

Environmental Actions

by President Clinton and Vice President Gore



1993

- **January 20, 1993:** President Clinton and Vice President Gore eliminated the Council on Competitiveness, which was established by the Bush-Quayle Administration and had been frequently used to circumvent environmental laws.
- **March 30, 1993:** President Clinton and Vice President Gore held the Forest Conference in Oregon, a critical first step toward developing a comprehensive and balanced long-term policy to preserve and protect old-growth forests while balancing the needs of the workers, businesses, and communities dependent on timber sales.
- **April 21, 1993:** President Clinton issued executive orders directing federal agencies to reduce their use of ozone-depleting materials, increase their use of alternative-fueled vehicles, and purchase energy efficient computers (Executive Order 12843, Executive Order 12844, Executive Order 12845).
- **June 29, 1993:** President Clinton signed an executive order establishing the President's Council on Sustainable Development (Executive Order 12852).
- **July 1, 1993:** President Clinton signed the Forest Resources Conservation and Shortage Relief Amendments Act (H.R. 2343).
- **August 3, 1993:** President Clinton issued an executive order requiring federal agencies to reduce pollution as much as possible and to report to the community any toxic chemicals that are released into the environment (Executive Order 12856).
- **August 4, 1993:** President Clinton signed legislation establishing the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in Idaho (H.R. 236).
- **August 13, 1993:** President Clinton signed the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993, which designated a total of 612,000 acres as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System (H.R. 631).
- **August 24, 1993:** The Clinton-Gore Administration unveiled a wetlands protection initiative which included more than 40 changes to current wetlands policy, including establishing a more effective process so that landowners and farmers can seek review of permit decisions without having to go to court.
- **October 20, 1993:** President Clinton signed an executive order requiring federal agencies to use recycled paper and other recycled products (Executive Order 12873).

1994

- **February 11, 1994:** President Clinton issued an executive order to address environmental justice and ensure that low-income citizens and minorities do not suffer a disproportionate burden of industrial pollution (Executive Order 12898).
- **March 8, 1994:** President Clinton issued an executive order directing federal agencies to improve energy efficiency and water conservation at their facilities (Executive Order 12902).
- **March 11, 1994:** The White House announced the Greening of the White House initiative, a comprehensive energy and environmental upgrade that includes actions for landscaping, waste reduction, recycling, and water and energy efficiency.
- **April 11, 1994:** President Clinton signed the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Improvement Act of 1994 (S. 476).
- **April 29, 1994:** President Clinton issued a memorandum directing agencies to use environmentally beneficial landscaping practices, such as using regionally native plants for landscaping, reducing use of pesticides and fertilizer, promoting construction practices that minimize adverse effects on natural habitats, and implementing water-efficient practices such as irrigation.

- **May 13, 1994:** President Clinton issued executive orders directing that the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation and the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Mexican States Concerning the Establishment of a Border Environment Cooperation Commission be implemented in a manner consistent with U.S. environmental policy (Executive Order 12915, Executive Order 12916).
- **August 11, 1994:** President Clinton signed the Winter Run Chinook Salmon Captive Broodstock Act (H.R. 2457).
- **August 26, 1994:** President Clinton signed the Farmington Wild and Scenic River Act (H.R. 2815), designating a portion of the Farmington River in Connecticut as a part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- **August 26, 1994:** President Clinton signed the George Washington National Forest Mount Pleasant Scenic Area Act (H.R. 2942).
- **October 19, 1994:** President Clinton signed the North American Wetlands Conservation Act Amendments of 1994 (H.R. 4308).
- **October 22, 1994:** President Clinton signed the Water Bank Extension Act (H.R. 5053), which expands eligibility for the wetlands reserve program to lands covered by expiring agreements under the Water Bank Act.
- **October 22, 1994:** President Clinton signed the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994 (H.R. 4924).
- **October 31, 1994:** President Clinton signed the California Desert Protection Act (S. 21), which designated approximately 7.7 million acres of Federal lands as wilderness. The Act added approximately 3 million acres to the National Park System, including magnificent lands adjacent to the Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Monuments. It also established the Mojave National Preserve as a new unit of the National Park System.

