

Earth Day Toolkit

Purpose

- To use Earth Day (April 22) and/or Earth Month (April 22 – May 22) as an opportunity for dialogue and connection with co-workers around the values of environmental sustainability.
- To join [Earth Day Canada](#) and millions of Canadians during “Earth Month” to encourage pro-environmental change through fun and creative activities.
- To build appreciation for and connection with nature, as a source of inspiration for reflection and action.

Background

“The first Earth Day, observed across the [United States] on April 22, 1970, crystallized a growing public concern about ecological crises. Earth Day was the product of local grassroots action to increase environmental awareness but it also focused the nation's political agenda on urgent environmental issues

It was Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson who in September 1969 proposed a national teach-in on the environment... Inspired by the campus activism of the late 1960s, he employed a team of experienced students to help him respond to the immediate and overwhelming public excitement for a national day on the environment.

*Nelson insisted the first Earth Day's activities be created...by individuals and groups in their own communities. **As a result of this empowering vision, 1 in 10 Americans participated in the first Earth Day**, drawing extensive attention from the media and jump-starting an era of bold environmental legislation.”**

* <http://www.nelsonearthday.net/earth-day/index.htm>

** <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/04/090421-earth-day-facts/>

“A new movement had begun, and uncouped millions...were gathering together in a massive educational effort to talk about survival and the quality of survival in a world they all share.”

Earth Day Founder, Gaylord Nelson, May 1970 newsletter

Earth Day is an opportunity to build interest and engagement among coworkers in the values related to environmental sustainability. Earth Day can remind us that we are part of a much larger community, all working in our own important ways to create a healthier future on our planet.

As with all these toolkits, please use it in a way that best suits your context and needs. Modify, adapt and adjust these steps as needed. Just don't forget to report back on your experiences!

Steps

Step 1: Review the list of possible Earth Day activities included in this toolkit. Speak to your colleagues or choose one on your own that you'd like to organize.

(Ideally your event/activity will happen on Earth Day. However, if this is not possible, choose the next most convenient option.)

Step 2: Talk to your manager or supervisor to bring them on board with your chosen activity. They may have ideas to add or resources to support your idea.

Step 3: Identify the resources you'll need to run your activity or event. Do you need to book a room? Set up a projector? Find some allies to help you plan?

Step 4: Communicate with coworkers about the upcoming event and activity. You may do this in a staff meeting, an email, or any other format that is effective for your workplace. (See sample email for ideas).

Earth Day is now celebrated every year by more than a billion people in 180 nations around the world. **

Place **Earth Day posters** in appropriate locations to remind coworkers of your activity and the purpose behind it. (Contact olive.dempsey@fraserhealth.ca for Earth Day posters).

Step 5: Evaluate and reflect on the experience. You may consider sending out a short survey within a day or two or you may request anecdotal feedback from participants.

Take time to reflect on your own or with your co-organizers on what you appreciated, what you learned and what you'd modify in future

Send your reflections to olive.dempsey@fraserhealth.ca

Step 6: Thank your coworkers for their involvement. Follow up on any commitments they made and offer suggestions for continuing to celebrate Earth Day, every day.

Sample Email

Subject: Special Earth Day Celebration, April 22

Dear [name of team or best way to address the group you're reaching out to]

On April 22nd, millions of people around the world will be celebrating Earth Day.

We'll be joining them with [insert activity name/idea here] at our site.

As staff employed in the health sector, we work directly and indirectly to ensure that people lead healthier and longer lives. And as we all know, one of the essential ingredients to healthy human lives is a healthy planet!

Earth Day was first celebrated more than 40 years ago, as a massive grassroots day of education across the United States. Since then, a lot has changed; Legislation, regulation and awareness have all improved, while challenges like increased air pollution, a changing climate, and species extinction have also increased.

Our opportunities to have an impact are bigger than ever. As Dr. Jane Goodall says, *"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."*

Please join us on [insert date] to learn more about how we can make a difference together. [remind them of activity, the time and the location]

If you have any questions or want to get involved with organizing, please let me know.

Happy Earth Day!
[insert your name]

PS Want to learn more about Earth Day? Check out these links

<http://earthday.envirolink.org/history.html>

<http://www.nelsonearthday.net/earth-day/index.htm>

www.earthday.ca

"The wealth of the nation is its air, water, soil, forests, minerals, rivers, lakes, oceans, scenic beauty, wildlife habitats and biodiversity... These biological systems are the sustaining wealth of the world." *Gaylord Nelson, Earth Day Founder*

Activity/Event Ideas for Earth Day

Activities during a lunch event or a meeting

- ◆ Use the [Story of Stuff Discussion Tool](#) or the [In Praise of Slow Discussion Tool](#) to host a lunch and learn in honour of Earth Day.
- ◆ Show the video, [What Happens when Astronauts Return to Earth](#) at a lunch and learn or other opportunity. Use the discussion guide in the above toolkits to reflect on the video with your coworkers.
- ◆ Host an Earth Day potluck, asking people to cook dishes using local and seasonal ingredients.
- ◆ Play the [Earth Day Jeopardy Game](#) over lunch time or during a meeting.

Activities with flexible time commitments

- ◆ Organize an Earth Day walk or bike ride at lunchtime or after work. Sometimes celebrating our planet starts with recognizing the natural beauty around us, that we often take for granted.
- ◆ Organize an office or department fundraiser and choose an environmental cause or group to receive the funds.
- ◆ Organize an Earth Day photo contest.
- ◆ Initiate a Nature Challenge, encouraging people to set and track personal goals for time spent in nature. (This could be used with the Earth Day photo contest).
 - <http://www.rochester.edu/news/show.php?id=3639>
 - <http://www.americanscientist.org/issues/pub/a-walk-in-the-woods>
 - <http://30x30.davidsuzuki.org/>
- ◆ Encourage an Earth Day pledge. Ask coworkers to pledge to undertake one new earth friendly activity or habit for one week. Record and post/publicize the pledges in a visible location. Check in the following week to see how it went and celebrate with recognition for those who lived up to their commitments.
- ◆ Share the idea of wildcrafting or foraging in an Earth Day message. Encourage coworkers to explore what our own local ecosystem can provide. (http://www.northernbushcraft.com/guide.php?ctgy=edible_plants®ion=bc; <http://www.greenhearted.org/wildcrafting.html>) Note: this suggestion came from a G+L who wrote, “A lot of people raised in the city have no idea that this is where food came from in the beginning, and still can come from today. I think it helps tie things together in a lot of peoples’ minds about polluting and being more respectful and responsible to the environment”

