The original documents are located in Box 37, “8/29/76 - Remarks at Old Faithful Lodge, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

SUNDAY - AUGUST 29, 1976
YELLOWSTONE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU, SECRETARY KLEPPE

SENATOR HANSEN

CONGRESSMAN HANSEN

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

REVEREND CLERGY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
LABOR DAY, NEXT WEEKEND, MARKS THE END OF A GLORIOUS SUMMER.

IT MEANS ONE MORE CAREFREE HOLIDAY BEFORE WE ALL GO BACK TO SCHOOL, BACK TO WORK, BACK TO THE DUTIES WE MUST DO TO BUILD BETTER LIVES FOR OURSELVES, OUR CHILDREN AND OUR COUNTRY.

FOR MANY FAMILIES, IT MEANS ONE LAST CHANCE TO GET OUT OF TOWN, OUT INTO THE SUN AND UNDER THE STARS, CLOSE TO NATURE'S BEAUTY AND NATURE'S CREATURES.
2.

FOR ME, THIS IS A MOMENT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO FOR A LONG TIME TO RETURN TO YELLOWSTONE WHERE I SPENT ONE OF THE GREATEST SUMMERS OF MY LIFE.

BEING A SEASONAL PARK RANGER WAS ONE OF MY MOST CHALLENGING JOBS AFTER GRADUATING FROM MICHIGAN. NOW IT SEEMS MORE LIKE FUN THAN HARD WORK, THOUGH WE HAD PLENTY OF BOTH.
3.

I'VE BEEN TELLING MY FAMILY ABOUT THAT SUMMER EVER SINCE. MAYBE I OVERDID THE BEDTIME STORIES ABOUT MY FIRE-FIGHTING EXPLOITS AND HEROIC BOUTS WITH THE BEARS.
SO THIS TIME I BROUGHT PART OF THE
FAMILY ALONG.

JACK, as you know, is no stranger to
YELLOWSTONE. TWO YEARS AGO THIS MONTH, he was
working as a ranger at Tower Station, actually he was out
fishing, when he got a sudden summons to Washington
to see his old man get a new job. So today is a
sentimental return to the scene of wonderful memories
for two of the Fords. And a new experience for
Susan, who hopes to get some good Yellowstone
photographs like she did last summer at Yosemite.
5. FAMILY VACATIONS IN THE OUTDOORS, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS OF THE WEST, ARE A TRADITION IN OUR FAMILY. MY PARENTS ALWAYS TOOK MY BROTHERS AND ME TO THE LAKES AND WOODS OF MICHIGAN BEFORE I WAS BIG ENOUGH TO GO MYSELF AS A BOY SCOUT.
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE WIDE OPEN SPACES

THAT'S ALMOST A NECESSITY FOR AMERICANS. BEING ALONE

WITH NATURE STRENGTHENS OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER AND

FOR OUR COUNTRY.
7.

FOR THOSE WHO LIVE CLOSE TO THE LAND,

THIS IS NOTHING NEW, BUT AS MORE AND MORE

AMERICANS LIVE IN CITIES, THE LURE OF THE MOUNTAINS

AND THE BEACHES AND THE RIVERS AND THE LAKES BECOMES

MORE AND MORE COMPelling.

SO HAVE A SERIOUS AS WELL AS SENTIMENTAL

REASON FOR THIS VISIT.
OUR BICENTENNIAL FOURTH OF JULY TURNED OUT TO BE A PROFOUND EXPERIENCE FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS. AMID THE FIREWORKS AND PARADES, THE TALL SHIPS AND THE TRIPS TO HISTORIC SHRINES, IN OUR JOYOUS CELEBRATION OF 200 YEARS AS ONE NATION UNDER GOD, WE FOUND NEW MEANING FOR THE WORDS FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND UNITY.
SOMEHOW, DESPITE OUR DIFFICULTIES AND OUR DIFFERENCES, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THEM—— AMERICANS RECAPTURED THE ESSENTIAL SPIRIT AND GREATNESS THAT MAKE US A SPECIAL KIND OF PEOPLE. WE REALIZED AGAIN WHAT A WONDERFUL THING IT IS JUST TO BE AN AMERICAN.
10.

AS I THOUGHT ABOUT THE CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THIS GREAT COUNTRY, NOT ONLY IN THE LAST TWO YEARS BUT OVER THE LAST TWO CENTURIES, I ALSO THOUGHT ABOUT THOSE THINGS THAT MUST NEVER CHANGE.
THOSE UNCHANGING THINGS REALLY MAKE US AMERICANS. THEY ARE THE THINGS WE MUST PASS ON TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.

