We see that there is another course...Down this course lies a natural America restored to her people. The promise is clear: rivers, tall forests, and clear air—a sane environment for man.

Lyndon B. Johnson  
February 23, 1966  
Message to Congress

Growing up in the Scenic Texas Hill Country, Lyndon B. Johnson developed a deep appreciation and respect for nature and the land. This love of the natural land was something that President Johnson shared with his wife, Lady Bird Johnson. Over the years they watched the country change from an agrarian society to an industrialized nation with lasting problems that threatened the health of the environment. As president, Lyndon B. Johnson felt that it was his responsibility to take action not only to clean up the natural environment but to protect the natural heritage of America. During his administration, President Johnson signed over 300 conservation measures into law, forming the legal basis of the modern environmental movement.

President Johnson was the first President of the United States to sign acts concerning Clean Air and Water Quality. These acts established government authority and responsibility to act forcefully against air and water pollution. They also provided money for research on pollution, set standards for air and water quality, and vehicle inspections, emissions, pollutions and fuel additives and alternatives. In spite of larger populations, air pollution in the United States has been reduced by 50 million tons since 1970.

Clean Air Act, 1963  
Pesticide Control Bill, 1964  
Water Quality Act, 1965  
Water Resource Planning Act, 1965  
Water and Sanitation Systems in Rural Areas Bill, 1965  
Solid Waste Disposal Bill 1965  
Sale Water Conservation Act, 1965  
Air Quality Acts 1966 and 1967  
National Water Commission
To sustain an environment suitable for man, we must fight on a thousand battlegrounds. Despite all of our wealth and knowledge, we cannot create a redwood forest, a wild river, or a gleaming seashore. But we can keep these we have.

Lyndon B. Johnson
February 23, 1966

Wilderness Act, 1964
Central Arizona Project
Endangered Species Act, 1966
National Park Foundation, 1967
Wetlands Preservation Bill, 1967

We live with History. It tells us of a hundred proud civilizations that have decayed through careless neglect of the nature that fed them...We must not only protect the countryside and save it from destruction, we must restore what has been destroyed and salvage the beauty and charm of our cities.

Lyndon B. Johnson
February 8, 1965

Colorado River, Austin, Texas

Our national park and forest systems are America’s principle trustee in the vital task of conservation...I propose that we plan now to complete our national park system by 1972—the 100th anniversary of Yellowstone, the world’s first national park.

Lyndon B. Johnson
February 23, 1966

Colorado River, Austin, Texas

President Johnson wanted the American people to have the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of our nation. However, he knew it was almost impossible for the majority of the people to travel a great distance to enjoy the parks. During his administration he added 50 new national park units and expanded existing ones. In addition to protecting wilderness and historic sites, the Johnson Administration created national recreation areas and other urban park sites within a short distance of large cities. The United States national park system was permanently improved by the actions of President Lyndon B. Johnson.