

EARTH DAY 2020

50 YEARS COMING TOGETHER



A coloring zine
By Gobonussaves
Brought to you courtesy of
The Kalamazoo Earth Day Committee



On a cold, early spring day, a bright ray of sun reaches a silent bee hive. A faint buzz begins as a single bee makes its way to the opening, warms itself in the sun, then zips off. There are no flowers to be seen, but this little bee knows it is not the only life answering the call of spring. It finds what it is seeking high in the branches of a maple tree. The bee lands on a cluster of tiny flowers, collects some pollen, and quickly makes its way home. This is the news the hive has waited on for months. A stream of eager bees follow the route discovered by that first adventurer. Within months, the hive will grow, new bees will be born, and together they will become a community and accomplish what no individual could. Every year, bees work together selflessly to feed and care for their hives.

Earth Day began in 1970, much like that cold hive, slowly warming until it reached across the nation and created communities of people working together to create a better world. The individuals who started Earth Day believed that if we talked to our neighbors, created communities, and worked together, we could accomplish amazing goals. Together they laid the foundation for a world with cleaner air and water, protections for endangered species, and where recycling and thinking about our impact on the planet became common.

Today, those victories are threatened and the dangers are more serious than ever. Crises of climate change, contaminated water, toxic landscapes, plastic pollution, the extinction of species, and the destruction of habitats are terrifying and too big for any of us to solve. But if we join together, like the bees in their hives, we can accomplish more than anyone believes is possible. On this Earth Day, and every day that follows, we ask you to talk to your friends, family, and neighbors about why you want to live on a cleaner, more sustainable planet, then work together to do something that makes the world a better place.

*David Benac
Kalamazoo Earth Day Committee*

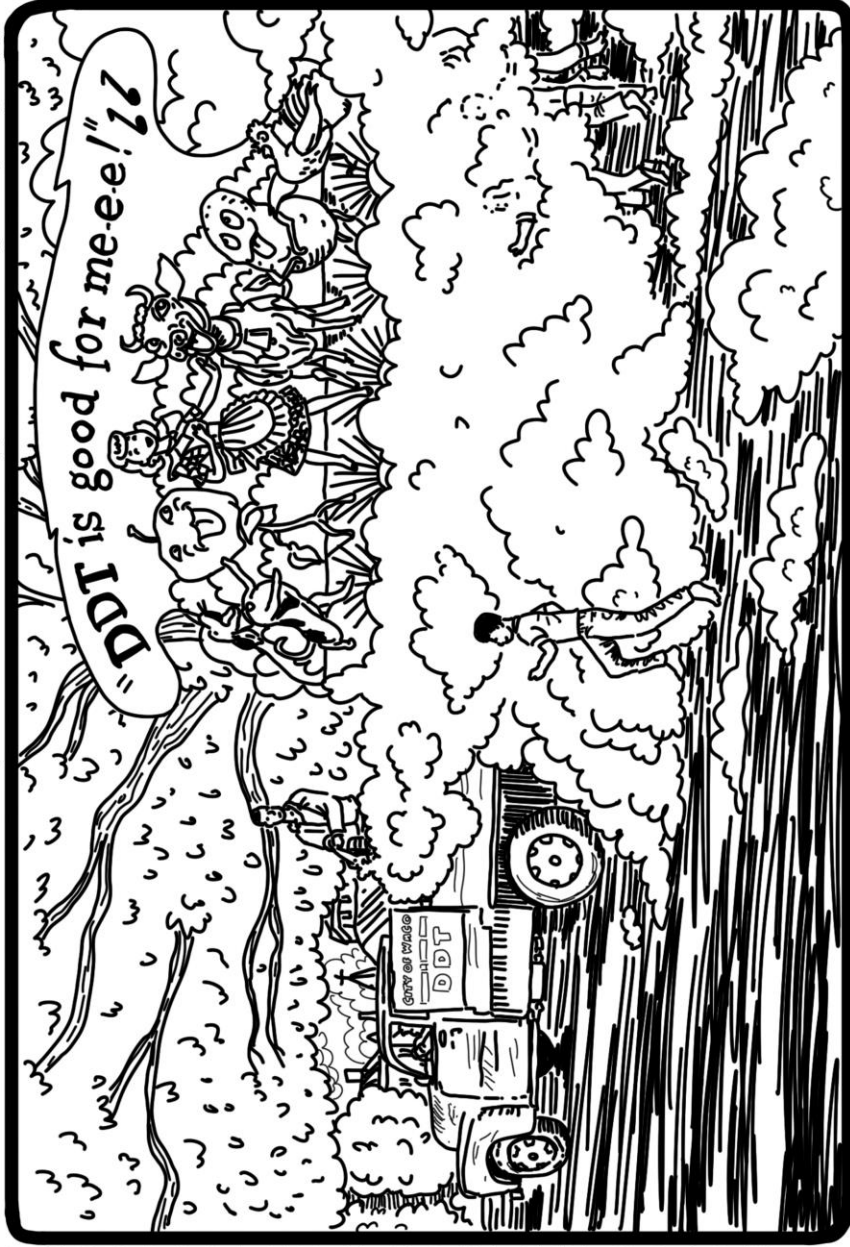


In the decades leading up to the first Earth Day, industry feared little to no consequences polluting the environment. Sludge seeped into our lakes and streams, killing wildlife and poisoning the land. Air pollution was a sign of prosperity. Up to this point, most Americans were oblivious to the health costs of pollution.



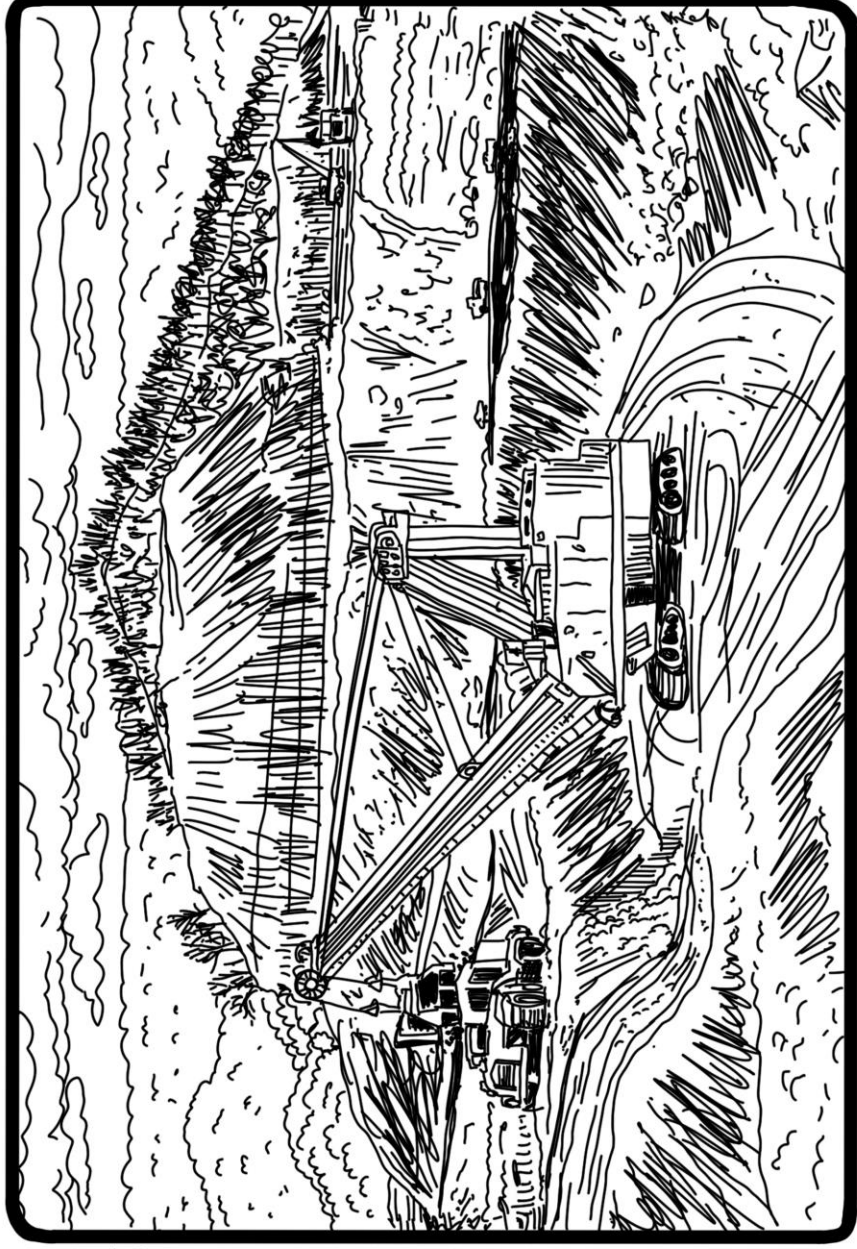
The Santa Barbara oil spill of 1969 spewed an estimated 3-million gallons of crude oil into the ocean, creating an oil slick 35 miles long along California's coast and killing thousands of birds, fish and sea mammals. Following the spill, the region became ground zero for some of the most significant conservation efforts of the 20th century.

