

*President George W. Bush:
“Pale Green” Responses to the Environment?*

Byron W. Daynes and Glen Sussman

George W. Bush suggested during the 2000 campaign for the presidency that he would be an eco-friendly president. During his eight years in the White House, did the president use the power and resources of his office to carry out his campaign rhetoric about protecting the environment? This study examines the Bush approach to environmentalism by focusing on four important perspectives—political communication, legislative leadership, administrative actions, and environmental diplomacy—in an effort to better understand Bush’s environmental record. After a careful evaluation of the Bush presidency and the environmental domain, we offer our judgment about the Bush environmental legacy.

When George W. Bush first ran for the presidency in the year 2000, he indicated to the voters that he would be an “eco-friendly” president (Devine 2004, 21). This was not to be, since other concerns interfered with the president’s initial intention to be “eco-friendly,” changing the environment from being an issue of major importance to one of peripheral concern. Those other issues considered of higher priority included: a) national security; b) the war on terror; and c) the Republican Party values of pro-development and economic growth. While some of the attention paid to these other issues is to be expected, and they are issues that any “war-time” president would put as a priority, some presidents have been able to respond to both national and international crises, while, at the same time, maintaining an interest and focus on the environment, as did Franklin Roosevelt (Daynes 1998). This, however, was not George W. Bush’s way.

As a result of Bush’s lack of attention paid to environmental concerns, those sympathetic to the environmental movement have, on the whole, been both disappointed and displeased with the efforts of the Bush presidency. One observer went so far as to charge Bush with practicing “voodoo environmentalism,” reminiscent of George H.W. Bush’s criticism of Reaganism’s “voodoo economics” (Mosely 2008). Friends of the Earth, an environmental watch-dog group, even charged Bush with putting the earth “up for sale” (Goldstein and Cooper 2002). Moreover, the Audubon Society pointed

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BYRON W. DAYNES is a professor of political science at Brigham Young University. GLEN SUSSMAN is a professor of political science at Old Dominion University.

out how the Bush Administration often used a slight of hand approach to environmental problems, leading the public to believe one thing while doing something quite different, as the Administration did in its plans to protect the polar bear, declaring it to be a “threatened species,” rather than an “endangered species,” a listing that would carry statutory protection. And rather than protect the bear’s surroundings, this president allowed oil companies to drill in the 73 million acres of Alaska that supports “more than one-fifth of the world’s population of polar bear” (Loyless 2008).

Furthermore, some Republican “environmentalists” have had concerns about the Bush environmental record. As a disgruntled Martha Marks, president of Republicans for the Environment lamented: “Even my Republican eyes can see that President Bush has a long way to go before his conservation record can hold a candle to TR’s” (Marks 2004, 7).

Methodology

In terms of organizing our research for this study, we will consider the president’s efforts to protect the environment from several different perspectives, namely, 1) *public communication*—including formal speeches and informal remarks made concerning the environment; 2) *relations with Congress*—involving legislation Bush encouraged, took a stand on, and/or signed into law relating to the environment; 3) *administrative actions*—focusing on staff management and actions taken based on the power of the president related to the environment; and 4) *environmental diplomacy*—examining actions taken by the president in the global arena.

Throughout we will assess both George W. Bush’s accomplishments and failures domestically and in the international sector in responding to environmental challenges. Finally, we will offer a judgment regarding Bush’s environmental legacy—will he be remembered as “very green,” “green,” “somewhat green,” or “pale green?”

Political Communication

Without question, George W. Bush and his Administration spokespersons say the right things in their efforts to make us believe they have the environment’s needs as a high priority. The words they use to describe the environment are carefully selected, however. One guideline to their speech and writing about the environment has been the “Luntz Memo,” a sixteen page memorandum from the Luntz Research Company. It alerts Republicans that the environment is one area in which they are most vulnerable and urges them that when they talk about the environment, they need to speak in “soft tones” talking about “climate change” rather than the more negative, “global

warming;" writing about "preserving and protecting" the environment to make citizens feel "safer," "cleaner" and "healthier" (Luntz 2002). It is unlikely, however, that any environmentally-attuned citizen has been fooled by such rhetoric.

