Facts About Used Oil

Used motor oil never wears out — it just gets dirty and can be recycled, cleaned and used again. Motor oil poured onto the ground or into storm drains, or tossed into trash cans (even in sealed containers) can contaminate and pollute the soil, groundwater, streams, and rivers.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that over 200 million gallons of do-it-yourself used oil ends up in the trash, in water and poured on the ground each year.

Recycling used motor oil reduces this pollution threat. When you recycle used oil, you are protecting the environment and conserving a valuable resource.

Recycling used oil helps protect ground and surface waters, fish and wildlife and conserves energy. If recycled, the oil could save about a half million barrels of crude oil each year, worth nearly $10 million dollars.

Used oil from ATVs, jet skis, boats, lawn mowers, weed eaters, and other motorized items threatens the environment just as much as oil from automobiles.

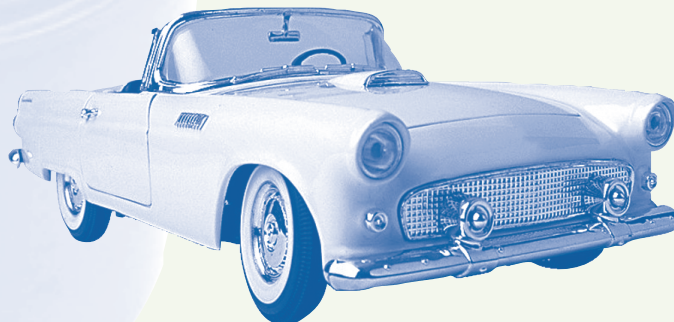### Clean Water. Healthy Life.

What's the Problem?

Used motor oil can contain concentrations of toxic heavy metals such as zinc, lead, and cadmium that affect the environment, including wildlife, vegetation, surface water and drinking water supplies when not disposed of properly.

One quart of oil poured down a storm drain can contaminate one million gallons of water. Water that goes down storm drains does not go to treatment plants.

One pint of oil can produce a slick of approximately one acre of water.

When oil enters a body of water, a film develops on the surface that blocks out sunlight that plants and other organisms need to live.

Other automotive fluids, including antifreeze, solvents and gasoline are also harmful to the environment when not disposed of correctly. When used motor oil is mixed with other automotive fluids, it is considered contaminated and cannot be collected for recycling.

For more information

What Can You Do?

There are things that every citizen can do at home and in their community to help prevent illegal dumping and oil pollution to our water:

- Recycle used motor oil at a local used oil collection center.

- Request re-refined motor oil when you get your oil changed. Re-refined motor oil must meet the same American Petroleum Institute (API) certification standards as virgin motor oil.

- Cars that leak oil and other automotive fluids are a big source of water pollution. Have your car checked for any leaking fluids that might run-off into storm drains.

- Recycle and re-use oil filters. Recycling one ton of drained oil filters produces 1,700 pounds of steel and recovers about 60 gallons of used oil.

- Community storm drain stenciling events are a good way to get the word out about what should and shouldn't go down storm drains. Many programs focus on the dangers of mixing oil and water.

- If you change your own oil, get a reusable used oil container. Drain the oil carefully into the container, avoiding splatter and spills.

or call
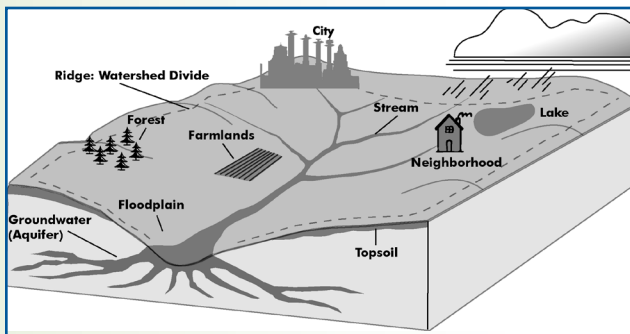
MARC
Mid-America Regional Council

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common point, such as a nearby creek, stream, river or lake. Every small watershed drains to a larger watershed that eventually flows to the ocean.

Watersheds support a wide variety of plants and wildlife and provide many outdoor recreation opportunities. By protecting the health of our watersheds we can preserve and enhance the quality of life for Kentucky residents.

What is stormwater runoff?

Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow. It flows from rooftops, over paved streets, sidewalks and parking lots, across bare soil, and through lawns and storm drains. As it flows, runoff collects and transports soil, pet waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizer, oil and grease, litter and other pollutants. This water drains directly into nearby creeks, streams and rivers, without receiving treatment at sewage plants.

Polluted stormwater contaminates streams, rivers and lakes. It can kill or damage plants, fish and wildlife, while degrading the quality of our water.

City
Ridge: Watershed Divide
Forest
Stream
Lake
Farmlands
Neighborhood
Floodplain
Groundwater (Aquifer)
Topsoil

A typical watershed system

**For more information,
visit
or call**

Oil and Water Don't Mix

Winter Watershed Tip

Used motor oil is the largest single source of oil pollution in our lakes, rivers and streams.