

Join the Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Initiative

Be a part of the solution to combat plastic pollution along the Mississippi River by helping to collect data on marine litter.

The Mississippi River flows over 2,000 miles from its headwaters in Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. It is one of our most essential inland waterways, supporting the livelihoods of people living along the river, and the home to a wide range of plant and animal species.



Up to 80% of marine plastic originates on land, and rivers are a major route for plastic litter to be transported from inland communities to the ocean.

We are impacting the River with our actions. Items that we use every day - like disposable coffee cups, masks and plastic bags - can end up in the environment, making their way to our rivers.

The Mississippi Plastic Pollution Initiative is collecting data through a 'citizen science' approach to create a plastic pollution map. The map will help understand the state of plastic pollution along the river and help scientists, policy-makers, businesses, and citizens take action.

Did you know?

The Mississippi River is the drainage system for 40% of the United States



Here's how you can make a difference by joining our efforts to collect data along the river



1

Download the Marine Debris Tracker on Android or iOS

- Download the **Debris Tracker**, a free App to record what type of litter exists and where it is.
- Open the App and allow access to your location to mark where you are finding debris.
- Click "Start Tracking" and select the list named "MRCTI." You're ready to start tracking litter!

2

Download the Mississippi River Citizen Science Field Guide

- The guide provides detailed information on how to use the App, and how to collect data easily and safely. **Click here** to download it.
- Any data collection in the Mississippi River basin is valuable, but we encourage you to follow this protocol to allow for data comparison and scientific analysis:
 1. Select an area from the sampling maps for:
St. Paul | St. Louis | Baton Rouge
 2. Find a 1-m (or 3ft) wide-pathway where litter typically accumulates, such as along a roadside or sidewalk.
 3. Follow the path and record all items within the 1-m transect for at least 30 minutes.



3

Collect data

- You can collect data alone, in pairs or in a group.
- Log into the Debris Tracker and record the items you find by selecting the type of litter and tapping the "Add" button. You can also upload photos to your log.
- When you are finished, click "Upload Session." A checkmark will appear when it is complete.



If you want to join an organized clean-up event, **click here** to find one in your area and to receive more information on trainings and upcoming events.

The official data collection dates are April 1st to April 25th, 2021 and the information obtained will be analyzed and included in a special report for the Mississippi Plastic Pollution Initiative. However, we encourage you to continue to use the Debris Tracker beyond those dates and to add information, as this will contribute to a larger global database on plastic pollution.

The Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Initiative is a partnership between the United Nations Environment Programme, the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative, the National Geographic Society and the University of Georgia. For updates and more information, visit the website: www.unep.org/mississippi

