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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sikh Environment Day (Vatavaran Diwas) celebrations this year were tremendously uplifting. Major Sikh religious bodies, prominent Gurdwaras, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions responded to the appeal by EcoSikh to celebrate the third Sikh Environment Day on March 14, 2013 — an important day for Sikhs as it commemorates the Gurgaddi Diwas (Enthronement Day) of our Seventh Guru, Guru Har Rai Saheb — and marks the beginning of Sikh New Year. The celebrations worldwide were truly inspiring as more than 1500 Sikh bodies took part in diverse activities in this call for action. Thousands of trees were planted, new gardens installed, rallies carried out by youth, and much more grassroots work done by individuals and families for protection of our environment. Increased awareness because of Gurbani (Pavan Guru Pani Pita Mata Dharth Mahat) and the drive to respond to this call at an individual level as a moral duty made EcoSikh’s vision come alive. The Sikh community this year was more acknowledging, more reflective and more engaging!

Central Sikh institutions like Akal Takhat, Takhat Hazur Sahib, and Takhat Kesgarh Sahib organized religious events and provided overwhelming support for preservation of natural resources and environment. Additionally, two key Gurdwara committees in South Asia – Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhndhak Committee (SGPC) and Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) – pledged their support for this year’s celebrations. With the support of these two major institutions, plantation drives of more than 5000 trees in 145 Gurdwaras, schools and colleges were organized. Revival of Naulakha Bagh, a herbal garden originally planted by Guru Har Rai Saheb in 17th century in Kiratpur Sahib, with the help of Ganga Nursery and SGPC was a great step toward preserving the rich legacy of our Sikh Gurus.

A very moving gesture this year was shown by 35 Gurdwaras in Pakistan, mainly in Sindh and Baluchistan, and in Nankana Sahib (birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev ji) by observing Sikh Environment Day with various activities focused on nature, an effort which has garnered support from various faith communities in the country. Additionally, a National Conference on ‘Preservation of Nature’ was organized at Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University at Fatehgarh Sahib, presided over by President of SGPC, Avtar Singh Makkar. Baba Sewa Singh Seechewal of Khadur Sahib, Vice-Chancellor Jaspal Singh of Punjabi University and Kiranjot Kaur, an SGPC member from Amritsar, were among other prominent speakers. The conference aimed at discussing and connecting technical solutions to current challenges facing Punjab’s environment and drawing inspiration from Sikh theology on nature.

Building on the resources, tools and strategies from previous year’s celebrations, this year’s celebrations were planned to educate and engage an even larger population. Environmental topics have been an important part of dialogue in Punjab (home to majority of Sikhs in the world) since the legislative elections held in 2012. Due to growing concern about rising industrial activity in the state, deteriorating water quality, decreasing water table, low forest cover and chemical based agriculture affecting human health across Punjab, environmental activists and advocacy groups have been very active in dialogue exchange and
pushing for effective action to improve the quality of land, water and air across Punjab over a number of sectors.

As an organization rooted in Sikh values and beliefs, EcoSikh strives for action through reflection and solidarity. The momentum has become more conclusive because of the Sikh community’s growing commitment to take responsibility for the environment through reflection and individual action. Just as encouraging has been the welcoming of Sikh Environment Day celebrations by other faith traditions – Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Sindhis to name a few – who have embraced their connection with the planet for the welfare of humanity. EcoSikh used its resources effectively, developed focused strategies and took the movement this year to new heights with its achievements for a healthy environment for future generations.

The worldwide support this year on Sikh Environment Day was inspiring to say the least. It’s the first time in Sikh history that a mass action of this magnitude has been taken by the Sikh community to focus on environmental work. EcoSikh conveys its sincerest and heartfelt thanks to all the Gurdwaras, organizations, and academic institutions that participated this year and showed a greater commitment and leadership to work towards preservation and protection of our Mata Dharth (Mother Earth)!
INTRODUCTION

The Seventh Master of the Sikhs, Guru Har Rai Saheb, had great sensitivity towards nature. He would watch birds fly high up in the sky and admire the creation of the divine. When a wounded bird fell to the ground, he would heal it using the medicinal herbs from his garden. Guru Har Rai Saheb was passionate about creating parks and gardens, where he grew medicinal plants, as well as planted trees bearing fruit and flowers. He also built a hospital for poor people in Kiratpur Sahib in India, which is his hometown. His Enthronement Day, or Gurgaddi Diwas, is March 14.

In 2011, Shri Akal Takhat Sahib - the Throne of the Eternal, the seat of the Sikh temporal authority - dedicated March 14 as Sikh Environment Day. Working with EcoSikh, a faith-based non-profit organization, it appealed for celebrations among Sikh communities worldwide. Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship), Sikh schools, businesses, Sikh media organizations, and academic institutions across the world mark this day by taking part in many positive environmental activities.

With rapid increase in industrialization, urbanization, depletion of natural resources, increasing population, destruction of vegetation and ecosystems, extinction of wildlife, cutting of trees in plains and hills, and unsafe disposal of household and industrial chemicals and bio-medical waste has caused many environmental, health, and social disorders in our society. For example, deforestation, overuse of water and continuous increase in agrochemical use have led to dire consequences in the state of Punjab, birthplace of Sikhism. Deforestation has led to reduced rainfall, difficult land conditions and significant reduction in bird and animal life. Overuse of water has the scientific community predicting that Punjab is on the verge of becoming a desert by 2025. And most serious of all, increased use of pesticides and chemicals has caused the cost of crops to increase, natural soil organisms like bacteria and fungi to deplete, and rates of cancer, infertility and mental health problems to increase among people.

As part of Sikh Environment Day, Sikhs have been contributing to helping protect and preserve our Mother Nature by planting trees, recycling and reusing as much as possible, initiating kitchen gardening, reducing plastic and polystyrene usage, carefully using water, gasoline and other resources, properly disposing of household and bio-waste, reducing chemical use, using biodegradable domestic cleaning products, and increasing the use of solar energy and bio-gas in Gurdwaras and in their individual households.

The Sikh faith teaches that humans create their surroundings as a reflection of their inner state, and hence the increasing barrenness of the earth reflects a spiritual emptiness within humans. Celebrating Sikh Environment Day, being kind to Mother Nature, and respecting and preserving the wonderful creation on this planet, is a step towards making this a better and more harmonious world, both inside and outside.
ETHODOLOGY

APPROACHING TAKHATS, GURDWARA COMMITTEES & ORGANIZATIONS

Sikh Environment Day has been an integral grassroots initiative by EcoSikh movement since its birth year in 2011. During its first year in 2011, 450 institutions participated in the call. In the second year, setting a target of 750 Sikh bodies, the response from more than 1000 Sikh bodies yet again exceeded the goal expectations. And with an ambitious target of reaching out to 1500 Sikh bodies for this year, the success was dually achieved with more than 1550 Sikh Gurdwaras, organizations, and academic institutions taking part in celebrations worldwide. Goal setting has been vital to the success of EcoSikh’s programs. Giving the much needed focus, it helped us the organization strategize and work effectively from grassroots levels to their involvement with recognized global Sikh bodies at the highest levels.

EcoSikh approached the three Takhats namely Akal Takhat, Sri Keshgarh Sahib and Sri Hazur Sahib, and requested them to issue empowering messages to the Sikh community to encourage participation on Sikh Environment Day. The efforts bore fruits as Jathedar Kulwant Singh of Takhat Sachkhand Shri Hazur Sahib issued a powerful statement reinstating the message of Pavan Guru Pani Pita, Mata Dharth Mahat. He called for action by humbly requesting the Sikh Sangat to plant at least one tree individually and work towards preservation of the beautiful biodiversity drawing inspiration from Guru Har Rai Saheb.

EcoSikh shared this colossal statement and other statements from these Takhats through press releases to the major newspapers, via social media such as Facebook and Twitter, EcoSikh’s website, Sikhnet website and other major online Sikh news platforms. EcoSikh shared these big events and news with its 15,000 member list-serve who were emailed through the EcoSikh monthly newsletter, Dharat Suhavi.

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhadhak Committee (SGPC), the governing body of major Sikh historical Gurdwaras in Punjab and Haryana, and Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) were approached by EcoSikh staff in India. The participation of these major two Sikh institutions enabled widespread tree plantation drives, Kirtan and Kathas, and other hands-on activities in various Khalsa schools and Gurdwaras under their administration. In diaspora, Gurdwara committee members were approached to discuss Sikh Environment Day plans with their respective Gurdwara committee members and execute the plans using resources provided by EcoSikh.

