

**“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of
Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Conservation and Preservation</u>	95
Overview	95
Activity	96
TEKS	98
Sources	103
<u>LBJ’s Government Organization and Task Force Solution</u>	104
Overview	104
Activity	105
TEKS	112
Sources	119
<u>Agricultural Conservation</u>	120
Overview	120
The War on Poverty and the Great Society	121
National Forests, Grasslands, and the Wilderness Act	122
Activity	123
TEKS	128
Sources	134
<u>The Urban Environment and Civil Rights</u>	136
Overview	136
Activity and Additional Resources	137
TEKS	140
Sources	151

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

Agricultural Conservation

Overview Providing Context for Educator

Lyndon Johnson knew the challenges facing the American farmer. He grew up on a farm and knew the back-breaking work, the economic hardships, and uncertainty of living at the mercy of the weather. When he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1937, Johnson wanted to do whatever he could to help his constituents. Through his herculean efforts, farmers in the 10th Congressional district were compensated for the clearing of pesky brush, especially the hated cedar.

By 1940 the amount of cultivated land increased 400 percent in the Hill Country counties that were part of LBJ’s district. When he became President, LBJ quickly sent a message to Congress detailing his plans for the Department of Agriculture. He stated his main goals as the following, “First, to maintain and improve farm income, strengthening the family farm in particular. Second, to use our food abundance to raise standards of living both at home and around the world. Third, to accelerate the development and conservation of both material and human resources in rural America, where one third of our citizens live.” He wanted to help the farmer and improve their overall way of life. As part of this broad program, the President recommended “the permanent transfer of excess cropland into trees, grass, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and other uses for which there is a growing public demand.”

LBJ also saw needs in the forest lands that presented a “major challenge.” He wanted to increase the amount of National Forests and also asked the Department of Agriculture to study and recommend “new methods of wood utilization, better timber management techniques, improved fire protection and more effective use of forest ranges.”

In 1967, the Department of Agriculture published a conservation pamphlet, *Resources in Action*, outlining LBJ’s goals for rural America by the year 2000. The goals were stated as:

- “Rural living space will offer a viable alternative to urban congestion.
- Scientific advances will permit better and larger crop yields—at a fair price to the farmer, so that he shares fully in our prosperity.
- The quality of our rural resources—fertile soil, clean air, fresh water—are preserved and not polluted.
- A global War on Hunger brings victory over the greatest obstacles to an enduring world peace— starvation, overpopulation, and human want.”

A warm-up activity could include students analyzing and debate the goals as a class.

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

The War on Poverty and the “Great Society”

In his 1964 State of the Union message to Congress, President Johnson, declared “an unconditional war on poverty” in America. Johnson’s proposed legislation was designed to improve education, to create Medicare and Medicaid, to provide food for needy citizens in the form of food stamps and create a jobs programs to teach skills needed for secure employment. This was part of a larger agenda that the President called “The Great Society.” Through these programs and agencies President Johnson wanted to wipe out poverty, racial injustice and create greater opportunities for all Americans.

In the speech introducing the ideas relevant to the “Great Society” at the University of Michigan commencement on May 22, 1964, the President called on the government and citizens to renew man’s contact with nature, reminding those in the audience that, “we have prided ourselves on being not only America the strong and America the free, but America the beautiful.” The idea of “quality of life” was a key theme in Johnson’ vision for a “Great Society.”

Racial equality and the elimination of poverty were the primary goals of Johnson’s “Great Society.” That meant feeding people who were hungry. A trial food stamp program was passed during Kennedy’s administration which LBJ made permanent by passing the Food Stamp in August of 1964. According to Orville L. Freeman, Secretary of Agriculture under LBJ, the President saw passage of this bill as “a realistic and responsible step toward the fuller and wise use of our agricultural abundance.”

Johnson felt that environmentalism, especially where it concerned pollution and degradation of the natural and urban environments also should be included in working toward the goals of a better America that the “Great Society” he envisioned. He felt that all Americans should be able to spend time in nature and to appreciate our nation’s beauty. **Therefore, he wanted to create more parks and wildlife areas closer to cities for the enjoyment of All Americans.**

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

LBJ - the National Forests, National Grasslands, and the Wilderness Act

As part of his plan for citizens to get out and enjoy nature closer to home, LBJ wanted to increase the National Forests, including the National Grasslands, which had just come under the administration of the Forest Service in 1960. He backed his plan with congressional funding.

