Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day during the COVID-19 pandemic

Don’t keep your Earth Day 2020 communications in quarantine
By Anna Nixon
April 21, 2020

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day during the COVID-19 pandemic

April 22, 2020, marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, but many utilities have gone silent on the topic due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But you don’t have to choose between the fight against the virus and the climate crisis, and utilities have the platform to create change for both. Now is the time to make or increase environmental commitments, promote the value of energy efficiency, and offer energy upgrades to businesses while their doors are closed.

Despite widespread social-distancing and shelter-in-place orders, Earth Day 2020 will go on virtually. Utilities and nonutilities alike have found the following creative ways to bring their Earth Day celebrations into customers’ homes:

- Providing online educational activities
- Participating in or hosting virtual Earth Day events
- Communicating about environmental initiatives
- Sharing energy-efficiency or sustainability tips

We encourage you to join in, and hope the following examples will inspire your utility’s virtual Earth Day 2020 celebration.

Earth Day educational activities

Schools may have closed, but learning hasn’t stopped. Parents have assumed the role of teachers and could use your help keeping their little ones engaged. Take this as an opportunity to revisit your educational materials and make them online-friendly (**figure 1**).

Figure 1: Earth Day 2020 virtual educational activities

Organizations are helping families get into the Earth Day spirit by highlighting educational resources

and activities.

MGE created an Earth Day 2020 themed educational booklet full of sustainability lessons and at-home activities.

View this post on Instagram

Photo by @sustain_dane: Earth Day turns 50 years old this April! Celebrate sustainability with lessons and at-home activities from @mgemadison ‘s Earth Day Every Day digital guide for kids! Kids and families can learn about the global celebration, energy conservation, clean energy and electric vehicles. Find MGE’s Earth Day Every Day fun guide at mge.com/earthday

A post shared by Madison Gas and Electric (@mgemadison) on Apr 8, 2020 at 12:38pm PDT

Dominion Energy shared family-friendly sustainability and conservation activities in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

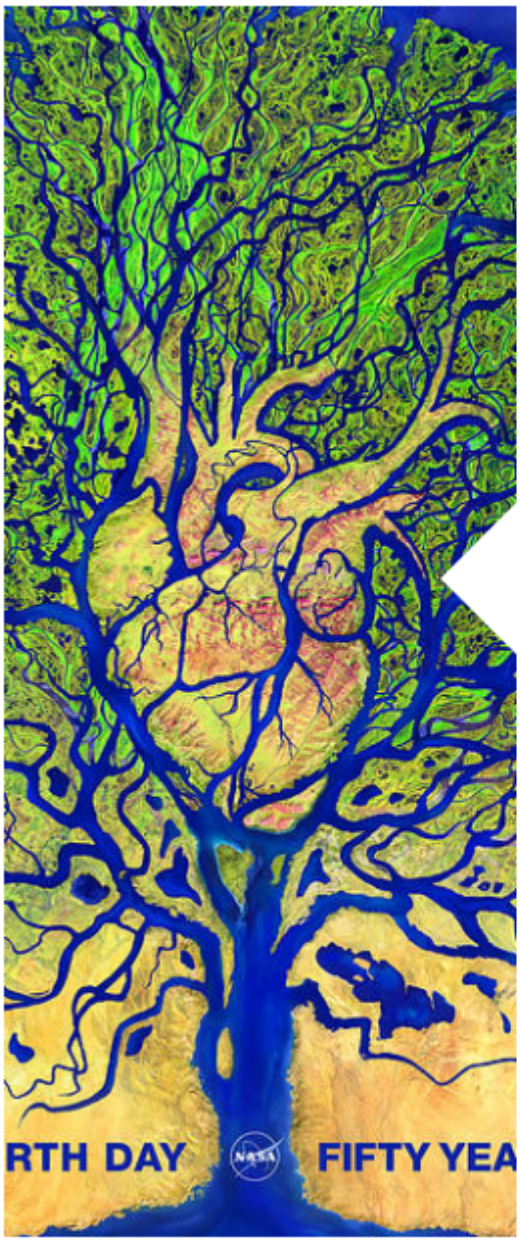
SMUD encouraged parents to submit their children’s Earth Day art by offering a chance to win an Amazon gift card.

Clark Public Utilities created a four-week-long virtual Earth Day challenge.



Source: Clark Public Utilites

NASA got in on the virtual Earth Day fun by providing a myriad of online resources to get kids excited about celebrating at home.



#EarthDayAtHome with NASA

On April 22, 1970, the world marked the first Earth Day. As we physically separate ourselves by necessity, we can still collectively appreciate the wondrous beauty of our planet

To help get you started, NASA has collected numerous activities to help you observe "Earth Day at Home."