1995

- **April 18, 1995:** Vice President Gore unveiled a National Environmental Technology Strategy with three major goals: create high-wage jobs and exports and stimulate overall economic growth; reduce the cost of cleaning up past pollution; and help prevent future damage to the environment.
- **June 7, 1995:** President Clinton issued an executive order to improve the quality, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities (Executive Order 12962).
- **July 31, 1995:** President Clinton announced that the Clinton-Gore Administration had reached agreement with oil companies to protect sensitive coastal areas off Florida and Alaska from oil drilling.
- **August 8, 1995:** President Clinton issued an executive order requiring those who would do business with the federal government to continue to report on over 650 toxic chemicals that are emitted (Executive Order 12969).
- **November 10, 1995:** President Clinton signed the Fisheries Act of 1995 (H.R. 716), which implements international agreements designed to protect important fish stocks in high seas areas of the world's oceans and off of America's coasts.

1996

- **March 25, 1996:** President Clinton signed an executive order requiring paper mills to use some recycled materials in producing new paper (Executive Order 12995).
- **March 25, 1996:** President Clinton issued an executive order to protect and preserve the National Wildlife Refuge System for future generations while ensuring continued public access and recreational opportunities (Executive Order 12996).
- **April 6, 1996:** President Clinton signed the most environmentally beneficial Farm Bill in history. The bill provided over \$2 billion in increased spending for conservation programs, including \$200 million to purchase environmentally sensitive lands in the Everglades.

- **May 15, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Trinity River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Reauthorization Act (H.R. 2243).
- **May 24, 1996:** President Clinton signed legislation reauthorizing the Water Resources Research Act (H.R. 1743).
- **May 24, 1996:** President signed legislation authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire property in the town of East Hampton, New York, for inclusion in the Amagansett National Wildlife Refuge (H.R. 1836).
- **August 2, 1996:** President Clinton transmitted to the Senate the Canada-United States Protocol for the Protection of Migratory Birds.
- **August 3, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, establishing strong new standards for pesticide residues in food, and requiring for the first time that the standards take into account special risks to children (H.R. 1627).
- **August 6, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996, requiring stronger standards for many pollutants and establishing a revolving loan fund to help communities upgrade water treatment systems. (S. 1316).
- **August 7, 1996:** President Clinton ratified a landmark fisheries conservation agreement: the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.
- **August 12, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Yellowstone Protection Agreement to protect the park from mining.
- **August 28, 1996:** President Clinton announced new initiatives to accelerate cleanup of brownfields and Superfund sites, strengthen environmental enforcement, and expand community right-to-know.
- **September 18, 1996:** President Clinton issued a proclamation establishing the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.
- **October 1, 1996:** President Clinton signed legislation authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the Waihee Marsh for inclusion in the Oahu National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Hawaii (H.R. 1772).
- **October 2, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Antarctic Science, Tourism, and Conservation Act of 1996 (H.R. 3060), which implemented the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.
- **October 9, 1996:** President Clinton signed legislation increasing funding for the Department of the Interior for the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana (H.R. 2660).
- **October 11, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Sustainable Fisheries Act (S. 39), the Water Desalination Act of 1996 (S. 811), and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (H.R. 543).
- **October 12, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Water Resources Development Act, which authorized development of a long-term plan to restore the Florida Everglades (S. 640).
- **October 12, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Accountable Pipeline Safety and Partnership Act of 1996 (S. 1505), which will reduce risk to public safety and the environment associated with pipeline transportation of natural gas and hazardous liquids.
- **October 19, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Marine Mineral Resources Research Act (S. 1194).
- **October 26, 1996:** President Clinton signed the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 (H.R. 4283), which will help to control the unintentional introduction and spread of invasive species, such as zebra mussel, throughout the waters of our Nation. Such species can cause significant damage to the environment, the economy, and fisheries.
- **October 31, 1996:** President Clinton signed an executive order dissolving the Midway Islands Naval Defensive Sea Area and the Midway Islands Naval Airspace Reservation and transferring jurisdiction to the Secretary of the Interior, who will oversee the Midway Islands as the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (Executive Order 13022).
- **November 11, 1996:** President Clinton signed the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, establishing five new national parks, authorizing 10 national heritage areas, and expanding and protecting dozens of national parks, trails, and wild and scenic rivers (H.R. 4236).

1997

- **January 25, 1997:** President Clinton issued a memorandum directing the Agriculture Secretary, Health and Human Services Secretary, and EPA Administrator to work with consumers, producers, industry, States, universities, and the public to identify ways to improve food safety.
- **April 18, 1997:** The United States ratified the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty of 1991 which sets forth a comprehensive, legally binding system of environmental protection that applies to all activities in Antarctica. It reaffirms the status of Antarctica as an area reserved for peaceful purposes, including scientific research.
- **April 21, 1997:** Vice President Gore announced that President Clinton had signed an executive order setting new standards to reduce environmental health risks and safety risks to children (Executive Order 13045).
- **May 2, 1997:** President Clinton announced a Balanced Budget Agreement that included \$700 million for priority Federal land acquisitions, including \$250 million to protect the ancient redwoods of the Headwaters Forest in California and \$65 million to acquire the New World Mine outside of Yellowstone.
- **May 13, 1997:** Vice President announced the creation of the Brownfields National Partnership, a two-year effort including more than 100 commitments from more than 25 organizations to further spur cleanup and redevelopment at some 5,000 brownfields sites around the nation.
- **July 16, 1997:** The President approved stronger, more protective air quality standards to further control pollution from ozone and particulate matter (smog and soot) and issued a memo to the EPA regarding implementation of those standards.
- **July 26, 1997:** President Clinton issued an executive order to protect natural, recreational, and ecological resources in the Lake Tahoe Region (Executive Order 13057).
- **August 15, 1997:** President Clinton signed the International Dolphin Conservation Program Act, commonly known as the Dolphin Safe Tuna bill (H.R. 408).
- **September 11, 1997:** President Clinton signed an executive order launching the American Heritage River initiative (Executive Order 13061).
- **October 9, 1997:** President Clinton signed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (H.R. 1420).
- **October 18, 1997:** Vice President Gore directed federal departments and agencies to develop an action plan to clean up America's waterways.
- **October 20, 1997:** The Vice President announced that the Clinton-Gore Administration and the state of Maryland have joined together in a new initiative to help protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
- **October 29, 1997:** The Vice President announced a U.S.-China initiative that will move the countries toward greater cooperation in energy and environmental science, building on the Administration's efforts to engage China in joint initiatives that promote sustainable development and help lay the groundwork for reaching common ground in addressing climate change.
- **November 19, 1997:** President Clinton signed the Asian Elephant Conservation Act (H.R. 1787).
- **December 12, 1997:** The United States signed the Kyoto Protocol. The Protocol must be ratified before it can take effect.
- **December 12, 1997:** President Clinton signed the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act Amendments of 1997 (H.R. 1658).

1998

- **January 8, 1998:** Vice President Gore announced new "Energy Star" partnerships with leading manufacturers to promote energy-saving TVs and VCRs with the potential to save Americans hundreds of millions of dollars in electricity bills and significantly curb greenhouse gas pollution.
- **February 2, 1998:** President Clinton announced plans to expand or protect 100 natural and historical sites, including the final links in the Appalachian Trail, critical winter range for Yellowstone's elk and bison herds, and initial funding for the removal of two dams blocking salmon migration on the Elwha River near Olympic National Park.

