



FREP DOWNSTREAM E-NEWSLETTER

Monday, April 20, 2020

Greetings from FREP

Please visit our [Website](#) for additional information and updates on activities shared in this newsletter

FREP's special Downstream edition -- recognizing the significance of Earth Day



What is the history of Earth Day?

Earth Day was a unified response to an environment in crisis — oil spills, smog, rivers so polluted they literally caught fire. On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans — 10% of the U.S. population at the time — took to the streets, college campuses and hundreds of cities to protest environmental ignorance and demand a new way forward for our planet. The first Earth Day is credited with launching the modern environmental movement, and is now recognized as the planet's largest civic event.

What was the result of the first Earth Day?

The first Earth Day in 1970 launched a wave of action, including the passage of landmark environmental laws in the United States. The Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts were created in response to the first Earth Day in 1970, as well as the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Many countries soon adopted similar laws. Earth Day continues to hold major international significance: In 2016, the United Nations chose Earth Day as the day when the historic Paris Agreement on climate change was signed into force.

What is the theme for Earth Day 2020?

The theme is climate action. The enormous challenge — but also the vast opportunities — of action on climate change have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary. Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable.

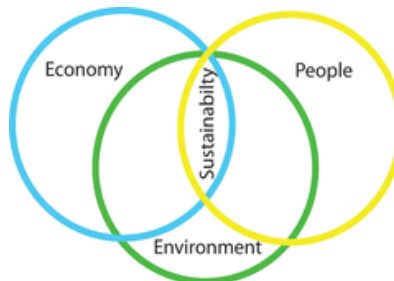
President's Message



On the first Earth Day **nearly one in ten Americans joined the protest** to call for an end to the rampant pollution of our country's air, waters, and landscapes. Wisconsin Democratic Senator Gaylord Nelson - often cited as an Earth Day founder and whom I had the privilege of meeting when I was in college - said the goal was to force the issue of environmental protection permanently onto the national political agenda. From that day came the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These took a few years to write and implement, but put our country on a solid framework of environmental protections.

Currently all these protections are quietly being rolled back and suspended indefinitely by the Trump administration. Here, at 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we find ourselves unable to physically participate in any protests or actions as groups of citizens while we are trying to deal with a novel virus pandemic.

This special **50th Earth Day edition of the Downstream** is our effort to mark this important anniversary and provide you with background and ways we can all act — mostly through our virtual world. This needs to be the biggest Earth Day yet, to get the attention again of our national government and make it clear that people still need clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. We need both a healthy environment and healthy people for a healthy economy.



For a wonderful history and various perspectives on the first Earth Day, read what our friends at the Sierra Club put together in their last magazine found [HERE](#). Note that this issue of their magazine was put together before the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, so advocacy detailing in-person strikes is, of course no longer, a possibility. This Downstream provides ways you can engage while still respecting our social distancing rules during the pandemic.

Jeff Mengler, Hey and Associates, FREP President

Ways to celebrate Earth Day:



For the entire week of 2020 Earth Day and in honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22 — we invite you to participate in **One Earth Film Fest's Earth Week Virtual Mini Film Festival**, in partnership with the City of Chicago. Register for one or more FREE screenings below, watch a film in community online, then discuss with experts via live chat on Zoom.

[Click for details](#)

Outdoor Activities for Families:

"Social Distancing" does not mean you have to stay indoors! Some people have been fooled into thinking this, as evidenced by a Sierra Club piece where the author erroneously repeated the misconception that we have to stay indoors. We can go outdoors and you can do this with people you are already living with, while taking care to keep at least six feet or more from other humans.

So, what can we do outside? Indeed, we cannot go to the playground — a place with hard surfaces touched by many and where the virus can be found. But there's still lots we can do and keep our distance.



[CLICK HERE](#) for ideas shared by the [Children and Nature Network](#) for **25 Things to do in Social Isolation**, a list of outdoor activities to do with your family during the pandemic. This list was created by [Nature Play WA](#) (Western Australia.) Both of these organizations have a wealth of other resources on their websites. Check them out!

What can you do to help our watershed and planet, while practicing good social distancing to combat COVID-19?



Shut off your vehicle while waiting in line at the drive-up — pharmacy, bank, fast-food, etc. You never know how long the people in front of you will be, and your car will start back up just fine. So, save the fuel and the emissions while sitting there.



Reduce water usage and waste (except for handwashing!) — water use equals energy use through pumping to bring the water to you, and then to take it away and treat it at the wastewater treatment plant. Fix dripping faucets, flush the toilet less often, run the dishwasher only when full, etc. Capture rainwater for non-potable uses, especially watering plants. Many of our partners offer rain barrels.



Look at your home energy usage. Can you turn off some electronics while not in use, turn off lights, change to LED light bulbs, etc. Work with your children if they're at home to sleuth out places of energy waste.



Plan to plant some native wildflowers in your yard/garden this year — add benefit to our urban ecosystem for pollinators.



