

Canada 

Make Waves in Your Community.
Planning an Oceans Event.



Environment
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Oceans play a vital role in our lives and are essential to our survival. Even if you live thousands of kilometres from an ocean, you are connected to it. Water is constantly flowing from your area to the ocean and back through a network of freshwater streams, ponds, marshes, lakes, and rivers. That's why it is crucial to keep these watery places clean and healthy!

The United Nations declared June 8 *World Oceans Day* during the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The purpose of Oceans Day is to raise awareness about the life-sustaining role of oceans and inspire people from coast to coast to take better care of our salty seas through activities and events that promote ocean health.

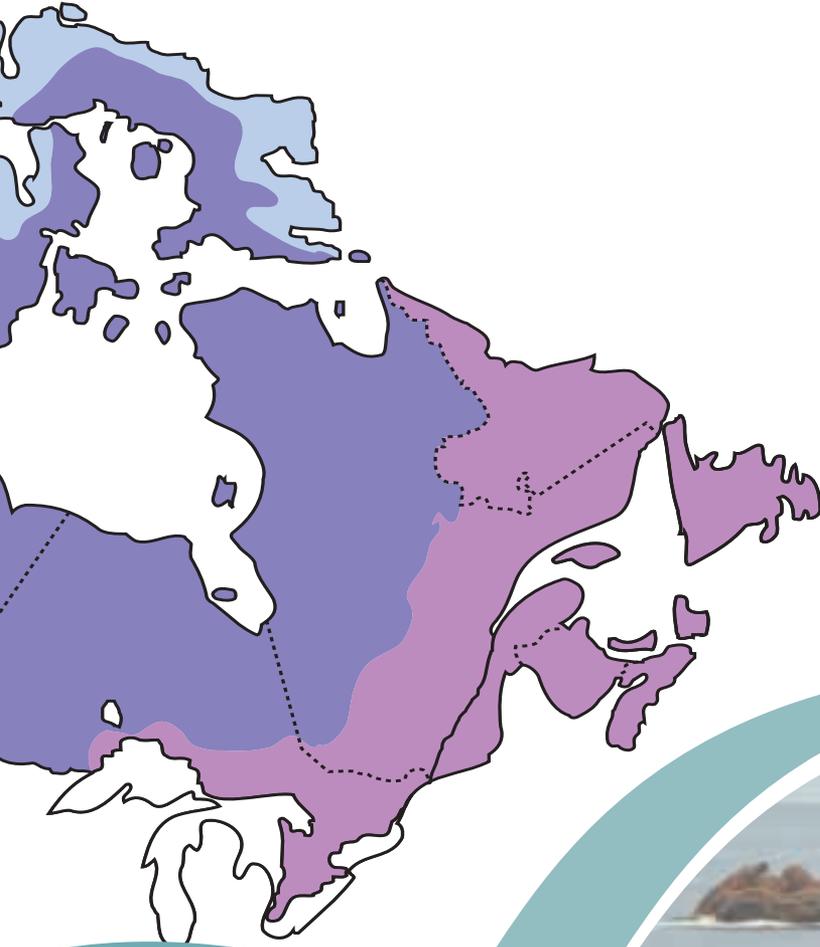
In celebration of our oceans, exciting events and activities take place across the country, including beach clean-ups, exhibits, public tours, talks, and parades. Events can take place on June 8 or any other day that's convenient and meaningful to your community.



Ocean Drainage Areas

-  Atlantic Ocean
-  Pacific Ocean
-  Hudson Bay
-  Gulf of Mexico
-  Arctic Ocean
-  Internal Drainage

This booklet was developed to assist you and your community in planning an event in celebration of oceans. Ideas for events are provided along with tips on planning, promoting, and fundraising to make your oceans event a success! As every community is unique, make sure to customize these ideas to suit your own community's situation.



Getting Started

Before planning your oceans event consider these key questions—who, what, where, when, why, and how?

Who is your target audience? An oceans event can be targeted to a specific age group by working through community, youth, or seniors groups, through schools, libraries, or community centres. Alternatively, it can aim to attract residents of a particular town or municipality, regardless of age. The choice is yours!

What types of activities or events could you plan? There are a variety of options for the type of event you may wish to plan for Oceans Day. The most common activities include festivals, exhibits, shoreline clean-ups, talks, and workshops. The possibilities are endless! (See the "Activity Suggestions" on page six for more ideas.)

Where should you hold the event? Depending on the type of event you have chosen, there are many possible venues including a local museum, school, public library, or community park.

