

# Campaign for a Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone River

## Cleaner Car Care

Fixing oil and antifreeze leaks, and getting clean on the green

Lawns/  
Gardens

### WHY?

Terrific  
Trees



To Watershed

Car Care

**Leaks:** Oil, antifreeze and other fluids that leak from your car are washed from your driveway into the street, and then into **storm drains** that flow directly into our Blackstone watershed waterways. In the U.S., it is estimated that petroleum



Hydrocarbons

Pet Waste

washed off the pavement every year, along with dirty oil dumped directly into storm drains, sends 15 times more oil into the ocean than the Exxon Valdez did. One pint of motor oil can contaminate 125,000 gallons of drinking water and make an oil slick about the size of two football fields.

Rooftop  
Runoff/  
Rain  
Gardens

**Washing:** How and where you wash your vehicle makes a difference to our local environment! The soap, together with dirt and oil washed from your vehicle, can find its way to local streams, wells and groundwater through storm drains, which are not linked to a water treatment plant. Runoff of excess phosphorous from cleaning products can contribute to the decline in health of our local streams. Phosphorus acts as a nutrient or fertilizer for aquatic plants, causing excessive growth. This pollution harms water quality and aquatic life.



<http://www.lismore.nsw.gov>

Household  
Hazardous  
Waste

Pervious  
Surfaces

Here's how you can reduce harmful oil and cleaning-product runoff from your vehicle.

### HOW?

Stream  
Buffers

Leaks:

- ◆ If you notice vehicle fluids on your driveway, call your local repair shop to fix it, or repair it as soon as possible. If you change your own oil, return the used motor oil to the place where you bought it for recycling – it's the law in Massachusetts. Also you can check with your Department of Public Works to see if they collect it. Never pour it down the storm drain.
- ◆ Clean up spills immediately. Use a non-toxic biodegradable chemical from your local hardware store that will safely break down oil deposits, or use kitty litter to soak up oil. Place it in your garbage can in a sealed bag. Do not hose fluids into the street where they can eventually reach local streams and lakes.
- ◆ When parked in your driveway, keep a drip pan under the leak until you repair it. Empty the collected fluids into a tightly sealed and labeled container, and recycle it.

more →

## Washing:

- ◆ If you wash your vehicle at home, wash it on grass or gravel instead of the street or driveway to help filter the soapy water and grime.
- ◆ Use soap that is biodegradable. To conserve water, make sure your hose has an on-off switch or nozzle.
- ◆ If you use a bucket of soap and water, pour what is left in your bucket down the sink so it can be treated, not down the stormdrain.

## RESOURCES

<https://spacreek.net/resource/tips-for-environmentally-friendly-car-care/>

<http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/oilspi01.pdf>

<https://dem.ri.gov/programs/customertech/used-oil-recycling.php>

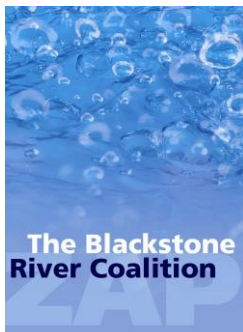
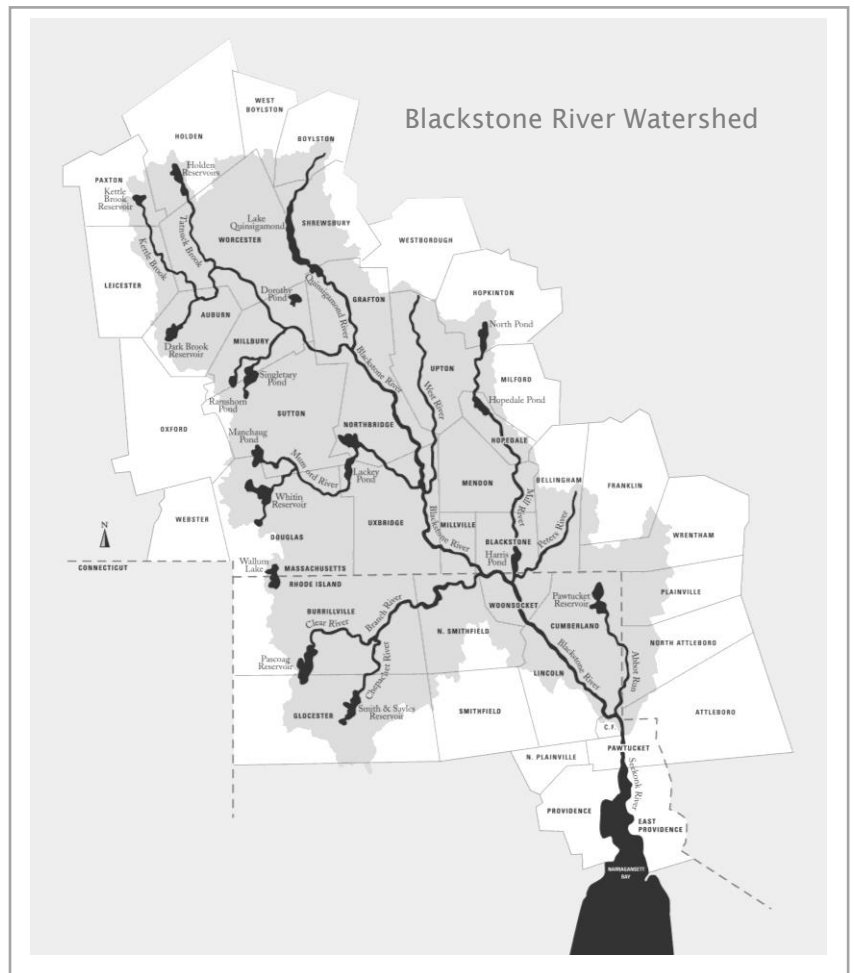
"**You Dump It, You Drink It**" poster:

<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/en-poster.pdf>

## BENEFITS

You reduce the impacts of oil and other petroleum products from harming aquatic life, and avoid adding nutrients that cause excessive aquatic vegetation.

If you live within the shaded area on the map, then you live in the Blackstone River watershed.



**The Blackstone River Coalition** is a partnership of numerous organizations working to restore the Blackstone River and improve the health of its watershed. For more information contact BRC Coordinator Peter Coffin at 508-753-6087 or [peter.coffin@zaptheblackstone.org](mailto:peter.coffin@zaptheblackstone.org).

This guide was developed by Mass Audubon for the BRC.

Blackstone River Coalition [www.zaptheblackstone.org](http://www.zaptheblackstone.org)

 **Mass Audubon**  
Protecting the Nature of Massachusetts