The president and his Administration have also used another technique to appear "environmental" in their rhetoric, and that is in making a consistent effort to link themselves to Theodore Roosevelt, and TR's conservationist accomplishments. George W. Bush did just that, even before beginning his presidency, when at the Republican National Convention in 2000, he suggested that: "Today's Republican party stands in the proud tradition of Teddy Roosevelt, the first president to stress the importance of environmental conservation" (Bush 2000).

Bush even went so far as to develop his own version of the Roosevelt "Stewardship theory"—a theory that justified TR's broad expansion of constitutional power to improve the *public* good. Bush's "stewardship theory" incorporated the public and government in unison to conserve the earth (Bush 2001b, 831-33). The concept of being a "good steward" of the earth was broached by President Bush on April 18, 2002, when he indicated: "A good steward . . . understands that we share this Earth with other creatures, and we have a responsibility to provide them places to live and areas to roam" (Bush 2002, 649-51).

While no one supportive of preserving the environment is going to argue with what the president said in these speeches, we must look carefully at how the president followed up on his words; how he implemented them; and what his intent was in uttering them.

Nor would an environmentalist take issue with those individuals the president has looked to as models of environmental protection. One in particular was his own father, George H.W. Bush, who, as president, focused his attention on improving air quality. He gave his father full credit for creating an effective program under the Clean Air Act (Bush 2001b, 831-33). Yet as president he saw the Clean Air Act very differently from his father. For example, George W. Bush completely ignored the stern instructions that came from the Supreme Court's majority in the 2007 decision of *Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency* indicating that Bush's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had an obligation under the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases if these gases contributed to global warming and if human health and welfare are being harmed by these gases (*Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency*, 2007). Bush, in defying the Court's instructions, maintained that the EPA had no such obligation to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act, and "even if it did, it would not use the authority" (Greenhouse 2007).

Legislative Leadership

One of the first changes President Bush made once he assumed office was to introduce a program he called: “New Environmentalism for the 21st Century.” It would be what he referred to as a “balanced program” whereby anything done to protect the environment would in no way harm property owners. The maintenance of national parks would play a central role in this new program. As the president indicated:

. . . [M]any of our parks have gone neglected. So today I’m announcing the National Parks Legacy Project . . . We will spend \$5 billion over 5 years to clean up the backlog in maintenance and make our parks more inviting and accessible to all citizens (Bush 2001b, 831-33).

The president’s Secretary of Interior, Gale Norton, stated that “New Environmentalism” would be based on what she called “the “four Cs”—Communication, Consultation, and Cooperation, all in the service of Conservation” (Devine 2004, 31). Robert Devine saw some irony in the Administration’s advocacy of “New Environmentalism,” however, since, as he indicated, this has been an Administration that “rarely Communicates, Consults, or Cooperates with anyone who disagrees with its positions, and that has not done much to serve Conservation” (Devine 2004, 31).

Given all that George W. Bush firmly stated about being a “good steward” of the earth, it is somewhat surprising that when one looks at the specific environmental programs he put forward, they seem to tell another story and may be the reason why environmentalists have not given firm support to them. His Administration, rather than supporting established environmental law, has devised several substitute initiatives and laws that have sounded promising in name, as if they would be a strong protection for the environment, but have proven to be much weaker than the previously established environmental legislation.

An example of this was Bush’s “Clear Skies” Initiative, designed to replace the Clean Air Act. It was Senator John Kerry (D-MA) who, in his second debate with Bush on October 8, 2004, described “The Clear Skies Initiative” as “. . . one of those Orwellian names you pull out of the sky, slap it onto something, like ‘No Child Left Behind’ but you leave millions of children behind. Here they’re leaving the skies and the environment behind” (Kerry 2004). While the president’s proposal did set limits on nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide, Clear Skies would not establish uniform national standards that would compel polluting companies to comply with the law as does the Clean Air Act (Marquis 2002). Under Clear Skies, power plants would be allowed to buy and sell pollution credits, which Douglas Jehl maintains, would indicate that companies had the “right to pollute—among

themselves" (Jehl 2003). And possibly this was the reason it did not pass the Congress.