Illustration reproduction from an ad that appeared in Time Magazine, June 30, 1947.



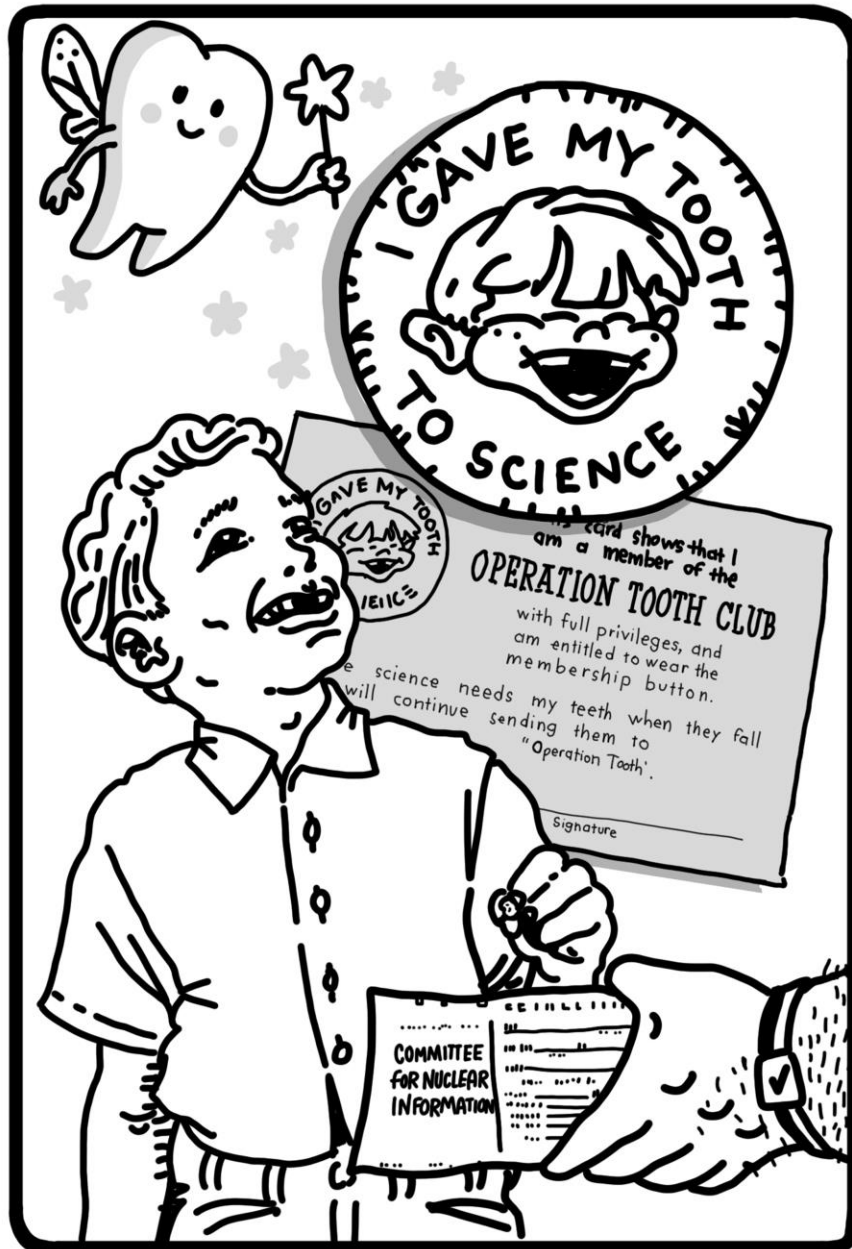
DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-tri-chloroethane) was developed as the first of the modern synthetic insecticides in the 1940s. It was initially used with great effect to combat malaria, typhus, and the other insect-borne human diseases. It also proved to be long lasting in fatty tissue. Suspect in human reproductive effects, and liver tumors in some animals exposed to the insecticide. Shown here are children running within a haze of DDT being applied down a city street.

Coal mining has always been hazardous, but mountaintop removal (MTR) has proved massively destructive to local eco-systems and towns close by the mining sites. Coal industries were "friends" of local communities by boosting the economy, while turning a blind eye to pollution and health hazards caused by coal extraction.





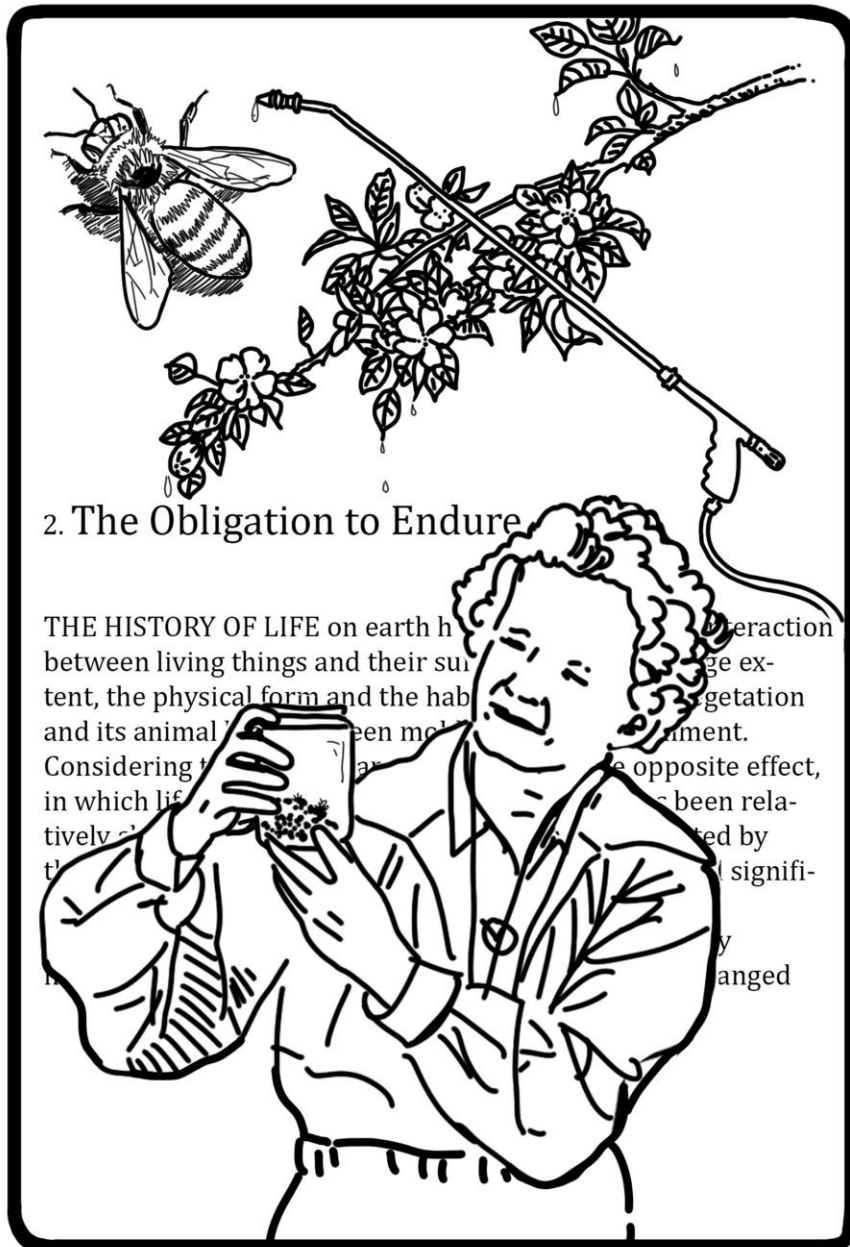
Scientists suspected that radiation from the above-ground atomic weapons tests taking place from 1945 onward could pose a significant health risk to the populace. Later precautionary rules in the early 1990s would have cattle moved to shelters and their milk dumped. The main pathway for radioactive iodine exposure is through milk, which children consume in larger quantities than adults.