Don't treat your yard to kill every insect that crawls, slithers or flies. Many of the commercial mixes kill nearly everything — including pollinators. And you'll get more bats and birds around if there still is something left for them to eat. And many of the chemicals we apply to lawns are produced by the petroleum/chemical industry and not "environmentally friendly."



Apply only organic, slow-release fertilizer to your lawn to reduce nutrient runoff. Lawn fertilizer should not contain phosphorus unless soil testing has demonstrated a deficiency.



Buy and eat locally grown food whenever you can. It is not a sustainable practice to have produce flown in from various South American countries that we can grow right here.

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Here are some links to local organic farms:

- The Conservation Foundation's Green Earth Harvest Naperville
- Angelic Organics Caledonia
- Heritage Prairie Farm Elburn
- Rustic Road Farm Elburn
- M's Organic Farm Woodstock
- Mighty Green Farm Elburn
- Pushing the Envelope Farm Geneva
- Sol Gardens Yorkville
- The Garden Works Project West Chicago - helping neighborhoods set up organic gardens



Want to Learn More About Sustainability, Climate Change and Earth Day?
Use these quizzes with your family to see how much you know and don't know!:

- National Geographic Earth Day Quiz
- Conservation.org's Earth Day Quiz
- Earthday.org's Earth Day Quizzes
- Famous Environmentalists Quiz
- Earth and Environment Quiz
- Free, Printable Earth Day Quiz

Other links to Earth Day and related resources:

- The official Earth Day website
- Take the Earth Day Challenge
- Chicago Community Climate Partnership Earth Day site
- Citizen's Climate Lobby

One more thing you could do outside -- pull up some garlic mustard!



If you want to get outdoors and get some exercise, spring is the perfect time to pull garlic mustard, one of our widespread invasive species. Garlic mustard is an invasive plant, capable of choking out native eco-systems as it carpets woodland floors, wetland banks, roadsides, alleys, backyards, and forest preserves. Tolerant of sun, shade, wet, or dry, it out-competes native plants through its aggressiveness, shocking seed production, and ability to release toxins in the soil that prevent native seedlings, including certain species of trees, from thriving. It is a noxious weed, normally noticed around tax day (easy to remember), perhaps in your own garden, or even slyly growing in the potting soil of a new perennial you just purchased. It is the second year, however, when the plant does its most damage, again beginning in April, when its growth really takes off.

What YOU can do:

Identify garlic mustard properly—a process most gardeners, school kids, and the public find easiest during its second year, when the plant is actively growing. It is important to remove the whole plant, including all of its fleshy root. Even a tiny remnant left in the soil will regenerate. Gently pull the plant out (if the soil is moist this job is easier) by grasping it low on its stem. Do not shake it or compost it! Put it in a plastic bag and tie securely and dispose of it in your regular trash.

See https://www.chicagobotanic.org/plantinfo/spring_arrives_so_does_garlic_mustard for more information.

Upcoming Related FREP Activities:

FREP will not be holding gatherings for Noon Networks or Meetings until it is safe to do so. We have listed below under **Future Activities** what has been planned, if we can resume meeting. For now -- here is a virtual activity for you:

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

1 - 2:30 PM

FREE WEBINAR

Lessons from the COP25 Madrid Climate Change Meeting

Via **GoToMeeting** <https://www.gotomeet.me/SevenGenerationsAhead>

The UN Climate Change Conference was held in Madrid, Spain in December 2019. This webinar will be presented by Gary Cuneen-Seven Generations Ahead Executive Director, student Roz Beile and teacher Laura Stamp, who attended COP25.



What was the UN Climate Change conference all about? The conference was designed to take the next crucial steps in the UN climate change process. Following agreement on the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement at COP 24 in Poland last year, a key objective was to complete several matters with respect to the full operationalization of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. The conference furthermore served to build ambition ahead of 2020, the year in which countries have committed to submit new and updated national climate action plans. Crucial climate action work was taken forward in areas including finance, the transparency of climate action, forests and agriculture, technology, capacity building, loss and damage, indigenous peoples, cities, oceans and gender.

The conference included the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 25), the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 15), and the second session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 2). The fifty-first sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 51) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 51) took place 2 - 9 December 2019.

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

FREP Membership Meeting & Program

1 - 2:30 PM

Location: Kane County Government Center, Building A, 719 S. Batavia Avenue, Geneva, IL

Program: Plastics in our Watershed - including excerpts from a number of related videos from National Geographic & PBS

Presenter: Jennifer Garland, Kane County Recycling Coordinator

If you have an activity or event you'd like FREP to share on our Website or in the Downstream, please email the information to Becky at: foxriverinfo@comcast.net

Becky Hoag, Communications Manager, Fox River Ecosystem Partnership 630-482-9157 foxriverinfo@comcast.net

Please email me if you have an email to add to our mailing list.

FREP WEBSITE: foxriverecosystem.org



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