

**CHAPTER 24** Section 4 (pages 820–825)

# Environmental Activism

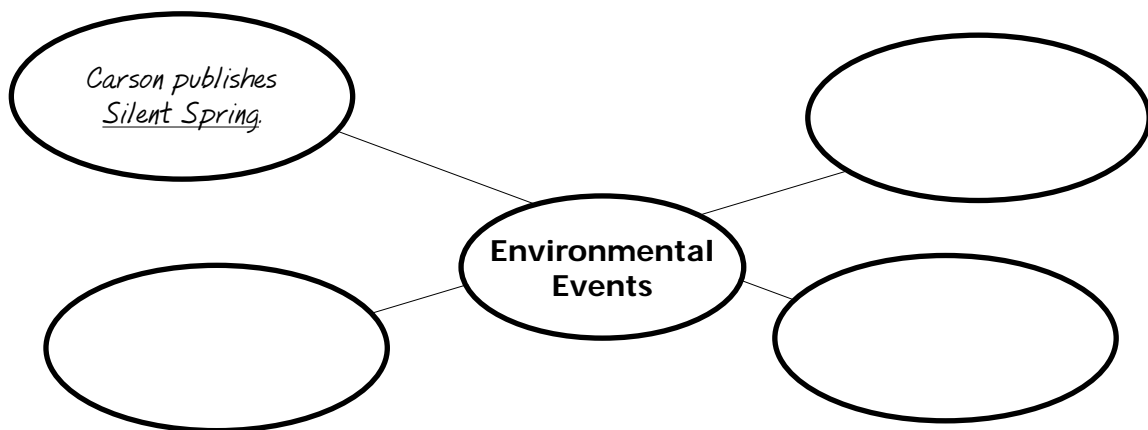
## BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you learned about President Ford and President Carter.

In this section, you will see how Americans addressed their environmental concerns.

## AS YOU READ

Use the web below to take notes about important events for the environmental movement in the United States.



### TERMS AND NAMES

**Rachel Carson** Environmentalist crusader in the U.S.

**Earth Day** Annual day to celebrate the environment

**environmentalist** Person who actively tries to protect the environment

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** Federal agency formed to decrease pollution

**Three Mile Island** Site of a nuclear plant that released radiation into the air

## The Roots of Environmentalism

(pages 820–821)

### *What is environmentalism?*

Concern for the environment was increased by the 1962 book *Silent Spring*, written by **Rachel Carson**. That book argued that *pesticides* were poisoning food and killing birds and fish. *Silent Spring* sold nearly half a million copies within six months.

Carson's book was an awakening to many Americans. President Kennedy set up a committee to investigate the situation shortly after the book's publication. It took several years, but Carson's work helped to outlaw the use of DDT, a harmful pesticide, in 1972.

1. How did *Silent Spring* encourage environmentalism?

## Environmental Concerns in the 1970s

(pages 821–825)

### *What were the key environmental issues of the 1970s?*

On April 22, 1970, Americans celebrated **Earth Day** for the first time. Earth Day became a yearly event to highlight environmental issues.

Richard Nixon was not an **environmentalist**—someone who takes an active role in protecting the

environment. But he did recognize the nation's concern over the environment. In 1970, he created the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**. This agency had the power to regulate *pollution* caused by *emissions* standards and to conduct research.

Nixon also signed the 1970 Clean Air Act. This law required industry to reduce pollution from factories and automobiles. Other new laws to protect the environment also passed.

In 1968, oil was found in Alaska. Oil companies began building a pipeline to carry the oil 800 miles across the state. The discovery of oil and the construction of the pipeline created many new jobs and increased state revenues.

But the pipeline raised concerns about Alaska's environment and the rights of Alaska's native peoples. In 1971, Nixon signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This law gave millions of acres of land to the state's native tribes.

In 1978, President Carter set aside 56 million more acres in Alaska as national monuments. In 1980, Congress added another 104 million acres to Alaska's protected conservation areas.

In the 1970s, some people believed that nuclear energy was the energy of the future. They believed that it was cheap, plentiful, and safe.

Others opposed nuclear energy. They warned that nuclear plants were dangerous to humans and the environment. These people also feared accidents and nuclear waste.

On March 28, 1979, the concerns of opponents of nuclear energy appeared to come true. An accident caused one of the nuclear reactors on **Three**

**Mile Island**, in Pennsylvania, to release *radiation* into the air. An investigation showed that workers at the plant had not been properly trained. It also showed that some safety measures were not taken. Afterwards, the government strengthened nuclear safety regulations.

2. What did the government do after the accident at a nuclear reactor on Three Mile Island?

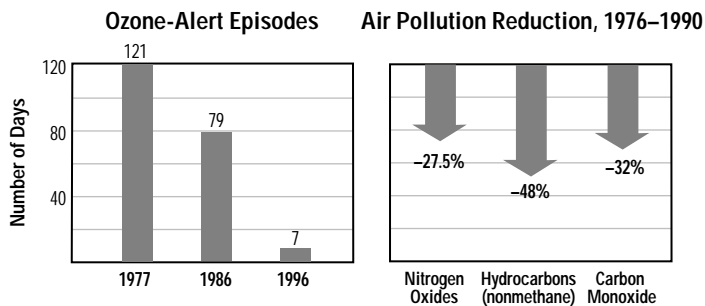
## A Continuing Movement (page 825)

*Have the goals of the environmental movement changed?*

The debate over the environment continues today. The struggle is between proponents of economic growth and conservationists. Environmental regulations sometimes block economic development and cause a loss of jobs for workers. Though there is conflict, it is clear that environmental concerns have gained increasing attention and support.

3. What issue faces Americans today regarding the environment?

### Environmental Progress in Los Angeles Region



Source: California Air Resources Board

## Skillbuilder

Use the charts to answer these questions.

1. How many days in 1996 did people in Los Angeles face ozone-alert episodes?
2. How much did carbon monoxide pollution decrease in Los Angeles between 1976 and 1990?