Research focused on detecting the presence of strontium-90, a cancer-causing radioactive isotope created by the more than 400 atomic tests that is absorbed from water and dairy products into the bones and teeth. The team sent collection forms to schools in the St. Louis, Missouri area gathering 50,000 teeth each year. Children were encouraged to mail in their newly lost baby teeth. The project collected over 320,000 teeth from children of various ages before the project was ended in 1970.



As a senator, Gaylord Nelson contributed to important liberal reforms but struggled for years to interest his colleagues in environmental protections. He turned instead to the people, proposing April 22, 1970 as a day for Americans to speak out about the environmental crises they faced. Earth Day's massive public support forced politicians to see the severity of the problems and the extent of public concern. The first Earth Day galvanized Congress into creating some of the most important U.S. environmental legislation.



2. The Obligation to Endure

THE HISTORY OF LIFE on earth has been a continuous interaction between living things and their surroundings. To a large extent, the physical form and the habits of the vegetation and its animal life have been modified by the environment. Considering the fact that the opposite effect, in which life has been relatively unaltered by the environment, has been relatively rare, it is significant that the environment has been so largely changed.

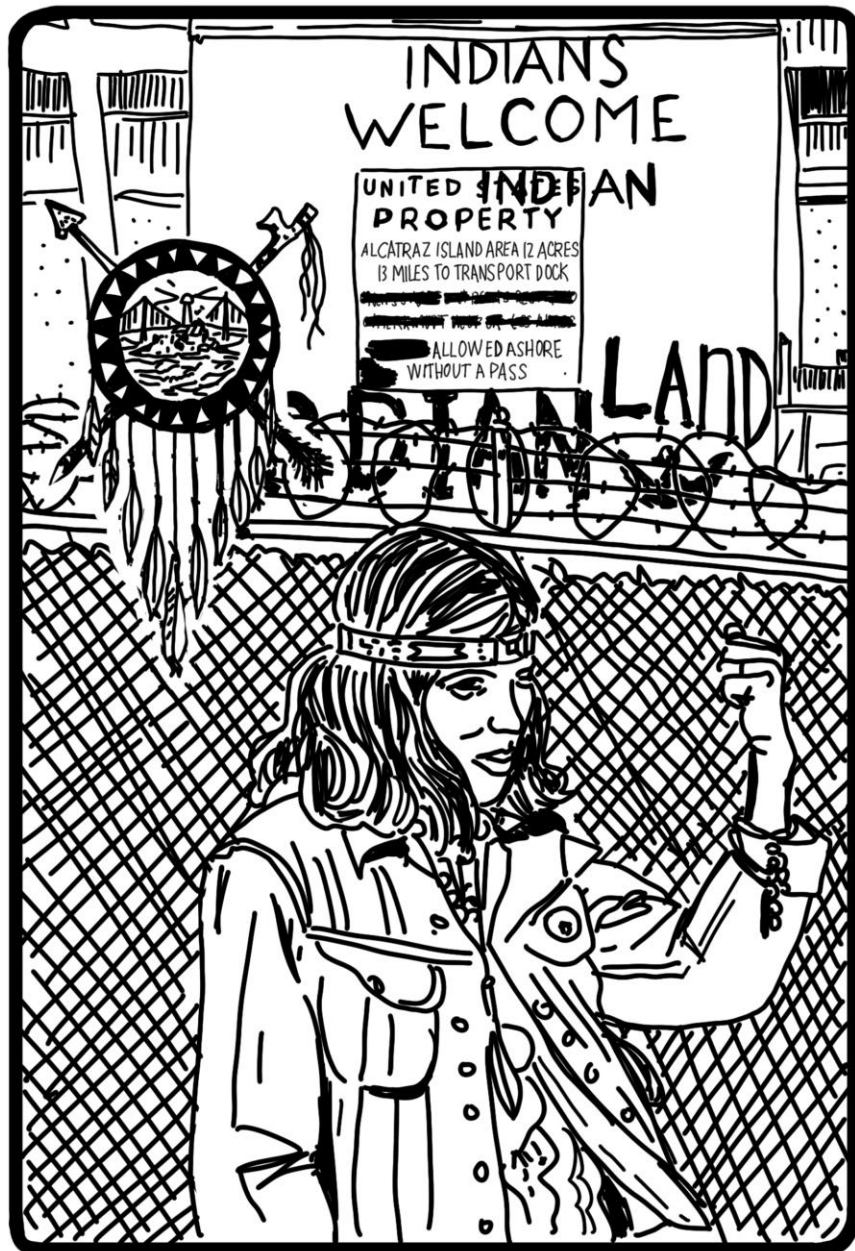
Silent Spring is an environmental science book by Rachel Carson, published on September 27, 1962. It documented the adverse environmental effects caused by the wide use of pesticides. She accused the chemical industry of spreading disinformation, and public officials of accepting the industry's claims. The book was met with fierce opposition by chemical companies, but, bowing to public opinion, it brought about numerous changes including banning of DDT and the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



Women Strike for Peace was a women's peace activist group in the United States. In 1961, nearing the height of the Cold War, around 50,000 women marched in 60 cities around the United States to demonstrate against the testing of nuclear weapons.



