

Wetland Protectors!

Most folks in Louisiana have a local waterway near where they live. These wetland areas are important for a variety of human needs and wildlife. However, some wetland areas are not healthy because they suffer from pollution. In this activity you will explore a common kind of pollution – litter – and come up with a plan to help out!



Materials Needed:

- Gloves or trash grabber
- Trash bag
- Pencil
- Litter tally sheet (included)

Safety Considerations: Don't pick up anything that is sharp (broken glass, needles) or items that came in contact with body fluids (diapers, feminine hygiene products, etc.). When in doubt, let it be!

Instructions:

1. Find a local body of water like a pond, stream, or ditch and, using your gloves and trash bag, pick up the litter that you find. If you don't have a local body of water nearby, anywhere with litter to pick up will do!
2. Once your back home, empty your bag and take and tally your litter using the table below.

Form of Litter

Material Type	Bags	Bottles	Other Container (jars, tubes, etc.)	Other
Glass				
Metal				
Plastic				
Paper				
Other				

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Questions

1. What was the most common material type that you found?
2. What was the most common form of litter (bags, bottles, other containers, ect.) that you found?

How You Can Help

Litter is just one kind of pollution – there are other types that are much harder to see because they are so small or can be dissolved in the water. The good news is that there are a variety of actions you can take to help reduce the amount of pollution entering wetlands. The table below contains some suggestions of what you can do to help out!

Pollutant	Remedy
Trash/litter	Organize a trash clean-up
Vehicle Fluids: oil, brake fluid, antifreeze	Plant wetland vegetation around perimeter of pond to act as a filter
Excess nitrogen & phosphorous	Education and outreach to residents about fertilizer use in the backyard
Bacteria overload	Educate residents about picking up their dog's feces. Also, investigate whether there is a nearby farm and talk with the farmer about management practices
Too much soil in water column (turbid)	Plant grasses and wetland vegetation to keep soil from eroding into pond

Did You Know?

Wetlands act as natural filters for a variety of pollution. In next week's Wetland Wednesdays, you will see how wetlands can filter out pollution by making your own water filter!