



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

SKOPJE - MACEDONIA

Earth Day Fact Sheet

What is Earth Day?

Earth Day and the Rise of Environmental Consciousness

Earth Day, April 22, is the annual celebration of the environment and a time to assess the work still needed to protect the natural gifts of our planet. Earth Day is observed around the world, although nowhere is it a national holiday. In the United States, it affirms that environmental awareness is part of the country's consciousness and that the idea of protecting the environment - once the province of a few conservationists - has moved from the extreme to the mainstream of American thought.

This year marks the 37th Anniversary of Earth Day. What began in 1970 as a protest movement has evolved into a global celebration of the environment and commitment to its protection. The history of Earth Day mirrors the growth of environmental awareness over the last three decades, and the legacy of Earth Day is the certain knowledge that the environment is a universal concern. Earth Day came back in a big way in 1990. Led by Dennis Hayes, a primary organizer of the first Earth Day, Earth Day 1990 was international in scope. More than 200 million people around the world - ten times the number in 1970 - participated in events that recognized that the environment had finally become a universal public concern. The global momentum continued in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where an unprecedented number of governments and NGOs agreed on a far-ranging program to promote sustainable development.

In the United States, people, often prompted by their children, began to separate their household trash for recycling. By the late 1980s recycling programs were established in many communities. By the mid-1990s these municipal recycling programs were paying for themselves, the amount of trash dumped into landfills was in noticeable decline, and more than 20 percent of America's municipal trash was being converted into useful products. Corporations, ever conscious of the desires of the consumer - and the bottom line of profits - began to promote themselves as being environmentally friendly. Many firms adopted sensible business practices that increased efficiency and reduced the amounts of industrial waste.

Green Tips

Everyone can impact the environment by taking a few simple steps in their homes and day-to-day lives.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Walk, bike, take public transportation.
2. Switch off unused lights.
3. Trade in your old incandescent bulbs for newer, energy efficient compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. They last several years longer and use 1/4 of the electricity that your current bulbs use.
4. Don't leave any appliances on stand-by. A television left on stand-by can consume up to 1/3 of the electricity used when completely turned on.
5. When choosing new appliances always request energy efficient models.
6. Fix any leaky faucets, toilets and pipes. Not only can these things be annoying, but each wasted drip adds up over time.
7. Use non-toxic cleaning materials in your home.
8. Avoid using aerosols.
9. Always put a full load of laundry in the washing machine and use cold water.
10. Stop the build up of endless plastic bags. Either reuse them or bring your own recyclable bags.
11. Shop in bulk. It will save you money and minimize excess packaging use on the environment.
12. Pay your bills online.
13. Recycle, recycle, recycle.
14. Celebrate Earth Day every day.