

immediately. Let us also reach out to educate our fellow Americans about the importance of organ and tissue donations. We must work with our religious communities and community organizations to spread this important message. The Federal Government has already established partnerships with the Union of Hebrew Congregations and the Congress of National Black Churches in an effort to educate congregations and clergy across our Nation through sermons, Sunday school programs, and community events. We should do more.

We should recognize that our greatest ambassadors for organ and tissue donation are donors, donor families and recipients. Their personal stories have motivated and inspired others, and we should take better advantage of these great resources. Taken together, these and other efforts will save the lives of countless loved ones. And we should take the opportunity to recognize and celebrate Americans who donate these gifts of life.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 20 through April 26, 1997, as National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week. I call upon health care professionals, educators, the media, public and private organizations concerned with organ donation and transplantation, and all the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate activities and programs that promote organ donation and invite new donors to become involved.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

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Proclamation 6993—National Wildlife Week, 1997

April 19, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our Nation is blessed with a wealth of wildlife, wild places, and natural resources that enrich the lives of all Americans. Conserving our wildlife—whether antelope or grizzly bear, salmon or serpent, or plumed bird—is of urgent importance. Our vast system of wildlife refuges has played a vital role in this endeavor. Helping to ensure greater harmony between people and nature, more than 92 million acres of land and waters are dedicated to wildlife conservation, encompassing 500 refuges, with at least one in every State and within a short drive of most major cities. These wonderful resources provide opportunities for people of all ages and from all walks of life, and from cities, suburbs, and the rural heartland, to learn about and participate in the effort to preserve the places and wildlife that contribute so much to our Nation's heritage and natural wealth.

The appreciation and protection of wildlife, particularly of endangered or threatened species, is both the right and responsibility of all Americans. Indeed, countless individuals and private volunteer organizations across the United States have already made a significant contribution to wildlife protection. Only by engaging communities in conservation, by taking note of and rewarding community service efforts, and by maintaining diverse approaches to wildlife protection, can we preserve our wildlife today and for future generations.

We set aside this week to celebrate the role that citizens and private volunteer organizations play in engaging in service activities, and in advancing the knowledge, appreciation, and protection of wildlife and the environment. Let us also work to spread this message to broader audiences and encourage all individuals and groups to contribute to this national goal. I urge all Americans, private organizations, businesses, community leaders, elected officials and governmental agencies to do all they can to preserve and

value the role of wildlife resources in our lives. This tradition of nature education will continue to teach our children how to be life-long stewards of the environment and help to build the knowledge and understanding essential to the protection of nature's abundant gifts.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 20 through April 26, 1997, as National Wildlife Week. I ask all Americans to find ways to promote the conservation and protection of our wildlife and wild places.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

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Proclamation 6994—National Park Week, 1997

April 19, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, America made a momentous decision: to set aside and protect in perpetuity an extraordinary part of our young Nation. With the signing of the Yellowstone National Park Act on March 1, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant created the world's first national park, and the succeeding years have proved beyond all doubt the wisdom and foresight of that decision. Known throughout the world for its beauty and the natural wonders that lie within its boundaries, Yellowstone has inspired the creation of a multitude of other national parks, both here and in other countries, pre-

serving for future generations the rich natural and cultural legacy of our world.

Today, our 374 national parks protect America's unparalleled wonders and the history of those who have helped shape our land. Our national parks preserve both where we live and who we are. In America's national parks, we see Americans through their experiences—war and peace, tragedy and triumph, struggle and liberty. Our national park sites invite us not only to marvel at the grand geography of Yellowstone or the Great Smokies, but also to explore the innovative genius of Thomas Edison at the Edison National Historic Site in New Jersey, to visit the remains of an ancient civilization at Mesa Verde in Colorado, or to walk the hallways of the Kansas school where the struggle for civil rights ultimately led to the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision.

In addition to the parks themselves, the national park spirit thrives in thousands of communities across the country where the National Park Service provides support and technical advice to create close-to-home recreational opportunities and to honor local history through programs such as Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance, the National Register of Historic Places, and National Historic Landmarks. The National Park Service, in partnership with organizations and individuals dedicated to conservation and historic preservation, is ensuring that our national parks touch the lives of as many people as possible, while sparking an interest among our Nation's children in archaeology, ethnography, history, historic landscapes, and historic structures.

Indeed, the national parks remain a magnet for the American public. Every year millions of visitors flock to them—270 million in 1996. Surveying our history and heritage, our national parks let us reach out and touch the past.

As we observe this week, let us remember with gratitude all those who are and have been entrusted with the stewardship of these treasured places. As the parks and the mandate of the National Park Service have evolved, the demands on those who manage these resources have become more complex and the skills required of the National Park