

EARTH DAY 2024 EDITION

OSEEP News



Office of Sustainable Energy and Environmental Programs
Office of Facilities and Environmental Quality
U.S. Department of Commerce



Check out the Earth Day Photo Challenge highlights on pages 4-16

A note from OSEEP

Happy Earth Day from the Office of Sustainable Energy and Environmental Programs (OSEEP)!

We were delighted to receive many incredible photos in the 2024 Earth Day Photo Challenge. It's inspiring to see so many Commerce employees embracing the great outdoors and making efforts to reduce plastic waste. We hope you enjoy these photos as much as we did. Wishing you a happy Earth Day filled with admiration and appreciation for our beautiful Earth!

Sincerely
The OSEEP Team

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2024 Earth Week Activities at the Department

Join the Office of Sustainable Energy and Environmental Programs in celebrating Earth Week at the Department of Commerce! The following activities are available to Department employees and contractors:



- **(Virtual) Monday, April 22 at 2pm ET:** Anyone Can Garden webinar with Master Gardener Christina Tyler Wenks - check broadcasts for the Teams Live link.



- **(Onsite at Headquarters) Tuesday and Wednesday, April 23 & 24, 10 am - 2 pm:** Seed Planting Table at the Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB) cafeteria. OSEEP will provide seeds, soil, and planting cups for you to start your spring garden! Once you're done planting, visit the HCHB Green Store to see Earth Day Photo Challenge highlights and pick up some office supplies. Check broadcasts for more information.



- **(Virtual) Friday, April 26 at 2pm ET:** Representatives from Washington, DC's Office of Waste Diversion will discuss the waste hierarchy, how recyclability is determined, and other waste diversion strategies you can employ in your workplace and at home.



USPTO is hosting their 14th Annual Green Fair on Wednesday, May 1st from 11am - 2pm. This event will be held both in person and online. There will be exhibitor booths and guest speakers at the USPTO Madison building in the Clara Barton Auditorium. Online, you can watch the guest speakers and see the exhibitors present. There will be great information on plastic reduction, sustainable practices, and strengthening local waterways. For more information, please contact Tiffany Spina at Tiffany.Spina@uspto.gov

Check Out This New Recycling Tool - Recyclecheck.org

Check out recyclecheck.org to get all of your recycling questions answered! Developed by The Recycling Partnership, recyclecheck.org is the first comprehensive database that tracks which materials are accepted in recycling centers across the country. Select the “chat your question” option and type in your zip code to learn what is accepted in your area. Let’s work together to keep plastics out of our landfills!



Coming Up: 2024 SEE Ambassadors Call for Nominations

This summer, the Department of Commerce will announce its annual call for nominations for the Sustainability, Energy, and Environmental (SEE) Ambassadors Program. The SEE Ambassadors program recognizes individual Departmental employees for outstanding performance in implementing exceptional projects and/or programs helping the Department meet sustainability, energy and water reduction, clean energy, climate change adaptation, resilience, and/or environmental performance goals. Stay tuned to broadcasts for more information and email Sarah Yardley (syardley@doc.gov) with questions.



Pictured above: The 2023 Class of SEE Ambassadors.

Online Training with OSEEP

OSEEP offers training via Commerce Learning Center to provide education on environmental compliance, sustainability, climate literacy, and technical development topics. Stay tuned to broadcasts for more information and join us for our upcoming sessions:

Anyone Can Garden with Fairfax Master Gardeners Association
April 22, 2024 at 2:00pm ET

Zero Waste DC with the DC Department of Public Works
April 26, 2024 at 2:00 pm ET

Environmental Compliance

Sustainability 101

Climate Literacy

Technical Development

Questions about OSEEP training? Contact Sara Smith (formerly Lake) at slake@doc.gov.

Earth Day Photo Challenge 2024: Planet Versus Plastics

This year's Earth Day theme is Planet Versus Plastics. Department of Commerce employees submitted wonderful photos showcasing their love and care for Planet Earth. Thank you to everyone who participated in the 4th annual Earth Day Photo Challenge! Please enjoy the featured photos in the following pages. If you have any questions, please contact Meredith Reilly at mreilly@doc.gov.



