

How Earth Day and environmental conciousness have evolved

Reduce, reuse, recycle is a mantra for many people. It's difficult to imagine that just 50 years ago awareness of the state of the environment was not part of the collective consciousness.

An emerging public consciousness about the planet began amid environmental issues like increased air pollution and massive consumption of fossil fuels in the 1960s. The bestselling book "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson also raised public concern for living organisms and the links between pollution and public health. The push for environmental reform gained even more momentum on April 22, 1970, when the first Earth Day was celebrated. Then-Senator Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin put Earth Day on the national stage following a large oil spill that struck off the coast of Santa Barbara, Calif. Before this disaster, recycling was not a word in the popular lexicon. But when the disaster struck, people began to reason that changes would have to be made to save the planet.

Since the first Earth Day over 50 years ago, many strides have

been made in the environmental movement. This grassroots initiative gave rise to the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. Environmental awareness has become much more mainstream and is a less polarizing issue than it was in the 1970s, although there are still debates about the reality of climate change and other risk factors. Public demand for environmental safeguards grew in the second half of the twentieth century, and those demands have grown stronger in recent years. Legislation is continually evolving to protect the air, land and water. Sustainability has joined the buzzwords of the movement, and most industries now have a vested interest in changes that can minimize risk to human health and the environment.

Mitigating or avoiding environmental effects, proper waste disposal, reduction in water discharge, and emphasis on reducing, reusing and recycling have become important components of environmental wellness. And



people are being educated at earlier stages on the importance of environmental mindfulness. For example, core subjects of the environmental movement are increasingly covered in elementary schools.

Twenty million people turned

out for the first Earth Day in the United States. Today, more than 190 countries are engaged and more than one billion individuals are mobilized for action every Earth Day, advises the Earth Day Network. To mark the 50th anniversary, the most pressing topic

for the year is climate change. Climate Action is the 2020 Earth Day theme to engage the global public. There is still work to be done, but great progress has been made since 1970.

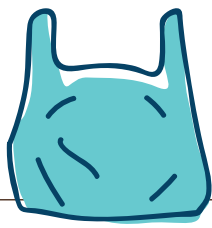
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THINKING GREEN





Environmental Champions

Gaylord Nelson
A former U.S. senator, he is considered the founder of Earth Day.

Abhay Kumar
Poet, diplomat and writer, he wrote "Earth Anthem," widely considered to be the official Earth Day song.

Rachel Carson
Writer of 1962's *Silent Spring*, a book describing the impact of pesticides on the environment, she is considered by many to be the founder of the modern environmental movement.

Wangari Maathai
Environmental activist and founder of the Green Belt Movement in Africa, she helped to plant over 30 million trees.

Chico Mendes
A conservationist, he ignited international support for rainforest preservation in Brazil before being killed.

Doing Your Part Adds Up!

1 reusable bag = 600 plastic bags
One reusable bag can prevent the use of 600 plastic bags in its lifetime.
Source: National Geographic

1 mile of walking = 1 pound of pollution prevention
Every mile walked instead of driven keeps nearly one pound of pollution out of the air.
Source: National Geographic

15 billion trees are cut down worldwide each year.
Source: National Geographic

30% increase in the acidity of surface ocean waters has been recorded since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.
Source: NASA

91% of the world's population live in places where air pollution exceeds World Health Organization guideline limits.
Source: World Health Organization

450 years is the potential breakdown period for a plastic bottle.
Source: National Geographic

Eco Facts & Figures

279 billion tons of ice per year was lost by Greenland between 1993 and 2019, while Antarctica lost about 148 billion tons annually.
Source: NASA

>1 billion people recognize Earth Day each year.
Source: Earth Day Network

Committed to Our Environment

NextStep Recycling Donation Center
245 Jackson Street, Eugene
541-686-2366

NextStep Reuse Store
987 Garfield St. Suite 2, Eugene
541-868-0904

Advanced Energy Systems Solar,
65 Centennial LP, Eugene
541-683-2345 office • 541-912-4003 mobile

Dave's Pump & Construction
76082 London Rd., Cottage Grove
541-942-9635

The Bookmine
702 E Main, Cottage Grove
541-942-7414

Pinocchio's Pizza
795 E Main St, Cottage Grove
541-942-5531

Brads Cottage Grove Chevrolet
2775 Row River Rd., Cottage Grove
541-942-4415

Magnolia Gardens
1425 Daugherty Ave., Cottage Grove
541-942-0054

Shady Oaks Nursery
77380 HWY 99 S., Cottage Grove
541-942-5004

Cottage Grove Sentinel
1498 E. Main St., STE 104
Cottage Grove
541-942-3325