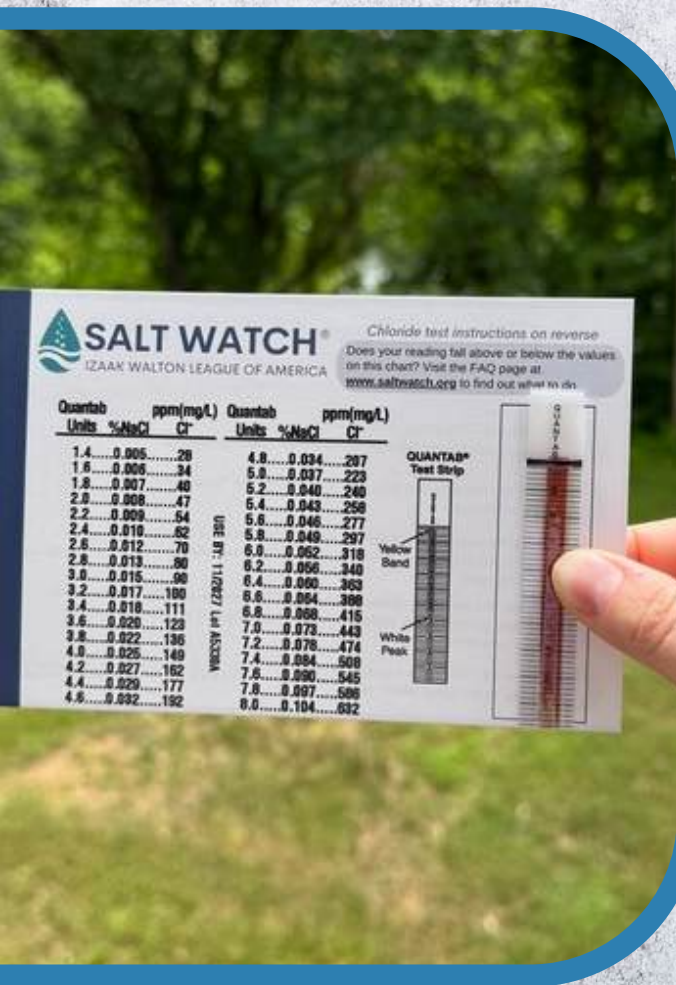




2025-2026

SALT WATCH[®] ANNUAL REPORT



SALT WATCH[®]
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Chloride test instructions on reverse
Does your reading fall above or below the values on this chart? Visit the FAQ page at www.saltwatch.org to find out what to do.

Quantab Units	%NaCl	ppm(mg/L)	Quantab Units	%NaCl	ppm(mg/L)
1.4	0.005	28	4.8	0.034	287
1.6	0.006	34	5.0	0.037	223
1.8	0.007	40	5.2	0.040	240
2.0	0.008	47	5.4	0.043	256
2.2	0.009	54	5.6	0.046	277
2.4	0.010	62	5.8	0.049	297
2.6	0.012	70	6.0	0.052	318
2.8	0.013	80	6.2	0.056	340
3.0	0.015	90	6.4	0.060	363
3.2	0.017	100	6.6	0.064	388
3.4	0.018	111	6.8	0.068	415
3.6	0.020	123	7.0	0.073	443
3.8	0.022	136	7.2	0.078	474
4.0	0.025	149	7.4	0.084	508
4.2	0.027	162	7.6	0.090	545
4.4	0.029	177	7.8	0.097	586
4.6	0.032	192	8.0	0.104	632

USE RT: 11/20/27 LAL ASCOM

QUANTAB[®] Test Strip

Yellow Band

White Peak

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INTRODUCTION

The 2025-2026 season was another record-shattering year for Salt Watch, with more data submissions than ever before!

[Salt Watch](#), launched in 2018, is a crowd-sourced community science monitoring program through the [Izaak Walton League of America](#), a national conservation organization. Salt Watch mobilizes volunteers to monitor waterways for road salt pollution.



THE GOALS OF SALT WATCH ARE...

- **Raise awareness** about the impacts of winter road salt (chloride) pollution on the environment and human health
- **Identify hotspots** of chloride pollution
- **Advocate for solutions** that reduce winter road salt pollution

This report provides a summary of Salt Watch participation and chloride readings reported by volunteers between July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026. We'll also take a look ahead toward goals for the years to come.

For more information about winter road salt pollution and the Salt Watch program, visit saltwatch.org.



Questions about this report? Email saltwatch@iwla.org.

THE TROUBLE WITH CHLORIDE

SOURCES

Chloride is a component of most road salts or deicers used in the winter months to help melt snow and ice and prevent slips and falls. While it is naturally occurring in the environment, human activity has caused chloride levels to increase within waterways and the environment year after year.

Other sources of chloride include water softener discharge, wastewater, urbanization, sewage effluent, salt water pools, salt water intrusion and more.

IMPACTS

Once salt enters the environment, it does not break down and can remain for decades to come. Overuse of road salt has negative impacts on freshwater aquatic life, plants, soils, pets, drinking water and infrastructure. For a detailed look at these impacts, click on each of the fact sheets below:

Road Salt in the Environment



Road Salt in the Environment

Chloride is a long-lasting pollutant in freshwater environments, commonly present in lakes, rivers, and streams from sources like road salt, household water softeners, and industrial runoff. Since chloride does not naturally break down, it can build up over time, causing stress to many different types of plants and animals and affecting the overall health of aquatic ecosystems.

FISH, MACROINVERTEBRATES, AND PLANKTON

As chloride washes into streams and waterways, it acts as a hidden stressor to aquatic life. Chloride affects fish by disrupting growth and impacting reproduction. Macroinvertebrates (insects "bugs") and plankton may be even more sensitive than fish. These small organisms are the foundation of the food chain, so they provide the off-chain water between too salty. Small planktonic crustaceans like daphnia are very sensitive to chloride pollution. Daphnia eat algae, so without daphnia, algae blooms can become more prevalent. The combination of algae and daphnia oxygen from the waterways as it dies off and decomposes, causing problems for other aquatic life.

AMPHIBIANS

Many amphibians use wetland ponds (seasonal waterways produced by rainfall and runoff) to reproduce in the spring. As wetland ponds have no discharge point, chloride from salt can build up over time, causing a cascade of impacts. Amphibian embryos and larvae are particularly vulnerable; high salinity can cause malformations, reduced hatching rates, and increased susceptibility to disease.

SALT WATCH
Learn more about road salt impacts in the environment.

Road Salt, Lead & Drinking Water



ROAD SALT, LEAD & DRINKING WATER

What is the Connection?

Road salt helps to keep our highways and streets clear during the winter, preventing slips and falls on vehicles and reducing air pollution. It is important to keep people safe in the winter, but road salt use also has environmental impacts.

SCOPE OF THE ISSUE

Chloride is a component of road salt. Road salt is the leading cause of chloride pollution in waterways throughout the United States. Chloride pollution also comes from other sources including water softener discharge and sewage discharge. The impact of chloride on human health is an area of ongoing research, but there are several health risks that are known to be linked to increased chloride in drinking water.

Impacts of Lead in Drinking Water

The EPA expects that lead in water can cause cardiovascular disease and reproductive health risks in adults and even low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in:

- learning and memory problems
- lower IQ and hyperactivity
- delayed growth
- learning disabilities
- anemia

JOIN SALT WATCH
Learn more about road salt impacts in the environment.

SALT WATCH
Learn more about road salt impacts in the environment.

Road Salt in Drinking Water



SALT WATCH
Learn more about road salt impacts in the environment.

Road Salt in Drinking Water

Road salt pollution is the leading cause of chloride pollution in waterways throughout the United States. Chloride pollution also comes from other sources including water softener discharge and sewage discharge. The impact of chloride on human health is an area of ongoing research, but there are several health risks that are known to be linked to increased chloride in drinking water.

DRINKING WATER STANDARD

The drinking water standard for chloride is 250 mg/L, as established by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1998. At this level, water starts to taste "salty." There is no health-based guidance for chloride in drinking water, but there are health implications for consuming sodium. Sodium and chloride concentrations in water are often related since sodium chloride (NaCl) is the most common type of road salt being applied in the winter. The EPA recommends sodium in drinking water be less than 20 mg/L for individuals on severely restricted sodium diets.

250 mg/L

JOIN SALT WATCH
Learn more about road salt impacts in the environment.

SALT WATCH
Learn more about road salt impacts in the environment.

Road Salt and Infrastructure



Road Salt and Infrastructure

Each year, between 10-20 million tons of road salt are applied to roadways in the United States, depending on the winter weather conditions. The environmental cost of road salt is high, about \$1 billion of natural resources, but there are long-term and indirect costs associated with the damage to ecosystems.

INDIRECT COST OF ROAD SALT POLLUTION

Chloride, found in road salt, is incredibly corrosive and can damage roadways, bridges, vehicles, and other infrastructure once applied. Indirect costs of road salt in the United States are estimated to be between \$1.6-19 billion each year. Approximately 1/3rd of bridges throughout the US are structurally deficient due to corrosion, which is exacerbated by road salt exposure.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Chloride is known to corrode metals, pipes, and to be toxic to some aquatic life. It is also corrosive to soil, waterways, and can damage roadways, bridges, vehicles, and other infrastructure once applied. Indirect costs of road salt in the United States are estimated to be between \$1.6-19 billion each year. Approximately 1/3rd of bridges throughout the US are structurally deficient due to corrosion, which is exacerbated by road salt exposure.

