

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

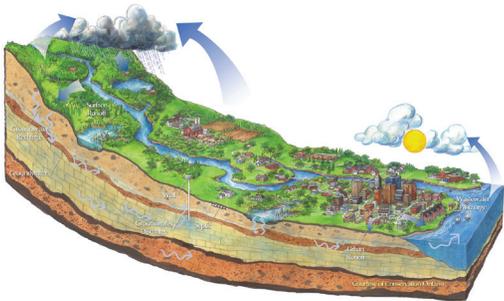
A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common point, such as a nearby creek, stream or river. Every small watershed drains to a larger watershed that eventually flows to the ocean.

Watershed support a wide variety of plants and wildlife and provide many outdoor recreation opportunities. By protecting the health of our watershed we can preserve and enhance the quality of life for Charleston area residents.

What is Storm Water Runoff?

Storm water is water from rain or melting snow. It flows from rooftops, over paved streets, sidewalks and parking lots, across bare soil, and through lawns and storm drains. As it flows, runoff collects and transports soil, pet waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizer, oil and grease, litter and other pollutants. This water drains directly into nearby creeks, streams and rivers, without receiving treatment at sewage plants.

Polluted storm water contaminates creeks, streams, and rivers. It can kill or damage plants, fish and wildlife, while degrading the quality of our water.



A typical watershed system

**THINK GREEN WHEN
WASHING YOUR CAR AND
FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM
THIS BROCHURE TO
PROTECT OUR LOCAL
WATER RESOURCES.**



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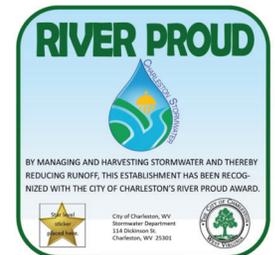
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This Brochure has been distributed to you by the City of Charleston, West Virginia in an effort to increase your knowledge of our stormwater management program and educational efforts.

WASHING YOUR CAR
*without washing the
environment!*



WHEN YOU ARE WASHING YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY, REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT JUST WASHING YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY. ALL THE SOAP, SCUM, AND OILY GRIT, COMES OFF THE CAR, RUNS ALONG THE CURB. THEN INTO THE STORM DRAIN AND DIRECTLY INTO OUR STREAMS AND RIVERS. THESE ACTIONS CAUSE POLLUTION AND IS UNHEALTHY FOR FISH AND AQUATIC WILDLIFE.



THE FACTS ABOUT CAR WASHING!

For many, car washing is a springtime ritual. Often, citizens don't realize that by washing all the winter grime off their vehicles they might actually be causing harm to our local waterways.

Water entering storm drains, unlike water that enters sanitary sewers, does not undergo treatment before it is discharged into our waterways. When cars are washed on streets and driveways, that dirty water eventually winds up in the streams, creeks and rivers.

Washing one car may not seem to be a problem, but collectively car washing activity adds up to big problems for our local streams, creeks and rivers. Pollution associated with car washing degrades water quality while also finding its way into sediments, impacting aquatic habitats.



WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH CAR WASHING?

There's no problem with washing your car. It's just how and where you do it. Dirty water containing soap, detergents, residue from exhaust fumes, gasoline, heavy metals, and motor oils can wash off cars and flow directly to storm drains which run directly into our streams and rivers.

Soap detergents can have a poisonous effect on all types of aquatic life. Detergents can also cause severe damage to the gills, and destroy the external mucus layers that protect fish from bacteria and parasites. Additionally, too much soap in the water can make it difficult for aquatic organisms to get the oxygen from the water they need to survive.



Washing your car is only a problem if you don't know where or how to do it correctly. The homeowner used 116 gallons of water to wash a car! Most commercial car washes used 60 percent less water for the entire process than a homeowner used just to rinse the car.

WHAT CAN YOU DO!

The best way to minimize the effect washing your car has on the environment is to use a commercial car wash. Most locations reuse wash water several times before sending it to a treatment plant.



However, if you choose to wash your car at home, these are some things that you can do to minimize the water quality impact:

- Use biodegradable, phosphate-free, water based cleaners only.
- Minimize water usage, Use a spray gun to minimize water volume and runoff.
- Wash on an area that absorbs water, such as gravel, or grass. This can filter water before it enters groundwater, storm drains or creeks. Avoid washing cars on concrete or asphalt pavement unless it drains into a vegetated area.
- Always empty wash buckets into sinks or toilet that flows into a treatment plant.

WHAT KIND OF SOAP CAN I USE TO WASH MY CAR?

Choose a biodegradable soap specifically formulated for automotive parts such as:

