

Why's Plastic a Problem?

According to scientists from the University of Georgia, "...Almost 300,000 tons of plastic swirl near the surface of our seas today..." Plastic is very harmful to the waters and aquatic life that live in them because of the toxins that they carry to the water and also because many fish, birds, turtles, and other marine life mistake small pieces of plastic for food which becomes stuck in the digestive tract of these animals causing them to die. A Popular Science article from May 19, 2015 estimates that the average American throws out roughly 185 pounds of plastic waste each year, not much right? However in 2013, the article goes on to say, "Volunteers with the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup collected more than 12.3 million pounds of beach trash... including more than 940,000 plastic bottles," the most common type of household plastic waste. This trash does not come from thin air, with nearly 320 million people in the United States alone, it's easy to see how 185 pounds a person can add up quickly. If each of us does our part, we can prevent the five trillion pieces of plastic floating in our waters from growing.



Only water in our storm drains!

For more information...

or if you have questions or concerns,
feel free to contact:

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City of Goshen

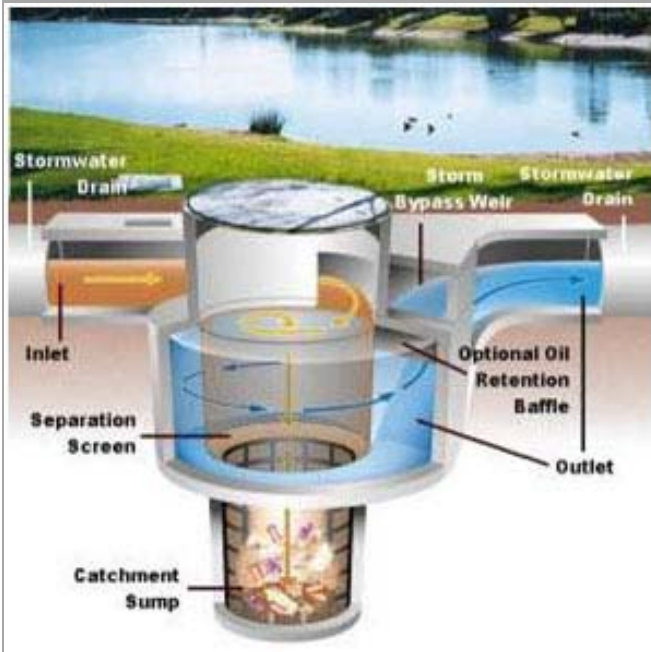
The Plastic Problem



Pictured is a stormwater treatment unit
in Goshen filled with several types of
plastic waste.

What is Goshen Doing?

The City of Goshen is making a conscious effort to reduce the plastic waste that is discharged to our local waterways. The biggest thing that is being done and has been done is the installation of stormwater treatment units. These units have several methods of filtering the stormwater that enters them through the over 2,300 storm drains throughout the city. One type of unit allows stormwater to flow in through the inlet pipe, where it hits a series of barriers causing it to swirl and move downward. To exit the treatment unit, the water must move upwards again leaving floatables, like plastic bottles, behind and flow through a baffle and pass out an exit pipe to our local waterways, such as the Elkhart River. The city currently has 8 stormwater treatment units installed and will continue to install them whenever possible.



What Can You Do?

- Recycle - Make an effort to recycle your plastic waste at one of the recycling collection locations throughout Goshen instead of putting it in your trash and sending it to a landfill.
- Drink city water - Drinking city water instead of buying plastic bottles will keep plastic waste out of our local waterways by stopping it at the source, if you don't buy plastic water bottles, then it cannot enter our waterways!
- Reuse hard plastic bottles - Buying reusable plastic bottles also keeps soft plastic bottles out of our waterways and catch basins by removing them at the source.
- Avoid littering - Avoiding littering is one of the easiest and simplest things you can do to avoid causing plastic pollution, simply don't throw it out of your car or leave it anywhere but a recycling bin.
- If you see litter, pick it up - Making a conscious effort to pick up the plastic litter you see on the sidewalk or roadway will keep it out of our beautiful and precious waterways.
- Avoid products with microbeads - Microbeads are tiny synthetic plastic particles used as an abrasive in many personal-care and beauty products, such as facial scrubs, soaps, and toothpastes. These tiny particles do not dissolve, and when they are washed into streams, lakes, rivers, and oceans, they often can carry pollutants to those bodies of water. Since they do not dissolve, they also are eaten by wildlife who cannot digest them and subsequently die with a full stomach. Indiana is also a state which has passed legislation to phase out the use of microbeads in consumer products.

A penny provides scale for the size of micro plastics being found in the Great Lakes 'Garbage Patch.' Credit: 5Gyres.

