

"Address," Democratic National Convention , Philadelphia, June 26, 1982

[At Top: Sacred Trust, Morris K. Udall, Remarks; Burton Draft]

I couldn't help but reflect today on the words of a great actor ... a Californian ... a man who has been acclaimed as the possessor of a wry wit ... credited with now and then uttering some profound political advice ... I refer, of course, to the esteemed statesman, W. C. Fields ... who said that, on the whole, he would rather be in Philadelphia.

This is a good place for Democrats to meet. I'm proud to be one of you ... always have been. And I've always been proud of the role my party has played in shaping the guardianship of our natural treasures ... my grandfather and my Dad always told me as a boy that one of the best things we could do was to leave the earth a bit better than we found it. That's been among my fundamental beliefs ... and you've helped me along the way.

For two decades now, the whole conservation effort has been reduced to a few phrases ... can we have oil and clean beaches? Mountains and coal? Jobs and clean water?

I would submit to you that that never has been the argument. We all know it. We all know which party is willing to make tradeoffs for a recession, for unemployment and all the rest.

But if that's the challenge we must face, then face it we will. I won't run from a fight, and I know you won't, either.

I'm reminded, in fact, that it was a Republican who relished challenge with it came to conservation, and he's a Republican we remember and revere ... Teddy Roosevelt.

To paraphrase John Kennedy ... "The administration of the Interior Department has the greatest bunch of conservationists ever assembled ... with the possible exception of when Teddy Roosevelt dined alone."

TR reminds us that there was a time when Republican Presidents cared about the land ... Roosevelt used to refer to this country's natural resources as part of a "sacred trust." For most of this century, Democratic and Republican Administrations alike have treated our public lands and our environment the same way.

Even Richard Nixon -- you may recall the name -- proposed the creation of an agency to protect the environment, and that's what we know it as today: the Environmental Protection Agency. He did it with encouragement and help from Democrats, But the point is, he did it.

When Gerald Ford was President, we had differences with him about strip mining. He vetoed two of our bills. Still, we had a friend in a Ford man named Nat Reed.

In the Nixon years, we had Wally Hickel.

When Republicans have been in the White House, we've always had **someone** who would listen.

In **this** Administration, I can't name a single figure with any firm, conservation-oriented background. Not one.

This Administration isn't listening.

It isn't even listening to conservationists within its own party.

Listen to Dan Lufkin, from a letter to President Reagan:

"Mr. President, I am not some 'environmental nut' as some of your advisers seem to regard all who care about the environment. I am a lifetime Republican, a strong supporter of the Reagan-Bush ticket, a businessman, a longtime advocate of the strengthening of states' rights, responsibilities and powers, a former State Commissioner of Environmental Protection in the state of Connecticut, and, what to me is most ironic, chairman of the task force you established as President-elect to advise you on the environment."

And the punchline: "What the Administration is doing in environmental affairs is crazy."

Russell Peterson, the president of the National Audubon Society, is a good Republican and a former Delaware governor. He had to wait a full year for an appointment at the White House. Once he got in, he got a few minutes of polite conversation.

The Los Angeles Times, a Republican newspaper, was among the first to ask for the resignation of James Watt. "Watt should be sent back to his legal foundation," the *Times* editorialized last June, "to plead the case for his clients from the outside again, where he belongs."

The National Wildlife Federation, considered by many to be the most politically conservative outdoors organization, called on the President in July to fire Watt. "Mr. Watt is out of step," wrote the group, "with the mainstream of American thought on conservation issues."

Just this past week, the Conservation Foundation, another conservative organization that numbers financiers and industrialists among its membership, reported that "the bipartisan consensus that supported federal protection of the environment for more than a decade had been broken by an Administration that has given priority to deregulation, defederalization and defunding domestic programs."

Tough language.

But it shows that when we're talking about conservation, there is no such thing as a Republican river or a Democratic park.

The environmental policies of this Administration are the policies of neglect. They do not have the support of the American people. They will leave a legacy of ruin and they certainly violate what Teddy Roosevelt called our "sacred trust."

We hear a lot from this Administration about having to clean up "the mess left from the last 40 years." But the last 40 years includes 18 years of Republican Presidents. When it comes to conservation, I'll trade anything over the last 40 years to what this Administration will leave behind.

"The mess of the last 40 years?" What are these Republicans talking about? Let me remind you:

- The Clean Air Act.
- The Clean Water Act.
- The Environmental Protection Agency.
- The Toxic Substances Control Act.
- The Alaska Lands Bill.
- The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.
- The doubling of our national forests and parklands.
- Reclaimed land.
- Cut pollution.
- The enactment of critical public health safeguards.

That's part of the list.

To most Democrats and most Republicans, it is a list of responsible, and responsive, actions.

To this Administration, it is only part of a mess.

And what this Administration is talking about today is not a tune-up. We're talking about taking apart the whole machine, engine, tires, seats, steering wheel and all.

By 1984, this Administration wants to cut the EPA budget by 60 percent, a 47 percent cut in staff and reduce research budgets by 43 percent.

What is so frightful ... what is so fearful ... about the EPA research budget?

I have some thoughts about what's frightful.

The EPA has identified 2,000 chemicals that may pose a danger to our health.

That's frightful.

Each year, this country generates more than 40 million tons of hazardous wastes, and every year, there are more than 150,000 reported violations of safe drinking standards.

That's frightful.

Every year, more acid rain destroys more farmland, more timber stands.

That's frightful.

Every year, our demand for mineral resources increases and this Administration now seeks to return us to those good old days of scarred landscapes, polluted streams, floods and landslides.

That's frightful.

For the past 20 years, most Republicans and most Democrats have worked alongside one another to protect our wilderness from oil and mineral exploration.

That's changed.

This Administration wants to open our wilderness to oil and gas leasing. It wants to prevent any new wilderness designations. It wants to open existing wilderness lands to mineral leasing by the year 2000.

Is that what the American people want?

Is that what our children want?

Good Lord ... is **that** what Teddy Roosevelt had in mind when he talked about our "sacred trust?"

No!

There are still Republicans who are with us when it comes to the work we have to do for clean air, clean water and the protection of our land.

But you won't find any of those Republicans in this Administration.

What that means to all of us here for his conference. . . is that we, the members of the Democratic Party, now have an even more special obligation.

We will ask our Republican friends -- and there are many -- to join us.

- Join us in the spirit of the legacy of Teddy Roosevelt.
- Join us in caring for that "sacred trust."