Like previous years, partnerships with environment activists, Baba Sewa Singh of Khadoor Sahib and Baba Balbir Singh Seechewal of Kapurthala, Punjab, was instrumental to the progress of grassroots work in Punjab. Support has come from them in the form of orchid and plantation projects. Additionally, many Sikh non-profit organizations partnered with EcoSikh this year to engineer the projects in their local
communities. Sikh Mission Haryana, Sukrit Trust, Akal Purakh Ki Fauj, Kalgidhar Sewak Jatha (Mohali), Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle, Jawadi Taksal, VMAD, Gurmat Gian Missionary College, Khalsa Multiversity Educate Punjab Project, Kheti Virasat, Mission Jaitu, Punjab Art Council, GurSikh Family Club and Environment Society Mansa, Pakistan Sikh Council, and Pakistan Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee were helpful in engaging a lot of Sikh families and Gurdwaras across Punjab in India and Pakistan. In the Diaspora, partnerships with UNITED SIKHS organization, Sikh Research Institute, Sikh Naujawan Sabha of Malaysia, SikhNet, and other local organizations provided an added push to the Diaspora involvement.

On March 25, 2013, five spiritual leaders from the five Takhat held a meeting in Amritsar, India and formally made declarations to celebrate Guru Har Rai Saheb’s Gurgaddi Diwas as Sikh Environment Day going forward in the wake of rising global climate change, and environmental and biodiversity destruction. This announcement is a historic moment not only for EcoSikh movement but the entire Sikh community in India and abroad. It is one step closer to more awareness and collective action to make our Mother Earth greener again!

**OUTREACH: TRADITIONAL & TECHNOLOGICAL**

Outreach was vital in this action-oriented movement. Many organizations were approached personally. For example, this year we partnered with VMAD group in Ludhiana, India which works with public and encourages social responsibility. The EcoSikh team planned an environment rally with them including Gurmat Gian Missionary College. Many volunteers from this group reached out to the local Gurdwaras and organizations. Other partnerships included Satnam Sarv Kalyan Trust, Chieft Khalsa Diwan and Guru Nanak Khalsa Multiversity Educate Punjab Project which helped to reach out to over hundreds of schools all over Punjab.

EcoSikh also organized a special press conference in February which flashed in almost 20 newspapers, various news channels, news blogs and Sikh websites. This turned out to be a major contribution in spreading the word out.

Mass emailing, calling and telephone messages constituted the bulk form of outreach. Part of the reason for this was to minimise our own ecological footprint and be more eco-friendly in our work. Social media like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp on smart phones were widely used in contacting community on various focused issues and ideas on Sikh Environment Day.

The existing institutional and corporate friends and supporters of EcoSikh (including Advance India Project Limited, Jawadi Taksal, Ishmeet Singh Music Institute, The White Pixels and Hotel Aroma) demonstrated amazing ways to celebrate and advance their self-approach to engage many others to join in this global celebration.
TOOLKIT RESOURCES

With our commitment to continuously improve our work, EcoSikh added additional resources to the Toolkit this year based on last year’s celebration feedback. Catering to the needs of the wider Sikh community, resources were drafted in both Punjabi and English. Toolkit included materials for Gurdwaras, organizations, academic institutions, families and individuals. Toolkit resources were sent via email with links available for download on the EcoSikh website. Additionally, Ten Minute Eco-Assembly Booklets were distributed to many schools in Punjab and rest of India. For continued commitment from the community to engage in grassroots work in their communities, villages and cities, ‘Sikh Environment Day Pledge Forms’ were made available. The toolkit resources this year included:

- **Eak Bageecha, Gurbani on Nature**
- **Sikh Environment Day Guide / ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਦੀ ਏਂਟਰੈਂਸ ਮੁੱਠਾ ਟੀਉਲਟ**
- **Sikh Environment Day Flyers / ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਦੀ ਏਂਟਰੈਂਸ ਤੇਲਟ**
- **Ban ‘Plastic, Disposable, & Styrofoam In Langar’ Poster / ਪਲਾਸਟਿਕ, ਡਿਸਪੋਜੀਸੀਵ ਅਤੇ ਸਟ੍ਰੋਫੋਮ ਲੰਗੜ ਵਿੱਚ**
- **‘Sikh Vision on Environment’ PowerPoint Slideshow / ਸਿੱਖ ਸੈਬਰ ਵਿਸ਼ਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵਿਕਟ ਪੋਵਰਪੋइਂਟ ਸਲੇਡਸ਼ੋਵ**
- **Elementary School, Middle School, High School Classroom Reading Lessons**
- **Ten Minute Eco-Assembly Booklet / 10 ਮਿੰਟ ਦੀ ਏਂਟਰੈਂਸ ਸ਼ੋਲਵਲੀ ਰੇਡੀਂਗ ਲੈਂਸ**
- **Pledge Form / ਪ੍ਰੇਧ ਦੀ ਏਂਟਰੈਂਸ ਪ੍ਲੋਡ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਲੋਡ-ਪੇਂਡਲ**

SEWA BY VOLUNTEERS

The ambitious goal of reaching out to 1500 Sikh institutions would not have been possible without the help of our many volunteers. EcoSikh drafted content to invite dedicated, hard-working and enthusiastic environmental activists to volunteer their time. This opportunity provided many individuals prospect to develop leadership skills, and provided great exposure for networking opportunities with individuals and communities locally and nationally.

Volunteers provided much needed service (*sewa*) in designing and distribution of materials, outreach work, and taking charge of celebrations in their local communities. Sikh Skillz and Degh Tegh Fateh organization created a promotional video for Sikh Environment Day. Panth Khalsa Yahoo Group helped with education and awareness by sending PDF documents on Sikh Environment Day to its subscribers. Many other volunteer organizations helped further spread the message among their networks and made huge contributions by involving many Gurdwaras, organizations and families from their localities. EcoSikh welcomes passionate individuals to volunteer with the organization on future projects as well. EcoSikh team conveys their sincerest gratitude to all the volunteers this year.
PRESS, BLOGS & SOCIAL MEDIA

The news about the launch of Sikh Environment Day campaign was covered by more than 22 newspapers and 6 TV channels in India and Pakistan. EcoSikh called press conferences in Chandigarh and Delhi, and had a series of press releases in various newspapers even after Sikh Environment Day. Sikhnet, Sikh Siyasat Network, Kirpan News Network, and The Langar Hall were among some other websites that provided tremendous support by posting articles on Sikh Environment Day related topics provided by EcoSikh team, making the news much more accessible to broader Sikh community.

- Following are some major newspaper stories related to Sikh Environment Day
  - Tribune Punjabi: Nanded Sahib celebrates Sikh Environment Day
  - Punjab Di Awaaz, Daily Ajit: Harimandar Sahib celebrates Sikh Environment Day
  - The News: Sikh community reiterates pledge to save nature
  - Hindustan Times: Gurdwaras in Pakistan observe Sikh Environment Day

- Ravneet Singh, EcoSikh’s Program Manager in India, and EcoSikh Intern, Satvir Kaur, appeared on Day & Night News Channel to share thoughts on importance and significance of celebrating Sikh Environment Day on Guru Har Rai ji’s Gurgaddi Diwas.
  - Ravneet Singh, Day & Night News Channel: Breakfast Show (March 2) on Environment & Sikh
  - Satvir Kaur, Day & Night News Channel: Breakfast Show (March 14) on Environment

- Bandana Kaur, Ambassador of EcoSikh, wrote an intellectual piece on The Huffington Post for Sikh Environment Day titled, “Protecting Mother Earth: Sikhism’s Ecological Roots”.

EcoSikh’s Facebook page provided a great platform to keep its users up-to-date on happenings and progress of Sikh Environment Day. Facebook invitation was created on January 14th and sent to about 1970 users. According to our web analytics, many people visited EcoSikh website through our Facebook.

EcoSikh’s Twitter account tweeted and re-tweeted news and progress on Sikh Environment Day on a regular basis. With 1270 followers, regular updates provided quick insights into the happenings of Sikh Environment Day and other Punjab related topics.

EcoSikh’s YouTube channel has several videos uploaded which showcases the efforts of people during Sikh Environment Day celebrations – children from Ludhiana cleaning their residential park, presentation at Gurdwara Sahib in Ameerpet, Hyderabad on Environment Day, and Gurdwara Sarabha Nagar celebrating Balehaari Kudrat Vasya flower show.
CELEBRATION STORIES: INDIA & PAKISTAN

Representation of tree planting efforts in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, New Delhi, Punjab and West Bengal in India, and Baluchistan, Sindh and Nankana Sahib in Pakistan as part of Sikh Environment Day celebrations this year.

Picture tool credit: National Geographic Education (Map Maker)
ANDHRA PRADESH

Hyderabad
Gurdwara Barambala
The Gurdwara held weeklong programs for Sikh Environment day. Notice boards were used to display information on topics of environment. Gurdwara’s youth planted trees around the Gurdwara premises during midnight celebrations to commemorate Guru Har Rai Saheb’s Gurgaddi Diwas.

Gurdwara AsaSingh Bag, Central Gurdwara Gauliguda
The Gurdwara celebrated this day displaying posters and other resources provided by EcoSikh.

Gurdwara Guru Ramdas Nagar, Gurdwara Rehmat Nagar
These Gurdwaras celebrated the day in collaboration. They planted large numbers of plant saplings to increase the green cover in the Gurdwara premises.

Guru Nanak High School, Sikh Chawniat
The school witnessed very versatile celebrations for the environment. Activities included prayers for the environment, seminars and plantation drives in the school. EcoSikh’s coordinator in Andhra Pradesh, Swarn Singh Nishanchi, was invited as one of the guest speakers. He shared words of encouragement with students and staff to practice an eco-lifestyle, live in harmony with the Guru’s teachings and continue to work towards environment conservation and preservation.

Gurdwara Ameerpet
The most visited Gurdwara in the heart of the city organized a special Kirtan Diwan to celebrate the Gurpurab and share the values of this special day with the Sangat. They had special displays on their notice boards about Guru Har Rai Saheb and Sikh Environment Day. EcoSikh drafted PowerPoint on ‘Sikh Vision on Environment’ was used to present during evening Diwan. Kirtan and Katha were also done to share the message of Gurbani and encourage the Sangat to live a green lifestyle. Gurdwara also bought new plants to decorate the entrance. Special weeklong Sukhmani Sahib Paath was performed by a group of Sikh ladies every morning for the wellbeing of our environment.
CHHATTISGARH

Raipur

Sikhs at Devpuri Gurdwara planted over hundred trees as part of the Gurdwara and organization’s efforts. The participants shared extreme happiness for being part of this auspicious celebration, revisiting old Sikh tradition of planting trees and taking care of them.

Chhattisgarh Sikh Sewa Sangathan

HARYANA

EcoSikh volunteers Gurpreet Singh and his team reached out to all the major Gurdwaras and schools, and inspired them to take concrete steps towards greening their cities and lives. Senior member of SGPC, Raghujit Singh Virk, had a discussion with EcoSikh Haryana volunteer coordinator Gurpreet Singh about future projects which will include rainwater harvesting in SGPC buildings in Haryana, reducing and discouraging the use of plastics and disposables, and beginning organic farming on a piece of SGPC agricultural land as a pilot project.

Kalwa

Government Primary School

Gurpreet Singh, teacher at Government Primary School in village Kalwa, Haryana, started a nursery project to mark Sikh Environment Day this year. With just 50 young students, the efforts began when students used polythene bags from households to plant seeds and saplings provided to them by EcoSikh. As a pledge, each student contributes one and a half hour from the two activity periods every week towards taking care of the nursery.

Ambala

Guru Da Garib

This organization helped with the outreach for this year’s celebrations by sending messages in India and abroad to over 700 Sikh contacts.

Gurdwara Badshahi Bag

Sangat has taken the initiative by commencing the greening of parikrama area of this historical Gurdwara. The parikrama area was initially unlevelled and swampy but now has been land filled and levelled. There are plans to restore the gardens and green patches in future as next phase of this project.

Sikh women from a local community planting trees at Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
Jind
Gurdwara Dhamdhan Sahib
The committee of this Gurdwara distributed plant saplings as prasad and over 2000 saplings are reported to have been distributed to associated Sangat for this year’s Sikh Environment Day celebrations.

Yamuna Nagar
Guru Nanak Khalsa College
This college organized an inter-college Gurbani Shabad gayan (hymn singing) competition and plantation drive at their college. Inspirational notes about Guru Har Rai Sahib’s special love for nature were delivered to the students and audience.

Rohtak
Vaish Public School
The school made a commitment to start a recycling program for office paperwork.

HIMACHAL PRADESH
Solan
Dagshai Public School
The school students celebrated their 3rd Sikh Environment Day by singing hymns, organizing a seminar on topics of environment degradation followed-up with a reflection on ‘What can we do?’. Students planted saplings despite severe weather conditions, which showed their dedication and commitment to this cause. They also performed a skit based on the ideals of Bishnoi Community (Chipko Movement) who sacrificed their lives for saving trees.
“Sir, I want to make our India again a ‘Green India’ because people are cutting out trees and I don’t want that, but, I want that every person - an old, young or a child should grow a tree in their homes.”

Tavleen Narang in a letter addressed to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

MADHYA PRADESH

Indore

Tavleen Foundation

This year Tavleen Foundation released a 13 page PDF booklet, Tavleen Eco-Booklet, on the auspicious occasion of Sikh Environment Day dedicated to Guru Har Rai Saheb. The initiative came as a result of inspiration by Guru Har Rai Saheb who advised Sikhs to care of nature and whose legacy provided one of the most inspiring models for our ecological consciousness. This little booklet, in a very animated and artistic manner, shares guidelines on how to practice an environment conscious lifestyle, various concerns regarding our deteriorating environment and how we can make a contribution for a healthy and sustainable living planet.

Some ideas from the booklet include – saving electricity by switching off power when not needed, striving to be a vegetarian to be kind to animals, preserving water resources since it is vital to our sustenance, leaving less carbon footprint and travelling by public transportation among other ideas. speaks on how we feel when there is a power cut, how being vegetarian is being earth friendly, how water is so precious and its worth will grow in future, and various other thoughts like travelling and carbon footprint and much more. An article was also published on Tavleen, a little girl so loving and caring of nature in whose memory this foundation was established, and her wish for a beautiful, heavenly Earth. The foundation distributed this booklet among students and Sangat as a part of their celebrations for Sikh Environment Day.

MAHARASHTRA

Head Jathedar, Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib (Nanded), Giani Kulwant Singh issued a message calling Sikhs everywhere in the world to celebrate the Gurgaddi Diwas of Guru Har Rai Ji by planting trees at home and Gurdwaras. The Takhat also announced a local deluxe bus service in Nanded to reduce carbon emission which will connect eight pilgrim spots in the city. A major religious event including Katha and Kirtan diwan was organised involving students and staff of all the schools and colleges of the city, an exhibition and rangoli on environment was organised by ladies staff at the Gurdwara on March 14. The Gurdwaras, hospitals and educational institutions in all over Nanded organized a major plantation drive in the city under the aegis of Baba Narinder Singh of Gurdwara Langar Sahib. This major event was highlighted by various press and media in India and abroad.

Message on Sikh Environment Day by Jathedar Kulwant Singh from Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib. Click on the image to view the larger version.
NEW DELHI
Delhi

Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) involved all of their 20 educational institutions (Guru Har Krishan Public Schools) in New Delhi via eco-assembly, speeches and presentations, outdoor planting activities, and messages from Gurbani. This greatly inspired the students to take action towards environment protection. They also planned for a flower exhibition and sale at Rakab Ganj Sahib Gurdwara during March 13th celebrations. Many of their schools sent reports with pictures of their celebrations.

Arpana Caur
A famous Delhi based artist, Arpana Caur, presented three of her artwork in honor of Sikh Environment Day. The artwork - Aarti, Dharti-Parkirti, Dharti - depicts Nanak’s love for nature. When shared through EcoSikh’s social media outlets, the work was very well appreciated by the community.

Eco-Earth Care
A New Delhi based monthly environment magazine, Eco Earth Care Optimised, published an article written by Niti Sinha on page 56-57 about EcoSikh and Sikh Environment Day in their April edition. This magazine which is printed on recycled paper is widely read by community in India. The digital copy is available online for free.

Karampura Colony and Shiromani Sadh Sangat Society
Surinder Kaur Shunty, Councilor of Karampura area of New Delhi, helped organize an environment rally in their area to spread awareness about Sikh Environment Day and Guru Har Rai’s life. They encouraged the Sangat to follow in his footsteps and get inspiration from the legacy he has left behind. Many Sikhs who had gathered wore green T-Shirts, walked around distributing plant saplings to the residents, and appealing them to take good care of their surroundings and residential areas. Other former DSGMC members and Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) leaders
joined in the environment rally as well. (Press: Guru Har Rai Sahib Ne Kudrat Noo Prem Karan Te Es Di Sundarta Banae Rakhan Di Sikhiya Ditti)

Guru Har Krishan Public School (Tilak Nagar)
The students and staff had very joyous environment day celebrations at their school. They planted saplings, sang Gurbani with messages on nature, had stage performances by students, and signed pledge forms for future protection and preservation of the environment.

Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha (Hari Nagar)
This Gurdwara organized a wide range of activities to celebrate Guru Har Rai Saheb’s Gurgaddi Diwas. They sang Gurbani Kirtan and shared Katha with the Sangat, distributed plant saplings for people to plant and take care, initiated a tree ceremony, and pledged to do Nagar Kirtan for Gurpurabs in a ‘Green’ way.

PUNJAB
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), the main governing body of Sikh places of worship, held celebrations in 78 Gurdwaras, 11 Colleges, 31 Khalsa schools and 12 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) schools, planting 50 trees at each location. In total, 5000 new trees were officially planted during the celebrations in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh.

Amritsar
Post Sikh Environment Day Celebrations, there was a declaration issued by Sikh spiritual leaders of five Takhats to celebrate March 14th as Sikh Environment Day as an annual event going forward. This announcement is going to prove instrumental for the EcoSikh movement and for the entire Sikh community as we continue to inspire people to take individual and collective action. (Press: Sikh Environment Day Declared Annual Sikh Event by Five Takhats)

Message on Sikh Environment Day from Akal Takhat. Click on the image to view the larger version.
Mission Agaaz
The organization arranged a flower show during the week of March 14th under the title of Gul-Gulshan-Gulfaam engaging District Administration and Municipal Corporation at Amritsar. In attendance were Mayor Bakshi Ram Arora and DC Rajat Aggarwal of Amritsar who called for a deeper connection between the environment and general public and appreciated the efforts of the participants. An on the spot painting competition for kids was also a part of celebrations.

Guru Har Krishan Public School (Jhabal)
The institute planted a ceremonial tree at their school ground and had special prayers for contemplation on environment in the morning assembly.

Guru Har Krishan Public School (Patti)
The school started with reciting of Sukhmani Sahib and Kirtan followed by a seminar on environmental issues and concluding the activities by planting trees in their school premises. Principal Mrs. Kamal Vig shared thoughts on Guru Har Rai Saheb's life, his legacy and our duty as our Guru's Sikhs to take care of Mother Earth so future generations can reap the same benefits. (Press: Sikh Vatavaran Diwas Manaaya)

Chief Khalsa Diwan Charitable Society
The organization involved nearly 40 of their Khalsa Schools for environment day celebrations via 10 minute eco-assembly and environmental pledges.

Gurdwara Chubara Sahib, Gurdwara Bauli Sahib, Gurdwara Goindwal Sahib
The Gurdwaras organized an Akhand Path to celebrate month of Chet, the beginning of Sikh New Year, as well as Gurgaddi Diwas of Guru Har Rai Saheb as part of their Dharmic Smagam. Trees were also planted in the Bauli Sahib complex by Manager Balwinder Singh and other heads of the Gurdwara. (Press: Nanakshahi Nave Vare Mauke Gurdwara Chubara Sahib Vikhe Smagam)

School teacher presenting on the issue of Climate Change at Guru Har Krishan Public School (Patti) in Amritsar, Punjab.
Manji Sahib Diwan Hall, Golden Temple
On March 14th morning, a special katha on Sikh Environment Day and Sikh New Year was broadcast from Manji Sahib Diwan Hall in Golden Temple. Giani Amrik Singh, a famous Sikh religious speaker (kathawachak), emphasized key points of water preservation and reduction in air pollution. Thousands of pilgrims attended this program at Amritsar and millions watched it live on PTC, a famous Punjabi TV channel aired in 68 countries across the world.

Gurdwara Baba Budha ji Bir Sahib (Jhabal)
The Gurdwara committee planted several trees, shady and fruit-bearing, in the complex. Manager Paramjit Singh shared the message of keeping the air, water and environment clean as part of our moral duty. He added that all our Gurus have given the message to the Sikhs to connect with the Creator and his Kudrat. He urged the sanagt to plant at least one tree. (Press: Satve Pathshah Da Gurgaddi Dihara ‘Vatavaran Diwas’ Vajon Manaya)

Bathinda
Mata Sahib Kaur Girls College (Talwandi Sabo)
College Principal, Dr. Rajinder Kaur, along with other staff members and students planted trees on campus. The institute planted trees at their college campus. Students and staff celebrated Guru Har Rai Saheb’s Gurgaddi Diwas with high spirits and reflection on environment’s wellbeing. (Press: Satven Pathshah Shri Guru Har Rai Di Prakash Mauke Boote Lagae)

Barnala
Sukhmani Foudation (Amargarh)
The organization conducted an environment seminar at Government Elementary School Niamatpur. All the people in attendance planted trees at school premises. Headmaster Balbir Singh, very humbly, took charge of taking care of the trees. (Press: Vatavaran
Baba Deep Singh Gurmat Vidyala
This institute celebrated Sikh Environment Day with a ceremonial tree planted by Gurdwara committee members. The guests, in their respective speeches, shared the value of celebrating this day and connecting ourselves to the environmental values. (Press: Guru Har Rai Sahib Da Prakash Poorab Paudhe Laga Ke Manaya)

Batala
Gurdwara Dehra Sahib, Gurdwara Satkartaria Sahib
The two SGPC Gurdwaras planted shady and fruit bearing trees in the local area to mark the celebrations. (Press: Boote Lagaa Ke Vishva Sikh Vatavaran Diwas Manaya)

Gurdwara Otthian Sahib
The Gurdwara organized a special program on Sikh Environment Day and Baba Ajit Singh from Khadoor Sahib planted trees at the historical Gurdwara. (Press: Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib De Gurtagaddi Diwas Mauke Paude Lagae)

Gurdwara Guru Teg Bahadur
This Gurdwara held Kirtan and Katha on themes of environment, had many notice board with information, Gurbani phrases related to nature to inspire the Sangat.

Wood Blossoms School
Celebrations at this school included plantation drives, seminar and speeches on themes of environment, and an initiative to recycle paper in office use. Future plans at this school included an initiation of herbal garden to create more awareness about the traditional herbs and plants, and teach their importance.

Woodstock Public School
This public school held seminars and speeches, showed a PowerPoint and held ceremonies for tree planting. Future plans included creating a garden on school premises.

Chandigarh
Artwork by Painter Rahi Mohinder Singh
Painter Rahi Mohinder Singh generously donated a print of one of his artwork to EcoSikh this year. The beautiful and vibrant painting shows Guru Har Rai Saheb giving a tree sapling to a GurSikh to plant. This inspirational piece of artwork was widely used by EcoSikh for its outreach and communication for Sikh Environment Day. The artwork was well praised by the wider Sikh community when it was shared on social media platforms.

Zila Yudh Akali Dal (Roopnagar), Sukhmani Foundation
These organizations celebrated the Sikh Environment Day by planting 101 tree saplings at village Behrampur Zimmidara. (Press: Boote La Ke Gurta Gaddi Diwas Manaya)
Satnam Sarv Kalyan Trust
The organization engaged over 300 schools via 10 minute Eco-Prayer as part of Sikh Environment Day celebrations. The organization provides curriculum in religious studies to the schools under its umbrella.

Chamkaur Sahib
Gurdwara Katalgarh Sahib, Gurdwara Damdamaa Sahib
The forest department along with Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) members planted trees at Gurdwara Katalgarh and Damdamaa Sahib. A special program with Kirtan and Katha was organized at the Gurdwaras and Sangat was appealed to plant trees to commemorate the Gurgaddi Diwas of Sri Guru Har Rai. (Press: Vatavaran Diwas Vajon Manaye Es Dihare Mauke Lagae Boote)

Kasba Chaarh Sahib, Sant Pyara Singh Study Foundation and Sukrit Trust
These organizations planted trees at various places involving staff and students of the institute. Students were briefed on the message of Sikh Environment Day. (Press: Vishva Sikh Vatavaran Diwas Manaaya)

Fatehgarh Sahib
Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University
The university celebrated Sikh Environment Day as a National Conference dedicated on the ‘Preservation of Environment: Challenges before Humanity’ on March 14th to commemorate the Gurgaddi Diwas of Sri Guru Har Rai Saheb. Some important people in attendance were Padham Shri Baba Sewa Singh, Avtar Singh Makkar (SGPC President), Dr. Jaspal Singh (Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University), Dr. A.S. Reddy (Head of Department of Energy and Environment at Thappar University in Patiala), and Kiranjot Kaur (Kiranjot Kaur). There were number of scholars from different universities, colleges and science institutions who participated. The conference had presentations – research papers and posters – in addition to a slogan writing competition. Moreover, many trees were also planted in the University. (Press: Stress laid on preservation of environment at seminar, Sikh Vatavaran Diwas National Conference De Roop Ch Manaaya)

Gurdaspur
Sant Baba Hazara Singh Primary School (Nikke Ghuman)
The school organized a seminar on environment issues. Students and staff planted over 50 trees in honor of Guru Har Rai Sahib. (Press: Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji De Gurtagaddi Diwas Nu Samarpith Sikh Vatavaran Diwas Manaya)
Gurdwara Darbar Sahib (Dera Baba Nanak)
The Gurdwara staff planted shady and fruit-bearing trees in the area to mark this day. (Press: Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib De Gurtagaddi Mauke Boote Laae)

Hoshiarpur

Farmers at an organic farming workshop organized at Hoshiarpur, Punjab.

