

For those tired of the wrangling in Washington over legislation, there is some good news. For some time now, the Obama Administration has been taking matters into its own hands on the regulatory front (including [fuel efficiency / greenhouse gas emission regulations](#) for cars that should be finalized any day; [greenhouse gas emissions reporting requirements](#) for large stationary sources; and moving, albeit at a snail's pace as [Cara](#) and [Sean](#) have pointed out, to impose [new source review requirements](#)), as well as on the adaptation front (among other things forming an [Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force](#), led by the White House's Council on Environmental Quality, which recently issued [this progress report](#) including recommendations for a national adaptation strategy).

But of course the White House does more than coordinate regulatory and resource management policy. It provides an opportunity to raise the public profile of issues, and to channel public concern in productive ways. Until recently, this White House has done surprisingly little of that on environmental issues, probably because it's had so many other issues to deal with. Now there's a welcome initiative on that front. The White House has announced that it will host a [Conference on America's Great Outdoors](#) on April 16, 2010. Led by CEQ Chair Nancy Sutley, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack,

This conference will bring together leaders from communities across the country that are working to protect their outdoor spaces. Participants will include working ranchers and farmers, sportsmen and women, State and local government leaders, Tribal leaders, public lands experts, conservationists, youth leaders, business representatives and others who view the outdoors as integral to their communities. The discussion will center on the conservation opportunities in communities, the challenges facing them, and the innovative solutions they are crafting from the bottom up.

This is a very welcome sign that the White House recognizes the importance of conservation, and is willing to put at least some of its public relations power to work on understanding and dealing with conservation issues.

On a more local note, for those interested in the wildest parts of the American outdoors, this year's [Western Wilderness Conference](#) will take place April 8-11, 2010, on the UC Berkeley campus.