

# Celebrate Earth Day – April 22<sup>nd</sup>

Amelia County Department of Environmental Management

April 2021

What is Earth Day, you ask? The idea came to Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson, then a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, after witnessing the damage caused by the massive 1969 oil spill. On January 28, 1969, an oil rig off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, experienced a blowout. The oil well's safety system could not handle the back pressure released from the drilling, and the pressure caused the sea floor to crack open in five places, releasing an oil slick that covered an area almost as large as Chicago. Thousands of birds and an unknown number of sea mammals were killed as a result of the oil spill.

In response to this crisis, Senator Nelson announced a “national teach-in on the environment” and organized a staff of 85 people to promote conservation events nationally. On April 22, 1970, protests and demonstrations took place across the country, with 20 million Americans – 10% of the U.S. population at the time – participating. The national movement spurred the creation of several environmental protection laws, including the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Endangered Species Act.

Each year on April 22, Earth Day is celebrated around the world with events held to demonstrate support for environmental protection. To find an Earth Day event to participate in, check out <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2021>. Or you can choose your own project or everyday lifestyle change to celebrate Earth Day. Here are a few ideas.

Plant a tree, pick up litter, start or increase your recycling, walk or bike to work, carpool, install a rain barrel to conserve water, donate clothes and household items to charity, buy products made from recycled materials, have your pet spayed or neutered, turn off lights and appliances when you are not using them, compost your kitchen waste and leaves, or put up a bluebird nesting box.

Most importantly, take a moment to value and appreciate your Earth. Everything we need to survive – clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, healthy soil to grow the food we eat, etc. – comes from the Earth. Treat it with respect and realize that the things you do every day can truly make a difference. Make every day Earth Day!

If you are interested in picking up litter along a state or county road, call (804) 561-3004 we will provide your group with bags and safety vests.