Here are some things you should think about when choosing a site.

- Access is easy for everyone.
- There is adequate parking.
- You have permission from landowners or managers.
- There are no major hazards.
- There is a means of dealing with garbage.
- It is possible to use stakes or easily identified landmarks before people assemble.

Keep in mind that if you are planning an outside activity you need to make alternative plans in case of inclement weather.

When should you hold the event? Ideally you should plan your event to coincide with Oceans Day, June 8. However, you may want to avoid overlap with other community events. If this is the case, you may wish—in the early stages of your planning—to select an alternate date for your event. Or, you may

want your event to coincide with other community events. Combining resources will make the events more cost-effective.

Why should you hold an event? Oceans are important to all Canadians. Each year, Oceans Day celebrations take place in communities all across Canada. Regardless of the type of oceans event your group plans, it should help to increase awareness of and participation in ocean conservation and stewardship.

How are we going to make this event happen? Organizing any type of activity can be a daunting task. Careful planning and cooperation among many groups and individuals will ensure the success of your event. Be sure to involve as many groups and individuals as possible so the workload can be shared by all. However, begin by recruiting a small number of individuals to form an organizing committee to ensure that the planning and implementation of your event goes smoothly.

- **Volunteers and Community Champions**

If your group does not have enough members to carry out the activity you have in mind, you may need to recruit volunteers. Involving individuals who already have many contacts in the community, for example the chairperson of a local non-profit organization or a representative from a local school, might be key to the success of your event. Other possible sources of volunteers include groups such as Scouts, Girl Guides, 4-H clubs, service clubs, churches, conservation groups, schools, and sports, fishing, or hiking clubs. Depending on your activity, an advanced training session or safety briefing might be required to ensure that all goes well on the day of the event.



If possible, plan the event in such a way that volunteers do not work for more than two or three hours. And remember, some form of public recognition for volunteers, such as a picnic or a barbeque to thank them for their time and assistance, is always appreciated!

- **Budget and Funding**

Drafting a simple budget, even if your event seems straightforward, can help you avoid unexpected financial surprises and ensure that your group focuses on potential costs at an early stage in the planning process. Expenses might include food and beverages, room or equipment rental, printing and advertising, or travel.

Approaching potential sponsors or donors, such as local businesses or grant-giving foundations, with a funding proposal might be one way of reducing these costs. Many event planners also organize community fundraising activities such as thematic silent auctions, the sale of promotional items, or prize draws.

Activity Suggestions

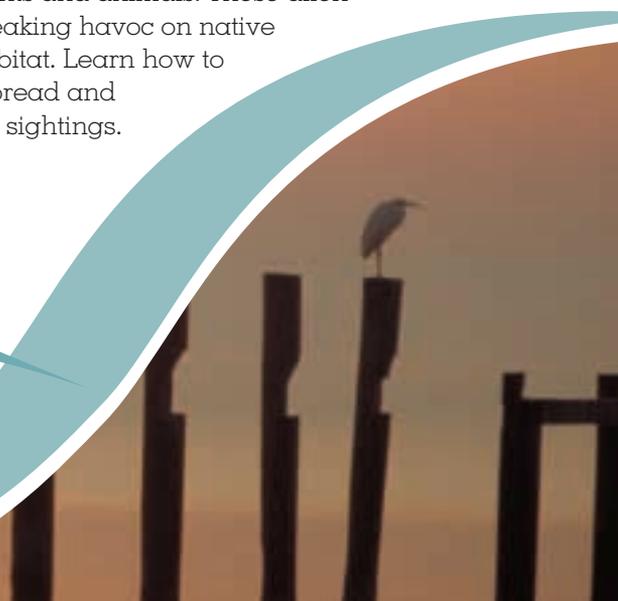
Whatever type of event you organize, try to think of a way to anchor the theme and messages of your event to the community. The variety of activities to celebrate oceans is as wide as your imagination!

- **Awareness and Educational Activities**

- Prepare feature articles focusing on oceans and freshwater-related issues in your community; submit them to a local newspaper or radio station.
- Write letters to the editor of your city or community newspaper expressing your concerns about oceans and what should be done to conserve them.
- Invite environmental educators to give lectures on oceans-related topics.
- Publicize your project. By promoting your efforts through such media as newspapers, bulletins, newsletters, and

flyers, you'll be able to raise awareness about oceans and encourage others to help.

- Set up a kiosk with interactive games for children and handouts such as posters, colouring books, tattoos, and bookmarks at your local library, school, or community centre.
- Create an "Our Town and the Ocean" display at your local library or school, using maps, aerial photos, municipal sewer plans, and river routes to demonstrate how your community is linked with the sea.
- Assemble a species touch table consisting of marine debris, shells, kelp or other specimens found in the ocean.
- Organize a film festival at a library, school, or theatre. Contact the National Film Board for titles of films.
- Cut marine debris off at its source. Encourage local ports and marinas to provide accessible garbage disposal facilities. When you go boating or visit a shoreline, take your trash home with you rather than leaving it behind.
- Fight the invasion of aquatic habitats by purple loosestrife, Eurasian ruffe, zebra mussels, round gobies, and other exotic plants and animals. These alien species are wreaking havoc on native wildlife and habitat. Learn how to monitor their spread and report any new sightings.



Public Participation Activities

- Have your municipality officially proclaim Oceans Day on June 8 and add it to your community calendar.
- Invite your mayor or municipal council to hold an official kick-off ceremony for Oceans Day.
- Coordinate a mini environmental fair.
- Plan an Oceans Day parade in your community.
- Organize a talent, song, poster, or storywriting contest with a regional watershed and/or marine conservation theme.
- Initiate an oceans action project with the goal of protecting the natural ability of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems to absorb greenhouse gases or helping isolated species by improving connectivity between fragmented habitats.
- Recruit volunteers for a beach sweep—fun, simple, and rewarding. It doesn't have to occur along an ocean coastline. It can also be the clean-up of a lakeshore, a riverbank, or even a community pond. Water from these sources flow into the ocean, so it is equally important that they, too, be cleaned up.
- Take the beach sweep idea one step further. Adopt a beach by developing a protection and clean-up plan and by assigning specific tasks to various individuals or community groups. In the clean-up plan, schedule a beach sweep at regular intervals throughout the year (except when there is snow cover).
- Organize a dune grass planting campaign on sand dunes (for example, marram grass, sandwort, and beach pea). Since dune grass reduces erosion, it is very important in preserving the dunes.
- Undertake a species inventory encompassing marine and water-dependent terrestrial environments.
- Help protect sensitive aquatic habitat by posting "No Dumping" signs along wetlands and rivers and by encouraging local ports and marinas to provide access-

ble garbage disposal facilities.

- If you don't live near a beach, organize a clean-up day at a park. Keep a record of the litter collected and launch a neighbourhood litter-prevention campaign with the help of your municipality, school board, or social club.
- Invite a local environmental educator to lead a bicycle trip to various ecologically sensitive waterways in your area and trace how the water flows to nearby and larger rivers or oceans.
- Link up with another community—coastal or inland—in a distant part of Canada or the world and collaborate on an action project. This can be coordinated through your school or through a mayor's office.

Communication and Promotion

Spread the word about your ocean-related activity as early and widely as possible! An effective media/communication strategy is essential to informing the public and drawing in the crowds that will make your event a successful one.

- Make a list of the media sources in your region, including newspapers, radio and community television stations, and of local publications such as municipal and parish newsletters, school newspapers, and electronic newsletters from environmental organizations. Distribute a news release to local radio and community television stations a few weeks before the activity. A news release should include all the information pertinent to the activity (e.g., the date, location, time, sponsors, and name and telephone number of the contact person) as well as some background information. It should be typed, double-spaced,



and no more than two pages long.

- A week before the event, contact the media representatives to remind them of the activity and inform them of specifics such as the availability of spokespeople for interviews.
- Ask elected representatives or other community leaders to assist with or attend the event. The participation of high-profile community members will attract the media.
- Use the Oceans Day poster, which is included in the annual Ocean Education kit produced by Canadian Wildlife Federation and its Oceans Day partners, to promote your activity by adding the location, date, and time of your event as well as the name and telephone number of the contact person.
- Local radio stations and newspapers are usually receptive to offers of on-air interviews or to the submission of a news release.
- If your budget allows, small promotional items such as t-shirts, hats, pins, cloth bags, mouse pads, pens or refrigerator magnets are a great way to build local awareness and interest in your activity.
- Have your event posted on oceans-related Web sites. Visit CWF's Web site at www.cwf-fcf.org to register your event.

Cautions

By combining a bit of common sense with precautionary measures, your oceans event will be safe, educational, and, of course, lots of fun!

The safety of all participants and attendees is of paramount concern. Depending on the event, selection of the site should be based on such criteria such as convenience, safety, and environmental significance. Contact your local municipality to determine who owns the property, and get permission from the landowner, as well as any necessary permits, in advance. Depending on the nature of your event, it might be wise to look into liability issues and to consider buying insurance.

