



# 50 YEARS *EARTH DAY* 2020

The “green things growing” whisper me  
Of many an earth-old mystery.  
*-Eben Eugene Rexford*

# Timeline

**1970** - the first Earth Day mobilizes 20 million Americans to call for increased protections for our planet;

**1990** - Earth Day goes global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries;

**2000** - Earth Day leverages the power of digital media to build millions of local conversations across more than 180 countries;

**2010** - Earth Day Network launches A Billion Acts of Green® and The Canopy Project. Earth Day 2010 engages 75,000 global partners in 192 countries;

**2020** - Earth Day will mark 50 years with global activations that aim to mobilize a billion people worldwide for transformative action for our planet. **Becomes virtual!**

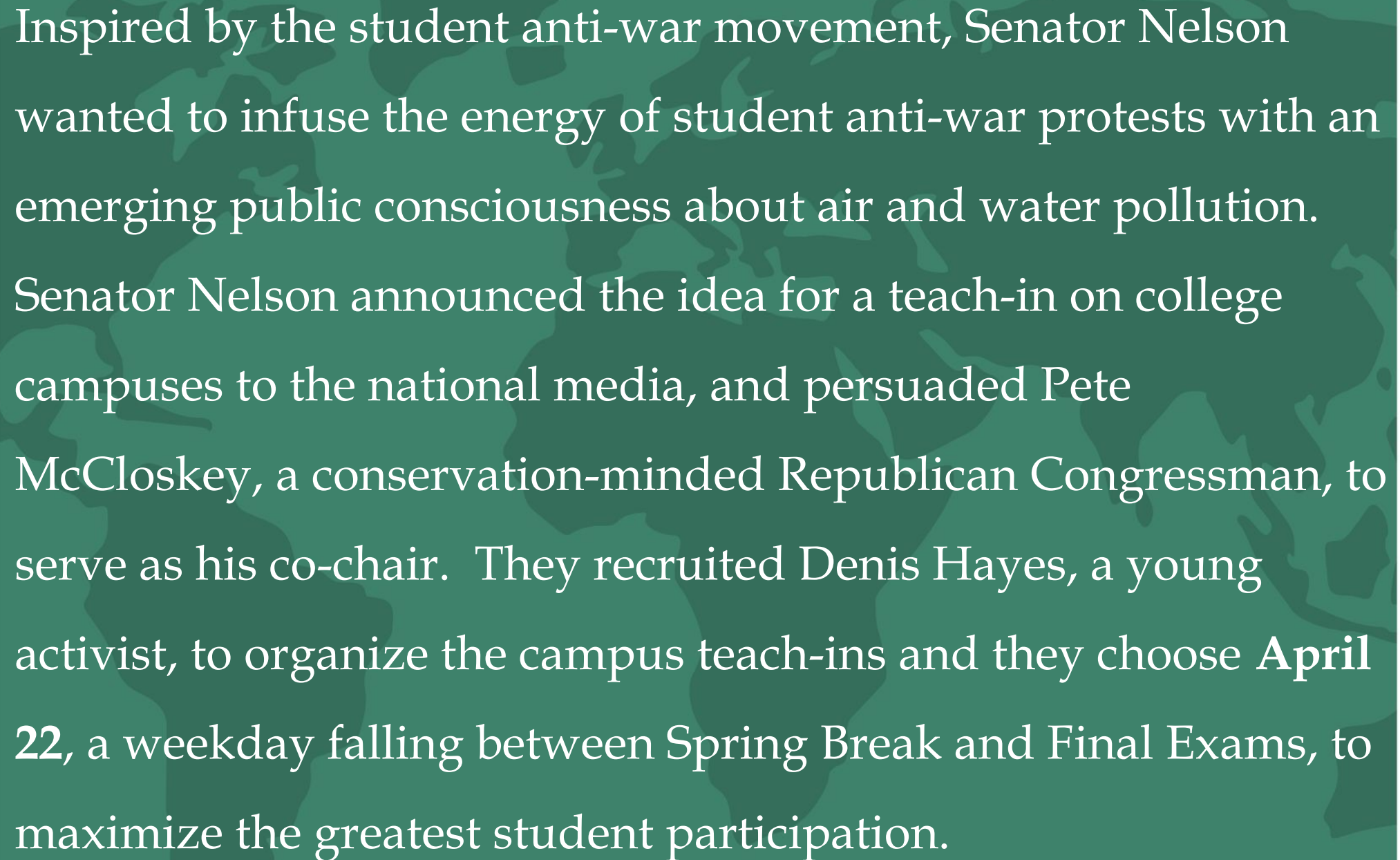


Earth Day is an annual event, celebrated on **April 22**, on which events are held worldwide to demonstrate support for environmental protection. It was first celebrated in **1970**, and is now coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network, and celebrated in more than 192 countries each year.



