

April 16 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the President's Environmental Youth Awards Ceremony April 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Welcome. Please be seated. Welcome to the East Garden. We're glad you're here. This is a perfect place to honor some of America's finest young stewards of the environment. By working hard to preserve our natural surroundings, you've made important contributions to your communities and to our Nation. We're really glad you're here, and I appreciate the great example you're setting for others.

Steve, thanks for being here. I'm honored that you've accepted the assignment of becoming the Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. That's a big job, and I'm glad you're going to do it.

Stephen L. Johnson. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you. I know that your wife, Debbie, and Matthew are with us here today too, and I'm glad they're here. Good to see you.

I want to congratulate the award winners from 10 EPA regions from around the country. Thanks for what you're doing. I want to thank your family members who are here with you, your teachers who are here with you, your buddies who are here with you. Thanks for coming.

I also want to thank the EPA Regional Administrators. I see a couple of recognizable faces here. I'm glad you all are here. I appreciate your hard work for the country.

The award winners today span the entire country, from Barrackville, West Virginia, to Shakopee, Minnesota, to Albuquerque, New Mexico. You've cleaned parks. You've restored wetlands, and you've organized conservation projects. As volunteers, you've

given your time and talents in many different ways, and together you're helping to achieve a great national goal, to protect and pass along the great natural beauty of our country.

Showing concern for the environment is one way of showing your love for America. Americans are fortunate to be able to breathe clean air and enjoy the beautiful, diverse landscapes of our vast continent. By getting your hands dirty and helping to clean up your communities, you're putting your ideals into action, and you're making America a better place. I hope you know that.

As each of you have learned, good stewardship can be a lot of fun. Working outdoors is a chance to clear your mind or to get exercise or to be with your family and your friends. That's one of the reasons I like to go down to Crawford. I like to get outdoors. I like to clear my mind. I like to be with my family and my friends. And I like to work on our ranch to restore native grasses and to make our hardwood trees flourish.

I'm looking forward to going down to be with a family member tomorrow, as a matter of fact. See, my brother is the Governor of Florida—Jeb—and we're going down to clear out some nonnative plants from the Everglade area so that the wetlands can be more healthy and flourish more. I'm going to make sure he pulls his weight, too. [Laughter]

The other thing you're doing is you're setting an important example of service. I don't know if you know this or not, but this week is called National Volunteer Week. It's a time to recognize millions of

citizens who are working hard to improve the communities in which they live. After September the 11th, 2001, I called on our fellow citizens to dedicate 4,000 hours or 2 years over the course of their lives to volunteer work. That's what you're doing, and I appreciate that a lot.

I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to provide information about volunteer opportunities in communities. And if people are interested, they ought to go on the Internet at www.usafreedomcorps.gov. And you can find out how to help if you're interested in environmental projects; they'll be listed there. If you're interested in ways to feed the hungry, you can find that too.

You've proven with your projects that many small acts taken together can add up to something big, improving the environment, while people who volunteer to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves are part of doing small gestures, which makes America a better place. Your efforts are helping to ensure a cleaner world for future generations. I want to thank you for your hard work. I look forward to congratulating you as you come up to receive your awards.

Those of us in Government must uphold our responsibilities as well. Today I went to Maine. I saw my mother, I might add. I announced a new goal for our country, and that is to expand the wetlands of America so that we have better habitat for wildlife, wetlands that are important to trap pollution and clean water and stabilize whole areas. For decades this country was losing wetlands, and yet, with sound policy here and fostering cooperation between landowners and conservationists, we've not only slowed the loss of wetlands; I know that over the next 5 years, we can increase

the number of wetlands to 3 million, over a 5-year period.

To meet this goal, we're going to have to make sure that Congress passes reasonable budgets. In my budget, I've proposed \$349 million on two key wetland programs, which would be an increase of more than 50 percent since 2001. As well the farm bill I passed had a major conservation title to it, which will encourage farmers to replenish the wetlands on their lands so that we can meet an important national goal.

I'm really looking forward to saying hello to you and thanking you. I'm told this is an impressive group of young leaders. You should be proud of your achievements. You're setting a good example for your fellow citizens. It leads me to be confident about the future of the environment because you're contributing so mightily.

So thanks for coming, and now it's my honor to welcome Steve Johnson to the podium to announce the awards.

[At this point, Acting Deputy Administrator Johnson introduced the award recipients from each region, and the President congratulated them.]

The President. Thank you, sir. Welcome. Glad you all are here. Thanks for coming. May God bless you, and may God bless your families, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thanks for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:48 p.m. in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The National Volunteer Week proclamation of April 16 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report of the National Science Board

April 22, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with 42 U.S.C. 1863(j)(1), I transmit herewith a report prepared for the Congress and the Administration by the National Science Board entitled, "Science and Engineering Indicators—2004." This report represents the sixteenth in the series

examining key aspects of the status of science and engineering in the United States.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
April 22, 2004.

Remarks at Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Naples, Florida

April 23, 2004

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated if you have a chair. If you don't have a chair, don't be seated. [*Laughter*] So yesterday I was in Wells, Maine, talking about the environment, and my mother showed up. [*Laughter*] So today I am in South Florida talking about the environment, and my brother shows up. [*Laughter*] And you all showed up. Thanks for coming. It's great to be here at the Rookery Bay Reserve. What a special place. I like to call it a little slice of heaven.

This week we observed Earth Day. And one way to honor the day is to honor those citizens in our country who understand the definition of stewardship, citizens who work to make sure that our environment is as clean as possible. And that's what we're here to do today.

It also happens to be National Volunteer Week. So, yes. And what is easy to understand is one of the reasons why the Rookery is such a place, is because of the volunteers who have come on a daily basis to make this a special place. My first task is to thank you for being such good stewards of Florida's natural beauty. Thank you for not only protecting it, but thank you for

enhancing it. And a person who gets a lot of credit for that is my brother. Jeb has been a—[*applause*].

I spent some quality time with Gary Lytton, who is the director here, by the way. Gary, I want to thank you for your service. Gary is a joyful person—[*laughter*]—because he likes what he's doing, and he loves this part of the world. And it's clear that there's a great sense of ownership when you talk to Gary. Gary is interested in not only preserving beauty; he's interested in learning as much as possible to share the knowledge across our country.

He's also pretty good about lining up these volunteers and making sure they work. [*Laughter*] I said, "Does Gary keep you working?" He said, "You bet." [*Laughter*] That's good. That's called leadership. But Gary, thanks for what you're doing. He tells me that much of the property bought here is a result of the bonding issue that Jeb pushed to make sure that much of the great State of Florida is protected and preserved throughout the years to come. I know there's a lot of politics when it comes to the environment. But what I like to do is focus on results, and you've got yourself a results-oriented Governor