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### 1. MAY IS AMERICAN WETLANDS MONTH

In celebration of American Wetlands Month, activities are taking place all across the country. Visit: [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm/index.html) for a listing of events and activities. Highlights include:

May 12 - *International Migratory Bird Day* - This year's theme is "Birds in a Changing Climate" and events around the globe will highlight the threats to migratory birds and efforts to conserve these beautiful creatures.

<http://www.birdday.org/>

May 1-24 - *Hurricane on the Bayou, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History* - The Johnson IMAX Theater in Washington, DC presents the film "Hurricane on the Bayou," a breathtaking tour of the Louisiana Bayou and the City of New Orleans. <http://www.si.edu/imax/#johnson>

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### 2. ABETTEREARTH 2007 ESSAY CONTEST

Deadline: May 31, 2007

Should governments mandate biofuels? Contest is open to all full-time students and anyone under 26 years old. Submit an essay of 600 to 2,500 words, addressing the potential unintended consequences, and based on research - argue for or against the proposition that government should decide.

<http://www.abetterearth.org/About/pageID.1175/default.asp>

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### 3. INTERGENERATIONAL CONTEST HONORING RACHEL CARSON

Deadline: June 15, 2007

Entries for this photo, essay, and poetry contest in honor of Rachel Carson must be a joint project involving a person under age 18 and a person age 50 or older. Sponsored by the EPA Aging Initiative, Generations United, and the Rachel Carson Council, Inc.

<http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/thesenseofwonder/index.htm>

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### 4. NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

September 29, 2007

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) provides an opportunity for volunteers across the nation to work together in improving our public lands.

<http://www.publiclandsday.org/>

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### 5. CURE RECYCLING

Recycle ink cartridges and cell phones to benefit the environment and help pediatric cancer research. Excellent fundraiser for schools. Free recycling materials and shipping provided. <http://www.earthtonesolutions.com/>

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### 6. EARTH PORTAL

Looking for environmental news, science-based information, and debate? Earth Portal is a new expert-driven Web site with three main components:

Encyclopedia of Earth, EarthForum, and EarthNews. <http://www.earthportal.org/>

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### 7. EARTH & SKY WEB SITE

The Web site of the internationally syndicated Earth & Sky radio series, with hosts Deborah Byrd and Joel Block. Interviews with scientists, commentary, video picks, photo galleries, and night sky charts. <http://www.earthsky.org/>

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### 8. ARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL ATLAS

Interactive map view over the Arctic environment, showing the North Pole and the countries of the Arctic. Browse the map layers, including land cover, topography, population density, and wilderness and make your own map.

<http://maps.grida.no/arctic/>

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#### 9. ARE YOUR MEDICINES AFFECTING FISH?

Synthetic chemicals designed to help human health may be having unintended consequences downstream from wastewater treatment plants, according to an Auburn University researcher. The problems can include fish with both male and female characteristics and the creation of antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms. Willie Harper, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering, is looking into how synthetic, or manmade, chemicals are broken down by wastewater treatment plants and the possible effects on the environment. He says pharmaceutical and personal care products, such as aspirin, antibiotics and birth control pills, contain chemicals that can pass through treatment plants either unaltered or only slightly degraded. Using National Science Foundation grants, Harper has set up three small-scale treatment plants in his laboratory where he can control the treatment process and the kind and amount of chemicals being treated. To read the news release, see [www.ocm.auburn.edu/news\\_releases/wastewater.html](http://www.ocm.auburn.edu/news_releases/wastewater.html).

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#### 10. COD CRASH -- PART1

The ocean is not an inexhaustible resource. When Europeans arrived in North America, the waters along the Atlantic coast were teeming with cod. The Grand and Georges Banks are two underwater plateaus (25-100 meters deep) where the cold Labrador Current from the north and warm Gulf Stream from the south mix. These currents bring nutrients to the surface and support huge concentrations of marine life.

Codfishing became the major industry in this area and as fishing techniques improved, so did the numbers caught. In 1951, the first of many huge trawlers arrived on the scene that both fished and processed their catch onboard. By 1968 the catch of Atlantic Cod reached record levels but then began to drop. Despite greater and greater efforts, the catch continued to fall. In 1988 the cod population crashed. Will the Atlantic Cod ever recover? No one knows for sure but the answer is probably not! <http://www.enaturalist.org/unit/248>

Source: Electronic Naturalist

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#### 11. EPA RELEASES NONPOINT SOURCE OUTREACH TOOLBOX

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has released the Nonpoint Source Outreach Toolbox, a comprehensive set of Web-based resources

designed to assist communities across the U.S. conduct locally effective watershed education and outreach activities. The Toolbox, online at [www.epa.gov/nps/toolbox](http://www.epa.gov/nps/toolbox) , includes a searchable catalog of nearly 800 print, radio, and TV ads and outreach materials in the following categories: lawn and garden care, motor vehicle care, pet care, septic system care, household chemicals and waste, and general stormwater and storm drain awareness. This repository of contemporary, audience-tested materials is designed to meet the needs of stormwater professionals who might be strapped for ideas, money, time or staff to develop messages and products for their own communities. The Toolbox also provides EPA's publication Getting in Step - A Guide to Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns, as well as a comprehensive collection of surveys and evaluations of outreach programs from around the country and a collection of logos, slogans, and mascots to help unify a community's campaign.

