

PROTECTING OKLAHOMA'S FRESHWATER

A Community Guide to Preventing Microplastic Pollution

What Are Microplastics?

Microplastics are plastic particles smaller than 5 millimeters that form as larger plastics break down.

While often associated with oceans, they are increasingly detected in Oklahoma's lakes, rivers, and reservoirs.

Why Microplastics Matter

Microplastics can:

- Be ingested by fish and aquatic organisms
- Move through freshwater food webs
- Carry attached pollutants
- Persist for long periods in the environment

Prevention protects both ecosystems and communities.

Why Prevention Is Powerful

Once microplastics enter lakes and rivers, they disperse widely and are difficult to remove.

Preventing pollution upstream is:

- ✓ More effective
- ✓ More affordable
- ✓ More sustainable

Protecting freshwater begins with everyday choices.

What Communities Can Do

- Promote watershed awareness in schools
- Support conservation programs
- Participate in creek and lake cleanups

Reduce Microfiber Release

- Wash synthetic clothing in full loads
- Use cold water cycles
- Consider microfiber-catching laundry bags

Reduce Plastic Use

- Choose reusable bags and bottles
- Avoid single-use plastics when possible
- Secure trash to prevent wind dispersal

Reduce Tire Particle Runoff

- Maintain proper tire pressure
- Combine trips to reduce driving