



About three months ago, my friend Michael Cohen [wrote a piece for the Atlantic](#) arguing who were the five best and worst foreign policy presidents of the last century. It got [a good bit of well-deserved play in the blogosphere](#).

So what if we tried to do it for environmental policy?

The immediate problem is that environmental policy has nowhere near the salience for the nation's chief executive that national security does. This is true practically, politically, and constitutionally. So at the very least, you'd have to extend any nominations back to the nation's founding. Whether that does much good is an open question, for one could argue that environmental *policy* as we currently consider it really did not get going until the 1960's. But that sort of begs the question of what environmental choices are, which is part of the fun of the whole thing.

It's also not clear to me whether looking at the worst environmental presidents will really get you a list. Presidents who make an environmental mark usually do so positively (although of course, there are exceptions, including one Very Big Exception). But I'll entertain nominations.

In any event, though, in preparing for a [listicle](#), let's start taking names: who are the best environmental presidents in the American history, and why? I'll try to come up with the Ultimate Definitive List next week.