

**“We all live downstream.” --Anonymous**

For most of our lives, we have done things like walk the dog, wash the car, change the oil, add some anti-freeze, fertilize the lawn, and kill those pesky weeds without giving a thought to what we are doing to our streams, rivers and lakes. We have now come to realize that the way we do some of our most common chores is having an unhealthy impact on our waterways. Here are some things you can do to help minimize your impact:

- Use chemical fertilizers and pesticides sparingly and follow label directions carefully. Never apply when rain is forecast. Visit [www.ohioline.aq.ohio-state.edu](http://www.ohioline.aq.ohio-state.edu) or [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) for better ways to control pests and grow a nice lawn.
- Recycle or properly dispose of used motor oil and other hazardous wastes. Roundups are held twice a year at the Service Dept. and used motor oil is accepted year-round.
- Washing your car on the grass helps to filter the pollutants that are washed off your vehicle. Use a mild biodegradable soap. Use a nozzle on your hose to limit water use and runoff. Also, consider taking your car to a commercial car wash where the used water is routed to a sanitary rather than a storm drain.
- Do not mow stream banks. This natural buffer helps reduce erosion.
- Mow lawns to the proper height—3” for most lawns. Never cut more than one third of the existing lawn height at one time. Cutting too low leaves the lawn vulnerable to stress and disease.
- Reduce the amount of actively mowed lawn and create a meadow in your yard.
- Reduce the amount of paved surfaces around your home. Using bricks, stones or gravel for driveways, sidewalks and patios can reduce the amount of rainwater flowing into storm drains as well as help filter pollutants.
- Keep leaves and grass clippings away from streets, ditches, storm drains and waterways. Just because they are organic does not mean they are not harmful. These waste products feed the waterway with added nutrients that cause harmful algae blooms and kill fish. Use a mulching mower and leave grass clippings on the lawn.
- Bag pet waste and place it in the trash.
- If you spill engine degreaser, tire cleaner, brake fluid, antifreeze or oil in the driveway, do not hose it off. Instead, sprinkle cornmeal, sawdust, cat litter or a commercial absorbent product over the spill. Sweep it up and dispose of it properly.

- Fix those leaks! Oil, gas or antifreeze leaking onto our driveways, streets or parking lots eventually makes its way into our waterways.
- Hosing off your driveway or sidewalk uses about 10 gallons of water per minute. Consider using a broom and dustpan.

These are just a few of the ways that you can help make a difference.

*Information provided by the Chagrin River Watershed Partners  
[www.crowp.org](http://www.crowp.org)*