

# DMV Salt Outreach Workgroup

## *Collaboration and Connection*

WSSC Salt Summit  
January 22, 2025

Renee Bourassa, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin  
Abby Hileman, Izaak Walton League of America



# DMV Salt Outreach Workgroup



Maryland  
Department of  
the Environment



- Members come from community-based organizations, government agencies, and regional organizations
- Coordinating messaging across the region since 2021
- Sharing resources, amplifying voices, learning best practices



# DMV Salt Outreach Workgroup



**Maryland**  
Department of  
the Environment



- Working together on improving websites and social media posts
- Sharing activities and events from other organizations
- Conducted surveys with the public for most impactful Salt Wise messaging
- Used findings to develop radio spot



# WSSC Water

Partnered with Montgomery County's Salt Wise campaign

Social media messaging throughout winter season & ahead of any winter weather event

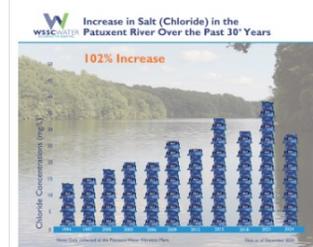
Dedicated salt wise webpage:  
[WSSCWater.com/saltwise](http://WSSCWater.com/saltwise)



## Be Salt Wise in the winter

Most people know that salt is effective in melting snow and ice and keeps our roadways safe in the winter. But many people may not realize that the salt we use on sidewalks, driveways and roads is harmful to the environment. Salt doesn't just go away when the snow/ice melts. It seeps into the ground and wells, and travels with stormwater into streams and eventually into our drinking water sources – the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers.

WSSC Water closely monitors the water entering our Patuxent and Potomac Water Filtration Plants and we've noticed that over the last 30 years, the average salt levels (sodium and chloride are the two components of salt) have been steadily increasing. The levels peak in the winter months and are higher in years that see more winter weather events. Once sodium or chloride enters our drinking water sources, we cannot remove it during the water filtration process.



## Be Salt Wise

Do your part to keep excess salt out of local waterways

[wsscwater.com/saltwise](http://wsscwater.com/saltwise)

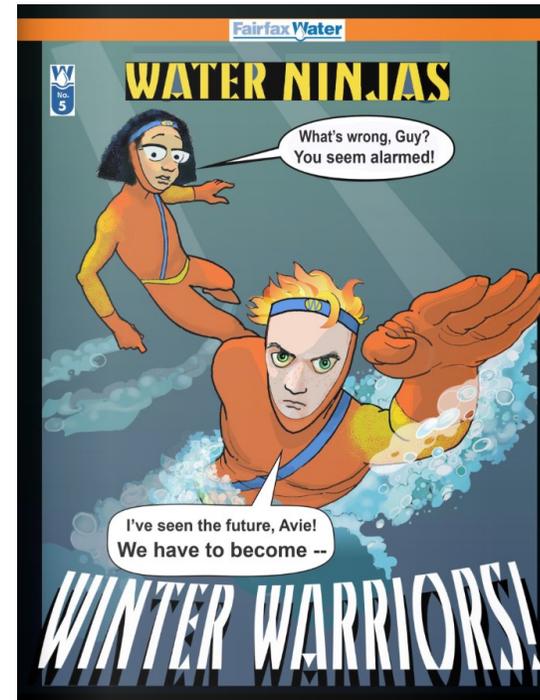


# Winter Salt Outreach



- Hosted its second Drinking Water Summit at the Griffith Treatment Plant and updated elected officials on winter salt initiatives and source water protection.
- Provided funds via Fairfax Water's Stakeholder Outreach Grant Program to local organizations to support educating residents on winter salt use and source water protection.
- Participated in the Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory's research, which had a social science component to explore how to best communicate with the public on this topic.
- Continued winter salt outreach to Fairfax Water customers of all ages through its annual water quality report, website, social media, newsletters, and in person events.
- And as always, the Water Ninjas are on the case!

See our Winter Warriors comic book here:  
[fairfaxwater.org/comics](http://fairfaxwater.org/comics)





