

Earth Day: a grassroots initiative

By Mariah Wagner and Kimberly Reeves

Planting trees – pledging to unplug appliances – creek cleanups – call to action.

These traditional images come to mind when someone says they are celebrating Earth Day. But, how was April 22nd chosen as the date to acknowledge the small steps we should all take to protect the only place we all call ‘home’?

This annual celebration of the Earth was developed by Wisconsin Senator, Gaylord Nelson. He witnessed the consequences of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara in 1969 and was inspired by the antiwar protests that were happening at the time. Senator Nelson recruited Denis Hayes, then a graduate student at Harvard, to serve as the national coordinator. The original goal of Earth Day was to create an environmental teach-in that would lead to a national movement and was scheduled on April 22-- strategically placed between spring break and finals--so that university students could attend.

On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans took to the street to demonstrate for a healthy environment. In this same year, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Clean Water, Clean Air and Endangered Species Acts were created. Earth Day was not celebrated globally until 1990 when a group of environmental leaders, led again by Denis Hayes as the founder of the Earth Day Network, pushed to make it happen.

Since 1990, people’s appreciation of the Earth is celebrated globally with marches, clean ups and festivals.

Get involved with the community this Earth Day on Saturday, April 22nd!

- The Great American Clean Up
 - 9:00am – 12:30pm
 - Register for a site here: <http://www.gacppp.com/>
- Earth Day at Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Site
 - 9:00am – 3:00pm
 - 3105 Gateway Road 80804
 - More info here: <https://coloradosprings.gov/parks-recreation-and-cultural-services/article/calendar-event/earth-day-rock-ledge-ranch-historic>
- The March for Science Colorado Springs
 - 10:00am – 12:00pm
 - 115 E. Platte Ave. 80903
 - More info here: <https://www.facebook.com/MarchforScienceColoradoSprings>
- The Colorado Springs Earth Day Sustain-a-Fest
 - 11:00am – 4:00pm
 - 702 E. Boulder St. 80903
 - More info here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/183100332179092/>