“The appropriation level for recreation on the national forest increased from \$26,105,000 in fiscal year 1965 to \$39,844,000 in fiscal 1969. In this five-year period \$173,338,000 [was] provided for recreation development and management on the national forests. This is sixty-two per cent of the total funds appropriated for this purpose since 1923,” according to Edward P. Cliff, head of the Forest Service from 1962-1972.

In 1964, LBJ signed into law, the Wilderness Act, which provided for the management of unspoiled areas of our nation. The bill, lobbied for by Howard Zahniser Executive Secretary of the Wilderness Society, was hoped to increase experiences with nature by the citizenry. Today there are over 111 million acres of wilderness in national parks, grasslands, national forests, national wildlife refuges under the Bureau of Land Management.

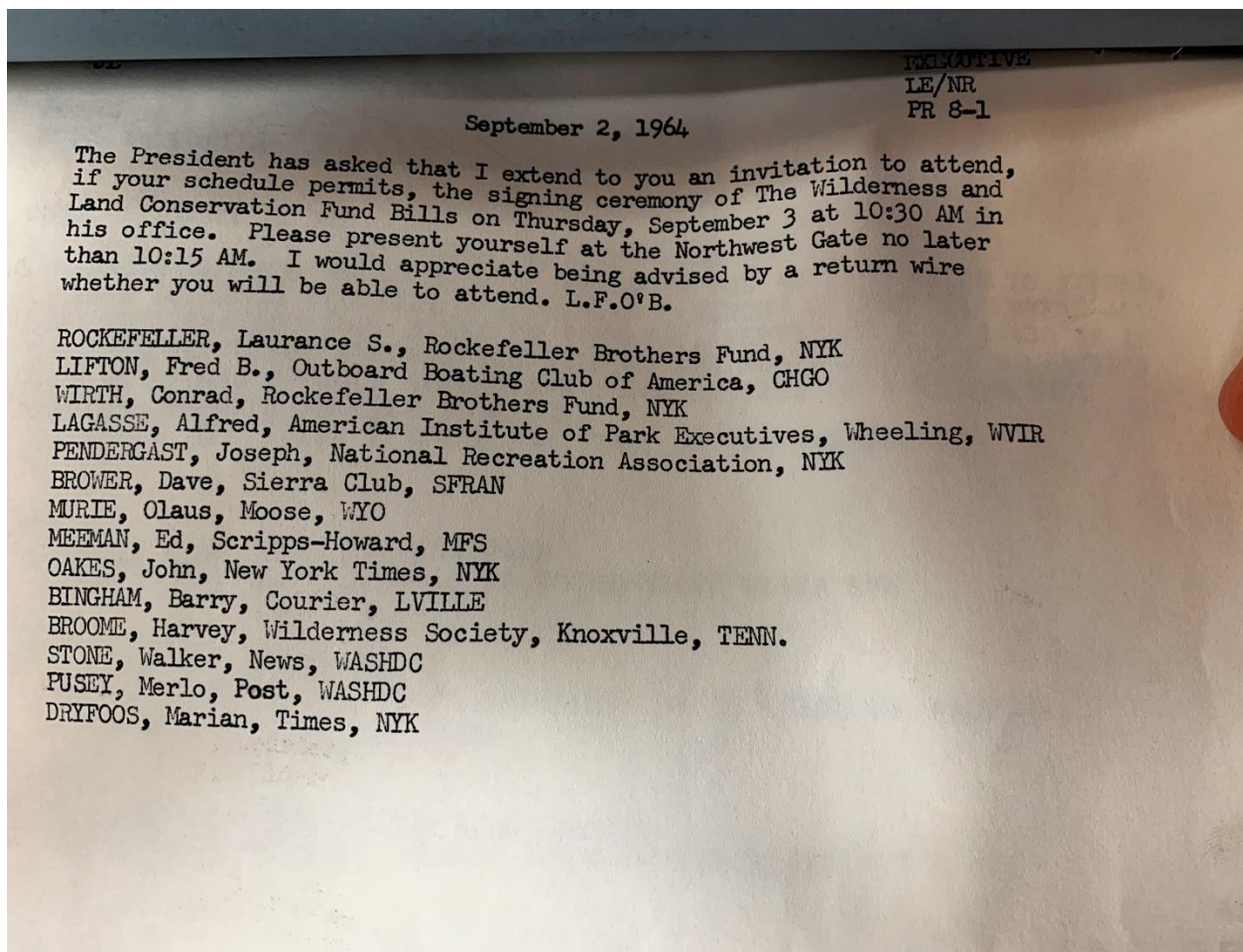
Johnson’s plan to connect citizens to nature was overwhelmingly successful. During the five years from 1965-1969, the Forest Service recorded 1 billion visitor days in the national forests. This amounted to nearly half—49% of all visitor days ever recorded.

