

**Indigenous Peoples have lived on this land since time immemorial.**

Native Nations govern, respect, manage, and maintain traditional lands.

Evidence for **Viking presence** in North America.

European countries, including England, Spain, and France, explore the Caribbean, Central and North America in search of trade routes. Operating under the **Doctrine of Discovery**, European countries legitimized colonization, invalidated Indigenous land ownership, and enslaved Indigenous Peoples.

**Establishment of 13 British Colonies** along the east coast of the North American Continent. The Dutch, French, Swedish, Scottish, and Spanish also founded settlements during this time. Despite already being occupied by many Indigenous Peoples, explorers and settlers take credit for discovering the land and claim it as their own. This starts a narrative that the land and waters belong to the European settlers rather than Indigenous Peoples.

**African enslavement** begins with 20 Angolans who arrived in Virginia. Slave labor enables the settlement and development of land across many of the original British colonies. Slavery and its debate shapes and influences many early US land decisions including the Louisiana Purchase and the Annexation of Texas. Slavery also shapes African Americans' relationship to the land. Many slaves spend their days planting, harvesting, and doing hard labor in fields often under brutal conditions including physical and psychological threats. Engagement with land was linked to a social hierarchy and reflected deeply entrenched racial power dynamics. Violence and subjugation towards African Americans and the dominance of white supremacy were early hallmarks of African Americans' relationships with land and open spaces. Ultimately over 400,000 Africans are enslaved and brought to North America.

Time Immemorial

~1000 AD

Late 1400's and 1500's

1607-1732

1619

Britain set the **Proclamation Line** to temporarily defined the limits of colonial land in North America. Lands east of the Appalachian Mountains were declared colonial lands and the land west of the divide as an Indian Reserve. The Proclamation canceled all colonial land claims within the Indian reserve and prohibited colonists from purchasing land in the Indian Reserve. Through subsequent treaties in 1768 and 1770 with Indigenous Peoples, present day Kentucky and West Virginia were declared colonial lands.

The **Treaty of Paris**, marking the end of the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), acknowledges the sovereignty of the United States and defines the original borders of the United States as all of the land east of the Mississippi River, north of Florida and south of Canada (almost the exact border we have today).

The U.S. Constitution establishes the **government's authority over "property belonging to the United States"** and specifically the right to retain, dispose of, and manage lands. Lands that were not under private Euro-American or state ownership were considered "public lands".

Purchase of the Louisiana territory from France causes President Jefferson to launch the **Lewis and Clark Expedition**, by which the U.S. seeks to explore and map out the new territory, find a navigable route across the western half of the continent, establish a territorial claim to today's Pacific Northwest region, assess the resources in the new territory, and establish relationships with Indigenous tribes throughout the region. Jefferson places special importance on declaring U.S. dominion over the lands occupied by the tribes. The expedition could not have been successfully undertaken without the support of Indigenous tribes and tribal members like Sacagawea who guided Lewis and Clark.

**U.S. General Land Office (GLO)** is formed to survey and sell public land. The GLO creates a structure that formally distinguishes public lands from private land. The GLO administers two of the nation's first significant land ownership/disposal laws, including the Homestead Act and the Preemption Act.

1763

1783

1789

1804-1806

1812

Signed by President Andrew Jackson, the **Indian Removal Act** calls for the removal of Indigenous people, including the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee people, from their ancestral lands mostly in Southern states in exchange for lands in what would become parts of Oklahoma.

As part of the implementation of the Indian Removal Act, Indigenous Peoples are forced to give up their lands east of the Mississippi River in what is now Georgia and Tennessee to lands in what would become Northern Oklahoma. Indigenous Peoples later call this journey the **Trail of Tears** where they face internment, hunger, disease, and exhaustion. Over 4,000 out of 15,000 Indigenous Peoples die.

The **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo**, which ends the Mexican-American war, establishes the southern boundary of the United States as the Rio Grande River. Through the treaty, Mexico cedes parts of what is now Texas, all of California, and a large area comprising roughly half of New Mexico, most of Arizona, Nevada, and Utah, and parts of Wyoming and Colorado. The treaty included a provision that the United States would respect land and water titles and allow the new citizens to remain on their land, however the U.S. does little to uphold those claims.

