Clean Water is Important to All of Us

In recent years, sources of pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced—that's great! Now the greatest source of water pollution (60 percent!) comes from everyday things like cars leaking oil; fertilizers from farms, lawns, and gardens; pet waste; residential car washing; and failing septic tanks. All these seemingly harmless sources add up to a BIG pollution problem. BUT each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too—and that adds up to a pollution solution!

Why Do We Need Clean Water?

Having a clean environment is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean waterways provide recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, and add beauty to our landscape. All of us benefit from clean water—and all of us have a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, wetlands, and ground waters clean.

Your actions can help keep our water clean. Find out how and spread the word!

GREATER LANSING REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
www.mywatersheds.org

MGROW
MIDDLE GRAND RIVER ORGANIZATION OF WATERSHEDS

For more information or to learn more about protecting our water, visit the links below or contact Erin Campbell at Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.

www.mywatersheds.org
www.pollutionisntpretty.org

(517)393-0342
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GASOLINE
WEED KILLER
ROAD SALT
NAIL POLISH
FERTILIZER
SEWAGE
PET WASTE
SOIL EROSION
MOTOR OIL

Responsible Car Washing

What's the Problem with Washing My Car?

There is no problem with washing your car... it's just HOW you do it. When you wash your car in the driveway or road, the soap—together with the dirt, wax, oil, grease, grime and grit—are washed from your car, flow along the curb and then into nearby storm drains. The mess flows through the drains, directly into our rivers, streams, wetlands, and lakes. This negatively impacts fish and other creatures that live in or near the water.

Only clean water should flow to storm drains.

Did you know that storm drains are NOT connected to sanitary sewer systems and treatment plants?
The purpose of storm drains is to carry rainwater away from developed areas to prevent flooding. Untreated storm water and the pollutants it carries flow directly into our creeks, rivers, and eventually the Great Lakes.

Most soap contains phosphates and other chemicals that harm fish and water quality. The phosphates from the soap can cause excess algae to grow. Algae blooms look bad, smell bad, and degrade water quality. As algae decays, the process uses up oxygen in the water that fish need.

How Can You Wash Your Car and Still Keep Our Lakes, Rivers, Streams, Wetlands, and Groundwater Clean?

- **If allowed by your local community, wash your car on the lawn so the ground can filter the water naturally.***
- **Use soap sparingly.**
- **Use a hose nozzle with a trigger to conserve water.**
- **Pour your bucket of soapy water down the sink when you're done, NOT in the street.**
- **Avoid using engine and wheel cleaners or degreasers.**
- **And—most importantly—take your vehicle to a commercial car wash, especially if you plan to clean the engine or the bottom of your car. Most car washes reuse wash water several times before sending it to the sanitary sewer system for treatment.**

**Please check local ordinances before washing or parking your vehicle on the lawn*