WHAT TO DO

- SHOVEL**
Clear sidewalks before snow turns to ice.
- SCATTER**
A 12 oz bag holds enough salt to treat a 20' driveway or 10' sidewalk (estimated).
- SWEEP**
Sweep up excess salt and reuse it.

JOIN SALT WATCH
Learn more about road salt impacts in the environment.

SALT WATCH
Learn more about road salt impacts in the environment.

Spanish versions of fact sheets are available in the [Resource Library](#).

YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2025-2026 Salt Watch season marked a historic milestone for the program, as volunteers shattered records by reporting 10,839 readings! While total kit requests dipped slightly compared to the previous year, the season achieved a remarkably high data submission rate. This indicates that a greater percentage of volunteers submitted data and/or that a growing number of individuals and organizations purchased their own test strips.

Data from the season revealed more elevated chloride levels compared to previous years. This was coupled with a brutal winter season where frigid temperatures created dense, compacted "snowcrete" conditions in some regions that rendered traditional rock salt ineffective, putting smart salting practices to the test for many winter salt applicators.

We urge you to keep driving the conversation on smart salting in your community. Through local awareness and collective action, we can dramatically reduce road salt pollution and keep our communities safe.

Thank you for monitoring with Salt Watch.

10,839

chloride readings
reported



27

states
reporting data



2,614

sample locations



17

new partner
organizations engaged



5,866

kits sent to
volunteers

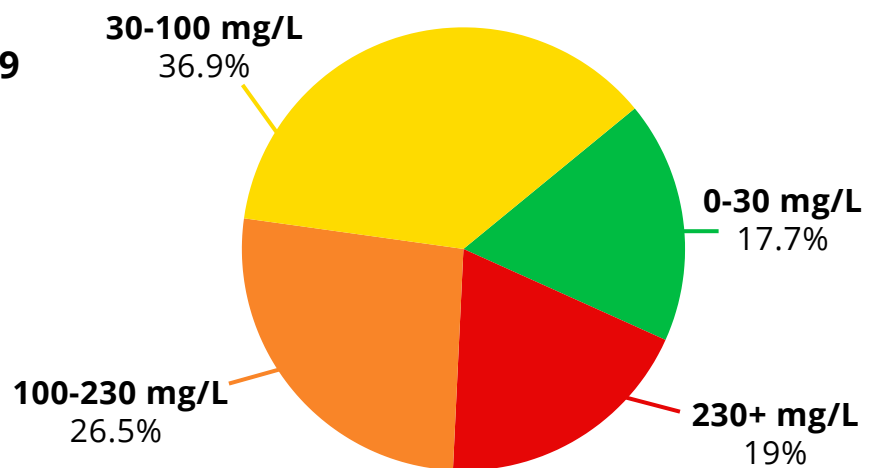


SALT WATCH[®] RESULTS NATIONWIDE



Total chloride readings: **10,839**

0-30 mg/L:	1,915
30-100 mg/L:	3,995
100-230 mg/L:	2,867
230+ mg/L:	2,062



On the following pages, you can view results from states that contributed over 200 Salt Watch results. To view all Salt Watch results, visit cleanwaterhub.org.

SALT WATCH[®] RESULTS

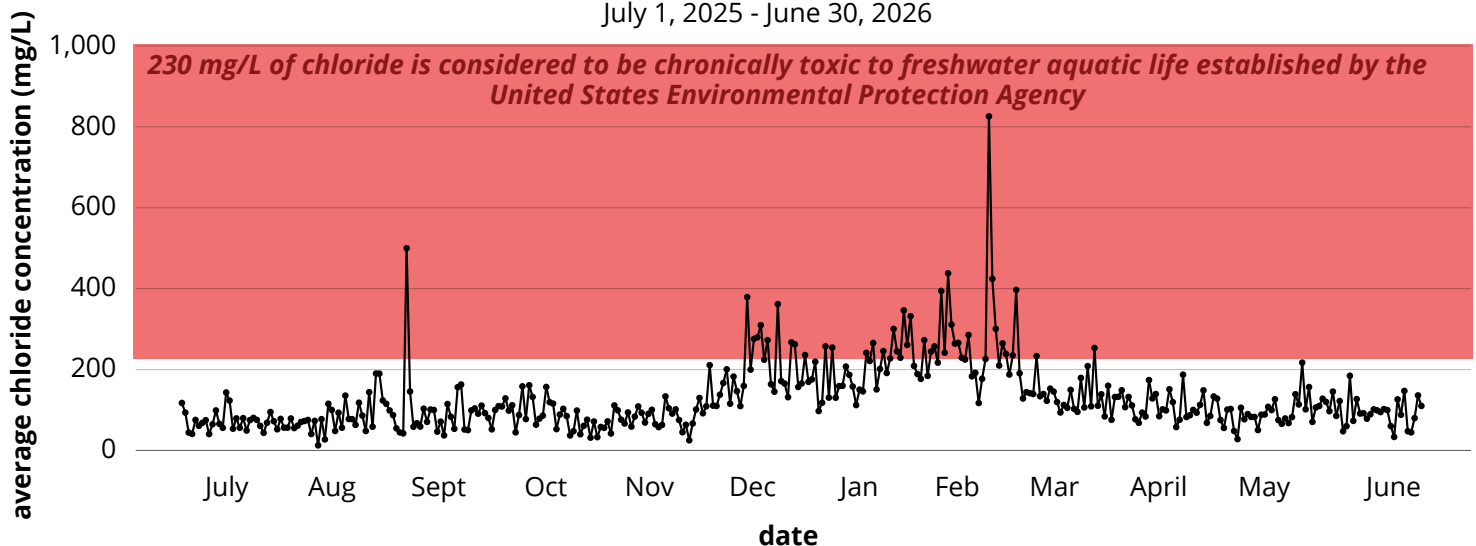
NATIONWIDE

Chloride concentrations in waterways tend to fluctuate throughout the year depending on seasonal variation in weather and salting practices. In northern urban areas in particular, we often see chloride spikes in the winter months after storm events or after rain or thaw events that flush salt pollution off of the streets into local waterways. Chloride spikes can also be seen during summer and fall drought events, where chloride becomes concentrated due to lower water levels.

The graph below showcases the seasonal variation in chloride (Cl-) levels reported to the Clean Water Hub between July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026. It plots the average chloride (Cl-) concentration reported in surface water each day. Note how concentrations spike in the winter months and there are also some elevated levels during the fall.

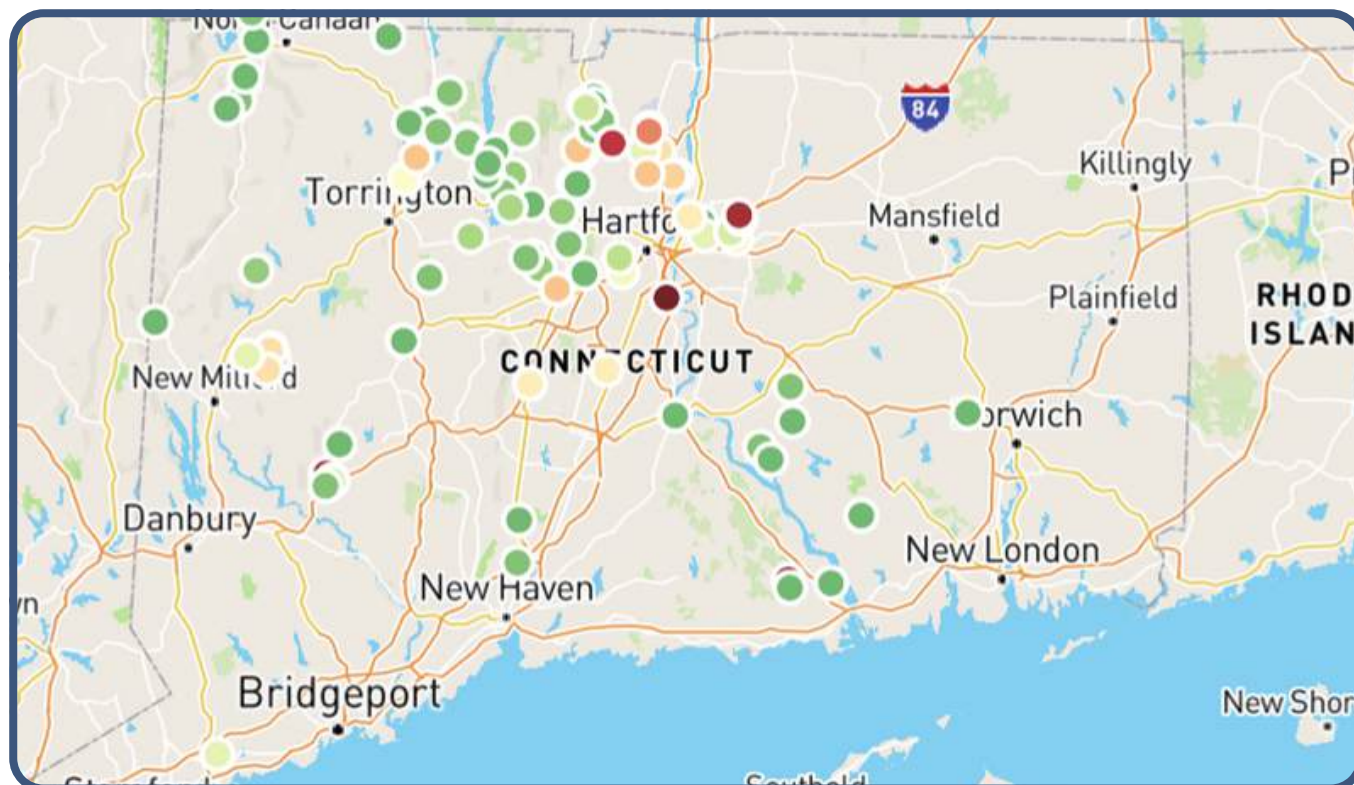
Average chloride (Cl-) concentrations (mg/L) in surface water reported by Salt Watch volunteers nationwide

