

## Every Day is Earth Day

April 22<sup>nd</sup> marks the official Earth Day. This calendar date has been used since 1970 when Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin founded the event as an environmental teach-in. Since that date 51 years ago, Earth Day has blossomed into a highly celebrated worldwide event recognized by over 193 countries. This special day puts a focus on the one thing that none of us could currently live without. Our home, our base, our Planet Earth.

It is widely accepted to preface the word Earth, with Mother. I believe this is for a very good reason. The earth is the vessel upon which every experience we have ever had was birthed. Every step you take, every move you make, every vow you break, every smile you fake, I'll be: oh wait, I got a little bit off course. But only a little. From the water we drink to the air we breathe to the food we eat; it is all from, for and of the Earth. We simply would not exist without it. Is there anything more important?

I ask you to consider that question as the annual date approaches. Think about the fresh air you breathe, the pure water you drink and the wholesome food you eat. Think about these things that we so often take for granted. Take a deep breath if you are able and look or feel around you for what it is that gives you a feeling of health, a sense of wellbeing, a longing to not just live life but to love life. My bet is that you will first find solace in something that is closely connected to the earth.

With the understanding that we are so deeply connected to this vessel, let's just go ahead and make it official that every day is Earth Day. Any extra effort you might put forth toward honoring the earth on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, please do so every day. Treat the earth like your Mother, give her the care and attention she deserves. Not just on one day of the year, but every day of every year.

Some examples of how you can make Earth Day an everyday event would be to take a walk instead of a drive. Buy local and in bulk when you can and bring a reusable shopping bag. When your light bulb burns out, replace it with an LED. Many of us here in Northern Michigan have no need to ever purchase bottled water. Instead, put your money toward a good container and bring your delicious water with you. After you reduce and reuse, don't throw it away! Utilize the great curbside pick-up or 24/7 single stream drop-off recycling services the Grand Traverse area haulers have available. Most of what you put in your garbage can be recycled. If you are a resident of Grand Traverse County, you most likely have access to curbside recycling. If not, the 24/7 recycling drop off sites are free to use! Not all items are recyclable so please follow the rules listed on the recycling bins and your haulers website. Can't find your item on the list? Check out the RecycleSmart "Take it Back" recycling directory at [RecycleSmart.info/983](http://RecycleSmart.info/983). While you're there, test your recycling knowledge on the RecycleSmart "Waste Sorting" game and see if you can earn a certificate! For more information about your recycling options in Grand Traverse County as well as the special events and collections being held throughout the year, visit [www.RecycleSmart.info](http://www.RecycleSmart.info). You may also call the Recycling Hotline at 941-5555.

Happy Earth Day from the Grand Traverse County Resource Recovery Department!