SOME ARE INTANGIBLE, INVISIBLE — OUR DEEP RELIGIOUS AND MORAL CONVICTIONS, OUR BONDS OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY, OUR POLITICAL VALUES EMBODIED IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE CONSTITUTION.
BUT WE HAVE OTHER COMMON TREASURES THAT ARE MATERIAL AND VISIBLE, THAT CAN BE DAMAGED AND DESTROYED BY MAN. WE MUST BE EQUALLY COMMITTED TO CONSERVE AND CHERISH OUR INCOMPARABLE NATURAL HERITAGE—OUR WILDLIFE, OUR AIR, OUR WATERS AND OUR LAND ITSELF.
MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO WE BEGAN TO
SAVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF
FUTURE AMERICANS WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM
OF WHICH YELLOWSTONE IS THE OLDEST AND LARGEST.
THIS YEAR ALONE WE EXPECT SOME 260 MILLION VISITORS
to enjoy our 287 NATIONAL PARKS THAT SPREAD
FROM THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AND MAINE TO ALASKA
AND HAWAII.
AND I'M SURE THERE ARE TIMES WHEN SOME OF YOU THOUGHT ALL 260 MILLION WERE CAMPING ON YOUR CAMPSITE.

WE HAVE HAD A WONDERFUL BICENTENNIAL.

WE CELEBRATED WHAT OUR PATRIOT FOUNDERS AND OUR IMMIGRANT ANCESTORS HANDED DOWN TO US.

WE RENEWED OUR VOWS TO THEIR VISION OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY. BUT I FOUND MYSELF SAYING:

WE OUGHT TO DO MORE!
15.

CAN'T WE DO SOMETHING SPECIAL AS OUR BICENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY PRESENT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS?

A GIFT THAT WILL BE GRATEFULLY REMEMBERED 100 YEARS FROM NOW?

WE CAN.
I therefore decided upon a 10-year national commitment to double America's heritage of national parks, recreation areas, wildlife sanctuaries, urban parks, and historic sites.
I WILL SEND TO THE CONGRESS TUESDAY A BICENTENNIAL LAND HERITAGE ACT WHICH CALLS FOR A PLEDGE OF ONE AND A HALF BILLION DOLLARS DURING THE NEXT DECADE:

--- TO MORE THAN DOUBLE OUR PRESENT ACREAGE OF LAND FOR NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION AREAS AND WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES:

--- BEGINNING DEVELOPMENT OF THESE NEW LANDS TO MAKE THEM ACCESSIBLE AND ENJOYABLE;
18.

-- IMPROVING FACILITIES AND INCREASING DEDICATED PERSONNEL AT EXISTING NATIONAL PARKS;

-- MAKING AVAILABLE 200 MILLION DOLLARS FOR URBAN PARKS, BRINGING THE BENEFITS OF NATURE TO THOSE WHO LIVE IN OUR CITIES:

-- AND ACCELERATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARKLANDS AND SANCTUARIES NOW DELAYED FOR LACK OF MANPOWER AND MONEY.
19.

THIS NATIONAL COMMITMENT MEANS WE MAY HAVE TO TIGHTEN OUR BELTS ELSEWHERE, BUT IT’S THE SOUNDEST INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF AMERICA I CAN ENVISION. WE MUST ACT NOW TO PREVENT THE LOSS OF TREASURES THAT CAN NEVER BE REPLACED FOR OURSELVES, OUR CHILDREN AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS.
THIS IS A BIG JOB, ONE THAT REQUIRES GOVERNMENT ACTION AT ALL LEVELS. BUT LIKE MOST OF THE BIG JOBS AMERICANS UNDERTAKE, IT CANNOT BE LEFT TO GOVERNMENT ALONE.
IN THE PAST, THE CAUSE OF LAND CONSERVATION HAS BEEN ADVANCED BY MANY CONCERNED CITIZENS, COMPANIES AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS. THE ROCKEFELLER FAMILY, REPRESENTED HERE TODAY BY MARY AND LAURANCE ROCKEFELLER, IS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF THIS DEDICATION.
I thank them and all such farsighted Americans for their generous contributions to our national park system and the preservation of our priceless natural heritage.
I CALL UPON ALL AMERICANS,

OUR BICENTENNIAL GENERATION WHICH HAS ENJOYED

THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS,

OURS FOR 200 YEARS, TO JOIN IN A GREAT NEW

UNDERTAKING TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF OUR LIVES

AND OF OUR LAND.
I recall that snowy day in 1961 when President Kennedy was inaugurated. I can still see the great American poet, Robert Frost, standing on the steps of the Capitol, reciting these moving lines:
"THE LAND WAS OURS BEFORE WE WERE THE LAND'S,

"SHE WAS OUR LAND MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS

"BEFORE WE WERE HER PEOPLE . . . . . . ""
I remember as a ranger the first time I stood alone on Inspiration Point looking out over this beautiful portion of our land. I thought to myself how lucky I was that my grandparent's generation had the vision and determination to save it for us.
27.

NOW IT IS OUR TURN TO MAKE OUR OWN GIFT

OUTRIGHT TO THOSE WHO WILL COME AFTER US \ 15 YEARS,

40 YEARS, A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW.
I want to be as faithful to my grandchildren's generation as Old Faithful has been to ours.

What better way can we add a new dimension to our third century of freedom?

Thank you.