

# OIL AND WATER DON'T MIX

Most oil pollution looks different than the pictures you see of oil covered beaches after a major spill or accident. In fact, poorly maintained vehicles are one of the largest causes of oil pollution in our waterways. Leaking automotive fluid goes from your car to the street, from street to storm drain, and from the drain directly into our rivers, lakes, and streams. This impacts aquatic habitats and makes waters unsafe for human recreation. With over 250 million cars on the road, these small spills add up to big problems. It's estimated that Americans spill 180 million gallons of used oil each year. That's 16 times the amount spilled during the Exxon Valdez disaster! By quickly fixing leaks, you can help protect both your vehicle and our water resources.

While checking for leaks and resolving them helps, it's not just leaking fluids that cause issues. When washing a vehicle on pavement, the soap suds, grease, oil, and sediment that rinse off your car or lawn equipment also become stormwater pollutants.

Worse yet, this pollution is not an isolated problem that only impacts the neighborhood or local waterway where the leaks or spill occur. As part of the Grand River watershed, runoff in the Lansing area eventually enters the Grand River. From there, water flows from the mouth of the river in Grand Haven and into Lake Michigan. This means that hazardous chemicals on the ground at home impacts our local waterways, the Great Lakes, and beyond!



## Help Keep Our Waterways Clean

- Repair any leaks and drips from your automobile. This includes: motor oil, transmission fluid, anti-freeze/coolant, power steering fluid, brake fluid, gasoline and other lubricants. Remember, these chemicals are also dangerous to your pets.
- If you choose to change your own oil, do not dump the used oil in the yard, on your driveway, or in a storm drain. Find a local firm that will recycle the used oil.
- Do not use used motor oil to control dust on gravel driveways.
- Wash your car on the grass to filter out impurities or take it to a commercial car wash where the water is reclaimed (check local ordinances first).
- Basic automobile maintenance such as tune-ups, proper tire inflation, and efficient driving practices save on fuel, as well as water and air pollution.
- Abandoned automobiles should be taken to a scrap yard or donated to a local charity. Old cars sitting out in a field will leak oil and fuel.