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026



The red shaded portion of this graph represents chloride (Cl-) concentrations at or above 230 mg/L, the level considered to be toxic to freshwater aquatic life according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency. **The daily average chloride concentration reported by our volunteers was 230 mg/L or greater on 39 days between July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026.**

SALT WATCH® RESULTS CONNECTICUT

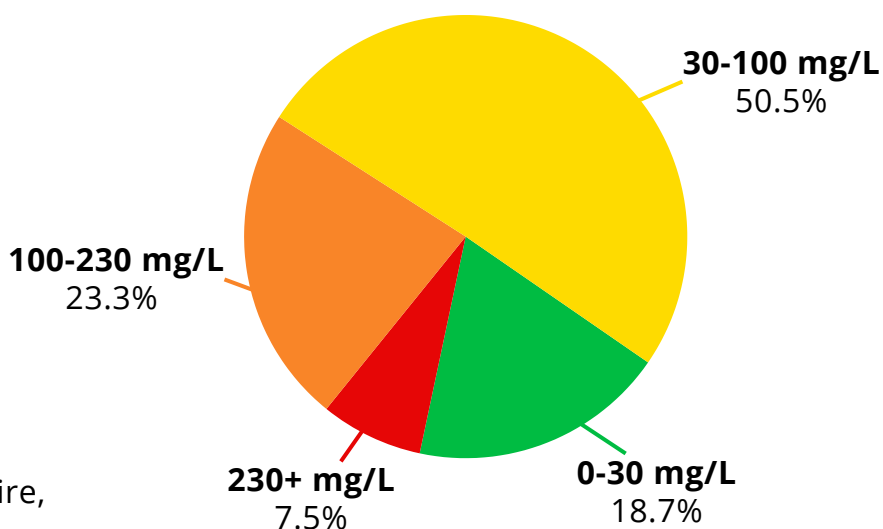


Total chloride readings: **374**

- 0-30 mg/L: **70**
- 30-100 mg/L: **189**
- 100-230 mg/L: **87**
- 230+ mg/L: **28**

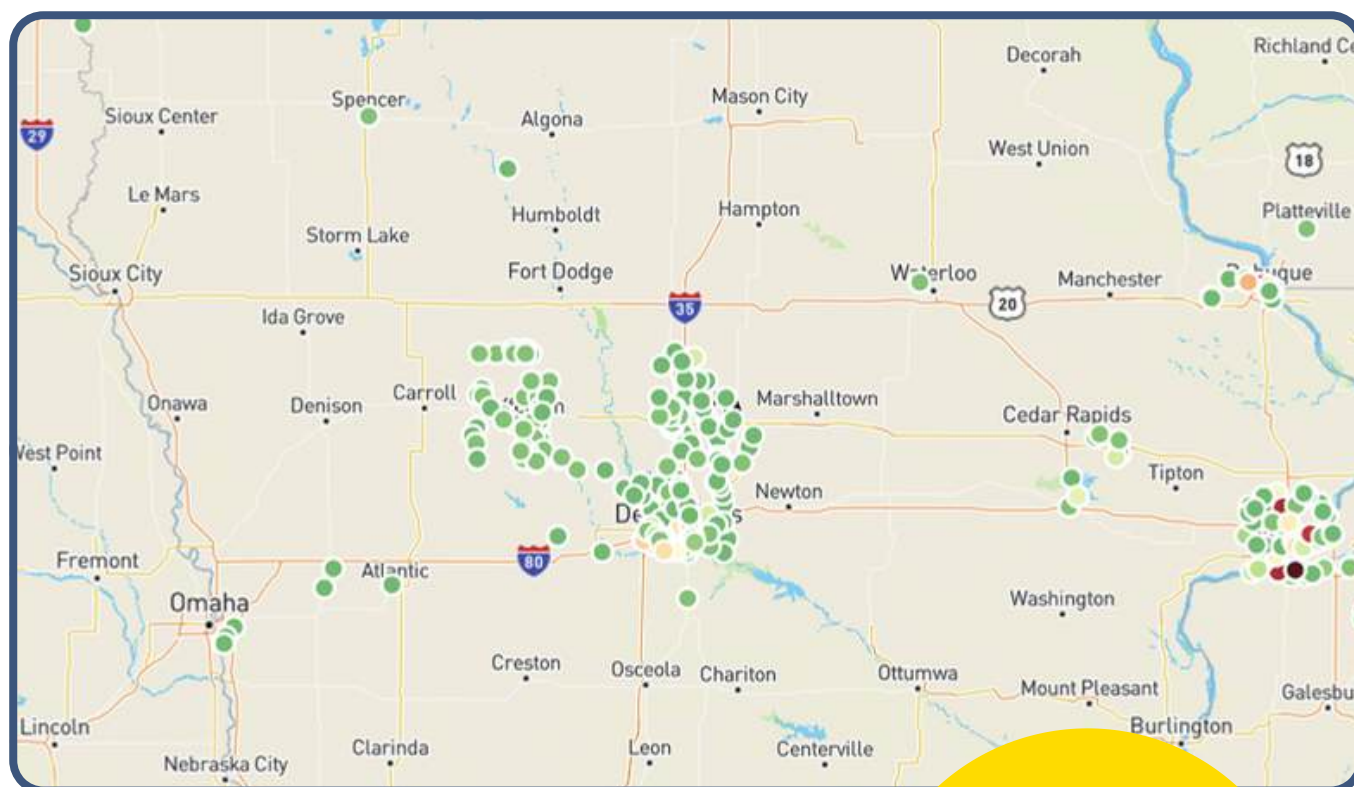
Regional Partners:

Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire,
Crystal Pond Association,
Farmington River Watershed Association



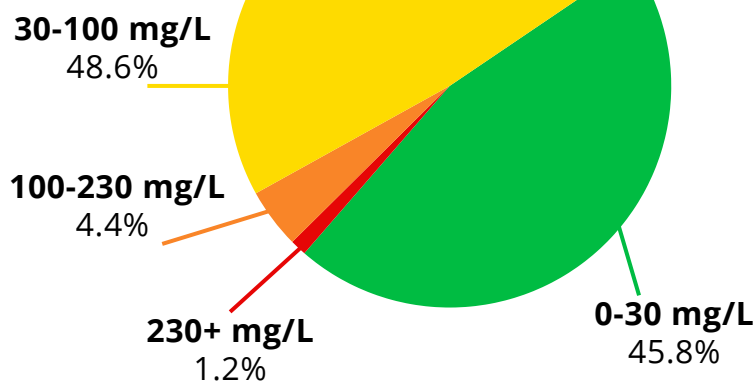
SALT WATCH® RESULTS

IOWA



Total chloride readings: **1,348**

- 0-30 mg/L: **618**
- 30-100 mg/L: **655**
- 100-230 mg/L: **59**
- 230+ mg/L: **16**

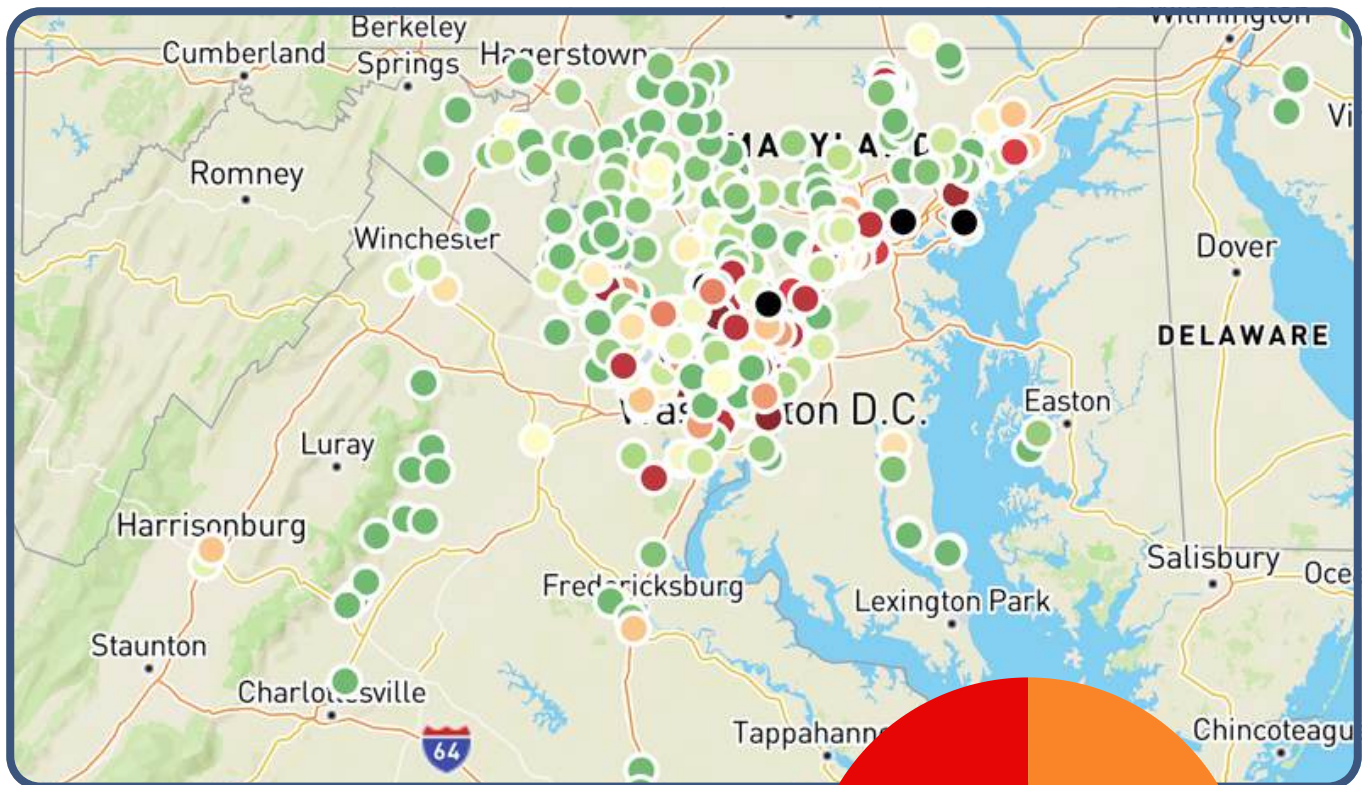


Regional Partners:

National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium,
Partners of Scott County Watersheds,
Story County Conservation

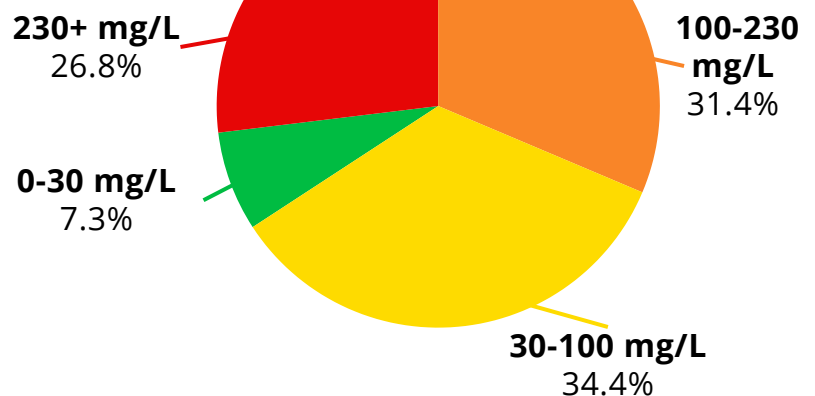
SALT WATCH® RESULTS

MARYLAND



Total chloride readings: **2,033**

- 0-30 mg/L: **148**
- 30-100 mg/L: **700**
- 100-230 mg/L: **638**
- 230+ mg/L: **547**

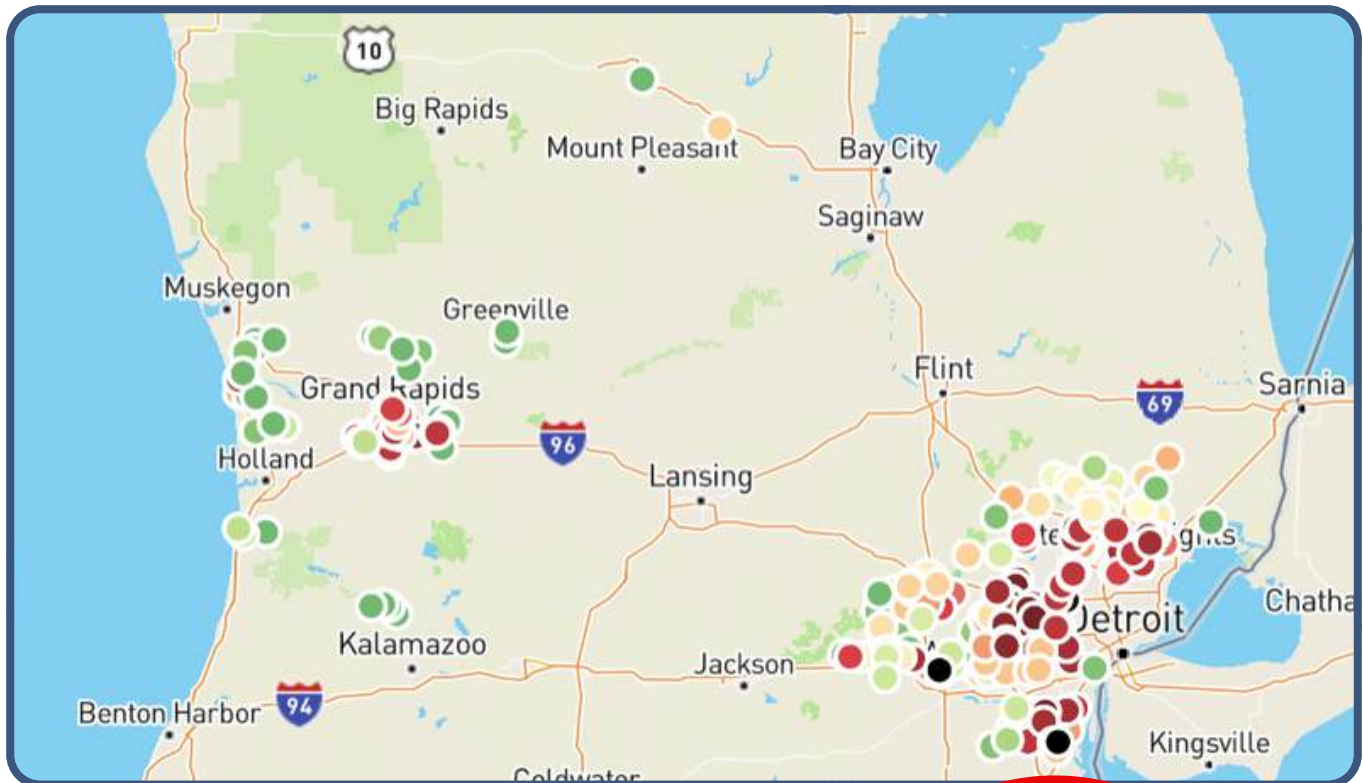


Regional Partners:

Antietam-Conococheague Watershed Alliance, Calvert County Parks & Recreation, Calvert Nature Society, Chesapeake Bay Trust, City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville, Columbia Association, Eyes of Paint Branch, Friends of Cabin John Creek, Friends of Sligo Creek, Frostburg State University, Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER®, Little Falls Watershed Alliance, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, Muddy Branch Alliance, Nature Forward, Neighbors of the Northwest Branch, Patapsco Heritage Greenway, Patuxent Research Refuge, Rock Creek Conservancy, Seneca Creek Watershed Partners

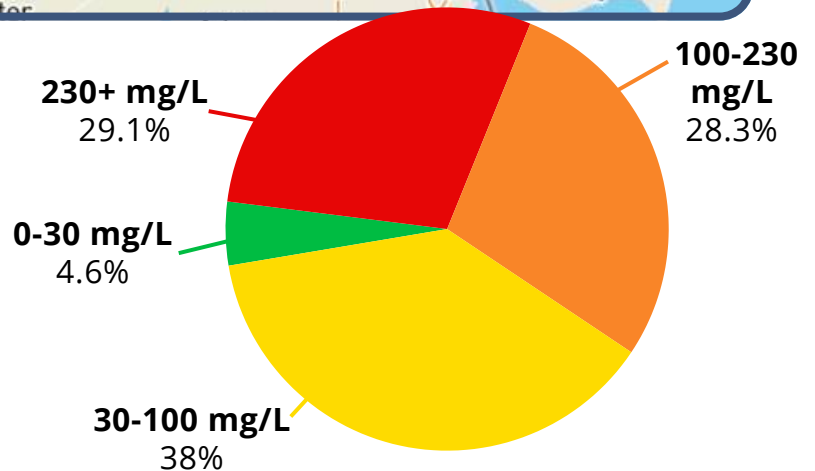
SALT WATCH® RESULTS

MICHIGAN



Total chloride readings: **453**

- 0-30 mg/L: **21**
- 30-100 mg/L: **172**
- 100-230 mg/L: **128**
- 230+ mg/L: **132**

