

Nature in the Neighborhood – April 2025

Earth Day Celebrates its 55th Year!

April showers, as they say, bring May flowers. Another thing April brings is Earth Day! Falling on April 22, Earth Day is a time to celebrate our planet and also raise public awareness about the environmental challenges it faces. World-wide rallies, conferences, school events, and other activities are planned on and around Earth Day – some right in our neighborhood (more on that later).

EARTHDAY.ORG, whose founders created and organized the first Earth Day in 1970, mobilizes over one billion people annually on Earth Day – and every day – to protect the planet. This year EARTHDAY.ORG invites its supporters, which span across 192 countries, to unite behind its 2025 theme: *Our Power, Our Planet*. The objective is to triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030. To achieve this goal, everyone is urged to explore smart energy choices and advocate for the rapid deployment of renewable energy.

Renewable energy comes from replenishable sources, like the sun, which do not produce greenhouse gas that drive climate change. It is energy that ends our reliance on fossil fuels and the damage they cause to both our environment and human health. Air pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels is linked to heart attacks, respiratory disorders, stroke, and asthma, as well as other health ailments.

“By engaging in community initiatives, participating in local and national elections with renewable energy in mind, and making sustainable choices in daily life,” EARTHDAY.ORG believes individuals are the catalyst for change and for creating a cleaner more equitable energy future for all. Some communities, like Marblehead and Swampscott, have already taken action to promote clean energy.

Sustainable Marblehead is a volunteer community organization that educates and engages residents, businesses, and town leaders to reduce carbon emissions and waste. It recognized that while the climate crisis is a global issue, change can and should begin at the local level. Among its many achievements, Sustainable Marblehead sponsored an article, passed at town meeting, that set a goal of “using 100% carbon-free energy in Marblehead, including in energy production, building energy use and

transportation, and moving with fiscal responsibility and all deliberate speed to achieve this goal.” You can read about its many accomplishments at [**sustainablemarblehead.org**](https://sustainablemarblehead.org).

In 2023, the neighboring town of Swampscott passed a climate action plan, “Resilient Swampscott,” that sets out a framework to make Swampscott a stronger, healthier, and more resilient community while reducing its contribution to climate change. A key goal of the plan, which can be found at [**swampscottma.gov/climate-action-resilience-committee**](https://swampscottma.gov/climate-action-resilience-committee), is for the town’s energy infrastructure to be emissions-free and supplied by 100% renewable energy.

A true leader by example is Salem State University, which was recognized in 2021 for its leadership in developing a roadmap for eliminating fossil fuels from campus operations. In fact, Tara Gallagher, Salem State’s Assistant Director of Sustainability and Environmental Health and Safety, was celebrated by the state at a January 30, 2025, ceremony, as one of the “Leading By Example” award recipients. As an advocate for reducing Salem State’s carbon footprint on campus, she has, among other actions, pushed for the University’s current decarbonization project that will capture geothermal energy – that is, heat energy from within the Earth – to deliver fossil fuel-free heating and cooling to buildings on the North Campus.

For those interested in Gallagher’s insights, she will be the Keynote speaker at the upcoming Swampscott Conservancy Annual Members Meeting, to be held remotely on April 15 at 6:30 pm. All are invited and information on how to participate can be found at [**swampscottconservancy.org**](https://swampscottconservancy.org)

Think Globally, Act Locally

Local efforts like those in Marblehead, Swampscott, and Salem State University are important, perhaps now more than ever as the federal government is not only withdrawing support for climate-focused efforts but is actually acting to reverse the progress that has been made. Since the first Earth Day in 1970, grassroots movements have raised public awareness and helped enact significant legislation to address pressing environmental problems. The effectiveness of local action should not be underestimated. To quote Margaret Mead, “[N]ever doubt that a small

group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Earth Day Events in the Neighborhood

Of the various Earth Day activities in and around the North Shore, highlighted are these two:

Swampscott's 4th annual family-friendly EARTH FEST will be celebrated on April 26 (rain date May 4) from 10 am to 1 pm on the Swampscott Town Hall lawn. The event includes lawn games and a marine animal exhibition (live critters to touch!) from the Northeastern Marine Science Center. There will also be free Hornbeam trees given away by the town's Tree Committee, as well as a used bike sale by the Friends of the Swampscott Rail Trail. See: swampscottma.gov/home/events/95686

Salem State University again will be hosting a weeklong Earth Day celebration with its 2025 theme: Climate Change and Biodiversity. The event, which runs from April 7 through 11, will encompass a judged research poster competition, an art exhibition and competition, and a series of lectures, panels, films, and activities. The celebration will bring renowned researchers, activists, and officials to the campus to engage students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the larger community. The daily activities are listed on: saalemstate.edu/offices-and-services/sustainability/earth-days.

We at the Conservancy wish everyone a happy Earth Day!