



# Not the Gulf Spill, But Just as Serious

*Non-Point Pollution can occur anywhere- even your own driveway*



The BP gulf oil spill has been a major news story this summer, but there is another type of oil spill that doesn't get as much news coverage. That's because it's relatively small and comes from many sources instead of one discharge point. It's called non-point pollution and it's the current No. 1 water pollution problem. Non-point pollution occurs away from waterways; so many people do not realize they are contributing to water pollution. For example, a car can leak fluids such as oil or antifreeze on the pavement which is carried into storm sewers by rainwater. The pollution will be carried - untreated - to the nearest body of water.

What is the impact of these driveway oil spills? It takes only one gallon of used motor oil to pollute a million gallons of fresh water. That's an entire years supply of drinking water for 50 people. If you have to add a quart of oil once a month to replace that which has leaked, in four months you'll have left enough contamination on the ground to pollute a million gallons of fresh water.

So how can you be part of the solution?

- Regularly check your car or truck for drips and oil leaks, fix them promptly, and keep your vehicle tuned to reduce oil use.
- Use ground cloths or drip pans under your vehicle if you have leaks or are doing engine work. Clean up spills immediately (you can use kitty litter or sand to soak up the liquid) and properly dispose of cleanup materials.

- Collect all used oil in containers with tight-fitting lids, such as old plastic jugs. Do not mix waste oil with gasoline, solvents, or other engine fluids. This contaminates the oil, which otherwise may be reused. Also, mixing may form a more hazardous chemical.
- Never dump motor oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid, or other engine fluids into road gutters, down the storm drain or catch basin, on the ground, or into a ditch.
- Recycle used motor oil. The electricity expended to retrieve one gallon of virgin oil from the ground is enough to run the average household for almost 24 hours. Many auto supply stores, car care centers and gas stations will accept used oil and send it to an oil recycler free of charge.