



U.S. Department of Commerce; Office of Administrative Services; Office of Real Estate, Policy, and Major Programs; Energy, Safety and Environment Division

Earth Day 2009



In honor of Earth Day, the first issue of the Department of Commerce (DOC) Energy and Environment Quarterly Newsletter is dedicated to the one thing we all have in common: concern for our planet. All of us, regardless of our background, live, work, and play on the Earth. It is our home, and many of us

reading this newsletter have devoted our lives to making it a better world for ourselves and our children.

Senator Gaylord Nelson first proposed a day of national awareness of the environment in 1962. It took eight years for the project to evolve into what

we now know as Earth Day. Thirty-nine years later, the concept is as strong and poignant as ever before. The article entitled "How the First Earth Day Came About" was written by Senator Nelson shortly before the 30th anniversary of the first Earth Day, April 22 1970. ☺

Did you know...

- Earth Day is now celebrated in 175 countries.
- April 22 was partially selected for Earth Day as the primary audience, college students, would be back at school after Spring Break and not yet involved in final exams.
- More than 20 million Americans participated in the First Earth Day.

"... on April 22, 1970, Earth Day was held, one of the most remarkable happenings in the history of democracy . . . 20 million people demonstrated their support . . . American politics and public policy would never be the same again."

-American Heritage Magazine, October 1983

How the First Earth Day Came About

Senator Gaylord Nelson

The 30th Anniversary of Earth Day [arrived] on April 22, 2000. What was the purpose of Earth Day? How did it start? These are the questions I am most frequently asked.

Actually, the idea for Earth Day evolved over a period of seven years starting in 1962. For several years, it had been troubling me that the state of our environment was simply a non-issue in the politics of the country. Finally, in November 1962, an idea occurred to me that was, I thought, a virtual cinch to put the environment into the political "limelight" once and for all. The idea was to persuade President Kennedy to give visibility to this issue by going on a national conservation tour. I flew to Washington to discuss the proposal with Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who liked the idea. So did the President. The President began his five-day, eleven state conservation tour in September 1963. For many reasons the tour did not succeed in putting the issue onto the national political agenda.

However, it was the germ of the idea that ultimately flowered into Earth Day.

I continued to speak on environmental issues to a variety of audiences in some twenty-five states. All across the country, evidence of environmental degradation was appearing everywhere, and everyone noticed except the political establishment. The environmental issue simply was not to be found on the nation's political agenda. The people were concerned, but the politicians were not. After President Kennedy's tour, I still hoped for some idea that would thrust the environment into the political mainstream. Six years would pass before the idea that became Earth Day occurred to me while on a conservation speaking tour out West in the summer of 1969. At the time, anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, called "teach-ins," had spread to college campuses all across the nation. Suddenly, the idea occurred to me - why not organize a huge grassroots protest over what was happen-

ing to our environment?

I was satisfied that if we could tap into the environmental concerns of the general public and infuse the student anti-war energy into the environmental cause, we could generate a demonstration that would force this issue onto the political agenda. It was a big gamble, but worth a try.

At a conference in Seattle in September 1969, I announced that in the spring of 1970 there would be a nationwide grassroots demonstration on behalf of the environment and invited everyone to participate. The wire services carried the story from coast to coast. The response was electric. It took off like gangbusters. Telegrams, letters, and telephone inquiries poured in from all across the country. The American people finally had a forum to express its concern about what was happening to the land, rivers, lakes, and air - and they did so

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Director's Message	2
Earth Day at DOC	2
HCHB Green Team	3
New Recycling Bins	3
Electronic Stewardship	3
Personal Computer Recycling	3
Making the World a Better Place	3
Environmental Stewardship Awards	4
Getting to Know...	4

A Message from Our Director

This first issue of the Department of Commerce's Energy and Environment Newsletter is appropriately scheduled for release on Earth Day 2009, the 39th anniversary of the first Earth Day. The article on the front page by Senator Gaylord Nelson mentions that he originally envisioned the day as a "teach-in," an opportunity to inform people about environmental issues. We hope that our Newsletter will follow in that same tradition, informing and raising awareness of environmental issues within the Department.

I hope you will all join us in the

lobby of the HCHB for our annual Earth Day Fair on April 22nd, and then at 2 PM come to the Auditorium to congratulate this year's winners of the DOC Environmental Stewardship Awards.

NIST has an amazing project that will save over 30 million gallons of water a year, and NOAA has developed an Environmental Management System that ensures that environmental stewardship is included in all aspects of the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science programs. Both of these award recipients are eligible to compete for the highest level of recognition given to Federal

Agencies—the White House Closing the Circle Award and the Presidential Award for Leadership in Energy Management.

