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Celebrate the Earth This and Every Month

<https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2022/>

April is chock-full of environmental observances, from Earth Day (April 22), Earth Month, and Arbor Day (April 29 this year), to National Park Week (April 16-24) and Bat Appreciation Day (April 17) to Global Astronomy Month. There's never a bad time to think about our relationship to the world around us, or to consider how we can decrease our impact both locally and globally, but particularly during the month of April you can find numerous reminders of how we are intertwined with each other and the environment.

Check out this list of things you can do this month (or anytime):

1. **Participate in an Earth Month event** (*see the list of events in Fitchburg below*): Earth Month is full of opportunities to participate in events that help raise awareness, clean up local areas, or simply create inspiration for more action going forward.

2. **Contribute to environmental causes:** Myriad organizations at all scales are putting in tremendous effort to help us create a better world; if you're able, consider donating your time or resources to enhance their ability to effect change.
3. **Share your activities to inspire or coordinate with others** (*see the Sustain Dane and EcoChallenge.org events below*): Whether with close friends and family or a larger group or social media, sharing your own efforts can help to shine light on an area or need or inspire others to take actions themselves.
4. **Consider changes to your diet:** Food waste and growing livestock for food contribute more to our global emissions than almost anything else outside of transportation and energy. Not ready to think about cutting out animal-based products entirely? Try meat-free Fridays to reduce your dietary impact a little bit, or plan out meals before shopping and order/cook smaller portions to reduce food waste.
5. **Plant natives:** If you own a house and yard, odds are good your home is surrounded by introduced and ecologically-sparse "nature," from annual flowers to ornamental trees and shrubs to bright green lawns. Native species still live in suburbs, but we've altered their habitat immensely and it can help to maintain native plants as food and shelter for the surrounding wildlife. Look to include prairie grasses, native flowers, and native trees in your yard, and give your local wildlife a helping hand.
6. **Look into renewable energy for your home:** Rooftop solar is cheaper than ever, especially with community solar programs, and you can also install solar hot water heating or a ground-source heat pump loop to heat and cool your home. But even if these aren't options for you, your utility likely offers shared solar or other ways to support increased investments in carbon-free electricity.
7. **Get outside and enjoy nature!** It's important to preserve as much as we can, but just as important is to ensure you're spending time outdoors and taking in as much natural beauty you can, as well as sharing it with others. As Senegalese forestry engineer Baba Dioum told a 1968 IUCN assembly, "*In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.*"

Earth Month Activities in Fitchburg

Looking to get involved in some activities this Earth Month? Check out the list below or look for more local activities throughout the city and county!

- **Shred/Recycling Event** – Fitchburg is hosting its semiannual electronics recycling and confidential paper shredding event this Saturday, April 9. If you're a resident of Fitchburg, you can take advantage of this opportunity to clear out confidential papers, old electronics, even expired medications at the police department med-drop box, between 8am and 11am tomorrow morning! See details [on the City website](#).
- **Waterway Cleanups** – The annual Fitchburg Waterway Cleanups are scheduled for Saturday April 23, from 9am-11am, at several locations

around Fitchburg. Go to the City’s [Waterway Cleanups webpage](#) for details and to sign up to help make Fitchburg a little cleaner.

- **Arbor Day Tree and Shrub Plantings** – The last Friday in April is Arbor Day, which this year is April 29. Join the Fitchburg Parks Department on April 30 as we plant native trees and shrubs for beautification purposes and to create more native habitat for local wildlife. We’ll be planting trees and shrubs at Quarry Hill Park at 9am, and at Chicory Meadow Park at 9:30am.
- **Sustain Dane Earth Month Challenge** – Sustain Dane invites local individuals and organizations to take actions that positively impact climate efforts, then write reflections on their website at <https://sustaindane.org/climateaction>. Top-participating organizations can win prizes and recognition, so get your team together today!
- **Earth Month at EcoChallenge.org** – The website EcoChallenge.org hosts team and individual challenges throughout the year, and they have a special challenge for Earth Month this year. Sign up at <https://earthmonth.ecochallenge.org> for a challenge that pushes you to take actions in line with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, a set of 17 goals created in 2015 with the ultimate goal of creating a better and more sustainable future for all.

