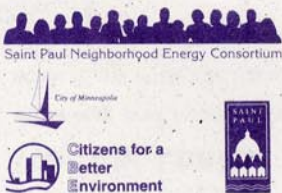


## What is an urban watershed?

A watershed, or drainage basin, is the area of land from which rain and snowmelt flow and eventually enter a lake, river or wetland. Even if your home is not next to a lake, river or wetland, you still live in a watershed. Twin Cities watersheds, like in most cities, are hidden because the natural drainage system has been replaced with underground storm drains. Most of these storm drains lead to the Mississippi River.



This material is provided to you through a partnership between the Saint Paul Neighborhood Energy Consortium, Citizens for a Better Environment (CBE) and the Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Support for this project is from CBE members and the Metropolitan Council. Funding for this project approved by the Minnesota Legislature, as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources from the Minnesota Futures Resources Fund.



### Citizens for a Better Environment

3255 Hennepin Avenue South  
Suite 150  
Minneapolis, MN 55408-9920

Nonprofit Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Minneapolis, MN  
Permit No. 2140

Printed with soy ink on 100% postconsumer recycled paper



# Clean up the Mississippi River



## without leaving your driveway

## What is urban runoff?

You can see urban runoff every time it rains, or in the spring when the snow melts – water runs off roofs, trickles across parking lots and flows down street gutters. In urban areas, most water from rain, snowmelt or from sprinkling your yard flows through storm drains and into a vast network of pipes. These pipes carry water directly from your neighborhood to our local rivers, streams and wetlands. This water becomes polluted when it picks up things like grass clippings, leaves, pesticides, motor oil and pet waste and flushes them into storm drains and eventually into the Mississippi River.

## Keep your car out of the Mississippi River

Cars cause air pollution, many of us know that. But did you know that cars are polluting the Mississippi River? That oil spot on your driveway or parking space is actually a source of water pollution. When water flows over pavement, it picks up everything in its way. If motor oil and other fluids leak out of your car, they are washed into street storm drains and then directly into the Mississippi River.

Even the smallest concentration of automotive products can cause contamination.

You do not need to live next to the Mississippi River to help it.

### These small things can make a big difference:

**Don't Dump!** It is illegal to dump motor oil, antifreeze, battery acid or other auto products down a storm drain. Americans dump an estimated 120 million gallons of oil down storm drains each year. Most oil change centers take motor oil or call your solid waste office for more recycling and drop off information. In Hennepin County call 348-6500 or 348-6509 and in Ramsey County call 633-EASY.



**Wash on the Lawn!** The water, soap, dirt and rust from washing cars on a paved area flows through a storm drain to the Mississippi River without being treated.



**Repair Leaks!** Auto leaks form pollution puddles on your street or driveway and eventually get washed into storm drains. If you find a leak, soak it up with cat litter, sweep it up and throw it in your garbage.



### Keep it Tuned!

A well tuned car uses as much as 20% less gasoline.



**More Air!** For every pound that your tires are under-inflated, your car loses 1% in gas mileage.

**Drive Less!** Research shows that the most polluted runoff comes from heavily traveled streets and highways. As your car leaks, tires and brake linings wear down, all of this gets washed directly to the Mississippi River. Walk, ride your bike and plan your trips to minimize mileage.



**For the Mississippi River, keep this flyer and spread the word!**

### For More Information

Contact Citizens for a Better Environment at (612) 824-8637.