Another new program with an attractive name was Bush's "Healthy Forests Initiative" which would exempt millions of acres of national forests from environmental review, encouraging logging and timber sales of old growth forests. Such a policy was of concern to environmentalists who saw an increase in logging of old growth forests as threatening to such areas as the Giant Sequoia National Monument, where some individual trees date back some 2000 years (Pope 2002). Despite these concerns, the Republican-led Congress passed this initiative and the president signed it into law.

An established law that presidents have used to prevent plants and animals from extinction has been the Endangered Species Act. George H.W. Bush added an average of 58 species per year. President Bill Clinton protected an average of 62 species per year for his two terms. But George W. Bush determined that only 59 species should be considered "endangered" during his two terms in office, which was far fewer than the other two presidents (Eilperin 2008b).

Administrative Actions

George Bush began his presidency doing all he could to erase the public's memory of his predecessors' environmental accomplishments. For example, EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman publicized the Administration's intention to reverse Clinton's strict arsenic standards for drinking water, while Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman announced the modification of Clinton's rule banning road development on over sixty million acres of national forests (Jehl 2001). President Bush lost on this one when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in a 2-1 ruling, indicated that a district court in Idaho "abused its discretion" in blocking the ruling that would prevent "logging, mining and oil drilling across 2 percent of the United States territory" (Jehl 2002). This, in effect, reinstated the Clinton Administration's ban on road construction on 60 million acres of forest land.

Another issue involved snowmobiles, with their excessive noise and pollution, allowed to come into the parks. Bill Clinton had proposed a total ban on snowmobiles by 2004 in Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park. George W. Bush said he would "limit" the number of snowmobiles in Yellowstone and Grand Teton, but his "limit" was no limit at all, allowing up to 1,100 per day (Vig and Kraft 2006, 326-27).

Bush again tried to reverse Clinton's efforts to increase protected wilderness areas. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton indicated that she wanted the Bureau of Land Management to limit lands that would be eligible

for protection as wilderness areas to 23 million acres, which meant that nearly 200 million acres of public land went unprotected (Egan 2003).

But what was most damaging to the environment beyond these specific actions was reflected in the anti-environmental attitude and philosophy that pervaded the staffing of this Administration. When you count all of those in the Administration who have been involved one way or another with oil, along with those who have been supportive of industry's needs and desires over the environment, and those who could be classified simply as anti-environmental, one looks in vain to find one official with proven environmental credentials.

Because of those who were appointed, environmentalists outside of government raised many objections. George W. Bush appointed no one who was a professional environmentalist. Instead he surrounded himself with former oil executives including Vice President Dick Cheney, Commerce Secretary Dan Evans, and former National Security Advisor and current Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who sat on the Chevron Corporation's Board of Directors and even had an oil tanker initially named after her until it became a source of embarrassment and advertised her connection to the oil industry. As a result, Chevron changed the tanker name from the *Condoleezza Rice* to the *Altair Voyager* (NNDB 2008). All of these appointees, including Interior Secretary Gail Norton, supported the president's anti-environmental stance on Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge encouraging oil exploration and drilling in ANWR.

Other individuals in the Administration who represented anti-environmental values included Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, who was on record in opposition to environmental laws, and her undersecretary, Mark Rey, a spokesperson for the timber industry. Bush's first Attorney General, John Ashcroft, as a member of Congress, had regularly voted against environmental protections, while Bush's Assistant Attorney General, Thomas Sansonetti, had been a lobbyist for the coal industry (Brasch 2002). Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Steve Griles, had previously served as a lobbyist for oil and coal interests, and had gone on record supporting off-shore oil drilling, even before it became Bush's official policy on June 19, 2008 (Stolberg 2008).

Two other appointees--Linda J. Fisher and James Connaughton—also had doubtful environmental records. Fisher, Deputy Administrator of EPA, had formerly been employed as vice president of government and public affairs at Monsanto, a company involved with both chemicals and agribusiness (Bush's Environmental Slate 2001); while Connaughton, chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, had been an attorney representing General Electric's interests regarding toxic waste sites (Seelye 2001).

Finally, one of the most influential anti-environmentalists in the Bush Cabinet is Vice President Dick Cheney who has, among other things, worked to weaken the Clean Air Act and discourage the Administration from moving ahead on regulating greenhouse gas emissions (Becker and Gellman 2007).

