PLASTIC POLLUTION: What we can do about SUP
Zoom presentation & discussion hosted by
Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Climate Action Campaign

Wednesday, April 13, 2022  7 - 8 PM

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3 Guiding Questions about Single-Use Plastics (SUP):

1. How did plastic pollution get this bad?
   • Power of Marketing Persuasion vs. Mindfulness – Awareness
   • Who is responsible?

2. Why be concerned now?
   Magnitude, variety, rate of growth of problems caused by SUP

3. What actions can we take where we live and work in Humboldt County?
   • Personal lifestyle choices from SUP to Reusables
   • Joining local, state and national campaigns
   • Advocate for legislation

Plastics recycling

Dry Creek Landfill near Medford, OR
1. How did plastic pollution get this bad?

Consumer Mindfulness – Awareness

Take Note of these Names

New Scott Plastic Cups
No cardboard taste...can't get soggy!
This plastic cup at ‘toss-away’ prices
makes paper cups strictly old-fashioned!

Tote those empties?

Or toss 'em away?

Why make hard work out of enjoying soft drinks?
Every delicious flavor now comes in throwaway steel cans.
No deposits, no returns. And soft drinks in steel cans taste so darn good!

BETHLEHEM STEEL

“The best things in life come in Cellophane”
We have been persuaded with fun!, cleanliness, food tastes better, more colorful, extreme convenience, much less work, more modern.
Greenwash
Words intended to confuse or mislead – bioplastic, eco-friendly, biodegradable, compostable, yes, even recyclable.
How did plastic pollution from SUP get this bad?  Who is responsible?

The Plastic Waste Makers Index, published annually, names the worst companies of the plastic supply chain that manufacture polymers – building block of plastics. It also highlights that the firms identified are supported by a small number of financial backers. The study says 20 petrochemical companies are responsible for 55% of the world’s single-use plastic waste. The research is conducted by academics from the London School of Economics, the Stockholm Environment Institute, Wood Mackenzie, among others.

U.S. energy giant ExxonMobil tops the list, contributing 5.9 million metric tons to global plastic waste, closely followed by U.S. chemical company, Dow and China’s Sinopec. 100 companies are the source of 90% of global single-use plastic production.
After SUP Manufacturing Pollution -- petrochemical fires, microbeads, pellet spills, oil spills, THEN worldwide waste & pollution in landfills, waterways, beaches, oceans. Coca-Cola, Nestlé, and PepsiCo are the top 3 most identified companies in global brand audits for the second year in a row, according to an annual report “BRANDED Volume II: Identifying the World’s Top Corporate Plastic Polluters.”

Global Citizen Science in Beach and River Cleanups – measurement & monitoring create global database.
2. Why be concerned about SUP now?

- Global Warming  Climate Crisis
- Water and Air Pollution impact on Human Health
- Loss of Species
- Too many false solutions are being promoted
- You pay at the point of purchase
- You pay garbage/recycling collection fees - **CONTAMINATION**
- You pay taxes for environmental cleanup & transport.
- Human rights violations
3. What actions can we take where we live and work in Humboldt County?

• Use the ZW Hierarchy for sustainable materials management
• Personal lifestyle choices to replace SUP with Reusables
• Join local, state and national campaigns
• Advocate for legislation
The Hierarchy for Planning, Investment, & Environmental Impact Analysis

IN PRIORITY ORDER:

WASTE PREVENTION
(Formerly Source Reduction)

MATERIALS REUSE

RECYCLING / COMPOSTING

SAFE DISPOSAL

Recycling is not going to solve this problem. Break Free From Plastic’s nearly 1,800 member organizations are calling on corporations to urgently reduce their production of single-use plastic and find innovative solutions focused on alternative delivery systems.
Plastic Free Personal Lifestyle Habits

1. Plan Ahead.
2. Drink tap water or buy glass bottles.
3. Avoid plastic bags.
4. Get rid of single doses.
5. Travel with your water bottle.
6. Get yourself a travel kit.
7. Avoid impulse snacks when you’re out of the house.
8. Don’t accept the single use extra stuff: straws, napkins, stirrers, lids, utensils, packets.
10. Buy products in reusable containers, paper, cardboard or glass.
11. Soap, Vinegar and Baking soda are all you need for cleaning.
Organize coalitions for legislative action

**Right-to-Repair Personal Electronics and Appliances** - **Senate Bill 983**
Most people want to use their expensive phones, tablets, and other personal devices for as long as possible, but it’s frustrating, unnecessarily difficult, and sometimes impossible to purchase replacement parts or find repair information for these items. The bill makes it easier for consumers and independent service dealers to order parts, tools, and instructions from electronics and appliance manufacturers.

**Move California Away from Trash Incineration** - **AB 1857**
This bill discourages trash incineration, which pollutes surrounding communities and contributes to climate change by ending existing financial incentives for municipal solid waste incinerators. It also redefines incineration as disposal as opposed to landfill diversion, and seeks to invest in zero-waste strategies focused in nearby communities.

**Refillable Water Bottle Stations in Public Places** - **AB 1953**
This measure makes clean water access easier – and would reduce demand for single-use plastic water bottles by requiring refillable water bottle stations and drinking fountains in public areas like transit stations and publicly owned buildings.
REUSE

• Reuse Systems – durable-refillable-returnable-washable-repairable,
• Reuse Infrastructure – reuse equipment, supplies, financial resources,
• Reuse Legislation to eliminate incentives for single use and incentivize reuse,
• Reuse lifestyle choices, habits, information sharing,
• Reuse in front of kids so these habits become natural to them.

ZERO WASTE IS ABOUT PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION.
Resources and Organizations

- **Zero Waste Humboldt**  [http://www.zerowastehumboldt.org/resources](http://www.zerowastehumboldt.org/resources)
- We Choose to Reuse Campaign / North Country Fair / Humboldt Refill Not Landfill Network

- **“Reducing single-use plastic at the local level”** – 9.5 minute TEDTalk
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQp9X0PrUc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQp9X0PrUc)
- **“Plastic Wars”** – PBS/NPR Frontline (3/2020) – 54 minutes
  [https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/plastic-wars/](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/plastic-wars/)
- **“A Brief History of Plastics”** – History of Yesterday, Kevin Shah 9/2020
  7 minute read or listen. [https://historyofyesterday.com/a-brief-history-of-plastic-2336f7bbdb96](https://historyofyesterday.com/a-brief-history-of-plastic-2336f7bbdb96)

Break Free From Plastics Annual Brand Audit Report and Audit Toolkit for locals to use
[https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/globalbrandauditreport2019/](https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/globalbrandauditreport2019/)
Plastic Pollution Coalition - [https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/](https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/)
As You Sow - [https://www.asyousow.org/](https://www.asyousow.org/)
**Upstream** | Sparking innovative solutions to plastic pollution  [https://upstreamsolutions.org](https://upstreamsolutions.org)
———National Reuse Network
Plastic Free July – [https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/campaigns/](https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/campaigns/)