

18.4

The Environmental Movement



As a Young Historian, I will be able to...

- Assess the causes and effects of the environmental movement.
- Analyze why environmental protection became a controversial issue

Environmental Activists Sound the Alarm

Toxic Waste- Poisonous byproduct of human activity.

Acid Rain- Moisture in the air caused by the mixing of water with chemicals produced by the burning of fossil fuels

Throughout the 1960s & 1970s, scientists sought more about toxic wastes & other environmental threats

Rachel Carson wrote the book *Silent Spring* to describe the deadly impact pesticides had on birds & other animals

She argued that human activity was altering the environment, causing Congress to limit pesticide DDT & create activism among Americans

Grassroots Movements

1969- The Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio burst into flames due to floating oil and debris from local industry

Senator Gaylord Nelson organized the first **Earth Day protest on April 22, 1970 to force environmental issues onto the national agenda**

President Nixon creates the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help limit or eliminate pollutants from the environment**

Environmental Acts

Clean Air Act (1970)- combated air pollution by limiting the emissions from factories & automobiles

Clean Water Act (1973)- Limited pollution of water by industry & agriculture

Endangered Species Act (1973)- Promoted the protection of endangered plants & animals.



Impact of Environmental Regulations

Some people argued for more far-reaching actions, some believed that the government had gone too far & threatened property rights (5th Amendment)

1978- The EPA investigated Love Canal, New York. Found the community had high rates of birth defects & cancer due to tons of toxic materials that were dumped in the area over decades

1979- A nuclear energy plant on Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania began a meltdown. It was contained, but people began to fear nuclear power

Americans are still divided about the environment & how to protect it today