Marine debris is an emerging pollution issue in communities and watersheds across New York State, from Lake Erie to the Atlantic Ocean. While a variety of educational resources currently address the ecological impact of marine debris, there is a need for an interdisciplinary curricula that include physical and social science elements from a local view. To properly integrate localized perspectives (Great Lakes, Long Island, Hudson River...) into its educational products development, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) routinely gathers the input of NY’s classroom teachers and non-formal educators.

In 2021, NYSG developed a 15-lesson curriculum focused on marine debris and plastic pollution. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the geographic range of New York State preventing in-person curriculum review workshops, NYSG developed an innovative process to gather feedback on its marine debris-plastic pollution curriculum. An online course on a learning management system called Canvas was developed. With this platform, teachers and educators could access the curriculum draft asynchronously at their convenience and provide feedback for analysis. To review each lesson, participants completed a five-question survey to gauge their perceptions and likelihood of usage. Additionally, the surveys gathered suggestions for improvements, appropriate time length, and grade level recommendations.

Ten teachers from Great Lakes and Long Island area schools provided comments and suggestions on all 15 lessons. This feedback was incorporated into revisions to the curriculum and have led to a more robust educational resource. More than 80% of participants stated they enjoyed using the online curriculum review process and would participate in future digital and interactive programs.

Project Partner: • Funding: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

**NYSG Focus Areas:** Environmental Literacy & Workforce Development in NY; Healthy NY Coastal Ecosystems.

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