

Marine Debris & Plastic Source Reduction Toolkit for Colleges & Universities

Made possible by one of the first U.S. EPA grants to reduce marine debris in coastal watersheds.

Why Marine Debris?

According to the Ocean Conservancy, six of the ten top contributors to marine debris are single-use (disposable) plastic products. They include food and beverage container caps and lids, beverage bottles, plastic bags, food wrappers, flatware, and drinking straws -- common items on college campuses. Much of this "food service ware" does not break down or decompose.

When littered, this material finds its way into streams, rivers, bays, and other waterways.

It flows through smaller waterways and into the ocean, where it is picked up by powerful currents.

These currents, called gyres, have now picked up so much debris that they've turned into enormous Garbage Patches -- posing major impacts on marine life.

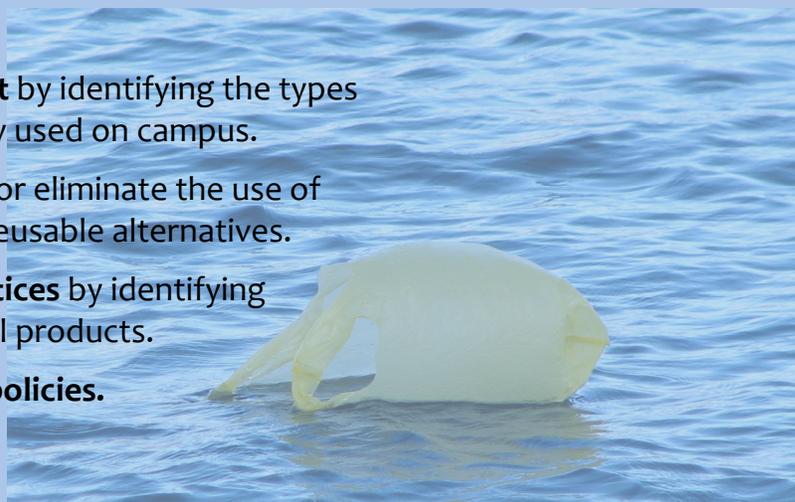
Marine species inevitably consume this debris, ingesting plastics that contain harmful chemicals, like PCBs, DDT, and other toxins.

Humans eat this ocean life—and the toxins that come with them.

*How can you help reduce harmful marine debris?
Eliminate plastic at its source!*

Steps to Success

- 1 Determine your campus's **plastic footprint** by identifying the types and sources of disposable plastic currently used on campus.
- 2 Create a **source reduction plan** to reduce or eliminate the use of disposable plastic items and to promote reusable alternatives.
- 3 Change your campus's **procurement practices** by identifying alternative, less environmentally impactful products.
- 4 Establish campus-wide **source reduction policies**.



Campus Victories

UC Santa Barbara

With support from the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI), UCSB convinced their Subway store to cease the purchase of 35,000 plastic bags per year, resulting in a **97% decline in plastic bag use** at on-campus food service establishments.

UC San Francisco

PSI retrofitted nine on-campus water fountains with goose-neck spouts, making it easier for students to refill water bottles. UCSF's chancellor then opted to retrofit 50 more fountains on campus, **cutting the purchasing of single-use bottled water by 50%**.

UC San Diego

With help from PSI, UCSD convinced the Subway store on campus to eliminate its use of plastic bags and plastic straw sleeves by summer 2014, **eliminating 1 million sandwich sleeve bags per year**.

Want to learn more? Visit the full [Marine Debris Toolkit](#).

Questions? Contact the Product Stewardship Institute at suzy@productstewardship.us.