Not all persons in the Administration, of course, supported Bush's strong-arm anti-environmental policies. In fact, several individuals left their positions in the Administration rather than subscribe to these policies. Christie Todd Whitman, for example, whose role as EPA Administrator became marginalized, eventually resigned on June 27, 2003 after 2½ years with the Administration. Rick Pitz, a senior staff person with the Federal Climate Change Science program, resigned in 2005. His major concern and reason for resignation was his discovery of "inappropriate administration editing of scientific reports" in order to support the Administration's views on climate change (Natural Resources Defense Council 2005). This was not a one-time occurrence; there were several other instances, during the two Bush terms, of data manipulation and "spin" put on the Administration's approach to global warming. Robert Devine, for example, found that the Environmental Protection Agency "completely cut . . . out" a section of its yearly 2002 report where it had referred to the Administration making a "habit of shunning the science of global warming . . ." (Devine 2004, 172). Even during his last year in office, there have been instances where the president did all he could to prevent information on global warming from becoming public. Jason Burnett, Associate Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, resigned from the agency because the White House had prevented the EPA from complying with the demands requested of the agency by the Supreme Court in *Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency* (2007).

The efforts of the Bush Administration to avoid compliance with the Court are described by Juliet Eilperin and R. Jeffrey Smith who indicated that:

The White House has walked a tortured policy path, editing its officials' congressional testimony, refusing to read documents prepared by career employees and approved by top appointees, requesting changes in computer models to lower estimates of the benefits of curbing carbon dioxide . . . (Eilperin and Smith 2008).

In addition to the civilian sector, there were exemptions made for the military, shielding it from compliance with environmental laws. Of particular concern were the Navy and Air Force that frequently came into conflict with environmental regulations in their conduct of training exercises. The sort of changes that the Pentagon sought were "extending federal deadlines

for hazardous waste cleanup on military installations, waiving Clean Air Act violations and bypassing state environmental protection regulations” as well as “delaying the release of important information regarding diseases or dangerous situations in the name of ‘national security’” (Natural Resources Defense Council 2004).

The Navy’s sonar operations have been of particular concern to environmentalists who are worried about protecting sea mammals and other sea life (Red Orbit 2008). Although the Navy admits that its sonar can cause “behavioral disruptions” and “short-term hearing loss in dolphins and whales,” Naval officers have argued that these effects do not have lasting damage, and protecting national security, they have argued, makes these exercises worthwhile. The Natural Resources Defense Council disagreed, charging that “high-intensity sonar” causes “mass injury,” including “hemorrhaging and stranding” to sea mammals (Greenhouse 2008).

By August 2008 a federal district court and federal appeals court in California ordered the Navy to use every means possible to protect marine life during their war-games and indicated that the Navy could test its sonar in areas near Hawaii and in the Northwest Pacific, but it was not to do so in areas that were “critically important for marine life.” This did not stop the Bush administration from sidestepping the courts, invoking “. . . national security to exempt the Navy from strict adherence to the environmental laws” (*New York Times* 2008).

Environmental Diplomacy

For George W. Bush, it was the market and market incentives that were the only tools he would use if any changes to the environment were going to be made in the international arena. He rejected every effort to use mandatory government regulations (Bush 2008).

Internationally, President Bush preferred to “go it alone” when it came to global environmental decisions rather than joining with other countries to combat transnational environmental problems. This at times has been particularly troubling to environmentalists, some world leaders, and other critics of the Bush Administration in the United States.

One of the first actions taken by the president was to unceremoniously strip away President Clinton’s signature from the Kyoto Protocol—a document which now bears the signature of 181 countries—that compels nations to adhere to mandatory standards to reduce greenhouse gases (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2008). President Bush charged that the reason he was rejecting it was that it was “fatally flawed,” and so renounced it in March of 2001. This action particularly irritated world leaders in support of the Protocol since the United States emits a quarter of

the pollutants tainting the atmosphere. Moreover, it was President Clinton and Vice President Gore who had been the principle negotiators and recruiters in getting world support for the agreement. Bush's move to separate the United States from the agreement caused anti-American demonstrations in Geneva, Madrid, Stockholm, as well as strong criticism from European officials that had formally ratified the agreement (Gelbspan 2002, 26).

