

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Earth Day 2025

Date Prepared: March 5, 2025

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Deputy Mayor Sheilagh O'Leary, Sustainability

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required:

That Council approve the proposed events and approach to commemorate Earth Day 2025.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

Earth Day was first celebrated on April 22, 1970, marking the inception of the environmental movement. It has since evolved into the largest participatory environmental movement on the planet. In 1990, Earth Day Canada became established to mobilize local stakeholders and facilitate the growth of this initiative within Canada.

The City of St. John's has been an Earth Day Canada 'mobilizing municipality' since at least 2022 and have signed up to continue as an Earth Day Canada Mobilizing Municipality for 2025 joining over 130 other municipalities across Canada.

The 2025 Earth Day Canada theme is "Biodiversity", with the goal to encourage as many citizens, municipalities, and organizations as possible to reconnect with nature and better understand the importance of preserving biodiversity for ecosystem balance, food security, and resilience to climate change.

Using the Earth Day Canada suggested activities for 2025, Staff are proposing a multi-faceted approach to reinforce and support the sustainability efforts of City Council:

1. Earth Day Flag Raising Event (April 22, 2025)
 - Hosted by City Council at City Hall
 - To commemorate and recognize Earth Day, the Earth Day flag will be raised in the morning.
 - The event will have an invited guest expert to speak about the importance of biodiversity in a sustainable community.
2. In-person Backyard Composting Information Session (April 19, 2025)
 - Hosted at Memorial University Botanical Garden, 306 Mount Scio Road.

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- After the session participants will receive a Certificate of Completion, which qualifies them to purchase a backyard compost bin from the City.
 - Hosted on same day and in conjunction with the Botanical Garden's 4th Annual Seedy Saturday event where visitors can join fellow gardeners, homesteaders, and seed savers for a day of learning, networking, and seed sharing.
 - Opportunity for members of Council to welcome attendees to the composting information session and support the benefit of this growing practice to enrich and build healthy soil, reduce organic wastes going to landfill and fight against climate change.
3. Virtual Workshop with Discussion on Reducing Food Waste
- Hosted by Earth Day Canada
 - Workshop gives residents the opportunity to share positive successes while offering keys to understanding how to reduce food waste from your grocery list to your storing and cooking habits.
 - Space will be limited and pre-registration will be required.
 - Recording of the session will be available to those who cannot attend for another 90 days
 - Opportunity for members of Council to welcome attendees at beginning of workshop.
 - Date TBD
4. Guided Hike at Bowring Park
- Participants will enjoy a guided walk around Bowring Park with Parks and Recreation staff to learn more about the biodiversity in plant / tree species within the park.
 - City staff will also present some of the horticultural practices employed to protect the health and biodiversity in the urban landscape.
 - Opportunity for members of Council to welcome and thank participants for attending and stress the importance of green space and the urban forest to the sustainability of the community.
 - Date TBD

In addition to these activities, the City will publish on its website and further promote through social media an overview of City services and programs that protect, enhance or restore our local biodiversity. Some of the potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Residential ReLeaf program (Parks)
- Tree planting and Naturalization in Parks and Open Spaces (Parks)
- Promotion of Tree and Yard Care (Parks)
- No cosmetic pesticides used in City Parks and Open Spaces (Parks)
- Yard waste collection, composting and giveaway (Waste)
- Backyard Composting information course/sessions & distribution of low-cost bins (Waste)
- Household Hazardous and Electronic Waste proper disposal (Waste)

- Community Gardens & composting (Community Services)
- Trail Explorers (Community Services)

Once approved by Council and as an Earth Day Mobilizing Municipality, all of our events will be listed on the Earth Day Canada website (earthday.ca). Earth Day Canada recognizes that community events are a great way to come together and make a positive impact on the environment.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: All events have no additional cost except for the virtual workshop (\$1075)
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Earth Day Canada, MUN Botanical Gardens
3. Is this a New Plan or Strategy: No

If yes, are there recommendations or actions that require progress reporting?

If yes, how will progress be reported? (e.g.: through the strategic plan, through Cascade, annual update to Council, etc.)

4. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Sustainable City: Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.

An Effective City: Achieve service excellence through collaboration, innovation and modernization grounded in client needs.

5. Alignment with Adopted Plans: NA
6. Accessibility and Inclusion: All events will consider accessibility and inclusion
7. Legal or Policy Implications: NA
8. Privacy Implications: NA
9. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Communications strategy to be fully developed once proposal approved.
10. Human Resource Implications: NA
11. Procurement Implications: NA

12. Information Technology Implications: NA

13. Other Implications: NA

Recommendation:

That Council approve the proposed plan detailed to commemorate Earth Day 2025

Prepared by:

Approved by:

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Earth Day 2025 .docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Mar 10, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Andrew Niblock - Mar 10, 2025 - 3:23 PM

Lynnann Winsor - Mar 10, 2025 - 4:22 PM