

**Mayor Van Johnson, Remarks  
5th Annual Earth & Arbor Day Celebration  
City Square Community Garden  
Monday, April 22, 2013**

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Today marks the Fifth Anniversary where this community has come together to commemorate the first ever community garden established within the city of Apalachicola - and to celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day, both annual events designed to bring awareness to the importance of mankind protecting and preserving for generations to come earth's natural resources.

As always, I'm humbled and honored by the invitation to join with you and to share my thoughts on this momentous occasion. Since day one, it has been a great pleasure for me to see such unwavering community support towards this one particular project.

Sometimes I wish that I could harvest that support and the friendships that have blossomed and risen from this place - just to apply them to every facet of our national, state, and local government - not only to increase the awareness for us to become better stewards over our natural resources - but to also create a spirit of collaboration throughout this great country. Our national and certainly our local communities depend upon such for its economic salvation.

The wealth of this great nation and the world, without exception is depended upon and derived from the air, water, soil, forests, minerals, rivers, lakes, oceans, scenic beauty and our wildlife habitations. All of our economic activity and jobs come from these biological systems, which are the sustaining wealth of the world.

These facts suggest that protecting and preserving our natural resources, which are linked to our economic wellbeing and survival should be in the best interest of every man, women and child within every community throughout this vast world.

At the very least, we should own our God appointed responsibilities to be good stewards over these vital resources. Our failure to immediately recognize and act accordantly will continued the unnecessarily loss of life, and the massive destruction of both private property and public infrastructure brought on by the effects of global warming, climate change and the rise in sea level, all of which should give each of us cause for concern.

However, contrary and to our dismay, the national public debate concerning this critical issue has become bitterly entwined and defined through politics.

Meaningful change will have to first take place in local communities and at events like this and spread throughout this great nation, reaching abroad until Mother Earth cools her disdain toward mankind for its like of stewardship.

However, the small historic seaport community of Apalachicola – blessed with an abundance of natural resources – has stepped to the plate and is doing its part to protect, preserve and to take anyone to task who threatens our fragile ecosystem.

Through a special attorney and over the weekend your city government filed a lawsuit in the Northern District Court of Florida against BP and Halliburton for their role in the horrendous crime perpetrated against nature and against mankind through the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

As a nation and community of concerned citizens, we must be resolute in our efforts to guarantee that we leave to the next generation the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a healthy and productive Mother Earth.

Thank you and Happy Earth Day!