

PLASTIC POLLUTION A WORLD PROBLEM



Hope and change for our environment

By Katherine Lacaze
For the Seaside Signal

It's not new information all the world's continents are connected by water; as a result, however, all civilizations across the globe also share responsibility in curbing the "mammoth problem" of plastic pollution threatening the environment.

"This issue is way bigger than us in the United States," Charlie Plybon, Oregon policy manager with the Surfrider Foundation, said during a Listening to the Land lecture at Seaside Library on May 16.

Plybon's presentation, "Plastic Pollution: Acting locally to curb a new world order in ocean pollution," was the final lecture of the 2018 Listening to the Land series, presented by the Necanicum Watershed Council in partnership with the library.

While the current trends related to plastic pollution are worrisome, Plybon's lecture was not about doom and gloom, but rather "a hope-and-change kind of presentation," said Chrissy Smith, coordinator of the Friends of Cape Falcon Marine Reserve, a North Coast-based volunteer organization.

The scope of the problem

Plybon, who has a degree in marine biology and is a member of the Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Council, shared important statistics, giving listeners a glimpse of the magnitude of the plastic pollution problem.

According to a 2016 report called "The New Plastics Economy," by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the World Economic Forum, if plastic pollution continues being generated and entering the environment at its current rate, it may outweigh the total mass of fish in the world's ocean by 2050. Such a presence of plastic has the power to change entire ecosystems and species, Plybon said.

Additionally, multiple studies suggest there are more than 2.25 trillion particles of plastic currently floating in the ocean, and fish off the West Coast ingest more than 12,000 tons of plastic per year. Humans also ingest plastic microfibers, which were found in 83 percent of tap water samples collected from at least a dozen countries on five continents, according to a study commissioned by data journalism outlet Orb. For the United States, 94 percent of water samples were contaminated by plastic.

A brief history

How did this happen? Plybon shared insight into a cultural shift that transpired

around the mid-21st century. In 1955, Life Magazine ran an article called "Throw-away Living" that celebrated the convenience of single-use products and disposable items. The consumerism mindset that began proliferating at the time can be summed up in a quote attributed to Victor Lebow, an economist and retail analyst: "Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction and our ego satisfaction in consumption."

"We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced and discarded at an ever-increasing rate," Lebow wrote.



KATHERINE LACAZE

Charlie Plybon, Surfrider Foundation's Oregon Policy Manager, gives a presentation on plastic pollution May 16 at the Seaside Library.

'Everything goes one way and into the trash. That's just not the way we can live. Eventually we will run out.'

Charlie Plybon

Such a system is not sustainable, however. Humans cannot exist on a finite planet with linear system, Plybon said.

"Everything goes one way and into the trash," he said. "That's just not the way we can live. Eventually we will run out."

Solutions such as recycling, incinerating, or converting microfibers into synthetic fleece are not sufficient, or even effective, in keeping plastic out of the environment. Also, China, the world's largest importer and recycler of plastic, has implemented increasing restrictions on foreign waste in the past couple years; most plastic items — save thin-necked plastic soda and water bottles — are no longer recyclable in the current system.

"Your 'recycling' isn't being recycled," Plybon said.

Solutions in the system

Most importantly, people need to consider the entire life cycle of the items they consume, and ask themselves.

"Be aware of what you're buying, and be aware of where it's going to go," Plybon said. "If it's single-use and it's plastic, it doesn't make sense for it to be around forever after you used it once."

In addition to consuming less in general, individuals can switch to alternatives and embrace a bring-your-own culture, using reusable mugs, water bottles, to-go containers, straws, storage bags, jars, and more. Buying in bulk is not only affordable but also allows people to avoid the wasteful packaging that often accompanies single-serve food products.

The next step is finding community solutions, such as setting zero-plastic waste goals at schools or workplaces; conducting educational events to raise awareness; holding outdoor cleanups; implementing local plastic-reduction policies; creating bans on plastic bags or polystyrene; or putting together a municipal plastics solution committee. Advocates can engage large-scale suppliers to ensure nonplastic alternatives are accessible and affordable for restaurants and other businesses.

The Surfrider Foundation recently launched its Ocean Friendly Restaurants certification program in Oregon, giving restaurants a way to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. To participate in the program, restaurants must follow four criteria: No using expanded polystyrene (also known as Styrofoam); following proper recycling practices; using reusable tableware for onsite dining and only providing disposable utensils for takeout food upon request; and no offering plastic bags for takeout orders. Additionally, restaurants must choose a minimum of three other criteria from a set of six.

Finally, individuals need to take their concerns about plastic pollution directly to the companies producing the items — the first point of the linear system. The world's largest corporations make more money than most countries, and that depends on consumerism and constant buying. Engaging irresponsible companies through letter-writing campaigns, phone calls, or strikes, and supporting companies with responsible practices can lead to tangible results, Plybon said.

"We are the ones that can be empowered," he added. "If we want to change the system we're in now, we have to be advocating at a higher level."

The Listening to the Land speaker series offered January through May, with presentations held the third Wednesday of every month at the library. The program, which is free and open to the public, is finished for 2018 and will resume in January 2019.

Radio station gets new ownership

Aims for men 18 to 49 years old

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Gearhart-based radio station 93.3 KEUB-FM will debut this month as "The Rock," catering to men who like traditional rock, grunge, hair bands and alternative music.

"No one is super-serving the males between 18 and 49 years old," said Jeff Jacobs, the new owner. "In general, no one's really taking care of that age group, which is nearly half of the population of the county. What we've devised is a perfect fit for this."



R.J. MARX

Radio station owner Jeff Jacobs at the Shilo Oceanfront Inn announced his purchase of 93.3 FM.

boards throughout the Northwest.

A mutual friend helped broker the radio station deal with owner Ernie Hopseker, who is retiring, Jacobs said.

Studios and facilities will be in Gearhart Plaza on U.S. Highway 101, with towers on

Jacobs grew up in Eastern Oregon and vacationed throughout the coast. He started in radio at age 12 and studied broadcasting at the College of La Grande, now Eastern Oregon University. Joining a local radio station, he learned the ropes of radio broadcasting and climbed the management ranks.

Jacobs Radio was launched in 2001 and Jacobs purchased his first radio station in 2005.

"The Rock" will be the company's eighth station in Washington state and Oregon, with affiliates covering areas between the Tri-Cities, Hermiston, Moses Lake, Wenatchee and The Dalles.

Another company owned by Jacobs, doing business as Tri-Cities Billboard, markets mobile bill-

Tillamook Head and in Astoria.

Radio hosts will include Twitch in the morning, Marconi at night, and "rock chick extraordinaire" Robbie Knight.

A Memorial Day kickoff is planned, with a range from Cannon Beach to Astoria.

"It's modern rock with a lot of bands people will know," Jacobs said. "It's not going to be a classic rock — but you might hear Zeppelin. You've got kids now who even though they weren't anywhere near around Zeppelin or anything, they like it because it's new to them."



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