



# The Daily Gleaner

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## Earth Day and the Days in Between

Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> is Earth Day, the largest and most celebrated environmental event in the world. More than 6 million Canadians join 1 billion people in over 170 countries in staging events and projects to address local environmental issues. Nearly every school child in Canada takes part in an Earth Day activity.

Celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, Earth Day was first launched in 1970 as an environmental awareness event in the United States and is recognized as the birth of the environmental movement. The first Earth Day, spearheaded by Wisconsin Governor Gaylord Nelson and Harvard University student Denis Hayes, involved 20 million participants in teach-ins that addressed decades of environmental pollution. The event inspired the US Congress to pass clean air and water acts, and to establish the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to research and monitor environmental issues and enforce environmental laws. The spirit and intent of Earth Day is to foster awareness and appreciation of the Earth's environment, and to serve as a catalyst for change.

Here in Fredericton there are two unique events happening on Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> to celebrate Earth Day. There is an Earth Day Nature Hike from 4:30-5:30pm in Hyla Park (on the City's northside behind Greenwood Drive Baptist Church), sponsored by Ducks Unlimited Canada, Nature NB, Sentier NB Trails, and the Nature Trust of NB. Come learn about the amphibians that call Hyla Park home, the secrets frog hold, and why we should care so much about them. Call Ducks Unlimited and talk to Erin at 458-8848 for more information.

Or to learn more about the Earth's vast marine world, join the Green Matters team at Empire Theatres at 4:30pm to watch an advanced screening of Disney's 'Oceans' movie. The reduced ticket price for this screening is \$5, just call 460-2777 or email [greenmatters@fredericton.ca](mailto:greenmatters@fredericton.ca) to book your advanced tickets (270 available). Check out the movie at [www.disney.go.com/disneynature/oceans](http://www.disney.go.com/disneynature/oceans). If you see 'Oceans' during opening week (April 22-28) Disneynature will make a donation to The Nature Conservancy's ([www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)) 'Adopt a Coral Reef' project in The Bahamas.

Perhaps one of the most inspiring musings on planet Earth originated from 'The Pale Blue Dot' photograph taken in 1990 by Voyager 1 from 6 billion kms away, which showed our Earth against the vastness of space. By request of Carl Sagan, famous American astronomer, NASA commanded the spacecraft, having completed its primary mission and now leaving the solar system, to turn its camera around and to take a photograph of Earth. It was subsequently used by Sagan as the title of his 1994 book of the same name. In a commencement address delivered May 11, 1996, Sagan related his thoughts on the deeper meaning of the photograph:

*"Consider again that dot. That's here, that's home, that's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every*

*"superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there – on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.*

*The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds.*

*Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.*

*The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.*

*It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."*

Listening to the great Carl Sagan read these words aloud even after he has left this cosmos will not only impact you on Earth Day, but just maybe on the days in between as well. Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search 'the pale blue dot Carl Sagan', you will not be disappointed.

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