

More than eight decades later, Abraham Lincoln returned to the words and meaning of the Declaration of Independence. Lincoln knew that in the distant future people would look upon it and “take courage to renew the battle which their fathers began—so that truth, and justice, and mercy . . . might not be extinguished from the land.” A century after Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., called the Declaration of Independence a “promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.”

The Declaration of Independence has become a standard by which other nations and peoples measure their progress in the effort to advance human freedom. Even nations that are not yet free pay homage to freedom, and it is seen as a universal human good.

Our Nation is vastly different than it was during the days of our founding—yet our commitment to America’s founding truths remains strong and steady. Our duty is to continue to fulfill the promise of Thomas Jefferson’s words and vision of a better life for all people. Meeting that responsibility is the best way we can honor the memory of the man who was an architect of the freest Nation on Earth.

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 of America, do hereby proclaim April 13, 2006, as Thomas Jefferson Day. I encourage all Americans to join in celebrating Thomas Jefferson’s achievements, reflecting on his words, and learning more about this extraordinary man’s influence on American history and ideals.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of April, 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 8002 of April 18, 2006

National Park Week, 2006

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

In America’s national parks, the magnificent beauty of our country and important examples of our Nation’s cultural heritage are preserved and made available to Americans and visitors from all over the world. Each year, as we observe National Park Week, we underscore our commitment to conserve our natural and historical treasures and encourage more Americans to enjoy, learn from, and protect these important parts of our heritage.

Our Nation has a long legacy of conservation. In 1872, Yellowstone National Park became our country’s first national park, and more than four decades later, the National Park Service was created. Today, the national park system includes almost 400 sites, with parks in nearly every state. From Yosemite National Park in California to Acadia National Park in Maine, and from Independence Hall to the Martin Luther King, Jr., National

Historic Site, America’s national parks are home to some of our Nation’s most beautiful landscapes and richest history.

This year’s theme, “Connecting our Children to America’s National Parks,” reflects the National Park Service’s commitment to encouraging young people to enjoy outdoor recreation and better appreciate our Nation’s beauty and history. The National Park Service Junior Rangers program develops interest in our national parks by teaching children and their families about the importance of the national park sites. Young people can visit our national parks online by going to the Junior Rangers website at www.nps.gov/WebRangers. As Honorary Chair of the National Park Foundation, First Lady Laura Bush helps raise awareness about preservation of the parks and encourages support for programs like the Junior Rangers. Through initiatives like this, the National Park Service is promoting good stewardship of the environment and appreciation of our Nation’s heritage.

With the opportunity to live in America comes a responsibility to ensure that our national parks remain a source of pride, pleasure, and education for all our citizens. During National Park Week and throughout the year, we pay tribute to the employees and volunteers of the National Park Service. For the past 90 years, these dedicated men and women have worked to maintain and enhance our national parks and to ensure that they are preserved and enjoyed for generations to come.

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 April 22 through April 30, 2006, as National Park Week. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in celebrating America’s national parks and becoming active participants in park conservation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of April, 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 8003 of April 19, 2006

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, 2006

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

For 50 years, the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has helped individuals, schools, communities, businesses, and organizations promote healthy lifestyles. During this year’s National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, we celebrate the Council’s 50th anniversary and underscore our Nation’s strong commitment to health, physical activity, and fitness.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower founded the President’s Council on Youth Fitness in 1956 to encourage America’s youth to make fitness a priority. He wrote that year, “Our young people must be physically as well as mentally and spiritually prepared for American citizenship.” The Council later became the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, including