The **Indian Appropriations Act** displaces indigenous populations across the United States. The 56 million acres of sovereign tribal lands (mostly west of the Mississippi) are established to permanently relocate Indigenous populations from across the country. Additional appropriations acts were passed between 1871 and 1889 and addressed the status of Indigenous nations as ‘wards of the government’, the ability to sell land, and the settlement of “unassigned lands” by Euro-American settlers.

New York City’s **Central Park** is designed by Frederick Law Olmsted as an early example of urban conservation.

1830

1838

1848

1851

1857

The **Pacific Railway Act** provides government support for building the first transcontinental railroad. Much of the land acquired to build the railway is seized from Indigenous Peoples. Railroads are built predominantly by East Asian laborers through the use of exploitative labor practices. The railroad, which was essential to getting Euro-Americans to see public lands, contributed greatly to the decimation of the buffalo population, a staple for Indigenous Peoples.

The **Homestead Act** provides homesteaders with 160 acres which was initially dispossessed from Indigenous people. Though it ultimately creates tracts of private land, the impetus for many settlers to take advantage of the act is the accessibility of vast and seemingly empty lands abutting private land parcels.

Under the **Yosemite Grant Act**, President Lincoln grants Yosemite Valley to California as a public park, marking the first time the federal government sets aside public land for public enjoyment. The park could not have been designated without the forced dispossession in 1851 of Yosemite Valley from the Ahwahneechee people. Some of the first park patrollers were Buffalo Soldiers, an all African American army regiment.

General Sherman issues **Special Field Order #15**, setting aside land in coastal South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida to grant “a plot of not more than (40) acres of tillable land” to every family of formerly enslaved people. Months later, President Andrew Johnson overturned the order and returned the land to its former Confederate owners.

President Andrew Johnson signs the **Alaska Purchase** and acquires approximately 370 million acres for \$7.2 million. Native Alaskans were subjected to the same assimilation practices as Indigenous Peoples in the continental U.S. Today, 220 million acres are federally protected parks and refuges in Alaska.

1862

1862

1864

1865

1867



The **Indian Appropriations Act** ended the practice of dealing with or recognizing tribes through treaties. Treaties entered into before 1871 remained in force. However, many of the promises made in these treaties were subsequently broken by the United States Government when it served the government's interests.

**Yellowstone** is designated by Congress as the **first National Park**.

Enacted in cities and states across the south after the Civil War, the first **Jim Crow Laws** legalize racial segregation and discrimination. Although slavery is abolished in 1865, African Americans continue to experience severe discrimination. Parks at the time are segregated with separate campgrounds and picnic areas for white people and people of color. Public lands are not equally available and accessible to all when people enter the park. People of color are also terrorized by the rise of the Ku Klux Klan which carried out acts of violence, such as lynching, in wooded areas.

The **Dawes Act** is passed, calling for most designated tribal land to be divided up into individual allotments and those who accepted the parcels and agreed to live separately from the tribe were granted citizenship, effectively dismantling tribal governments and communally held land. Any excess land was confiscated by the federal government and sold on the open market. The amount of land in native hands decreased from 150 million acres to 78 million acres by 1900.

Lands in the Adirondacks are reorganized into a **Forest Preserve**. New laws are passed restricting fish and game and fires and more and forest begins to be patrolled. People not on the Official Map of Adirondacks are deemed squatters and asked to leave with eviction notices, except the wealthy, who then put up fences and signs to keep poor people out of their lands. Along with the Forest Preserve, the state passes lumber trespassing laws criminalizing the cutting of trees except by lumber companies, ramps up arson laws prohibiting fires, and erects fire observation stations to enforce these arson laws.

1871

1872

1877

1887

1885-1910

The **Forest Reserve Act** creates forest reserves, which later become National Forests under the purview of the Forest Service.

The **Reclamation Act** marks the beginning of modern water law, formalizing the ability of private corporations and agriculture to draw water from public lands. The Reclamation Act often supersedes Mexican-Americans claims to water rights that were initially promised in the Treaty of Guadalupe de Hidalgo.

Pelican Island is declared **first National Wildlife Refuge**.

The **U.S. Forest Service** is established.

The **Antiquities Act** gives the President the authority to establish National Monuments that have objects of historic or scientific importance. Devil's Tower/Mato Tipila is established as the first National Monument.

1891

1902

1903

1905

1906

The **Weeks Act** allows the federal government to purchase private land in service of protecting watersheds and streams, as well as setting aside land for forest reserves.

The **National Park Service** is established through the National Park Service Organic Act.

