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Canada Hosts World Environment Day

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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

For World Environment Day 2017, the global host country Canada demonstrated its commitment to environmental action on the occasion of its 150th anniversary of confederation. The theme adopted by the Canadian government, "Connecting People to Nature," resonated around the world as thousands of people spent time outdoors, while governments and organizations announced bold new initiatives to safeguard our planet.

On June 5. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Environment Minister Catherine McKenna joined UN Environment Chief Erik Solheim to connect with nature by paddling kayaks on the Niagara River close to the famous Falls. The Prime Minister called on Canadians to follow through with the day's theme "to get outside and appreciate the healthy ecosystems that contribute to our well-being, and to do our part to protect the planet we share."

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A Parks Canada BioBlitz nearby attracted groups of school children who were paired up with celebrities including reggae star Rocky Dawuni, Disney actor Matthew Isen and The Water Brothers. A global BioBlitz was organized with iNaturalist which saw nearly 10,000 people submitting over 130,000 observations to assist experts to identify species at risk.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Around the world, people engaged in a wide variety of activities to mark the day including tree planting and clean-ups on mountains and beaches. The legacy of World Environment Day this year saw countries announcing major commitments such as the opening of a new national park in Finland; the designation of an area of the Red Sea as a natural reserve in Jordan; two new marine parks established in Chile; and Bosnia and Herzegovina pledging to double the size of their protected areas.

O Nathan Denette / The Canadian Press

From Niagara Falls to the Great Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, iconic buildings and landmarks across the globe turned green to commemorate World Environment Day as part of a 24-hour cycle of celebrations and activities.

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"World Environment Day reminds us that we have a global responsibility to safeguard our environment – and that each of us has a role to play to preserve and protect it. More than ever, Canada is committed to provide international leadership to fight climate change and support clean economic growth "

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau





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Following the official program with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Niagara, World Environment Day festivities continued in Canada's original capital of Kingston, Ontario aboard the Canada C3 icebreaker. Environment Minister Catherine McKenna and UN Environment Chief Erik Solheim moderated a dynamic youth panel discussion on civic engagement related to environmental stewardship. Students in classrooms from across the country were able to actively participate through Facebook Live.

The program also featured the unveiling of six new stamps issued by the UN Postal Administration in honor of World Environment Day, showcasing the beauty of Canada's landscapes and species. The events concluded on a high note with musical performances by renowned Canadian artists including Rob Baker, Gord Sinclair of the Tragically Hip.

Canada C3 is a signature project for the country's 150th anniversary that is making an epic 150day sailing journey from Toronto to Victoria via the Northwest Passage to connect Canadians. The journey is meant to lead to a greater awareness and deeper understanding of the country and the importance of protecting its natural environment and cultural heritage.





Canada C3 Education Lead Diz Glithero, Canada C3 Founder Geoff Green, UN Environment Acting Regional Director Fatou Ndoye, Singer Rocky Dawuni, and Youth Ambassador Kim Mathieu



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Jack Johnson Kicks Off World Environment Day Celebrations

On the eve of World Environment Day, singer and UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador, Jack Johnson and actor Adrian Grenier kicked off celebrations at a special concert in Toronto, Ontario. Following remarks by Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada Catherine McKenna and UN Environment Chief Erik Solheim, Johnson played an acoustic set in front of an electrified audience of fans. He was joined onstage by international music star and humanitarian activist, Rocky Dawuni.

The message from the stage was one of encouragement for people to connect with nature and to recommit ourselves to build a cleaner, more sustainable world and healthier planet for generations to come.

The celebrities and Minister met with local nonprofit organizations who shared environmental initiatives at the show's Village Green prior to Jack Johnson sold out concert as part of his 2017 summer tour.





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Summit Inspires a Deeper Connection with Nature



As the flagship event for World Environment Day in the United States, the Nature Summit brought together artists, innovators and storytellers to explore creative messaging and mediums to inspire a deeper engagement with nature.

From new media storytelling techniques to virtual reality, the Summit showcased the vast opportunities for creating positive narratives to inspire the human connection to nature and the ultimate shared responsibility to protect our natural world.

Dynamic discussions were moderated by adventurer and environmentalist, David de Rothschild, and featured: Material Alchemist Lauren Bowker; Music Producer Sol Guy; Jungles in Paris Co-founder, Darrell Hartman; UN Champion of the Earth Leyla Acargolu; Conservation Storyteller Sean Southey; Elisabeth Lacoursiere from Parks Canada; and Xin Liu from the MIT Media Lab.

The event was held at the Embassy of Canada in partnership with Voice for Nature, the Global Environment Facility and the #NatureForAll initiative with virtual reality experiences provided by Conservation International. H.E. David MacNaughton, Canada's Ambassador to the United States, remarked on the importance of the day for Canada and highlighted the country's leadership role in ensuring a more sustainable future.









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Teaming up with Formula E in the Race to Improve Air Quality

The Fia Formula E Racing Championship has joined forces with UN Environment to fight inner-city air quality and boost the profile of alternative energy sources and electric vehicles. The partnership focuses on raising awareness of the benefits of electric cars among younger generations and motorsport fans globally by educating future consumers and challenging major cities and governments to take action to tackle air pollution.

The partnership will leverage the popularity of the FIA Formula E Championship which brings electrifying motorsport to some of the world's leading cities including Paris, New York and Montreal.

Racing has always been a laboratory for the development of technology in the motor industry and Formula E aims to play a role in helping more people buy and drive electric cars. They are collaborating with Enel, the power partner of the FIA Formula E Championship, to promote the advancement of clean energy infrastructure. Enel also works with smart grid metering and allows the fans to interact with their energy systems in real time during races. The switch to cleaner technology, such as electric cars, will have an enormous impact on air quality as this market represents one quarter of the energy related greenhouse gas emissions globally.



FIA President Jean Todt, Head of UN Environment Erik Solheim, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, and Founder & CEO of Formula E, Alejandro Agag



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D.C. Mayor Bowser Celebrates Bike to School Day on Capitol Hill

Members of the Washington, D.C. community, including school children, parents, and teachers, gathered on May 10 for Bike to School Day during UN Global Road Safety Week. Students from a dozen different schools met to celebrate the occasion and to hear the benefits of biking to school. Among those present were D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, Secretary of Transportation, Elaine Chao, and Director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School, Nancy Pullen-Seufert.

Mayor Bowser highlighted the health benefits of biking as well as the environmental impact of having fewer cars on the road. Her comments reflected past commitments to increasing traffic safety, particularly for children.

The Mayor recently signed up as one of the Climate Mayors, a group of over 330 cities in the United States that commit to honor and uphold



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(R to L) Washington, D.C. Mayor Bowser, FIA Foundation North American Manager Natalie Draisin and National Center for Safe Routes to School Director Nancy Pullen-Seufert.



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