- **February 12, 1998:** Vice President Gore announced that with leadership from the Clinton-Gore Administration, major auto manufacturers voluntarily agreed to produce a cleaner car that emits 70 percent less pollution than today's models.
- **April 8, 1998:** President Clinton issued an executive order creating the American Heritage Initiative Advisory Committee, to review nominations for selection of American Heritage Rivers (Executive Order 13080).
- **May 4, 1998:** President Clinton launched the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing, a partnership with America's building industry to dramatically improve the energy efficiency of our homes — cutting consumers' energy bills by 30-50 percent, while reducing the greenhouse gases that cause global warming.
- **June 11, 1998:** To strengthen protection of natural coral reefs, President Clinton signed an executive order directing federal agencies to expand research, preservation and restoration activities (Executive Order 13089).
- **June 12, 1998:** To protect our oceans and coasts from the environmental risks of offshore oil and gas drilling, the President issued a directive extending the moratorium on offshore leasing for an additional ten years, and permanently barring new leasing in national marine sanctuaries.
- **July 25, 1998:** President Clinton issued a directive with four new steps to decrease energy use in Federal buildings and facilities, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and saving taxpayer dollars.
- **July 30, 1998:** President Clinton and Vice President Gore designated 14 American Heritage Rivers. Communities along these rivers will receive help over the next five years tapping federal resources to carry out their plans for revitalizing their rivers and riverfronts.
- **August 5, 1998:** President Clinton signed the African Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act (H.R. 39).
- **August 11, 1998:** President Clinton expanded the public's right to know with the announcement of a new rule requiring water utilities to provide regular reports to their customers on whether their drinking water meets federal health standards — and if not, why not.
- **August 25, 1998:** President Clinton issued an executive order creating the President's Council on Food Safety, which is charged with developing a comprehensive and coordinated strategic plan for Federal food safety activities (Executive Order 13100).
- **September 14, 1998:** President Clinton issued an executive order expanding recycling by Federal agencies (Executive Order 13101).
- **October 5, 1998:** President Clinton signed the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998 (H.R. 1856).
- **October 20, 1998:** President Clinton signed the Gallatin Land Consolidation Act of 1998 (H.R. 3381). The legislation, part of the Clinton-Gore Administration's goal of restoring and protecting the greater Yellowstone ecosystem, directed the transfer of certain lands and other assets in Montana to the Big Sky Lumber Company in exchange for a significantly larger amount of land to be included in the Gallatin and Deer Lodge National Forests.
- **October 27, 1998:** President Clinton signed the Border Smog Reduction Act, which prohibited entry into the U.S. of certain foreign vehicles which do not comply with state laws governing emissions (H.R. 8).
- **October 30, 1998:** President Clinton signed the Fish and Wildlife Revenue Enhancement Act (S. 2094).
- **October 30, 1998:** President Clinton signed H.R. 2807, an omnibus measure enhancing fish and wildlife protection, including reauthorization of the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act.
- **October 31, 1998:** President Clinton signed the Utah Schools and Land Exchange Act of 1998 — an exchange of land, mineral rights, commercial properties, and natural treasures between the United States and the State of Utah. This was the largest such land exchange in the history of the lower 48 States (H.R. 3830).
- **November 13, 1998:** President Clinton signed the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998, which improved the management of various park programs and increased funds to parks through concession contracts and the National Park Passport Program (S. 1693).