# Gaithersburg- Environmental Services

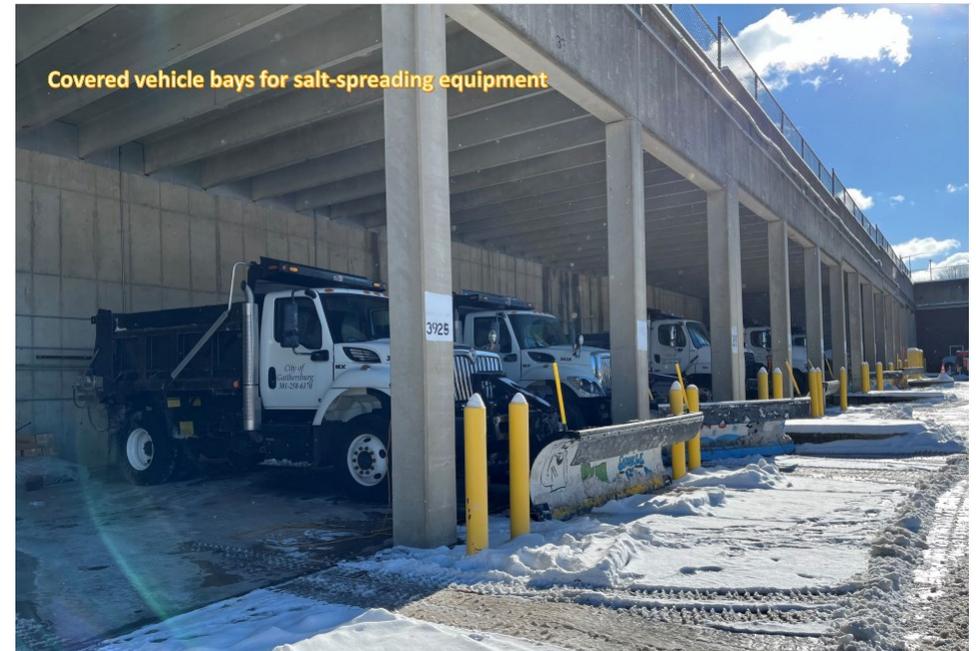
# Municipal Actions- Salt Prevention

- **220 Lane Miles**
  - 65 Staff
  - 35 vehicles
  - Post Storm Monitoring
  - Street Sweeping
- **Training through Izaak Walton Salt Watch**
  - Snow Rodeo Practice
  - Virtual Training with Sister Cities (Rockville and Takoma Park)
- **Pre-Treatment with Brine Layer**
  - Yearly Calibration of Tailgate Spreaders
  - Utilize State of MD Pavement Sensors
  - 600 Tons of Salt Used since Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 2025



# Storage/Disposal

- All Loaded Trucks stored under Cover
- All Snow equipment Washed and Cleaned Indoors
- Salt Drop off Program- Free of Charge
- Salt Barn and Good Housekeeping
- Emergency Response Preparedness





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the Environment

2024

- Expanded applicator training & certification program
- Updated winter salt web pages
  - Statewide salt reduction strategies
  - Applicators
  - Stormwater permit managers
  - At home
  - Business and property managers
- Social media, salt boxes, and more!

## SMART SALTING

THE 3 PRO TIPS FOR USING ROAD SALT EFFECTIVELY

### 1. Shovel first



Clear pavement and driveways *before* snow has the chance to turn to ice.

### 2. Use just the right amount

## APLICA SAL INTELIGENTEMENTE

LOS 3 CONSEJOS PROFESIONALES PARA UTILIZAR LA SAL DE CARRETERA DE FORMA EFICAZ

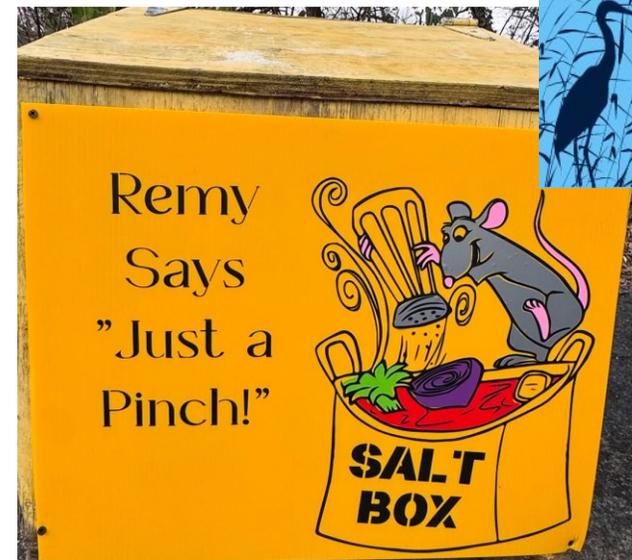
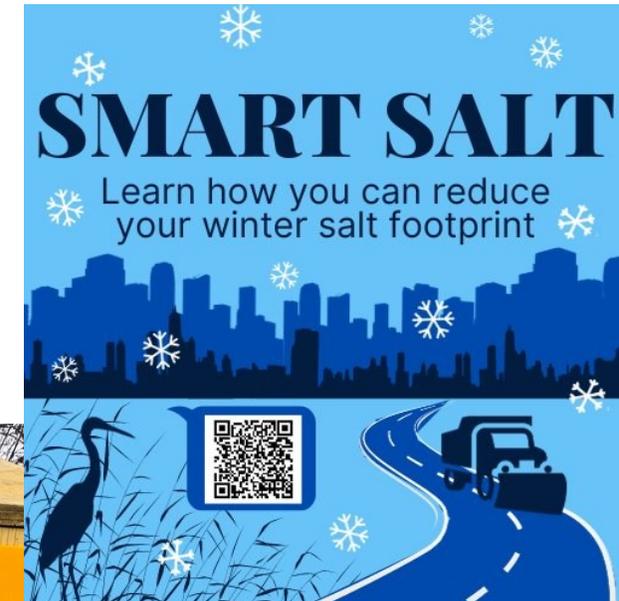
### 1. Palea primero

Limpie el pavimento y los caminos de entrada antes de que la nieve tenga la posibilidad de convertirse en hielo.



