

# Gary Hebl: Earth Day and Arbor Days are reminders of the importance of conservation

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At the end of April each year, we get to celebrate two holidays that are focused on environmental conservation. On April 22nd of each year we celebrate Earth Day, aimed at focusing on conservation efforts that was founded in part by Wisconsin's own Senator (and also former Governor) Gaylord Nelson. On the last Friday of April we observe Arbor Day, with a focus on planting trees to help sustain the planet. These holidays are celebrated all over the world,

Wisconsin has a long history of being home to conservation advocates. In addition to Senator/Governor Nelson, Aldo Leopold and John Muir also called Wisconsin home. Leopold was a professor at UW-Madison, and his conservation work is so venerated that he is considered to be the father of wildlife management. Muir, who attended UW-Madison, founded one of the national's leading environmental preservation groups, the Sierra Club.

Protecting the land, water, and air of Wisconsin is one of my top priorities. I have the privilege of being the ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on the Environment, where we hear testimony from citizens from all over the state about how important is it to protect Wisconsin's natural resources. My conservation efforts have also earned me praise as a Conservation Champion from both the Sierra Club and Wisconsin Conservation Voters.

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There is more our country and state can do to tackle important issues that affect our environment, our climate, and our earth. Certainly there is more that the Wisconsin Legislature can do. But you can also take action as a private citizen. Plant a tree. Go on a hike (when the state parks open back up). Or you could check in with the local chapter of a conservation group and see if there is anything they would have you do.

I want to make sure that Wisconsin's environment is healthy and strong for years to come. That's why in the past I have authored legislation that would restore strong environmental protections, and will continue to do so going forward. We must keep our future generations in mind when considering legislation, and make sure that we carry forward the legacy of Wisconsin's own conservation champions John Muir, Gaylord Nelson, and Aldo Leopold.

*-Hebl, D-Sun Prairie, represents the 46th Assembly District.*