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ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES MARKS 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY WITH WEEKEND FESTIVAL

Saturday and Sunday, April 17–18

PHILADELPHIA—The Academy of Natural Sciences will mark the 40th anniversary of Earth Day with a weekend of activities aimed at helping people better understand their environment, what they can do to protect it, and how to get involved.

The Earth Day Festival will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, April 17 and 18. Chemists, engineers and other scientists from the Academy's Patrick Center for Environmental Research will bring their equipment, fish tanks and watershed models out from their laboratories and explain how they monitor water pollution, measure climate change, test fish for toxins, and identify invasive species right in the local watershed. Visitors of all ages can play the Recycling Relay Race, make a craft from recycled materials, and conduct an experiment like a scientist. College Settlement Outdoor School will perform an environmental fable by a beloved children's author and starring a mossy bossy creature who speaks for the trees.

Representatives from regional environmental organizations, including the Delaware Valley Orienteering Association, Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and Schuylkill River Environmental Center, will be on hand with displays, literature and calls to action for how concerned citizens can get involved.

The Academy of Natural Sciences, the oldest natural history museum in the Americas, has been a leader in the field of environmental research for decades and in biodiversity research and systematics for almost two centuries. The popular Town Square series of public discussions on critical environmental issues is about to enter its sixth year and continues to grow.

A look back in time

Some of a certain generation of Academy scientists have vivid recollections of the first official Earth Day 40 years ago. On April 22, 1970, Dr. Ruth Patrick, then chairman of the Academy's Limnology Department and now 102 years old, kicked off a special lunchtime program

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before a crowd at the cavernous Academy of Music by addressing the topic “What is Pollution? What Can I Do About It?” according to historic records of the day. Later in the day, the activity moved a quarter-mile away to the Academy of Natural Sciences itself, where ecologist Dr. Clyde Goulden and other scientists led an “Environmental Teach-In” that lasted well into the night. There was an hour-long showing of “pollution films” followed by a series of talks on air and water pollution, misuse of land and what the average citizen can do (“fix that dripping faucet”), capped by a “major address” by Patrick on “Air, Land, Water and Man: One World.”

“People were really interested in what we had to say,” recalled Goulden, now director of the Academy’s Asia Center. “There was a great deal of concern in the Philadelphia area about what was going on, and there were a lot of questions from the public.”

While many concerned citizens today have moved beyond the basic question of “what is pollution” to how to measure their carbon footprint, many of the environmental concerns remain the same. The Academy’s Earth Day Festival will provide some enlightenment.

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The Academy of Natural Sciences, founded in 1812, is the oldest natural science research institution and museum in the Americas and a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.

HOURS: Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Saturday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. ADMISSION: \$12 adults; \$10 children 3-12, seniors, college students, and military personnel; free for members and children under 3. \$2 fee for Butterflies!