

On the Environment: Bush Administration Worst on Record

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

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Whether it's clean water, clear skies, healthy forests, or saving endangered species, "there has been no worse administration than the Bush administration," a distinguished political scientist says.

"While Bush talked about being a good (environmental) steward, if you look at his particular policies and programs, it's not consistent with being a good steward," asserts Byron Daynes, professor of political science at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and author of numerous scholarly books and articles.

At a conference on "Presidential Powers in America" April 27th at the Massachusetts School of Law at Andover, Daynes detailed how the Bush administration had failed the public in a number of key environmental areas:

Clear Skies — "This particular program to do away with air pollution had no uniform national standards, and power plants were still able to buy and sell pollution credits."

Clean Water — Bush "allowed coal mines to still put mining waste in the streams themselves."

Healthy Forest — Bush "allowed logging and timber sales of old growth, and the fear was that this would threaten the Giant Sequoia National Monument and endangered species."

Endangered species — Where President H.W. Bush put 231 plants and animals on the Endangered Species List and President Bill Clinton added 521, George W. Bush added 59, "so you can tell what he thought about that," Daynes said.

Auto Emissions — "He (GWB) does believe in developing mixed fuels and fuel efficiencies for automobiles (but gives) no particulars of course and no money to car industries to do this."

Carbon Emissions — "Bush has called for the United States to end the growth in U.S. carbon emissions by 2025 but again, he gave no particulars in terms of how this was going to come about."

Kyoto Treaty - "Here we had 170-nations that Bill Clinton and Al Gore had helped bring together in terms of the Kyoto Protocol. George Bush stripped the signature of Clinton from the protocol, making the United States, Australia, and four of their little teeny nations against the 170 nations with regard to Kyoto, because he said it was fatally flawed."

Post-Kyoto - Bush wants the 17 nations guilty of producing most of the greenhouse gases "to sit down and come up with future aspirational goals, whatever they are. Again, no details whatsoever on this but it's sort of a feel-good time where nations can decide what they really want to do."

Appointments — "There was no environmentalist brought into the (Bush) administration itself. People (were hired) who were devoted to oil, industry defenders, or anti-environmentalists, and the list is long...but the very worst was clearly (Vice President) Dick Cheney, who wielded the most authority, undercutting, for example, Christie Todd Whitman, who was as near an environmentalist as you could get at EPA, and that wasn't terribly

near.”

Daynes noted that James Connaughton, the chair on the Council on Environmental Quality, was representing General Electric’s interest in protecting toxic waste sites against what the EPA had suggested.

All three remaining White House candidates, Daynes said, “are probably certainly greener than George W. Bush” but “any candidate looks greener when compared with George W. Bush.”

Daynes is co-author with Glen Sussman of “The American Presidency and the Social Agenda”(Prentice Hall).

Further Information or to order a set of conference proceedings: Jeff Demers, Massachusetts School of Law, demers@msslaw.edu. Media consultant to MSL is Sherwood Ross, Ross Associates, Miami, Fla., sherwoodr1@yahoo.com).

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