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

Activity: Explore the interactive National Forest Service Map @ <https://www.fs.fed.us/ivm/>. What facilities are available close to you? How many are available in your state? What’s the most unusual service available? Discuss how the services of the Forest Service have changed since LBJ’s time. Do you think that his contributions to the Forest Service made a difference in the way we live now?

Activity: The following are documents relating to President Johnson signing several conservation bills into law at the White House in 1964. There is an invitation to the signing sent to a number of special guests. Several replies follow. Analyze these documents, what do they say about the President himself, and the whole process of signing a bill into law at that time. Are any of the names of those invited familiar?

Invitation to Bill Signing and Names of Special Guests from archives at LBJ Library



"Creative Conservation:" The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

Replies from the Archives of the LBJ Library:

Washington
1964 SEP 2 PM 9 03 ✓
WA067 (TELEX246) THIS MESSAGE RECEIVED DIRECT FROM
SENDER VIA WU TELEX PD
NEW YORK NY SEP 2 604P EDT
LAWRENCE F O'BRIEN
SPECIAL ASSISTANT
THE WHITE HOUSE
DEEPLY REGRET I CANNOT ACCEPT THE PRESIDENT'S KIND INVITATION TO
ATTEND THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE WILDERNESS AND LAND
CONSERVATION FUND BILLS ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER THIRD AT TEN
THIRTY IN HIS OFFICE
MARIAN S DRYFOOS.

The White House
Washington
1964 SEP 2 PM 6 54 ✓
WA057 PD
NEW YORK NY 2 359P EDT
LAWRENCE F O'BRIEN, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE
APPRECIATE THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION AND WILL BE HAPPY TO
ATTEND THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE WILDERNESS AND LAND CONSERVATION
FUND BILLS ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3RD AT 10:30
JOSEPH PRENDERGAST NATIONAL RECREATION ASSN 8 WEST 8 ST
NEW YORK NY.

"Creative Conservation:" The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

Replies Continued

The White House
Washington

1964 SEP 2 PM 6 47 ✓

WA056 PD
AM NEW YORK NY 2 408P EDT
LAWRENCE F O'BRIEN, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE
ACCEPT WITH PLEASURE AND THANKS PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S GRACIOUS
INVITATION TO ATTEND THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE WILDERNESS
AND LAND CONSERVATION BILLS ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER THIRD IN
HIS OFFICE
CONRAD L WIRTH.

Washington

1964 SEP 2 PM 7 11 ✓

WA059 PD
FAX CHICAGO ILL 2 330P EDT
LAWRENCE F O'BRIEN, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE
AM PLEASED TO ACCEPT INVITATION TO ATTEND SIGNING OF LAND AND
WATER CONSERVATION FUND BILL
FRED B LIFTON OUTBOARD BOATING CLUB OF AMERICA 307 N MICHIGAN
AVENUE CHICAGO ILLINOIS.