## History

**Senator Gaylord Nelson**, a junior senator from Wisconsin, had long been concerned about the deteriorating environment in the United States. In January 1969, he and many others witnessed the ravages of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California.

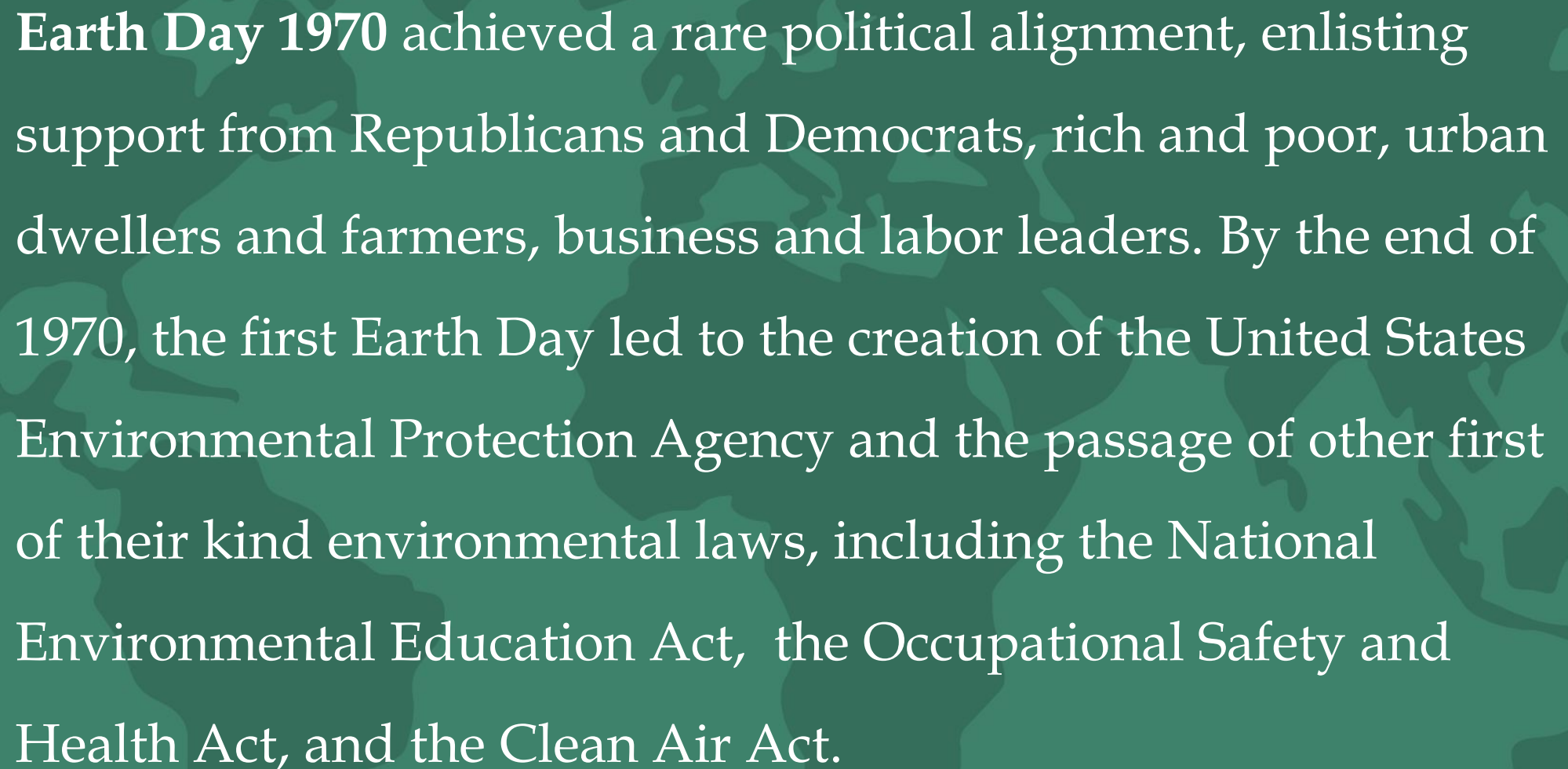


Inspired by the student anti-war movement, Senator Nelson wanted to infuse the energy of student anti-war protests with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution. Senator Nelson announced the idea for a teach-in on college campuses to the national media, and persuaded Pete McCloskey, a conservation-minded Republican Congressman, to serve as his co-chair. They recruited Denis Hayes, a young activist, to organize the campus teach-ins and they choose **April 22**, a weekday falling between Spring Break and Final Exams, to maximize the greatest student participation.




