

# WHEN YOU'RE WASHING YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY, REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT JUST WASHING YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY



All the soap, scum, and oily grit runs along the curb. Then it runs into the storm drain and directly into our lakes, streams, and rivers. That causes pollution, which is unhealthy for fish. So how do you avoid this whole mess? Easy. Take it to a car wash where the water gets treated and recycled.

## **CLEAN WATER IS IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US**

It's up to all of us to make it happen. In recent years sources of water pollution like Industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now more than 60 percent of water pollution comes from things like cars leaking oil, fertilizers from farms and gardens and failing septic tanks. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too and that adds up to pollution solution!

### **Why do we need clean water?**

Having clean water is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean water provides recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, drinking water and adds 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 and ground waters clean.

### **What's the problem with car washing?**

There's no problem with washing your car. It's just how and where you do it. Most soap contains phosphates and other chemicals that harm fish and water quality. The soap, together with the dirt and oil washed from your car, flows into nearby storm drains which run directly into lakes and rivers. The phosphates from the soap can cause excess algae to grow. Algae look bad, smell bad, and harm water quality. As algae decay, the process uses up oxygen in the water that fish need.

### **CLEAN WATER TIP:**

*How can you wash your car and keep our waters clean?*

**Here are some options.**

Use soap sparingly. Use a hose with a trigger to save water.

Pour your bucket of soapy water down the sink when you're done, not in the street.

Best of all, take your car 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

Text and photo courtesy of the Puget Sound Action Team and Water Quality Consortium.



Stormwater Management Division  
To report Illegal Dumping Call:  
(970) -336-4074  
For more information, visit  
[www.greeleygov.com/stormwater](http://www.greeleygov.com/stormwater)