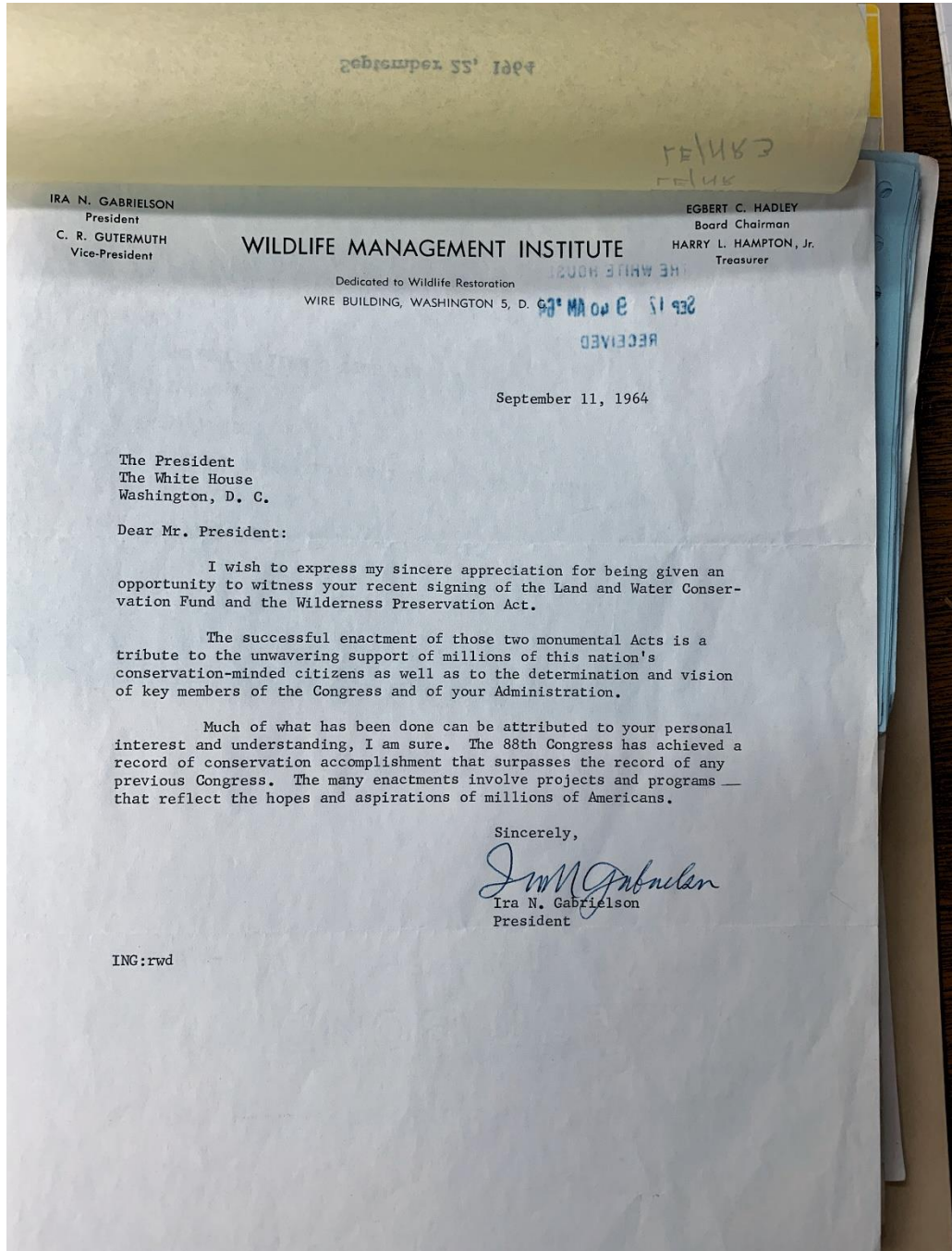
"Creative Conservation:" The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

Replies Continued

Washington ✓
1964 SEP 2 PM 9 03
W
A 072 PD
ML SAN FRANCISCO CALIF SEP 2 259P PDT
LAWRENCE F O'BRIEN
THE WHITE HOUSE
AM HONORED BY INVITATION AND LOOK FORWARD TO SIGNING CEREMONY OF
WILDERNESS AND LAND CONSERVATION FUND BILLS THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3
AT 10:30 WILL ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON FROM NEW YORK PRIOR TO 10:15 AM
DAVID BROWER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIERRA CLUB.
PRINTED BY THE STANBROOK REGISTER COMPANY, U.S.A.

Washington ✓
1964 SEP 2 PM 6 35
WA054 PD
WASHINGTON DC 2 431P EDT
LAWRENCE F O'BRIEN, ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE
I WANT TO THANK YOU AND THE PRESIDENT FOR THE INVITATION TO
ATTEND THE SIGNING CEREMONIES OF THE WILDERNESS AND LAND
CONSERVATION FUND BILLS ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, AT 10:30
A.M. IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. I SHALL BE PLEASED TO ATTEND
MERLO J PUSEY THE WASHINGTON POST.