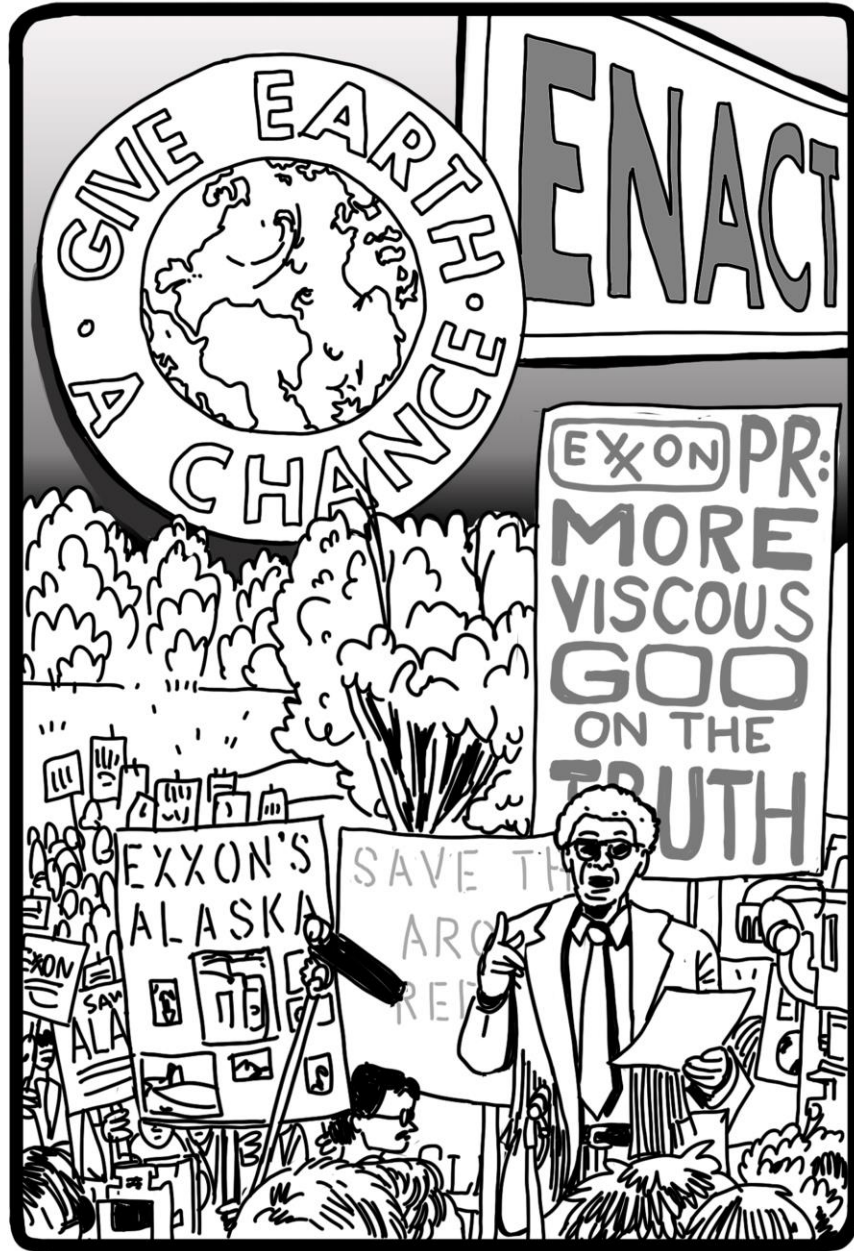
The period of 1965–1975 saw adult cycling increase sharply in popularity. The U.S. bike boom included affordable and versatile 10-speed racing bicycles becoming available. The arrival of many post-World War II baby boomers at adulthood seeking inexpensive transportation for recreation and exercise, and increasing interest in reducing pollution.



The Occupation of Alcatraz (November 20, 1969 – June 11, 1971) was a 19-month long protest when 89 American Indians and their supporters occupied Alcatraz Island. This group lived on the island together until the protest was forcibly ended by the U.S. government. The protest group chose the name Indians of All Tribes (IOAT). They claimed that, under the Treaty of Fort Laramie between the U.S. and the Lakota tribe, all retired, abandoned, or out-of-use federal land was returned to the Indians who once occupied it. The Occupation of Alcatraz established a precedent for Indian activism.



A 2.8-acre plot owned by the University of California was partially developed when funds ran out, leaving the lot derelict. Local activists and community members planned then began building a park. The city of Berkeley released plans to build a sports field on the site, which was in conflict with park activist. Police cleared the area, destroyed the newly added vegetation, and installed a fence. May 15, 1969 the National Guard was deployed, and protestors were fired on with shotguns. One death, 100's of injuries, and tear gas deployed over the city were all horrors that would unfold over the next couple of weeks. The park led to reforms for public spaces in California, but it still continues to be a point of contention between the city, university, and activists.



Barry Commoner (May 28, 1917 – September 30, 2012) was an American cellular biologist, college professor, and politician. He was a leading ecologist and among the founders of the modern environmental movement. Barry Commoner was, both figuratively and literally, the face of the first Earth Day in the United States in 1970. The publications of Commoner are also considered influential in the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Clean Air Act of 1970.



The Sierra Club, a nonprofit nature conservation organization, has been on the forefront of battles to stop the government-built dams in national parks. In the 1960s their fight to save the Grand Canyon from dams led to a showdown with the IRS that galvanized the public to help protect the Grand Canyon.

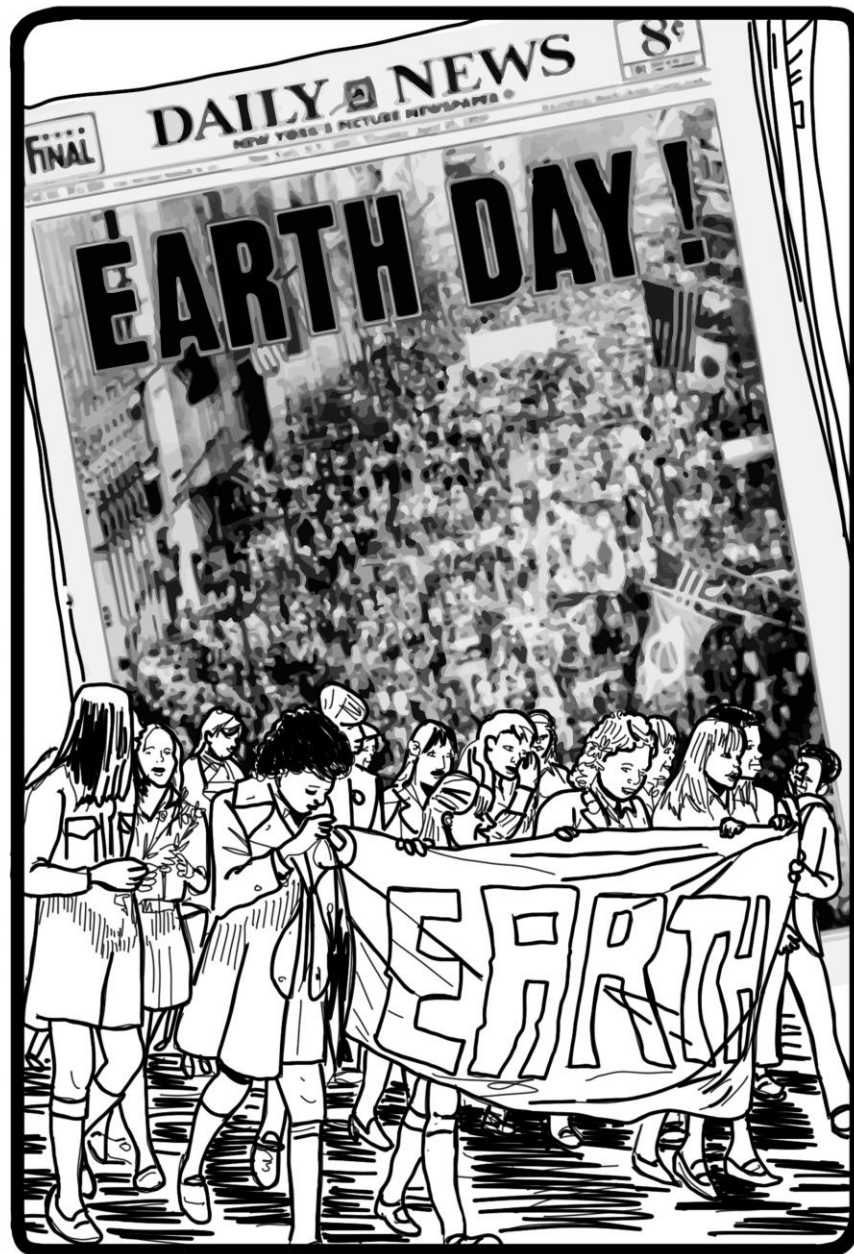


Environmental Teach-In staff (from left): Denis Hayes; Andrew Garling; Arturo Sandoval; Stephen Cotton; Barbara Reid; Bryce Hamilton.

