Biscayne National Park, Florida (formerly Biscayne National Monument)
Canyonlands National Park, Utah
Cape Lookout National Seashore, North Carolina
Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Oklahoma (incorporated Arbuckle National Recreation Area in 1976)
Curecanti National Recreation Area, Colorado
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Pennsylvania, New Jersey
Fire Island National Seashore, New York
Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana
Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, Washington
Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, Texas (formerly Sanford National Recreation Area)
North Cascades National Park, Washington
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Michigan
Redwood National Park, California
Ross Lake National Recreation Area, Washington

*Links and Sources:*

*Chronology of Events and People in the Development of the American Conservative Movement*
*Conservation Study Institute*
*Environmental History Timeline*
*EPA Environmental Progress*
*Evolution of the Conservation Movement*
*National Park Service*
*National Park System Timeline*
*USDA Forest Service*