

Marine Debris, or trash in waterways, is a huge ongoing issue locally and around the world and it accumulates quickly

in the waterways. In fact, various studies show that at least

5 to 12 million tons of plastic from the land goes into our

oceans each year, not including rivers, lakes and the Great

Lakes. The easiest way you can fix the problem of marine

debris is to keep your trash from ending up in our rivers

by REDUCING, REUSING & RECYCLING.

Learn more about the problem and how you

can be part of the solution.

did you know?

Most pieces of marine debris are plastic, which can break down into tiny microplastics that are almost impossible to remove from the water.



Marine debris, like other pollutants, "hitch a ride" in ditches, creeks and streams flowing downstream. From there the polluted water enters larger rivers like Swan Creek, Ottawa River and the Maumee River. While many groups are working hard to educate and prevent marine debris, the process begins with you. There are many local programs and initiatives currently in place for volunteers to take part in. Learn more about our watershed with the Youth Patch Day Workshop in March. Take charge by being part of Clean Your Streams 365, Get the Lead Out, Clean Your Streams or another cleanup. Share the message with Storm Drain Marking. But most importantly, get involved locally to Give Water A Hand!

Take Action! You can protect water quality. It's easy...

- Pick a few simple steps recommended in this tip card. Try them for a few months. Remember, a few simple changes can make a big difference.
- Share this tip card with a friend or neighbor.
- Get involved in local community events focusing on marine debris prevention and removal such as the programs through Partners for Clean Streams.

You can make a difference!



Partners for Clean Streams
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419-874-0727

PartnersforCleanStreams.org



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Over **12 million tons** of plastic from the land goes into our waterways each year.

MARINE DEBRIS

Trash in your waterways & what you can do about it.



6 DEGREES OF SEPARATION

How does trash travel?

1 Plastic bag from a store in the city



2 blows from a trash can



3 into a storm drain



4 travels through pipes and downriver



5 into the lake



6 where aquatic wildlife mistakes it for food.



Marine Debris comes in many forms and gets into our rivers in many ways with many varied affects. Some affects are more severe than others but all are potentially harmful. Good news is that it is almost 100% preventable!

Plastic, one-time use bags entangle more animals than any other debris, closely followed by fishing line.

Because they are light, bags are easily carried in the wind and travel to tops of trees, far across fields and into our rivers and lakes. They can get ripped, torn and shredded but take hundreds of years to break down completely. Instead of using plastic, one-time use bags, use cloth or reusable bags for any kind of shopping trips, not just grocery trips.



Cigarette Butts are the most common piece of trash.

The filters are made out of plastic fibers and can contain over 600 chemicals. Because the cigarette filters do not biodegrade in the environment, they can last hundreds of years without breaking down. Because they can look like a piece of food, they are often eaten by birds and other animals, often making them sick or eventually killing them. Instead of throwing your cigarette butts out the window, dispose of them properly in a trash receptacle or recycle them with organizations, such as Terracycle.

Straws are one of the most common pieces of trash and are very harmful to animals.

Because they can be confused as a food item, straws are found commonly in the stomachs of animals, such as turtles and birds. To help, next time you go out to eat, refuse a straw or bring your own reusable one.



checklist to saving our water

Use this checklist as a reminder of what you can do to make a difference. Tear it out, post it on your refrigerator, in the car or at work. Incorporating these small steps into your habits will add up.

✓ 1. Cover It!

Secure your trash using a trash can with a lid and make sure your bag is securely tied shut.

✓ 2. Bag It!

Use reusable bags when shopping, not just at grocery stores but when buying clothes, shoes, hardware or anything else that requires a bag.

✓ 3. Bottle It!

Drink tap water in a reusable bottle when on the go.

✓ 4. Reuse It!

Use reusable mugs, tableware (when away from home), packing material and gift wrap whenever possible.

✓ 5. Butt Out!

Use an ashtray so cigarette butts don't reach waterways.

✓ 6. Remove It!

Remove all tackle from waterways and use Fishing Line Recycling Bins along the river.

✓ 7. Leave No Trace!

Whenever in a park or other natural space, take all of your trash and belongings with you as you leave.



Here are a few habits you can practice to reduce the waste stream we make.

1. Reduce your use of straws by saying "no thanks" at restaurants or bring your own reusable straw when you travel.
2. Use reusable water bottles, coffee mugs, eating utensils and pack your lunch in reusable containers. Bring along your own toiletries, rather than buying new or using a hotel's disposable ones.
3. Buy things made from recycled materials. You will be supporting the recycling industry making it profitable to recycle items.
4. Buy in bulk whenever possible. You will use less plastic packaging over time.
5. Put a recycling container out at work and make sure the items get to a recycling center often.