Click here to learn more:

Click here to learn more, #EarthDayAtHome

Source: NASA

The US Environmental Protection Agency shared environmental information and online educational resources to help families celebrate Earth Day 2020 virtually.



Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day with EPA

This year, April 22nd marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, a day celebrated by millions of people across the world. Since the first Earth Day in 1970, the United States has made tremendous progress improving air quality, cleaning up contaminated lands, and protecting our water resources. As part of that progress, EPA is working hard to ensure all Americans have a clean, healthy environment and a more prosperous future.

EPA remains committed to protecting human health and the environment as we continue to adjust to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. While many of us are staying safe at home this Earth Day, we wanted to share some of our environmental information and educational resources for remote learning. Please feel free to share these resources with others. Have a happy and safe Earth Day!

Environmental Education Resources

[All About EPA: How Does EPA Protect the Environment Activity Book]



Learn the basics about how EPA protects our health and environment.

All ages

Type of Resource: Book

[Recycle City]



Explore Recycle City to learn how its residents reduce waste, use less energy, and even save money by doing simple things at home, at work, and in their neighborhoods.

All ages

Type of resource: Website/app

[Join the Lorax and Help Protect the Environment]



Have you met the Lorax? Play games and solve puzzles with some familiar friends.

All ages

Type of resource: Website/app

[History of EPA Research]



From the start, EPA researchers and partners have provided the data, knowledge, and tools needed to tackle the most pressing environmental and related health challenges the nation has faced. On our History of EPA Research webpage, you'll find links to milestones and other resources grouped by research area.

All ages

Type of Resource: Webpage

[Endangered Species: Save Our Species Coloring Book]



Did you know that EPA works to ensure that pesticides can be used safely without impacting our country's endangered plants and animals? Our endangered species coloring book introduces you to the different types of species EPA's pesticides program works to protect.

All ages

Type of resource: Coloring book

Source: US Environmental Protection Agency

Earth Day virtual events

Just because you can't gather in person doesn't mean you should cancel your Earth Day 2020 events. The following utilities and nonutilities worked quickly to bring their Earth Day 2020 events online, no pants required (**figure 2**).

Figure 2: Online events to celebrate Earth Day 2020

In-person events are going virtual as utilities and other organizations look to engage with people online.

City of Palo Alto turned its previously scheduled 2020 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan Community Engagement Workshop into an eight-part on-demand webinar.

> With Earth Day coming up on April 22, there are several ways to bring awareness to issues like climate change and our local sustainability efforts. This blog provides a summary of ways to participate in Earth Day awareness from the safety of your home. https://t.co/VORFusBztH pic.twitter.com/d3NVakioWl
>
> — City of Palo Alto (@cityofpaloalto) April 13, 2020

Omaha Public Power District' (OPPD's) CEO Tim Burke went on the live Earth Day Omaha virtual event to talk about OPPD's plans for renewable energy.

Earthday.org is celebrating with 24 hours of global conversations, calls to action, performances, video teach-ins, and more.



Source: Earthday.org

The Alliance Center, a Denver-based nonprofit, moved its weeklong Earth Day 2020 celebration online and includes themed documentary suggestions, sustainability tips, climate-friendly recipes, and more.