Lambhra Kaangri Bahumatvi Society, Kheti Virasat Mission, Shubh Karman Society, Environment Panchayat Ballowal, Organic Producer Association and Farmers Union

A workshop was organized at Ballowal on organic agriculture. Organic agriculture experts Umendra Dutt, Dr. Chamanlal Vishisht and Gurpreet Singh shared knowledge about devastating effects of chemical and pesticide intensive farming for future generations. They shared knowledge on how the land fertility could be upheld by adopting organic agriculture. Various critical issues like BT Crop and saving the original reproductive natural seeds were discussed and farmers were advised to protect their seeds and their rights to seeds. (Press: Kudrat Kheti Sambandhi Workshop Lagaai)

Khalsa College, Gharshankar

The Babbar Akali Memorial Khalsa College of Gharshankar planted ceremonial tree to commemorate the Sikh Environment Day. (Press: Sikh Vatavaran Diwas Manaya)

Jalandhar

Kanwar Satnaam Singh Khalsa High School

The school inspired and educated the students, teachers and staff through seminar and hands-on tree planting activities.

Khadur Sahib

Sri Guru Angad Dev College of Education

The institution running under the inspiration of Baba Sewa Singh of Khadur Sahib organized a seminar. The theme revolved around spiritual enlightenment of students and encouraging them to take responsibility in protecting and keeping the planet healthy. The celebrations were inaugurated with students in the assembly reciting prayers of Japji
Sahib and Sukhmani Sahib to seek the blessings of Waheguru. Baba Balwinder Singh (Kaar Sewa Khadur Sahib), Managing Committee members and other staff graced the occasion. The dignitaries and trainees enthusiastically planted beautiful plants around the college campus. A PowerPoint slideshow and a few short movies provided by EcoSikh were shared at the seminar. This provided the students an opportunity to visually see the damage and hazards caused by society's destruction of resources. All present staff members, students and others in attendance took pledge to grow more plants and save the natural resources.

Ludhiana

Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa Multiversity

The organization engaged over 450 schools, Gurdwaras and villages across Punjab to celebrate Sikh Environment day through environment theme focused morning assemblies in schools. The celebrations also included speeches and lectures in Gurdwaras and villages to inculcate ownership of responsibility for the natural resources and environment. Teams from this organization went and joined most of their venues and involved school staff and students. The celebrations emphasized on caring for sacred air, land and water, keeping our surroundings clean and healthy, and our individual responsibilities to plant and nurture trees. Students were encouraged to read their poetry, hymns and essays on environment. The Gurdwaras they involved celebrated the Gurpurab with singing of Kirtan and write-ups on theme ‘Nearer to Nature: Nearer to God’.

Gurdwara Flower Enclave

The Gurdwara showcased extraordinary dedication in implementing solutions to protect the environment. Within three weeks of celebration announcement by EcoSikh, they switched to steel utensils for Langar and stopped the use of Styrofoam and disposables at Gurdwara. The 14th March celebrations were marked with Kirtan and Kathas on nature, speeches and plant distribution to the Sangat at the Gurdwara. The members and Sangat also planted a few trees in the local community.
Guru Nanak Engineering College
NSS wing Program Manager Arvind Dhingra and Program Officer Deepinder Singh shared thoughts on environment via a PowerPoint presentation. A clean-up drive at on campus involving over 300 NSS volunteers was also organized. They invited EcoSikh Program Manager from India, Ravneet Singh, to speak to the gathering and inspire them to love, care for and take up responsibility to preserve the nature and its precious natural resources.

GurSikh Family Club
The club invited 200 families to a park for nature walk and discussion on environment degradation and our lifestyle choices which pollute the environment. Ravneet Singh, EcoSikh’s Program Manager, was also invited to address the club and share tips on how one can contribute in nature preservation by thoughtful action and lifestyle changes. Plants saplings were also given to the participating families. (Press: GurSikh Family Club Valon Vatavaran Diwas Mauke Rally)

Gurdwara Kalgidhar Sri Guru Singh Sabha
The Gurdwara organized a special diwan to celebrate the Sikh New Year as per Sikh calendar as well as Sikh Environment Day. They invited EcoSikh intern, Satvir Kaur, to share words on Guru Har Rai Saheb and his legacy with regards to Sikh Environment Day. She encouraged the Sangat to take this as a moral duty which the Sikhs must hold for the environment’s care.

Gurdwara Sarabha Nagar
The Gurdwara organized extraordinary programs for 15 days ranging from painting competition for area kids, a session of poems and speeches on environment flower show and plant exhibition as well as sale at Gurdwara starting 3rd March, which attracted huge gathering from all over the city. Later they inaugurated a photo gallery at Gurdwara which exhibited 12 months of the year based on Barah Mah from Gurbani. This Gurdwara’s work has been very influential in protecting trees in the surrounding areas within 1 kilometres of range. They have also planted over 500 trees in their area.
Gurmat Gian Missionary College & VMAD (Making a Difference) organization
The two organizations together, along with EcoSikh's support, organized an environment rally in Ludhiana routing 4 kilometres of city area. It brought over 250 youth and families together making it a mass awareness movement on saving water, reducing Styrofoam and disposable garbage, and planting more trees for the sake of Mother Earth. The chorus of inspirational eco-slogans attracted the crowds all over and the communication team of VAMD club interacted with shopkeepers and residents throughout the route. They shared information on water and garbage crisis and provided them with pledge forms to make continuous commitment for future. The rally was flagged off and received at finish line by political leaders Darhsan Singh Shiwalik and Simranjit Singh Bains respectively.

Gurdwara Safipura, Sidhwan Bet
The Gurdwara was encouraged by the message from Sri Akal Takhat Sahib to celebrate Gurgaddi Diwas as Sikh Environment Day. They organized an awareness program at Gurdwara to share the importance of valuing and preserving our environment and how each one of us can contribute individually. (Press: Safipura De Gurdwara Sahib Vikhe Vatavaran Diwas Manaya)

Gurdwara Singh Sabha Mata Gujri Road
The Gurdwara celebrated Sikh Environment Day with the help of resources from EcoSikh. There was Kirtan and Katha on these of nature, environment and how to take care of them. Notices were displayed with information to educate and create awareness among the Sangat.

Sangeet Cinema Road Shopkeepers Association
The shopkeepers association planted many trees along this road, inspiring many to join hands. (Press:
Dukaandaar Jathebandiyaan Ne Boote Laga Ke Manaya Gurtagaddi Diwas)

Mata Ganga Khalsa College for Girls, Manji Sahib (Kotan)
Stock exchange Executive Director, SGPC members, and students and staff members of college planted a ceremonial tree and conducted seminars to educate and bring about awareness. (Press: Vatavaran Diwas Manaya)

B-Block BRS Nagar
EcoSikh engaged children from over 12 families for the clean-up of a community park in their area. Kids were encouraged to invite their friends from their neighbourhood which they accomplished through sign-up methods and organizing themselves into teams to clean up their park. (Press: Kids Tidy BRS Nagar Park)

Kalgidhar Senior Secondary School
The school was part of the celebrations this year. They held an eco-assembly with students taking a pledge to conserve water, plant trees and contribute in keeping the surroundings clean. The school has reported to have a very successful impact from the eco-prayer and pledge from last year’s celebrations.

Alpine International Senior Secondary School
The school celebrated by initiating a recycling project for the offices, using notice boards to display environment related information and held seminars to educate the students, teachers and staff.
Mansa

Group of Malwai Cultural Society and Mansa Environmental Society

These groups advocated for Sikh Environment Day among various schools and Gurdwaras of Mansa and neighboring villages via posters and banners. They organized a seminar at Malwa Public School, Khyala and Dashmesh Public School, and Nagal Kalan to share the historical importance of this day. The message sent was of personal responsibility and do our bit for the environment with students, staff and committee members. The society also planted trees at Government Elementary School, Thuthiawali and shared environmental values with the villagers who were invited at the plantation drive. They also organized a plantation drive at Khalsa High School and Gandhi Senior Secondary School in Mansa.

