



Q How Did Earth Day Begin?

Although it might be hard to believe, before the first Earth Day there were no laws to stop pollution being created by individuals and businesses. For many years, trash, waste, and smoke were released into the atmosphere and waterways with no accountability. Finally, people began to realize something must be done to save the environment. Wisconsin senator Gaylord Nelson had the idea to host "teach-ins" at several colleges across the country to educate students about the many environmental threats America was facing and inspire change. His team hired Stanford University student Denis Hayes to organize these events, which were set to occur on April 22, 1970. Hayes expanded the

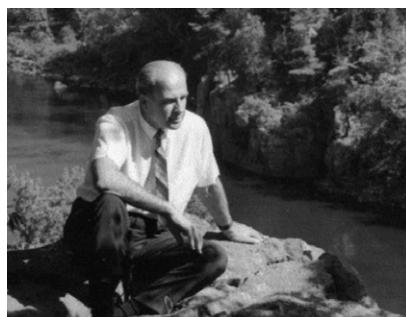
scope of these events to hundreds of organizations across the country, all with the goal of rallying against recent environmental deterioration. The very first Earth Day was attended by twenty million Americans across many different U.S. cities to force lawmakers to take on the issue of environmental preservation. Shortly after, politicians responded to the growing demand for cleaner air, water, and land by creating the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with the mission of protecting the environment and public health. Many environmental policies were passed in the years that followed, including the Clean Air and Clean



The first Earth Day in New York City, where about one million people participated in celebrations. Source: Columbia Climate School

Water Acts, as well as The Endangered Species Act. Since the first Earth Day, this event has continued to occur every year on April 22, marked by more than a billion people across the globe each year celebrating a day of action to change the human behaviors that impact our planet.

Sources: EarthDay.org, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Library of Congress, University of Colorado Boulder



MEET

Gaylord Nelson

Born in the NorthWoods of Wisconsin in 1916, Gaylord Nelson grew up admiring the beauty of the Wisconsin land. Finding passion in both the environment and in politics, Nelson was the perfect match for the environmental movement. In 1969, Nelson created "Earth Day" as a new approach to raise awareness and put pressure on legislation. His proposal of dedicating a day for a nationwide teach-in to highlight environmental concerns was met immediately with overwhelming enthusiasm and support. Now, thanks to this trailblazer, every year on April 22, we can do our part to be environmental stewards and carry on his legacy.

Sources: nelsonearthday.net, wilderness.net

Top photo: Gaylord Nelson, the founder of Earth Day

Bottom photo: Gaylord Nelson with future environmental stewards (Source: nelsonearthday.net)

Lassing Park Living Shoreline

Tampa Bay Watch works hard to celebrate Earth Day every day! We host various projects that allow volunteers to participate in our mission to protect and restore our estuary. Learn about these restoration projects and how you can help below!

The shoreline of Lassing Park, located just south of downtown St. Petersburg, has been severely eroded due to wave energy and wakes from boat traffic. As waves hit the shore, energy removes the shoreline and deposits the sediment in other areas of the bay. This has resulted in habitat loss and the slow disappearance of park land over time.

Tampa Bay Watch recognized this problem as an opportunity to create a living shoreline at Lassing Park. To build a living shoreline, oyster reef balls are first installed the furthest

away from land. These 200-pound concrete balls break up the wave action before it reaches the shoreline.

Adjacent to the oyster reef balls, oyster shell bags are installed to create a foundation that will recruit oyster larvae to settle, forming an oyster reef that will be a home to many small animals, many of which will clean the water by filter feeding.

Finally, native grasses are planted behind the oyster shell bags, which help hold the shoreline in place. So far, Tampa Bay Watch has installed 832 oyster reef balls, almost 80 tons




Volunteers helping to construct the living shoreline at Lassing Park


of shell bags, and about 2,000 square feet of grasses.


There is still more work to be done! Visit tampabaywatch.org to sign up for the Lassing Park Earth Day event this year, and help us build this important living shoreline!

Source: Richard Radigan, Tampa Bay Watch Oyster Shell Program Coordinator; Photo: Peter Clark

Fun Facts

 Earth is the only planet in our solar system that has water in all three states of matter: liquid, solid, and gas.

 Every year, Earth Day has a different theme. This year's theme is "Investing in Our Planet."

 The Earth is the third-closest planet to the Sun, and you can fit a million Earths in the Sun.

 The Earth is 4.543 billion years old!

Sources: earthday.org, nasa.gov

Sustainability Tip

Support local pollinators!



Filling your yard with native plants is a great first step in supporting local wildlife. Planting pollinator plants, such as Morning Glory and Milkweed, provides a sustainable food source for bees and monarch butterflies

Try something new!



Scan this code for a fun at-home activity!

Source: howweplayandlearn.com

TAMPA BAY
WATCH 

Restoring the Bay Every Day

Kids' Pages is a quarterly newsletter supplement to the Bay Watch Log. Please get your kids involved and sign them up to be a member today! Email membership@tampabaywatch.org or visit tampabaywatch.org.