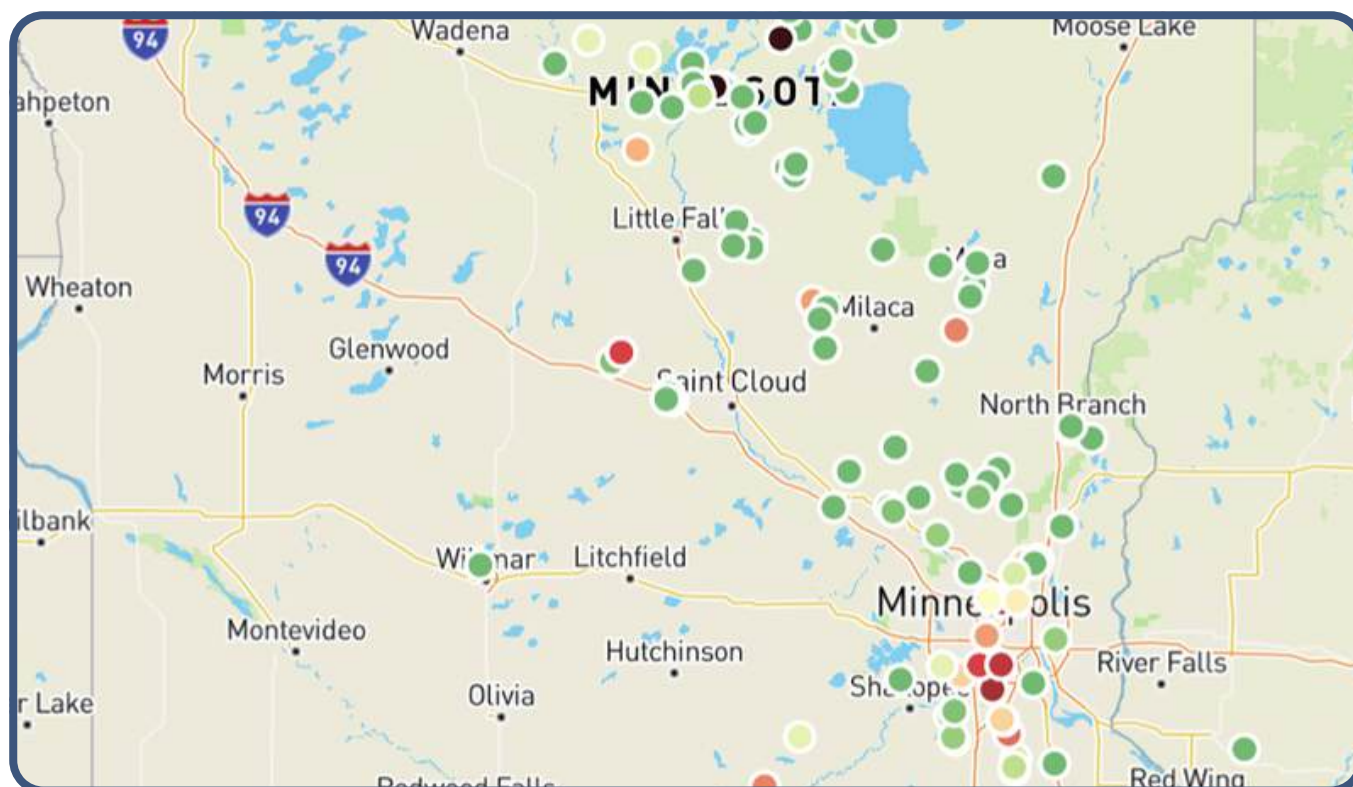


Regional Partners:

A Vision for Clean Water, Allegan Conservation District, Careerline Tech Center (Environmental Field Studies), Clinton River Watershed Council, Friends of the Rouge, Huron River Watershed Council, Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds, ODC Network, Rogue River Watershed Partners,

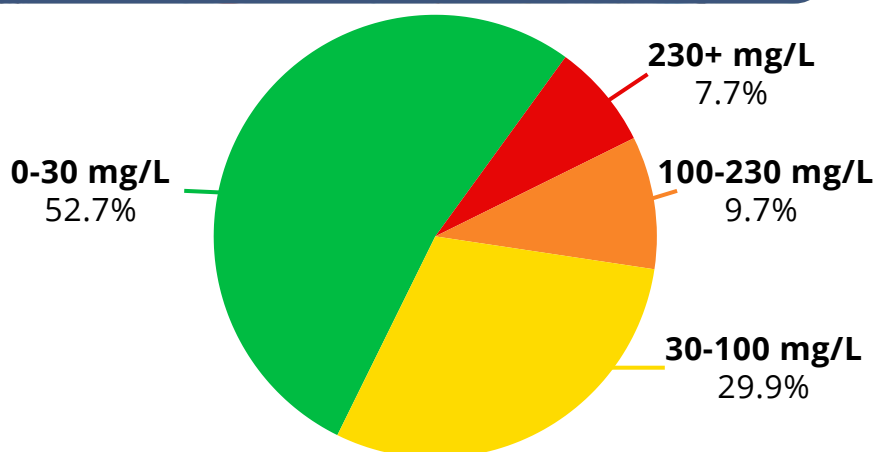
SALT WATCH® RESULTS

MINNESOTA



Total chloride readings: **351**

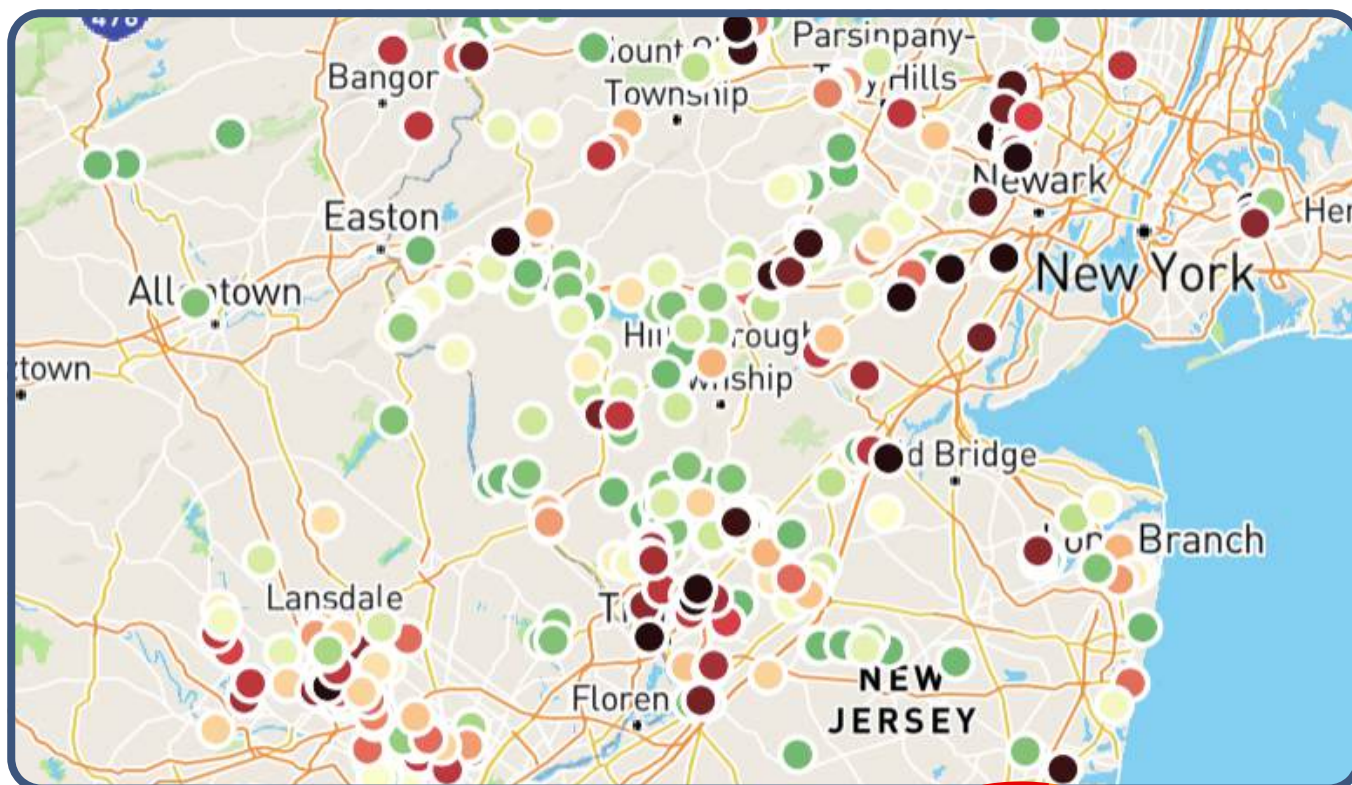
- 0-30 mg/L: **185**
- 30-100 mg/L: **105**
- 100-230 mg/L: **34**
- 230+ mg/L: **27**



Regional Partners:

Carver County Water Management Organization, City of Wabasha, Coon Creek Watershed District, Faithful Shepherd Catholic School, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District, Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District, Twin Cities Trout Unlimited

SALT WATCH® RESULTS NEW JERSEY



Total chloride readings: **1,406**

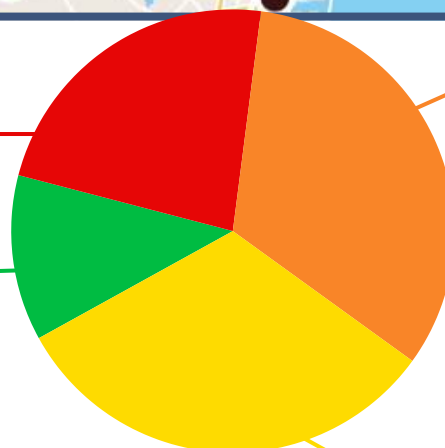
- 0-30 mg/L: **170**
- 30-100 mg/L: **450**
- 100-230 mg/L: **463**
- 230+ mg/L: **323**

230+ mg/L
23%

0-30 mg/L
12.1%

100-230 mg/L
32.9%

30-100 mg/L
32%



Regional Partners:

Fernbrook Farms Environmental Education Center,
Musconetcong Watershed Association,
New Jersey Watershed Watch Network

