



# Department of Navy Planning Guide

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

## Background: What is Earth Day?

Earth Day was founded in 1970 by Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisc) as a grassroots effort to increase awareness of environmental issues. Since the 1990s, the Department of the Navy and other military services have typically celebrated Earth Day annually with themes, “green” installation events that are open to the public and/or military personnel, participation in community and/or educational outreach activities, and articles or other information products that highlight local Earth Day events and ongoing Navy/Marine Corps environmental and energy programs.



Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson speaks at a Denver, CO Earth Day event in 1970.



Navy personnel help students plant a tree during an Earth Day event at Commander Fleet Activities, Chinhae, Korea.

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



Marines conduct a shoreline cleanup at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi.

## Types of Earth Day Activities

There are hundreds of possible activities in which your command could participate for Earth Day. The scale and number of activities you choose to support will depend on the nature and tempo of your command's particular mission, buy-in from your Installation Commander and Public Affairs team, strategic relationships with the local community and government officials outside your fence line, the size of your command, and of course local weather conditions. With that in mind, here are some examples of Earth Day activities that have been successful in the past for Navy and Marine Corps commands:

1. **Beach/neighborhood/shoreline cleanup:** One or more teams from the command pick up trash and debris from areas on local installations, on 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. **School presentation:** Command volunteers visit one or more 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.
4. **Earth fair/festival:** Command staffs one or more 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). Cookouts, fishing contests, trash pick ups, household hazardous waste turn-in (e.g., old paint, cleaning products), science displays, and "green" how-to seminars are examples of possible activities for the event.
5. **Habitat improvement:** Command volunteers and/or invited schools/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.
6. **Groundbreaking/ribbon cutting:** Commanding officer hosts a ceremonial groundbreaking/ribbon cutting



Students answer questions during an Earth Day presentation at Naval Submarine Base New London.



Naval Base Ventura County personnel participate in a 5K Earth Day run.

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. **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.
9. **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.

10. **Arbor Day celebration:** Arbor Day was first celebrated in Nebraska on April 10, 1872, and is now celebrated (typically with ceremonial tree plantings) throughout the U.S. at various times in April based on local weather conditions. Many commands conduct joint Arbor Day and Earth Day activities concurrently.
11. **Tree City USA event:** Tree City USA is a community designation sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in association with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. To qualify, communities must meet certain standards (see [website](#)).



NWS Earle shows off its Tree City USA designation and provides free saplings for Earth Day.

12. **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 in April/May (or all year round).
13. **Emergency response demo:** Command schedules demonstration of emergency response capabilities (e.g., oil spill containment, hazmat cleanup, fire response) on or around Earth Day.
14. **Ecological quiz:** Command internally distributes short quiz with questions about

environment/energy programs on local installation(s) and/or the environment in general, judges the entries, and then gives out fun prizes to winning individuals or departments.

15. **Tire/shoe recycling:** Command personnel coordinate with local recycling organizations on a volunteer basis to collect tires, shoes, or other specialty recyclable materials to create/improve a playground, nature trail, or other Earth-friendly community asset.
16. **Environment/energy awards presentation:** Commanding officer presents recent, relevant awards to winning individuals, teams and/or departments in a ceremony.
17. **Command speaking engagements:** Commanding officer and/or command subject matter experts on natural resources, energy-efficient facilities, environmental compliance, etc. give presentation(s) on Earth-relevant topics affecting installations and the local community.
18. **Guest speaker:** Command invites one or more environmental/energy experts and/or policy makers from the community to speak at an event.
19. **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.
20. **Off-base site visit:** Command personnel organize an educational field trip (e.g., 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.
21. **Electronic waste/furniture diversion:** Command collects electronic waste such as unneeded 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.



Naval Base Kitsap representatives collect used sneakers for Earth Day shoe recycling.

22. **Sustainability pledge:** Command employees sign a pledge to work and live in a more sustainable manner. For example, pledge may include agreeing to use water saving devices at home, avoiding plastic packaging, buying energy-efficient light bulbs, turning off lights, buying Energy Star-compliant appliances, recycling, and improving home insulation.
23. **Alternative fuel vehicles display/demo:** Command puts its solar/hybrid/natural gas/electric vehicles on display in a high-profile location, providing information about the technology and offering ride/drive opportunities for stakeholders if feasible.
24. **Electronic waste/furniture diversion:** Command collects electronic waste such as unneeded 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.



General Motors representatives show a hydrogen-fueled vehicle during an Earth Day event at the U.S. Navy Memorial.