Bhai Behlo Khalsa Girls College, Bhai Behlo Public School (Faffre Bhai-Ke)

College staff and students planted over 200 plants. Students also took responsibility to take care of the newly planted trees on campus. The school staff along with few SGPC members together planted trees at School campus to mark this day. (Press: Guru Har Rai Gurtagaddi Diwas Noo Vatavaran Diwas Vajon Manaya, Gurtagaddi Diwas Te Boote)

Guru Hargobind Public School (Lehri)

Students and staff conducted a special eco-assembly and took pledge to save environment. (Press: Vatavaran Diwas Manaya)

Seechewal and Udham Singh Wala

Baba Balbir Singh Seechwal addressed the public in this area and shared the environmental values. He asked them to safeguard their water resources and take a stand to maintain cleanliness. He made a plea to everyone to plant many trees to reverse the negative effects of the worsening environmental and climate. (Press: Vatavaran Noo Shudh Karan Layee Har Insaan Vadh Ton Vadh Rukh Lagave – Sant Seechewal)

Moga

Government High School (Mudhki)

The school registered on EcoSikh’s website online and celebrated the day with special eco-assembly and environment pledges by students.
Patton Hira Singh Wala Village
This historical village started a campaign on March 14th to encourage surrounding villages to protect natural resources and plant trees to combat pollution and preserve our dear Mother Earth for generations to come. The organization, Patton Eco-Tree and Landscape Society (PETALS), took this initiative after they received a call from Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib for celebrating Sikh Environment Day. The celebrations attracted over 200 villagers including students and staff members of schools and colleges of nearby villages, the Panchayat, Cooperative Society of Village, officials from Metro Hospitals, and staff from Oriental Bank and Civil Hospital. Words about Guru Har Rai Saheb’s life were shared and the audience was encouraged to apply his teachings in their lives. This village has been instrumental in grassroots work by planting over 1950 trees during November and December 2012. Additionally, they have plans to cover open spaces with grass and plant trees like Gulmohar, Chakrasia and Silver Oak on the main street of village, also called Firni.

Gurdwara Guru Ramdas Sahib, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar
The Gurdwara celebrated this day with Gurbani Kirtan and Katha veerchar by Hajoori Raagi Bhai Prabhjeet Singh on Sri Guru Granth Sahib and teachings on environment. (Press: Sri Guru Har Rai Jee Da Gurtagaddi Diwas Manaya)

Baba Namdev Education Society (Akalsar Road)
The society conducted a seminar at Sant Namdev Public School and shared the environmental values from the life of Guru Har Rai Saheb with students and staff. (Press: Gurtagaddi Diwas Sambhandi Jaankari Ditti)

Kes Samhbal Mohim Organization (Baghapurana)
The organization celebrated Sikh Environment Day with a plantation drive of shady and flowery trees at Government Senior Secondary School for boys.

Patiala
Gurdwara Rohta Sahib, (Nabha)
In the presence of Cabinet Minister Surjit Singh Rakhra, Gurdwara Rohta Sahib along with Patiala Welfare Sewa Society planted trees at the historical Gurdwara here. Cabinet Minister Rakhra shed light on Guru Har Rai Saheb’s life and his love for flower-bearing trees. (Press: Rakhra Valon Etehaasic Asthaanvan Te Rukh Lagaa Ke Manaya Satve Pathshah Da Gurtagaddi Diwas)

Khalsa College
The college held celebrations and planted trees in their botanical gardens to mark this important day. (Press: Guru Har Rai Ji De Gurtagaddi Diwas Noo Samarpith Vatavarann Diwas Manaya)
Patiala and Fatehgarh Sahib
Mata Sahib Kaur Khalsa Girls College of Education, Nanni Chah Unit
Nanni Chah unit provided plants for the plantation drive at the college ground where students of Sikh Environment Club planted 40 trees. The chief guests planted ceremonial trees and shared the value of environment preservation. (Press: Mata Sahib Kaur College Vikhe Boote Lagaae)

Paryavaran Welfare Society, Thapar University
The institutions planted 100 trees of Jamun or Java Plum at village Bibipur’s cremation ground. (Press: Bibipur Vikhe Jamun De 100 Boote Lagae)

Gurdwara Gobindgarh Sahib
This Gurdwara under Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) distributed plant saplings with Sangat of the area and provided them with good guidelines for taking good care of the tree as a part of their religious duty. (Press: Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji Da Avtar Poorab Manaya)

Panth Ratan Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra Institute of Advance Studies in Sikhism (Bahadargarh)
The director of this institute which is run under Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Dr. Rajinderjit Kaur organized a plantation drive planting shady, flowers and fruit bearing trees in the new campus of the institute. (Press: Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji De Gurtagaddi Diwas Te Boote Lagaae Gaye)

Pathankot
Forest Department
The forest department organized a special program in honor of Guru Har Rai Saheb. Mahavir Singh, head of the department, shared the legacy of Guru Har Rai Saheb, his dedication to planting fruit and flower bearing tress as well as medicinal herbs. He also urged the attending Sangat to plant as many trees during this month as part of the celebrations. (Press: Prakaash Utsav Nu Boote Lagaa Ke Vatavaran Diwas Vajon Manaya)
DRV DAV Public School
The students participated in various activities according their assigned house designations. Display board competitions, PowerPoint presentations, visit to local Gurdwaras and sharing the knowledge with Sangat, art competitions, poetry recitation and rally were all part of the celebrations.

Roopnagar
Naulakha Garden, Kiratpur Sahib (Anandpur Sahib), Gurdwara Sheeshmehal Sahib
Jathedar of Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Giani Tarlochan Singh, was in attendance in Kiratpur Sahib for revival of three century old Naulakha Bagh of Guru Har Rai Saheb, the Seventh Sikh Guru. He initiated the planting ceremony as part of Sikh Environment Day celebrations and as a tribute to Guru Har Rai Saheb. The revival of this important herbal garden brought together many Sikh leaders, ecologists and known community members. (Press: Boote Lagaa Ke Sikh Vatavaran Diwas Manaayaa)

To celebrate seventh Sikh Guru, Guru Har Rai Saheb’s 383rd birth anniversary, Sikh volunteer organization, Shree Ganga Nursery of Zirakpur along with support from Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) began the plantation of over 70 varieties of fruit and vegetable bearing trees and medicinal herbs at the Naulakha Bagh. The plantation initiative which began on 31st January, 2013 on Guru Har Rai Saheb’s birth anniversary was completed on March 14th, Guru Har Rai Saheb’s Gurgaddi Diwas. Principle Surinder Singh spoke on Guru Har Rai Saheb’s life history in Kiratpur Sahib on this occasion. (Press: Sikhs Reviving Historical Naulakha Bagh of Guru Har Rai Saheb on his 383rd Birth Anniversary)

Gurdwara Shaheedi Bagh, Anandpur Sahib
Guru Gobind Singh Sports and Social Club along with Gurdwara staff members planted 5 ceremonial trees in honor of Panj Pyaras here at Gurdwara premises. The Sikh community in attendance concluded there was a dire need to plant trees in Punjab. Growing environmental issues and the increasing rates of cancer in Punjab have crippled the state and its inhabitants. (Press: Sikh Vatavaran Diwas Manaaya, Panj Pyareyaan De Naa Te Boote Lagae)
**Tarantaaran**

Guru Arjun Dev Khalsa College (Chohla Sahib), Collegiate Senior Secondary School

The college staff and students initiated ceremony of planting trees. Words were shared with students to keep the environment healthy and clean. College’s Principal, Dr. Kulvinder Singh, helped planting trees as well. (Press: Gurtagaddi Diwas Vatavaran Diwas Vajon Manaya)

**WEST BENGAL**

**Kolkata**

Khalsa English High School

This Khalsa School’s efforts have been very inspiring in spreading awareness about environment. The school organized a week long program with a variety of activities to commemorate Sikh Environment Day. The celebrations began with prayers followed by painting and rangoli decoration competitions, a special clean-up drive by kids and staff, and serving of food to in pattals or leaf plates keeping eco-lifestyle in mind. No disposables were used.
PAKISTAN

Karachi

National Museum of Pakistan, Gurdwaras in Karachi, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Nanakana Sahib

In a historical moment, more than 35 important Gurdwaras in Pakistan, in collaboration with the Pakistan Sikh Council, including the birthplace of Guru Nanak, Nankana Sahib, celebrated this day with Kirtan, Katha and tree plantation drives. Ramesh Singh, Chairman of Pakistan Sikh Council and EcoSikh Ambassador for Pakistan, worked dedicatedly to involve the community in celebration of Sikh Environment Day. Leaders from Hindu, Christian and Muslim communities were present at the multi-faith conference organized at the National Museum of Pakistan to have a dialogue about environment. Faith leaders in attendance from different faiths shared their faith’s perspective on environment, ecology and climate change. Ramesh Singh explained the significance of important legacy left behind by Guru Har Rai Saheb for preservation and protection of our environment, natural resources and the biodiversity which coexists with it. He added, “When Guru Har Rai Saheb took charge as the Seventh Sikh Guru, he created the Naulakha Bagh in Kiratpur (Punjab, India), built wildlife sanctuaries, and advocated cleanliness of environment to maintain its sanctity. Following in the footsteps of his teachings, this global call for action from the Sikh community towards environment is one of those events in life when we should resolve to take care of our Mother Earth. It is our moral duty towards our Sikh values and beliefs which guide us in our journey.” He pledged continued support for celebrating this day going forward to pay tribute to Guru Har Rai Saheb’s environmental vision. For more information, visit their facebook page. (Press: Sikhs from Pakistan Celebrate Sikh Environment Day)
CELEBRATION STORIES: DIASPORA

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales

Project Khalsa
This organization involved the Sikh community through clean-up drives around the city, held a bicycle rally to engage the members with nature-focused activities. Kirtan and Katha were also performed as part of the celebrations.