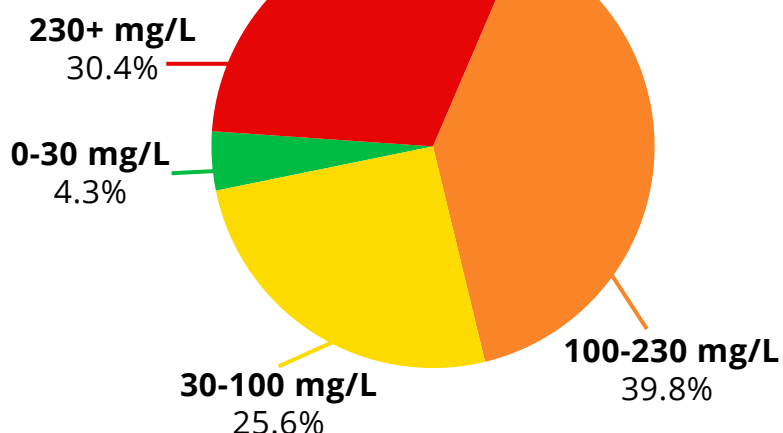
SALT WATCH® RESULTS

OHIO



Total chloride readings: **1,443**

● 0-30 mg/L:	62
● 30-100 mg/L:	369
● 100-230 mg/L:	574
● 230+ mg/L:	438

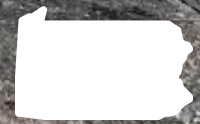


Regional Partners:

Belmont Soil and Water Conservation District, Cleveland Metroparks, Doan Brook Watershed Partnership, Erie Conservation District, Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries (FACT), Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, Groundwater Consortium, Jefferson Soil & Water Conservation District, Summit Soil and Water Conservation District, Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners

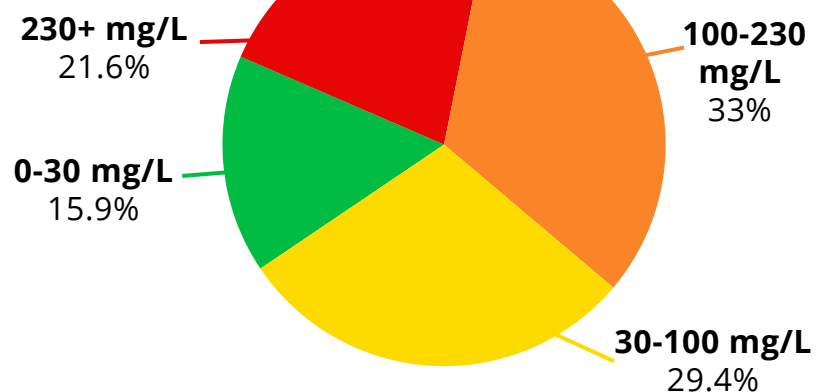
SALT WATCH® RESULTS

PENNSYLVANIA



Total chloride readings: **439**

- 0-30 mg/L: **70**
- 30-100 mg/L: **129**
- 100-230 mg/L: **145**
- 230+ mg/L: **95**

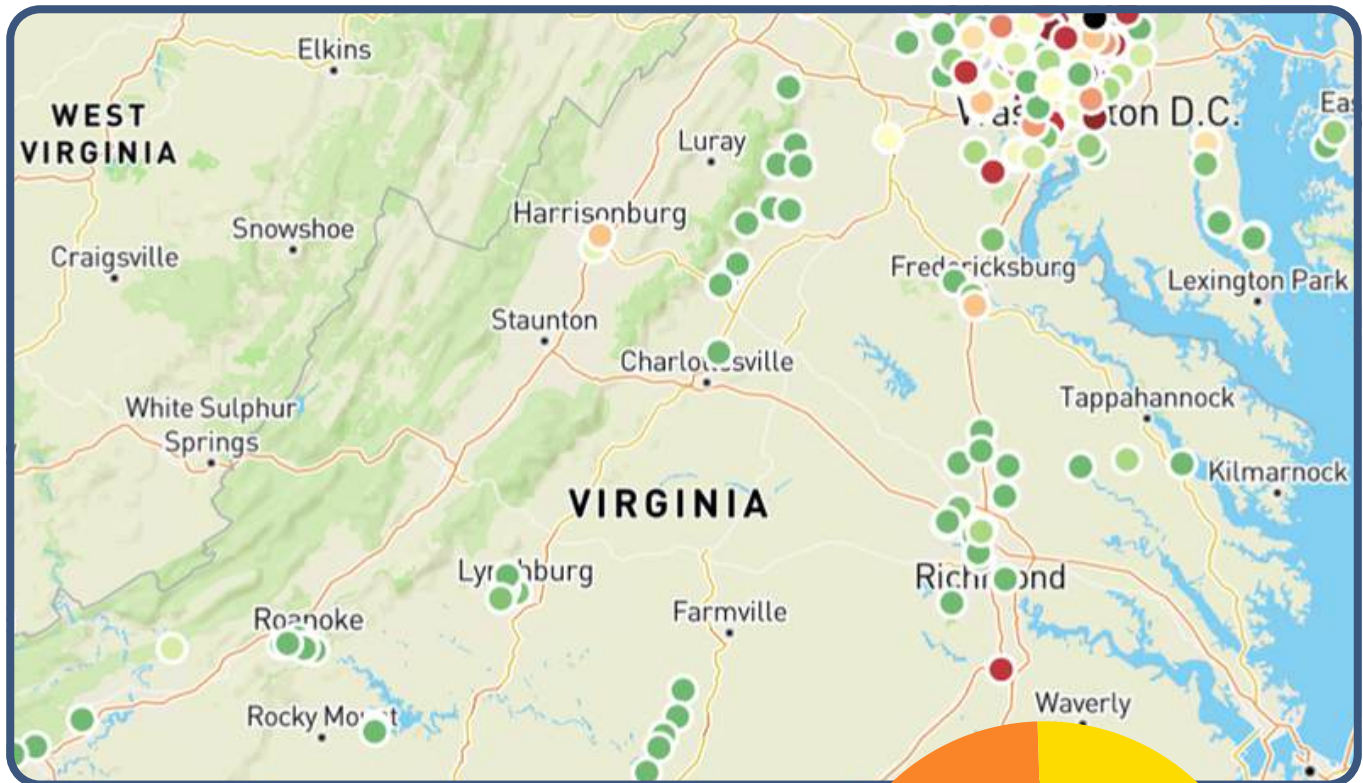


Regional Partners:

Audubon Society of Western PA, Creek Connections, Monroe County Conservation District, Pennsylvania Lake Erie Watershed Association (PLEWA), Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, The Field Trip Academy, Three Rivers Waterkeeper, Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, Washington County Watershed Alliance, Wissahickon Trails,

SALT WATCH® RESULTS

VIRGINIA



Total chloride readings: **2,112**

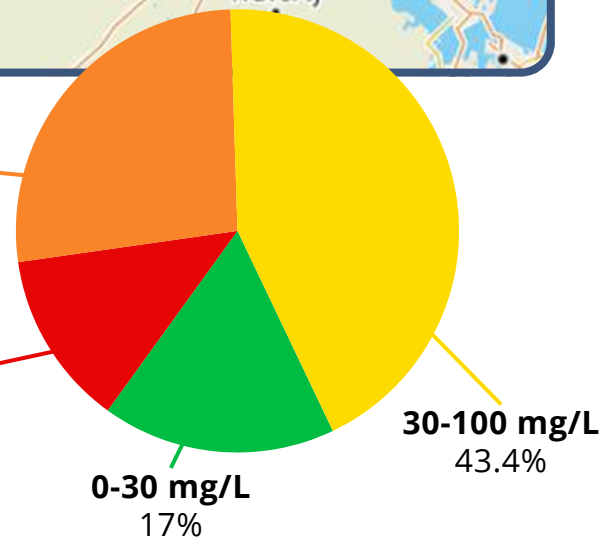
● 0-30 mg/L:	360
● 30-100 mg/L:	917
● 100-230 mg/L:	565
● 230+ mg/L:	270

