

# Dept. of Natural Resources: 50 years of Earth Day

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**MADISON, Wis.** - April 22 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, founded by former Wisconsin Governor Gaylord Nelson. On the first Earth Day in 1970, millions of Americans participated in rallies, marches and teach-ins for environmental education across the country.

“Our goal is not just an environment of clean air and water and scenic beauty. The objective is an environment of decency, quality and mutual respect for all other human beings and all other living creatures,” Nelson said on the inaugural day.

Earth Day catalyzed a grassroots movement in the United States leading to the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, Endangered Species, and Marine Mammal Protection Acts; founded the Environmental Protection Agency; and ignited a spirit of stewardship that has driven progress for five decades.

“I am extraordinarily proud to celebrate 50 years of Earth Day. This anniversary reminds us that it was Wisconsin’s very own Sen. Gaylord Nelson who reshaped our environmental protections in Wisconsin and around the world,” said DNR Secretary Preston D. Cole. “We know it’s tough to travel right now or even be around others. For those of us that love the outdoors, please find a way to celebrate in your own way close to home.”

Today, Earth Day is celebrated around the world and remains an annual reminder of the constant need for environmental activism, cooperation and stewardship commitments and sustainability efforts.

At the Wisconsin DNR, every day is Earth Day. We embrace Earth Day 365 and encourage you to join us in taking small steps to protect the environment daily such

as recycling, turning off the tap when brushing your teeth, shortening your shower time, using energy-efficient lightbulbs and more.

The spring print edition of [Wisconsin Natural Resources](#) magazine is now available with “Earth Day at 50” coverage leading the way with a look at the 1970s environmental era that spawned Earth Day. Plus, read a conversation with Tia Nelson, climate change activist and daughter of Earth Day’s founder. Additional magazine stories include another anniversary celebration, the 100th year of [Pattison State Park](#); a look at the benefits of [prescribed burns](#) on forested lands; and beautiful photography from [Heckrodt Wetland Reserve](#) in Menasha.

The most recent episode of the DNR’s podcast [Wild Wisconsin – Off the Record](#) also features Tia Nelson. We spoke with her in early March to hear more about her father’s life work, what Earth Day means to her and how you can get involved.

Show us on social media how you’re celebrating Earth Day close to home this year by using #EarthDayAtHome and tagging Wisconsin DNR in your posts.