

Touchstones in Environmental History

- 1789 - February, Cayuga Indians signed treaty with the State of New York.
- 1790 - on July 8, William McAllister draws Lot 39 from a hat.
- 1799 - Cayuga County formed from Onondaga County.
- 1813 - Hunter home at 147 Franklin built.
- 1817 - construction begins on Erie Canal.
- 1845 - On July 4th, Henry David Thoreau moves to Walden Pond.
- 1864 - On June 30th, President Abraham Lincoln protects Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove's giant sequoias.
- 1890 - October 1st, Congress sets aside "reserved forest lands," soon to be known as Yosemite National Park.
- 1874 - Congress finally approved legislation to protect the buffalo, only to see the law vetoed by President Grant.
- 1870s - Central New York State: wheatings the land to death.
- 1872 - On March 1st, President Ulysses Grant made Yellowstone the world's first national park.
- 1885 - The New York State Legislature established the Forest Preserve of New York State.
- 1886 - Audubon Society founded to counter the unrestricted slaughter of wild birds for plumes, flesh, and fun.
- 1887 - Aldo Leopold, born in Burlington, IA, on January 11.
- 1889 - First celebration of National Arbor Day.
- 1892 - New York State creates the Adirondack State Park.
- 1892 - in May of this year, the entrepreneur William T. Love begins digging his canal in Niagara Falls, New York.
- 1894 - New York State gives Forest Preserve NYS Constitutional protection.
- 1897 - Organic Administration Act creates National Forest System.
- 1899 - last passenger pigeon killed.
- 1900 - Congress passes the Lacey Act, banning the interstate shipment of birds killed in violation of state laws.
- 1903 - Roosevelt creates the first federal wildlife refuge at Pelican Island.
- 1906 - Aldo Leopold began coursework under Gifford Pinchot at Yale Forest School (Master of Forestry, 1909).
- 1906 - NYS brings beavers from the Yellowstone back to the Adirondacks.
- 1907 - On May 27th, Rachel Carson, is born.
- 1908 - terrible fires in the Adirondacks.
- 1909 - last wolf in NYS shot and killed in Cato, New York. Aldo Leopold joins the U.S. Forest Service.
- 1911 - Federal Weeks Law passed creating National Forests in Eastern US.
- 1913 - John Muir loses his desperate battle to save his beloved Hetch Hetchy Valley near Yosemite.
- 1914 - Martha, the last living passenger pigeon, died in the cage she'd called home since birth.
- 1916 - National Park Service created.
- 1918 - Congress ratifies the Migratory Bird Treaty Act with Great Britain (representing Canada); protect migratory birds.
- 1922 - In August of this year, the last grizzly bear in California was killed near Sequoia National Park.
- 1922 - Aldo Leopold submitted a formal proposal to make the Gila National Forest a wilderness area.
- 1927 - Congress to pass the Rivers and Harbors Act.
- 1928 - Americans buy 6.5 million hunting licenses.
- 1929 - First NY State Forest established in the Cortland County town of Scott: the Hewitt Forest.
- 1931 - NYS Hewitt Amendment allowing expansion of Adirondack Park and additional state forests around the state.
- 1932 - NYS purchases 3,200 acres in Cayuga County to make NYS's first wildlife conservation area, Howland's Island.
- 1940 - President Roosevelt signs the Bald Eagle Protection Act.
- 1944 - Smokey Bear adopted as USFS fire prevention mascot.
- 1946 - Congress creates the Atomic Energy Commission to guide the awesome new technology toward peacetime uses.
- 1947 - Nassau County, New York. Developer William Levitt began construction of his first planned community.
- 1948 - The worst air pollution disaster in U.S. history occurs in October, in Donora, Pennsylvania
- 1948 - After more than 100 failed tries in the past sixty years, Congress finally passes the first Water Pollution Control Act.
- 1948 - On April 21st, Aldo Leopold died of a heart attack while fighting a grass fire that threatened the Leopold pines.
- 1950 - Big Blow in the Adirondacks levels hundreds of square miles of Adirondack forests, public and private.
- 1959 - Queen Elizabeth II joins President Eisenhower in opening ceremonies for the St. Lawrence Seaway.
- 1961 - In April, buses began to replace streetcars in L.A.'s famous 1,100-mile electric railroad system.
- 1962 - Rachel Carson's Silent Spring is published.
- 1963 - On March 23rd, the gates closed on Glen Canyon Dam.
- 1964 - Wilderness Act establishes the National Wilderness System.
- 1967 - Lawrence Rickerfeller proposes an Adirondack Mt. National Park.
- 1967 - The Environmental Defense Fund is founded on New York's Long Island to stop the use of DDT.
- 1969 - moon landing
- 1969 - Construction begins on the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant (820,000 kw).
- 1969 - On June 22nd, the heavily polluted Cuyahoga River caught fire.
- 1970 - Earth Day, the brainchild of Wisconsin's senator, Gaylord Nelson, is celebrated April 22.
- 1970 - Congress also passes a tough new Clean Air Act.
- 1970s - Pollution Abatement Services starts operating in Oswego, NY.

1971 - New York's governor Nelson A. Rockefeller signs into law the Adirondack Park Agency Act.
1972 - On June 14th, the US Environmental Protection Agency banned the pesticide DDT for most uses.
1972 - October 18, Washington, DC. The Clean Water Act was passed.
1973 - Congress passes the Endangered Species Act, signed into law by Richard Nixon.
1975 - Electricity is produced for the first time on Feb. 1st at NYPA's James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant.
1976 - Bald eagles hacked in Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge.
1977 - Love Canal neighborhood at Niagara Falls determined to sit on a large toxic waste dump
1977 - Oil begins flowing southward through the Alaska pipeline from the North Slope to the port of Valdez.
1978 - On August 7th, President Jimmy Carter declared a federal emergency at Love Canal.
1979 - On March 28th, the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant has a partial core meltdown that destroyed its reactor.
Late 1970s - Maryland based Constellation Energy Group acquires Nine Mile Point Nuclear Power Station in Scriba, N.Y.
1980s - DEC moves to prevent General Electric Company from discharging PCBs into the Hudson River.
1980 - On December 2nd, President Jimmy Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.
1981 - The Salmon River Fish Hatchery located in Altmar, Oswego County opens.
1985 - French agents sink the Greenpeace vessel Rainbow Warrior.
1986 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency evacuates residents from dioxin saturated Times Beach, Missouri.
1986 - On April 16, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.
1988 - The first condor chick is born in captivity in California, raising new hope for the species' survival.
1989 - The supertanker Exxon Valdez runs aground in Alaska's Prince William Sound.
1994 - Bald eagle is down-listed from the "endangered" category to "threatened."
1995 - The gray wolf is introduced by federal biologists into the Yellowstone ecosystem and wilderness areas of Idaho.
1997 - On December 10th, twenty-three-year-old Julia Butterfly Hill climbed into a 1,000 year-old, 180' Redwood tree.
1998 - On January 15th, NYPA's James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant reaches the 100 B kw/h milestone.
1998 - On June 23rd, NASA scientist James Hansen warned Congress about consequences from global warming.
2001 - 9/11.
2000 - March: Entergy Corporation agrees to buy the New York Power Authority's Fitzpatrick nuclear power plant.
2005 - On August 31st, federal funding was awarded to protect the Lake Neatahwanta Watershed, in Fulton, N.Y.

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