Victoria

Dya Singh, Composer & Musician
Respected member of the Sikh Kirtan Community wrote a thoughtful piece on Sikh Environment Day which was published on Sikhnet.com. The piece was titled, “Happy New Year - The Environment, The Eco-System and Mankind’s Responsibility.”

Supreme Sikh Council of Australia, Inc.
Harkirat Singh Ajnoha, General Secretary of the organization, coordinated the efforts for celebration of Sikh Environment Day along with Sikh New Year celebrations. Based in the City of Whittlesea, the celebrations included many cultural activities ranging from fireworks, gatka and kabaddi.

CANADA

Ottawa

Gurdwara Sahib Ottawa Sikh Society
Harinder Singh of Sikh Research Institute spoke at the Gurdwara on the urgent need to make gender justice and environmental justice part of important dialogue among the Sikh community.

Regina

Sikh Sewa Society of Regina

“Though we do not want to overshadow the importance and significance of Khalsa Devas (14 April), I believe a greater awareness of this date is of importance in line with one of the greatest ‘needs’ of the moment for this planet – environment awareness which included conserving energy, lesser reliance on fossil fuels, water wastage, greed motivated devastation of vegetation without proper rejuvenation, minimization of garbage and encouraging recycling.”

Dya Singh, Australia
Renowned Singer and Composer
The Gurdwara celebrated Sikh Environment Day with their Sangat by doing Kirtan and Katha on the theme of environment. There were also efforts made to educate the Sangat through resources provided by EcoSikh on environment protection.

**Ontario**

**World Sikh Organization of Canada**
Sukhvinder Kaur, Executive Director of the organization, coordinated the efforts of celebrating Sikh Environment Day with its members. Lectures and seminars helped educate members and encouraged them to work towards protection of Mother Earth as part of their Sikh way of life. (News: [Marking Sikh Environment Day](#))

**British Columbia**

**Gurdwara Sahib Sukh Sagar**
The Gurdwara dedicated March 17th Diwan to celebrating Guru Har Rai Saheb's Gurgaddi Diwas with Gurbani Kirtan and Katha. Approximately 200 tree saplings were planted.

**FIJI**

**Wailailai**

**Khalsa Primary School and Khalsa College**
The institutions celebrated Sikh Environment Day for the third consecutive year. School's administration and staff addressed the need to work consciously on protection and preservation of environment. There were several activities such as planting of fruit and flower bearing trees around campus, lectures addressed on Guru Har Rai Saheb's work, and reflections on Guru Granth Sahib's teachings in which the teachers, staff and students actively participated.

**Tavua**

**Tagi Tagi Sikh Temple**
This Gurdwara continued the tradition of planting trees this year as well. Around the Gurdwara premises, there are flower-bearing plants as well as shrubs which have been planted. Along with Kirtan and Katha focused on nature and environment, notice boards were also used to educate and spread awareness.
MALAYSIA

Kuala Lumpur

Sikh Naujawan Sabha Malaysia

Sikh Naujawan Sabha Malaysia's support for celebrating Sikh Environment Day was very inspiring this year. The Sangat was in attendance in large numbers - children, adults, and Gurdwara committee members all participated very enthusiastically. The celebration included wide variety of activities from yoga bliss with nature, Guru and nature stories, coloring contest, PowerPoint presentation, recycle project, and EcoSikh pledge. The celebrations helped everyone experience build a deeper connection with nature.

PERU

Piura

Partap Singh with his family celebrating Sikh Environment Day by enjoying a walk among nature. They also took part in discussions with their local non-Sikh community members on the life and legacy of Guru Har Rai Saheb.

UNITED KINGDOM

Hertfordshire

Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha

The youth club active at the Gurdwara called Khalsa Roots distributed and planted saplings with children taking part in the celebrations. Wide distribution of plants among the Sangat was also done to encourage protection and preservation of our Mother Earth.
London
Gurdwara Southhall
Satinder Singh coordinated the Sikh Environment Day celebrations at this Gurdwara. There was Kirtan, Katha and workshops to educate the Sangat.

London (Sutton Lane)
Gurseva Organization
This non-profit organization celebrated Sikh Environment Day through reflections and discussions as well as Gurbani Kirtan and Katha.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Santa Ana, California
Sikh Gurdwara of Orange County
Sikh Gurdwara of Orange County celebrated Guru Har Rai Sahib’s Gurgaddi Diwas as Sikh Environment Day on March 17th. With the help of Dr. Ginny Kaur Chawla, Coordinator for the event, several kids took responsibility of organizing the Diwan and singing Gurbani Kirtan on the theme of environment. Presentations were also given on various environmental themes.

Dr. Chawla shared the message of ‘Pavan Guru Pani Pita, Mata Dharth Mahat’ with the Sangat. Principal, Mrs. Sukhjit Dhillon, and Gurpreet Bicky Singh from Guru Nanak Children’s Academy (GNCA), part of the Gurdwara’s Khalsa school, shared the message of ‘Reduce, Reuse and Recycle’ with the children. They emphasized individual as well as collective responsibility and encouraged everyone to live an eco-conscious lifestyle. Children expressed their thoughts on how to implement changes in their daily lives and be more eco-friendly Sikhs on poster board. Kirtan was also performed, followed by EcoSikh’s PowerPoint presentation on 'Sikh Vision on Environment', and two short videos shown on how Gurbani relates to the environment. Flyers, posters and banners were put throughout Display board made by children of Sikh Gurdwara of Orange County in Santa Ana, California.

Sikh Gurdwara of Orange County in Santa Ana, California has transitioned into using steel utensils during Langar.
the Gurdwara Sahib to create more awareness. Use of steel Langar utensils was also initiated to limit the use of disposables and Styrofoam. Initiated by Dr. Arinder Chadha, the Gurdwara Sahib also started a Pilot Program to switch to steel utensils and stop the use of Styrofoam during Langar.

**Elk Grove, California**

**Jakara Movement Sacramento, Sacramento Tree Foundation**

Over a dozen young Sikh volunteers participated along with other 15 individuals from local organizations in planting over 200 trees to create Habitat for Wildlife (in particular, the Swainsons Hawk) at the Cosumnes River Nature Preserve in Elk Grove, California. The event was organized by the Sacramento Tree Foundation and the volunteers planted bush seedlings, grass and other plants. (News: Planting Trees)

**Woodland, California**

**Sewa by Sikh Youth**

Young Sikh volunteers planted trees in and around the city in Woodland, California. The efforts of the group were truly inspiring as they took this individual responsibility to increase ‘greenery’ in their area.

**Whittier, California**

**Orange County Misl**

Youth run organization celebrated Sikh Environment Day by organizing a clean-up drive in the community.

**Norwalk, Connecticut**

**Guru Teg Bahadur Foundation**

The foundation celebrated Sikh Environment Day by doing Kirtan and Katha on the theme of nature, environment and encouraged the members to live an eco-friendly Sikh way of life.
Norwalk, Connecticut
Guru Gobind Singh Academy
Reena Kaur, Virsa teacher at this academy, organized a seminar and speech on environment, exhibition on restoration of ecology and with the help of volunteers installed recycling bins in the Khalsa School.

Oviedo, Florida
Sikh Society of Central Florida
The Gurdwara observed Sikh Environment Day on March 23rd with Kirtan and Katha to share the message with the Sangat. Notice boards were also set up around the Gurdwara to educate the Sangat. Children also took part in plantation drive.

Millibourne, Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Sikh Society Gurdwara
The Gurdwara celebrated Guru Har Rai’s Gurgaddi Diwas as Sikh Environment Day with much success with a lot of support from the Sangat. Recycling flyers were posted in the Gurdwara and Kirtan was sung from Eak Bageecha during that entire week. Rajinder Kaur, coordinator of this program, shared few words on the life and legacy of Guru Har Rai Saheb’s Gurgaddi Diwas and shared the ‘Sikh Vision on Environment’ PowerPoint with the Sangat. Navleen Kaur (13 years) and Harnoor Singh (8 years) made colorful posters on environment to display in the Gurdwara.