Source: Don Waye, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Nonpoint Source Control Branch

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## 12. NEW EPA TOOL HELPS ANSWER AIR QUALITY QUESTIONS

AirCompare, a new EPA-developed air quality tool, provides local air quality information to help people make informed decisions about moving, vacationing or living in different areas of the country.

"From people getting ready to retire to vacationers or those changing jobs, Americans are increasingly considering air quality as they make their plans," said Bill Wehrum, EPA's acting assistant administrator for Air and Radiation. "AirCompare helps answer those questions in a way that's simple to understand."

AirCompare uses EPA's popular Air Quality Index (AQI) to explain air quality from a health perspective. A person with asthma, for example, can use AirCompare to select up to 10 counties across the country -- and with the click of a button, find out how many days the air was unhealthy for asthmatics last year. Or someone planning a trip can find out the best time of year to visit a particular area, based on concerns about asthma, heart disease, outdoor activity, or just general interest.

AirCompare searches EPA air quality databases to pull information about pollutants reported under the AQI - and to translate it into charts that show simply whether the previous year's air quality was healthy, unhealthy or unhealthy for specific groups more susceptible to

pollution. The tool also can provide a multi-year snapshot of a county's air quality, based on a particular health issue.

U.S. air quality has improved dramatically since EPA first began addressing air pollution. Emissions of six key pollutants have dropped by more than half since 1970, and the national average concentration for each of those pollutants is now below the level of its air quality standard.

April 30-May 4 is Air Quality Awareness Week. This year's theme is "Keep an Eye on the AQI," to remind Americans to check daily air quality forecasts to help plan their outdoor activities.

View AirCompare: <http://www.epa.gov/aircompare/>

Source: John Millett, (202) 564-4355 / [millett.john@epa.gov](mailto:millett.john@epa.gov)

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### 13. WILDERNESS LIFESAVERS

Hiking and camping are great outdoor fun—but sometimes things don't go as planned. Don't panic! Knowing these eight tips can help you to survive if you should get lost:



#### **Take along an emergency survival kit.**

Before you head off into the wilderness, each person in the group needs an emergency survival kit. It should include:

- a large ziplock **bag** to contain the rest of the contents that follows:
- a water bottle filled with drinkable **water**
- high-energy **trail mix** in its own ziplock bag
- a **whistle** used for calling for help
- a **signal flag** cut from orange or white plastic garbage bag
- a large bright-colored garbage bag to use as a **poncho** with a hole torn in the middle (not cut) for your face

If you're lost, once you've stopped, blow the whistle in a series of three blasts every few minutes. And if you're cold or it is raining, slip on your garbage bag and wear it like a poncho. You can wave the flag or stick it where searchers looking for you can see it.

2

**Check out the boundaries of your campsite.**

When your group arrives at your campsite, scout out the camp area with the entire group and agree on just how far from camp you're allowed to go alone. Old shirts or rags or sticks make great markers for these boundaries. That way, it's clear from the beginning what the rules are.

3

**Stick together.**

If you get lost and you're with another person or a pet, stay with each other, don't separate. You can help keep each other stay warm if need be. Two people or a person and a dog can huddle together and survive better than on their own. (See #1 above about the whistle.)

4

**Stay in one place, hug a tree.**

If you're lost, stay in one place and don't wander around. This is the most important rule. If you run around, you might be running away from searchers. You could also get hurt.

Find a warm place out of the wind and rain, such as under a large tree—best not to pick one on that's standing alone on a high hill in case of lightning. And it's smart to find one near a clearing. Don't crawl into a cave or some place where people can't find you.

5

**Keep warm.**

Never take any clothes off. Cover up as much of your body as you can. Wear a hat if you have one. Don't lie on the cold ground. Build a mattress or "nest" using branches, moss, leaves and make it a few inches thick. Then gather more of the same material for a blanket.

6

**Watch what you eat.**

Don't eat berries, mushrooms, or anything else you aren't sure of. You don't want to get sick. You can go quite a while without food. But you do need water. Drink only from your water bottle or collect rain or dew from leaves in your plastic bag (see #1). If you must drink from a body of water, look for a small, running stream. Even then, you may get sick from the water.

7

**Make like Hansel and Gretel.**

Show people where you are. Put out something bright such as your flag (see #1), a piece of white paper, money, hair ribbons, or a colorful bit of garbage bag near where you are. (But don't take off any clothing for this purpose. See #5.) You can also spell the word HELP or SOS on the ground using

rocks and sticks or make a large arrow, pointing to where you are. It's also good to sing, whistle, shout and do anything to attract attention.



**Shout out or wave.**

When you hear people coming, move out into the clearing and call.

Don't run toward them. (You could be wrong about the direction and get even more lost.) Let them find you. But don't be afraid of getting in trouble or of making a lot of noise so they'll notice you. And if you hear a search plane flying overhead lie down where the pilot can see you and wave both your arms and legs as if you were doing a snow angel.

Source: Ranger Rick, National Wildlife Federation