Marine debris is currently one of the greatest threats to global oceans. There is no longer a marine environment untouched by our trash.

If we take the current state and trends of marine debris as the inevitable future reality, it’s easy to lose hope of finding a solution. But engaging in the language of the arts enables us to move beyond the world as we see it. The arts engage the creative, imaginative, and intuitive parts of brain that must be used to find innovative solutions that will change the future. Through combining science and art, we can recreate the world.

The Washed Ashore Project uses community art created from marine debris with the help of thousands of volunteers to raise awareness about plastic pollution in order to spark changes in the consumer habits that have generated this global issue. With NOAA support, Washed Ashore has worked to create a curriculum based on the goals of our project. The lessons bring together art and science to help students understand the plastic pollution issue and communicate about it using the language of the arts.

We would like to thank Harbor Lights Middle School in Bandon, Oregon for helping us to pilot these lessons and also the following conferences, zoos, and aquariums for hosting curriculum workshops that enabled us to create classroom ready lessons and activities:

- The Coastal Learning Symposium
- The State of the Coast Conference
- The Sharing the Coast Conference
- Sea World San Antonio
- Sea World Orlando
- Brevard Zoo
- Houston Zoo
- Georgia Aquarium
- Smithsonian National Zoological Park
- Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium