



Environmental History



Earth Day: Every
Day for Everybody



Below is a brief listing of some of the major environmental events that occurred in history this month. Answer the questions following the timeline. You may need to conduct some research to find answers to some of the questions.

April 7, 1890 -- Marjorie Stoneman Douglas was born in Minneapolis, Minn. As a writer for the Miami Herald, she will lead the crusade to save the Florida Everglades beginning in the 1920s. She wrote *The Everglades: River of Grass*, published in 1947, the same year President Harry F. Truman established the Everglades National Park. President Bill Clinton also honored her in 1993.

April 1934 -- Dust Bowl storms begin in the Midwest section of the United States, affecting farmers and agriculture workers.

April 3, 1934 -- Jane Goodall was born in London, England. In 1965, she earned her PhD in Ethnology from Cambridge University. Soon thereafter, she returned to Tanzania to continue research and to establish the Gumbo Stream Research Centre Home. Jane Goodall's profound scientific discoveries laid the foundation for all future primate studies. The Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research was founded in 1977.

April 22, 1970 -- Senator Gaylord Nelson and Dennis Hayes organized the first Earth Day and created a national political presence for environmental concerns. Millions of Americans demonstrated for air and water cleanup and the preservation of nature.

April 1970 -- The US Congress passes the Clean Air Act. It establishes national air quality standards and put limits on certain pollutants.

April 27, 1975 -- The Phyllis Cormack, now the Greenpeace V, heads out of Vancouver's English Bay on behalf of The Great Whale Conspiracy. The campaign is a celebrated media event, catching the International Whaling Commission by surprise, and represents the beginning of the end for commercial whaling.

April 26, 1986 -- The Chernobyl nuclear reactor explodes in Ukraine. Thirty-one people died immediately; mid-term deaths are estimated around 4,200. Various agencies report 10-fold to



200-fold increases in thyroid cancer. Over 2,000 square miles are evacuated. Long-term consequences may be severe, as noted in the article "The Children of Chernobyl."

April 1993 – The Korean Foundation for Environmental Movement is founded by Choi Yul, a South Korean environmental activist. Yul donated all the prize money from the 1995 Goldman Environmental Award towards building a citizens' environmental center in Seoul. Some 25 local branches work with 25,000 members in various fields such as anti-nuclear power movement, save-our sea campaigns, educational activities, and citizens' watch programs.

April 22, 2005 – Over 500 million people will celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of Earth Day worldwide. Earth Day Network holds local events throughout the United States and the world.

Questions for discussion and further research

1. Research the Clean Air Act. What regulations does it impose? Some politicians are suggesting removing the Clean Air Act in favor of the Clear Skies Act. What differences would this change make? Would they be positive, negative, or just different?
2. Have you heard of Chernobyl before? There have been other nuclear meltdowns. Why did this one receive so much more attention? Consider the time and place.
3. If you have not already, consider reading John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* to get an idea of the economic impact of the Dust Bowl. The book was later made into a movie starring Henry Fonda.
4. Visit the "Groups and Events" page of the Earth Day Network website, www.earthday.net, to find an Earth Day event near you. Or consider registering your own Earth Day event. What environmental issue(s) would you focus on?
5. How do you celebrate Earth Day and what does this day mean to you? How do you think Earth Day has helped to change the way people think about the environment over the last 35 years?

*Information comes from the [Environmental History Timeline](#)

