

Kamilo Point - A Tainted Paradise

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Marine debris is a problem all around the globe, but the Hawaiian island chain is home to one of the dirtiest waterfronts. According to Carla Herrera, an author for Huffpost, Kamilo Point on the island of Hawaii has gained the name “Plastic Beach”, and is known to be one of the dirtiest beaches in the world.

Most of the marine debris that finds its way to Kamilo Point’s shore is from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. The Pacific Garbage Patch is a circular current that collects trash from all over the world, and over time, the waste will collect to the center of the gyre. This trash island in the middle of the Pacific is twice the size of Texas and is the main cause of the debris on the coast of Kamilo Point. As of the year 2017, The Hawaii Wildlife Fund collected 15,000 pounds of trash, nylon nets, and fishing line from Kamilo Point. Many different types of trash are found on the beach such as straws, broken detergent bottles, hair brushes, and even discarded trash with different languages on the labels. The main contributor to the marine debris problem is plastic, because it never fully decomposes. The sand itself is multicolored due to microplastics that have mixed into the sand over time by the currents.

To find marine debris on my own island, I went out to a beach in Kailua, on the Island of Oahu. I was surprised at my finds. In only 22 minutes, I found 226 pieces of trash. Some examples of types of trash I collected were a needle cover, a foot by foot piece of net, a plastic water bottle with marine life living on it, a toothbrush, an oil container, and 3 ropes.



Three ropes and clipboard for size

One of the effects of marine debris can be found in the Hawaiian fishing industry. Fishing gear and other equipment from other ships can slow or even stop fishing operations all together. This might cause behavior changes within the crew that works for the fishery. But humans aren’t the only ones that are being affected by marine debris. One example of this is the Hawksbill Sea Turtle. According to SeeTurtles.org, They see the plastic bag in the ocean as the jellyfish that

make up it's diet and eat it. The plastic doesn't decompose making the turtle feel full, but it dies of malnutrition. The same thing happens to different marine animals that consume plastic.

The Hawaiian government has tried to implement somewhat of a ban on plastic bags, and input a five cent deposit on plastic water bottles but this has been proven to be ineffective. and the Hawaiian government is trying to solve this through the five cent deposit. Plastic bottles with the characters "HI5" collect a five cent deposit. Hawaiian residents have the opportunity to collect this deposit by taking the collected plastic bottles by taking them to a recycling centre but this solution isn't as affective because of the fact that there is no easy way to collect your deposit.

A more effective solution within the Hawaiian islands is the Nets to Energy Program. Hawaii's Nets to Energy Program takes net debris from the ocean and cuts it into smaller pieces that are a better size for burning. The cut up pieces are then taken to the H-power waste-to-energy facility where it is burned and used to create electricity. Some of this electricity is used to power expeditions to clear net debris from the ocean and the rest of it is distributed to the rest of the island. This is a much better solution than just taking the trash and filling up a landfill where it will just sit until it degrades or eventually finds its way into the ocean again.

One possible solution to this problem is to use the debris to power cars by using a system similar to Hawaii's Nets to Energy Program, powering electric cars fueled by marine debris. Instead of gas stations, people could find places to burn their trash and trash that they find around their community, inspiring people to clean up after each others messes and have a cleaner environment. Most of the landfills on the Hawaiian island chain are overflowing with garbage, some of it is recycled and some of it is burned for the fuel, but there is still a problem with burning plastic. When plastic is burned, the toxins that were inside of the plastic roam around in the air that we humans breathe. This solution may start out being expensive to build and create, but in the long run it will most likely be cheaper, and have a result that is worth the time.

I have spread this information to one social media platform and I have created a website to have some of my information. I have also shared this information to my classmates by presentation. I hope that everyone will see my information and be inspired to do something great and make a change within their daily lives. In order to make a difference, I believe that you yourself need to do something but even if you do, you must encourage others to do the same. Inspire those around you and together you will make a difference.

Here's the link to my website: <https://laurenhost.wixsite.com/beached>