The **19th Amendment** grants women the right to vote. Prior to this date women were not able to formally participate in public lands management decisions.

The **See America First** tourism campaign launches in the 1800's by railroads such as the Northern Pacific, Santa Fe, and Great Northern in an attempt to gain passengers by promoting places like Yellowstone, Glacier, and Grand Canyon National Parks as tourist destinations. The See America First campaign finds most of its success, however, when the National Park Service begins portraying national parks as national assets during the 1920's and encourages cross country train travel to visit these places.

The **Equal Rights Amendment** is introduced to prohibit discrimination based on sex. It eventually passes Congress in 1972, but fails to receive enough state ratifications to become law. Even though women could now vote, they continue to experience discrimination based on sex.

1911

1916

1920

1920s

1923

New Mexico's **Gila Wilderness**—on land that formerly belonged to Mexican citizens—is established as the **first Primitive Area**.

The **Chinese Exclusion Act** is passed to prohibit immigration by people of Asian descent and to legitimize racial discrimination. The transcontinental railroad was built by Asian laborers, and the railroad was the vehicle for the See America Campaign, which encouraged people to travel West to experience the beauty of public lands.

The **Indian Citizenship Act** grants Indigenous people citizenship. It is met with a mixed reaction from Indigenous people, as some wish to remain as sovereign nations and citizens. The Act creates fear that Indigenous people will lose even further sovereignty over their ancestral lands after 300 years of dispossession.

The **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)** is created as a New Deal jobs program that offers young, unmarried men jobs in conservation. A similar series of "She-She-She" camps employ a small number of women in conservation efforts for a short time. African Americans and Indigenous people were able to serve, mostly in segregated camps.

The **National Housing Act** creates the Federal Housing Administration, which permits redlining in housing deeds and covenants to prohibit people of color and Jews from receiving loans, owning or living in houses in certain neighborhoods. This impacts some people's basic rights to own land and property.

1924

1924

1924

1933

1934



The **Indian Reorganization Act** encourages Indigenous nation sovereignty, restores some of the lands that had been lost due to the Dawes Act of 1887 and its subsequent amendments, and promotes entrepreneurship, education, and employment opportunities for Indigenous Peoples.

Establishment of **The Wilderness Society**

**Shenandoah National Park** is created, and 500 families are displaced in the process. This is one of many public lands areas along the Appalachian Mountains that is created through the displacement of poor white families. To the extent families are not physically removed, they are forced out due to criminalization of subsistence hunting and fishing practices.

**Japanese Internment Camps** are established during World War II. America's Japanese citizens (some multigenerational) are rounded up and interned in camps throughout the U.S. Most of these camps were on land that today is part of the public lands system.

The **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** is established and takes over the responsibilities of the former General Land Office.

1934

1935

1935

1942

1946

The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)** is established.

Congress passes the **Indian Relocation Act**, which provided for relocation expenses and vocational training to encourage Indigenous Peoples to leave reservations, settle in select urban areas, and become more 'self-sufficient'. This act is part of a series of laws promoting 'Indian termination' from mid-1940's to mid-1960's - the federal government terminated recognition of over 100 tribes, removed 2.5 million acres of trust land from reservations, and granted states jurisdiction over tribes and reservations.

Illinois becomes the first state to **decriminalize homosexuality** by repealing sodomy laws. Several states follow in the years to come, starting to legalize and destigmatize homosexuality.

Rachel Carson's 1962 book **Silent Spring** exposed the threat of environmental degradation caused by the chemicals used in pesticides and manufacturing and raised awareness of ecological issues in the U.S. Carson's book built upon the work of Latinx farm workers who had laid the groundwork in the fight for reduction and regulation of pesticides, and continued to advance the cause.

The **Wilderness Act** establishes Wilderness, the highest form of federal land protection.

1949

1956

1962

1962

1964

The **Civil Rights Act** is passed, opening the door for people of all identities, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, to fully participate in the U.S. democratic process.

The **Land and Water Conservation Fund**, a critical conservation and recreation program, is created from the royalties of off-shore oil and gas drilling.

The **Voting Rights Act** provides legal protection against racial discrimination in exercising the right to vote. This act marks the point in time that all Americans are finally eligible to participate in public lands management decision-making.

The **Wild and Scenic Rivers Act** is passed to protect rivers and river corridors.

The **National Trails System Act** establishes the National Trails System, which establishes both the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail.

