Remarks of Assistant Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver, Jr., at the National Girl Scout Conference, Cazenovia College (Syracuse), New York, July 25, 1964

By chance, earlier this week, I was on the airplane which brought two of your number from Salt Lake City as far as Chicago. As all of you have converged on this beautiful college campus from all parts of the United States by train, plane, and bus, I am sure that you have been sensible, as the two I saw on that airplane certainly seemed to be, of your special responsibilities. In uniform, each of you is a steward of the reputation and tradition of the organization represented by that uniform. Because others worked and sacrificed to send you here, you feel a duty to be worthy of that confidence and trust. You represent them and your performance indicates their judgment of your leadership ability. And you are ambassadors of your States and communities.

And I know that you have promised to bring back to your sister scouts the lessons, experiences and insights, which come to you while here.

Above all, each one of you is a free citizen of a free society, so you bring to the conference your individuality, your own pride in America's regard for the worth and dignity of each citizen.

The responsibilities of the keynoter of such a conference are correspondingly great. I must honorably represent the national administration of which I am a part, the Department for which I work, and I must try to leave something with you which can be taken back to your States, something hopefully entitled to be remembered and repeated.

The national officers of the Girl Scouts pay the Secretary of the Interior a fine tribute in choosing one of his lieutenants to speak to the theme, "Conservation, Its Meaning and Importance to America Today." We like to think of conservation as the unifying force of the diverse responsibilities of our department. Many of our bureaus are concerned with conservation of the land and its resources, organizations like the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Mines and the power marketing agencies.
We are proud in the Department of our Secretary, Stewart Udall, who has done so much to make all America conservation conscious. I hope that you will have the opportunity, perhaps while you are here, to look into and be inspired by one of the truly fine books on conservation, *The Quiet Crisis*. In this book you will find background for an understanding of what our country and the people must do as we try to accommodate to perhaps 400 million people who will live in our country, perhaps within your lifetimes.

The first census after I was born counted 105 million Americans. The first census after most of you were born counted 150 million Americans. Between 1920 and 1950 our country's growth filled up the West, until urbanization is now the national norm. The two hundred million population increase predicted for the next 45 years (by 2010) will be crowded in upon our already crowded cities. The result will be even more suffocation of the values of openness, quality values which you will be examining in your sessions this week and next.

President Johnson, at another campus not long ago and not far from here, laid down a challenge to Americans to produce "The Great Society." "We have always prided ourselves," he said, "on being not only America the strong and America the free, but America the beautiful ... A few years ago we were greatly concerned about the 'ugly American.' Today we must act to prevent an ugly America. For once the battle is lost, once our natural splendor is destroyed, it can never be recaptured. And once man can no longer walk with beauty or wonder at nature, his spirit will wither and his sustenance be wasted."

*The Quiet Crisis* is a reference book which documents President Johnson's words. It is also one of the most readable and interesting you will find. So once again let me urge you to use it as an introduction to conservation literature.

Let me talk for a moment or two about conservation literature. It helps, sometimes, to have a theme or subject for your personal reading. It will open doors to experiences of great meaning to look to the writings of Henry Thoreau and William O. Douglas, to John Wesley Powell and Aldo Leopold. The literature of conservation is a treasure house.

The early waves of conservation in this nation brought the government and the people generally to a consciousness of resources and the necessity for wisely using them. John Wesley Powell could foresee the harnessing of the rivers for the public good. Gifford Pinchot fathered the idea of a sustained yield, multiple purpose management of our forest lands; he not only secured the creation of a system of national forests but his influence is felt by all users of the woods, who now follow higher standards for the management of the resources.

It was in the 19th century that Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay, *Nature*, developed the thesis that the individual should "enjoy an original relation to the universe." Henry Thoreau, in *Walden*, caught Emerson's spirit, and developed an explicit reverence for the land.
In this century, beginning with the vigorous Theodore Roosevelt, the conservation story has centered around the responsibility of the government for seeing that the natural resources, including especially the minerals of the public lands, should be "conserved".

And we have a series of wise laws which make this country a better place today, including the act which created the National Park Service, and provided for the protection of antiquities; the laws authorizing national forests and their management on a multiple use basis; the Taylor Grazing Act which ended the great range wars and brought stability to the range livestock industry in the West; the Reclamation Act which provided for the establishment of a fund into which should be paid a part of the proceeds of the minerals of the public lands for development of irrigation and reclamation, and for the repayment of the users of these projects of the cost over a 50-year period.

There are in this field of conservation and resources management literature, stirring stories of adventure, exploration and discovery; high excitement as you read about the struggles for the control of minerals and of the oil reserves; philosophy and quiet contemplation as in The Sand County Almanac of Aldo Leopold, which will sharpen your awareness of the ethical considerations of a man's relationship to the land. There is the genius of Audubon's Birds of America to please the scientist's mind and the artist's eye.

