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Marine Pollution Prevention in American Samoa

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ABSTRACT

The garbage that washes up on our beaches today is the result of human activity. The majority of this marine debris is plastic, with approximately 46,000 pieces of plastic found per km² in the world's oceans. These plastics are detrimental to marine life killing a million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals each year. Not only does marine debris affect these animals, it also has significant impacts and harmful consequences on human health. This project aims to examine seven polluted beaches on the East Side of American Samoa in order to determine villagers' perceptions of where trash converges from villages upstream to the beaches downstream, and how waste can be prevented from entering the ocean. Compiling these different methods will provide solutions to minimize marine pollution in the Territory. Moreover, the knowledge gained from this project can benefit the people of American Samoa and its future generations.

A survey was carried out in the villages of: Aua, Lau'i'i, Auto, Alofau, Alao, Aunu'u and Tula to gain perspective on how people perceive marine pollution in their surrounding environment. Preliminary results show that in the village of Lau'i'i, 85% of people surveyed, indicate that most of the trash enters the ocean because of littering. Litter is found on beaches, sidewalks and places close to the ocean. Additionally, 71% indicate that the most effective means of pollution prevention is through stream booms or filters. These pollution prevention tools will enable future generations to enhance their living conditions and promote a healthy environment.

Key Words: Marine Pollution, Ocean Health, Human Health, Impacts, Plastic

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