"Creative Conservation:" The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969



Source: Archives at LBJ Library

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

TEKS 113.16. Social Studies, Grade 5, Adopted 2018

Knowledge and Skills

(5) History. The student understands important issues, events, and individuals in the United States during the 20th and 21st centuries. The student is expected to:

(A) explain the significance of issues and events of the 20th century such as the civil rights movement, and “The Great Society”;

(C) identify the accomplishments and contributions of individuals and groups such as Lyndon B. Johnson in the areas of civil rights, women's rights, military actions, and politics.

(8) Geography. The student understands how people adapt to and modify their environment. The student is expected to:

(A) describe how and why people have adapted to and modified their environment in the United States such as the use of human resources to meet basic needs such as agriculture; and

(B) analyze the positive and negative consequences of human modification of the environment in the United States.

(18) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a constitutional republic. The student is expected to:

(A) identify past and present leaders in the national government, including the president and various members of Congress, and their political parties; and

(B) identify leadership qualities of national leaders, past and present such as LBJ.

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

TEKS 113.17. Social Studies, Grade 6, Adopted 2018

Knowledge and skills.

(2) History. The student understands the influences of individuals and groups from various cultures on various historical and contemporary societies. The student is expected to:

(A) identify and describe the historical influence of individuals, such as Lyndon B. Johnson on contemporary society; and

(B) describe the social, political, economic, and cultural contributions of individuals such as Lyndon Baines Johnson

(4) Geography. The student understands how geographic factors influence the economic development and political relationships of societies. The student is expected to:

(B) identify geographic factors such as location, physical features, transportation corridors and barriers, and distribution of natural resources that influence a society’s political relationship such as designation of national parks and monuments.

(11) Citizenship. The student understands that the nature of citizenship varies among societies. The student is expected to:

(B) explain how opportunities for citizens to participate in and influence the political process vary among various contemporary societies such as the United States.

(12) Citizenship. The student understands the relationship among individual rights, responsibilities, duties, and freedoms in societies with representative governments. The student is expected to:

(A) identify and explain the duty of civic participation in societies with representative governments, such as a President or cabinet officer; and

(B) explain relationships among right, responsibilities, and duties in societies with representative governments, such as that of the President and cabinet officers.

(14) Culture. The student understands that all societies have basic institutions in common even though the characteristics of these institutions may differ. The student is expected to:

(A) compare characteristics of institutions in various contemporary society, such as the Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture; and

(B) analyze the efforts and Activity institutions use to sustain themselves over time, such as the National Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture.

TEKS 113.17. Social Studies, Grade 6, Adopted 2018

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

TEKS 113.17. Social Studies, Grade 6, Continued

(17) Culture. The student understands the relationship among religion, philosophy, and culture. The student is expected to:

(A) explain the relationship among religious ideas, philosophical ideas and cultures, such as preservation and conservation.

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

113.19 Social Studies, Grade 7, Adopted 2018

Knowledge and skills.

(1) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in Texas history. The student is expected to:

(A) identify the major era in Texas history, describe their defining characteristics, and explain the purpose of dividing the past into eras, including Texas in the Civil Rights Era; and Contemporary Texas.

(7) History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues shaped the history of Texas during the late 19th, 20th, and early 21st centuries. The student is expected to:

(B) define and trace the impact of “boom-and-bust” cycles of leading Texas industries throughout the 20th and early 21 centuries such as farming, ranching and tourism to national forests and recreation areas;

(C) describe and compare the impact of reform movements in Texas in the 20th and early 21st centuries such as LBJ’s “Great Society”

(D) describe and compare the civil right and equal rights movements of various groups in Texas in the 20th century and identify key leaders in these movements such as Lyndon B. Johnson.

(8) Geography. The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of Texas. The student is expected to:

(B) locate and compare place of importance in Texas in terms of physical and human characteristics such as the hill country, and natural landmarks, national forests, and other areas of natural conservation in the state.

(9) Geography. The student understands the effects of the interaction between humans and the environment in Texas. The student is expected to:

(A) identify ways in which Texas have adapted to and modified the environment, such as working to eradicate and control the cedar in the hill country and explain the positive and negative consequences of the modifications.

(12) Economics. The student understands the interdependence of the Texas economy with the United States and the world. The student is expected to:

(C) analyze the impact of significant industries in Texas such as farming and ranching on local, national, and international markets.

