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## Environmental Journal



### Earth Day events: Cleanups, films, talk by Thomas Friedman

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Friedman

A talk by Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman will headline Earth Day activities in Rhode Island on Tuesday, April 22.

Friedman is speaking at 6 p.m. in Brown University's Salomon Center for Teaching. He will discuss the economic and foreign policy implications of green technology. His presentation is free and open to the public.

The talk is sponsored by Brown's Environmental Change Initiative as part of its spring speaker series, titled, "Going Green, Globally: Scientific, Economic and Political Perspectives."

Oswaldo Sala, director of Brown's Environmental Change Initiative, said in a statement: "Moving nimbly between politics, economics, history, culture and science, Tom Friedman demonstrates a tremendous intellectual agility in his columns and books."

Friedman has warned that continued American dependence on foreign oil, instead of developing more sustainable and homegrown energy alternatives, does the country and the planet a grave injustice while promoting the well-being of countries unfriendly to the national interests of the United States.

"One day Iraq, our post-9/11 trauma and the divisiveness of the Bush years will all be behind us and America will need and want to get its groove back," Friedman wrote in the New York Times Magazine last year. "We will need to find a way to re-knit America at home, reconnect America abroad and restore America to its natural place in the global order as the beacon of progress, home and inspiration. I have an idea how. It's called green."

Friedman joined the Times in 1981 and has won three Pulitzers for his work. He is now on leave,

writing a book about energy and the environment.

As usual, there will be plenty of Earth Day cleanups and events around the state this month.

The state Department of Environmental Management has a calendar at its Web site:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/events/pdf/eday08.pdf>.

Among the events:

- Rhode Island College is sponsoring a daylong conference on Wednesday, to promote climate change and environmental awareness for teachers and students. There will be hybrid car displays, lectures and videos, including a presentation of the award-winning movie *An Inconvenient Truth*. For more information, go to [www.teachgeography.com](http://www.teachgeography.com).
- The Audubon Society of Rhode Island is celebrating Earth Day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday at its Environmental Education Center in Bristol. There will be games, nature hikes, lectures, children's activities, stories and crafts. Admission is free to those arriving on bicycles. For more information, go to [www.asrieec.org/earthday.htm](http://www.asrieec.org/earthday.htm).
- Roger Williams Park Zoo is celebrating next Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Narragansett Bay Research Reserve will present a display. Also scheduled are entertainers, education stations, animal encounters and environmental artists. For details, go to: <http://www.rogerwilliamsparkzoo.org/calendar/conservationweek08.cfm#ed>
- Bryant University is observing Earth Day on Tuesday, April 22, by focusing on the environmental challenges for China and the world. The afternoon conference is free and open to the public.

At 2 p.m. in the Bryant Center South Dining Room, there will be a presentation on the emerging environmental legal and policy system in China, including a discussion of the environmental implications of the Three Gorges Dam.

At 3:30, there will be a talk titled "Environmental Challenge: China's Problem or the World's Problem?"

At 6:30 p.m., two documentary films will be shown, on migrant workers dismantling metal wastes from the United States, and on people dislodged by the Three Gorges Dam.

•Clean Water Action and the Environment Council of Rhode Island are sponsoring an Earth Day Lobby Day at the State House on April 22. Their work will be followed up by an Earth Day Party at Local 121, a restaurant in Providence.

Dozens of cleanups have been scheduled, but this year, because of staff cutbacks, the DEM is not maintaining a central list of cleanups. They are all being handled locally.

Drought worries ease in R.I.

It certainly won't be any surprise to anyone who has spent time outdoors in recent weeks, but the Drought Steering Committee of the state Water Resources Board has taken a step back in its concerns about water supplies and changed the state from a drought watch to a drought advisory.

The state's big reservoirs are 100-percent full and the smaller ones are approaching full, according to the water board. Farmers reported that fields were too wet to work and homeowners have delayed gardening chores because of rainy weekends.

The drought committee will meet again next month to review conditions.

#### Promoting R.I. meat to be discussed

Increasing the infrastructure to process and market locally grown meat will be one of the top issues discussed at the Rhode Island Raised Livestock Association annual meeting on Monday, April 21, at 7 p.m. at the Elks Lodge on 42 Nooseneck Hill Rd., in West Greenwich.

Developments in local meat processing will be discussed as part of the association's mission "to promote the preservation of our agricultural lands, our rural economy, and our agrarian way of life."

State Senators Susan Sosnowski and Kevin Breene, both farmers, plan to attend and discuss pending legislation that affects farmers.

For more information, contact Don Minto at (401) 423-0005 or write to [rhodyraisedmeat@yahoo.com](mailto:rhodyraisedmeat@yahoo.com).

#### A call for volunteer weather observers

The National Weather Service is recruiting volunteer weather observers with a goal of having one observer for every square mile in urban areas and one for every 36 square miles in rural areas.

Free training is offered, but observers will have to provide a scientific rain gauge, which costs about \$30.

A training session is scheduled for 3 to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 22, in Conference Room C in the Department of Administration building in Providence.

To volunteer or to get more information, call Beverly O'Keefe at (401) 574-8405 or write to [bokeefe@wrb.ri.gov](mailto:bokeefe@wrb.ri.gov). The state Water Resources Board is helping to coordinate the program.

#### Piping plovers need your help

The Nature Conservancy is looking for volunteers to help protect endangered piping plovers at Goosewing Beach Preserve, in Little Compton.

Last year, seven pairs of birds nested on the beach and raised 19 chicks — the most since 1994.

Volunteers help erect protective fencing and keep watch over the birds during the summer.

A slide show opens the annual program on May 21 at 7 p.m. at the Little Compton Community Center.

To volunteer, call TNC naturalist Polly Turner at (401) 529-1786.

The Environmental Journal is a listing of brief news items about the actions of individuals, organizations and businesses that affect the air we breathe, the water we drink and the landscape that surrounds us.

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact environment reporter Peter B. Lord at (401) 277-8036, or by e-mail at [plord@projo.com](mailto:plord@projo.com) or by writing him, care of The Providence Journal, 75 Fountain St., Providence, RI 02902.