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Glynn Environmental Coalition plans Earth Day celebration

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Apr 20, 2021



A group marches down Newcastle Street in Brunswick in 2017 during a March for Science, one of seven such marches that took place in Georgia.

The Brunswick News/File

The Golden Isles community will join others around the world this Thursday to celebrate the planet we all call home.

Locally, the Glynn Environmental Coalition and numerous partners will celebrate Earth Day through a variety of events, all of which will highlight the role everyone can play in protecting the environment.

“Our planet has one day of the year that we get to dedicate to celebrating it and taking action,” said Rachael Thompson, executive director of Glynn Environmental Coalition. “As an advocacy organization, we want to protect the environment and we want to protect the people who live in and are sustained by it.”

Trash cleanups will be held during the day, including one sponsored by College of Coastal Georgia’s athletics department.

Broomelli Boys Pizzeria, located at 760 Scranton Road in Brunswick, will hold an Eat for a Cause Fundraiser from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday. Customers at the restaurant can tell their server that they’re supporting the fundraiser, and Broomelli Boys will donate 10 percent of the proceeds.

Earth Day events in downtown Brunswick will kick off with a screening of the climate justice film “Re-visioning Recovery: Uncovering the Roots of Disaster.” The screening will take place from 5:15-6:30 p.m. at the Ritz Theatre, located at 1530 Newcastle Street. The series of short films spotlights overlooked stories of environmental injustice and historical inequities that are exacerbated when disasters hit.

Immediately after the screening, Glynn Environmental Coalition will lead a “March for Our Planet,” which will be a quarter-mile walk down Newcastle St. to Silver Bluff Brewery.

“We’re hoping that in that demonstration we can promote our elected officials both locally, in the state and federally to start to plan and take action around climate change to protect our people and the environment,” Thompson said.

The evening will conclude with a family-friendly Earth Day Action Party at 7 p.m. at Silver Bluff Brewery, 1325 Newcastle St., where there will be food and beverages as well as several vendors, including Dot & Army, the Natural Skincare Queen and Southern Henna.

Local environmental organizations, like One Hundred Miles and the Altamaha Riverkeeper, will set up action stations to help attendees get involved in issues concerning climate change, wildlife protections and more.

“One thing that is really important to our organization, especially around the idea of climate change and how it is going to impact our coastal community, is that we never want to leave people without an action, a tangible action item,” Thompson said.

Catherine Ridley, vice president for education and communications for One Hundred Miles, said she hopes to see the community come out and support this event, just as many local residents did for a March for the Planet hosted on Earth Day several years ago.

“Earth Day is the perfect opportunity to commit to taking responsible actions that benefit our natural world,” Ridley said. “We have some exciting action stations planned that will connect attendees to the many ways they can make a difference for wildlife like sea turtles and right whales, protect the Okefenokee and other treasured landscapes and participate in local planning processes to safeguard our communities. There’s an action for every interest, and now is the time to stand up and speak out for the coast we love.”

While planning this year’s Earth Day celebration, GEC prioritized offering numerous ways for the community to celebrate the planet while also working to protect it, Thompson said.

“The march is one way to take action and to demonstrate that this issue is important, and then we also want to follow up with some opportunities for people to engage in the public processes and also engage with our elected leadership,” she said. “It is the day for our planet, so we don’t want to just celebrate our planet. We want to take action to protect our planet and the people who live on it.”

Cheston Broomell, owner of Broomelli Boys, said he’s worked for many years to find ways to reduce the environmental impact his restaurant has. He also strives to support local organizations like Glynn Environmental Coalition that champion these issues.

The Eat for a Cause fundraiser on Thursday is one way to support this important work, Broomell said, and he encouraged community members to participate in this year’s Earth Day events.

“There are things we can do – as individuals, as businesses, as leaders in this community, as organizations, whoever we represent – to lessen our impact on our environment and on our Earth,” he said.

Pandemic precautions will be in place at the events downtown. Attendees will be asked to wear masks and social distance, and the seating inside the Ritz Theatre will be separated to promote social distancing as well.

Those planning to attend can RSVP at glynnenvironmental.org.