



The Rundown

A BLOG OF NEWS AND INSIGHT

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EARTH DAY -- April 22, 2010 at 1:00 PM EDT

Earth Day's 40th Anniversary Marked with Concerts, Idea Exchanges

BY: LARISA EPATKO

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Countries around the world celebrated the 40th Earth Day on Thursday and throughout the week with activities such as fashion shows featuring recycled materials, seed plantings at the Shanghai Zoo and musicians in Morocco playing songs about the Earth.

Earth Day began in the United States on April 22, 1970, after Sen. Gaylord Nelson, D-Wis., called for a nationwide "teach-in" to raise awareness about the environment.

At the time, a small crew of filmmakers set out to document some of the more pressing issues involving wildlife in America. They made eight half-hour films, which ended up being the first American environmental TV series. You can watch the landmark episodes of "Our Vanishing Wilderness" online, courtesy of our public broadcasting friends at WNET.

Forty years later, Earth Day rallies and other events have spread from college campuses to cities, towns and corporations across the globe.

The Washington, D.C.-based Earth Day Network, which works to promote the day worldwide, says 1 billion people will attend Earth Day celebrations this year in some 190 countries.

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One of the network's initiatives is a **Global Day of Conversation** in which officials from 39 countries will discuss and exchange ideas on climate-change issues, the group says.

In Morocco, officials planned to launch 10 projects, including environmental education programs in schools and a national observatory for environment and rural development, the **Agence France-Presse** reported. And Moroccan artists were planning to perform a specially composed song at an Earth Day event in Rabat on Saturday.

Visitors to Yoyogi Park in Tokyo could listen to music and **sample organic foods**, washing their dishes afterward in water warmed by solar panels.

The World Wildlife Fund helped organize nature trail walks in more than a **dozen cities in India** to introduce children to different insects, trees and birds. And in Mumbai, children could attend a "Birthday Party for Mother Earth."

In Ethiopia, where Earth Day celebrations are relatively new, events included climate-change lectures and activities and **screenings of environment-themed films**.

Revelers could attend dances and workshops in Barcelona, organized by Earth Day Catalonia, while in the U.K., the "Weapons of Sound" band was set to play in the Millennium Dome.

In Washington, D.C., a concert on Sunday featuring Sting, John Legend and The Roots will double as a rally for comprehensive climate-change legislation, among **other events**.

To kick off Earth Day festivities, Vice President Joe Biden on Wednesday announced \$452 million in Recovery Act "Retrofit Ramp-Up" awards for energy-efficient projects and encouraged people to sign up for **Earth Day service events** in their neighborhoods.

Since it's Earth Day, some PBS stations will also air -- **or re-air** -- the **American Experience film "Earth Days,"** which examines the birth of the modern environmental movement. It also features a discussion co-produced with the NewsHour and moderated by Ray Suarez about the future of the environmental movement. You also can **watch the film and the discussion online**.

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