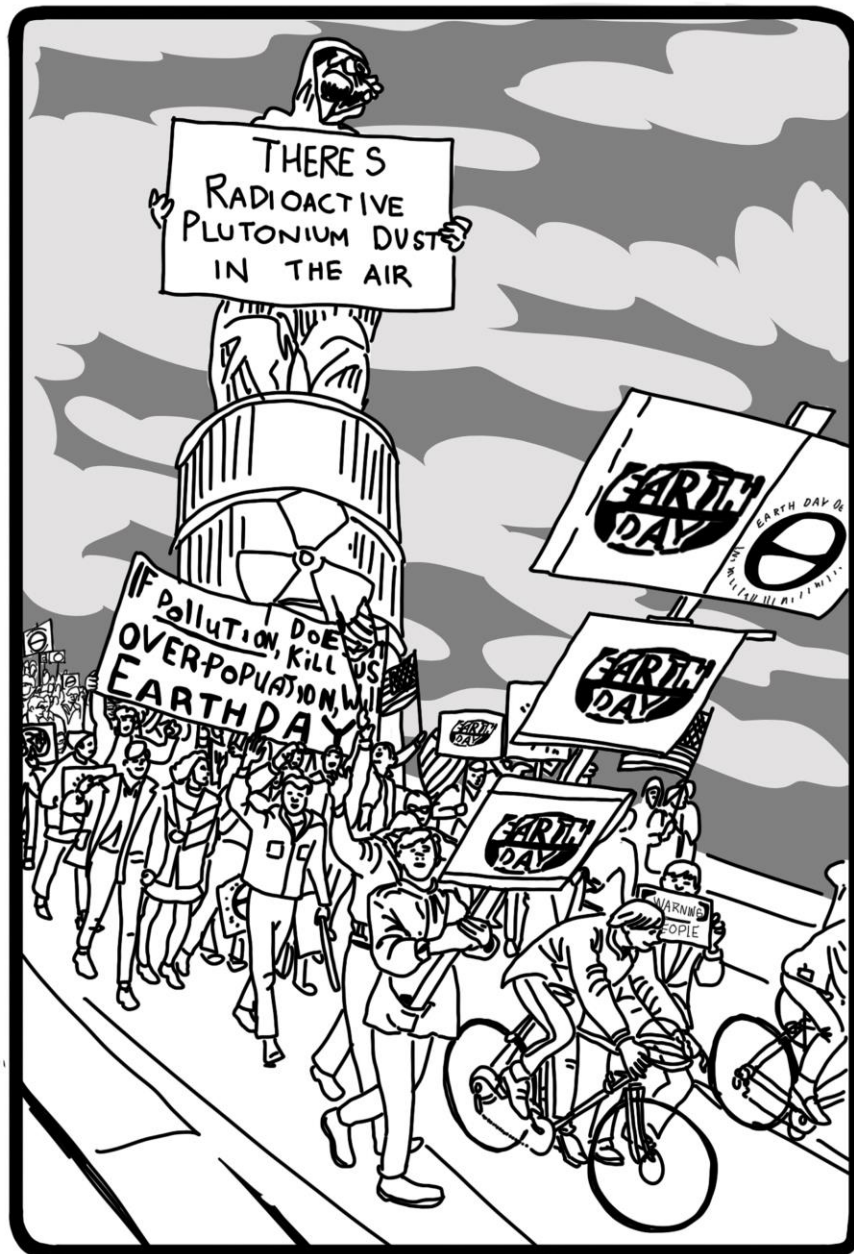
Gaylord Nelson, Senator from Wisconsin, put together a staff he named the Environmental Teach-In, Inc to organize what would be the 1st Earth Day. The Environmental Teach-In office staff functioned as a catalyst for the movement by encouraging people across the nation to plan events, collected and distributed information to their contacts.



Earth Day was not organized as a top down event, but one where local committees created the events they thought most beneficial to their communities. Over 3000 events occurred that first Earth Day. Trash cleanups ranged from people gathering together and cleaning trash out of streams and rivers, to school children collecting cans and other debris from parks and roads.



Mayor John Lindsay of New York City authorized the closing of Fifth Avenue for two hours, and the streets filled with thousands of celebrants and protesters. Fourteenth Street between Third and Seventh Avenues was also shut down for an 'ecological carnival.' The massive rally, with a 100,000 in attendance, reportedly left little pollution in its wake.



Senator Gaylord Nelson, Earth Day's founder, attended a 12-hour teach-in held at the city's Currihan Hall in Denver, Colorado. The event drew roughly 3,500 people. Activists protested Rocky Flats, a weapons complex where an incinerator for plutonium-contaminated waste was installed in 1958. Barrels of radioactive waste were found to be leaking into an open field in 1959. This was not made publicly known until 1970 when wind-borne particles were detected in Denver.



Over 100 students left directly from the Earth Day rally at the Government Center and staged a "die-in" in front of TWA's ticket desk at Boston Logan International Airport. 30 students participated in the "die-in", with 6 climbing into caskets labeled "Biocide" & "Genocide". The group was protesting government construction of the SST, a supersonic speed passenger transport. Activists were concerned about the effects of supersonic travel the atmosphere.



Sixth-grader Brad Frank, wearing a gas mask, joins about 100 classmates during an Earth Day march on Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California. Earth Day was marked in LA by a host of antipollution programs and a notable absence of smog. Daylong programs were held at USC, UCLA, Caltech, San Fernando Valley State College, Cal Poly, UC, Irvine, Pasadena City College and others.



The UAW played a major role both financially and distribution of information for Earth Day. The union printed thousands of weekly publications sent out all over the USA to let Earth Day organizers know what other events were planning, and what new resources were available. Remember, at this time the internet didn't exist, and small newsletters were the quickest way to get information out to interested parties. One of these papers, The Environmental Action Newsletter, was integral to the strategy of the organization moving forward from Earth Day. The first issue was published in January of 1970, and distributed to over 7,000 individuals and their membership only grew from there.