Earth Day inspired 20 million Americans — at the time, 10% of the total population of the United States — to take to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate against the impacts of 150 years of industrial development which had left a growing legacy of serious human health impacts. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment and there were massive coast-to-coast rallies in cities, towns, and communities.





**Earth Day 1970** achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, urban dwellers and farmers, business and labor leaders. By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of other first of their kind environmental laws, including the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Clean Air Act.



As 1990 approached, a group of environmental leaders approached Denis Hayes to once again organize another major campaign for the planet.

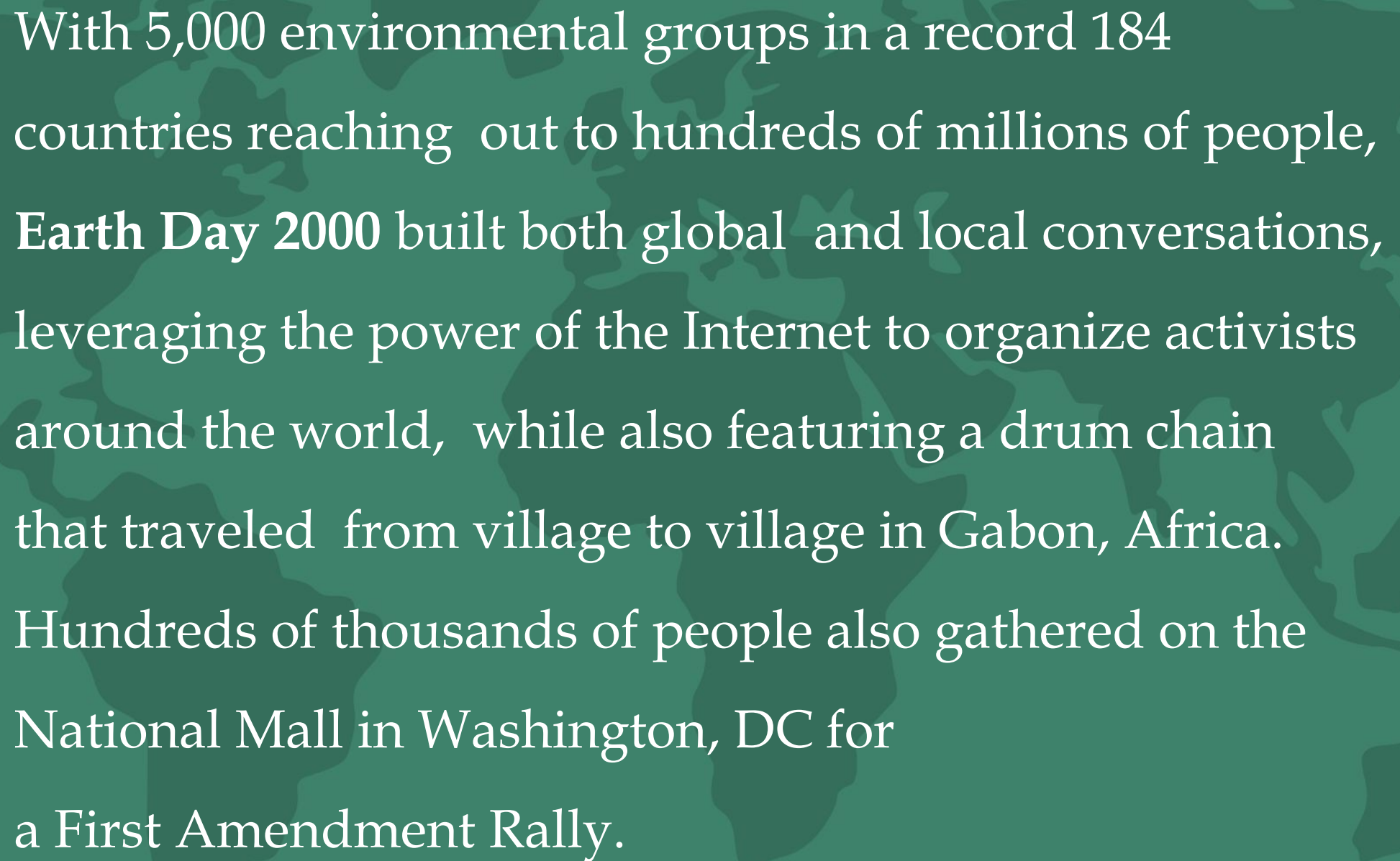
**This time, Earth Day went global,** mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting environmental issues onto the world stage.





