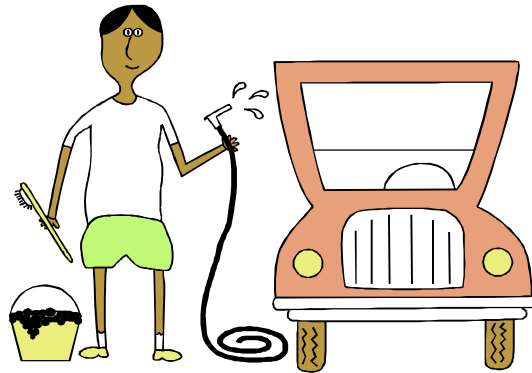


Community Car Washes Adversely Affect Our Lakes and Streams

Keeping pollutants out of our storm drain system protects our local creeks, rivers, and lakes. Materials swept, blown, or washed into the storm drains end up in these open waters where they degrade water quality and harm aquatic life. Moreover, wastewater discharged into storm drains is illegal.



Cars that are washed on the street and parking lots can pollute our lakes and streams, including those at fundraising car washes! Dirty water containing soaps, detergents, and residue from exhaust fumes, gasoline, and motor oils are washed off cars and flow directly into the nearest storm drain.

By following some of the practices below, we can make a difference in the water quality and health of our lakes and streams:

- **Check with your local car wash first!** Ask if you could sell fundraising coupons for a certain date to be used at the car wash. Sell the tickets for a fixed price and split the profits with the car wash.
- Selecting the site for your car wash is very important! **Choose a site where the wash water can soak into grass, gravels, or diverted into nearby landscaping.** This allows the wash water to filter through vegetation and soil instead of flowing directing into a storm drain.
- Check with your local automotive shops for absorbent pads that can be placed to catch oils, soaps, and other chemicals.
- Remove all trash, debris, and soap suds from the car washing area before and after the event.
- **A soap-free car wash is the best for the environment.** If you do use soaps, use cleaners or detergents labeled “non-toxic,” “chlorine-free,” “phosphate-free,” or “biodegradable.” The safest products for the environment are vegetable or citrus-based products. Biodegradable products are still toxic to aquatic life, but they do degrade faster over time.
- **Contact your local sanitary and water department prior to your event** to pump left over waste water into the sanitary system or haul waste water offsite.
- At the car wash event, make sure to:
 - Use a bucket of soapy water and re-use rags, rather than adding soap directly to sponges.
 - Wring sponges and rags into the bucket rather than on the ground.
 - **Empty soapy water buckets into the sanitary system** (e.g. sinks or toilets), NOT down the storm drain.

Also you could try a different approach to fundraising, including:

- Golf Outing
- Bowl-A-Thon
- Date Auction
- Bake Sale
- Coupon Books
- Talent Show