Help Your Local Pollinators

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/plantsanimals/pollinate/gardeners/>

Pollinators have been a big topic of discussion around Wisconsin for the past week, thanks to a [New York Times article](#) by Shorewood Hills resident and wildlife photographer Anne Readel, discussing the spread of “No-Mow May” observances around the state. The idea of “No-Mow May” started with UK nonprofit Plantlife, and multiple Wisconsin municipalities have joined in over the past few years, encouraging residents to leave flowers to bloom in their lawn as a food source for bees and other pollinators recently emerged from hibernation.



Pollinator species include bees, butterflies and moths, hummingbirds, and myriad other insects, and pollinators are a vital part of ecosystems, including many of the crops we rely on for food. Unfortunately, many of these pollinator species are also endangered, some local species (such as the rusty patched bumblebee) threatened with extinction due to habitat loss. Leaving lawns and the flowers contained therein to grow can provide a tremendous boost to these species in the early foraging season, as an Appleton study found that lawns participating

Recommended changes in this report begin with the energy sector, but they extend well beyond that to include industry, cities and urban areas, transportation and transit, food and agriculture, waste and recycling, forestry, and investment and finance. Solutions require ambitious effort, international cooperation, new innovation and technologies, and cross-disciplinary systems thinking, but nothing is beyond our grasp.

The report is lengthy and has a great deal of technical information, but the IPCC also included shorter summaries for policymakers and links to individual chapters, making the information accessible for many different readers beyond those with policy or technical expertise.



Celebrate Earth Day With the UW Nelson Institute

<https://earthday.nelson.wisc.edu>

The University of Wisconsin's Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies hosts an Earth Day celebration every year, and this year the event is again available free of charge with both online and in-person options.

The theme for Earth Day 2022 is "Water on the Rise," with a great set of guest speakers and panelists discussing ideas related to this topic. See the website linked above for more information on this event, and the following overview from the Nelson Institute.

Water and life are inextricably intertwined. Without access to adequate water, humanity suffers. Yet, water in extreme abundance can also become a destructive force.

We invite you to join us as we explore these concepts and more during the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies Earth Day 2022: Water on the Rise. This day-long community learning event, featuring both in-person and virtual experiences, will examine how communities across the globe are facing, responding to, and mitigating critical water issues.

This event will be in partnership with Water@UW, which will continue the conversation on Friday, April 22, 2022, at the annual Water@UW Symposium.

Dane County’s “Adopt A Storm Drain” Program

<https://ripple-effects.com/Adopt-A-Storm-Drain>

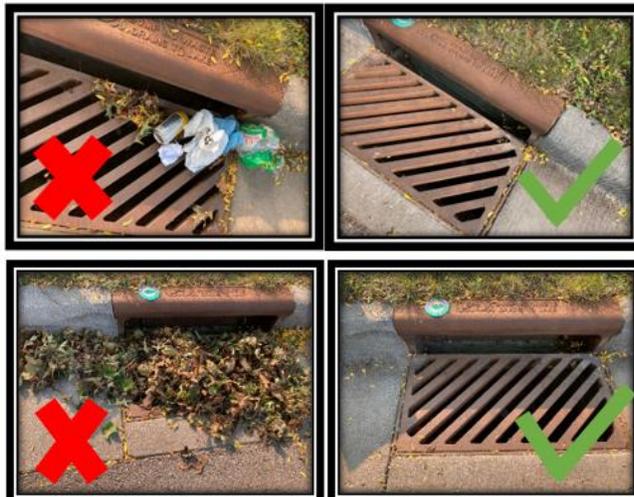
Storm drains play an important role in flood prevention and protection of our lakes, rivers, and streams. They help move stormwater runoff from roofs, driveways, streets and other hard surfaces to underground pipes or storm sewers that eventually make their way to our local water bodies. Unfortunately, that runoff also carries pollutants, trash, leaves, and other debris to our waters. Keeping storm drains and the area around them clean can help protect our waters.

