

# This is What True Environmentalists Do on Earth Day



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Can it be that just this month that we mark the 46th Anniversary of Earth Day? The calendar doesn't lie.

The late Gaylord Nelson, a former Wisconsin governor and U.S. Senator, is credited for [starting Earth Day](#) in 1970. I remember the hoopla surrounding that day well as I had just a few months earlier started my career as a journalist at the [Sandusky \(Ohio\) Register](#) and was still full of the "save-the-world" spirit that defined that era for so many of us young people.

As I look back over 40 years ago I can't help but wonder: "What happened to the passion?"

Perhaps it's just me, but the energy and intensity of feeling that marked those earlier Earth Day celebrations seem to be petering out year by year. And yes, admittedly, I could be viewing those first observances through the distorted lens of the passion rather than the many less-publicized but more significant efforts to preserve and enhance our environment being celebrated in more recent Earth Days.

After all, what's rhetoric without activity to *actually* preserve or enhance our green world. It's what we do rather than what we celebrate that really matters.

That's why I am so proud of the many people in the landscape industry that volunteer to install, repair and renovate urban environments each year on April 22. They truly make a sacrifice. April 22 arrives during the busiest time of the year for them.

Last April 22 was the 16th consecutive year that landscape/lawn service pros and many volunteer workers improved properties in their neighborhoods under the umbrella of the [National Association of Landscape Professionals](#). The NALP

Day of Service [program has changed](#) since April is the busiest time of year for most landscape contractors and a new community service program for the association is to be announced.

In 2015, about 50 organizations, companies and regional landscape associations, spent the day in volunteer service. I don't know exactly how many people in total pitched in but it was well into the thousands. Putting a dollar amount on the materials and labor they provided exceeded that by ten-fold.

I don't know how much positive publicity the efforts of all of these urban environmentalists will generate. Or, if any of their work will result in a single new customer. That probably wasn't on their minds as they worked.

I do know that what they did was the right and generous thing to do. I do know that it made a difference within their communities. And, I'm equally sure that it made an equally positive difference within their organizations.

***Editor's note:*** *This story was originally publishing April 2015 and has been updated for relevancy and accuracy.*

[VIDEO](#) AND COVER [PHOTO](#): NALP