Silver Spring, Maryland
Guru Nanak Foundation of America (GNFA)
120 Khalsa school children ages 4 through 18 planted perennial tulips in pots. In addition, children wrote messages on how they can conserve the environment, engage in more recycling and reusing, reduce energy and water usage. The celebrations ended with food being served in steel plates and not in Styrofoam.

Students of GNFA Khalsa School in Silver Spring, Maryland planted trees in pots.
Rockville, Maryland
Guru Gobind Singh Foundation (GGSF)
The Khalsa School took active part in celebrating Sikh Environment Day by using EcoSikh provided resources. Children made presentations and took part in singing Kirtan during Diwan. The ‘Sikh Vision on Environment’ PowerPoint by EcoSikh was used widely to educate the Sangat in the Gurdwara.

Hidden Falls, Michigan
Gurdwara Sahib Hidden Sahib
The Gurdwara celebrated Sikh Environment Day celebrations with a Diwan dedicated to Guru Har Rai Saheb’s Gurgaddi Diwas. Kirtan and Katha were shared with the Sangat to inspire them to be thoughtful about their actions and engage in individual efforts to lead more eco-conscious lifestyles. Further plans were also discussed to introduce solar energy and water recycling in the Gurdwara building.

Fishkill, New York
Gurdwara Sikh Cultural Society
The Gurdwara made efforts to engage the Sangat with Sikh Environment Day celebrations through Kirtan, Katha and workshops.

Glen Cove, New York
Gurdwara Mata Sahib Kaur, Khalsa School NY
Khalsa School NY in Mata Sahib Kaur Gurdwara celebrated Sikh Environment Day inspired by the legacy of Guru Har Rai Saheb. Children planted trees in pots, decorated their pots with paint, and even assigned inspiring and beautiful names to their own plants. Some of the names included -- Naam Simran, Seva, Slim Shady, Flower Power, Rafael, The Big Dipper etc. The dedicated staff and teachers assisted the children, and took part in the activities themselves.
Cincinnati, Ohio
Sikh Temple Gurdwara of Greater Cincinnati
Jasleen Kaur, along with Mr. Harjinder Chauhan (Gurdwara Committee member), led efforts of Sikh Environment Day celebrations at the Gurdwara.

Houston, Texas
Sikh Center of Gulf Coast Area
The Gurdwara shared the message of our Sikh Gurus through Gurbani Kirtan and Gurmat veechar. Notice boards were used to display information to educate the Sangat about environment and its important in our lives. Plantation drive also carried out around the Gurdwara to increase the green cover.

Houston, Texas
Gurdwara Sikh Center Houston
Gurdwara Sikh Center Houston dedicated many services to celebrate Sikh Environment Day this year. Children took part in singing Gurbani Kirtan on the theme of environment and also created beautiful posters with messages of environment preservation and protection. Bhai Sahib Manjit Singh of the Gurdwara also inspired the Sangat to take care of our Mata Dharth (Mother Earth) through his Katha and Kirtan. An engaging presentation was given by Inderpal Singh Gumer, Gurdwara Committee member, on the life and legacy of Guru Har Rai Sahib. Additionally, the Gurdwara Sahib used steel utensils for serving Langar and pledged their continued support for this cause by not using disposables in future.
Texas
Gurdwara Nishkam Seva
The Gurdwara shared the message of our Sikh Gurus through Gurbani Kirtan and Gurmat veechar. Notice boards were also used to educate and spread awareness among the Sangat.

Sterling, Virginia
Guru Angad Institute of Sikh Studies (GAISS)
This Gurmat School dedicated their Saturday school in loving memory of Guru Har Rai Saheb’s Gurgaddi Diwas. They focused on educating and sharing the legacy of our Seventh Guru with their students through artwork, discussions and worksheets in their classrooms. The Diwan was also dedicated to Guru Har Rai Saheb’s legacy. Sher Singh, Executive Director of GAISS, shared examples of our Guru’s commitment to preserving and protecting the environment with the help of EcoSikh’s PowerPoint, ‘Sikh Vision for Environment’. Raag Dhanasari Shabad, Gagan Main Thaal Raw Chand Deepak Bane, was also shared with the Sangat. Plant seeds were also distributed to students and their families to plant and take care of during its growth.

Fairfax, Virginia
Singh Sabha Gurdwara (Braddock Road)
The Gurdwara celebrated Sikh Environment Day by sharing Guru Har Rai Sahib’s legacy and encouraging the Sangat to actively live an eco-conscious lifestyle.

Fairfax Station, Virginia
Sikh Foundation of Virginia
Surinder Singh, member of the Gurdwara committee, shared a presentation and stories of Guru Har Rai Saheb’s life and legacy with the Sangat. Additionally, 300 steel plates have been ordered from India to replace the plastic and Styrofoam supplies used during Langar. Plans are also in progress to make arrangements for compost at the Gurdwara. Youth members were also involved in planting flowers around the Gurdwara Sahib.
Roanoke, Virginia
Gurdwara Roanoke
The Gurdwara celebrated Sikh Environment Day with the Sangat by sharing Gurbani Kirtan and Katha focused on nature and environment. They also introduced ideas and measure to implement long term plans such as solar energy and water recycling.

Renton, Washington
Gurdwara Singh Sabha
The Gurdwara made efforts to celebrate Sikh Environment Day as Eco-Awareness Month with a wide range of activities among the children, adults and members of the Sikh community.

Olympia, Washington
Guru Nanak Darbar
The Gurdwara celebrated the entire month as Eco-Awareness Month. Children, youth and the entire sangat took part in the celebrations with Kirtan, Katha and reflections to help preserve and protect the environment.

UNITED SIKHS Organization
The organization generously volunteered to help EcoSikh in its efforts. The organization used their social media presence and website to write about Sikh Environment Day and encouraged the members to be eco-conscious in their daily lives. (News: Becoming an EcoSikh!)

*Note: This report is meant to highlight the Sikh community’s efforts and their dedication to the cause of caring and protecting our Air, Water and Earth. There are chances we may have missed mentioning your efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact us to share your story. All the credit for the pictures used in this document goes to their respective owners. We thank them for letting EcoSikh use their work for educational reporting purposes. To view more pictures from Sikh Environment Day celebrations from this year, please visit our Flickr page.*
CONCLUSION

With increasing consumption and wastefulness, it has become crucial for the Sikh community to come together, take a stand on the ongoing environmental injustice and engage in collective work. This will have a positive impact so the generations to come can bear the fruit of Mother Nature’s wonders as well. Continuous exploitation of natural resources will only pave the path for destruction and chaos everywhere. As a community, we must come together to lead the vision of our Sikh Gurus which promotes a healthy and sustainable environmental community, where the biodiversity remains vibrant and all of the Divine’s creations coexist in harmony. Making environmental stewardship part of our daily lives, taking it as a moral responsibility and understanding the inherent value of nature in human life will help us live the true environmental vision of our Sikh Gurus. Mankind’s survival and the survival of the planet can only be achieved when we engage in honest dialogues with ourselves and our community members, and work towards practical solutions so the future generations can also benefit from the sacred relationship of humans and the Mother Earth.

In conclusion, the Sikh Environment Day celebrations brought the Sikh community together again this year. The Sikhs worldwide celebrated their strong bond with Mother Earth and took tangible actions for its protection and preservation - as evidenced by numerous stories across several continents. The celebrations were different this year! There was more meaningful action by Gurdwara committees - switching to steel utensils for Langar, stopping the use of Styrofoam and disposables, planning long-term sustainability projects like composting and solar panels, and creating awareness about water and soil conservation among the farming community. EcoSikh is committed to improving its work to better serve the Sikh community in carrying out the organization’s mission. For next years’ Sikh Environment Day celebrations, we hope to engage an even larger number of Gurdwaras, organizations, academic institutions and other members of the Sikh community through education, advocacy and grassroots work. Strengthening the foundations laid in the past three years, EcoSikh hopes to integrate education and grassroots programs to guide the Sikh community towards a sustainable future!
CONTACT INFORMATION

Ravneet Singh
Program Manager
EcoSikh, India
Ravneet.singh@ecosikh.org

Bandana Kaur
Ambassador
EcoSikh, USA
Bandana.kaur@ecosikh.org

Paramjeet Kaur
Program Administrator
EcoSikh, USA
Paramjeet.kaur@ecosikh.org

SOCIAL MEDIA

WEBSITE

EcoSikh