**Earth Day 1990** gave a huge boost to recycling efforts worldwide and helped pave the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

It also prompted President Bill Clinton to award Senator Nelson the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the highest honor given to civilians in the United States — for his role as Earth Day founder.



With 5,000 environmental groups in a record 184 countries reaching out to hundreds of millions of people, **Earth Day 2000** built both global and local conversations, leveraging the power of the Internet to organize activists around the world, while also featuring a drum chain that traveled from village to village in Gabon, Africa. Hundreds of thousands of people also gathered on the National Mall in Washington, DC for a First Amendment Rally.

The background of the image is a dark green world map. The continents are outlined in a slightly lighter shade of green, creating a subtle pattern. Overlaid on this map is a block of white text, which is the primary focus of the image. The text is arranged in five lines, centered horizontally. The font is a clean, sans-serif typeface. The entire image is framed by a thin white border.

Today, Earth Day is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world, marked by more than a billion people every year as a day of action to change human behavior and create global, national and local policy changes.

## Some tips -

- replace lightbulbs with Energy Star LED bulbs;
- ask energy company for a home-energy assessment;
- unplug appliances and electronics when not in use;
- use the cold water setting on your washing machine;
- dry your clothes outdoors;
- plug air leaks in windows and doors to keep your home warmer or cooler.

## Some tips -

- learn the names of the plants, bugs and birds in your neighborhood;
- plant native flora;
- pick up the trash (safely, with gloves or grabbing stick);
- don't release pets into the wild;
- keep your cat indoors or in an enclosed outdoor space;
- learn how to create habitats for wildlife in your yard.

## Some tips-

- replace single use items like water bottles with durable ones;
- ensure only acceptable materials go in your recycling cart;
- buy second hand whenever possible;
- repair a broken item instead of buying new;
- reuse an item in a new way;
- buy local when possible.



# What can you do on Earth Day in 2020 -

- listen to talks about environmental justice;
- learn about renewable energy;
- watch nature videos;
- plant a garden that helps support bees or start an organic vegetable garden;
- take part in the Virtual Run Challenge  
(<https://www.thevirtualrunchallenge.com/>)
- digital cleaning - clean your computer, phone from unnecessary files, pictures, etc;
- go outside (safely), no matter the weather;
- conserve water and avoid over-watering.

