

Earth-Friendly Car Care

With four million vehicles in Southeast Michigan, proper car care is essential in order to protect the lakes and streams of the State of Michigan. The Great Lakes and its watersheds contain the largest source of freshwater in the entire world. These bodies of water provide drinking water in addition to maintaining a diverse habitat of fish and other aquatic species.

Dirty water and other vehicle fluids pollute lakes, rivers, and streams through storm drains and roadside ditches. Local residents can have a significant impact in reducing the amount of pollutants that enter our lakes and streams.

Here are some helpful tips on practicing good car care habits:

- **Make a date:** Car-wash facilities treat their dirty water before discharging it to our lakes and streams. So, make a date to take your car to a car wash.
- **Wash it—on the grass:** If you wash your car at home, consider washing it on the lawn. The lawn will gladly soak up the soapy, dirty water preventing it from entering storm drains or roadside ditches. If you can't use the lawn, try to direct the dirty water towards the lawn and away from the storm drain.
- **Take advantage of business expertise:** Consider taking your vehicle to the shop to have the oil and other fluids changed. These businesses have the ability to recycle the used materials and clean up accidental spills.
- **Recycle:** If you choose to change your oil and other fluids yourself, label the waste containers. Then, take them to your local household hazardous waste collection day or to a business that accepts used oil. Never dump used oil, antifreeze, or other fluids on the ground or down the storm drain.
- **Soak it up:** Use kitty litter promptly to absorb small amounts of spilled vehicle fluids. Then sweep it into a bag and throw it in the trash.

For more easy steps on protecting our lakes and streams, visit www.semco.org. Remember, our water is our future — and it's ours to protect!