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## Earth Day demonstration calls for environmental action

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A march for Earth Day embarks down Newcastle Street on Thursday, which was part of several events organized by Glynn Environmental Coalition.

Lauren McDonald/The Brunswick News

A group in downtown Brunswick joined a global chorus Thursday calling for better environmental protections in honor of Earth Day.

In a short march down Newcastle Street organized by the Glynn Environmental Coalition, participants held up signs reading “Save What’s Left,” “Protect the Okefenokee” and “I’m With Her,” which was written alongside an arrow pointing to an illustration of the Earth.

The marches chanted, “What do we want? Climate justice. When do we want it? Now.”

Rachael Thompson, executive director of GEC, kicked off the demonstration with a quick reminder of why everyone was there.

“We’re trying to connect people with our environment and with taking action to protect our environment,” she said. “Earth Day was started in 1970, and some of the rallies and marches around Earth Day that were before 1970 are actually why we have the U.S. (Environmental Protection Agency) and the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act.”

Many who marched down Newcastle had spent the prior hour inside the Ritz Theatre watching a climate justice film series titled, “Re-visioning Recovery: Uncovering the Roots of Disaster,” which spotlights overlooked stories of environmental injustice.

After the screening ended, Thompson asked the audience what emotions the film stirred up in them.

“I can give you mine,” she said. “It makes me feel frustrated and sad ... Part of the reason we wanted to show this film for Earth Day today is because Earth Day is about connectivity, and it’s about talking about our planet, our natural resources, our cultural resources and protecting them better.”

The demonstration that followed was meant to serve as a demand for better protections for the planet and for the people and wildlife living here.

At the other end of Newcastle Street, an Earth Day Action Party awaited the marchers. Action stations were set up to help attendees get more actively involved in issues concerning climate change and wildlife protections.

Before the marches embarked, though, Thompson suggested a few chants they could use during their walk.

“This is one of mine — ‘Hey hey. Ho ho. Climate change has got to go,’” she read from her cellphone screen. “‘Hey hey. Ho ho. Climate change is going to go.’”

The chants echoed down Newcastle Street during the evening golden hour in Brunswick, just as similar calls for action reverberated around the planet throughout this year's Earth Day.

"We have a voice, and we are going to be advocating for solutions," Thompson said.

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Lauren McDonald