

Pollution: How Human Behaviors Affect Our Natural Resources

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Clean water is essential for all humans. Unfortunately, the Natural Resource Defense Council states that dirty water is the world's largest health risk ("Natural Resources Defense Council: Water Pollution Facts", n.d.). Pollution in rivers, oceans, and other bodies of water can cause disease and affect the surrounding ecosystem. Human activities are a major cause of such water pollution. River and ocean pollution impacts the environment when animals, plants and the soil are negatively affected. As a main source of pollutants, humans can help restore our water supplies in order to have a cleaner and healthier planet.

Humans around the world litter every day. As a result, most water becomes polluted by human activities. These include: throwing sewage and industrial waste into rivers and oceans, using harmful fertilizers, and even littering. All of these human activities affect our water sources. Dumping sewage waste and contaminated water into rivers and oceans pollutes the environment and becomes a health problem. In poor countries, over 2 million people die each year from polluted water ("World Health Organization", 2014). When people use fertilizers on their soil, the fertilizers runoff into rivers and oceans whenever it rains, causing water pollution. Humans also have accidents such as oil spills. An oil spill is an instance where oil is accidentally removed from its container, or what it is in, and is dumped into a water source. Also, motor vehicle engines drop small amounts of oil onto roads and parking lots, and much of this oil makes its way into water supplies.

Water pollution doesn't just affect the way water looks. Water pollution affects the plants, animals, and soil around the river. Some types of water pollution can even affect air

pollution, which makes conditions in that environment worse. When soil becomes polluted, it becomes useless, and plants are unable to grow. Pollution causes fish and wildlife to be harmed as well due to the lack of plants around the polluted water. Whenever this happens, food chains are interrupted, causing more animals to die because of starvation. Water pollution not only creates an immense negative impact on marine life in contaminated water sources, but its reach can also effect the wild life, and even the humans around it.

Many people are not aware of this world -wide pollution problem. People can help stop water pollution in many different ways: taking shorter showers, reducing the amount of weed killers and pesticides they use in their yard, stopping oils and greases from making their way into drains, riding bikes instead of cars that leak oil, and simply picking up any trash that has been carelessly littered. According to "Storm Water Runoff Pollution And How To Reduce It" (2013), simple changes such as using organic or natural fertilizer, maintaining your car to reduce oil leaks, and washing your car at a commercial car wash instead of your driveway, can reduce pollution. Also we can make smarter choices such as planting flowers and plants that don't need a lot of water and planting trees that help hold rainwater.

Many rivers and oceans are currently polluted. This pollution negatively affects all living creatures in the immediate environment: food chains are interrupted, soil becomes unfertile and plants and animals die. We are all dependent upon fresh water and, as a result, we have the responsibility to clean up polluted water sources in order to make the world a cleaner and healthier place to live.

Sources

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