

Clean Water And A Clean Hudson River Are Important To All Of Us

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

Why do we need clean water?

Having clean water is of primary importance for our health, environment 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 groundwater, lakes, streams and Hudson River 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, rivers or marine waters without being treated first. The phosphates from the soap can cause excess algae to grow. Algae looks bad, smells bad, and harms water quality. As algae decays, the process uses up oxygen in the water that fish need.

Clean Water Tips:

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

- Use soap sparingly. Use a hose nozzle with a trigger to save water.
- Pour your bucket of soapy water down the sink when you're done, not in the street, or wash your car on a grassy area so the ground can filter the water naturally.
- 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 sewer system for treatment.

To find out more about the impacts from washing your vehicle and what you can do to prevent water pollution, call your local Soil and Water Conservation District, or visit the Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts website at www.lhccd.org



This information is brought to you by the Lower Hudson Coalition of Conservation Districts. Established in 1998, the members have been working with individuals to coordinate state and federal conservation programs at a local level. The Districts provide technical assistance and education on soil, water, and related natural resources. Municipalities, farmers, and landowners use this information in making proper land use decisions.