

EARTH from page 1A

Vollmar's participation is something Meller hopes will engage other youth to be involved.

Vollmar said, "Even though Earth Day is in April, I always think it's a good idea to say, 'Hey, this is the planet we live on. Let's take good care of it.' Because we'll die if we don't."

She sang some of her own songs as well as covers of popular songs in between the main portion of the afternoon, which was a series of films featuring Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative's "Save the Oregon Dunes" and some of Siuslaw Watershed Council's 2019 award-winning short film series.

The Earth, and its environment, have been on the minds of community members lately, with climate activists attending the Florence Women's

March, holding signs outside Florence City Hall and on Highway 101 and collecting signatures outside last week's State of the City Address at Florence Events Center.

April 22, 2020, will mark 50 years of Earth Day. This year's theme is climate action.

"This year is focused on taking action, and we all need to take action and do whatever we can on our end to make this a better place," Meller said.

According to Earth Day Network, a nonprofit that rose from the first Earth Day, "The enormous challenge — but also the vast opportunities — of action on climate change have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary."

On Sunday, the network republished *The New York Times'* original 1970 ad declaring April 22 the first



PHOTOS BY
CHANTELLE MEYER/
SIUSLAW NEWS



(Above left) Liat Meller and Earth Day on the Boardwalk organizers hope to engage the community in planning April's event. (Above right) Nyah Vollmar sings for the Earth Day Kick-Off audience.

Earth Day. In it, the creators detailed the smog, garbage and pesticides infecting streams, forests, crops, wildlife and people.

"On April 22, we start to

reclaim the environment we have wrecked," the ad declared.

A new poster published this week contrasts with the stark black and white

of the original. It reads, "Fifty years ago, 20 million people took to the streets to demand our government protect the health of our people and our planet. Out of that first Earth Day came the bipartisan laws that keep us safe. Earth Day 1970 remains the largest civic engagement event in human history ... until now (sic)."

Earth Day Network reports that 20 million Americans equaled 10 percent of the U.S. population at the time.

The first Earth Day was the catalyst for the environmental movement and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts, as well as the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

In Florence, local groups began organizing Earth Day on the Boardwalk in

2018 as a way to celebrate the Earth — Mother Nature often attends — and educate the community. Other local Earth Day events have included community clean ups in Dunes City and Mapleton, plastic recycling and the removal of invasive species.

"Earth Day 2020 will be far more than a day," stated the Earth Day Network's website. "It must be a historic moment when citizens of the world rise up in a united call for the creativity, innovation, ambition and bravery that we need to meet our climate crisis and seize the enormous opportunities of a zero-carbon future."

For information on getting involved in the Florence Earth Day on the Boardwalk, contact Meller at 541-305-1193.

For more information about the history of Earth Day, visit www.earthday.org.



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