President Bush justified his rejection of the Kyoto Protocol by attempting to focus our attention on the *post-Kyoto period* beginning in 2012. By this year he proposed inviting representatives from the fifteen industrial nations responsible for most of the greenhouse gases to sit down with the president and begin to establish non-binding "aspirational goals" to limit the gases and to establish fuel efficiency standards by using a cleaner energy-generating technology (Fletcher and Eilperin 2007). While there was no mention of caps or restrictions on emissions in his projected proposal, it represented the first time that President Bush has acknowledged that greenhouse gases are a problem (Froomkin 2008).

Bush's "go it alone" strategy was evidenced again when he refused to attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development held from August 26 to September 4, 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, where some 174 countries were represented, and 106 leaders of countries were there to talk about the environment and development. Bush was not in attendance and sent U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell instead. The U.S. attracted a lot of attention from the other delegates due to its position opposing rigid deadlines and timetables to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Environmental News Service 2002).

The President did support two important environmental agreements that showed that the United States was capable of working with international partners in the domain of global environmental policy. President Bush committed the United States to the *Stockholm Convention Implementing Amendments to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)* and the *Toxic Substances Control Act*—an international agreement that would restrict the use of twelve lethal chemicals known as persistent organic pollutants or POPs (Bush 2001a). Although Bush signed the agreement, joining some 146 other nations, the agreement has not yet been ratified by the U.S. Senate, and, according to critics within the Administration, the feeling was that it never would be ratified (Department of State 2002). Some environmentalists and public health groups were critical of the president's support of these acts because he failed to get additional pollutants added to the list (Pianin 2002, A13).

The second international agreement that President Bush became involved with was the Tropical Forest Conservation Fund with its "debt for nature swaps" (Bush 2001b). The Fund came out of the Tropical Forest

Conservation Act of 1998, along with a grant of \$2 million from Conservation International and the Nature Conservancy. For example, under this Fund, the United States forgave Guatemala's \$24 million debt if it would use that money to conserve the forests in the country, over the next 15 years (Nature Conservancy 2008). Guatemala became the tenth Tropical Forest Conservation Fund pact that had been written under the Bush Administration. The other countries that had signed a pact during the Bush years included Belize, Columbia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, two agreements with Panama, and Bangladesh. This program will also train scientists, forest managers, and technicians to better conserve tropical forests (Nature Conservancy 2008).

A "Pale Green" Presidency?

It was Senator John Kerry (D-MA) who indicated that the Bush Administration was "one of the worst administrations in modern history" when it came to the environment (Kerry 2004). Was this too harsh a criticism to level at this president? After all, Kerry's statement had been made in the 2004 debate after Bush's first full term. Were there, perhaps, some important environmental accomplishments in President Bush's second term in office that might, at least, put him in a "pale green" category to define his environmental legacy?

In fact, if one carefully examines the Bush record during his two terms in office there were some accomplishments that need to be mentioned. First, there was his *Texas White House* in Crawford, Texas, a 4,000 square foot home that was equipped with a geothermal heat pump to circulate water located some 300 feet below the surface. The water is used to both cool the house in the summer and heat it in the winter (Sullivan 2001). The house is environmentally sound, but the president never made it part of an environmental program as the sort of "green house" that others might seriously consider adopting as their own.

A second Bush proposal for the future involved his efforts to set *automobile fuel efficiency standards* that promised that by 2011, we will see new vehicles averaging 27.8 mpg by the year 2011, and 35.7 mpg by 2015. But there are some real drawbacks to this plan, including disallowing states like California, Arizona, and fifteen other states from establishing with their own gas reducing plans, since the federal plan made clear that state proposals would be an "obstacle" to the achievement of the new federal standards (Daynes and Sussman 2005, 442). The opposition to the state plans may well be due to the states' own opposition to the Administration's fuel efficiency plans in the past (Knickerbocker 2008).

