



# JOIN THE MOVEMENT

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How to develop in-person or virtual **Earth Day** and **World Environment Day** activities for employees and community members

*2021 Edition*



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## Earth Day

April 22

## World Environment Day

June 5

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In the past year, as indoor spaces closed, many people turned to nature as a space for recreation, socialization and relaxation, gaining a renewed appreciation for the outdoors.

At the same time, many have learned how to make the indoors work for them, seeing record turn-out for innovative virtual events.

Whether in-person or remote, Earth Day and World Environment Day events are an effective way to keep the momentum for nature going through 2021 and beyond. The events of April and June are, then, not one-day observances, but collective catalysts for a new year of environmental action.



# Join the movement!

Conservation-based activities offer meaningful and accessible opportunities for employees to get active, learn something new and make a positive contribution to the environment.

Even if your team has limited resources or restricted site access, participation in Earth Day (April 22) and/or World Environment Day (June 5) is possible. Events do not have to be large-scale, expensive productions, and they can take place anywhere. There are numerous small yet impactful ways to incorporate activities on or around these two special days of awareness.

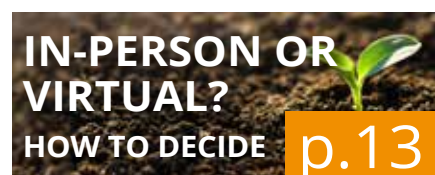
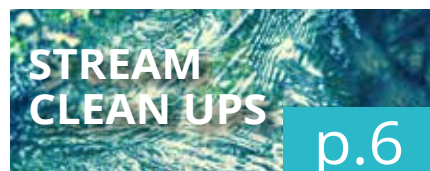
## Why it's important for your company and your employees

In-person or virtual, small or large, employee and community engagement events centered around awareness days can provide the following benefits:

- Establish a sense of unity with the global Earth Day and World Environment Day Campaigns
- Build awareness of a company's local conservation activities
- Provide an action-oriented outlet that will let employees feel empowered and closer to their community during a challenging time

## It's easier than you think to get started

To make it easier to implement awareness day activities on your site, WHC has created this guide to help you plan and host events in a short period of time with limited resources. The following pages provide instructions and advice on how to implement four of the most accessible Earth Day activities:







# PLANTING EVENTS

## MAKING THE WORLD GREENER

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### Why it's important

Trees improve soil, water and air quality, prevent soil erosion, control flooding from stormwater runoff, and mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration. Native plants attract pollinators like hummingbirds, butterflies and bees that aid in the health and growth of plants.

Planting native trees, grasses and flowers restores native habitat that birds, insects and other animals rely on for nutrients and shelter.

### What's involved

*Participants prepare soils and plant trees, grasses and flowers. Physical activity and appropriate outdoor clothing is required.*

# HOST A PLANTING EVENT

## What participants gain

- ✓ Opportunity to restore native habitat
- ✓ Awareness about local conservation issues
- ✓ Knowledge about the values and benefits of trees and native plants to water, air, climate, biodiversity and health
- ✓ Positive attitudes towards conservation

## Planning checklist



Use the following to-do list to help plan and develop your planting event:

- Consult with local stakeholders and conservation experts to determine sites in most need of planting projects
- Determine the location for the planting
- Invite employees, stakeholders and community members to the event
- Send out press releases and invite local media to the event
- Register the event with the Earth Day network ►
- Order supplies
- Send out reminders and instructions about necessary clothing and safety based on the weather, etc.
- Hold a pre-event meeting with partners
- Host event
- Publicize event

## Tools needed

- Native tree and/or plant seeds/saplings
- Compost or mulch
- Water and watering equipment
- Shovels or spades
- Gloves
- Trash bags
- First aid kits



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# STREAM CLEAN-UPS

## IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

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### Why it's important

Streams are vital to biodiversity. They carry water, organisms, and important gases and nutrients along their path and into larger bodies of water. They also help drain rainwater and provide habitats for a wide variety of plants and wildlife.

