



# LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

## Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

### Agenda Item

#### Item 7. E. - Funding Request from Dakota County SWCD for Winter Salt Week

#### Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

#### Summary

Lindsey Albright from the Dakota County SWCD plans to create a multifaceted engagement campaign that marries public education efforts with an opportunity to monitor chloride in local water bodies to help raise awareness and engage the public. With this goal in mind, the campaign will partner with other Dakota County WMOs/WDs, Dakota County Parks, and Dakota County Library to broaden the campaign's reach and increase program accessibility.

The event will coincide with Winter Salt Week January 27-31, 2025 ([www.wintersaltweek.org](http://www.wintersaltweek.org)). Information about the Dakota County effort is attached. Outreach materials developed will be available to the LMRWD to use across the District. Materials developed will be available for the CAC to use when they table at events and we also plan to distribute the outreach materials to public libraries and other locations throughout the LMRWD.

The Dakota SWCD has requested \$300 from the LMRWD as a contribution to the program. More information can be found in the information attached from Dakota SWCD. The LMRWD was a partner in the development of the Hennepin County Low Salt, No Salt campaign.

#### Attachments

Dakota County Winter Salt Week Volunteer Chloride Monitoring and Outreach Campaign.

#### Recommended Action

Motion to Authorize \$300 Contribution to the Dakota County Winter Salt Week program.

# Dakota County Winter Salt Week Volunteer Chloride Monitoring and Outreach Campaign

Winter Salt Week is January 27-31, 2025. This event is a collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organizations across the United States and Canada. Winter salt use damages infrastructure and threatens the health of lakes, streams, and drinking water. The goal of the event is to engage with Minnesotans on chloride pollution in your community and continue 'working to keep freshwater fresh'. Visit [www.wintersaltweek.org](http://www.wintersaltweek.org) for more information and to learn about the daily webinars including Minnesota speakers providing public works perspectives and presenting on the policy solutions panel.

Dakota County, the Dakota County SWCD, and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization are partnering on a local salt reduction campaign, inspired by work done in Wisconsin by [WI Salt Wise](#) and the [Low Salt, No Salt](#) campaign led by the Hennepin County Chloride Initiative. Both organizations provide excellent resources for Local Government Units (LGUs) to help build salt awareness oriented to their respective communities. An informed public can support the adoption of best practices in snow and ice control and advocate for the protection of freshwater resources.

These three partners are seeking financial support from other Dakota County Watershed Management Organizations (Lower Mississippi River WMO, Egan-Inver Grove Heights WMO, and Black Dog WMO) to provide displays surrounding chloride and salt reduction in Dakota County Libraries.

## Campaign Objectives

- To raise awareness of chloride levels and the negative impacts of de-icing salt on Dakota County watersheds.
- To build agency in individual community members to take action accessible to them.
- To obtain commitments to reduce salt use through the Salty Dawg pledge form.

## Campaign Logistics

The Dakota County campaign aims to marry public education efforts with an opportunity to monitor chloride in local water bodies to help raise awareness and engage the public. With this goal in mind, the campaign will partner with several organizations to help spread the word and increase program accessibility.

### *Monitoring program outline:*

- The chloride monitoring effort will be supported by [Salt Watch](#), a national community science program hosted by the Izaak Walton League of America that provides organizations and volunteers with free kits to track levels of chloride in their local streams throughout the year.
- The monitoring kits include four test strips, a chart for result interpretation, and a postcard with instructions for completing a Salt Watch test and reporting findings in the [Clean Water Hub](#).
- A Dakota County liability form will be provided to the volunteers.

- Volunteers can monitor chloride at the stream location of their choosing, though a list of recommended locations based on access, safety, open water, and other parameters will also be provided to the volunteers.
- Monitoring data will be submitted to the Clean Water Hub and data will be reported to the public and provided to Dakota County, WMOs, and cities when available.

To increase program reach, we have partnered with Dakota County Library locations to serve as the main contact points for both the monitoring program and outreach materials. Library locations are located throughout the county, and we are working with Library staff to ensure that the campaign will be featured at a minimum of one library within each of the contributing Watershed Management Organizations. Branding for participating Watershed Management Organizations will also be incorporated into outreach materials.

