

# DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

# Earth Day Planning Guide

---

Global Reach | Local Action

This document is intended to assist Navy and Marine Corps personnel in organizing and increasing awareness of Earth Day activities at their commands.



## BACKGROUND

Earth Day is a worldwide event celebrated annually on April 22. Earth Day was founded in 1970 by Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisc) as a grassroots effort to increase awareness of environmental issues. The first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and passage of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act. Earth Day celebrations raise environmental awareness and involve citizens and communities in creating a cleaner, healthier world.

Since the 1990s, the Department of the Navy and other military services celebrate Earth Day with installation events and community and educational outreach activities such as tree plantings and beach clean-ups.

## TIMEFRAME

Earth Day is celebrated annually on April 22, but events are not constrained to that date. Depending on local weather conditions and mission requirements, commands often elect to conduct Earth Day activities at various times in April or May.

## BENEFITS

Organizing Earth Day activities at your command can serve several purposes:

1. Build relationships with local communities through joint events and activities.
2. Raise internal (Navy/Marine Corps, military families) and external (general public, media, sister services) awareness of Department of Navy environmental programs and energy-conscious initiatives.
3. Improve the environment on and around your base or location for recreation and mission considerations via volunteer beach/shoreline/neighborhood cleanups.
4. Educate the command, the public, and/or school groups on natural resources, hazardous waste cleanup projects, “green” buildings and systems, and other environmental and energy projects specific to your command.
5. Reduce building operating/maintenance costs and increase recycling efforts at your command through increased awareness of environmental and energy best practices.

# POTENTIAL EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES

Earth Day activities will depend on the size and mission of your command, buy-in from your Installation Commander and Public Affairs team, relationships with the local community, and local weather conditions. With that in mind, below are examples of past Navy and Marine Corps Earth Day activities:

1. **Beach/neighborhood/shoreline cleanup:** Command teams pick up trash and debris from local installations, roads, or in nearby public recreation/wildlife conservation areas.
2. **Wildlife tour:** Natural resources managers/staff biologists provide a guided tour/hike of nature areas and explain how installations conserve and manage threatened and endangered species.
3. **Earth fair/festival:** Command staffs environmental/energy exhibits during local community Earth Day events, or organizes an Earth fair event and invites local stakeholders (public, government agencies, non-governmental organizations). Possible activities include cookouts, fishing contests, trash pick ups, household hazardous waste turn-in (e.g., old paint, cleaning products), science displays, and “green” how-to seminars.
4. **Habitat improvement:** Command volunteers, schools, and/or community organizations plant trees/flowers/shrubs, build bird houses, improve nature trails and signs, remove invasive plants, or complete other projects to beautify the area and help natural resources thrive on local installations.
5. **Fun run/walk/bicycle:** Command organizes and promotes a run/walk/bicycle ride on Earth Day, encouraging participants to enjoy nature and pursue personal fitness goals.
6. **Groundbreaking/ribbon cutting:** Commanding officer hosts a ceremonial groundbreaking/ribbon cutting for new or upgraded energy efficient/environmentally sound facilities or equipment on base.





7. **Art contest:** Command works with local schools to organize, judge, and promote a student art contest (posters, decorating recycled bags, etc.) for Earth Day and recognizes winning students with a certificate from the commanding officer.
8. **Recycling contest:** Command branches or departments compete over a specified timeframe (ex: week prior to Earth Day; month of April, Earth Day date) to recycle the greatest volume of paper, glass, metal, etc., and win fun prizes for their efforts. Some commands collect recyclable materials from waste storage areas (a.k.a., “dumpster diving”) during the contest.
9. **Arbor Day celebration:** Arbor Day was first celebrated on April 10, 1872, and is now celebrated (typically with tree plantings) throughout the spring based on local weather conditions. Many commands have joint Arbor Day and Earth Day activities.
10. **Tree City USA event:** Tree City USA is a recognition program designed to help communities manage and increase tree numbers. To qualify, communities must meet certain standards (see <https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/index-become.cfm>). Numerous naval installations are Tree City USA communities and often announce Tree City USA awards and give away free saplings on or around Earth Day.
11. **Energy conservation/carbon footprint reduction challenge:** Command personnel commit to making energy/environment-conscious decisions (e.g., turning off lights, carpooling/using public transit, buying products with less packaging, increasing recycling) at home and at work for a specified timeframe and are recognized around Earth Day.
12. **Ecological trivia:** Command hosts a trivia event or internally distributes short quiz with questions about environment/energy programs on the installation(s) and/or the environment in general and gives prizes to winning individuals/teams/departments.
13. **Tire/shoe recycling:** Command personnel coordinate with local recycling organizations to collect tires, shoes, or other specialty recyclable materials to create/improve a playground, nature trail, or other Earth-friendly community asset.
14. **Electronic waste/furniture diversion:** Command collects electronic waste such as cell phones, computer monitors, and cables and “recycles” the items through reuse, donation, or delivery to a local electronics recycler. Excess furniture can also be collected and reused/recycled.
15. **Emergency response demo:** Command schedules demonstration of emergency response capabilities (e.g., oil spill containment, hazmat cleanup, fire response) on or around Earth Day.

