

What happened to Earth Day 2013?

To the Editor, *Ottawa Citizen*,

Taking a quick look online on Earth Day, I was pleased with the big picture, but bitterly disappointed with what I found closer to home.

The bright lights included a symbolic show of support from Google, who gave up their own logo on their landing page to display an interactive doodle with an Earth Day theme. On a more substantial level, the US Environmental Protection Agency offered its own Earth Day website in both English and Spanish, featuring interactive maps, volunteer opportunities, Twitter chats, and lesson plans for teachers.

Here in Ottawa, things did not look so good. *The Citizen* had no coverage of Earth Day in its digital edition. Environment Canada's online participation was also non-existent.

The best I could find from either the Citizen or Minister of the Environment Peter Kent was a weekend story on the opening of a "portal for public access to sensitive environmental data from the oilsands." How is taxpayer funded public data on the health of our environment sensitive? The data should have been gathered and shared long ago.

This Earth Day I joined volunteers from Ecology Ottawa to gather public support for funding the Ottawa River Action Plan, i.e. to keep raw sewage out of our river. Other good ways to participate might include a clean up of a park or stream, or sharing information on the Emerald Ash Borer infestation with your neighbours.

Whatever your thoughts on resource extraction or climate change, I encourage all Ottawans to get involved close to home on Earth Day. Stand up for our health and our environment. Earth Day is a time when all of us should be loud, proud, and united as Canadians!

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