So this Earth Day, fulfill the dream imagined on that first Earth Day: Raise your awareness of the environment; learn about our programs here at the HCHB, and most of all, join us in celebrating Earth Day, every day. ☺



Fred Fanning
Director for Administrative Services

Special points of interest:

- April 22, 2009, from 2-3 PM, in the HCHB Auditorium, the Department of Commerce Environmental Stewardship Awards will be presented.
- May 27-29, The State of Environmental Justice in America, Arlington, VA
www.eiconference.net/2009conference.html.
- June 16-18, The Federal Environmental Symposium will be held in Bethesda on the National Institutes of Health campus.

The First Earth Day

(Continued from page 1)
with spectacular exuberance.

For the next four months, two members of my Senate staff, Linda Billings and John Heri-

“Why not organize a huge grassroots protest over what was happening to our environment?”

tage, managed Earth Day affairs out of my Senate office. Five months before Earth Day, on Sunday, November 30, 1969, *The New York Times* carried a lengthy article by Glad-

win Hill reporting on the astonishing proliferation of environmental events:

“Rising concern about the environmental crisis is sweeping the nation’s campuses with an intensity that may be on its way to eclipsing student discontent over the war in Vietnam... a national day of observance of environmental problems... is being planned for next spring... when a nationwide environmental ‘teach-in’... coordinated from the office of Senator Gaylord Nelson is planned...”

It was obvious that we were headed for a spectacular success on Earth Day. It was also obvious that grassroots activi-



Senator Gaylord Nelson (1916-2005) served in the Senate from 1963-1981 as a Democrat from Wisconsin.

telephone calls, paper work, inquiries, etc. In mid-January, three months before Earth Day, John Gardner, Founder of Common Cause, provided temporary space for a Washington, D.C. headquarters. I staffed the office with college students and selected Denis Hayes as coordinator of activities.

Earth Day worked because of the spontaneous response at the grassroots level. We had neither the time nor resources to organize 20 million demonstrators and the thousands of schools and local communities that participated. That was the remarkable thing about Earth Day. It organized itself. ☺

Earth Day at DOC

The Herbert C. Hoover Building will host DOC's Earth Day Celebration this year on April 22, 2009. Displays from several Operating Units as well as environmentally themed giveaways and prizes will be available from 10am to 2pm in the main lobby. Literature on recycling, composting, backyard gardening, and energy conservation will also be available. Commerce-Kids will be treated to Earth Day lollipops and an Earth-themed art project. ☺



Earth Day 2008

HCHB Green Team

The HCHB Green Team is a task force of volunteers helping to make HCHB a greener work environment. Members of the team represent every Operating Unit and the Office of the Secretary. The Green Team meets quarterly to discuss and suggest greening initiatives within the building.

The newly created team has been successful in helping the Energy, Safety and Environment Division launch the Personal Cell Phone Drive being held at

HCHB next month. Additionally, the team has come up with



Members of the HCHB Green Team.

some great ideas for future efforts that we hope to be able to act upon.

If you wish to join the Green Team, please contact Gevevieve Walker at gwalker@doc.gov.

Electronic Stewardship

EPEAT registered imaging equipment and televisions are expected to be available in late 2010. These printers, copiers, scanners, fax machines, and all-in-one devices have earned the Energy Star and will be 14 percent more efficient than current qualified models.

Once EPEAT registered imaging equipment is available, at least 95% of new purchases and leases of this equipment must

meet the requirements. Visit www.epeat.net for more information on EPEAT requirements.

It is recommended that those with leasing agreements begin to work new language into the contracts to allow for an easier transition. Guidance on contracting language is available at www.federalelectronicschallenge.net/resources/docs/epeat_contract_ietv.pdf.

Making the World a Better Place: Green Tips



The U.S. Government is the single largest domestic user of energy – spending more than \$9 billion to power its vehicles, operations and approximately 500,000 facilities throughout the U.S. As the number one consumer of energy in the country, it is up to us as federal employees and contractors to act as stewards and promote the wise and efficient use of energy in the gov-

ernment.

By “bringing your green to work,” you can help reduce energy use, lessen dependence on non-domestic oil, and help fight global warming. To start, ENERGY STAR offers advice on how to “Bring your Green to Work” with ENERGY STAR:

1. **Give it a rest**—Use the ENERGY STAR power management settings on your computer and monitor so they go into power save mode when not in use. Also, use a power strip as a

DOC Purchases New Recycling Bins

New recycling bins have been placed throughout HCHB. The bins, made from 100% recycled materials, were purchased from funds generated through successful recycling efforts throughout the Department. Recycling bins can be found on the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th corridors of each floor, and 16 more are being ordered for those areas still in need. The new bins replaced the old bins and have three separate compartments for Cans & Bottles, Mixed Paper & Newspaper, and Garbage & Trash.

