Holocaust and Earth Day

It would be hard to miss the arrival of Earth Day on Sunday, a time for reflection on the fragile state of the planet. But it is also a day set aside for a commemoration of another kind. It is Holocaust Memorial Day, known in Hebrew as Yom Hashoah, a time to remember the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis during World War II.

While events marking Earth Day and Yom Hashoah will, for the most part, be separate, a Jewish environmental group outside Philadelphia is suggesting a connection.

"Jews have a special sensitivity to the preciousness of life," said Ellen Bernstein, director of Shomrei Adamah, a project of the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot in Wyncote, Pa. "Jews have a real understanding on this day in particular to the possibility of disaster when the world sits back and watches and waits."

Ms. Bernstein will be a speaker at the Earth Fest in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, where she plans to ask participants to observe a moment of silence for the victims of the Holocaust. She hopes to begin speaking at 2 P.M., just as a Yom Hashoah commemoration will be getting under way at the city's nearby Holocaust memorial.