



SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

WHAT IS STORMWATER POLLUTION?

When rain falls and snow melts, the runoff produced may pick up a variety of contaminants (salt, oils, grease, fertilizer, pet waste) polluting our lakes and streams.

Remember: storm drains lead directly to our local rivers and streams.

- Americans generate 10.5 million tons of plastic each year and only recycle 1-2%.
- More than 22 million pounds of plastic pollution end up in the Great Lakes every year.
- The Great Lakes provide drinking water for over 40 million people. Microplastics can make their way through water treatment facilities and end up in our drinking water.
- Plastic debris makes up about 80% of litter on Great Lakes shorelines.
- Great Lakes plastic usually comes from local sources like storm drains and windblown litter.
- Every year, over 8 million tons of plastic enter the ocean.
- Plastic bags and other plastic garbage in the ocean kills as many as 1 million marine animals & birds in the Pacific Ocean every year.
- Ocean plastic can get caught up in currents and circulate the globe.

PLASTIC WASTE & STORMWATER

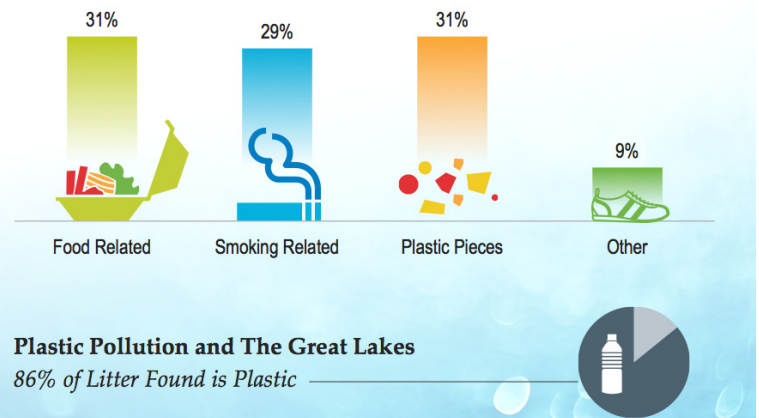
Rainwater and wind can carry plastic waste into storm drains or directly into nearby water bodies. Once in the system, local plastic waste can end up in the Great Lakes and ultimately the Atlantic Ocean. Plastic waste is extremely persistent in the environment and continually breaks down into smaller pieces called *microplastics*.

Microplastics are defined as plastic fragments less than 5mm in size (the top of a push pin) and have the potential to infiltrate our drinking water and food chains.

TOP 3 CATEGORIES

Alliance for the Great Lakes

of Most Common Litter Found



CURRENT PLASTIC BANS & POLICY CHANGES

Costa Rica will become the first country to ban single-use plastics and plans to eliminate them from the country by 2021. The ban will include straws, cutlery, bags, bottles, and cups made from plastic.

In July of 2018, India announced it would eliminate all single-use plastics in the country by 2020.

Hawaii has moved forward with legislation to ban all single-use plastics after banning plastic bags from grocery stores in 2015.

In June 2019, Canada announced it would ban some plastic products as early as 2021.



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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Here are some easy alternatives to common single-use plastics:

If you use...

Plastic grocery bags...

Disposable coffee cups...

Plastic straws...

Plastic water bottles...

K-cups or single serve coffee...

Plastic drink stirrers...

Plastic sandwich bags...

Plastic plates...

Plastic cutlery...

Try this alternative...

Keep reusable bags in your car, bag or purse, and bring them with you.

Use a reusable thermos or mug.

Opt for no straw, or use a paper or metal straw.

Carry a refillable water bottle.

Use a reusable coffee pod or make an entire pot.

Use a wooden stirrer.

Use reusable food storage containers.

Use and wash your normal dishware.

Keep reusable cutlery with you or use compostable cutlery.



Sources:

borgenproject.org • chicagotribune.com • greatlakes.org • huffpost.com • nrdc.org • nytimes.com • oceanconservancy.org • seastewards.org