### 2. Usa la cantidad justa

Use the right amount of salt to melt snow and ice.



# Montgomery County Salt Wise Campaign

## Be Salt-Wise!

❄️ It's Easy as 1-2-3! ❄️

**1** Shovel  
Right Away



**2** Use  
Less  
Salt



= Melts 10  
Sidewalk  
Squares

**3** Sweep &  
Reuse



Learn more at [MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/salt](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/salt)



¡No use demasiada sal!  
¡Tan fácil como 1-2-3



**1**

De inmediata-  
mente retire  
con una pala  
la nieve



**2**

Use menos sal



derrite la nieve  
en 10 cuadros  
del pavimento

**3**

Barra y  
reutilice



Más información en [MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/salt](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/salt)

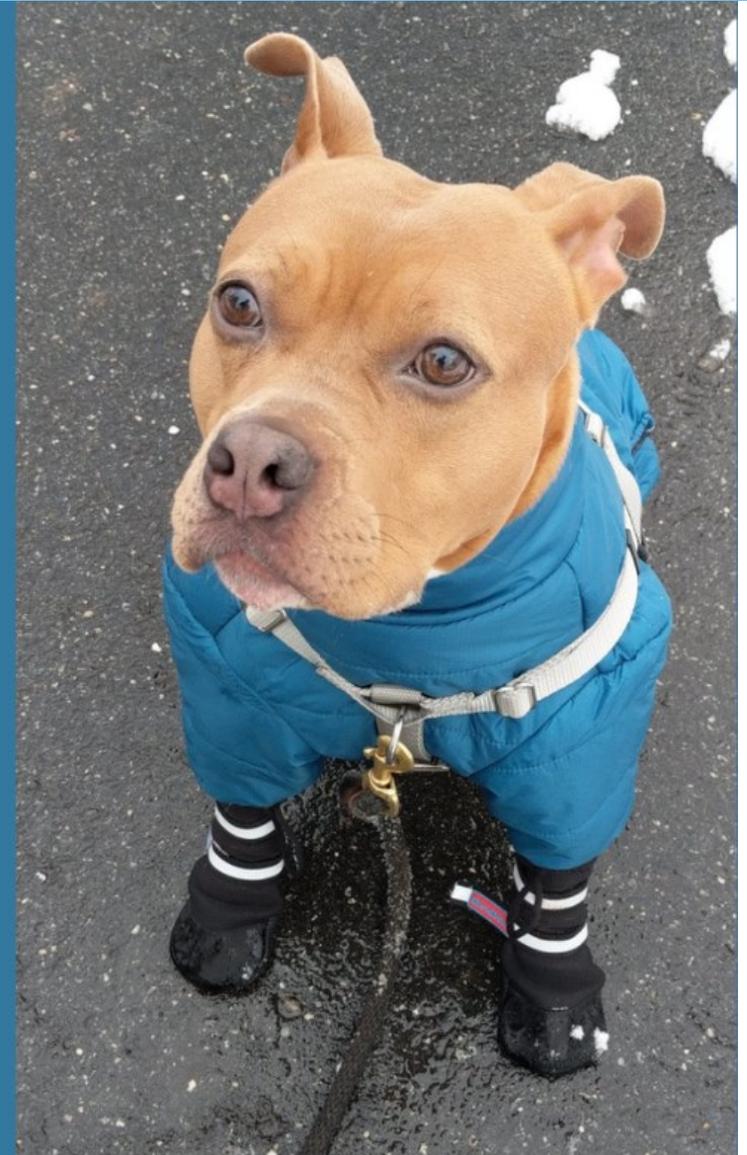




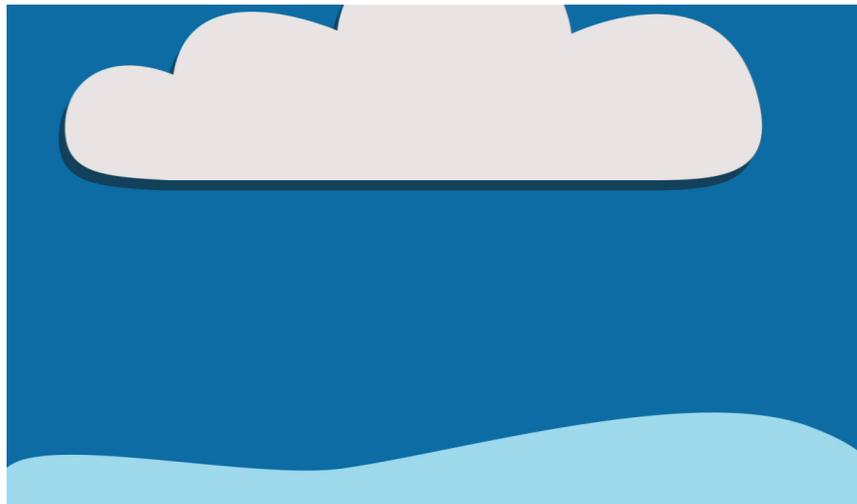
**Be PUPared and  
PAWtect your  
pets from salt.**

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**Use pet-safe salt  
alternatives.**



Post updates, videos and news events in County e-newsletters as winter weather occurs.



