



## ENVIRONMENT NEWSLETTER

March 2021 – Karen Martinek, GFWC Environment Chairman

*“Where flowers bloom so does hope.” - Lady Bird Johnson*

A reminder to all states to send in your Environment State Award Entries with your Top Ten Club Projects, State Federation Activities and a Creative Project. Also attached are the cover sheets to include with your entries. I have received 6 so far and I am sure I will have many more by the time you receive this Newsletter- Please send to me at- Karen Martinek, GFWC Environment Chairman, 2267 Sugar Bottom RD NE, Solon, IA 52333 or

[karengfwc@gmail.com](mailto:karengfwc@gmail.com)

**Deadline- March 15<sup>th</sup>**

**We have many exciting Environmental Celebrations this Spring so mark your calendars and plan state and club activities. Remember to post pictures of all celebration activities to Facebook.**

### **1. Celebrate National Park Week 2021 - April 17 - 25, 2021**

Recharge with nature. Visit a National Park. GFWC has a long association with the National Parks. We were instrumental in the establishment of some of the first National Parks and the establishment of the National Park Service.

GFWC again rallied with a letter writing campaign to pass the Great Outdoors Act in 2020 that will provide up to \$9 billion to fix deferred maintenance at national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and other federal lands, with \$6.5 billion earmarked for national parks over the next five years.

Experience all the national parks! The National Park Service now supports over 423 units. Of these, 63 are national parks. They are some of the most beautiful places on the Earth.

## **Help promote the many types of park passes available-**

### **-Annual Pass**

- **Cost:** \$80 annual pass
- **Available for:** Everyone

**-Gold Star Families and U.S. military veterans [receive free access](#)** to federal recreation areas.

### **-Military Pass**

- **Cost:** Free annual pass
- **Available for:** Current U.S. military members and their dependents in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force, as well as Reserve and National Guard members.

### **-Annual 4th Grade Pass**

- **Cost:** Free (valid for the duration of the 4th grade school year though the following summer (September-August))
- **Available for:** U.S. 4th graders (including home-schooled and free-choice learners 10 years of age) with a valid Every Kid Outdoors paper pass

### **-Senior Pass**

- **Cost:** \$80 Lifetime Senior Pass
- \$20 Annual Senior Pass
- **Available for:** U.S. citizens or permanent residents age 62 or over. Applicants must provide documentation of age and residency or citizenship.

### **-Access Pass**

- **Cost:** Free
- **Available for:** U.S. citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities. Applicants must provide documentation of permanent disability and residency or citizenship.

### **-Volunteer Pass**

- **Cost:** Free (valid for 12 months from the date of issue)
- **Available for:** Volunteers with 250 service hours with federal agencies that participate in the Interagency Pass Program

**On six days in 2021, all National Park Service(NPS) sites that charge an entrance fee will offer free admission to everyone. Mark your calendar for these free dates in 2021:**

- **January 18:** [Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)
- **April 17:** First day of [National Park Week](#)
- **August 4:** One-year anniversary of the [Great American Outdoors Act](#)
- **August 25:** [National Park Service Birthday](#)
- **September 25:** [National Public Lands Day](#)
- **November 11:** [Veterans Day](#)

The Park Service has announced the nation's newest National Park and Preserve, West Virginia's New River Gorge. It is a popular rock climbing and whitewater rafting destination. According to the NPS, the park encompasses over 70,000 acres of land along the New River and is rich in cultural and natural history.