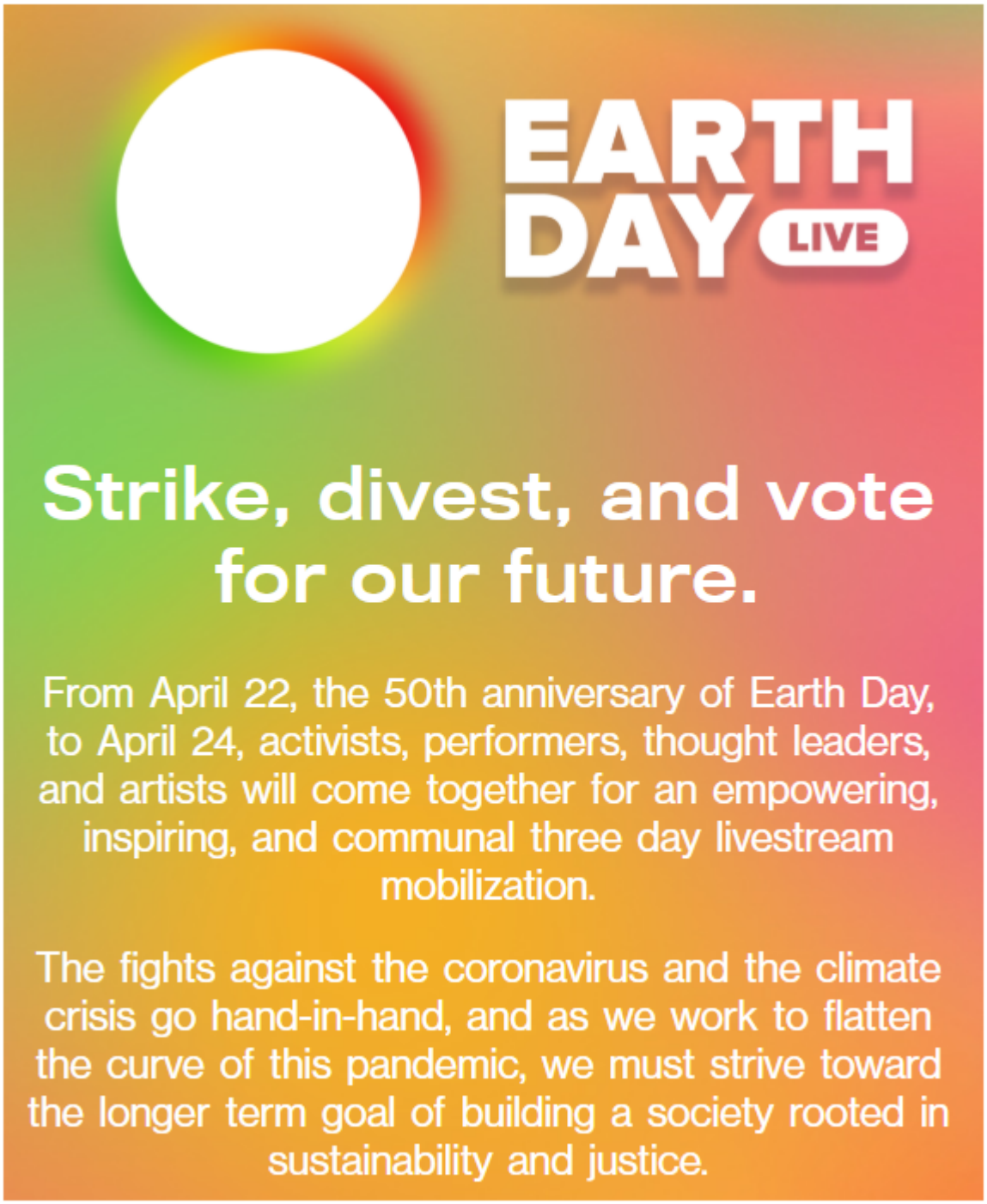


Celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day with a week of remote activities and online resources! In partnership with Earth Day Network and a coalition of organizations, we have adapted our Earth Week 2020 events to include content and actions you can utilize or partake in from the comfort of your home. Share how you're celebrating Earth Week with #DenverEarthWeek on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

Source: The Alliance Center

Earthdaylive2020.org will be livestreaming activists, performers, thought

leaders, and artists in celebration of Earth Day 2020.



Source: Earthdaylive2020.org

Earth Day environmental initiatives

Earth Day 2020 is a great excuse to talk about (or rethink) your environmental commitments. Approach this topic with empathy and make your customers the hero of your sustainability story (**figure 3**).

Figure 3: Pacific Power’s Earth Day 2020 environmental initiatives

Pacific Power acknowledged that Earth Day will look a little different this year, but that it still wanted to celebrate by sharing its sustainability efforts. The utility directed customers to its website, where it shared 12 specific ways it’s taking care of the earth.