# Howard County Activities

- Giveaways: salt mugs and ice scrapers with “Salt Smart”
- Pledge for residents to reduce salt usage
- Salt Webpage:
  - What Highways is doing to reduce salt use
  - How residents can help highways do their job better
  - How residents can help protect water quality
  - Showcasing MDE outreach materials
- Salt Matte stories for HOA newsletters
- Social posts
- Tabling events





# Sustainability Department of the City of Frederick, Maryland

- Program in infancy
- Smart Salt / Winter Pollution Prevention sessions with staff
- Social media posts
- Markings on street sweeper trucks
- Paint the Plow Program



**FREDERICK**  
MARYLAND

# Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council (CCLC)

- Developed and refined Smart Salting: Enhanced Winter Maintenance Training Series, with UMD EFC and MDE
- Promoting winter salt content on CCLC Social Media
- Participating in Winter Salt Awareness Week
- Outreach to Landscape Contractors, Local Governments, schools, and communities



Smart Salting: Enhanced Winter Maintenance Training Series



**Who:** Property managers, business owners, landscaping companies, and other private contractors / salt applicators interested in effective ice melting strategies that protect the environment while also maintaining profitability and meeting customer expectations.

**What:** Topics include pre-season planning, site analysis, and ice fighting strategies. Contracts and cost benefits will also be covered.

**Why:** The use of salt and brine during winter weather months has increased exponentially during the past decade. The chemical properties in salt lower water's freezing point and allow for safer use of roadways and sidewalks. However, once in the environment, it accumulates in the soil and travels into local streams, wells, and drinking water reservoirs causing damage to infrastructure, the environment, and potentially human health.

The Smart Salting: Enhanced Winter Maintenance Training addresses salt overuse on parking lots, driveways, and sidewalks. The goal of this program is to provide a voluntary, statewide road salt certification for private applicators that balances the safety and mobility of people during winter weather months with minimizing salt application and improving application practices to reduce contamination.

This program will be offered again in the Fall of 2025. If you are interested in participating in the training program click the link below and fill out the online form to indicate your interest and the project team will follow up with you when details are available.

[I am interested in participating in the training program](#)

Questions? Please contact Natalia Sanchez, Program Manager at the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center at [nsanchez@umd.edu](mailto:nsanchez@umd.edu) or (301) 405-5421



# Northern Virginia Regional Commission

- Monthly Northern Virginia SaMS coordination meetings to promote collaboration on salt management planning
- In 2024, developed resource sheet for HOAs to assist with planning for contracts, salt policies, and other topics for communities
- Radio advertisements over WAMU (88.5 FM) before and after winter storm events
- Through the Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners:
  - Paid media ads and posts on social media about smart salting (FB, Twitter/X, Instagram)
  - Information and other resources on [onlyrain.org](http://onlyrain.org)



## Smart Snow and Ice Maintenance Resource Sheet for HOAs and Civic Associations Winter 2024

Smart snow and ice maintenance during the winter is crucial for homeowner associations (HOAs) and civic associations to ensure residents' safety, maintain property values, and prevent liability, while also limiting the impacts of winter salt on the environment and reducing long-term maintenance and improvement costs to vehicles and infrastructure. The following resource list provides information and links for HOA leaders to make informed decisions when they are preparing for snow and ice in the winter months. From maintenance contracts to member resident education and outreach, these tools will serve as a foundation for smarter salt management in every community.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### How does winter salt impact the environment?

While salt on our roads and sidewalks helps to keep us safe in the wintertime, it only takes one teaspoon of salt to permanently pollute 5 gallons of water. In particular, salt that enters the environment can raise sodium levels in our drinking water and harm fish, plants, and other wildlife that are adapted to freshwater environments.

#### Does excess winter salt financially impact our HOA?

Salts causes corrosion to vehicles and infrastructure, including sidewalks, roads, and bridges, and can lead to costly maintenance and repairs around your community. There are also a number of direct costs from winter salt application, including costs for materials (salt, brine, fuel etc.), equipment (trucks, plows, spreaders, etc.), and labor that increase with excess salt application. Without the use of optimal products and smart application practices, winter salt can result in greater costs to HOAs to maintain levels of service and replace infrastructure over time.

