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GEC joins Earth Day celebrations with several events

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There will be plenty of ways to celebrate Earth Day this weekend in the Golden Isles.

CoastFest, a massive celebration of coastal resources organized by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division, will return as in person event Saturday for the first time since 2019, after being a virtual event due to the pandemic and postponed in October 2022 due to a hurricane threat. The event, held at Mary Ross Waterfront Park, will feature interactive activities, wildlife and entertainment for all ages.

Keep Golden Isles Beautiful will host its Electronics Recycling and More event from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday at Glynn Place Mall. Donors can bring old electronics, scrap metal, prescription drugs, textiles and more.

And the Glynn Environmental Coalition has several planned events to offer additional opportunities to celebrate the planet and promote environmental consciousness for Earth Day.

GEC will kick off the weekend with a cleanup Friday at Satilla Marsh Elementary School, where the nonprofit will provide supplies to students for a litter pickup around the school.

At 6 p.m. Friday, GEC will host its annual Earth Day film screening at the Ritz Theatre in downtown Brunswick.

This year's film, "Company Town," tells the story of a man's mission to save his Arkansas town from pollution from a paper mill and chemical plant that caused sickness among residents.

"We usually try to pick a film that's somewhat relevant to Brunswick or environmental issues that are facing coastal Georgia," said Rachael Thompson, executive director of GEC.

The investigative documentary walks through the response from the community organizer and other residents when facing this environmental challenge.

“There are definitely some parallels, things that we’ve seen and residents have seen and things that residents say here in Brunswick about their experience with industry here,” Thompson said. “And there’s a lot of connections between the film and that community’s experience and our community’s experience.”

She hopes the film will offer local residents a sense of solidarity with this Arkansas community.

“The residents talk about what they did and how they organized, and hopefully it will inspire people to get involved and join us in our fight to improve air quality and water quality locally, Thompson said.

GEC will be involved in CoastFest on Saturday. They will also support an “Eat for a Cause” event at Broomelli Boys Pizzeria, 760 Scranton Road in Brunswick.

Broomelli Boys will donate 10% of all orders Saturday to GEC. The restaurant will be open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

“It’s a way for people to support a small business and support the mission of the Glynn Environmental Coalition at the same time,” Thompson said.

GEC will wrap up its Earth Day festivities with a Yoga in the Park event from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Sunday at Twitty Park on St. Simons. Parking will be available at 501 Sea Island Drive.

Jen Hatcher, who runs Donation Beach Yoga on St. Simons, will lead an outdoor yoga session accessible to all ages and athletic abilities.

Hatcher leads yoga sessions at Coast Guard Beach twice a month, and those interested in joining those sessions can learn more on Facebook and Instagram at Donation Beach Yoga SSI.

“Yoga in general is beneficial for anybody, whether you’re an athlete or not an athlete, and I really target my classes so that the class is for everybody,” Hatcher said. “Any level – it doesn’t matter if you’ve been doing yoga for 20 years or you’ve never done yoga. I try to keep it very simple.”

The session on Sunday will include a focus on ways to connect with nature.

“Especially at this time of year, just being outside and exercising, it’s good for your mind, body and spirit,” Hatcher said. “You get fresh air and sunshine. And maybe you learn something about the Glynn Environmental Coalition.”

Attendees are invited to bring their own yoga mat or a beach towel.

“We thought it was a good way for people to connect with nature, and yoga practice is all about connecting with your body and being mindful,” Thompson said. “It’s outside, and it will have the backdrop of the live oak trees.”

Thompson said she’s looking forward to the full line-up of Earth Day events this weekend and hopes the community will come out in support.

“We only have one planet, and we have to take care of it,” she said. “Earth Day is a great way to learn more about environmental issues, learn more about all the organizations that are working to keep our air clean, our water clean, and our communities safe.”

The full schedule of GEC events can be found online at www.glynnenvironmental.org.

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