



"The vibrant beauty of the oceans is a blessing to our country. And it's a blessing to the world. The oceans contain countless natural treasures. They carry much of our trade; they provide food and recreation for billions of people. We have a responsibility, a solemn responsibility, to be good stewards of the oceans and the creatures who inhabit them."

-President Bush, June 15, 2006

Conserving Our Oceans Through Stewardship, Volunteerism, and Education

On Monday, March 24, 2008 The President And Mrs. Laura Bush Will Host The Annual White House Easter Egg Roll On The South Lawn Of The White House. This year's event will focus on the importance of ocean conservation to our national heritage, economy, and security. As children explore the White House grounds, they will learn about our oceans and how to preserve them for future generations. Through education and volunteerism, all families can make a difference in keeping our oceans clean.

The President And Mrs. Bush Are Committed To Continuing To Protect Our Natural Resources Through Wise Stewardship And Sensible Management. In 2004, the President released his Ocean Action Plan to promote an ethic of responsible use and preservation of our oceans and coastal resources. Of the 88 actions in the President's 2004 Ocean Action Plan, this Administration has met or is on schedule to meet all commitments, and more than a quarter of the existing actions have activities that "moved beyond" the initial commitments.

Our Duty Is To Use Our Land And Seas Wisely. Americans know that we must preserve our natural heritage and safeguard the environment for future generations. To keep our country and communities strong, President Bush created USA Freedom Corps to expand America's volunteer efforts and called on all Americans to engage in service.

- **The easiest thing every American can do to preserve our oceans is to put trash in an appropriate receptacle.** Whatever ends up on the street can end up in the sea. Something as simple as a plastic pen could find its way into the water, where it could cause harm to birds and other creatures. To learn more about how you can prevent marine debris, visit www.marinedebris.noaa.gov.
- A new public-private partnership, featuring Ariel from Walt Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, has been highlighted in a series of television and print public service announcements reminding kids and parents to recycle and dispose of their trash properly. To learn more about this project and ways you can keep the oceans clean, visit www.keeпоceansclean.org.

- Americans of all ages can access volunteer opportunities through conservation and other service organizations by visiting the USA Freedom Corps Volunteer Network at www.volunteer.gov. Kids and parents can also find ideas and resources on volunteering in their communities through USA Freedom Corps' www.volunteerkids.gov.

Guests at the Easter Egg Roll will include volunteers from:

- **Ocean Conservancy:** Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup helps improve the health of oceans and marine wildlife and find solutions to prevent pollution by organizing the world's largest year-round volunteer movement to clean up local beaches, rivers, lakes, and streams. For more information about coastal cleanups near you, visit www.oceanconservancy.org.
- **Discovery Creek Children's Museum of Washington:** Through interactive educational programming and outdoor activities, Discovery Creek Children's Museum of Washington helps children experience, appreciate, and become stewards of the natural environment. For more information visit www.discoverycreek.org.
- **Take Pride in America:** Under the President's leadership, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Take Pride in America initiative was re-launched to increase volunteer service on America's public lands and is supporting more than 30,000 skilled volunteers in conservation and stewardship activities. Visit www.takepride.gov for more information.

Since Taking Office, The President And Mrs. Bush Have Worked To Create Programs That Will Keep Our Oceans Vibrant And Thriving For Future Generations.

- **Funding Ocean Programs:** The Administration's FY '09 Budget Request includes \$217 million for the President's Ocean Initiative, \$62 million more than was requested for the Oceans Initiative in 2008, and about \$64 million more than Congress approved in the recent 2008 omnibus appropriations act.
- **Supporting the Coral Triangle Initiative:** In December 2007, the Administration announced its support for six nations in Southeast Asia as they enhance coral conservation, promote sustainable fisheries, and ensure food security. The U.S. intends to commit \$4.35 million in new funds to this initiative.
- **Helping To Stop Marine Debris From Being Dumped Into Our Oceans:** In November 2007, Mrs. Bush announced a new Marine Debris Initiative to address the estimated 6.4 million tons of marine debris that litters the ocean. The initiative encourages the private sector to clean up marine debris and educate the public on what they can do to prevent its spread.
- **Promoting Ocean Literacy:** In an effort to educate and involve the public in protecting our coastal ecosystems, Mrs. Bush designated the J.L. Scott Marine Education Center as a Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center (CELC). This established the 21st partnership between the federal government and a marine education center to bring awareness to the public about ocean issues. In addition, a new permanent exhibition about the ocean opens September

2008. The 23,000-square-foot Ocean Hall uses hundreds of fossils, artifacts and high-definition underwater video footage to explore the changing nature of the ocean and ways in which we are affecting it. To learn more about the Smithsonian's Ocean Hall visit www.nmnh.si.edu.

- **Protecting Striped Bass and Red Drum Fish Populations:** In October 2007, President Bush signed an Executive Order to conserve two of America's most popular recreational fish—striped bass and red drum fish—for the recreational, economic, and environmental benefit of present and future generations of Americans. This Order moves to prohibit the sale of striped bass and red drum caught in Federal waters, promotes more accurate scientific records about fish population levels, and helps the Federal government work with state and local officials to find innovative ways to conserve these species for future generations.
- **Preventing Marine Debris:** Signed by the President in December 2006, the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act works to reduce and prevent marine debris and its adverse impacts on the marine environment. The Act specifically targets types of fishing gear that are a threat to the marine environment and navigation safety.
- **Ending Overfishing:** President Bush signed the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act Of 2006, reaffirming our commitment to protect America's fisheries and keep our commercial and recreational fishing communities strong. This bill will end over-fishing, help us replenish fish stocks, and advance international cooperation and ocean stewardship.
- **Calling For An End To Destructive Fishing Practices:** In October 2006, the President directed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in consultation with Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, to strengthen efforts to protect sustainable fisheries and call for an end to destructive fishing practices, such as unregulated bottom trawling on the high seas. The President emphasized that it remains United States policy to support protection and use of sustainable fisheries as a food source and to meet the needs of commercial and recreational fishing.
- **Establishment of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument:** President Bush created the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in June 2006, designating nearly 140,000 square miles of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands to receive our Nation's highest form of marine environmental protection. This Marine National Monument is the largest single area dedicated to conservation in the history of our country and the largest protected marine area in the world.