#### What actions can my HOA/civic association take to ensure smart salt management?

- There are a number of ways that you can reduce the impacts of winter salt in your community:
- Engage member residents through workshops, newsletters, flyers, and other outreach tools to educate them about the environmental consequences of road salt and smart salting practices.
  - Create a salt use policy that assesses current salt usage, adopts best practices for application, and ensures that your community is engaged around responsible salting practices.
  - Develop a winter maintenance contract that reflects your salt use policy while also maintaining public safety and quality levels of service.
  - Promote landscaping with native plants, which are typically more resilient to salt damage, and buffer zones to mitigate salt damage.

### Developing a Smart Salting Policy

A salt use policy for an HOA or civic association outlines guidelines and best practices for the application of de-icing materials during winter months. Components of a policy may include assessment and monitoring guidelines, application practices, resident education, community involvement, and future adaptation. Overall, having a salt use policy helps to protect the environment and community health, while also enhancing property values, cost savings, and long-term sustainability. See below for two examples of these policies:

- [University of Wisconsin Madison Outdoor Salt Use Policy](#)
- [Village of Shorewood Hills Salt Use Policy](#)

# Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin



- Social media posts
- Walk in the Woods: Let's be Smart About Winter Salt
- Salt Box project with MDE and IWLA
- Working with the Potomac River Basin Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership:
  - Interactive map on monitoring locations
  - Website with more technical information
- Winter Salt Smart StoryMap



# Winter Salt Smart StoryMap

[www.potomacriver.org/salt](http://www.potomacriver.org/salt)



## Winter Salt Smart

The Potomac and nearby rivers are getting saltier. Learn how everyone can protect our waterways by using less winter salt.

Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin

# Izaak Walton League of America: Salt Watch

- Hosted Smart Salt Certification trainings for road salt applicators in Gaithersburg and MoCo
- Faith-based outreach (new toolkit!)
- Winter Salt Awareness Week
- MCPS Teacher Outreach
- Tabling: Farmers markets & events like Gburg Oktoberfest, Gburg Active Aging Expo, MoCo Greenfest, & AstraZeneca Sustainability Showcase
- Salt pile covering bill
- Upcoming: Rockville outreach, Gaithersburg survey