1964

1964

1965

1968

1968

The **Indian Civil Rights** Act grants Indigenous people most of the Bill of Rights, including the right to free speech, freedom from unreasonable search and seizure, and protection against cruel and unusual punishment. It is worth noting that this act came after the Civil Rights Act, and that up to this date discrimination against Indigenous people was both condoned and legal.

Police raid the **Stonewall Inn** in New York City, an establishment created as a safe space for gay and lesbian people, inciting the Stonewall Riots that protest violence against LGBTQ people. Within two years of this event, LGBTQ rights groups sprouted up in every major US city.

Congress passes the **The National Environmental Policy Act** requiring environmental review of the impact of proposed federal agency actions.

Following the discovery of oil in the Arctic, Alaska's Indigenous people protested, arguing their land ownership rights were not recognized. In compensation, the **Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA)** authorized Alaska Natives to select and receive title to 44 million acres of land, and \$962,000,000 in cash as settlement of their aboriginal claim to lands within the state.

The **Endangered Species Act** passes to protect fish and wildlife.

1968

1969

1970

1971

1973



The **American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIFRA)** grants all “American Indian, Eskimo, Aleu, and Native Hawaiians” religious freedom under the United States Constitution and protects their right to conduct religious practices and ceremonies, which sometimes take place on public lands. For centuries prior to this act, many Indigenous religious practices were prohibited by law.

**Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)** protects 104 million acres of Alaska’s highest value conservation lands as national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, national monuments, and conservation areas. The law helped to safeguard wildlife habitat and wilderness areas, as well as traditional and culturally important subsistence resources and practices.

The **Americans with Disabilities Act** prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life including employment, transportation, public accommodations, and access to state and local government services.

The **Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)** establishes the right of “Indian Tribes and their lineal descendants” to recover possession of human remains, sacred objects, and other important objects that were taken illegally or unethically. The act requires certain institutions to identify and repatriate such items to their original communities.

During the first National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, the participants draft the **17 principles of Environmental Justice** to guide the fight against environmental discrimination.

1978

1980

1990

1990

1991

First enacted in 1966 to protect historic properties and archeological sites from destruction, the original **National Historic Preservation Act** did not mention Indigenous peoples or their culturally important sites. In 1992 the act was amended to include Native cultural and religious sites on the National Historic Register. Among other things, the act requires federal agencies to evaluate the impact of all federally funded or permitted projects on historic properties (buildings, archaeological sites, etc.) through a process known as Section 106 Review.

The **Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)** passes, barring the federal government from legally recognizing the validity of same-sex marriages.

The **Omnibus Public Land Management Act** adds millions of acreage to existing federal protection schemes, expand the types of designations, and expand the role of agencies in protecting public lands.

The **Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act** is signed, which extends the definition of a hate crime to include hate crimes based on gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and ability.

**Honouliuli**, the site of a former Japanese internment camp, is designated a National Monument.

1992

1996

2009

2010

2015

**Stonewall** becomes first National Monument site dedicated to LGBTQ history, one year after the Supreme Court legalizes gay marriage.

President Obama designates **Bears Ears National Monument** in southeastern Utah. The monument, designated at the request of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, includes numerous sites that are sacred to tribal members.

Three national monuments, **Reconstruction Era, Birmingham Civil Rights, and Freedom Riders**, are designated to honor the civil rights movement.

**Medgar and Myrlie Evers National Monument** (Mississippi) created to honor the civil rights movement and Medgar Evers's assassination in 1963.

2016

2016

2017

2019

## Henry David Thoreau



### Transcendentalism

Originated with Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who saw wilderness as a place where one could commune with God through appreciating beauty. Though wilderness was still a potentially dangerous place, facing its challenges was a noble endeavor.

Thoreau was a famous author and essayist, and wrote about living in a cabin he built in the woods in Walden.

## John Muir



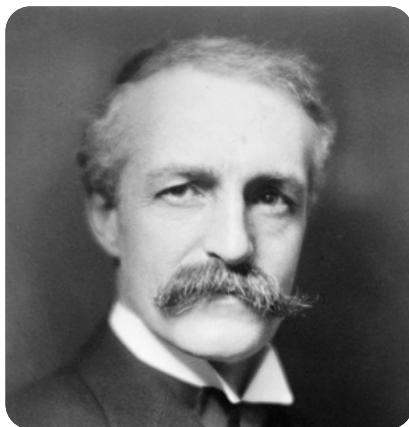
### Preservation

Muir believed wild spaces should be protected from any human impact; inspired by transcendentalism.