A related proposal by the president supporting *new diesel standards* initially gained support from environmentalists. This proposal, first formulated by the Clinton Administration, was directed at diesel vehicles over 8,500 pounds and was to take effect in 2004. The program promised to "reduce air pollution from trucks and buses by another 90 percent" (Lazaroff 2002). The president was committed enough to the program to echo a call for its expansion in his 2007 State of the Union Address focusing on both "clean diesel vehicles and biodiesel fuel" (The White House 2007).

Bush's fourth environmental action took place on June 15, 2006, when he directed the creation of a new national monument—the *Northwestern Islands Marine National Monument*—located off the coast of Hawaii. This 140,000 square mile monument became the largest in size of any park or monument. This was the second national monument accredited to George W. Bush, with the first one being the African Burial Ground National Monument in New York City. Clearly, George Bush, in his eight years in office, paid little attention to protecting unique sites in the U.S., particularly when compared to two-term President Bill Clinton who used the same authority to create twenty-one national monuments (National Park Service History 2008).

Another of Bush's EPA rulings that showed promise in reducing smog and soot was the *Clean Air Interstate Rule*, that the *New York Times* indicated was "one of the few creative initiatives to emerge from the Environmental Protection Agency in the last seven years" (*New York Times* 2008). The regulation applied to 28 of the eastern states and would require a "70 percent reduction" in sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide by 2015 (Barringer 2008).

When one takes account of George W. Bush's environmental accomplishments and compares them to the damage done to the environment by this president and his Administration, any objective assessment would have to conclude that those actions to undercut environmental protection weighed much more heavily than the very few positive accomplishments to his credit.

The president's legislative efforts have all been tied to ineffective volunteerism that resists compelling emitting industries and individuals to comply with the law that would bring emissions to a halt. And there have been few environmental limits on the military that allowed the Pentagon to use the tried-and-true "national security" banner to justify legal avoidance of the law.

Bush's Orwellian inventiveness in conjuring up names that sounded "good and right" to his "environmental programs" to make the public think that his formal response to environmental concerns was the best approach proved to be deceptive. The Bush approach has not resulted in effective environmental initiatives coming from this Administration. Even his program

introducing new diesel standards that had environmentalists in full support when it was first introduced in 2001 became a mere shadow of itself by 2008 when the president reduced the Environmental Protection Agency's authority and budget preventing effective monitoring of the program. And then there was the Clean Air Interstate Rule that held real promise to give us a cleaner atmosphere, but the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit found "several fatal flaws in the rule" and rejected it (*State of North Carolina v. Environmental Protection Agency* 2008).

One can legitimately question the president's genuine commitment to clean air when President Bush himself intervened in March 2008 to overrule the EPA's limit on the amount of ozone allowed in the air. John Walke, of the Natural Resources Defense Council, called the president's action most "unprecedented" and an "unlawful" act (Eilperin 2008c).

When choices have had to be made, Bush has rarely elected to protect the environment. Establishing what will be a seldom-visited Northwestern Islands Marine National Monument, although massive and unusual in its composition, can in no way make up for increasing the noise level and air pollution caused by massive numbers of snowmobiles descending upon the frequently visited Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, damaging the park experience for all. Furthermore, there are efforts on the part of the president to encourage Congress to further alter the Clean Air Act to make it easier to build power plants near National Parks and wilderness areas, potentially obscuring visibility and making it more difficult for patrons of the parks to enjoy their experience. Those parks that will be most affected include Mesa Verde in Colorado, Shenandoah in Virginia, and, ironically, the Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota (Eilperin 2008a). This speaks volumes in terms of what this president thinks of the environment.

There is no excusing the tampering with scientific data and altering the results of environmental research in order to generate the *political* findings that will support the Bush agenda. Additionally, there is no tolerance that should be given a president who staffs his Administration with so many anti-environmentalists who have been asked to resolve environmental concerns. Unfortunately for the public, those in the Administration who were somewhat sympathetic to the need to take action to resolve the environmental crises either stepped down or were relieved of their assignments.

We thus have to conclude that the Bush record on the environment has been far worse than any other modern American president. If "pale green" describes the bare minimum effort of a president to promote environmental quality since the modern presidency began with FDR, then George W. Bush would qualify—and this becomes his environmental legacy.

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