



GCA Positions on Public Policy Issues

A core tenet of The Garden Club of America's mission is to "restore, improve and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement." In fulfilling that purpose, the GCA has developed position papers to articulate broad goals for advocacy efforts in the public policy arena. Underlying all of these position papers is a commitment to "independent, academic, peer-reviewed scientific research as the basis for formulation of public policy and legislation, as well as appropriate funding to ensure quality results."

The GCA's current position papers cover the following subject-matter areas:

Clean Air: The GCA supports the Clean Air Act and urges a reduction in greenhouse gases through an integrated strategy of regulated emission caps, improved energy efficiency, and greater use of renewable energy sources.

Clean Water: The GCA supports policies to protect the quantity and quality of our nation's water resources. This includes preserving ecosystems and reducing water pollution through a vital and broad-based Clean Water Act, as well as protecting coastal waters and the world's oceans through national and global initiatives.

Strategies to Address Climate Change: With an emphasis on encouraging action to preserve biodiversity, the GCA is committed to educating members and communities about the causes of climate change and constructive responses. The GCA supports federal, state and local legislation and regulations, as well as individual initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

National Parks: Recognizing the national parks as irreplaceable treasures as well as critical habitats for protecting native plant communities and whole ecosystems, the GCA supports making conservation the system's top priority, along with ensuring adequate resource levels to maintain the parks.

National Public Lands: Recognizing the ever-increasing pressure for multiple uses of federal lands, the GCA supports strengthening public policy to make resource protection and preservation the first priority in establishing public land policy. This includes full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the use of the federal portion of that fund to purchase and restore public lands.

Preservation of Native Plants: Viewing the Endangered Species Act as one of America's landmark pieces of conservation legislation, the GCA supports measures to protect the nation's rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitat and to create workable science-based recovery programs.

Sustainable Agriculture, Seed Diversity, and Food Security: The GCA encourages agricultural policies that support conservation of healthy soil on farms, including a strong and well-funded conservation title in the Farm Bill.

Environmentally Responsible Transportation Legislation: The GCA favors legislation that encourages biodiversity in roadside plantings, fosters the creation and maintenance of scenic byways, emphasizes protection of the natural landscape, addresses the hazards of electronic billboards, and preserves the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process.