Where does the water go?

What happens to water from storms, lawn watering, or car washing? This water, called stormwater or urban runoff, flows into the City’s storm drainage system through over 2500 curbside catch basins - the openings located along street gutters. The water moves through the storm drain piping below our streets to our rivers, creeks, wetlands, sloughs, delta, bay, and eventually the Pacific Ocean.

Initially, much of this water fills the City’s detention and wildlife ponds which support an array of wildlife species. Other water flows through drainage ditches towards the northern and eastern edges of the City.

A portion of the stormwater that is collected in the City is conveyed to the Davis Wetlands where it is used to support this constructed wetlands system and all its wild inhabitants.

To remind everyone about the importance of preventing pollution of our stormwater, be it from other sources, the City has installed storm drain inlet markers near each drain.

PLEASE KEEP OUR WATERSHED CLEAN!!

Stormwater pollution can be extremely harmful to the health of the plants and animals with which we share this planet.

Help us to protect your water resources for current and future generations.

If you see anyone dumping questionable materials, please call City of Davis Public Works at (530) 757-5686.

If it is an emergency, call 911.

Home and Charity Car Washing: Is it possible to keep both our cars and watershed clean?

City of Davis
Department of Public Works
PROTECT OUR WETLANDS

Our local watershed is comprised of a delicately balanced ecosystem. Creeks, ponds and wetlands are home to numerous species of plants and animals. These species rely on the abundance of smaller organisms that support the food web. These organisms can be harmed by discharges of material and wastes from an array of urban activities.

Car Washing

Contrary to what some believe, water that runs off from our homes, parking lots and streets does not receive treatment. Unlike the water coming from toilets and bath-tubs, urban run off flows straight into local wetlands and ponds. Home and charity car washers often don’t realize they are actually harming the environment. Automotive frames, paint, brakes and exhaust contain heavy metals such as lead, zinc, iron oxide and asbestos. Soap contains phosphates, chlorine and other non-biodegradable ingredients that are toxic to fish and other aquatic life.

Did you know...

Detergent as low as:
- 2 parts per million can cause fish to absorb twice the amount of chemicals as normal?
- 5 parts per million will kill fish eggs?
- 15 parts per million cause death in most fish species?

The Solution to Car Washing Pollution

Best Management Practices such as washing your car at a licensed car wash facility or redirecting wash water away from the storm drain can prevent pollutants from entering our wetlands, ponds and oceans.

What you can do:

- Wash your car at a licensed car wash facility. These facilities collect wash water and send it to the sanitary sewer system for treatment. Some facilities even recycle the water through on-site filtration for use as a pre-wash rinse!
- Charity car wash organizers should try and partner with licensed car wash facilities. Charities benefit from increased traffic and fund raising. The car wash owner benefits from increased business and good public relations. Everyone benefits from healthy local wetlands ecosystems!
- If car washing must occur outside of a licensed car wash facility, wash vehicles over turf grass or other vegetated soil. Another method would be to use a containment sump to capture wash water. This water may then be pumped into a sanitary sewer drain.

Save Water for More Important Uses

Professional car wash facilities are a water responsible alternative to washing your vehicle at home or in a parking lot. Most car wash facilities save water by using high pressure nozzles and pumps. This car wash equipment is designed to thoroughly clean a vehicle using minimal water. As a result, a fraction of the water is used compared to a garden hose typically used at home or charity car washes.

Think About It!

Would you intentionally throw buckets of dirty, soapy water in a river, pond or stream? That’s what is happening when 100 to 200 cars are washed at home or charity car wash events.