



STATE OF NEVADA

Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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NEWS RELEASE

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NDEP SUPPORTING EARTH DAY 2006

CARSON CITY— The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) is supporting Earth Day events across the state April 21-29, encouraging waste reduction and recycling, reduction of water and air pollution, as well as environmental education.

Earth Day events are scheduled in the following Nevada communities: Reno, Las Vegas, North and South Lake Tahoe, Carson City, Elko, Winnemucca and Pahrump. NDEP will have representation at most of them.

NDEP funds the Erase Your Trace program, developed by Environmental Leadership to minimize environmental impacts of special events in the Reno-Sparks area. NDEP initiated a program of corn-based to-go ware to replace plastic eating utensils, paper plates and cups at food stations throughout Earth Day events. It also arranged for composting services for the food and to-go ware waste.

“For about four years now, we’ve been working with the Earth Day organizing committees to reduce the amount of waste that is disposed of from these events,” said NDEP’s Recycling Coordinator David Friedman. “Last year, we were able to divert to recycling or composting approximately 1 ton of the 1.5 tons of the waste generated at the events. We then returned the composted material to the North Tahoe Demonstration Garden in Incline Village and the Paradise Park Community Garden in Reno. With the corn-based biodegradable to-go serving ware, for example, the food and its packaging are disposed directly into the compost bin. It’s about changing peoples’ habits.”

At the NDEP recycling booth in Reno, Earth Day participants can enter the “Guess the Waste” contest to guess how much waste will be generated at the event. The guess closest to the actual amount of waste generated at the event will win a Recycled PET Hammock, made from roPETe™ rope manufactured from plastic beverage bottles, and other post-consumer PET containers. Other prizes, including free bags of compost and recycled plastic zipper pulls, will be awarded for attendees who properly recycle at the event.

NDEP is also a sponsor of Nevada Project WET (Water Education for Teachers), an education enrichment program for grades K-12 that fosters awareness and stewardship of water resources.

“Through Project WET, we offer teachers some tools they can use to teach their students the value of our water resources,” said Mary Kay Riedl, NDEP Project WET Coordinator. “The children seem to get a lot out of it, and in many cases, they take the information home and talk to their parents about it.”

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Earth Day
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With Nevada's continued growth and urbanization has come an increase in impervious surfaces—a change that is having a major impact on local hydrology, according to Riedl. These surfaces are causing an increase in urban and storm-water runoff, which carries pollutants, such as pesticides, fertilizers, sediment, bacteria and hydrocarbons, directly into rivers and streams. NDEP's Water Quality Planning booth features information on the effects of urbanization on the water cycle, and provides examples of low-impact development techniques that can be used to minimize impacts on water resources.

At the Pahrump Earth Day, NDEP will team up with Nye County to educate participants about particulate pollution and the county's fugitive dust ordinances. The NDEP and Nye County exhibit will include information explaining the properties of particulate matter or dust, why it's important to control, and dust control measures that will help reduce particulate matter and protect human health.

"NDEP's message is: 'got dust, keep it down'," said Corey-Lynn Kern from the division's Bureau of Air Quality Planning. "Airborne dust is often so small that it passes through the nasal passage, and can cause damage to the lungs. Children, the elderly, and people with respiratory or heart disease can be especially vulnerable to particulate pollution. Our goal is to educate people that it's important to keep dust on the ground and out of the air." As part of that effort, NDEP will distribute small squirt guns stamped with the slogan.

For more information on the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and last year's Earth Day activities, visit the agency's website at http://ndep.nv.gov/recycle/earth_day05.

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