Theodore
Roosevelt

Teddy Roosevelt was an early conservation, who fought even as a young man to help preserve Yellowstone National Park from commercial exploitation. As President, he created the national forest system, TR created the Tongass and the Chugach forest reserves in Alaska. In Hawaii, he set several small islands aside as the Hawaiian Islands Bird Reservation, and in Florida he created the Pelican Island Bird Reservation. Other protected areas included Mount Olympus (Washington State), Lake Malheur (Oregon); Culebra Island (Puerto Rico); Mosquito Inlet (Florida), and the Grand Canyon National Monument(Arizona). He also founded the Bureau of Forestry and appointed Gifford Pinchot as its first head.

It's often forgotten today, but the Nixon Presidency was a golden era for environmental law. Nixon created the federal EPA by executive order. He also signed key environmental laws: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Clean Air Act; the Ocean Dumping Act, and the National Marine Mammal Protection Act. One of his Supreme Court appointments, Harry Blackmun, took a very progressive view of environmental standing. Another, Warren Burger, wrote the famous Snail Darter opinion that gave vigorous meaning to the Endangered Species Act.

William Ruckelshaus was the first Administrator of the EPA. He had been an assistant Attorney General in Indiana and a member of the state legislature, before Nixon appointed him to DOJ and then to head EPA. He did much to set the course for EPA during his time under Nixon. President Reagan reappointed him to the office to regain the credibility and professionalism of the agency after scandals involving Reagan's first appointee.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, the former Governor of California, took a leading role in the fight against climate change. He strongly supported AB 32 and oversaw the initial implementation efforts. Parlaying his celebrity status into a pulpit for advancing this cause on the world stage, he spoke with world leaders and reached a broad audience. After leaving office, he is continuing to work on this issue.