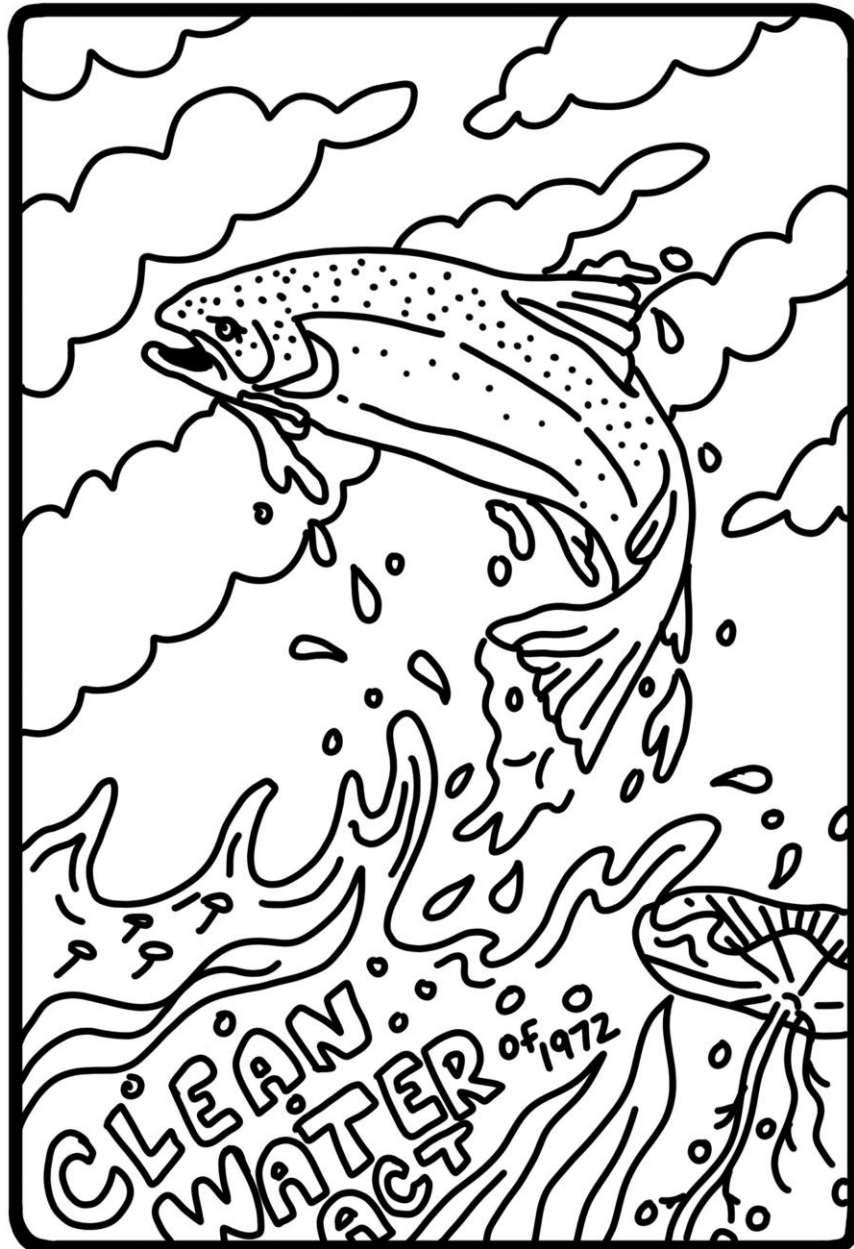
Activists Walking Along the Huron River, Joining With ENACT to Protest the Water's Pollution



ENACT (Environmental Action for Survival, INC) was not only a student organization but the face of an environmental movement taking place in both Michigan and the whole United States. As a grassroots effort to educate citizens of the environmental issues and what they could do to help, ENACT created a philosophy of responsibility, education, and action.



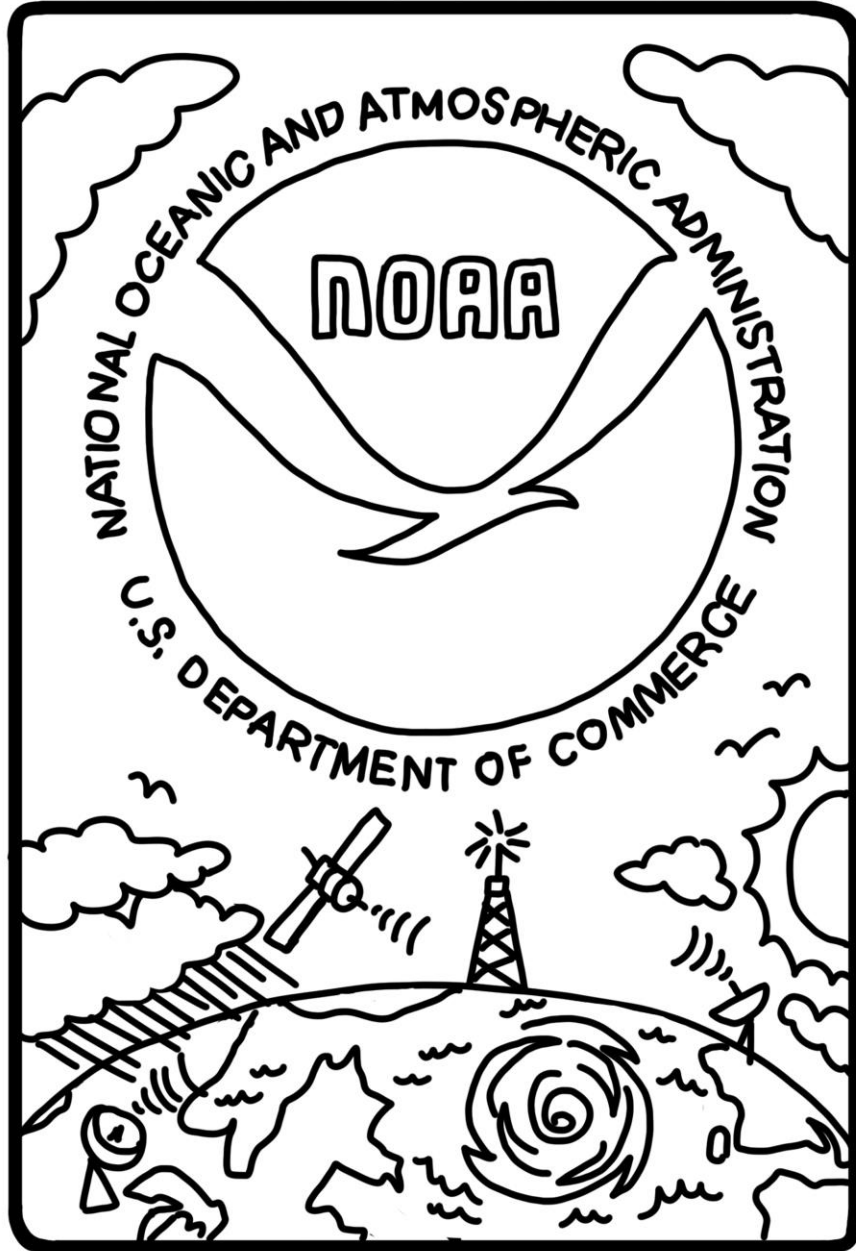
The first Earth Day brought over 20 million US citizens to the streets, almost 10% of the population. This call to action over the environment channeling the anti-war movement brought real change through legislative actions, both on a Federal and state level. The Clean Air Act (CAA), U.S. federal law, passed in 1970 and later amended, to prevent air pollution and thereby protect the ozone layer and promote public health. The Clean Air Act gave the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the power it needed to take effective action to fight environmental pollution.