Muir believed a person could be closer to God, improve themselves, and find a true home in the wilderness.

Muir was an early advocate for the creation of National Parks.

## Gifford Pinchot



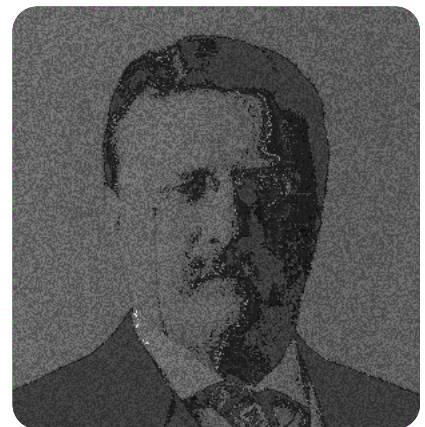
### Conservation

Pinchot brought from Europe the philosophy that wilderness had resources that humans were entitled to extract and use.

Conservation advocates for extracting resources responsibly so that they will be available for future generations.

Pinchot became the first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905.

## Theodore Roosevelt



### Strenuous Life

Roosevelt believed our connection to nature fosters and encourages rugged individualism to combat the ease of city life and the dangers of “eroding masculinity” presented by industrialization.

Theodore Roosevelt was President of the United States from 1901 to 1909 during which he established the U.S. Forest Service and saw the designation of 5 National Parks.







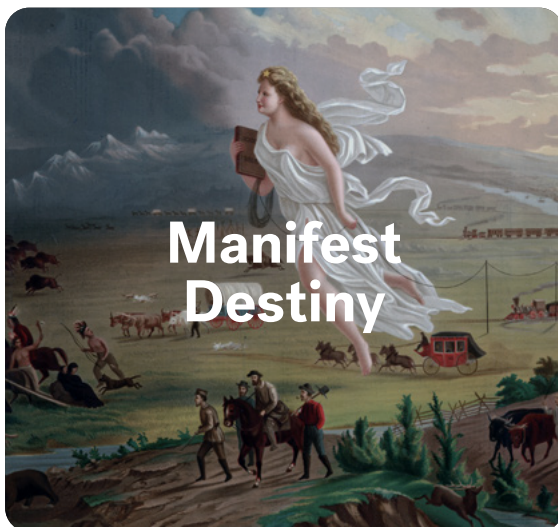
Colonialism is the process by which one country controls the political activities and economic resources of another through (1) forced entry into their territory; (2) alteration and destruction of Indigenous cultures and patterns of social organizations; (3) domination of Indigenous Peoples; and (4) development of elaborate justifications for these actions. The colonizers' actions all work to benefit the home country.

Settler colonialism is a type of colonialism where the colonists stay in the land they colonize and never intend to leave. In the U.S., settler colonialism takes the form of stimulating economic growth through development and natural resource extraction, and implementing political structures that disadvantage people of color, Indigenous people, women, non-Christians, and other marginalized communities.



Based on the Bible and other Christian works, wilderness had a very negative connotation to Christian European settlers. It was considered evil, alien, unknown, supernatural, the antithesis to civilization, and a symbol of man's imperfections. Consequently, settlers felt that undeveloped land needed to be controlled and converted to farmland and settlements.

European settlers viewed Indigenous Peoples as part of the natural wild they encountered, and felt that the Indigenous Peoples needed to be controlled or killed to ensure order. Europeans viewed themselves as bringing enlightened civilization to a dark and chaotic continent. In the process, they disrupted the natural order of the world that had allowed Indigenous Peoples to thrive since time immemorial.



Manifest destiny was the belief that Euro-Americans had a divine destiny to settle the West, and spread new American thought, culture, and institutions. Manifest destiny was rooted in the idea that European settlers were racially and culturally superior to other peoples, especially the Indigenous Peoples they encountered and slaughtered along the way.

Early European settlers of North America saw land as theirs for the taking. They claimed land without consideration for Indigenous Peoples who inhabited these lands, or the potential need to set land aside for conservation or public use.



