



The Daily Gleaner

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Celebrating Canadian Environment Week

Tomorrow marks the official start of Canadian Environment Week, which runs through to next Saturday, June 6. Canadian Environment Week incorporates three significant environmental events: nationally, the Commuter Challenge from May 31 to June 6 and Clean Air Day on June 3; and internationally, World Environment Day on June 5.

These commemorative-type days can be as significant or insignificant as you make them. Naming the days alone does not make them significant, it is how we choose to honour them that makes them meaningful. On that note, there are a series of events planned in our beautiful capital city to recognize the significance of Environment Week, all open to the public and free of charge.

But first let's consider what we can each do in our own homes, neighbourhoods and workplaces. You can start the week off by taking on your own personal environmental project, whether it be converting to reusable bags from plastic; picking up litter in the neighbourhood or local park; hanging your clothes to dry and not using your dryer all week; or starting a backyard composter. The Green Matters campaign is declaring Monday, June 1st – Act of Green day! So commit your own 'act of green' and encourage your family and friends to do so as well. Check out www.onemillionactsofgreen.com to find out how your acts of green can add up to real greenhouse gas reductions!

All week you can take part in the Commuter Challenge. This is a national program that encourages Canadians to walk, cycle, ride-share/carpool, tele-work or take transit instead of driving alone to work. You can participate as an individual, or better yet sign-up and challenge your workplace. There are already several Fredericton businesses and offices registered for the challenge on the national site. Visit www.commuterchallenge.ca to register.

If you are a bike-to-work commuter, you may want to drop in and see the new Bike Park (secure bike lock-up) located at 335 Queen Street, next to the Police Station. The Bike Park Open House is taking place Thursday, June 4th from 7am-10am (the official launch is @ 9:30am). As an added bonus, Radical Edge (a Green Shop) is offering a free Bike Tune-up Clinic and giving away two bike helmets as a draw prize. You can register for a space in the new Bike Park for \$50 but keep in mind space is limited for the season, so come early!

The event that I am most looking forward to takes place on Thursday evening. As part of a 150+ city tour across North America, Green Matters in partnership with the Conservation Council of New Brunswick (CCNB) is pleased to present the movie screening of "A Sense of Wonder". This is a 55-minute documentary-style film about leading environmental pioneer and author of *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson.

The movie is an intimate and poignant reflection of Carson's life as she emerges as America's most successful advocate for the natural world.

Preceding the headlining movie, a short-film called “The Story of Stuff” will be presented. This is a fast-paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns. “The Story of Stuff” will teach us something, make us laugh, and it just may change the way we look at all our ‘stuff’!

Both films will be shown in the auditorium at the Charlotte Street Arts Centre, doors open at 6:30pm, screening begins at 7pm. Members of CCNB will be on hand to share information about environmental stewardship and conservation and about how you can be a member of the Council.

There are several other interesting activities taking place next week, such as a seedling giveaway on Clean Air Day – come ask your tree questions to our expert on site, Fredericton's City Forester. There are also several kid-focused environmental reading events at the Fredericton Public Library through the week. Check out www.greenmattersfredericton.com for full schedule and details.

I hope you choose to celebrate Canadian Environment Week by joining in the Green Matters events; or simply by using the week to start an environmental practice that you can maintain for the rest of the year and beyond. This is truly the way to make Environment Week more than just a name.

Valerie Hillier is a Frederictonian who lives with the environment in mind. She encourages you to do the same – one small step at a time. If you would like to contact the Green Matters team e-mail greenmatters@fredericton.ca.