The “Green Hornet,” an F/A-18 Hornet fueled on a 50/50 blend of jet fuel and camelina-based biofuel, completed a test flight at NAS Patuxent River on Earth Day 2010.

## Coordination with Headquarters Earth Day Theme

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment (ASN (E,I&E)) typically selects a theme for Earth Day each year with input and approval from SECNAV. In most cases, the theme will be included in national-level (Chief of Information (CHINFO)-approved) Earth Day-related information materials released in April. The theme may tie in to high-profile/national level Navy and Marine Corps energy and environmental events happening on April 22 and throughout April.

The target date for release of the DON Earth Day theme is 22 March, providing ample time for commands to consider how to incorporate the theme into their Earth Day planning for the following year. Bear in mind that the yearly theme is intended as a *general guideline*—it is not intended to force individual commands to abandon ideas for Earth Day celebrations that may not precisely align with the theme but reflect their specific “green” accomplishments and community relationships. In most cases, themes selected are general enough to allow Earth Day planners to interpret the theme creatively as needed to match their events and generate locally relevant talking points with public affairs support. Some commands also develop separate themes for their local Earth Day events if there is a specific need.

## Free Information/Outreach Materials

On an annual basis, the Chief of Naval Operations Energy and Environmental Readiness Division (N45) coordinates with Chief of Naval Installation Command (CNIC) headquarters to notify commands of free outreach materials that may be available to support Earth Day. After a given year’s theme is announced, a poster/flier that incorporates the year’s Earth Day theme and has space for commands to customize content will be available for download on the Green Fleet website (<http://greenfleet.dodlive.mil/>).



Participants in the Earth Day Jacksonville & Ecology Fair get free information about environmental programs at Commander Navy Region Southeast.

Online materials such as fact sheets, children’s coloring books, and *Currents* magazine articles are available for print on the Greenfleet Kids’ Corner, Library, and Currents Magazine pages.

Posters and Earth Day stickers that highlight DON environmental and energy programs are also typically available by mail or in some cases online.

To receive printed items in time for Earth Day, 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 **10 April**.

Supplies of some hard copy items are limited in quantity.

## Promoting Earth Day Activities

Once your command determines that one or more Earth Day events will be supported in a given year, the command public affairs office should collaborate on an approach to help get the word out for any events organized by the command. Recommended steps for promoting the event(s) are as follows:



**CAPT John Sears, commanding officer of Naval Support Activity Washington, greets Bob Barnes of the Nature Conservancy. Mr. Barnes was guest speaker at a Washington Navy Yard Earth Day event.**

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**, send an email to Madeline Joyce ([madeline.joyce.ctr@navy.mil](mailto:madeline.joyce.ctr@navy.mil)) with the following information:

- a. Type of event
- b. Date(s) and timeframe
- c. Point(s) of contact (name, phone, email)
- d. Location
- e. Command name

Please copy LCDR Noel Cajudo, ODASN EI&E ([noel.cajudo@navy.mil](mailto:noel.cajudo@navy.mil)), Kenneth Hess, N45 ([kenneth.hess@navy.mil](mailto:kenneth.hess@navy.mil)), LT Chika Onyekanne ([chika.onyekanne@navy.mil](mailto:chika.onyekanne@navy.mil)) and Christine Porter, CNIC ([christine.porter@navy.mil](mailto:christine.porter@navy.mil)) on the email message. N45 and/or ODASN EI&E will post Navy/Marine Corps Earth Day events summaries on the Earth Day Network site ([www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net)) to help increase awareness of the activities.

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. Post Earth Day fliers in conspicuous 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>).



**Naval Station Everett and other installations promote their Earth Day activities via Navy.mil.**

6. As soon as possible but no later than **30 April**, send an email to the four points of contact in item #2 above 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

ODASN EI&E, N45, CNIC and CHINFO will use the summaries and photo information to inform senior leadership and other stakeholders of Navy/Marine Corps Earth Day activities worldwide.

## Feedback/Continuous Improvement

To make Earth Day efforts as effective and high-impact as possible, CNIC and N45 will disseminate an informal request for commands to provide feedback on theme, products, and any command-level lessons learned for the year's Earth Day. This "hotwash" request typically goes out the first week of May, and responses are requested within a week.

## Earth Day Questions

Please send any questions, comments or suggestions about Navy/Marine Corps Earth Day support to Kenneth Hess, phone 703-695-5077, email [kenneth.hess@navy.mil](mailto:kenneth.hess@navy.mil).



**A Sailor waters a flower planted by volunteers during an Earth Day celebration in San Diego.**