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and towering mountains. Through biking, swimming, skiing, hiking, and many other activities, Americans are enjoying our country's magnificent scenery and the healthy benefits of outdoor recreation.

To ensure that our natural heritage remains a source of pride for all our citizens, my Administration is committed to conserving America's public lands and natural resources and pursuing environmentally responsible initiatives. We are working to accelerate research into cleaner sources of energy, protect our water sources, and encourage the use of hybrid cars. We have put in place a series of clean air regulations that will help us to meet air quality standards. Through efforts like these, we will continue our Nation's economic growth and protect the environment.

Our citizens play an important role in protecting our natural spaces. Throughout our country, Americans are volunteering in their communities for environmental education programs, local parks, nature conservancies, and other stewardship opportunities. These devoted individuals are working to maintain park trails, restore wildlife habitats, plant trees, and clear overgrowth. I appreciate these volunteers for their efforts to keep America beautiful, and I encourage all Americans to demonstrate good stewardship and an appreciation for the outdoors. Individuals interested in volunteering can visit the Department of the Interior's Take Pride in America website at takepride.gov.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2006 as Great Outdoors Month. I call on all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities and to spend time enjoying the outdoors.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 8024 of May 24, 2006

National Homeownership Month, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Owning a home is an important part of the American dream. During National Homeownership Month, we raise awareness of homeownership and encourage more Americans to consider the benefits of owning their own home.

Nearly 70 percent of Americans enjoy the satisfaction of owning their own home, and my Administration continues to promote an ownership society where the promise of America reaches all our citizens. The American Dream Downpayment Act of 2003 is helping thousands of low to moderate income and minority families with downpayment and closing costs, which represent the greatest barrier to homeownership.

Since 2002, when I announced our goal to help 5.5 million minorities become homeowners by the end of this decade, the rate of minority homeownership has climbed above 50 percent, and more than 2.5 million minority families have become new homeowners. My Administration will continue to provide counseling and assistance for new homebuyers and expand homeownership opportunities for all Americans.

During National Homeownership Month and throughout the year, we applaud the men and women who work to achieve the dream of homeownership, and we are grateful for those who provide counseling, lending, real estate, construction, and other services to these individuals. The hard work, financial discipline, and personal responsibility of our country's homeowners help transform neighborhoods throughout our Nation and reflect the best qualities of America.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 2006 as National Homeownership Month. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in building a more hopeful society and recognizing the importance of expanding the ownership of homes across our great Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Proclamation 8025 of May 25, 2006

Black Music Month, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

African-American musicians have added to the rich culture of our country and of countries around the world. During Black Music Month, we recognize the African-American artists who have enhanced our lives and created some of our Nation's most treasured art forms.

Throughout history, African-American artists have produced music with the power to change hearts and shape our national conscience. From gospel to blues, from jazz to rock and roll, the songs of America's black musicians have defined our times and enriched our culture. Performers such as Count Basie and Dizzy Gillespie and vocalists such as Lizzie Miles and gospel singer Mahalia Jackson have made their mark as great American musicians, strengthening our Nation's diversity and lifting the human spirit.

In 2005, Americans witnessed the power of music to help bring our country together. Following the devastation of the Gulf Coast by Hurricane Katrina, the musicians of that great region sought to preserve their unique musical style and culture and share it with the rest of the Nation. The soulful music of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast remains one of our national treasures, a symbol of creativity and hope.