



Celebrate the 50th Year of EARTH DAY at Home -April 22, 2020 Roselynn Lwenya, Director Natural Resources and Culture

Earth Day 2020 is a very momentous one; it marks the 50th Earth Day celebration and many people all over the world are using this milestone to reflect on how far the environmental stewardship movement has come and how far we still have to go. It goes without saying that due to the COVID-19 crisis many people and environmental organizations will not be meeting in person to celebrate the event in compliance with the CDC guidelines on social distancing. In my capacity as CTCLUSI Director of Natural Resources and Culture, I am compiling this brief article that will serve two purposes: firstly, to educate the Tribal community on the history of Earth Day and secondly, to suggest activities that the community can undertake at home that will contribute towards environmental protection. Finally, some simple fun activities for the kids are included.

What is the History of Earth Day?

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated around the world on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. It now includes events coordinated by the Earth Day Network in more than 193 countries. Earth Day was a unified response to an environment in crisis – oil spills, smog, rivers so polluted they literally caught fire. On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans – 10% of the U.S. population at the time – took to the streets, college campuses and hundreds of cities to protest environmental ignorance and demand a new way forward for our planet. You can find more information on Earth Day Network's website, www.earthday.org/earth-day-2020/

This date reminds each of us that the Earth and its ecosystems provide us with life and sustenance. This is an opportunity to reflect on the challenges regarding the well-being of the planet and all the life it supports. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Day).

What Was the Result of the First Earth Day?

The first Earth Day in 1970 launched a wave of action, including the passage of landmark environmental laws in the United States. The Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts were created in response to the first Earth Day in 1970, as well as the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Many countries soon adopted similar laws. Earth Day continues to hold major international significance: In 2016, the United States chose Earth Day as the day when the historic Paris Agreement on climate change was signed into force.

The Theme for Earth Day 2020 is Climate Action

According to the Earth Day Network, 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. Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable. Earth Day marks society's unified response to our environmental crisis.

Things you can do at home to celebrate and support Earth Day

It does not matter where you are and whatever little you do, you can contribute towards the global efforts to Save the Earth. Here are some activities to do in the comfort of your home!



a) Reduce Reuse and Recycle

Recycle right: While you're spending more time at home, you're also likely producing more waste, including recyclables. It is very important to recycle right because recycling incorrectly can do more harm than good. To make sure you're not adding to contamination, don't put your recyclables in plastic. The following material types are accepted for household recycling: paper/cardboard, plastic bottles, glass bottles and jars, metal cans and cartons.



Do a trash audit: A simple way to do this is to wear some gloves and rummage through your trash can. When you sort and separate the waste, you will get a better understanding of what you're throwing away and how much of your waste could be recycled or composted.

Don't use plastic water bottles: Globally, millions of plastic bottles are purchased per minute — and most aren't recycled. Investing in a reusable bottle is beneficial in general, but now that most are sheltering-in-place, using reusable cups or bottles is easier than ever.

b) Water Conservation: Tips for Saving Water



Wash your hands regularly: With the COVID-19 crisis, the health experts have emphasized the importance of washing our hands more often and for a full 20 seconds! With all due respect to the experts, let's all observe that but do not leave the water running in the meantime. Otherwise, we will end up wasting gallons of water every day. It's the little things that we rarely think about that make the biggest difference.

Showers: It's advisable to take shorter showers. Long, hot showers can waste five to ten gallons every minute. Let's try to limit our showers to the time it takes to soap up, wash down, and rinse off. A one or two minute reduction in the shower time can end up saving us up to 375 gallons of water per month.

Brushing your Teeth: Turn off the water while brushing your teeth. There is no need to keep water pouring down the drain. Just wet your brush and turn off the water. You can

turn the water back on when you are ready to rinse. It is amazing how much water will be saved!

Washing Machine: When using your automatic washing machine, adjust the water level to the correct setting for the size of load you plan to wash.

Leakage: If you have a sink or shower leak and you can't afford, or are not ready to get, a plumber, consider putting a bucket beneath the drip. Then use the collected water to water plants.

Swimming Pool: If you have a swimming pool consider covering it to prevent water evaporation.

Kitchen Sink: Rather than using an electric disposal for kitchen waste, consider starting a compost pile.

Home improvement time. It's time to finally get around to those home improvement projects that may have been piling up, like fixing leaky faucets or caulking cracks around the window. These could help reduce water waste or save energy by keeping warm or cold air inside. Any other project like cleaning and sorting stuff in your wardrobe – I just DID!

c) Things to do outside your house



Start a garden: Digging your hands in the soil is good for not only your physical health, but your mental health as well. Plant native plants, fruits, and vegetables.

Start a compost pile: Staying at home means that you are doing a lot of cooking. It would be a good idea to gather all the food scrap or paper towels and compost them instead of throwing them away hence reducing the amount of waste that can end up in the landfill. The organic waste can be added to the soil in your garden.

Become a backyard observer: Pollinators, such as bees and birds, are such a critical part of the environment and keep whole habitats and ecosystems running. So get set with your 'backyard diaries'. Noting day to day what you see blooming in the yard or nearby, what birds are around, what bugs you see, garter snakes etc., drawing what you see (flowers, bumblebees, jays and robins- suggested by Patty Phillips, Linguist).

d) Kids Games, Quizzes, and Videos about the Environment

Play games and find other activities to do online, including crossword puzzles and word searches: www.epa.gov/students/games-quizzes-and-videos-about-environment

Visit the WaterSense kids' page! Water-efficiency questions while avoiding water-wasting monsters: www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-kids

Go With the Flow! Let NASA teach you all about the flow of water:
<https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/ocean-currents/en/>

HAPPY EARTH DAY AND THANK YOU!!!