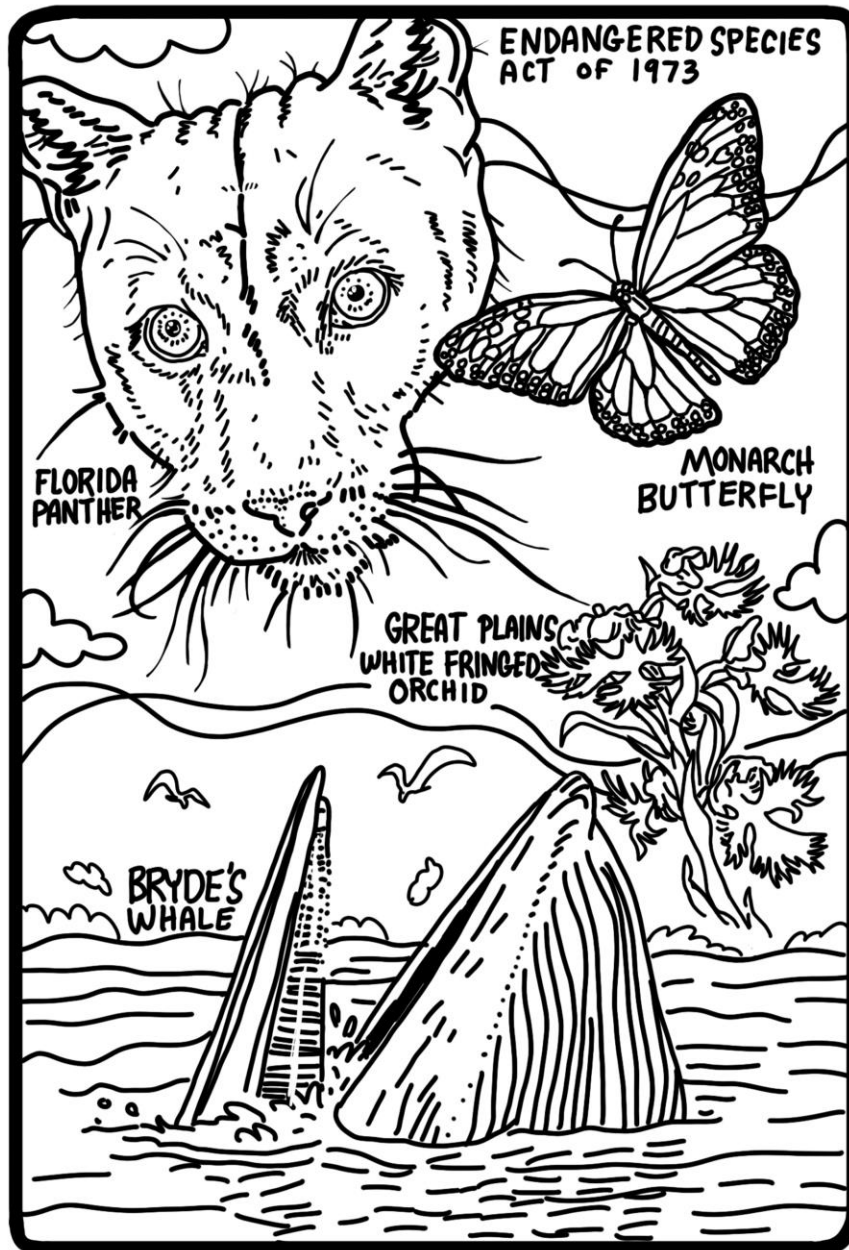
The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 was the first major U.S. law to address water pollution. Growing public awareness and concern for controlling water pollution led to sweeping amendments in 1972. As amended in 1972, the law became commonly known as the Clean Water Act (CWA). The amendments gave power to regulate pollutant discharges into the waters of the USA, made it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters without a permit, & gave EPA the authority to implement pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for industry.



Born in the wake of Earth Day amidst concern about environmental pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established on December 2, 1970 to consolidate in one agency a variety of federal research, monitoring, standard-setting and enforcement activities to ensure protection for individuals and the environment.



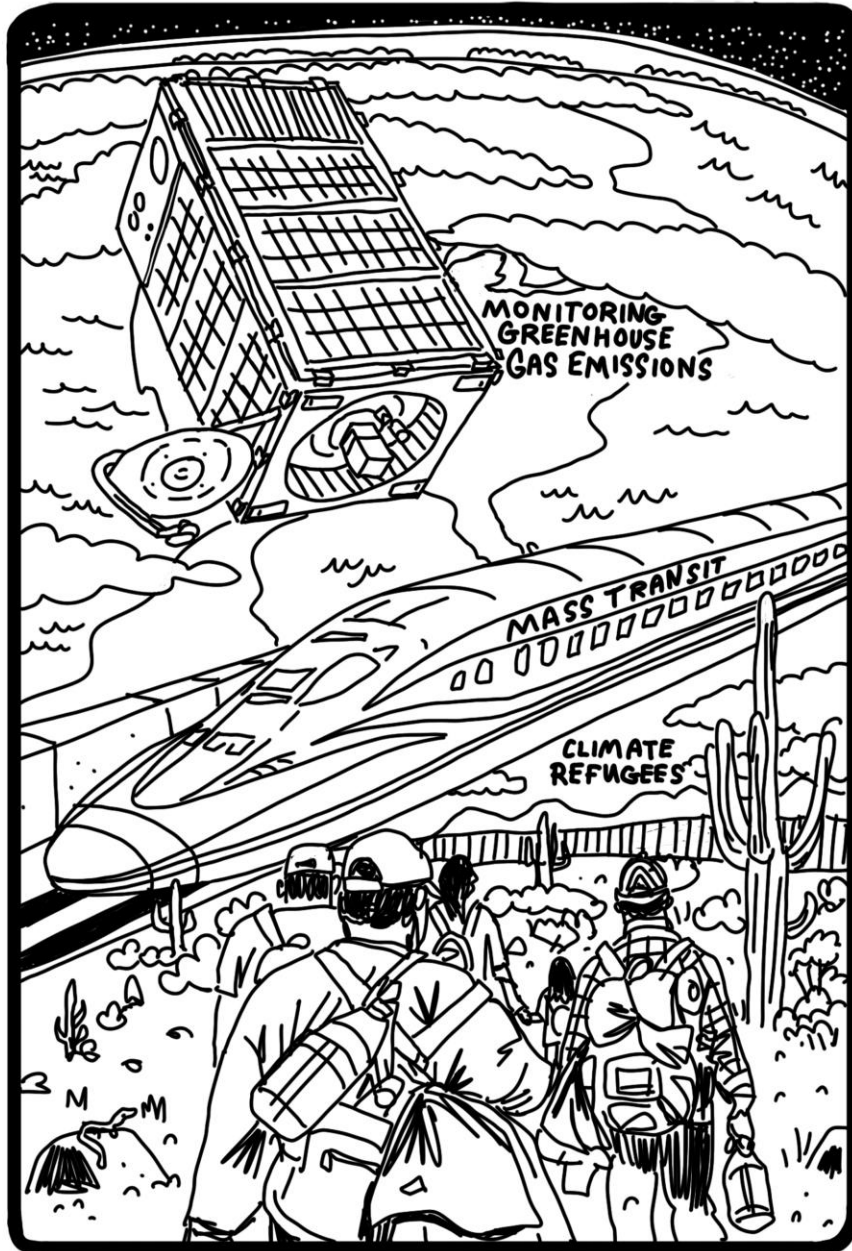
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, is the agency of the United States federal government, established in 1970 within the Department of Commerce. It is responsible for monitoring our climate and our environment, and taking steps to preserve them.