**INSPIRING  
AT HOME ACTIONS:**  
Making a Difference Faithfully:  
A Steward's Guide to Reducing  
Road Salt

ACTION KIT



GOING FORTH

**In the beginning...**

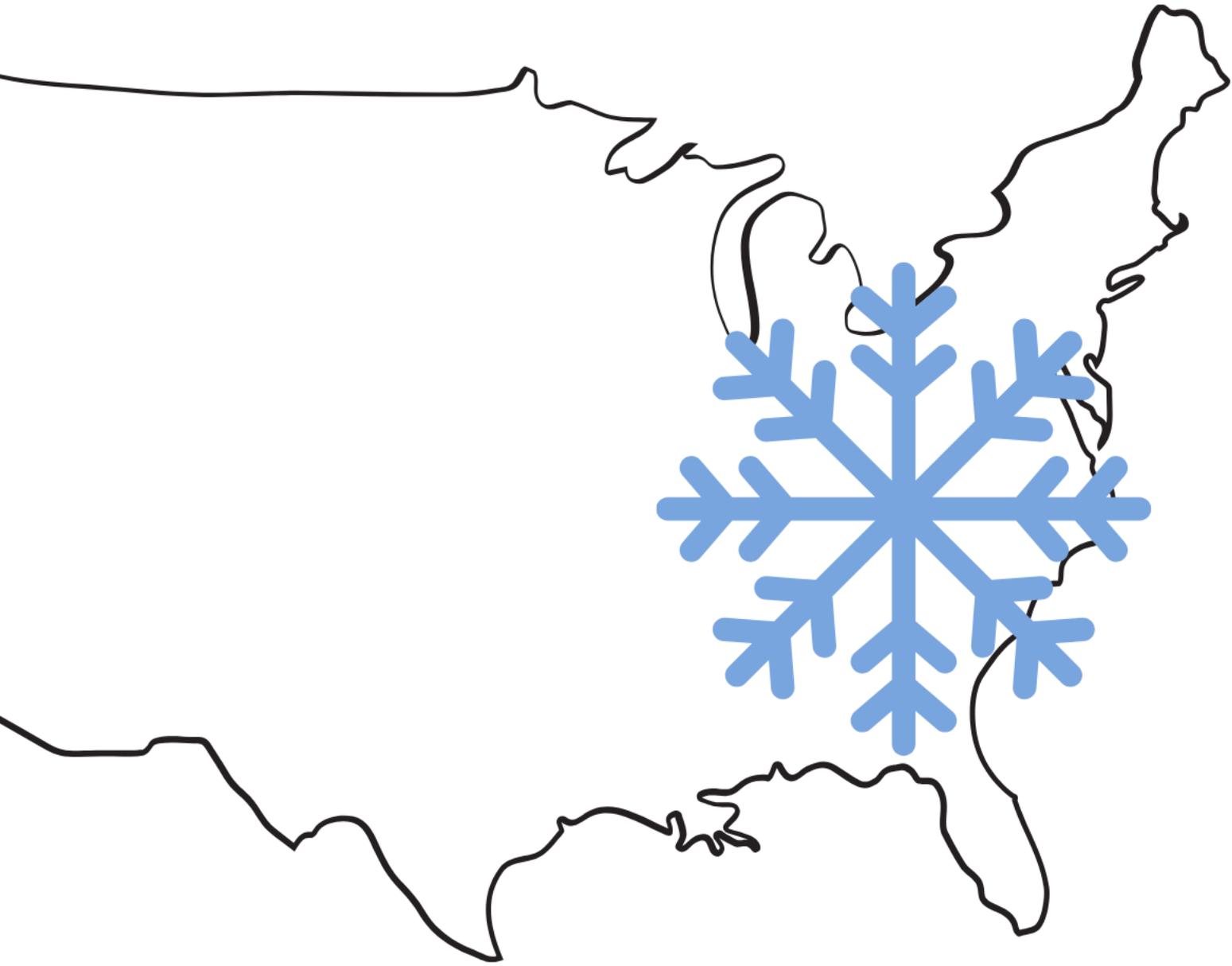




**A partnership  
formed...**



**And grew...**



**And grew...**



**SALT**  
(Road)

**Homeowners**

**People Driving**

**Private Sector**

**Public Sector**

**Winter Maintenance Professionals**

**Insurance**

**People Walking**

**First Responders**

**HOA**

**Policy Makers**

**Groups Contracting Applicators**

**Lawyers**

**Scientists**

**Regulators**

**Drinking Water Providers**

**Businesses**

**Condo Assn.**

# The benefits of odd couples

- New ideas
- New people
- New audiences
- More resources
- And...

One Voice



# Social Media Messaging

Partners: Everyone

One message:

 Shovel

 Salt Lightly

 Sweep it up

Partners have created shareable content

When salting your sidewalk...

**DO THIS**



**NOT THAT**



**YOU ONLY NEED 1 MUG OF SALT FOR 10 SIDEWALK SQUARES.**




Sustainable Frederick

**Are you too salty?**

You might be over-salting your sidewalks this winter



Here's why it matters

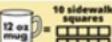
Maryland Dept. Of The Environment

December 21, 2023 at 10:00 AM

It is officially the first day of winter so it's time to talk about salt. Our number one priority is to keep you safe, but we also don't want to harm the environment so anytime you need to be dealing with ice this winter please remember to #SaltSmart!

**SALTING SMART**

THE 3 PRO TIPS FOR USING ROAD SALT EFFECTIVELY

- 1. Shovel first**  
 Clear pavement and driveways before snow has the chance to turn to ice.
- 2. Use just the right amount**  
 **12 oz mug** = **10 sidewalk squares**  
 A little salt goes a long way! Extra salt does not mean more melting. Just one 12oz coffee mug holds the perfect amount for 10 sidewalk squares or a 20ft driveway.
- 3. Spread evenly**  
 **At least 1.2 inches**  
 Make sure the salt granules are at least 1-2 inches away from each other and clean up spills.

Learn more pro tips and winter safety advice at [maryland.mde.gov](http://maryland.mde.gov) or scan the QR code



#OnlyRain



**SHOVEL MORE, SALT LESS**

Be Salt-Wise! It's easy as 1-2-3!

Watch later Share

Be Salt-Wise! It's Easy as 1-2-3

- 1** Shovel Right Away
- 2** Use Less Salt  
 Melts 10 Sidewalk Squares
- 3** Sweep & Reuse

Watch on  YouTube

**It's Easy as 1-2-3!**

- 1 Shovel Right Away**  
 Clear pavement and driveways before snow turns to ice. 
- 2 Use Less Salt** If you must use salt, a 12-oz mug holds enough salt to treat a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares. 
- 3 Sweep & Reuse**  
 Keep unneeded salt out of our waterways by sweeping and collecting for reuse. 