Above: Planet versus Plastics by Angela Sampson, NOAA



Above: "Glistening brightly with snow, the photo depicts mountains on the foothills of Boulder Colorado, framed by grasses peeking through the wintery coating. The image was taken on upcycled arial surveillance film to reduce the impact that producing new photographic film has on the environment." Russell Colby Evans, NIST



Above: "This photo was taken during a tour of the Westcave Nature Preserve in Round Mountain, TX last summer. The tour funds go towards continuing education centered around preserving and enjoying nature." Jennifer Goode, OS



Above: Mushrooms growing on a tree trunk found in the woods of White Mountains, New Hampshire by Andrea Berry, NOAA



Above: Alexandra Dowlin, NOAA, volunteering at a Shark Conservation in Pacific Harbour, Fiji. In this photo, she was planting baby mangrove seeds and nursing them prior to planting. They repurposed plastic bottles as pots.



Above: "A large lava tube on Lanzarote, in the Canary Islands, Spain. The lava tube is called La Cueva de los Verdes and was historically used by locals as refuge from pirates. The photo depicts a shallow pool that perfectly reflects the ceiling to make it appear as though there are two levels, with a giant hole in the floor of the upper level." Kimberly Hutchinson, NOAA



Above: A seagull on the beach catching food in its mouth. Hannah Robinson, CHIPS, NIST



Above: Brandon Jameson, NOAA, climbing the tallest mountain outside of the Himalayas. Aconcagua is 23,000 ft high, watching over South America.



Above: The flourishing coral reef of Howland, Phoenix Islands, Jan Willen Staman, NOAA



Left: A swallow tail butterfly on Cape Cod, Elizabeth Langevin, NOAA



Above: "This photo was taken during a "Snow Marathon" in the Himalayas. The race was held in Sissu, Himachal Pradesh, India." Brendon Thomas, ITA



Above: Machu Picchu in Peru, Abby Kassa, Census

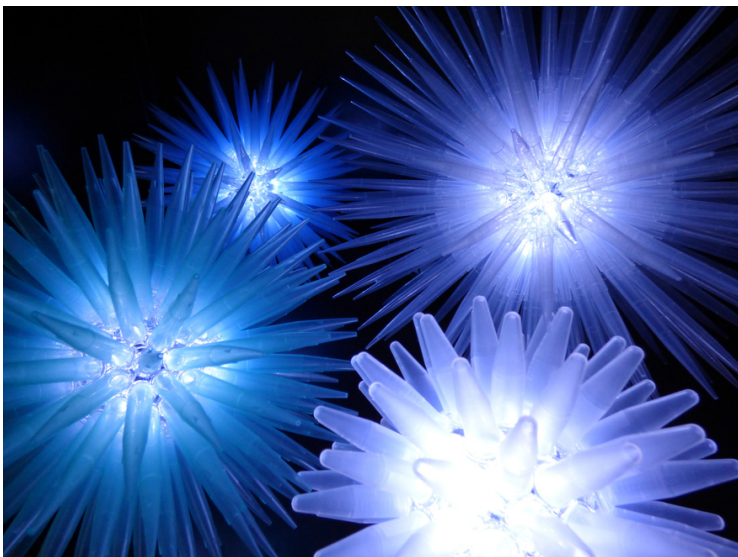


Above: Catherine Lee, USPTO, in the Valley of Fire state park in Nevada, April 2023.



Above: "Photo taken of a Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*) during our Northern shrimp survey last year in the Gulf of Maine." Zachary Fyke, NOAA

"Right: For 15 years, the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Springfield, MO has aided the planet vs plastics by participating in an Adopt a Street Program." Photo submitted by Kelsey Angle, NOAA



Left: "Illuminated spheres made from upcycled plastic pipette tips and centrifuge tubes. These were unused but expired/unwanted supplies from genetics labs that were otherwise going to be landfilled." Tanya Rogers, NOAA



Above: "Taken from a belay station while ice climbing near Valdez, AK. Ice is beautiful and powerful, but it is also ephemeral and vulnerable. Here one can see mid-season waterfall ice, telling the story of its earlier formations and disintegrations, and foreshadowing the growth of ice formations yet to come."
Lila Ardor Bellucci, NOAA



Above: "[This] photo is of me hiking in the French Alps in front of The Aiguille du Dru mountain in the Mont Blanc massif. It is situated to the east of the village of Les Praz in the Chamonix valley. "Aiguille" means "needle" in French." Sarah Miyahara, ITA



Above: NIST employee Susi Barraza on a hike in Estes Park, Colorado



Above: Strawberry moon in central Virginia, June 2023 by Margaret Hurwitz, NOAA



Above: "During a kayaking trip near the beautiful Mangenguey Island in the Philippines I decided to collect all the trash I could find. Inside my kayak are sunscreen bottles, soda bottles, plastic caps, other packaging that I was later able to recycle." Kathryn Klass, Census



Left to right:
AnnElizabeth McMahon, OS,
overlooking Laurisilva of
Madeira, Portugal. The laurel
forest is a UNESCO World
Heritage Site and 90% of the
forest is believed to be
primordial.

