

# Celebrating Earth Day 2002

■ By Sahlee C. Bugna

The 22<sup>nd</sup> of April each year marks International Earth Day, which some consider the birth of the modern environmental movement and was first celebrated in the United States in 1970. The event is largely credited to Gaylord Nelson, then a Senator from Wisconsin, who first had the idea of spotlighting environment in the political arena in 1962. At that time, he was deeply troubled by the fact that the environment remained a non-issue in America. He resolved to increase awareness of the matter by persuading then-President John F. Kennedy to embark on a national conservation tour. Although environmental concerns failed to grab national attention, Senator Nelson continued to travel across the country to discuss the effects of environmental degradation with a varied audience.

The idea that would culminate in an Earth Day celebration came in 1968, when war demonstrations and 'teach-ins' were being conducted to oppose the Vietnam War. Nelson asked himself, "Why not organize a huge grassroots protest over what was happening to our environment?" He was convinced that tapping into the concerns of the general public and infusing the anti-war energy into the environmental cause could generate a demonstration that would force this issue onto the political agenda.

Thus in 1969, he announced that in the spring of 1970 there would be a nationwide grassroots demonstration on behalf of the environment and invited everyone to participate. The response to the call was tremendous since the event provided the public with a forum to discuss their concerns over the state of the environment. The interest generated by the announcement was encapsulated in an article in *The New York Times*, which stated "Rising concern about the environ-

mental crisis is sweeping the nation's campuses with an intensity that may be on its way to eclipsing student discontent over the war in Vietnam..." On 22 April 1970, around 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment.

Earth Day 1970 achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting wide-ranging support from vast sectors of society. It also led to the creation of the United States Environment Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and

activists all over the world. Around 5,000 environmental groups worldwide participated in Earth Day 2002, reaching out to hundreds of millions of people in a record 184 countries.

Earth Day 2002 celebrations in Asia were largely dominated by musical events, tree planting activities and beach clean-ups. In Brunei Darussalam environmentalists gathered garbage at beaches and cleared turtle nesting areas of debris to raise awareness of the importance of protecting the marine ecosystem and maintaining the turtle's natural habitats. Cambodia celebrated Earth



Many organisations celebrated Earth Day with clean-up activities

Endangered Species Acts.

The enthusiasm from that first Earth Day has not diminished. Over the years, organisations in the other countries would follow suit and replicate the movement. By 1990, 20 years after the first Earth Day celebration, Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting the status of environmental issues on to the world stage. The 1990 celebrations boosted recycling efforts worldwide and helped pave the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In 2000, campaigns focused on global warming and a push for clean energy, and used World Wide Web to help link

Day with concerts and dialogues with local communities. In Indonesia, Earth Day events included a Clean-Up Bali Day campaign to raise awareness on waste management and reduction, composting and sustainable development; nature walks to build understanding of natural resources and the public's role in their protection; and tree planting activities that highlight the importance of traditional customs in encouraging a more sustainable means of living. International organisations also participated in local Earth Day celebrations. Wetlands International activities included environmental education efforts concerning wetland and biodiversity con-

ervation, the development of an Asian Watershed census, and the publication of articles concerning wetland conservation and educational resources. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) facilitated a Coral Reef Clean Up, together with local environmental stakeholders and organisations.

Lao PDR celebrated with month-long musical events while Malaysian activities included the Taiping Lake Education Project that focused on the importance of Malaysia's wetlands, and an 'Adopt-a-Coral' Education Day to encourage divers to 'adopt' a coral fragment and transplant it to substrates in a degraded reef plot.

In Thailand, tree plantings, beach clean-ups and symposia on caring for the environment were complemented by an annual gathering of 100,000 monks by the Dhammakaya Foundation to promote world peace, peace within ourselves, and peace with the environment.

A number of activities by various environmental organizations were held to celebrate Earth Day in the Philippines. These included a conference on ecological solid waste management by the Zero Waste Recycling Movement of the Philippines Foundation, Inc. and a Guided Marine Protected Area tour by Project Seahorse and the Haribon Foundation. One of the most colourful activities is the annual Tour of the Fireflies organised by the Firefly Brigade. This activity is a 50-kilometer critical mass citizens' bike ride through seven cities of Metropolitan Manila to encourage air pollution reduction.

In Singapore, a Web of Life Exhibition was set up to highlight biodiversity and focus on the various interactions and adaptations for survival found in nature. The Singapore Science Centre also hosted a science show to introduce environmental issues effecting the local population and the world at large, including acid rain, global warming, chloroflourocarbons (CFCs) and electric

## Participatory 3-Dimensional Modelling: Guiding Principles and Applications

By Giacomo Rambaldi and Jasmin Callosa-Tarr

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This Publication (with an enclosed multimedia resource kit) intends to assist researchers, project managers, Participatory Learning and Action and GIS practitioners in enhancing the capacities of marginalised, isolated, and frequently natural resource-dependent communities to deal with spatial data and to communicate with the "outside world" on a peer to peer basis.

Participatory 3-D models (P3DM) integrate people's knowledge and conventional spatial information like contour lines, to produce stand-alone scaled relief models that have proved to be user-friendly and relatively accurate data storage and analysis devices, and excellent media that eases communication between local stakeholders and external agencies.

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**Participatory 3-Dimensional Modelling: Guiding Principles and Applications** provides hands-on guidelines on how to organise and implement a P3DM exercise. It also includes insights on adult learning and spatial cognition, on the history of relief modelling and an analysis of P3DM experiences in the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand over a period of 15 years.

The Companion CD-ROM contains the following:

- Resource Book: *Participatory 3-D Modelling: Guiding Principles and Applications*, July 2002; ISBN: 971-8986-47-2. [Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) format].
- Magazine: *GIS and the Fingertips*; ASEAN Biodiversity Vo. 2, No. 1, March 2002; ISSN: 1655-0471 9 [Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) format]
- Manual: *Manual on Participatory 3-D Modelling for Natural Resource Management*, September 2000. ISBN: 971-8986-21-9 [Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) format].
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cars. The Singapore Environment Council also sponsored its second annual car-free day.

Vietnam recognized Earth Day through public awareness campaigns and community meetings

organised by the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment as well as a project by the Institute of Oceanography to train fishermen on methods to check and monitor reefs. ■