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

113.19 Social Studies, Grade 7, Continued

(17) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society. The student is expected to:

(A) identify the leadership qualities of elected and appointed leader of Texas, past and present, including Texans who have been president of the United States, such as Lyndon B. Johnson.

(19) Science, technology, and society. The student understands the impact of scientific discoveries and technological innovations on the political, economic, and social development of Texas. The student is expected to:

(C) analyze the effects of scientific discoveries and technological innovations on the development of Texas such as advancements in the agricultural industry;

(D) evaluate the effects of scientific discoveries and technological innovations on the use of resources such as water and land.

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

113.41 United States History Studies Since 1877, Adopted 2018

Knowledge and skills.

(9) History. The student understands the impact of the American civil rights movement.

(D) identify the roles of significant leader who supported various rights movements, including President Lyndon B. Johnson.

(14) Geography. The student understands the relationship between population growth and the physical environment. The student is expected to:

(B) identify the roles of governmental entities and private citizens in managing the environment such as the establishment of the National Park System, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Endangered Species Act and the Wilderness Act.

(18) Government. The student understands changes over time in the role of government. The student is expected to:

(B) explain constitutional issues raised by federal government policy changes during times of significant events, including the 1960s and LBJ’s Great Society and his efforts in conservation and preservation;

(23) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a constitutional republic. The student is expected to:

(A) evaluate the contributions of significant political and social leaders in the United States such as Lyndon Baines Johnson

(25) Culture. The student understands how people from various groups contribute to our national identity. The student is expected to:

Explain actions taken by people such as President Johnson to expand economic opportunities and political rights for racial groups in American society;

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

Primary Sources:

- Cliff, Edward P. Oral history transcript of interview 1 (I), 1/6/1969, by Joe B. Frantz, LBJ Library Oral Histories, LBJ Presidential Library, accessed November 23, 2019.
<https://www.discoverlbj.org/item/oh-cliffe-19690106-1-74-35>.
- Freeman, Orville. Oral history transcript of interview 1 (I), 2/14/1969, by T.H. Baker, LBJ Library Oral Histories, LBJ Presidential Library, accessed November 10, 2019.
<https://www.discoverlbj.org/item/oh-freemano-19690214-1-74-18-a>.
- Freeman, Orville. Oral history transcript of interview 2 (II), 3/12/1969, by T.H. Baker, LBJ Library Oral Histories, LBJ Presidential Library, accessed November 10, 2019.
<https://www.discoverlbj.org/item/oh-freemano-19690312-2-74-18-b>.
- Freeman, Orville. Oral history transcript of interview 3 (III), 7/21/1969, by T.H. Baker, LBJ Library Oral Histories, LBJ Presidential Library, accessed November 10, 2019.
<https://www.discoverlbj.org/item/oh-freemano-19690721-3-74-18-c>.
- Freeman, Orville. Oral history transcript of interview 4 (IV), 11/17/1988, by Michael L. Gillette, LBJ Library Oral Histories, LBJ Presidential Library, accessed November 10, 2019.
<https://www.discoverlbj.org/item/oh-freemano-19881117-4-06-13>.
- Freeman, Orville L. *Agriculture/2000*. United States Department of Agriculture. 1967. Accessed November 15, 2019.
<https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=wwvsA3p5R7EC&rdid=book-wwvsA3p5R7EC&rdot=1>.
- Johnson, Lyndon B. “President’s Message to Congress Outlining His Program for Agriculture.” *New York Times*, February 1, 1965. Accessed November 14, 2019.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1964/02/01/archives/presidents-message-to-congress-outlining-his-program-for.html>.
- O’Brien, Lawrence F. invitation and responses to legislative signing by telex. September 2, 1964. WHCF. Box 42. LBJ Library.

“Creative Conservation:” The Environmental Legacy of Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1963-1969

Secondary Sources:

Stoil, Rebecca Shimoni. “The Forgotten Lessons of LBJ’s Domestic Legacy.” *Washington Monthly*. Jan-Mar 2019. Accessed November 12, 2019.

<https://washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/january-february-march-2019/the-forgotten-lessons-of-lbjs-domestic-legacy/>.

U.S. Forest Service. “Visitor Map.” Accessed November 20, 2019.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/ivm/index.html>.