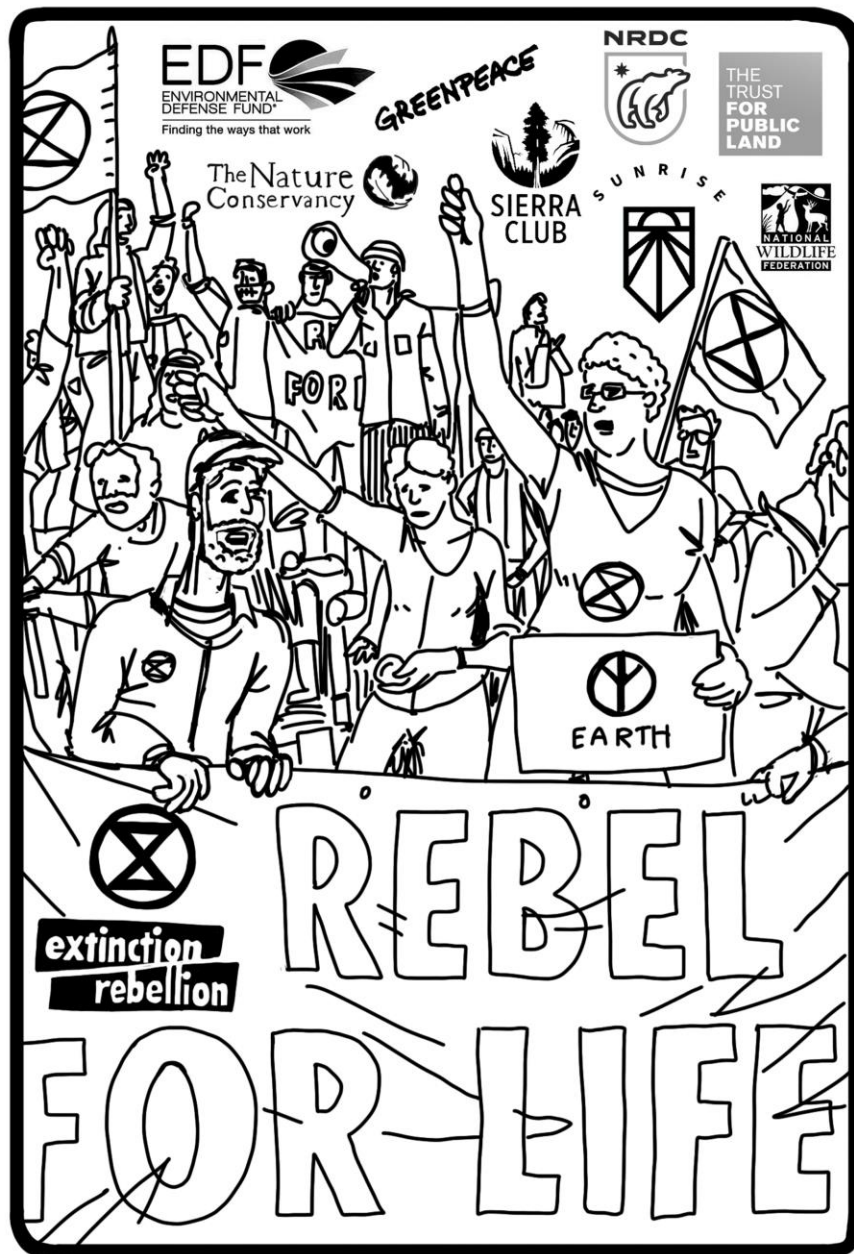
The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals and the habitats in which they are found. The law also prohibits any action that causes a "taking" of any listed species of endangered fish or wildlife.



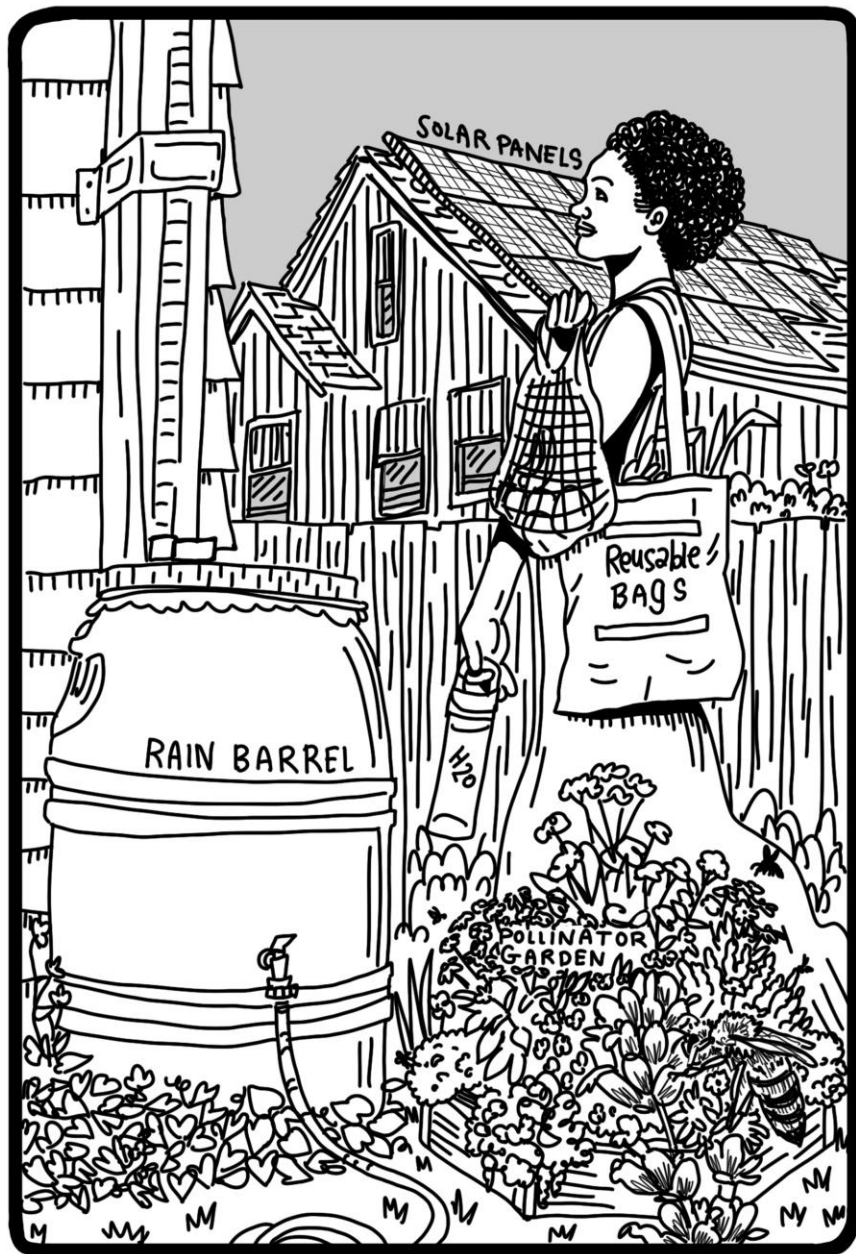
The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 was designed to counter damage to natural ecosystems on public lands. The NFMA is a cornerstone of environmental law intended to protect biodiversity in National Forests and to ensure public involvement in forest planning and management.



Going forward we face challenges from all fronts. Expanding our monitoring of methane and other harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing our carbon footprint and drastically expanding mass transit. Assisting climate refugees, not building walls and laws intended to keep others in need out. Working with partnering nations and rejoining the Paris Agreement. Passing a Green New Deal.



What can I do? Get involved with local community passionate about the environment. Don't have a local group? Start one. Get involved in local politics. The change starts close to home. Donate to environmentally minded organizations, with money, your involvement, or both. Keep environment as a top concern when electing candidates for office, whether it be the school board or the president.



What can we do on an individual level to reduce our waste and have an impact on climate change? Recycling water runoff with rain barrels, using reusable water bottles and shopping bags, installing solar panels for energy, and planting a pollinator garden are just a few options.

Earth Day 2020: 50 Years of Coming Together

A coloring zine that explores the foundations for the first Earth Day, and the lasting legacies implemented within our culture, state, and federal government. This is the story of grassroots activism by the people coming together to demand environmental change in our laws regulating pollution, our land, air, & water.



Artist & Author

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photo credit: @dirtykics

