

Waste In the Watersheds

An article written by Amaya

In the United States alone, Americans collectively throw out around 615,600,000,000 pounds of trash yearly. And yet, that is only 12% of the total trash that gets thrown away worldwide. And it is ruining the watersheds. Me and many peers of mine agree that people as a whole litter more than they realize, and it has a serious and possibly catastrophic impact.

In this article, I will be going over pollution (mainly trash/waste pollution) and how it affects the watersheds of West Michigan.

The Grand River, most commonly recognized from running through downtown Grand Rapids, stretches farther than some people know. The river itself starts in Hillsdale County, and flows all the way through The Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean, cutting through a few dams and different lakes on the route. That means any trash or plastic waste that isn't taken care of will potentially infect Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario on its way to the ocean, possibly infecting them as well. If too much of the water is infected, that bacteria can weasel itself into the watersheds and cause more possible harm than necessary.

The main sources that may cause this type of pollution can be traced back to things such as gasoline, fertilizer, pesticides, detergents, and motor oil and such, along with the obvious mention of trash. Fumes from things like pulp and paper mills also may contribute, with some factories emitting bacteria into the water through extraction pipes. As for a watershed itself and how it is impacted, many people live in a watershed and don't even know it.

A watershed is an area of land where any runoff or extra water drains into one singular body, such as a river or lake. A watershed

does not always need to have signs of elevation and depression, but they help the water drain quicker. Within the watersheds, there are also man made elements that help water be cleaned and drained of trash and pollution when it is caught, such as water plants. A water plant is what cleans natural water and gives us things like bathing and drinking water.

If our water is polluted and dirty, we will eventually get to a state in humanity where there will be little to no water left if we do nothing. There are many movements that are happening or have occurred in the past in which their motive is to save the watersheds, but most just suspect humanity will do its thing and the pollution will pile back up again. But in reality, it's all up to the people.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has many suggestions of what people can do to save the water, along with movements being created and performed quite successfully to save water and keep the environment safe.

Some suggestions from myself are things such as following the three R's, even if it's cheesy, it's extremely effective. Another is simply just picking up trash while out on a walk, field trip, or just in general. Any simple action, even if it may not feel at all beneficial, matters.

In conclusion, the watersheds all over the world have a huge purpose, and need to be protected and cherished, since we may not be able to have good water if the pollution keeps up. Your actions matter, and so does your voice.

WAIT

if you want to help keep our environment and lakes clean, please throw away your trash and any trash you see nearby!

22 million pounds of trash get into the great lakes in a year, and that includes any trash in our rivers, or stormdrains. You might think there is no big solution to this issue, and that would be correct, but you can do your part to help keep our rivers clean by picking up any trash you see and putting in a trash can.



TRASH GOES HERE



NOT HERE

Poster designed by Holly Schend