or most of us, automobiles are a necessary part of our daily lives. Thoughtful use can reduce nonpoint source pollution as well as air pollution.

Follow these tips to decrease impacts from motor vehicles:

- Plan errands to minimize the number of trips. Driving less reduces the amount of pollution your automobile releases into the environment.
- Regularly inspect and maintain your vehicle to help keep automotive waste, toxic metals and petroleum byproducts from contaminating runoff.
- Clean up spilled brake fluid, oil, grease, antifreeze and other toxic chemicals, rather than hosing them into the street where they may enter the storm drain system and eventually reach local streams and lakes.
- Never pour used oil or other chemicals down storm drains, on the soil, or in the trash.
- Recycle used oil, antifreeze and batteries by taking them to recycling centers or auto parts stores. Recycling just 2 gallons of used oil can generate enough electricity to run the average household for almost 24 hours.

Vehicles with leaking oil, coolant or other fluids should be repaired immediately. If repairs must be delayed, place a drip pan or an absorbent substance under the vehicle. Properly dispose of the absorbent material and/or collected leaking fluid.

See: www.recycleoil.org for more information
Wash your car at a certified car wash. Detergents contain nutrients that can run off impervious surfaces. Certified carwashes are required to collect and dispose of wash water properly.

If you must wash your car at home, park on a lawn area, gravel driveway or other permeable surface so the soapy water can soak into the ground.

Use a spray nozzle or hose equipped with a shutoff valve to minimize water use. Don’t let the hose run throughout the whole car washing process.

Many schools, clubs and organizations use car washes as fundraisers. Try to plan ahead and divert the wastewater to a sanitary sewer, grassy area or catch basin instead of a storm drain. If possible, work with a local carwash to host the fundraiser. Many will donate a portion of their profits in exchange for the sweat equity of your volunteers.

Did you know?
A certified car wash is required to collect and dispose of wash water properly.

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