100-230 mg/L
26.8%

230+ mg/L
12.8%

0-30 mg/L
17%

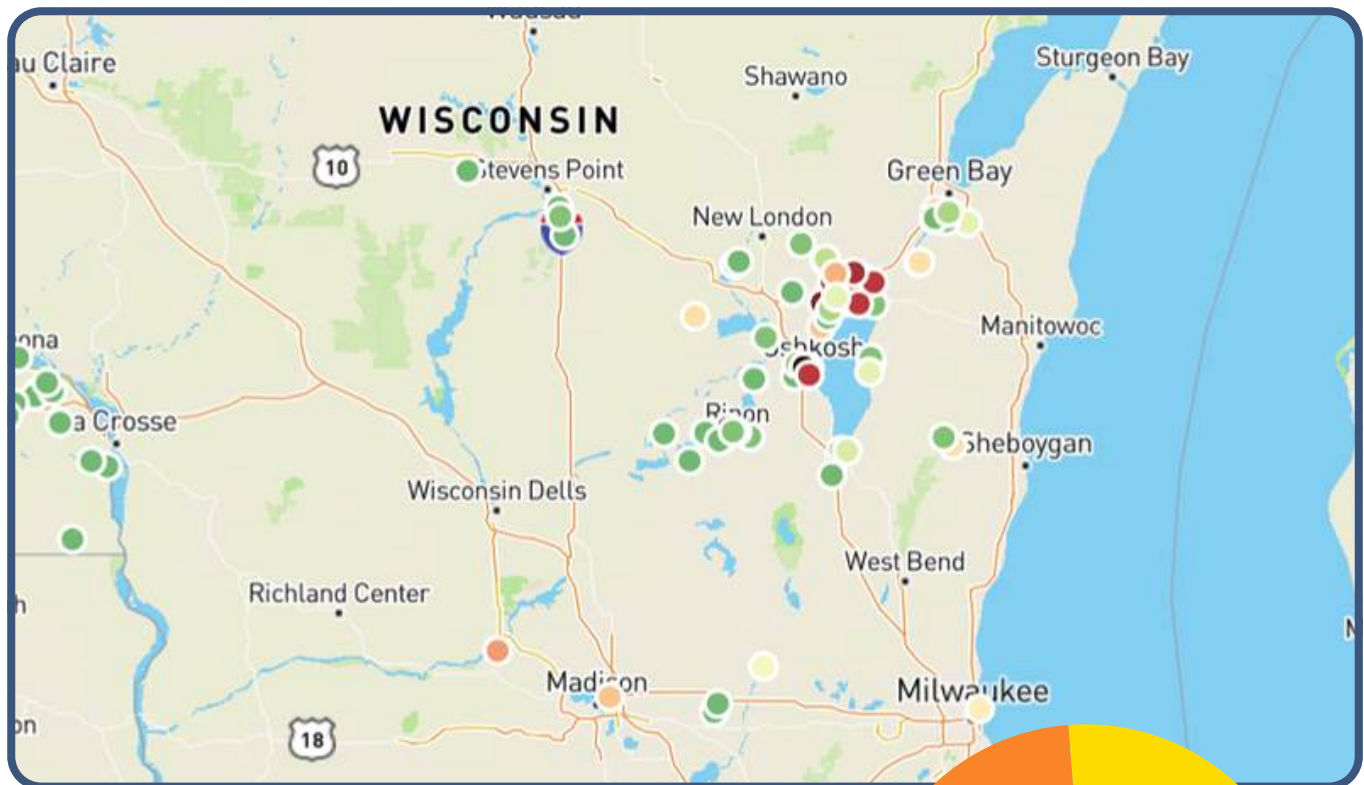
30-100 mg/L
43.4%



Regional Partners:

Arlington County Government, Blue Ridge Discovery Center, Clean Virginia Waterways, Dan River Basin Association, Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, Lynchburg Water Resources, Reston Association, Rivanna Conservation Alliance

SALT WATCH® RESULTS WISCONSIN



Total chloride readings: **300**

- 0-30 mg/L: **58**
- 30-100 mg/L: **144**
- 100-230 mg/L: **58**
- 230+ mg/L: **40**

30-100 mg/L
19.3%

230+ mg/L
13.3%

0-30 mg/L
19.3%

100-230 mg/L
48%

Regional Partners:

Columbia County Division of Health, Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance, Green Lake Association, Rock River Coalition, Wisconsin Salt Wise



WINTER SALT WEEK 2026

Winter Salt Week 2026 (January 26–30) further evolved from a regional Wisconsin effort into a premier national awareness campaign connecting scientists, public works crews and residents. The week served as a critical platform to broadcast "Smart Salting" strategies through technical webinars focusing on contract management, engineering, local advocacy and water monitoring.

Meanwhile at the Maryland State Capitol in Annapolis, Salt Watch staff visited the State House of Delegates for an announcement about smart salting practices and later received official commendation for their clean water stewardship.

The week concluded with an Open House at the Izaak Walton League's National Headquarters. The event featured hands-on sidewalk salting demonstrations, water testing, local organizations tabling and speakers including regional environmental leaders, equity advocates and water utility executives.

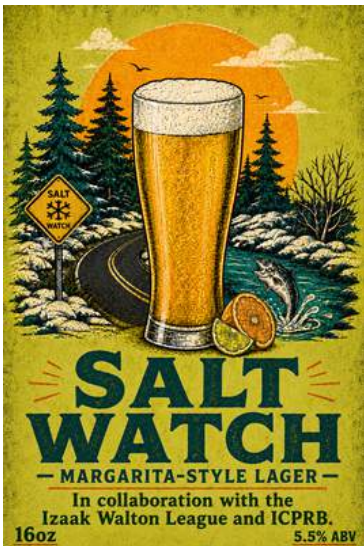
[Read more highlights from Winter Salt Week 2026.](#)



Photos clockwise from top: Salt Watch partners and speakers at the 2026 Open House, Salt Watch staff in Annapolis with Delegate Qi, Delegate Foley presenting a citation to Salt Watch staff from the Maryland District 15 Delegation, Maryland Department of the Environment's Greg Sandi speaking at the Open House, and Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council's Jason Swope giving a salting demonstration.

SALT WATCH[®] PROJECTS

NO CLEAN WATER, NO GOOD BEER



In a novel way to meet people where they are, Salt Watch staff have been teaming up with local breweries in the DC, Maryland, and Virginia region. Breweries are brewing salty beers and Salt Watch staff are talking to customers about road salt pollution!

The first of the salty beers called "[Salt Watch](#)" is now available at [Lone Oak Farm Brewing Co.](#) in Olney, MD. Keep an eye out for other salty beers dropping soon!

Left image by Lone Oak Farm Brewing Co. showing sign for Salt Watch beer.
Right image showing salty beer.

WINTER SALT APPLICATION RESOURCES:

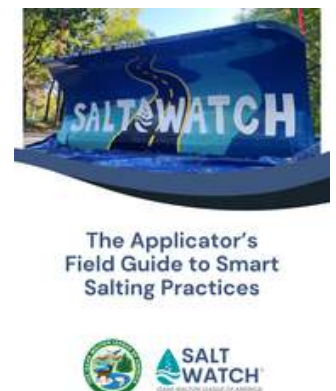
Salt Watch staff released "[The Applicator's Field Guide to Smart Salting Practices](#)" to help winter salt applicators use smart salting practices in the field.

For the second year, Salt Watch staff also developed a [webinar](#) for property managers and HOA/Condo Association board members to learn how to write performance-based salting practices into contracts with winter maintenance professionals.

Winter Maintenance Contracts that Reduce Costs & Protect Liability (Webinar)



The Applicator's Field Guide to Smart Salting Practices



OUR PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful for our expanding coalition of conservation partners and are thrilled to welcome **seventeen new partner organizations** during the 2025–2026 season, bringing our network to **90 official partners nationwide**.

These dedicated groups serve as vital regional hubs, empowering local volunteers and driving grassroots action. By logging water quality data, amplifying the Salt Watch mission and championing smart salting policies, our partners are instrumental in protecting local watersheds from hazardous winter salt pollution.

NEW PARTNERS IN 2025-2026 SEASON



In addition to official partner organizations, Salt Watch volunteers represented over **900 participating organizations** across the country.



*Interested in becoming a Salt Watch partner organization?
Email us at saltwatch@iwla.org.*

PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



Columbia Association

Columbia Association became an official Salt Watch partner in 2026. Their Salt Watch monitoring has quickly grown to over 50 sample sites with over 30 volunteers participating!

Photo of one of Columbia Association's volunteers, Deb Cappuccitti monitoring a local stream. Photo taken by Zach Burnett.



Friends of the Rouge

During Winter Salt Week 2026's 'Salt Monitoring 101' webinar, Monitoring Manager Lauren Eaton presented insights on incorporating salt monitoring into FOTR's benthic macroinvertebrate program.

Despite sub-zero wind chills, 61 dedicated volunteers participated in the Winter Stonefly Search on January 24, breaking through ice to sample 34 sites, including critical salt data collection. The momentum continued into spring; on April 11, the Spring Bug Hunt engaged 15 teams across 28 sites. Groups that participated included Wayne State University, the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, the Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Additional sites were sampled during the Team Leader Training by volunteer Sue Thompson, Wayne County and Lawrence Tech University's Environmental Alliance student group. 49 sites were sampled for the spring dataset!

Photos of FOTR volunteers sampling, taken by FOTR.



Nature Forward

Nature Forward partnered with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to engage high school biology students in water quality monitoring. This year, they worked with over 3,000 students to analyze stream and pond health near seven different high schools. Chloride testing through Salt Watch is included in the MCPS biology curriculum.

Photo of MCPS students monitoring, taken by Nature Forward.



PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed

FLOW volunteers sampled 38 streams throughout the Lower Olentangy Watershed.



Photo to left: Stratford stream by Annie Stimmel.

Photo at center: Sampling a stream with Salt Watch by Robin Brick



Neighbors of the Northwest Branch

With the help of grant funding, NNWB installed two kiosks along the Northwest Branch Trail. These kiosks provide information about the NNWB, their efforts to clean up and protect the watershed, and how others can get involved.

During the winter months, information about Salt Watch and smart salting practices were added to the seasonal winter display.

Photo of kiosk with Salt Watch smart salting materials taken by Deb Briceland-Betts.



Little Falls Watershed Alliance

A few years ago, LFWA participated in the Salt Watch “Paint the Plow” event. This winter, they saw their plow being used!

LFWA frequently sends out information to neighborhood listservs of over 50,000 people about their winter monitoring and how to reduce salt pollution. There is a lot of interest from the community.

Check out their blog, [Salt Levels exceed safe range in Little Falls creek.](#)

Photo of LFWA plow by Sarah Morse.

PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

LWC released their first ever Salt Watch report, [*"The Salt In Our Streams"*](#)! Since getting started with Salt Watch, LWC has greatly expanded their program and now are almost running out of sites for their volunteers to sample!

LWC volunteers also cleaned up salt piles around another gas station this past winter. Read more about the cleanup: [*"All the Salt that Remains: The Lasting Danger of Road Salt to Our Waterways"*](#).

Photo of a salt spill around the gas station at by Cathy Lemmon.



Patapsco Heritage Greenway

PHG staff held more Salt Watch Snapshots! The snapshots get more community members involved in water monitoring with Salt Watch and are a great place for them to learn about smart salting practices.

PHG also created a Salt Watch Guide: [*"Become Salt Smart: A Guide to Taking Community Action for Road Salt Reduction"*](#).

