

Be Plastic-Free because Plastic Pollutes!

According to NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Plastics make up 13% of all municipal waste generated in New York, and approximately 17% of the material buried in landfills (2010). 40% of plastic produced today is used for packaging; which is used once and then discarded in the landfill where it could take more than 500 years to start to break down. Most of the plastic used today cannot be recycled tomorrow!

Plastic pollutes watersheds!

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) claims that each year, 8 million tons of plastic enters the world's oceans and researchers believe much of it comes from activities on land, including litter sources (2019). Marine debris damages habitat, transports invasive species, and disrupts aquatic food chains, among other serious effects. Microplastics/fibers from clothing also pollutes water systems when released during laundering.

Plastic impacts wildlife!

Ocean plastic pollutes aquatic ecosystems and impacts wildlife at each level of the food chain. Marine life are entangled, injured, or killed due to marine debris. Wildlife may mistakenly ingest plastic debris and chemicals that bio-accumulate up the food chain, which is harmful to the health of fish, seabirds, and other animals – including humans!

Plastic pollutes our communities!

Everyone deserves a clean neighborhood and to enjoy the natural beauty Ulster County has to offer. In the Nation's Largest Litter Study, Keep America Beautiful reports that the presence of litter in a community is believed to decrease property values by as much as 7%. Plastic makes up 19% of all litter found on U.S. roadways (2010). Plastic litter impacts recreation, outdoor activities, tourism, and a sense of pride in our communities.

Plastic impacts human health!

Researchers are continuing to study the effects of plastic use on public health. Microplastics are very small plastic fragments and scientists have found microplastics in seafood, sea salt, tap water, beer, and even honey (NOAA, 2019). Reducing our use of plastics may have health and safety benefits, reducing long term exposure to chemicals that may cause illnesses.

Plastic pollutes our environment!

Globally, we produce roughly 310 million tons of plastic each year. Almost all plastic is made from non-renewable fossil fuels (Project Drawdown, 2019). Plastic production is an energy and chemical intensive process, resulting in toxic emissions of sulfur oxides, nitrous oxides, methanol, ethylene oxide, and other volatile organic compounds (Ecology Center Plastics Task Force, 2020).

Waste impacts Ulster County's Carbon Footprint

New York manages waste using large regional landfills as opposed to local waste management systems. That means that waste must travel far distances for final disposal, which creates green house gas emissions from long-hauling. In Ulster County, each trip to the landfill travels over 480 miles round trip! It's estimated that 4% of Ulster County's GHG emissions are generated from the solid waste sector (Ulster County, 2018).



UCRRA Zero Waste Seminar Project



The UCRRA Zero Waste Seminar is a community engagement project by the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency, celebrating Plastic Free July and the many ways we can prevent pollution from our waste.

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Climate Smart Choices to Be Plastic-Free!

Zero waste living is a lifestyle that aims to drastically reduce the amount of garbage we create on a daily basis. Reducing our reliance on single use disposable plastics helps foster stewardship of New York's natural resources. Small acts make a big difference at home, at work, at school, and on-the go!



Reduce & Refill

Buy in bulk

See it? Don't ignore it! Pick up litter!

Refuse over packaged items

Upcycle! Make your own

Regift unwanted items

Bring your own

Skip the straw or use a metal one

Look for plastic alternatives

Toss it? No way! Bring it to a Repair Café!