16. **Alternative fuel vehicles display/demo:** Command displays its solar/hybrid/natural gas/electric vehicles in a high-profile location and provides information about the technology and offers ride/drive opportunities if feasible.
17. **Environment/energy awards presentation:** Commanding officer presents recent environmental/energy awards to winning individuals, teams, and/or departments in an Earth Day ceremony.
18. **Command speaking engagements:** Commanding officer and/or command subject matter experts (natural resources, energy-efficient facilities, environmental compliance, etc.) give presentations on Earth-relevant topics affecting installations and the local community.
19. **Guest speaker:** Command invites environmental/energy experts and/or policy makers from the community to speak at an event.
20. **School presentation:** Command volunteers visit local schools and give a presentation on environmental, energy, recycling, and/or natural resources programs at local installations, including any that involve school or community participation. A command mascot can make the event fun for younger audiences.
21. **Off-base site visit:** Command personnel organize an educational field trip (with dependents or school groups) to a local zoo, wastewater treatment plant, nature preserve, marine research institute, alternative power generation station, or other local environment/energy-oriented facility.
22. **Letter of instruction/support:** Commanding officer (or designee) issues a letter in support of command personnel participating in Earth Day-related activities, stressing the importance of protecting the environment and using energy responsibly in support of the mission.





## PROMOTING EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES

Once your command determines which Earth Day event(s) will take place, the public affairs office should collaborate on an approach to help promote the event. Recommended steps include:

1. **30 or more days** before the event(s), send an email notifying command personnel and any invited guests (participating schools, local government agencies, non-governmental organizations) of the theme, event details (when, where, type of activities, points of contact), and any volunteer opportunities associated with the activities.
2. By **1 April**, fill out the online Earth Day Outreach Materials Request form (<http://greenfleet.dodlive.mil/environment/earth-day/earth-day-outreach-materials-request-form/>), or email Ashley Saunders (ashley.m.saunders.ctr@navy.mil) with the following information:
  - a. Type of event
  - b. Date(s)
  - c. Number and types of participants (children, local community, military only)
  - d. Point of contact (name, phone, email)
  - e. Shipping address
  - f. Command name

N45 will post Navy/Marine Corps Earth Day events online to help increase awareness: (<http://greenfleet.dodlive.mil/environment/earth-day/2017-earth-day-local-naval-command-events/>)

3. **14 or more days** before the event(s), publish a short article in the command newsletter/newspaper and/or on websites/social media pages describing the Earth Day theme, event plans, and volunteer opportunities. Hang Earth Day posters/fliers in high-traffic public areas around the base/facilities.
4. **Seven or more days** before the event(s), contact local media and “pitch” command Earth Day activities to reporters/editors who cover military matters, environment, energy, or other relevant beats. If feasible, invite journalists with whom your command has a good working relationship to attend and cover the activities.
5. **The day of the event(s)**, distribute a press release to relevant internal/external channels describing the activities. Include a high-resolution photo of people participating in the activities if possible. Be sure to post the press release and photo to Navy.mil (<http://www.navy.mil/submit/index.asp>).
6. As soon as possible but no later than **30 April**, send an email to Ashley Saunders (ashley.m.saunders.ctr@navy.mil) with the following information:

- a. A short (<150 word) summary describing the event(s)
- b. High-resolution photos (300 dpi uncompressed JPG or TIFF, minimum 3 x 5 inches)
- c. Separate photo cutlines with photographer's credit.

N45 will use summaries and photo information to inform senior leadership and other stakeholders of Navy/Marine Corps Earth Day activities worldwide.

### Free Information/Outreach Materials

The Chief of Naval Operations Energy and Environmental Readiness Division (N45) provides commands free outreach materials to support Earth Day.

- An official Navy Earth Day poster is available for download on the Earth Day website (<http://greenfleet.dodlive.mil/environment/earth-day/>). Online materials such as fact sheets, children's coloring books, and *Currents* magazine articles are also available to print.
- Additional environmental and energy posters, stickers, and pens are also available by mail. To request outreach materials, submit an online request using the Earth Day Materials Request Form (<http://greenfleet.dodlive.mil/environment/earth-day/earth-day-outreach-materials-request-form/>) no later than **4 April**. Materials are limited in quantity.

### Coordination With Headquarters Earth Day Theme

The Navy's Earth Day theme target release date is 22 March. The Navy's Earth Day theme is intended as a *general guideline* and allows Earth Day planners to match their local events as needed. Earth Day celebrations should reflect a command's "green" accomplishments and community relationships.

## EARTH DAY QUESTIONS

Please send any questions, comments, or suggestions about Navy/Marine Corps Earth Day support to:

- Ashley Saunders
  - Phone: 703-695-5083
  - Email: [ashley.m.saunders.ctr@navy.mil](mailto:ashley.m.saunders.ctr@navy.mil)
- Kenneth Hess
  - Phone: 703-695-5077
  - Email: [kenneth.hess@navy.mil](mailto:kenneth.hess@navy.mil)