Cleaning up a stream protects biodiversity by improving water quality, removing hazards to animals, preventing erosion, and improving food, water and shelter resources for wildlife.

### What's involved

*Participants remove trash, pull invasive species and plant native species.*

*Physical activity and appropriate outdoor clothing is required.*

# HOST A STREAM CLEAN-UP

## What participants gain

- ✓ Opportunity to impact local biodiversity
- ✓ Awareness of water quality issues
- ✓ Knowledge about the value of local stream and watershed health to regional biodiversity
- ✓ Positive attitudes towards conservation

## Planning checklist



Use the following to-do list to help plan and develop your stream clean-up:

- Consult with local stakeholders and conservation experts to determine sites in most need of stream clean-ups
- Determine the location for the clean-up
- Coordinate trash pickup and fees
- Invite employees, members stakeholders and community members to the event
- Send out press releases and invite local media to the event
- Register the event with the Earth Day network ►
- Order supplies
- Send out reminders and instructions about necessary clothing and safety based on the weather, etc.
- Hold a pre-event meeting with partners
- Host event
- Publicize event

## Tools needed

- Native riparian seedling/seeds
- Clippers/saws
- Trash grabbers
- Trash bags
- Gloves
- First aid kits



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# EDUCATION EVENTS

## LEARNING NEW SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

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### Why it's important

New learning opportunities motivate employees to become more involved in conservation and biodiversity, whether at work or at home. They are a cost-effective way to help employees gain new skills or knowledge.

Conservation-focused presentations and trainings can align with a company's sustainability and biodiversity goals, providing an additional organizational benefit.

### What's involved

*Participants sit in a classroom style set-up, indoors or outdoors, listen and ask questions. Typically, no physical activity or outdoor clothing is required.*



# HOST AN EDUCATION EVENT

## What participants gain

- ✓ New skills and knowledge
- ✓ Motivation to engage in conservation activities
- ✓ Connection to company and its sustainability initiatives
- ✓ Positive attitudes towards conservation

## Planning checklist



Use the following to-do list to help plan and develop your education event:

- Determine instructors/leaders – consult with local stakeholders, conservation experts or activists, teachers or professors, etc.
- Choose the topic: acts of conservation at work or home, climate change, enhancing biodiversity or ecosystem health, etc.
- Choose location – school, library, church, community or recreational center, etc.
- Invite employees, stakeholders, and community members to the event
- Send out press releases and invite local media to the event
- Register the event with the Earth Day network▶
- Order supplies
- Send out reminders
- Hold a pre-event meeting with partners
- Host event
- Publicize event

## Tools needed

- PowerPoint or other visual presentation
- Handouts
- Items or tools needed for hands-on learning activities
- Refreshments



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# VIRTUAL EVENTS

## RAISING AWARENESS REMOTELY

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### Why it's important

Remote events offer certainty, allowing organizers to put all their time into implementing the event as-advertised, instead of allocating resources to back-up plans.

In times of crisis and not, there are many benefits to going virtual. Having employees participate at (or close to) home decreases the carbon emissions associated with driving to an event. Remote events are also less prone to weather cancellations and offer greater accessibility, allowing for a broader audience.

### What's involved

*Participants view a webinar/livestream (no physical activity) or remotely partake in a company-wide initiative and share photos of their participation (physical activity at participant's own pace).*



# HOST A VIRTUAL EVENT

## What participants gain

- ✓ New skills and knowledge
- ✓ Awareness that conservation can persist in challenging times
- ✓ Sense of connection to community without leaving home
- ✓ Positive attitudes towards conservation

## Planning checklist



Use the following to-do list to help plan and develop your virtual event:

- Choose a topic and delivery mode. Identify event speaker(s) or choose at-home activity (see next page for remote activity ideas).
- Select streaming and/or social platform(s)
- Invite employees, members, stakeholders, and community members to the event
- Send out press releases and invite local media to the event
- Create social buzz - promote event multiple times and create an event hashtag
- Register the event with the Earth Day network ▶
- Order supplies and distribute to employees
- Hold a pre-event meeting with partners and presenters; test streaming platforms
- Host event
- Publicize event; have participants email pictures to contact or post on social media

## Tools needed

- Appropriate virtual platform
- Downloadable handouts
- Presentation slides
- Supplies (seed packets, etc.)



