

# Teddy Roosevelt speech to Scenic America conference

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It is a true honor to have an opportunity to share a moment with you to celebrate Scenic America's accomplishments and legacy of protection of our natural resources and scenic beauty for future generations. It is even more rewarding to be here in Utah once again, marking the official launch of Scenic Utah. Your state has exemplified a doctrine, which it seems to me to be all-essential for our people to keep fresh in their minds – the fact that though natural resources can do a great deal, that the law can do a great deal, the fundamental requisite in building up prosperity and civilization is the requisite of individual character in the individual man or woman.

Here in this state the pioneers and those who came after them took not the land that would ordinarily be chosen as land that would yield return with little effort. They took a state which at the outset was called the desert, and literally – not figuratively – made the wilderness blossom as the rose.

The fundamental effort in the building up of Utah has been the work of the citizens of Utah. You did it because your people understand the importance of leaving the land a better place for your children, and your children's children.

Scenic Utah is built on the same noble insights as those of the Pioneers of Utah. To keep America beautiful through creating an open window to view the wonder book of nature. "The beauty and charm of the wilderness are his for the asking, for the edges of the wilderness lie close beside the beaten roads of the present travel."

I know a thing or two about both travel and the beaten and unbeaten path. My first visit here was in 1903 at the tail end of an exhaustive tour of the west. At that time, I was nearing the end of my journey. Over the course of sixty-six days, I had visited twenty-five states, travelled over 14,000 miles, averaging 212 miles a day and delivered 260 stump speeches and five major addresses. I had observed and cataloged nature for over a week on my own with no one knowing exactly where I was in Yellowstone Park. I camped in Yosemite with John Muir where I had laid out a very simple rule. "I do not want anyone with me but you, and I want to drop politics absolutely for four days and just be out in the open with you."

He shared with me around the campfire how the wild forests were vanishing and his vision of how to protect them. During and after, I enjoyed the company of governors, mayors, senators, and congressmen. Throughout the trip, I kept a close eye on the natural resources that I had sworn to protect and thought of ways to balance their use while conserving their legacy. Utah and its amazing people weighed heavy on my mind on what I should do upon my return to Washington.

Under the influence of Mr. Pinchot and Mr. Newell, I took up the cause of conservation. I was already fairly well awake to the need of social and industrial justice; and from the outset we had in view, not only the preservation of natural resources, but the prevention of monopoly in natural resources, so that they should inhere in the people as a whole.

The work I undertook after what I called my great exploration allowed me, as President, to double the number of your National Parks. To expand on the innovation, I created the Wildlife reserves that protected your land and animals. It would lead to the creation of your National forests. But all of these pale in comparison to the one that protects your federal land for you, the people. The Antiquities Act of 1906.

The Act grew out of concerns that developed over the course of the last quarter of the 19th century for the preservation of America's archeological sites and the artifacts and information that they contained. After all, America's public lands and oceans belong to all of us. The Government holds them in trust for the benefit of current and future generations. These National treasures are now deemed National Monuments, and their contribution to the fabric of Utah cannot be ignored.

Grand Staircase Escalante, Zion, Bryce Canyon, Arches, Dinosaurs, Natural Bridges, – the list goes on, giving Utah more places of wonder and imagination than that of any school boy or girl. One of them is even called Bear's Ears. You may have heard of it too. I have always been rather fond of bears, their ears and all the rest too! I better be! It was after a hunt in Mississippi when –Mr. Mitchum designed the stuffed toy named "Teddy's Bear" that in part, gave me another 4 years in the White House and put smiles on young and old even today.

Scenic America and its 50 state and regional Affiliates play a huge role in championing these places as an important - no – an essential legacy of our generation as a gift to future ones. These places cannot exist in perpetuity without your support and protection

Today, the impact of both the Antiquities Act and of Scenic America is unmatched.

Many different organizations cooperate in diverse partnerships, including governments at the Federal, state, tribal and local levels; professional and scholarly groups and communities in shaping public policy to protect a broad array of cultural and natural resources. It is truly through the cooperation of people with a shared passion to protect that allows these legacies to continue. For I know we all agree that

"it is also vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird. Here in the United States we turn our rivers and streams into sewers and dumping-grounds, we pollute the air, we destroy forests, and exterminate fishes, birds and mammals -- not to speak of vulgarizing charming landscapes with hideous advertisements. But at last it looks as if our people were awakening."

This is certainly the understanding of those standing with each other today. You are leader-citizens, committed to making a difference while focused on the avoidance of and removal of vulgarity in charming landscapes. Bless you for your energy and your passion – continue to share it with others and become evangelists for the land and what you believe in.

Teach your children the importance of civic duty to continue to carry the torch for protecting your public lands and the incredible beauty of American Landscape. There can be no better

legacy for your family, your neighbors and those unborn than the protection of our natural beauty and resources.

"We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune."

We must continue to grow the numbers of neighbors and friends of scenic preservation across the country. We need to continue to educate and support each other on why this work is among the most valuable public citizens perform. Most of all, we need to continue to celebrate accomplishment and look to the future to the accomplishments that are yet to come.

Bless you all for the hard and amazing work you all do, and financial contributions you all make to keeping America Beautiful for our-selves, our visitors and our future. A bully congratulations to Scenic America and Scenic Utah.