

The History
of
Earth Day





Earth Day History

There was a time in our history when people didn't worry about the air, water, land and animals on Earth.

People assumed that these resources would always be there. Several things happened to change that type of thinking. First, a few people took notice of some problems and let others know about it. Then some disasters occurred, and once people learned about the problems they decided something needed to be done.

In 1962 Rachel Carson published a book called *Silent Spring*, which warned about the problems that pesticides were causing to wildlife, birds, bees, agriculture, animals, pets and people. This book became an overnight best seller. Even John F. Kennedy, the US President at the time, read the book. Senator Nelson, from Wisconsin, began to organize the first Earth Day in 1969.

This was the same year that two disasters happened in the United States. First, pollution on the Cuyahoga River in Idaho caused a fire that created a lot of damage. Then an oil spill off the coast of California made people realize that we had a pollution problem.

The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970. Twenty million people and 10,000 schools participated. Earth Day was embraced by politicians from both parties, and families all over America. A few months later, the EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency was established. Two years later the EPA banned DDT (a pesticide) because it was causing bald eagle' eggshells to thin. In 1975 Congress set rules for cars so they would cause less pollution. So many small actions have transpired, or taken place since these early days of Earth Day and environmental awareness for our planet. In 2020, we will celebrate our 50th Earth Day.