

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION



The first Earth Day happened on April 22, 1970 when **more than 20 million Americans came together** to spread the word about protecting our planet. Some people ran demonstrations and protests while others came to learn. It was a pivotal moment in American history and the largest ever gathering in the United States at the time. It proved that people were on the same page—they wanted change for the environment.

What came from this gathering was a national holiday we still celebrate today and some of the most important environmental acts ever created. **The Clean Air Act and Clean Water Acts** as well as the creation of the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** can all be traced back to Earth Day. The Endangered Species Act, which has saved numerous species including the Bald Eagle, was also a product of Earth Day.

A lot of change has occurred since the first Earth Day in 1970. In 1990, Earth Day focused on how to boost the recycling system in the US. Today in Vermont, big steps are being taken in that area. Besides general recyclables like paper, plastic, and glass, Vermont has implemented a new composting law that has homes and businesses keeping their food waste out of landfills. This is a huge step towards less trash and a better system for recycling organic waste.

In 2000, Earth day turned its attention to Global Warming awareness. In 1992, the United States signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which pledged all nations to take action against Climate Change. The UNFCCC is still working today to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions. More recently, in 2007, the EPA published a rule mandating the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions from large sources. More than 8,000 facilities report their emissions yearly and that information is made public each October.

Earth Day in 2010 continued the fight against climate change in the face of denial by many citizens and government officials. It spawned two programs aimed at “going green”. The first, called The Canopy Project, has a goal to plant 7.8 billion trees worldwide, one for each person on Earth. The second, is a program called A Billion Acts of Green which provides ideas and opportunities for people to take action and go green. It has over 2.5 billion acts so far!