The City of Fitchburg has been working on a leaf-free streets initiative and other stormwater-improving initiatives, but we can’t do it alone. Fitchburg is one of five communities partnering with Dane County on a new Adopt-A-Storm Drain program and we’re looking for volunteers!

1. Adopt a nearby storm drain using the Dane County Adopt-A-Storm Drain App.
2. Commit to safely cleaning the area on and around the adopted storm drain at least once a month, but preferably before every large rain event.
3. Report the amount and type of debris after each cleaning using the Adopt- A-Storm Drain App.
4. Report any spills/discharges washing down the storm drain.
5. Agree to share feedback that will be used to improve the program and expand it to other Dane County communities.

All volunteers will be provided a Storm Drain Cleaning Kit that includes: a safety vest, storm drain decal to place on their adopted storm drain, dustpan and broom, collection bucket, and an Adopt-A-Storm Drain sticker to proudly display. Volunteers will also be included on the Ripple Effects Adopt-A-Storm Drain e-Newsletter, which comes out 3-4 times/year. Adopt a local storm drain and have a Ripple Effect on area waters!

To adopt a storm drain or learn more, visit <https://ripple-effects.com/adopt-a-storm-drain>



Upcoming Events

Spring Electronics Recycling and Confidential Paper Shredding Event

Saturday April 9, 8:00am – 11:00pm

Spring Waterway Cleanups

Saturday April 23, 9:00am – 11:00pm

Tales From Planet Earth: Into the Okovango

UW Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies film screening and discussion

The UW Nelson Institute invites you to join a screening and discussion of the film Into the Okavango, a National Geographic Documentary Film that follows explorers on a four-month, 1,500-mile expedition to save the river system that feeds the wetland wilderness of the Okavango Delta in Botswana.

This event will feature a special discussion about the Okovango River Basin, its ecological importance, and ongoing protection efforts, with Steve Boyes, a National Geographic explorer and founder of Wild Bird Trust, and Nyambe Nyambe, the executive director of Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area Secretariat.

Wednesday April 20, 7:00-9:00pm

<https://nelson.wisc.edu/events/tales-from-planet-earth-into-the-okavango/>

Sustain Dane Master Recycler Courses

Sustain Dane's Master Recycler course is back, in partnership with the City of Madison and the Carton Council! Take part by attending two 90-minute online sessions and then conducting an educational/outreach project that applies what you learned. Registration is free for Sustain Dane members or \$15 for members of the public (full and partial scholarships are available). If you missed the first April session, sign up for July!

Thursdays April 7 and 14, 12:00-1:30pm

Thursdays July 20 and 27, 6:30-8:00pm

<https://sustaindane.org/eventbrite-event/master-recycler-3/>

<https://sustaindane.org/eventbrite-event/master-recycler-4/>

Local Spring Plant Sales

Two plant sales this May offer opportunities to purchase plants for your landscape and garden. Proceeds from the UW Arboretum native plant sale help Friends of the Arboretum support the Arboretum's work and mission, and the Extension Master Gardener sale is the primary source of funds for the Dane County Extension Teaching Garden and will have master gardeners available to answer your questions.

Friends of the UW Arboretum Native Plant Sale

Saturday May 14, 10:00am – 2:00pm

<https://arboretum.wisc.edu/get-involved/friends/native-plant-sale/>

Dane County Extension Master Gardener Plant Sale

Sunday May 22, 11:00am – 3:00pm

<https://dane.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/plant-sale/>

Share the News

Tell your friends to subscribe to Green Fitchburg on the city website
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx> > Green Fitchburg

- a. Visit Fitchburg's "Notify Me®" web page:
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx>
- b. Type your email address in the box and select "Sign In"
- c. To receive text messages enter your phone number and select "Save"
- d. Click  (to subscribe/unsubscribe to emails) and/or  (to subscribe/unsubscribe) next to the lists to which you wish to subscribe / unsubscribe (e.g. "Green Fitchburg" is the mailing list for environmentally friendly suggestions or events)

Please contact Phil Grupe, Sustainability Specialist, at phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov or (608) 270-4259, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions for future Green E-News topics.