*Monitoring program support:*

- Pick-up location for chloride monitoring kits (provided by the [Izaak Walton League Salt Watch Program](#))
- Volunteers will register through the Dakota County volunteer portal and indicate which library they will pick up the kit.
  - Written materials and contact information for program staff will be provided to the volunteers. Library staff are not being asked to answer questions about the program.
- Kits are one time use so there will be nothing for the volunteers to return.
  - Potential for more elaborate monitoring kits to check out from the library in the future.

*Outreach effort:*

- Display at/near the entrance of the library
  - Book topics include winter, snow, fun snow activities, snowplows, etc.
- Giveaways: Salty Dawg temporary tattoos, buttons, bookmarks, salt measuring cups
- Winter/snow maintenance related scavenger hunt (find a picture or letter search)
  - Salty Dawg sticker prize
- Story Trail at Dakota County Park
  - Water or winter themed book

*Additional programming beyond Library and Parks activities:*

- [Lowe's Kids Workshop](#) (West St Paul), Saturday January 18th

We envision this being the first of a multi year effort and we hope to expand engagement offerings to a larger audience in future years. Such offerings could include a Touch-a-Truck event, a "paint the plow" event, or attending a local event hosted by a city partner like a winter gear swap, December/holiday events, or a New Year's Eve event.

## Watershed Organization Support Request

We are seeking support from Dakota County Watershed Management Orgs (Lower Mississippi River WMO, Eagan-Inver Grove Heights WMO, and Black Dog WMO) to acquire outreach materials for Winter Salt Week 2025. Total expenses for this year's campaign (see next page for breakdown) are estimated to be \$701.10 per library location. At this time, we are asking that each contributing LGU provide a not to exceed financial contribution of \$300. In-kind contributions are also welcome and appreciated.

Proposed expenditures for Winter Salt Week:

Task	Item	Company	Quantity	Cost
<i>Printing</i>	Bookmark	Canva	200	\$ 40
	Postcards	Canva	200	\$ 50
	Coloring Books	<a href="#">Mixam</a>	200	\$ 160
<i>Outreach Swag</i>	Temporary Tattoo	<a href="#">4Imprint</a>	500	\$ 305
			1000	\$ 330
			1500	\$ 440
	Button making supplies	Amazon		\$ 60
	Smart Salting cups	In-kind contribution - Dakota County Groundwater Department and Eagan-IGH WMO		
	Story Trail signs	In-kind contribution - Dakota County Library		
	Additional outreach material creation	In-kind contribution - Dakota County SWCD		
<i>Monitoring kits</i>	Chloride test strips	<a href="#">Hach</a>	40	\$ 86.10
		Salt Watch	30	Free
<b>Total:</b>				<b>\$ 701.10</b>

Any assistance you can provide in promoting Winter Salt Week through your available channels (e.g., websites, social media, newsletters) is also valuable. Please contact us if you need sample posts or graphics.

## Program Contacts

- Lindsey Albright, Dakota County SWCD – [lindsey.albright@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:lindsey.albright@co.dakota.mn.us)
- Paula Liepold, Dakota County Environmental Resources Department, [paula.liepold@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:paula.liepold@co.dakota.mn.us)
- Brita Moore-Kutz, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization, [brita.moore-kutz@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:brita.moore-kutz@co.dakota.mn.us)
- Carter Anderson, MN GreenCorps via Dakota County [carter.anderson@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:carter.anderson@co.dakota.mn.us)

## Attachments

Salty Dawg graphic and pledge



# Don't be a Salty Dawg! Be a smart salter.

Use of some salt during winter is necessary for safe roads, driveways and sidewalks. However, salt gets into our local lakes and rivers when snow melts, affecting fish and plants. One teaspoon of salt can permanently pollute five gallons of water.

## You can help prevent salt pollution.

Choose at least 2 of the following...



**Shovel first.** The more snow and ice you remove, the less salt you will have to use, and the more effective it will be.



**Use less salt.** One 12-ounce cup of salt is enough to cover 10 sidewalk squares. Leave about three inches between salt granules.



**Check the temperature.** 15 degrees is too cold for salt to work.



**Sweep up extra salt and reuse it.**



### Did you know?

Just **one teaspoon** of salt will permanently pollute **five gallons of water**



*Dakota*  
COUNTY

I pledge to carry out the checked items from the above list.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Sign up for more information and e-news.