



Bringing the Adventure and Science Communities Together

Microplastics sampling-- Frequently asked questions

1. In the data sheet is only one space for high tide. If I sample on different days, the time of high tide changes. Where should I best write down the time for each sample?

You can write this in the notes section on your data sheet ex. HT: 15:23. This way we will have the date of the sampling event from your sample ID.

2. I don't have a GPS, but downloaded an app for my cell phone. I am not sure if my cell phone will work in the mexican net. In case it doesn't, is there another way to let you know, where I sampled? For example if I mark the points on a google satellite picture? How accurate do the GPS dates have to be?

An accurate GPS reading is really important. As with any scientific study, the repeat-ability of the project legitimizes the science allows recognition of the project in the research field. There are some great apps out there but I would also be happy to lend you a handheld GPS unit if needed. I would only resort to using google earth if sampling from the shore, can pinpoint the site confidently and you have no other means of obtaining a GPS coordinate.

3. Just because I am interested: If I use a plastic bottle, won't this totally contaminate the sample?

This is a legitimate concern. Due to the scope and budget of the project, glass sample jars for all volunteers is not feasible. We have run numerous tests using 'blank' water samples in plastic bottles and have not detected contamination from the plastic bottle. That said, it is important to use bottles that are fairly new (not super photo-degraded or banged up). Also the cap is a area of potential contamination due to plastic threading wear. This is the reason we ask adventurers to line bottle caps with aluminum foil, cutting down on potential contamination. We are also in the process of transitioning to Kleen Kanteen stainless steel water bottles. We hope that these will be available to adventurers soon.

4. If I send a package with 10 Kg of water, this will be a heavy and expensive package. Do you guarantee the refund of that and how long will it approximately take?

Shipping water is heavy! Luckily we do not have to worry about the sample degrading. We ask that you use the most economical option when shipping your samples (it often takes a few months to get to Maine). This way we can continue to expand our sample area without breaking our budget. We will provide full reimbursement by check or pay pal once we receive your postage receipt (most people take a picture and send it as an email attachment).

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5. *Would you prefer several samples from the same spot or from different spots?*

This really is dependent on your adventure plans/location and needs to be tailored to the individual adventurer.

6. *How often should samples be taken? How distant should samples be from each other (geographically / temporally)?*

A maximum of 10 samples to start with for 2013-2014. Your schedule can determine the frequency and location of sampling-port/urban areas are of interest as well as more remote, offshore sites. The proximity of one sample site to another is not important.

7. *Is the delivery of the samples very time sensitive? We sometimes go for weeks without access to postal services.*

The samples are not time sensitive. Please ship using the most economical option possible.

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