

When you're
washing your
car in the
driveway,



...you're not just washing your car in the driveway.

If you wash your car on the street or driveway, the soap and oily grit picked up by your car will be washed into nearby storm drains and then into our streams, ponds, reservoirs or estuaries, without any treatment. This pollution is unhealthy for all of us. So how can you avoid this mess? Wash your car on grass or gravel surfaces instead of on paved streets. Better yet, take it to a commercial car wash where the water is treated and recycled.

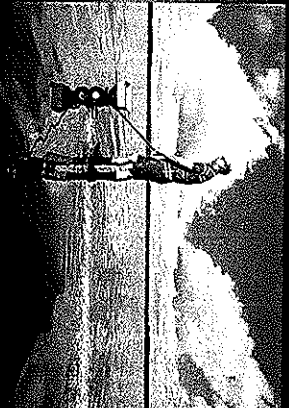
When
your pets
go on the
ground,



...they're not just going on the ground.

If pet waste is not properly disposed of, the waste may be washed into nearby storm drains by rain or melting snow. Pet waste is a source of bacteria. Many storm drains empty into our streams, ponds, reservoirs and estuaries, delivering bacteria and other pollutants to these waters. So what can you do? Carry a pooper scooper or plastic bags. Flush only the waste or seal it in a plastic bag and dispose of it in the garbage.

When
you're
fertilizing
the lawn,



...you're not just fertilizing the lawn.

If you apply too much fertilizer, especially before a heavy rain storm, a lot of it may be washed into nearby storm drains and then our waterways and water bodies without treatment. Once in the water, fertilizers promote a growth and decay process in algae. The decaying algae then use up oxygen, which fish need to survive. So when you apply fertilizer to your lawn or garden use it sparingly, avoid applying it before a heavy rain storm, and use slow-release fertilizer.

When
your car is
leaking oil on
the street,



...it isn't just leaking oil on the street.

When oil leaks from our cars onto driveways, streets and parking lots, there's a good chance it will be washed into nearby storm drains, eventually making its way into our streams, ponds, reservoirs and estuaries. Picture the number of cars in your area and imagine the amount of oil that finds its way from leaky gaskets into our waterways and water bodies. So, please fix leaks and never dump used motor oil or other engine fluids into storm drains or the ground.

Step By Step

Your Guide To Cleaner Water



Visit these web sites for information about polluted runoff:

County of Westchester:

www.westchester.gov.com/waterquality

Center for Watershed Protection:
www.stormwatercenter.net

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps>

Improving water quality is a priority of Westchester County Executive Andrew L. Spano and the Westchester County Board of Legislators. The Department of Planning, in partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation District, has advanced a number of initiatives to control polluted stormwater, including watershed planning, stormwater management and natural resources restoration projects, and public outreach and education. For more information, call (914)995-4400 or visit www.westchester.gov.com/planning/environmental.

Be Part Of The Pollution Solution!

What is Polluted Stormwater Runoff?

When snow melts or it rains, water runs over roads, parking lots, sidewalks and lawns, removing oils and grease, sand and salt, tiny metal and soil particles, and fertilizers. This stormwater runoff and the pollutants it contains then flow directly into storm drainage systems. From there, it's carried without treatment into our streams, ponds, reservoirs, Long Island Sound and Hudson River. If we want to continue making progress, more effort is needed to control polluted stormwater runoff, such as by fixing any oil and other fluid leaks on our cars, reducing the amount of fertilizers we use, and washing our cars at commercial car washes where the water is recycled and/or filtered. And remember, don't dump! Only rainwater should go down a storm drain, not used motor oil or pet waste.

Help Clean Up Our Water Resources.

Clean streams, lakes, reservoirs and estuaries are important to all of us!

But you don't have to live near a stream or lake to affect their water quality. For example, spilled oil may eventually find its way there no matter where it's spilled. The environmental impacts from polluted runoff are gradual, but severe. The cumulative effects of polluted stormwater runoff can make the water very unhealthy for fish, animals and people.

It's up to all of us to keep our water resources clean. Polluted runoff can be reduced significantly if everyone incorporates small preventive measures into their regular everyday activities, such as properly disposing of pet waste or minimizing use of lawn fertilizers.

What Can You Do?

Wash your car on a grassy area so the ground can filter the water naturally.



Use soap sparingly and use non-phosphate detergents.

Use a high-pressure, low-volume hose with a trigger nozzle to save water.

Empty your bucket of used, soapy water down the sink.

Best of all, take your car to a commercial car wash where the used water is captured, recycled and/or filtered to remove pollutants. If you plan to hold a fund-raising car wash, try to have the cars washed on a permeable surface where the soapy water can be absorbed into the ground.

What Can You Do?

Scoop up pet waste.



Flush it down a toilet, as long as it's not mixed with filter or other materials. This is the best method because your septic system or community sewage plant will treat the waste.

Or, seal the waste in a plastic bag and put it in the garbage. Never dump pet waste or plastic bags containing waste into a storm drain.

If your community does not regulate pet waste, encourage your local government to adopt a "pooper-scooper" ordinance. If your local parks do not provide pet waste stations, encourage them to do so.

What Can You Do?

Use fertilizers sparingly. Lawns and many garden plants do not need as much fertilizer as you might think, especially if you use certain grasses and native plants.



Use slow-release fertilizers.

Don't fertilize just before a forecasted heavy rain storm.

Use commercially available compost to make your own using yard waste. Mixing compost with soil prevents your plants from needing less chemical fertilizer and puts your waste to good use.

Compost may be available from your local public works facility or a garden store. Don't bag grass clippings. Use a mulching lawn mower and naturally fertilize your lawn with the clippings.

Wash your spreader and equipment on a previous area like a lawn, not on the driveway. This allows natural absorption of excess fertilizer. Maintain a buffer strip of unmowed, natural vegetation alongside streams, ponds and wetlands to trap excess fertilizers and sediment.

What Can You Do?

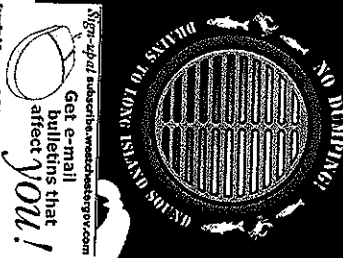
Check your car often for oil and fluid drips and other leaks and fix them promptly.

Have your car regularly tuned-up to reduce oil use. Use ground cloths or drip pans under your vehicle if you have leaks or are doing engine work. Recycle used motor oil. Many auto supply stores, car-care centers and gas stations accept used oil. Some public works facilities also accept used oil.



Clean up spills immediately. You can use kitty litter or sand to soak up the liquid. Properly dispose of this material after the spill. Collect all used oil in containers with tight-fitting lids. Do not mix waste oil with gasoline, solvents or other engine fluids. This contaminates the oil, which may otherwise be reused, and may form a more hazardous chemical.

Never dump motor oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid, or other engine fluids down storm drains, into road gutters, on the ground, or into a ditch.



Sign-up at www.westchester.gov.com
Get e-mail bulletins that affect YOU!

The Westchester County Department of Planning and Soil and Water Conservation District wish to thank the Washington State Department of Ecology for these images, and Long Island Sound Study and New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission for sharing the brochure design.



Westchester County
Soil and Water Conservation District