"In our mini indoor garden. It's
Earth Day all year round in this
office!" - Arlene Jones, USPTO



Left: Titled "Fury of the Sea" was taken
during a high tide storm event in Morro Bay,
California. Katherine Glick, NOAA



Above: Cassie Doyle, OS, at Zion National Park



Above, Pelican in Biloxi, MS, by Charolette McClendon, NOAA



Above: "I am cleaning trash (quart milk bottle) from a floating boom called a Trash Trout on a creek leading into the French Broad River in Asheville, NC. Traps in the area collect tons of trash before it makes it downstream." Greg Hammer, NOAA



Above: LaTasha Sanders, NIST, poses at the "Garden of the Gods" in Colorado Springs



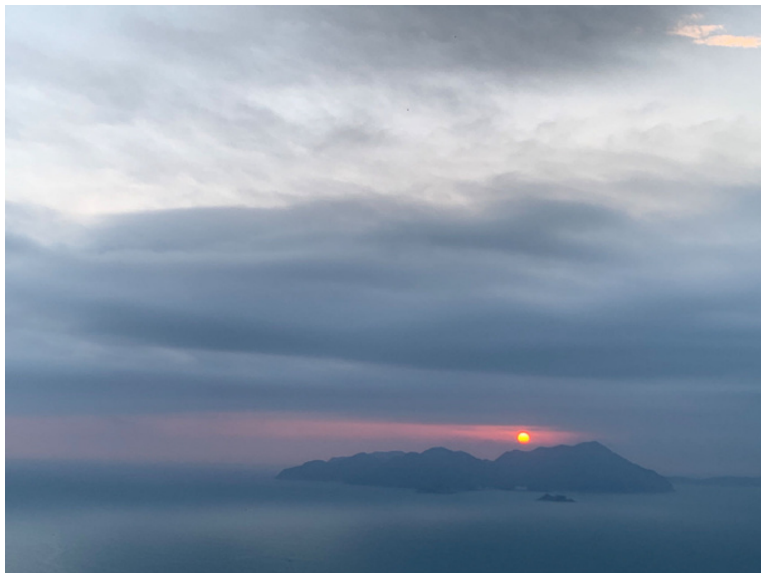
Above: "This photo was taken during a tour of the Westcave Nature Preserve in Round Mountain, TX last summer. The tour funds go towards continuing education centered around preserving and enjoying nature." Jennifer Goode, OS



Above: Minsun Harvey, USPTO, at the George Washington and Jefferson National Forrest.



Above: An upcycled garden of dolls in Asheville, North Carolina, by Shayne Sewell, USPTO



Above: Shenzhen, China, Lin Lin, NOAA



Above: Sunset at the Soundside Dock in Nags Head, North Carolina, Marni deLeon, NIST



Above: View of the Shenandoah Valley from Stony Man Mountain. Xiang Li, Census



Above: Ice castles in Cripple Creek, Colorado, Jennifer Clason, NOAA



Above: "Luray Caverns at Shenandoah, Virginia, which was discovered in 1878. This spectacular natural formation features enormous chambers filled with towering stalactite columns." B.M. Hannan, USPTO



Right: "This is a picture going across the lake at sunset on a 65 mile sled dog race I competed in in Northern Minnesota" James Tackeberry, NOAA



Above: "Picture of my daughter looking at some construction at the rock formations at Red Rocks, Colorado." Liang Li, USPTO



Above: Ping Sun, OIG, exploring the Lofoten Archipelago in Norway



Above: "Red Wolf puppies born in late April 2023 at the WNC Nature Center in Asheville, NC. The WNC Nature Center is part of a breeding and management program known as the Red Wolf Species Survival Plan (SSP)." Richard A. Smith, NOAA



Above: "This photograph was taken from Eastern shore of Maryland in the past winter when we had some snow. I would like to use it to show how clean our planet could be without any plastic waste. After the snow buried everything including all the plastic waste on the ground, it could be pure, clean, beautiful. That supposed to be the original planet and we should keep it this way." Yilong Li, OS



Above: Photo by Peter Tataris, ITA



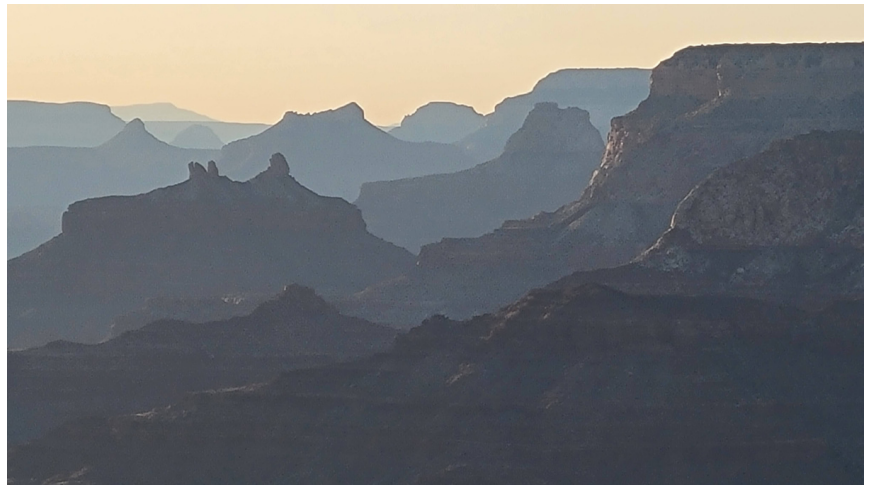
Above: "My daughter Emilia exploring a beach in Australia" Yen Southwood, USPTO

Pictured right: Several layers of the Grand Canyon. From foreground to background the canyon gradually fades from brown to grey. Anita Silverman, NOAA

"Driftwood at Cape Blanco, Oregon near the mouth of the Elk River. This "driftwood" is an entire old growth tree!" Nissa Rudh, NOAA



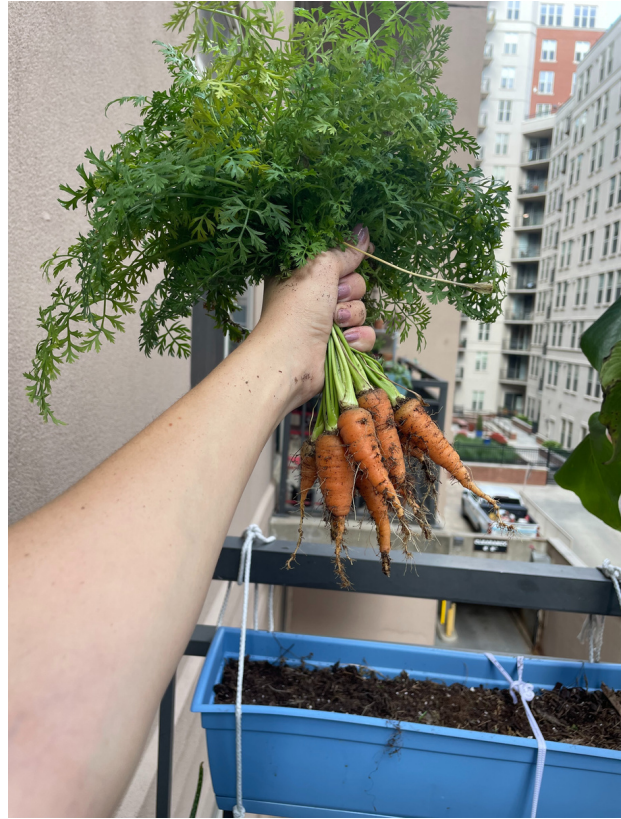
Above: Photo by Hunter Coleman, NOAA



OSEEP Staff Photos



Above: OSEEP's Sarah Yardley reuses egg cartons and other plastic containers to plant flowers while her dog inspects



Above: Meredith Reilly, OSEEP, harvests carrots from her balcony garden.



Left: "I grew up, and still live, on Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. Living next to the ocean for my family means utilizing and protecting the resources it provides. We regularly catch fish for our own consumption, but also choose to release fish, like this Striper, when we know the population is not strong. And we unfortunately encounter and collect garbage when we on our boat. Oftentimes it is used fishing gear or plastic that has gone overboard or washed out to sea. To help avoid unwanted materials entering our environment, my family follows these steps: 1) REFUSE (don't purchase or accept anything you don't need) 2) REDUCE (use less resources overall) 3) REUSE (We love thrifting and borrowing) 4) RECYCLE (When we are absolutely done with a product, we look for ways to recycle it)." Julie Snow, OSEEP