

Protect Our Species

Earth Day 2019



Teach-In
Toolkit



EARTH DAY NETWORK

Education is the foundation for progress. We need to build a global citizenry fluent in the issues of species loss and aware of the unprecedented threat species are facing across the planet. We need to empower everyone with the knowledge to act in defense of environmental protection.

Nature's gift to our planet are the millions of species that we know and love, and the many more that we have still to discover. Unfortunately, human beings have irrevocably altered the balance of nature and the world is facing the greatest rate of extinction it has seen since we lost the dinosaurs more than 60 million years ago. But unlike the fate of the dinosaurs, the rapid extinction of species in our world today is the result of human activity.

Developing activities are leading to the global destruction or rapid reduction of populations of plants and wildlife. Species are going extinct, and habitats are shrinking. Biodiversity, or the variety of living things in a given place – whether in a small stream, a desert, a forest, the oceans, or the entire planet – is falling faster than ever before. If this problem continues, it will have an overall negative impact on the capacity of the planet to sustain life, including that of humans.

The causes are many: deforestation, habitat loss, poaching, unsustainable agriculture, pollution, pesticides, and climate change to name a few, and the impacts are far-reaching. If we do not act now, bringing about mass extinction may be humanity's most enduring legacy.

Environmental education leads to an internalization of environmental values. A world inspired by environmental values will take local, regional, and global actions to safeguard the Earth and its inhabitants.

Earth Day Network believes that grassroots activism is the best way to build a world literate in climate and environmental science.

With this toolkit, you will be able to organize an Environmental Teach-In for your local community.

TEACH.IN

n. a series of lectures and discussions on a subject of public interest focused on taking action

History of the Environmental Teach-In

A teach-in is similar to a general educational gathering on any complicated issue, usually an issue involving issues or problem of importance to society. The main difference between a teach-in and a seminar is the refusal to limit the discussion to a strict academic scope. Teach-ins are meant to be practical, participatory, and oriented toward action. While they include experts lecturing on the area of their expertise, discussion and questions from the audience are welcome and at the core of the methodology.

Concerned citizens from all walks of life deployed teach-ins at the first Earth Day in 1970. Around the USA, they gathered to learn the facts about environmental degradation happening around them. Earth Day teach-ins helped educate and mobilize citizens across America to demand that Congress act to protect the environment. Ultimately, this activism led to the landmark Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other groundbreaking legislative accomplishments.

What an **EARTH DAY 2019 TEACH-IN** can accomplish

Working within your community to develop the knowledge and skills to make a difference—otherwise known as **Collective Civic Action**—is needed to make real, lasting progress for our own well-being and for the environment. Holding a **teach-in** for your community will both educate others on the impact species loss is having globally and provide your community members with the tools they need to make a personal commitment to protect other species, and advocate for practices and policies that safeguard the local environment and their own well-being. Together, these actions will add up to substantive and lasting progress on a national and global scale, and will ensure the survival of all living things on the planet.

The goal of an Earth Day 2019 Teach-In is to educate the members of your community about protecting our species, how the problem of species loss impacts the local area, the country and the world, and empower and mobilize your community to take informed civic action to protect our species. At the end of a successful teach-in, your audience should walk away committed to being involved and taking personal action.

As you read through this toolkit, think about the unique ways your community can accomplish these three objectives:

1

Get informed about species loss and its impact on their own community, the country, and the world.

2

Promote the internalization of concepts and values associated with species conservation and the understanding that all species have intrinsic value.

3

Empower your community with the civic engagement skills necessary to take action to help protect our species.

Teach-In Preparation

1

FORMING AN
ORGANIZING
COMMITTEE

2

RECRUITING
PROGRAM
SPEAKERS

3

SELECTING A
MODERATOR

4

CREATING
AN AGENDA

5

COMMUNITY
OUTREACH

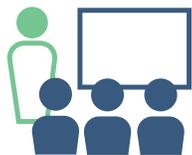
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PRE-EVENT
LOGISTICS

1 FORMING AN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Depending on the size of the teach-in, you may need to create an Organizing Committee to support the event and facilitate logistics.

A sample Organizing Committee could include:



Coordinator

Tasks include coordinating support, meetings, and internal communications.



Engagement & Outreach Team

Tasks include crafting key messages about the event, working with local press to promote event coverage, sharing via social media, and building attendance for the event. This group should have strong writing skills, preferably have or can build contacts in the local press, and have skills using social media.



Logistics Team

Tasks include securing a venue; equipment; transportation; signage; accessibility; and recruiting day-of volunteers to help direct attendees, set up equipment, and more.



Program Team

Tasks include planning and setting the agenda, finding and securing speakers, identifying and securing a moderator, and planning moderator questions.

Consult Earth Day Network's Earth Day Organizers Toolkit for guidance on developing a team and media campaign, recruiting additional support, and more.

Earth Day Organizers Toolkit available at earthday.org/earthdayinbox/

TIPS ON RECRUITING SUPPORT

- Engage with local community organizations or businesses that have the skills needed for the tasks outlined above.
- Advertise a sign-up form for recruiting volunteers.

2 RECRUITING PROGRAM SPEAKERS

Recruiting engaging, inspiring and knowledgeable speakers for your event is critical. Ideal speakers are respected subject-matter experts and active in the community. These could be heads of local organizations, teachers and professors, and/or local elected officials.

Refer to the “What an Earth Day 2019 Teach-in Can Accomplish” section on Page 3 to explain to speakers what is expected from them.

