

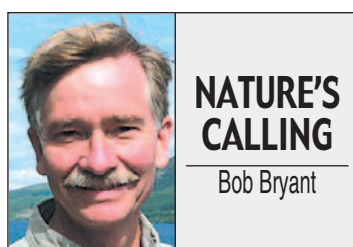
A requiem for Earth Day?

This Earth Day, April 22, people worldwide will celebrate the Earth, its natural resources, and the benefits it provides. Our lives depend on the Earth. Clean air, clean water, and clean land are essential for our health and livelihoods as well as for those of every other living thing on the planet.

Born of an American cultural revolution in 1970 in response to unprecedented pollution and disregard for the environment in the name of "progress," or more correctly "greed," Earth Day has now become a worldwide movement that promotes wise stewardship of the Earth's natural resources and calls humans around the world to act responsibly for the Earth's care.

This year, we Americans especially ought to take stock of the benefits we receive from the Earth and consider our role in promoting its care. Indeed, before our country was a 100 years old, we gave the world its first national park (1872). Soon afterward we established the first National Forest (1891), National Bird Preserve (1903), and National Conservation Commission (1908).

Of course, these visionary acts were also reactionary, as are most conservation acts. America extended its environmental stewardship with the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918), but it was in response to the extinction and near-extinction of



NATURE'S CALLING

Bob Bryant

many migratory birds. We established the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (1934), but only after industrial pollution caused dramatic losses of fish and wildlife. The Soil Conservation Act (1936) was a reaction to the Dust Bowl.

The same "knee-jerk" governance applies to the establishment of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (1954), Air Pollution Control Act (1955), and Federal Water Pollution Control Act (1960).

Even visionary legislation like the world's first act to protect untrammeled areas with the Wilderness Act (1964) or create a National Trails System (1968) were reactions to the near disappearance of wild spaces where citizens could roam and experience an expanse of the natural world for extended periods of time.

Similarly the creation of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969 and the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970, both of which were established under the leadership of Republican President Richard M.

Nixon with full bipartisan support, were necessitated by a massive public outcry from coast to coast that reached a crescendo when the Cuyahoga River caught on fire again and became the symbol of America's pollution problem.

Then, acting as if their lives depended on it — because all of our lives did, Congress passed the Clean Air Act without a single nay vote. The Clean Water Act followed (1972), and then came the Endangered Species Preservation Act (1973).

Americans wanted non-toxic land to live on, non-poisonous air to breathe, and non-contaminated water to drink and touch. So they worked together for the common good — Republicans and Democrats — and asked companies and individuals to rethink, reduce, reuse, and recycle for the good of all.

Today, however, our nation shows no common resolve to protect the environment we share. Indeed, our current governmental assault on hard-earned environmental protections to safeguard public health is unprecedented. This past year alone, 33 environmental policies and safeguards were rolled back and 24 are still being processed. Ten are stalled. The particulars are well-chronicled, but the trajectory is clear: vital protections for the health of the nation and the land we share are being removed as speedily as

possible for the financial advantages of a few.

We are witnessing an environmental Tragedy of the Commons, a phenomenon in which self-interested individuals, if left unchecked, will inherently choose self-gain over the common good and deplete — even spoil — the resources that belong to all.

Presently, even the chief administrator of the EPA, Scott Pruitt, is vigorously dismantling the very agency our country created to champion a healthier environment for a healthier people. Foundational laws for clean air and water are under attack, and scientific research is ignored. Moreover, according to the League of Conservation Voters, our state's own federal representatives are nearly all aligned with Pruitt and are among the most anti-environmental voters in the nation.

Thus, despite our great natural history, our legacy of environmental leadership for the world, and widespread sentiments that the Earth is good — even created by God, we have entered another period of tragic disregard for the environment and the life it sustains. If left unchecked, the ways of self-interest will bring far greater losses, and Earth Day will become more requiem than celebration.

Musgrove Mill to hold annual encampment

Musgrove Mill State Historic Site will be presenting their annual Encampment Weekend on April 28 and 29. Come experience what life was like on the South Carolina frontier during the American Revolution! Activities will highlight the battle of Musgrove Mill and will feature interpretive talks, demonstrations, and exhibits presented by reenactors. The demonstrations include historic weapons demonstrations, tactical military demonstrations, period children's games, colonial art, colonial medicine, blacksmithing, and more. The event will begin at 10 a.m.

and end at 4 p.m. each day.

Admission for the event is: Adults - \$4, children (age 6 to 16) - \$2, and children (age 5 and under) - free.

Admission is free with a Park Passport Plus.

This event is designed for everyone. Wheelchair and stroller accessible.

For more information regarding this event you can contact Musgrove Mill State Historic Site at 864-938-0100, e-mail mgmillsp@scprtc.com.

For more information on the site, please go to www.SouthCarolinaParks.com.

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