If your event is to take place at a beach or waterfront, be sure to plan it when water levels will be safe and predictable, rather than during spring run-off when the levels of rivers and streams can rise suddenly and dangerously. Make sure there are no other major hazards and avoid activities that might damage private property or fragile local habitats.



Remind participants to handle rocks and plants with care, avoid trampling vegetation, and give animals space. Tell them to leave everything as found. It's a good idea for participants to take pictures rather than taking items away with them. Leave the area cleaner than you found it.

The following suggestions should help ensure that your day is safe and enjoyable for all!

- If there are children in your group of volunteers, make sure there is adequate adult supervision.
- Leave pets at home.
- Ensure that volunteers are properly trained. Ideally, they should have First Aid certification, and should be knowledgeable about the activity. If volunteers are leading groups of participants, ensure they have a cellular phone and first-aid kit for each group if possible.
- Monitor weather forecasts and adjust your schedule accordingly. For example, if conditions are



very warm and humid, reduce the time spent outside to avoid heat exhaustion.

- Advise volunteers to be cautious when near water, even if it appears calm. They should be aware of and avoid river currents, rogue waves, and incoming tides.
- If participating in a beach sweep, leave natural materials, like driftwood, seaweed, and shells in place.
- Prevent erosion by staying away from sand dunes and not trampling vegetation. Never disturb breeding or nesting areas, especially those of species at risk.
- Some items on beaches can be very dangerous, such as discarded needles, ammunition, blasting caps, or hazardous materials such as containers for toxic chemicals. Should you find any of these things, do not touch them! Report them immediately to the the appropriate municipal authority.

Summary Checklist

Four to six months before the activity:

- Develop a plan. Use it to guide you throughout the process.
- Find key individuals and organizations to help plan your activity/event.
- Determine the audience.
- Develop a list of activities.
- Confirm dates and schedule.
- Identify and inspect the site to be used.
- Prepare budget and apply for funding.
- Order necessary materials.
- Prepare promotional materials.

Two weeks before:

- Put up posters to promote the event.
- Contact volunteers and invite them to participate.
- Send advisories/news releases to the media.

One week before:

- Bring the leaders together for an information meeting.
- If necessary, hold a training session or safety briefing for volunteers.

One or two days before:

- Contact the media to confirm the event.
- Make sure that you have all the necessary materials.

The day of the event:

- Bring the volunteers together at the meeting place.
- Distribute the necessary materials for the day.
- Make safety recommendations to the volunteers.

After the event:

- Make sure garbage is picked up or recycled, and that the site is as clean as you found it.
- Collect participants' information for follow-up with media and at future events.
- Thank the volunteers for their participation by organizing a community event such as a picnic or barbeque.
- Seek feedback on the success of the events.
- Send thank you notes and follow-up reports to sponsors.

Additional Considerations

Have you:

- Maintained a consistent message that will promote ocean health at the event?
- Bought insurance (if necessary) and determined liability?
- Determined a budget and allocated funds to specific activities?



- Contacted potential sponsors, donors, and foundations to fund your events?
- Contacted the appropriate department of your municipality to assist you in choosing a site?
- Contacted local venues for availability and cost?
- Recruited and trained volunteers to lead activities?
- Requested permission to post promotional posters?
- Distributed kits for clean-up campaigns? Included an information booklet, advertising posters, and garbage bags?
- Invited local waste and recycling firms to participate in a "Pick Me Up" campaign by providing additional waste and recycling bins and by removing the full containers once the event has finished?
- Informed appropriate authorities about the details of your Oceans Day activities and, when necessary, arranged to have safety patrol or medical staff present?

For more information about Oceans Day and additional resources on planning a successful oceans event visit CWF's Web site at www.cwf-fcf.org.

Environment Canada's Marine Environment Branch plays a key role in the delivery of marine protection programs. The Branch's responsibilities include co-leading with Fisheries and Oceans Canada the implementation of Canada's National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (NPA); promoting pollution prevention for maritime shipping in Canada; coordinating a shellfish water-quality monitoring program to protect public health; and managing a permit system for the disposal of material at sea.

Canadian Wildlife Federation is dedicated to fostering awareness and appreciation of our natural world. By spreading knowledge of human impacts on the environment, sponsoring research, promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, recommending legislative changes, and cooperating with like-minded partners, CWF encourages a future in which Canadians may live in harmony with nature.

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