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# Virtual Event Ideas

With so many options for virtual events, it can be difficult to narrow down your choices. A good starting point may be to consider what face-to-face events have resonated most with your employees. From there, translate the essential elements of those events into a digital format. The following event suggestions provide additional ideas.

## Informational Events

Online learning platforms offer countless ways for remote learning that would traditionally be delivered through site tours or classroom experiences. Informational event options include:

- **Site-based Livestreams.** Go live on your social media with a short nature walk at a facility or at home. Engage with viewers via questions and answers.
- **Educational Webinars.** Have employees and/or local experts deliver a live or recorded virtual lesson on a conservation topic of your choosing. Content can be delivered in multiple ways, such as a slideshow or a panel discussion.
- **Educational Pamphlets.** Compile information about your company's conservation initiatives in a short document that can be uploaded to the company website or emailed to employees ahead of Earth Day or a virtual program it applies to.

## Interactive Events

Participatory events like plantings, stream clean-ups or art activities can easily be translated into a virtual format. Make sure to provide participants an online platform to share their activities. Interactive event options include:

- **Show Your Nature.** Ask employees to share photographs of the nature they see in their backyard or workplace.
- **Kids' Art Contest.** Invite employees' children to create and share their nature-themed artwork. Create a gallery on the company Intranet or social media, and invite employees to vote for their favorites.
- **How I Make a Difference.** Have employees (and/or their families) film and share short videos showing how they help the environment – recycling, conserving water, saving electricity, planting seeds, etc.
- **Backyard Planting.** Distribute native seeds and planting instructions to employees and ask them to send pictures of their backyard blooms and any wildlife using the plantings.

## Promoting your virtual event

Remote events can be advertised online beforehand, publicized afterward, and even promoted while activities are taking place. Consider the following strategies:

- **Use the event hashtags,** e.g. #EarthDay2021 #WED2021 #GenerationRestoration
- **Engage employees on social media** or the company Intranet by asking what they want to learn and what they did learn at the event
- **Tag @WildlifeHC and partners in social posts,** and have participants tag your company



# Virtual or in-person

## How to decide?

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Virtual and in-person events each have benefits and drawbacks. If your team is having difficulty deciding between the two formats, start by asking the following questions:

**What venues/platforms are available to me?** Consider if events can be held at your facility or an external venue (e.g., park, community center or school). If proper social distancing is feasible, on a nature trail or outdoor classroom, for instance, an in-person event may be possible. If not, going virtual can simplify the logistics by allowing attendees to participate from anywhere.

**Are there safety or accessibility considerations?** Determine if an in-person event can be held in accordance with corporate or local health guidelines. If only a few employees can work in your pollinator garden while keeping a safe distance, organizing backyard plantings at home may be a better option. Always consider the needs of your audience.

**Will attendees need to travel?** If your Earth Day event targets site employees during their workday, there are few travel logistics to consider. If your event would bring employees to your site during off-hours, or would be open to the public, consider how far attendees might be traveling to attend your event and how that could impact your event's carbon footprint.

**What works best for your target audience?** Many employees have worked from home for the past year, and have reacted in different ways to the experience. If time allows, solicit employee input on the event. Will a virtual event give attendees flexibility and peace of mind, or are employees eager to get outside and/or visit the workplace?

**Is hybrid the way to go?** If, logistically, your event could take either form and you believe that different audience members may benefit from each experience, a hybrid event may be right for you. This could entail livestreaming an event that also has in-person attendees, or giving employees the option of cleaning up a designated waterway or performing an independent clean-up closer to home. As long as both event modes are given equal attention, a hybrid format may provide the largest impact of all.