As I said, these are things which will be introduced to you in Secretary Udall's fine book, The Quiet Crisis. That book bridges the idea that conservation is associated with land and its resources to the much broader modern concept of conservation, a concept which relates to the growing urbanization and exploding population.

President John F. Kennedy said that we must expand the concept of conservation to meet the imperious problems of the new age.

President Lyndon B. Johnson's remarks at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, which I mentioned earlier, was an occasion for him to say the same thing. In our national history, as he pointed out, for a century we labored to settle and subdue a continent; for half a century we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all of our people. The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization. He spoke about our cities, our countryside, and our classrooms.

I hope that if you feel moved to take up my challenge to look into the literature of conservation that you will discover Lewis Mumford and such books as The Culture of Cities and The City in History. Probably only a few of you here today would say that you live in the country or in a rural neighborhood. Most of you, like my children, know best the suburbs. Your experience covers the sprawl of the new subdivisions, the ever-growing pressure on highways and other facilities, including particularly the demand for more and more schools.
The violence in our cities, particularly where young people are involved, reflects the erosion of the values of the community, the values of communion with nature. The loss of these, said President Johnson to the students at Ann Arbor, breeds loneliness, boredom and indifference. Loneliness and boredom and indifference, when triggered by emotion or incited by extreme elements, moves with frightening speed, sometimes, to violence and hate. All society suffers the consequences.

This, then, is another concept of conservation and what it means to you. We must understand our cities just as we must understand our land and its resources, and just as we must understand our system of government and the nature of freedom. This is the meaning and importance of conservation in America today.

I outlined a little earlier to you some of the landmarks of conservation legislation. The process of the Congress coming to grips with the needs of our country and the framing of national policy for conservation concepts is still going on. Congress in 1958 authorized the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission expressing the Congress' desire to preserve, develop and assure accessibility to all American people of present and future generations such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as will be necessary and desirable for individual enjoyment, and to assure the spiritual, cultural, and physical benefits that such outdoor recreation provides. Chapter 1 of the Commission's magnificent report said that the "outdoors lies deep in American tradition."

The recommendations of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission are being put into effect. For example, its recommendation that a Bureau of Outdoor Recreation be established in the Department of the Interior has been carried out. This group coordinates the outdoor recreation activities of more than 20 federal bureaus and offices which have responsibilities related to outdoor recreation. These include the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, whose reservoirs serve the ever growing demand for water based recreational opportunities; the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service and the United States Forest Service, who have the scenic lands and camping opportunities and the parkways in the natural and historic areas which mean so much to Americans; and the Fish and Wildlife Service is concerned with fishing and hunting opportunities and habitat for ducks and wildlife.

As important as any of the laws I listed earlier is one which is now being considered by the Congress. The day before yesterday the House of Representatives passed a bill to create a land and water conservation fund. This measure will be considered by a Committee of the United States Senate next week. This bill will enable the federal government to give assistance to the states to meet the demand for recreational opportunities in city parks, county parks, state parks. This philosophy represents the strongly held view of this administration that there must be a creative cooperation on conservation matters between the federal government and the state and local governments and the private sector of the community.
I would like you to pursue your deliberations and discussions with feeling that the conservation movement is a dynamic, important national force. It is something which you can be a part of at many different levels, all of them important. You can, as I have said, find the stimulation of adventure in its history; its literature will excite you; there are great vocational opportunities in it, and make no mistake about it, these vocational opportunities are every bit as open to the women as to the men in this country. Conservation consciousness can help you with the work of your troops, and in a few years can be included in the agendas for your PTA and civic association meetings.

I would like to conclude with some further words spoken by the President in this kind of place to another group from your generation:

"Within your lifetime powerful forces, already loosed, will take us toward a way of life beyond the realm of our experience, almost beyond the bounds of our imagination. For better or for worse, your generation has been appointed by history to deal with those problems and to lead America toward a new age. You have the chance never before afforded to any people in any age. You can help build a society where the demands of morality, and the needs of the spirit, can be realized in the life of the Nation.

"So will you join in the battle to give every citizen the full equality which God enjoins and the law requires, whatever his belief, or race, or the color of his skin? Will you join in the battle to give every citizen an escape from the crushing weight of poverty? Will you join in the battle to make it possible for all nations to live in enduring peace as neighbors and not as mortal enemies? Will you join in the battle to build the Great Society, to prove that our material progress is only the foundation on which we will build a richer life of mind and spirit?

"There are those timid souls who say this battle cannot be won, that we are condemned to a soulless wealth. I do not agree. We have the power to shape the civilization that we want. But we need your will, your labor, your hearts, if we are to build that kind of society.

"Those who came to this land sought to build more than just a new country. They sought a free world.

"So I have come here today to your campus to say that you can make their vision our reality. Let us from this moment begin our work so that in the future men will look back and say: It was then, after a long and weary way, that man turned the exploits of his genius to the full enrichment of his life."