If you are already an active recy-

cler, we thank you for supporting the Department’s recycling and greening efforts. If you’re not an active recycler, we encourage you to begin. Each item recycled brings money back to the Department, helping DOC to Go Green! ☺



Personal Computer Recycling

In October 2008, Dell and Goodwill Industries joined forces to create Reconnect, a free and convenient means for computer recycling.



Reconnect is now accepting computer donations of any brand of computer equipment in any type of condition at Goodwill locations across the DC metro area and Virginia.

The program hopes to divert 2.7 million pounds of used computers from landfills over the next year, and provide education on the benefits of environmentally sound disposal.

Customers are responsible for removing data from hard drives and other storage material before donating to Goodwill. For more information, visit www.reconnectpartnership.com.

central “turn off” when you are using equipment to completely disconnect the power supply.

2. **Unplug it**—Unplug electronics such as cell phones and laptops once they are charged. Adapters plugged into outlets use power even if they are not charging.

3. **Light up your work life**—Replace the light bulb in your desk lamp with an ENERGY STAR qualified bulb. It will last up to 10 times longer and use about 75% less energy. Turn off

your lights when you leave, especially at the end of the day.

4. **Let it flow**—Keep air vents clear of paper, files, and office supplies. It takes as much as 25% more energy to pump air into the workspace if vents are blocked.

This information is also available in brochure form on the www.energystar.gov website. ☺

DOC Environmental Stewardship Awards

Congratulations to the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Sciences (NCCOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), Gaithersburg campus. Both were selected to receive the 2009 DOC Environmental Stewardship Awards. This award program recognizes outstanding achievements of Department employees or organizations for efforts



NIST's Steamed and Chilled Water Generation Plant with groundwater piping.

that significantly contribute to or promote environmental stewardship within the environmental, energy, or transportation programs under Executive Order (EO) 13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management*.

NIST was selected to receive the Environmental Stewardship Award for their water reuse/conservation project that is estimated to save approxi-

mately 33,000,000 gallons of water a year. This innovative project utilizes water pumped from sump pits that would previously have been disposed of in the storm drain, and instead reroutes the water for use in the cooling tower of the Steam and Chilled

Water Generation Plant. In addition to saving millions of gallons of water a year, the project has resulted in an annual savings of approximately \$128,000. This project will be nominated for the Presidential Award for Leadership in Energy Management.

NCCOS was selected to receive the Award for their Environmental Management System (EMS). The NCCOS EMS encompasses five main organizational research centers geographically distributed from South Carolina to Alaska. In November 2008, the NCCOS EMS was subject to a rigorous third-party audit and was determined to be in conformance with all 17 elements of the international standard (ISO



The NCCOS EMS covers several research centers including the Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research (CCFHR) facility on Pivers Island, NC.

140001). This project has been nominated for the White House Closing the Circle Award. ☺

Getting to Know DOC Environmental Manager—Genevieve Walker



Genevieve Walker, DOC Environmental Manager.

Ms. Walker is a geologist with over 25 years' experience in Environmental Management. Her work has emphasized sustainability, pollution prevention, regulatory compliance, hazard and risk assessments, emer-

gency management, waste management, and environmental impact assessment. She has developed several multi-media environmental programs for the Air National Guard, the US Coast Guard, Dade County, Florida and Miami International Airport. Prior to coming to DOC, she worked extensively with NASA, assisting them at the HQ level in development of a Sustainability Program, an Agency-wide Environmental Management System, several training programs for both professional and non-environmental professionals, preparation of briefings and white papers for presentation to Congress and the White House and development of an agency-wide policy on perchlorate contamination.

Her favorite job to date has been developing and running the environmental program for the 192nd Fighter Wing in Richmond, Virginia. That position allowed her to create an entire multi-media environmental program from scratch, learn the mysterious ways of the military ("call everybody a Colonel and you won't offend anybody"), and won her several high-level accolades and awards within the National Guard and the Air Force.

Ms. Walker can be reached at either 202-482-2345 or gwalker@doc.gov. ☺



U.S. Department of Commerce; Office of Administrative Services; Office of Real Estate, Policy, and Major Programs; Energy, Safety and Environment Division

1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Phone: 202-482-3580
Fax: 202-482-1969
E-mail: gogreen@doc.gov

www.osec.doc.gov/oas/ore.htm