### **What else is new from the NPS?**

- A brand-new app. It provides all kinds of maps, hiking trails, food recommendations lodging reservations, hike suggestions, audio tours, restaurant hours, etc. Available for free on Android and Apple- [NPS\(<http://apps.apple.com/us/app/national-park-service/id1549226484>\)](http://apps.apple.com/us/app/national-park-service/id1549226484)

-Virtual Tours- If you are unable to travel, visit the parks and activities virtually. <https://www.nationalparks.org/connect/blog/take-virtual-visit-national-park>

-Other programs and activities from the comfort of your home. <https://www.nationalparks.org/connect/blog/park-activities-you-can-do-comfort-your-home>

**What can we do to support our national parks? Visit them, purchase passes, volunteer, litter clean-ups, make donations and above all support legislation protecting the parks and their usage.**

## **2. Earth Day-Thursday, April 22, 2021**

The theme of Earth Day 2021 is “**Restore Our Earth.**” [www.earthday.org/earth-day-2021](http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2021)

### **Support our Environment Challenge Project**

Cleanup projects on roadways, parks or waterways are wonderful! Help keep our water and air clean. Support river and ocean cleanups to keep our fish and all marine life healthy. Recycle and upcycle your plastic bags. Crochet with Plaryn, yarn made from plastic bags.

Consider setting up plastic recycling projects with one of the below companies:

Trex-<https://www.trex.com/recycling/recycling-programs/>

TerraCycle- <https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/brigades>

Join a plastics cleanup locally or through any of the online cleanup programs. *Great Global Cleanup* is all of April 2021- Plogging( pick up while Jogging), individual cleanups, or group cleanup. Clean up in parks, beaches, parks, urban landscapes, waterways

Join *Great American Cleanup with Keep America Beautiful* for March 20- June 20<sup>th</sup>. -with heightened attention to waterways.

Support Ocean Cleanup Projects and Clean Water Projects.

Some States such as California, have set up many statewide activities for Earth Day.

Get outside, Celebrate the Earth!

## **3. Arbor Day-Friday, April 30, 2021**

**A year of Celebration - 150 Years of Arbor Day  
from April 30, 2021 until April 29, 2022**

**Find a way to Celebrate Trees.**

See [CelebrateArborDay.com](http://CelebrateArborDay.com)! for ideas on how to celebrate

**We had several devastating events around the country this year damaging millions of trees.**

-On August 10<sup>th</sup> a weather complex known as a “derecho” sent intense winds of up to 100 mph and thunderstorms over a 700-mile stretch from Nebraska to Indiana.

-The wildfires in California in 2018 were the most destructive on record, yet in 2020 more than 4 million acres burned which was double that record. There were also wildfires in Texas, Colorado, Alaska.

-Five catastrophic Hurricanes hit our coast lines in the past two and a half years causing flooding.

-Tornadoes hit many states including Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri, and Nebraska.

## **Why are trees important?** ( Top 10 Reasons We Need Trees: Source: USDA Forest Service)

1. Trees help purify the air we breathe by absorbing pollutants.
2. Trees increase property values and improve the tax base in communities.
3. Trees improve neighborhood appeal, attracting business, shoppers, and homeowners.
4. Trees cool our cities and towns by reducing heat generated by buildings and paved surfaces.
5. Tree shade, properly placed, can save an average household up to \$250 annually in energy costs.
6. Trees reduce the number of pollutants in sewer systems, saving communities millions of dollars in water treatment costs.
7. Trees soften harsh building lines and large expanses of pavement, making urban environments much more pleasant.
8. Trees provide habitat for birds and other wildlife, maintaining a balance with nature even in urban areas.
9. Trees reduce the amount of water-borne pollutants that reach streams and rivers.
10. Trees reduce levels of domestic violence and foster safer, more sociable neighborhood environments.

## **Possible methods of Celebrating Arbor Day:**

- Plant trees individually, with the club, or students either in a park, the community, or in your own backyard.
- Have a professional or arborist teach how to plant a tree properly and which trees are best to use to replant lost trees. Also discuss tree care and the benefits of planting trees native to the area. Can be a virtual presentation.
- Buy books on trees for your Library.
- Have an Arbor Day poster contest or coloring contest for youth.
- Read a book about trees
- Take a nature walk or hike noticing different tree varieties and bring a field guide to help with identification
- Visit a botanical garden or arboretum.
- Become a member of your favorite conservation or wildlife organization

**Live Sustainably**