# Earth Day 2020 Report...

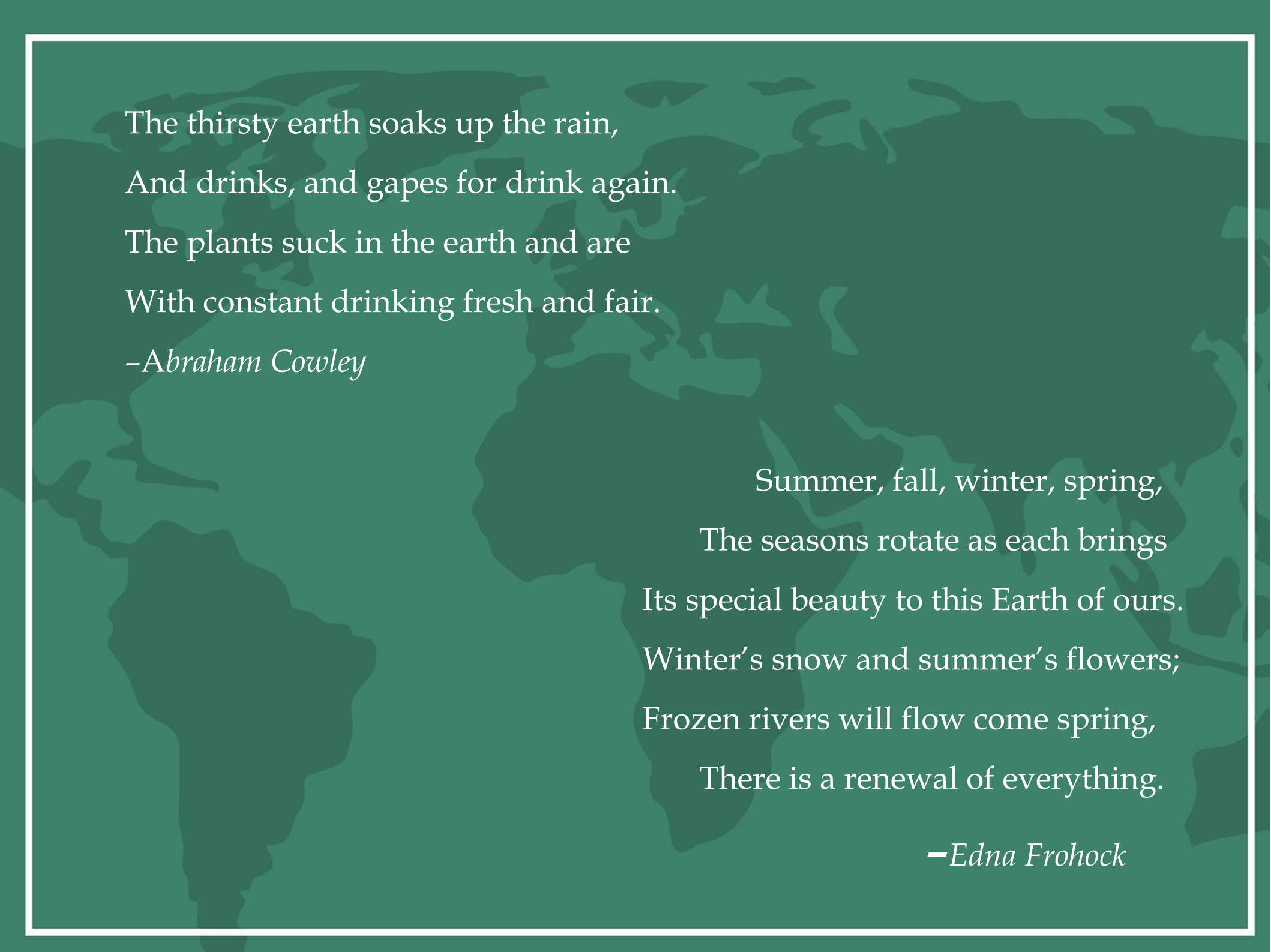
WE'VE  
GOT LESS  
INDUSTRIAL  
POLLUTION!

LESS NOISE  
POLLUTION,  
AT AIRPORTS!

AND LOTS  
LESS LITTER  
ON STREETS

THERE'S  
LESS AIR  
POLLUTION  
FROM CARS!!

ALL IT TOOK  
WAS A GLOBAL  
PANDEMIC  
SHUTDOWN...



The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,  
And drinks, and gapes for drink again.  
The plants suck in the earth and are  
With constant drinking fresh and fair.

*—Abraham Cowley*

Summer, fall, winter, spring,  
The seasons rotate as each brings  
Its special beauty to this Earth of ours.  
Winter's snow and summer's flowers;  
Frozen rivers will flow come spring,  
There is a renewal of everything.

*—Edna Frohock*





# References

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