

# Keep it green and clean

## Car Washing



### Washing the Car

Cars washed in the street or on the driveway can pollute our waterways. The soapy water that runs off the car and into the gutters goes directly into the storm water system. Storm water, unlike the water which enters the sewers, does not undergo treatment before it is discharged into our waterways and all of the pollutants end up in our lakes, rivers or groundwater.

### How Big is the Problem?

While it may seem rather mundane, the waste water that runs off a car when it is washed contains a range of substances that may pollute the environment. These include soaps and detergents, mud, rubber, metals, oil, antifreeze, grease and other automobile fluids.

If these substances enter the storm water system, they will eventually find their way into our groundwater, streams, creeks and lakes or wherever the storm water discharges.

In addition, phosphates in the soap you use act like fertilizer. Weeds and algae decompose and use up oxygen needed by fish.



### Use Commercial Car Washes

A good way to protect our lakes, streams and groundwater is to take your car to a commercial car wash where the dirty water from the car wash goes to a wastewater treatment plant and the pollutants are removed.

If you are thinking of holding a local car wash to raise money, contact your local commercial car wash and team up with them to sell tickets for an environmentally-friendly fund raiser.