

# Earth Day

The origins of Earth Day lie, curiously, in anti-Vietnam War protests. It was Gaylord Nelson, U.S. senator and conservationist, who first wondered whether the methods developed for the anti-Vietnam War protests could achieve positive results in other areas as well. The anti-war teach-ins—meetings to discuss a subject of public interest—were held on campuses across the United States and they led Nelson to plan a nationwide teach-in on the environment.

That was the origin of Earth Day. In September 1969, Nelson formally announced that there would be a “national environmental teach-in” sometime in the spring of 1970. A full page ad in *The New York Times* in February 1970 announced that on April 22, 1970, citizens all over the United States would demonstrate for a cleaner environment. As a result, 20 million people participated in America’s first Earth Day celebration. <http://www.epa.gov/earthday/>