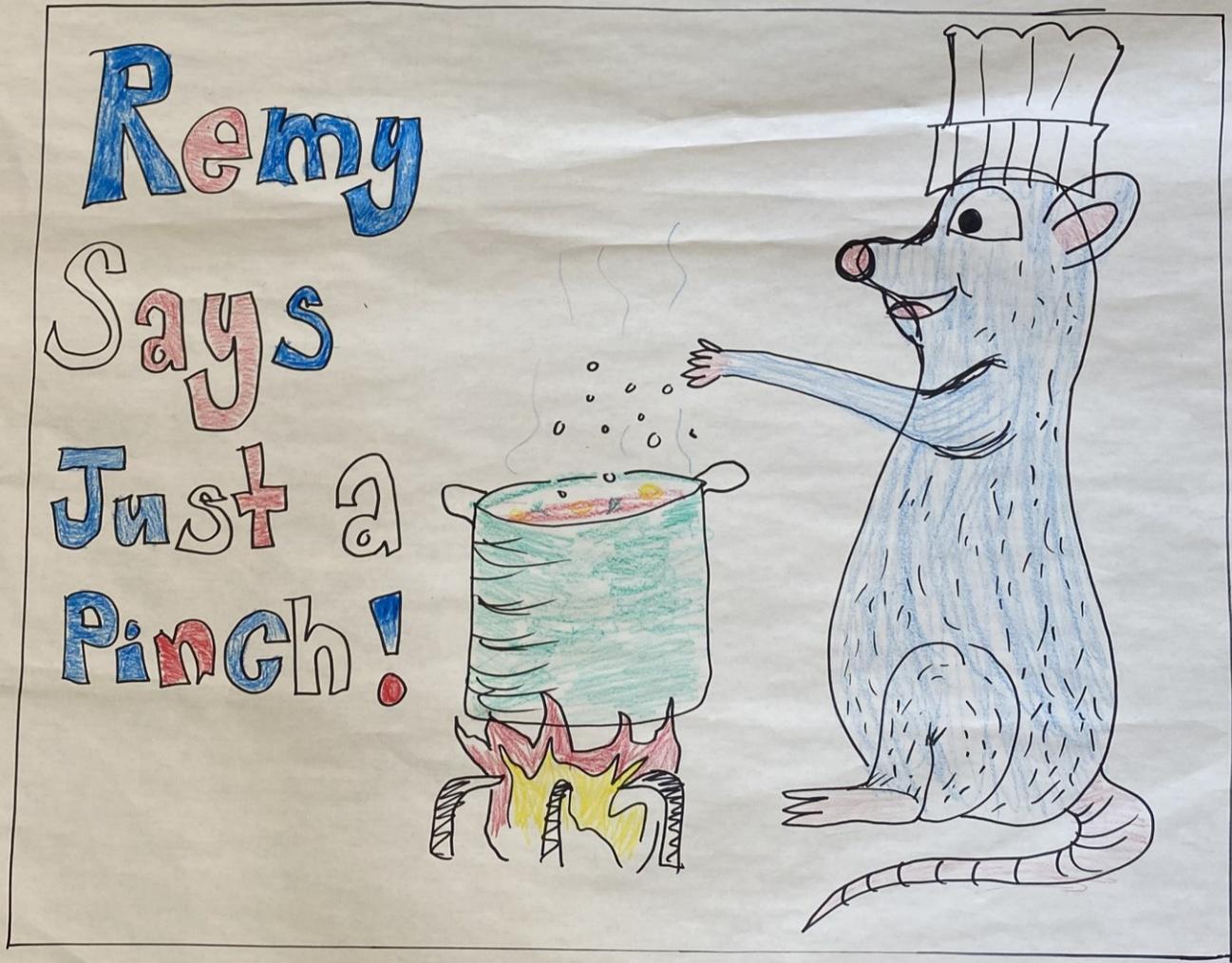
Did you know? There are many organic, salt-free and pet-safe products on the market today. De-icers containing calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) are more eco-friendly.

