

will be expected to take only photographs and leave only footprints.

The second part of our plan, which works in tandem with the livable communities initiative the Vice President announced yesterday, represents a new vision of environmental stewardship for the new century. Today, it's no longer enough to preserve our grandest natural wonders. As communities keep growing and expanding, it's become every bit as important to preserve the small but sacred green and open spaces closer to home: woods and meadows and seashores where children can still play; streams where sports men and women can fish; agricultural lands where family farmers can produce the fresh harvest we often take for granted.

In too many communities, farmland and open spaces are disappearing at a truly alarming rate. In fact, across this country, we lose about 7,000 acres every single day. And as the lands become more scarce, it becomes harder and harder for communities to then afford the price of protecting the ones that are left. That's why we have to act now.

So we will also dedicate nearly \$600 million to helping communities across our country save the open spaces that greatly enhance our families' quality of life. With flexible grants, loans, and easements, we will help communities to save parks from being paved over. We'll help to save farms from being turned into strip malls. We'll help them to acquire new lands for urban and suburban forests and recreation sites. We'll help them set aside new wetlands, coastal, and wildlife preserves. There will be no green mandates and no redtape. Instead, the idea is to give communities all over our country the tools they need to make the most of their own possibilities.

Let me just give you an example of what I mean. South Kingstown, Rhode Island, was a quiet farming town for more than two centuries. Today, it's the fastest growing community in the State. Its citizens welcome growth, but they want to maintain their parks and their open spaces. They want to make sure parents won't have to sit in traffic jams when they could be home reading to their children. They want to remain the kind of livable town where employers have no trouble recruiting educated workers interested in a high quality of life. So South Kingstown is setting aside one of every 5 acres as green space. They're revitalizing the historic downtown by creating a greenway along the

Saugatucket River so people can stroll and bike right through the heart of town. And in November voters overwhelmingly approved a million-dollar bond measure to protect more farms and more open spaces.

This is the work we will help them to complete and the kind of work we will help people all over America to do. This is the kind of future-oriented community action all Americans, without regard to party or region, should be supporting, action that combines a vigorous commitment to economic prosperity with an equally vigorous commitment to conservation.

Ever since Theodore Roosevelt launched our Nation on the course of conservation, pessimists have claimed that this would hurt the economy. They've been wrong for 100 years now, but they haven't given up. Time and again they have been wrong. Whether the issue was park land preservation, acid rain, deadly pesticides, polluted rivers, the ozone hole, or any number of other environmental issues all of you know very well, we have always found ways to improve our environment, protect the public health, and enshrine our public heritage and still continue to grow our economy.

In fact, with the recent developments in technology and the looming problems of climate change, we now know that we will have a far more prosperous economy if we do the right things by the environment. And I hope that in the 21st century we will not have to fight that battle for another 100 years.

With this historic lands legacy initiative and the farsighted livable communities plan the Vice President announced yesterday, we will use flexible, innovative means to protect our Nation's and our communities' natural heritage. We will help to create livable cities where both citizens and businesses want to put down roots. We will honor the core principle Theodore Roosevelt set out for us 100 years ago: to leave this magnificent country even a better land for our descendants than it is for us.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. at the National Arboretum. In his remarks, he referred to Jean Mason, president, Arboretum Civic Association, who introduced the President; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Thomas S. Elias, Director, National Arboretum; Theodore Roosevelt IV, member, board of directors, League of Conservation Voters, and great-grandson of