



CLEAN WATER IS UP TO YOU

By Carol Hillestad for the Brodhead Watershed Association

A Drop in the Bucket

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It doesn't take a crystal ball: a look out the window says that winter weather, road salt, and grunge-caked cars are coming our way.

Even if you're one of the hardy souls who enjoys washing the car, a numbing breeze and temps in the 30s cut a big slice out of that pleasure. And if bitter winter weather sends you to a commercial carwash instead of the driveway — that's a good thing. Because unless you are really, really careful, driveway washing can be a serious polluter of our pristine local creeks.

Seriously!

Driveway washing sends buckets of accumulated grime, oil, gas, heavy metals from rust, and exhaust residue scouring away down the driveway. Not to mention ice melt chemicals and detergent. Just in rinsing a car most people use twice the water that a car wash does to do the whole job.

Eventually, it all ends up in the nearest waterway.

So, yes, commercial car washes are way safer for our water supply. Professional car washes slash water waste by reclaiming, recycling, treating, and reusing water. They use eco-friendly cleaning products which protect our creeks from algae blooms that can kill water plants, fish, and other critters (and smell just awful).

Will switching to a commercial car wash end water pollution? Ah, if only it were that easy.

But with all the challenges stressing Mother Nature, making the switch from home washing to commercial is something you can feel good about. A clean car, clean creeks, pure drinking water — a drop in the bucket can be a very good thing.

If you must wash at home... Use buckets and a spray gun on your hose to keep water volume and runoff to a minimum. Use water-based, biodegradable, non-phosphorus cleaners — and wash your vehicle on grass or gravel areas, so dirty water is filtered before it gets into groundwater or creeks. Or try one of the many professional waterless products. Find reviews at <https://www.caranddriver.com/shopping-advice/g25575860/waterless-carwash/>

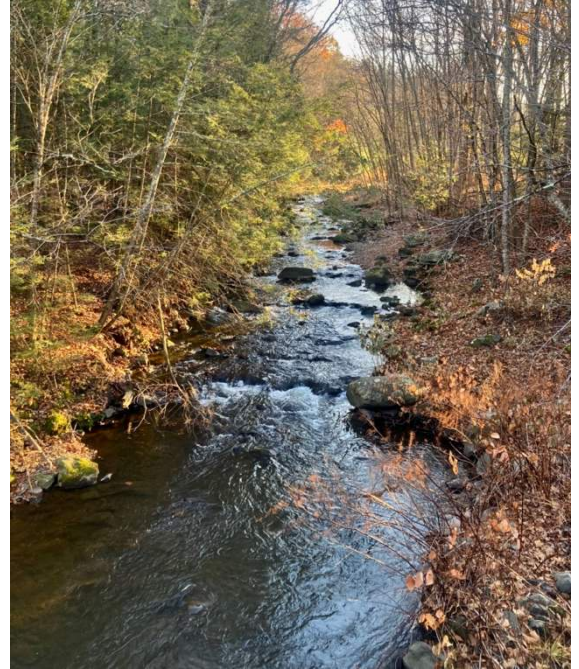
If you're running a car wash fundraiser... Please don't do it anywhere that's paved! And follow the home washing practices above. Better still, partner with a local commercial car wash — the wash will be safer for our drinking water, and your scouts, cheerleaders, or band members can handle the vacuuming and finishing.

For more information

https://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/files/KSMO_CarWashing.pdf

Check out the Clean Water archive on our updated website <https://brodheadwatershed.org/protecting-clean-water/>

For humans, fish, and every living thing, Brodhead Watershed Association protects water quality and quantity throughout our area. Get involved! Become a member today. <https://www.brodheadwatershed.org>



Do you really want road salt, detergent, oil and gas residue from washing your car to end up here? Switch to a commercial car wash!