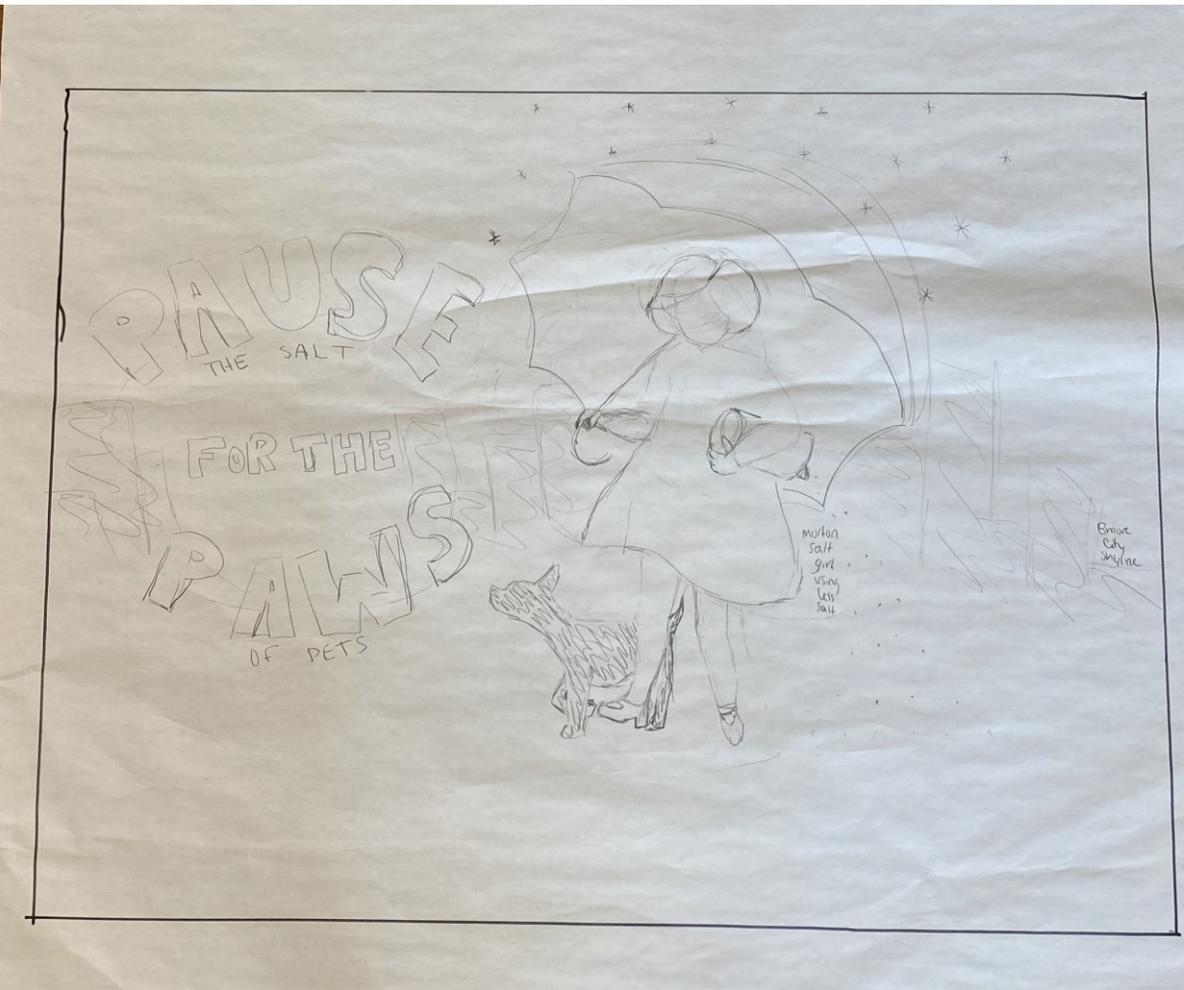



Learn more at [MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/salt](http://MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/salt)

01/20







# Tips for Success

## Variety of partners

Who isn't at the table?



## Encourage participation

Encourage everyone to take a turn giving updates.



## Consistent meetings

Don't drop the ball on this one.



## Follow through

Check-in on action items.



## Looking Ahead

- Continue to meet regularly
- Encourage and support work of partners
- Promote smart salting practices
- Reach new audiences
- Add more regional members to the workgroup



# Winter Salt Awareness Week

January 27-31, 2025

[www.wintersaltweek.org](http://www.wintersaltweek.org)



# Regional Activities

## 2025 WINTER SALT WEEK

*Perspectives from the DMV*

1.29.25 | 2:30 - 3:15 PM (EST)

[REGISTER HERE](#)  
or scan the QR code



Join representatives from Maryland, Virginia, and Washington D.C. on January 29, 2025 from 2:30 - 3:15 PM (EST) to learn how the states and D.C. are working to implement winter salt management strategies that limit the negative effects of winter salt on the environment while balancing public safety. This event will also share actions that you can take to reduce salt impacts in your community. Speakers include:

- Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin
- Center for Watershed Protection
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council

Learn more about **Winter Salt Awareness Week**, including additional events and ways to get involved, at [wintersaltweek.org](http://wintersaltweek.org).



Maryland  
Department of  
the Environment



## Event: Winter Road Salt Awareness Week Open House

January 31 from 1-3pm

The Izaak Walton League of  
America Headquarters

707 Conservation Lane  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878



REGISTER  
HERE!

# Questions?

Renee Bourassa (rbourassa@icprb.org)  
Abby Hileman (ahileman@iwla.org)



[www.bit.ly/4acMZMm](http://www.bit.ly/4acMZMm)



[www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/salt](http://www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/salt)



[www.saltwatch.org](http://www.saltwatch.org)



<https://www.fairfaxwater.org/winter-salt>



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[www.bit.ly/MDEsaltsmart](http://www.bit.ly/MDEsaltsmart)



GAITHERSBURG  
STORMWATER

[www.bit.ly/4jdHkty](http://www.bit.ly/4jdHkty)



[www.potomacriver.org/salt](http://www.potomacriver.org/salt)



<https://www.chesapeakelandscape.org/>



Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments

[www.mwcog.org/saltsmart](http://www.mwcog.org/saltsmart)



Northern Virginia Regional Commission

[www.onlyrain.org/winter-weather](http://www.onlyrain.org/winter-weather)



[www.wsscwater.com/saltwise](http://www.wsscwater.com/saltwise)



[www.cleanwaterhoward.com](http://www.cleanwaterhoward.com)