View this post on Instagram

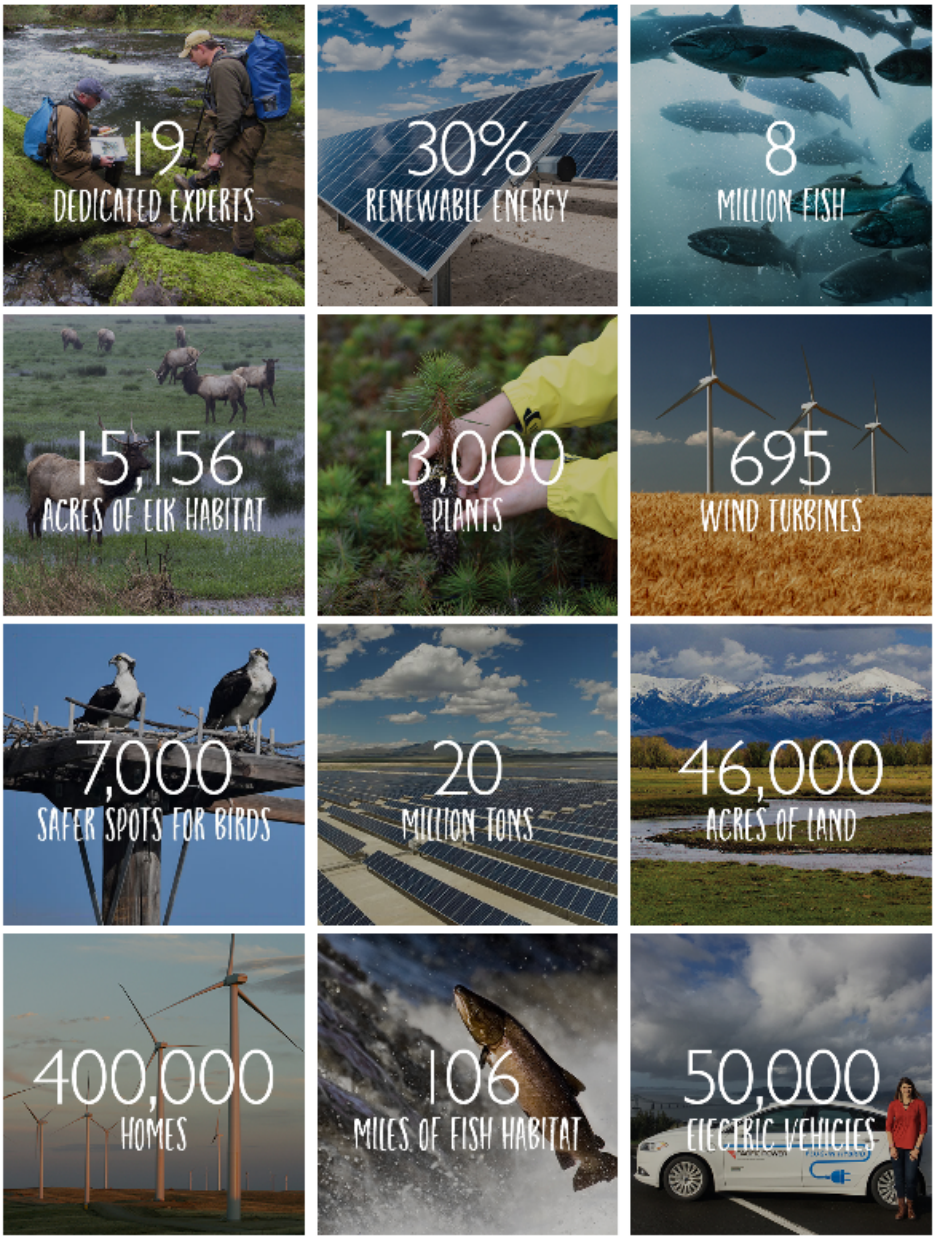
Earth Day is coming up, though things look a little different this year. We’ll celebrate with you here and share how we look to work sustainably in ways that count. Learn more at PoweringGreatness.com/BetterFuture #EarthDay50

A post shared by Pacific Power (@pacific_power) on Apr 13, 2020 at 7:00pm PDT

Serving as good stewards of the land

From the wind to our waterways, our land's not only the source of clean, renewable energy, it's also paramount to sustaining our healthy communities. That's why we're committed to protecting and preserving the land we all call home.

Click on the tiles below to learn more about ongoing work to protect our lands.



Source: Pacific Power

Energy-efficiency and sustainability tips

With people spending more time at home, there's never been a better time to share energy-efficiency and sustainability tips. Your customers are likely bracing for higher bills. Help them feel more incontrol by sharing simple ways to save energy and money (**figure 4**).

Figure 4: Earth Day 2020 energy-efficiency and sustainability tips

Earth Day is all about taking action, but options are limited with stay-at-home orders. Organizations suggest ways for people to help the planet from the comfort of their home.

PNM has been sharing sustainability-related tips and stories each day for the 50 days leading up to Earth Day. The utility got a gold star for making these tips helpful, timely, and funny during this uncertain time.

> The 50th anniversary of Earth Day is April 22. To celebrate, starting tomorrow for 50 days we'll share a simple, earth-loving, sustainability tip or story with you. Happy Earth Day 50! #PNMEarthDay50 #EarthDayEveryDay #EarthDay50for50 pic.twitter.com/gz84fGYC0n
>
> — PNM (@PNMtalk) March 3, 2020

The Earth Day Network created an Earth Day Challenge that encourages people to implement a different sustainability tip each day for 22 days leading up to Earth Day 2020.

> It's April 1st, but this is no joke — we're issuing a daily micro challenge for you to take, every day, wherever you are, to help fight our climate crisis while you might be staying home to #bendthecurve.
>
> Are you ready for 22 days of the #EarthDay #Challenge? pic.twitter.com/LCJDdTUeiu
>
> — Earth Day Network (@EarthDayNetwork) April 1, 2020

National Geographic shared simple ways kids can help the environment for Earth Day 2020.



PHOTOGRAPH BY FUSE, GETTY IMAGES

Earth Day

Celebrate Earth Day with these tips for helping our environment.

Source: National Geographic

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