

Pollution Patrol

Objective: To create awareness about watershed contamination by having students track the amount of pollution around their school.

Give your students a brief overview of pollution before you send them out with their “Pollution Patrol Logs.”

Background Information

Pollution is something that makes a negative change in the environment. There are two types of pollution that can negatively affect the environment:

Point Source Pollution

A type of pollution that can be easily tracked back to its source. You should be able to point to the source of this pollution. Some examples of this include factory smoke and oil spills. Although, this pollution is very detrimental to the environment there is another type of pollution that may even be more harmful.

Nonpoint Source Pollution

The next type of pollution is called nonpoint source pollution and every person in the world is responsible for it. Nonpoint source pollution is a type of pollution that cannot be easily tracked back to its source. It happens everyday in all communities. Examples of this include: pesticide, oil, fertilizer, animal waste, and garbage. Essentially, it is anything that has been left on the ground and may be moved by rain down the watershed. This pollution travels down storm drains and into the oceans. It may also leak down into aquifers holding groundwater.

Note: Please refer to examples of nonpoint source pollution (listed earlier in the packet) for more details on how it directly affects ocean life.

Directions

1. Give each student a “Pollution Patrol Log” sheet and have them walk around a designated area to find articles of nonpoint source pollution. The students will document how much of this trash may be recycled as either paper, plastic, aluminum, or glass, while they also collect these items.
2. This is a great way to provide a service to your school and show the students how much trash is created by the student body each day.
3. A brief trip to your trash collection site or recycling area with your school’s custodial supervisor may help the students visualize how much trash they produce and the present recycling efforts of your school. Later, you may choose to take this class project to another level by taking your recyclables to a plant that pays for such materials. The money collected from your recycling efforts may be donated to your school, used in your class, or donated to a charity voted on by the class. Either way, your students will learn it pays in more ways than one to recycle.

Materials

✓ Trash Bags

✓ Plastic Gloves

✓ Pollution Patrol Log

Conclusion

Have each student write their total sums from their worksheets up on the board and add these numbers to get a class total. Discuss how prevalent nonpoint source pollution is in our world and brainstorm ways that they can individually limit nonpoint source pollution.

