



Cora Strand, a student at Oshkosh North High School, is calling on others to remember to recycle plastic bags.

SOPHIA SHAM

Maybe it starts with just one

BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ONE PLASTIC BAG BECOMES 100 BILLION?

Cora Strand

As you travel down the road, you observe a plastic bag rolling, being blown by the wind. It's just one bag. Later, another. Again, it's just one. As you wait in the parking lot, another bag is stuck under a cart. It's just one, but one turns into two; two turns into three; three turns into seven; seven turns into 20; 20 turns into 45, which eventually turns into the 100 billion bags being thrown into U.S. landfills. But, it was just one bag.

In Wisconsin, over 50 percent of the materials in our landfills could have been recycled. Recycling keeps about 1.7 million tons of materials out of Wisconsin landfills and incinerators yearly. I visited the Outagamie County Recycling Center and Landfill in April, and I learned it had doubled its intake in one year due to the improved economy and the lack of reusing daily items and im-

proper recycling. The center's mission is to recycle more and waste less. A lack of recycling impacts us as a population, but others suffer from this as well.

Billions of plastic bags are made each year. Of these bags, 100 billion are thrown away according to the *Wall Street Journal*, with less than 1 percent finding their way into a recycle bin. The result of this is around 1 billion birds and mam-

mals dying each year through the consumption of plastic. That one little bag that you got from the grocery store to hold that one carton of yogurt and one bag of chips could end up being an animal's last supper. Be a hero, a life saver, the next eco-friendly mastermind; it only takes a few minutes out of your day. That one plastic bag that you saw earlier, please pick it up. Reuse it. Then it's truly one bag. One bag that will stay out of our landfills. Jack Johnson, musician and environmentalist says, "An individual action, multiplied by millions, creates global change." Please consider taking one action that could impact our world a million times over.



Cora Strand is a student in the Communities Program at Oshkosh North High School. Her essay was a class assignment to write about plastics and landfills. Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine congratulates her on an excellent essay that is well researched and written.