



# Newsletter

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## Earth Day and Action - By Nate Bramhall

For those of us who were born after 1970, it may be hard to imagine that before then, it was perfectly legal for factories in the U.S. to dump obscene amounts of toxic waste into the atmosphere and nearby watersheds. The operators behind such industrial processes couldn't be challenged in court because there was no EPA, no Clean Air Act, no Clean Water Act—virtually, no [regulatory systems](#) in place to defend the wellbeing of our lands.

This began to change when, 47 years ago this month, [Senator Gaylor Nelson](#) announced the idea for Earth Day, a “national teach-in on the environment” as a way to force environmental issues into the forefront of the Nation's political dialogue. Galvanized by the vitality of the student anti-war movements at the time, Earth Day '70 achieved an impressive degree of political support. When April 22 dawned, over twenty million Americans of all ages and from all walks of life participated in celebrations from coast to coast, uniting over a shared affinity for the planet in one of the most exciting and radical grassroots efforts in U.S. history. This proved to our national leadership that there was broad and deep enough support for the environmental movement.

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## UofU Recognizes Alta GM for Sustainability Leadership — By Nate Bramhall

On March 27<sup>th</sup>, the third annual [Alta Sustainability Leadership Awards ceremony](#) was held on the University of Utah campus. Like the past two years, this event recognized four distinguished awards of the University of Utah academic community for outstanding work in the field of sustainability. This year's ceremony was a little different from previous years in that a new awards category was created to recognize individuals who have made significance strides in advancing sustainability at the community level. The inaugural recipient of this award was no other than our own Onno Wieringa, general manager and director of sustainability of Alta Ski Area.

As the 2016-17 ski season comes to a close, so will Onno's role as our general manager of the past 28 years. Over the course of his career at Alta, Onno has played a crucial part in making the ski area more sustainable, as well as in developing sustainable [partnerships](#) between Alta and the greater Utah community. After the awards ceremony, I took the opportunity to ask Onno for his thoughts regarding the future of Alta's [sustainability](#), to which he responded: “I've never thought about Alta's sustainability as something that depends only on me. I'm not worried about the direction of our sustainability efforts because I trust the leadership we've developed over time. Alta is in good hands. What's important is that we focus on long-term sustainability projects that make real, measureable progress first at Alta, then in the greater community.” In closing, we've been privileged to work with a person of such vision and will work hard to carry out his legacy of sustainability.



2017 Alta Leadership Sustainability Awardees: Elizabeth Archuleta—Education Integration, Robin Craig—Sustainability Research, Hunter Klingensmith—Campus as a Living Lab, Aaron Phillips—Sustainability Integration, Cheryl Pirozzi—Sustainability community Partnership.



**“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.”**

**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

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In the decade following the first Earth Day, congress passed several landmark environmental statutes. Many of these federal acts, such as the [Clean Air Act](#), the [Water Quality Improvement Act](#), and the [Resource Recovery Act](#), address the important physical aspects of the environment. Similarly, though it was signed into law in the January preceding the first Earth Day, the National Environmental Policy Act ([NEPA](#)) played a critical role in ensuring thoughtful decision-making and foresight by federal agencies in advancing the goal of equitable co-existence between the environment and people. These statutes effectively set the tone for what we retrospectively see as the first [wave](#) of U.S. environmentalism.

Now, nearly a half century later, it has become popular in some circles to write about the environmental movement as a thing of the past, as if the end of its “golden era” has been marked by the shifting of public interests to other sites of conflict. In a sense, this is true: those who profess that view are right to describe the wane of the environmentalisms of the ‘70s, which were harnessed mostly by youth counter cultures that decried the abuse of wilderness and the loss of wildlife. While these precious resources are no less valuable today, contemporary environmentalism has gained a wider spectrum of [priorities](#). For example the wide-spread notion of uncertainty of impending climate change puts our wild spaces at risk and the adherence of our political guidelines to science-based facts. Taking this further down the contemporary line, the dissociation between opinion and fact regarding climate change effects greater social issues like [climate refugee](#) across the globe, which raises the stakes of environmentalist efforts from a fight for the environment to a fight to achieve justice for our fellow human beings. In short, if you claim to be an advocate for justice today, you are also an environmentalist.

Though environmentalism has changed since the first Earth Day, the spirit and empathy that inspired it remain. As beneficiaries of the Earth, it’s our duty to harness that spirit and continue to apply [thoughtful action](#) through sustainability upon our leaders to align with the realities of climate change and its threat to all life on Earth.

## **April - May Sustainability Events**

If these highlighted sustainability events catch your eye, check out our full sustainability calendar at [alta.com/alta-environmental-center/resources#sustainability-events](https://alta.com/alta-environmental-center/resources#sustainability-events).

- **April 22—March for Science:** Join the ranks for Salt Lake and make your voice heard! This Earth Day, scientists, science enthusiasts and concerned citizens are marching to support scientific reasoning. [www.facebook.com/marchforsciencescut](https://www.facebook.com/marchforsciencescut)
- **April 22—Urban Homestead Expo:** Calling all backyard gardeners, urban homesteaders, and hobby farmers! Come to the Backyard Homestead Expo at Conservation Garden Park to learn from our experts about backyard chickens, drip irrigation, beekeeping and more! [www.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)
- **April 26—Local Government solutions: saving energy and reducing pollution:** join the Salt Lake City Sustainability team at a workshop on April 26th to explore ways that cities, towns and counties can save energy, reduce pollution and improve air quality through our internal operations. [www.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)
- **April 30—Applications for AEC summer internship due:** Want to gain some valuable experience in natural area stewardship and management? The AEC is hiring an intern this summer to do just that! [alta.com/alta-environmental-center/research-education/internship-opportunities](https://alta.com/alta-environmental-center/research-education/internship-opportunities)