1999

- **February 3, 1999:** President Clinton issued an executive order to prevent the introduction of invasive species into our environment, and to limit the economic, ecological, and human health impacts those species might have (Executive Order 13112).
- **March 2, 1999:** President Clinton announced completion of negotiations to protect the Headwaters Forest in California — the world’s largest unprotected stand of old-growth redwoods.
- **March 9, 1999:** Vice President Gore announced a comprehensive federal strategy to help clean up rivers, lakes and coastal waters by reducing polluted runoff from large livestock operations.
- **April 9, 1999:** President Clinton signed the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild and Scenic River Act, which designated portions of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers in Massachusetts as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (H.R. 193).
- **April 22, 1999:** Vice President Gore announced a “regional haze” rule to improve air quality in national parks and wilderness areas so that visitors can enjoy unspoiled views of America’s greatest natural treasures.
- **May 29, 1999:** President Clinton issued an executive memorandum to improve the water quality of beaches and rivers, including the Cape Cod, Cape Hatteras, and Pt. Reyes National Seashores.
- **June 3, 1999:** President Clinton issued an executive order directing all federal departments and agencies to improve the energy efficiency of government buildings.
- **August 12, 1999:** The President issued an executive memorandum setting the goal of tripling the nation’s use of bioenergy and bioproducts by 2010. At the same time, the President signed an executive order establishing the Interagency Council on Biobased Products and Bioenergy to develop a biomass research program to be presented annually as part of the federal budget (Executive Order 13134).
- **August 14, 1999:** The President announced new steps to restore America’s rivers, lakes and coastal waters. Under a proposed rule, the Environmental Protection Agency will work with states to better assess the health of U.S. waterways and to develop detailed plans to make them safe for fishing and swimming.
- **August 21, 1999:** President Clinton announced a landmark agreement to protect 9,300 acres adjoining Yellowstone National Park — a critical step to preserve the park’s famed bison and geysers.
- **September 2, 1999:** President Clinton signed a proclamation strengthening our ability to enforce environmental, customs and immigration laws at sea by expanding a critical enforcement zone to include waters within 24 nautical miles of the U.S. coast.
- **September 16, 1999:** President Clinton transmitted to the Senate an amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer to strengthen measures to promote compliance with the protocol.
- **October 13, 1999:** President Clinton directed the National Forest Service to develop regulations to provide long-term protection for 40 million acres of “roadless” areas within national forests. The proposed regulations could ban road building in these areas and could also prohibit logging or other activities that harm their unique ecological value.
- **October 21, 1999:** President Clinton signed into law Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999, establishing the Black Canyon in Colorado as a national park (S. 323).
- **October 30, 1999:** President Clinton announced an agreement to preserve New Mexico’s spectacular Baca Ranch.
- **October 30, 1999:** President Clinton announced the acquisition of 14,000 additional acres within the Joshua Tree National Park — land that otherwise might be developed.
- **October 30, 1999:** President Clinton announced a new EPA rule strengthening the public’s right to know about highly toxic chemicals released to the environment. The rule establishes or strengthens reporting requirements for 27 “persistent bioaccumulative toxics,” including mercury, dioxin, and PCBs, which build up in the environment rather than breaking down.
- **November 5, 1999:** President Clinton announced the addition of 57,000 acres of prime Columbia River Salmon habitat to the National Wildlife Refuge System, including large sections of the Hanford Reach, the last section of free-flowing salmon habitat on the Columbia.

- **November 16, 1999:** Vice President announced that President Clinton signed an executive order requiring careful assessment and consideration of the environmental impacts of trade agreements (Executive Order 13141).
- **November 24, 1999:** President Clinton signed the Arctic Tundra Habitat Emergency Conservation Act (H.R. 2454).
- **December 12, 1999:** President Clinton announced that the EPA was issuing the toughest standards ever for reducing harmful air pollution from auto tailpipes. The new standards ensure that sportutility vehicles, minivans, and lightduty trucks meet the same low levels of tailpipe emissions as other passenger cars.

2000

- **January 11, 2000:** President Clinton signed proclamations creating three new national monuments — the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and the Agua Fria National Monument in Arizona, and the California Coastal National Monument — and expanding another, the Pinnacles National Monument in California.
- **February 9, 2000:** President Clinton transmitted to the Senate the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, with Annexes. This Convention assists developing countries in evaluating risks and enforcing their regulatory decisions regarding trade in hazardous chemicals and pesticides.
- **February 14, 2000:** President Clinton announced \$18.6 million in Forest Legacy grants for 29 projects encompassing nearly 250,000 acres in 19 states and territories. These competitive grants are used to protect private forestland that provides critical wildlife habitat and is threatened by development. Protected lands can continue to be used for forestry and other compatible activities.
- **March 22, 2000:** U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Indian Minister of External Affairs Jaswant Singh signed a U.S.-India statement on cooperation on energy and environment issues on behalf of the United States and India, outlining a common agenda on clean energy development and environmental protection.
- **March 28, 2000:** President Clinton announced new measures to restore “natural quiet” to the Grand Canyon by better managing sight-seeing flights over the National Park. The new rules continue to allow visitors to view the Canyon by air, but limit noise by significantly expanding “flight-free” zones over the Park and by restricting future growth in commercial air tour operations.

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