Ideal number of speakers: 3 to 5

Too many speakers will leave little time for audience participation.

Be intentional and strategic with whom you invite.

Create an ideal list of speakers with a few back-up names in case some of your first asks are unavailable.

Invite speakers who can bring concrete tasks for audience members to accomplish through civic action.

VIP speakers and local elected officials can draw larger audiences.

EDUCATE

Seek experts on species conservation that preferably know what has been done in your city or community

SAMPLE SPEAKERS AND TOPICS:

-  Environmental professor speaking on local environmental issue
-  Government or official non-government organization staff member presenting on species conservation

EMPOWER

Seek experts on civic action

SAMPLE SPEAKERS AND TOPICS:

-  Political science professor training the audience on civic engagement
-  Advocacy organizations presenting ways the audience could participate in their campaigns
-  Local or regional elected leadership addressing opportunities for public engagement

SPEAKER RECRUITMENT PITCH

Earth Day 2019 teach-ins will be occurring simultaneously around the world. Speakers will be taking part in an international movement to promote the protection of our species and spur action. This is an unprecedented time for action. People not previously engaged in making their voices heard are looking to participate. Now is our chance to provide them with that opportunity.

3 SELECTING A MODERATOR



The role of the moderator is to:

- Keep the program on schedule
- Field and manage questions from the audience
- Contribute questions to stimulate discussion with the audience



Your moderator should:

- Have strong public speaking skills
- Be knowledgeable on the discussion topics
- Be generally informed on the expertise of the speakers
- Have a deep understanding of the Teach-In's goals and the event itinerary to properly facilitate discussion



Good potential moderators include:

- Professors (especially in environmental science or government)
- Heads of local environmental/civic/faith organizations, or student leaders
- Respected, charismatic individuals not directly aligned with environmentalism but influential in your community
- Conservation or species experts from your local zoo, aquarium, or nature center

4 CREATING AN AGENDA

The purpose of the agenda is to keep the teach-in on schedule and goal-oriented. The Program Team can take the lead in developing the agenda. Your moderator will follow the agenda to ensure the teach-in is proceeding as planned.

Utilize the ‘What an Earth Day 2019 Teach-In Can Accomplish’ section found earlier in this toolkit for reference. Keep in mind that a Teach-In looks to not only educate participants, but also to prepare them to take action.

TEACH-IN

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The agenda can largely be up to you, but be sure to include the following:

- 1 An introduction speech explaining “why are we here?” with an overview of the concept and goals of the teach-in. This speech should also introduce the program speakers.
- 2 A discussion educating the audience on the environmental and health issues facing the world and the local community related to biodiversity.
- 3 A discussion of civic action skills and methods and what needs to be done.
- 4 A closing speech addressing the question, “What are the next steps?”

SAMPLE AGENDA

15 mins	Introduction by the Chair of the Organizing Committee
1 hr	Education & Program Speakers: Species conservation in our community and around the world.
30 mins	Q&A
30 mins	Break
1 hr 30	Community engagement and civic action panel
30 mins	Q&A
15 mins	Closing Speech and call to action by the Chair of the Organizing Committee or other leader

5 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The effectiveness of your teach-in depends on attendance. Reach out to your entire community – not just environmentalists – to ensure an inclusive and diverse event. Here are some suggestions for attracting attendees:



Start advertising early. More time means more opportunities to spread the word.



Utilize social media platforms to promote the event. In addition to creating an event, be sure to craft content and updates to regularly post. Diversify your use of platforms. When posting, be sure to tag us @EarthDayNetwork and use the hashtags #EarthDay2019 and #ProtectOurSpecies.



Utilize active advertising. Create a flyer with a logo or image and the details of the event. Hand out flyers in high traffic areas and consider going door to door in your communities.



Build partnerships with local businesses who can advertise the teach-in or provide sponsorships or products.



Build partnerships with local leaders who can endorse the teach-in on social media and in the press. Ask them to use the hashtags #EarthDay2019 and #ProtectOurSpecies and tag @EarthDayNetwork



Inform school/college administrations who can pass along information to students.



Advertise to community clubs and other local organizations



Ask your Program Speakers to advertise on social media and in local press.



Contact Earth Day Network with any additional questions at info@earthday.org

6 PRE-EVENT LOGISTICS

When choosing a venue, consider:

Expected attendance

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Refer to similar events that have taken place in your area to get an idea of how many people might attend.

Infrastructure

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Consider locations that already have in place some of the infrastructure you will need such as large monitors or projector screens, sound equipment, and seating for large audiences.

Audio

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Pick a venue where your attendants will be able to hear speeches and discussions. Avoid venues with frequent noise pollution.

Accessibility

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Event attendees may require wheelchair ramps or other accommodations.

Weather

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Outdoor events need a contingency plan for inclement weather.

Equipment

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Possible equipment needs:

- A projector, mics, and chairs for speakers
- Chairs and mics for the audience
- Tables for signing in and water and food
- Name tags
- Signage at the venue to direct attendees

Registering attendees

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There are plenty of online registration options the leadership team should research and consider using. Use social and traditional medias to market the teach-in, but be sure to have an official registration tool so that you can follow-up with guests about moving forward with your planned local action.

Location

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Some possible event locations might include:

- Lecture hall or auditorium
- Library
- Concert venue
- Town green or park
- Sports stadium
- Theater or amphitheater
- House of worship

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Use #EarthDay2019 to share your event with the world. You might even get a shout-out!

STAY IN TOUCH



Contact Earth Day Network with any additional questions, at info@earthday.org