## ***The Yosemite (excerpt) - 1912***

John Muir

“Hetch Hetchy Valley, far from being a plain, common, rock-bound meadow, as many who have not seen it seem to suppose, is a grand landscape garden, one of Nature’s rarest and most precious mountain temples. As in Yosemite, the sublime rocks of its walls seem to glow with life, whether leaning back in repose or standing erect in thoughtful attitudes, giving welcome to storms and calms alike, their brows in the sky, their feet set in the groves and gay flowery meadows, while birds, bees, and butterflies help the river and waterfalls to stir all the air into music—things frail and fleeting and types of permanence meeting here and blending, just as they do in Yosemite, to draw her lovers into close and confiding communion with her.

Sad to say, this most precious and sublime feature of the Yosemite National Park, one of the greatest of all our natural resources for the uplifting joy and peace and health of the people, is in danger of being dammed and made into a reservoir to help supply San Francisco with water and light, thus flooding it from wall to wall and burying its gardens and groves one

or two hundred feet deep. This grossly destructive commercial scheme has long been planned and urged (though water as pure and abundant can be got from sources outside of the people’s park, in a dozen different places), because of the comparative cheapness of the dam and of the territory which it is sought to divert from the great uses to which it was dedicated in the Act of 1890 establishing the Yosemite National Park.

...Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike...

That anyone would try to destroy [Hetch Hetchy Valley] seems incredible; but sad experience shows that there are people good enough and bad enough for anything. The proponents of the dam scheme bring forward a lot of bad arguments to prove that the only righteous thing to do with the people’s parks is to destroy them bit by bit as they are able. Their arguments are curiously like those of the devil, devised for the destruction of the first garden...”

## ***Strenuous Life (excerpt) - 1899***

President Theodore Roosevelt

“A life of ignoble ease, a life of that peace which springs merely from lack either of desire or of power to strive after great things, is as little worthy of a nation as of an individual. I ask only that what every self-respecting American demands from himself and from his sons shall be demanded of the American nation as a whole. Who among you would teach your boys that ease, that peace, is to be the first consideration in their eyes—to be the ultimate goal after which they strive? You men of Chicago have made this city great, you men of Illinois have done your share, and more than your share, in making America great, because you neither preach nor

practice such a doctrine. You work yourselves, and you bring up your sons to work. If you are rich and are worth your salt, you will teach your sons that though they may have leisure, it is not to be spent in idleness; for wisely used leisure merely means that those who possess it, being free from the necessity of working for their livelihood, are all the more bound to carry on some kind of non-remunerative work in science, in letters, in art, in exploration, in historical research-work of the type we most need in this country, the successful carrying out of which reflects most honor upon the nation...”



## ***The Maine Woods (excerpt) - 1864***

Henry David Thoreau

"Strange that so few ever come to the woods to see how the pine lives and grows and spires, lifting its evergreen arms to the light,—to see its perfect success; but most are content to behold it in the shape of many broad boards brought to market, and deem that its true success! But the pine is no more lumber than man is, and to be made into

boards and houses is no more its true and highest use than the truest use of a man is to be cut down and made into manure. There is a higher law affecting our relation to pines as well as to men. A pine cut down, a dead pine, is no more a pine than a dead human carcass is a man."

## ***The ABC of Conservation - 1909***

Gifford Pinchot

"The central thing for which Conservation stands is to make this country the best possible place to live in, both for us and for our descendants. It stands against the waste of the natural resources which cannot be renewed, such as coal and iron; it stands for the perpetuation of the resources which can be renewed, like the food-producing soils and the forests; and, most of all, it stands for equal opportunity for every American citizen to get his fair share of benefit from these resources, both now and hereafter.

...Conservation stands for the same kind of practical common-sense management of this country by the people that every business man stands for in the handling of his own business. It believes in prudence and foresight instead of reckless blindness; it holds that resources now public property should not become the basis for oppressive private monopoly; and it demands the complete and orderly development of all our resources for the benefit of all the people, instead of the partial exploitation of them for the benefit of a few. It recognizes fully the right of

the present generation to use what it needs and all it needs of the natural resources now available, but it recognizes equally our obligation so to use what we need that our descendants shall not be deprived of what they need...

Conservation holds that it is about as important to see that the people in general get the benefit of our natural resources as to see that there shall be natural resources left.

Conservation is the most democratic movement this country has known for a generation. It holds that the people have not only the right but the duty to control the use of the natural resources, which are the great sources of prosperity. And it regards the absorption of these resources by the special interests, unless their operations are under effective public control, as a moral wrong. Conservation is the application of common sense to the common problems for the common good, and I believe it stands nearer to the desires, aspirations, and purposes of the average man than any other policy now before the American people."

