

Eco-Tip for 4-7-19

Earth Day 2019: Events, Opportunities, and Inspiration

By David Goldstein, Ventura County IWMD, PWA

An Earth Day e-card already making the electronic rounds this year sarcastically says, “I admire your determination to save the planet despite your inability to save a houseplant.” Another says, “I’m hoping Earth Day will make Polar bears hate us less.”

Both of those jokes are about how we treat other species, but, as expressed by the cover of this year’s Ventura County General Services Agency Earth Day booklet, the major benefit of improving the environment may be the good we will do for our own species. Available at www.ventura.org/general-services-agency/earthday, the booklet’s title this year is “Save Our Species,” and it includes a catalogue of environmental protection measures taken at Ventura County facilities. This year’s theme is summarized in an introduction by Facility Manager Rosalind Harris, who writes, “Every living organism... is part of the ecological balance... It is a web of life, in sync and dependent upon the environment. When a living species becomes extinct due to unnatural causes, the balance of this ecosystem is compromised. The causes include climate change, deforestation, habitat loss, poaching, and contamination of air, water, and soil.”

On Earth Day, April 22, from noon to 1 PM, the Ventura County General Services Agency will host its tenth annual Earth Day guided tour of environmental features at the Ventura County Government Center. Register at www.ventura.org/general-services-agency/earthday, or call 805/654-2051, and meet at the Hall of Administration Fountain.

Also on Earth Day, from 2 PM to 5 PM, the city of Fillmore will host a celebration at Fillmore City Hall, 250 Central Avenue. This event is notable for some great free offers. Bike Ventura will offer free bicycle repairs on site. The Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance will sign up homes and businesses for free indoor air quality assessments and arrange for free energy and water saving devices for businesses. Mamma Marley’s Garden, a community supported agriculture venture, will give away free fruit and vegetable seeds, as well as planting crafts for kids.

April 22 is celebrated as Earth Day internationally, but commemorative events in Ventura County are held all month. The week before Earth Day, the City of Oxnard’s Earth Day festival will be held on Saturday, April 13 from 11 AM to 3 PM at Plaza Park, the corner of Fifth and C Streets in downtown Oxnard. Hands-on exhibits will include booths from community organizations advocating protection for wildlife and earth-friendly gardening practices. Children’s activities include an EcoHero environmental show, combining comedy and songs to inspire kids’ environmental choices. For more information visit www.oxnard.org/earthday or call 805/385-7928..

Just a couple days before Earth Day, on April 20, the City of Santa Paula is combining an Earth Day commemoration with an Easter-themed event, including carnival games and an egg hunt. The event, at Las Piedras Park, 431 North 13th Street, goes from 11 AM to 2 PM.

Also on April 20, Ojai's Earth Day, hosted by the Ojai Valley Green Coalition, will be at Libbey Park, 269 E. Ojai Ave, 11 AM to 4 PM. It is promoted in their press release as "an ideal way for continuing the conversation about advancing a green, sustainable, and resilient way of life," with "engaging interactive activities, demonstrations, dynamic speakers, talented performers, environmentally-friendly exhibitors, and non-profits sharing information about living with a lighter, more compassionate footprint." It includes an interactive area with yoga, tai chi, peace sticks, and "kids creative movement," as well as a \$100 Toad&Co gift certificate drawing at 4 PM for anyone who registers by 3 PM.

For many, the highlight of the Ojai event will be the opening music, featuring composer/songwriter Ray Powers, whose native flute compositions include *Valley of the Moon Suite*, honoring the Ojai Valley. Other highlights include an opening ceremony by Chumash Elder Julie Tumamait-Stenslie, music by The Brothers Koren, Rumi poetry readings, and a community sing-along. With a perspective relevant to recent local discussions about wildlife corridors, Beth Pratt of the National Wildlife Foundation will provide updates and education. Other speakers will cover topics such as hydraulic fracturing (known as "fracking"), making Ojai bike friendly, local watersheds, regenerative agriculture, and new advances in solar technology. For more information visit www.ojaiearthday.org, or call (805) 669-8445.

The following Saturday, April 27, both Ventura and Thousand Oaks will host Earth Day events. The Thousand Oaks event will be 10 AM to 2 PM at the Grant Brimhall Library, 1401 Janss Road. There will be in-depth presentations on firescaping, living with wild animals as neighbors, building healthy soils, buying or leasing an electric vehicle and home solar and battery storage. Outside there will be live music, kids' activities, exhibitors, and raffle prizes. Visit www.toaks.org/aeday for details.

Ventura's Earth Day Eco Fest, also April 27, from 10 AM to 4 PM, is expected to draw over 5,000 people and over 100 exhibitors, according to the event's web site, <http://www.venturaearthday.org/> . Held at downtown's Plaza Park, a bicycle valet is available, and a parking structure is one block away. Live music will be featured on two stages, and activities include eco arts and crafts, a green scavenger hunt, yoga classes, a green car expo, interaction with animals, and a raffle raising money for Ventura Charter School of Arts and Global Education, one of the event organizers in cooperation with the City of Ventura.

In conjunction with the Ventura event, the Channel Islands Bicycle Club will coordinate a family friendly group bicycle ride with a police escort. Following announcements at the outdoor amphitheater of the Channel Islands National Park Headquarters, 1901 Spinnaker Drive, at 9 AM, the six-mile ride begins at 9:30 and ends at the Ventura Earth

Day Eco Fest by 10:30 AM. An optional return group bike ride leaves from Plaza Park at noon.

The events are all free, and most include live musical entertainment and food vendors. Attendees are encouraged to bicycle, carpool, or take public transportation to these events.

A related event began just before the month of April with several cities participating in "Earth Hour." Commemorating Earth Hour, major landmarks and surrounding communities shut off all non-essential lights on March 30, from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM local time, in support "urgent action for the environment" (according to earthhour.org, coordinated by the World Wildlife Fund, which originated the commemoration in 2007). Landmarks ranging from the Victoria Harbor in Hong Kong to the Sydney Opera House in Australia went dark for an hour.

The goal of that event, and the goal of local Earth Day events, is to affect behavior year-round, but rather than trying to try to "celebrate Earth Day every day," or compress commemoration into one hour, organizers in Ventura County scheduled events throughout the month, inviting the public to combine environmental awareness with fun and entertainment.