Photo of a Salt Watch Snapshot event by Patapsco Heritage Greenway.



Reston Association

During winter monitoring, staff from the Reston Association discovered a massive 500-to-700-pound "salt dump" hidden in a local cul-de-sac. By physically removing this salt, Reston Association staff prevented hundreds of pounds of chloride from dissolving and flushing directly into Reston's sensitive streams.

Check out the blog: [*"Small Wins, Big Impact: Saving Reston's Streams from Salt Overload"*](#).

Photo of Reston Association's Natural Areas Specialist, Sophia Edwards, next to collected salt.

PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



Rock Creek Conservancy

Rock Creek Conservancy monitoring photos submitted by volunteers at left and below.



Wissahickon Trails has been working with the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit to include Salt Watch in their curriculum about local environmental issues.

Eyes of Paint Branch assisted with notifying their county's Department of Environmental Protection about a huge uncovered pile of salt. The county was very responsive and the salt pile was removed.

Photo of uncovered salt pile by Maura McMullen at right.



OTHER NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS



Minnesota Water Steward in Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed, Stephanie Wang, promoted Salt Watch and smart salting practices during Winter Salt Week 2026 at a library in Woodbury, MN.

Photo of library outreach at left by Stephanie Wang.

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy have launched the Great Lakes Green Schools Fellowship program and have incorporated Salt Watch into the curriculum for teachers as a resource because chloride contamination is a big emerging issue in the Great Lakes.

MEET A MONITOR

The Izaak Walton League of America's "[Meet a Monitor](#)" blog series celebrates the dedicated water monitoring volunteers driving change across the nation. This platform amplifies grassroots voices, showcasing the personal stories and vital contributions of our community scientists.

Ready to tell your story or share recent conservation wins in your community? Contact us today at saltwatch@iwla.org to be featured!



[Lauren Eaton](#) is the Monitoring Manager at Friends of the Rouge, an environmental non-profit tirelessly working to restore, protect, and enhance the Rouge River watershed in southeastern Michigan. Lauren and her volunteer network uncovered year-round chloride impairment in the highly urbanized Rouge River watershed.

Lauren's work perfectly illustrates how grassroots community science drives targeted policy changes and helps municipalities reduce toxic winter runoff.

[Karen Jimenez](#) is a student at Loudoun County High School in Virginia who took first place at the 2025 Loudoun Student Environmental Action Showcase. Mentored by Amy Ulland at the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, Karen tracked winter weather road treatments and stormwater outfalls in her neighborhood using Salt Watch test strips.

Her award-winning initiative, "Smart Salting to Save Our Streams," presented critical baseline and winter spike data directly to local conservation boards. Beyond advocating for the area's ancient, historic watersheds, Karen credits her hands-on stream monitoring experience with inspiring her to pursue a future college career in environmental science.



MEET A MONITOR



Bryon Bodt is a member of the Harford County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America. A lifelong conservationist and professional decoy maker, Bryon bridges art and community science in Maryland. Bryon tracks water quality where freshwater streams meet the tidal Chesapeake Bay.

Bryon relies on crowdsourced citizen data to protect local habitats, using his findings at community festivals to spark environmental stewardship.

Mark Wincek is a dedicated volunteer stream monitor with the Cleveland Metroparks Watershed Volunteer program. Having witnessed the infamous Cuyahoga River fire in his youth, Mark now tracks road salt runoff at Porter Creek using his Salt Watch kit.

Leveraging his career background in occupational risk management, Mark champions "Smart Salting" strategies that balance public safety and environmental protection.



Paityn and Mackenzie are two high school seniors from the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Partnering with Allegheny College's Creek Connections program, they monitored the urban Nine Mile Run Watershed in Pittsburgh, PA.

Using Salt Watch test strips, they tracked unseen runoff and successfully captured a massive spike in chloride levels when winter snow melted from adjacent heavily salted roadways. The students presented their winter data at the annual Creek Connections Symposium, creating a "snowball effect" of clean-water awareness across their local community.

THANK YOU!

Special thanks to the following organizations, foundations and municipalities for making the Salt Watch program possible and accessible to community members across the country.

If you are interested in making a donation to support Salt Watch, please visit www.iwla.org/saltsponsor.



**Raines
Family
Fund**



For more information, visit saltwatch.org.

ADDENDUM: MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

Note: Dates of this report reflect results from February 19, 2025 - April 30, 2026

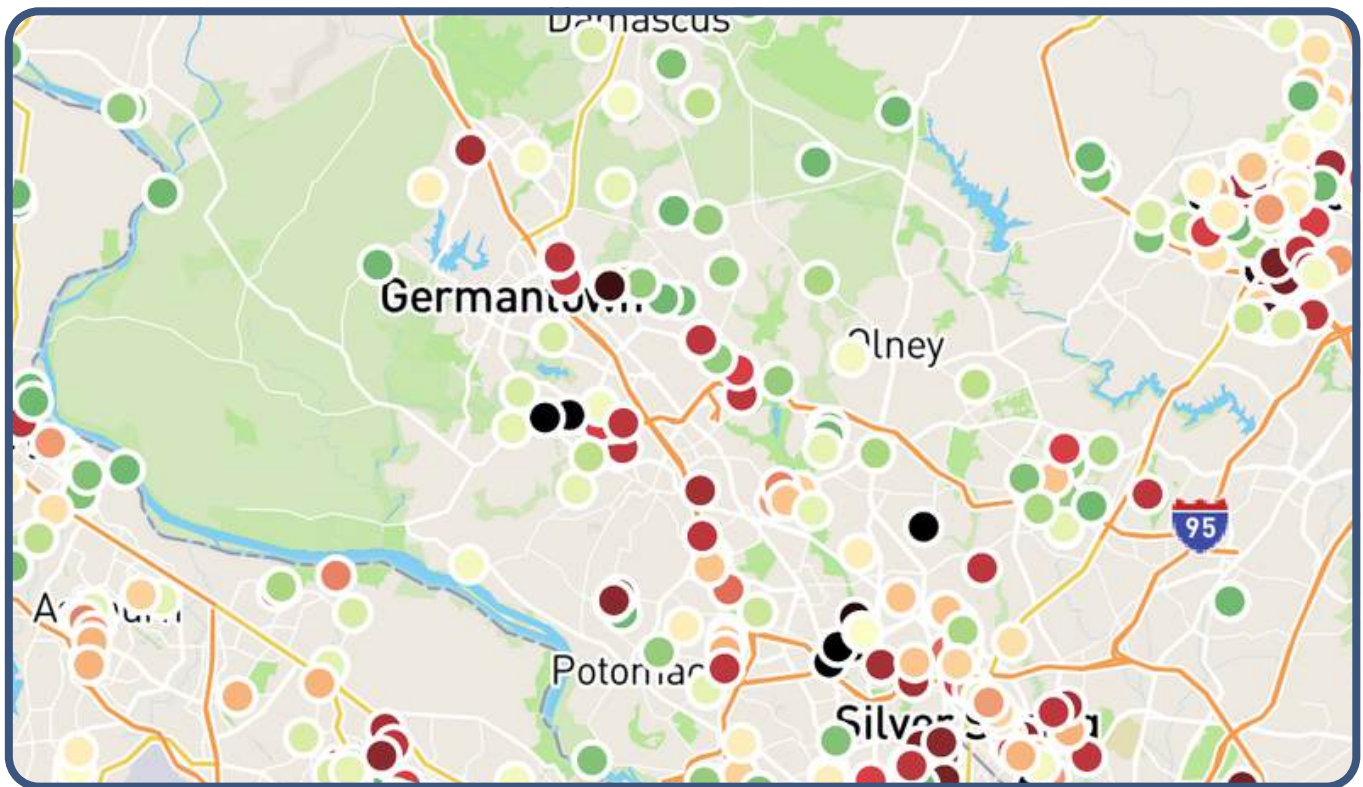


MONTGOMERY COUNTY SALT WATCH[®] ANNUAL REPORT 2025 - 2026



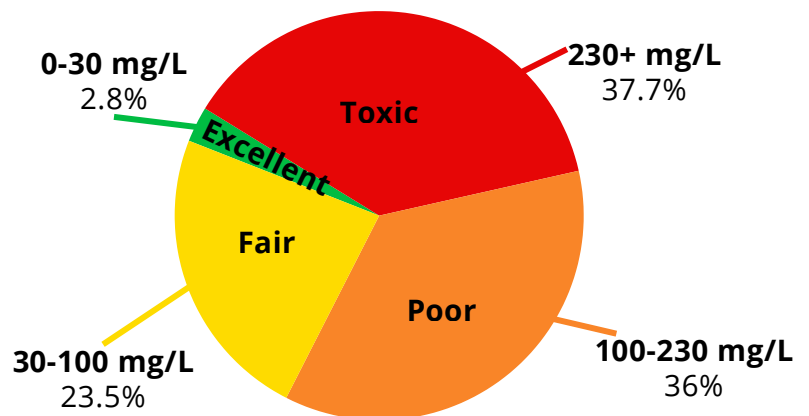
SALT WATCH[®] RESULTS

This was the third year the [Izaak Walton League of America](#) promoted [Salt Watch](#) monitoring during outreach in Montgomery County, MD. Staff distributed **1,143** English/Spanish Salt Watch kits to residents from February 19, 2025 - April 1, 2026.



Total chloride readings: **1,138**

0-30 mg/L:	32
30-100 mg/L:	267
100-230 mg/L:	410
230+ mg/L:	429

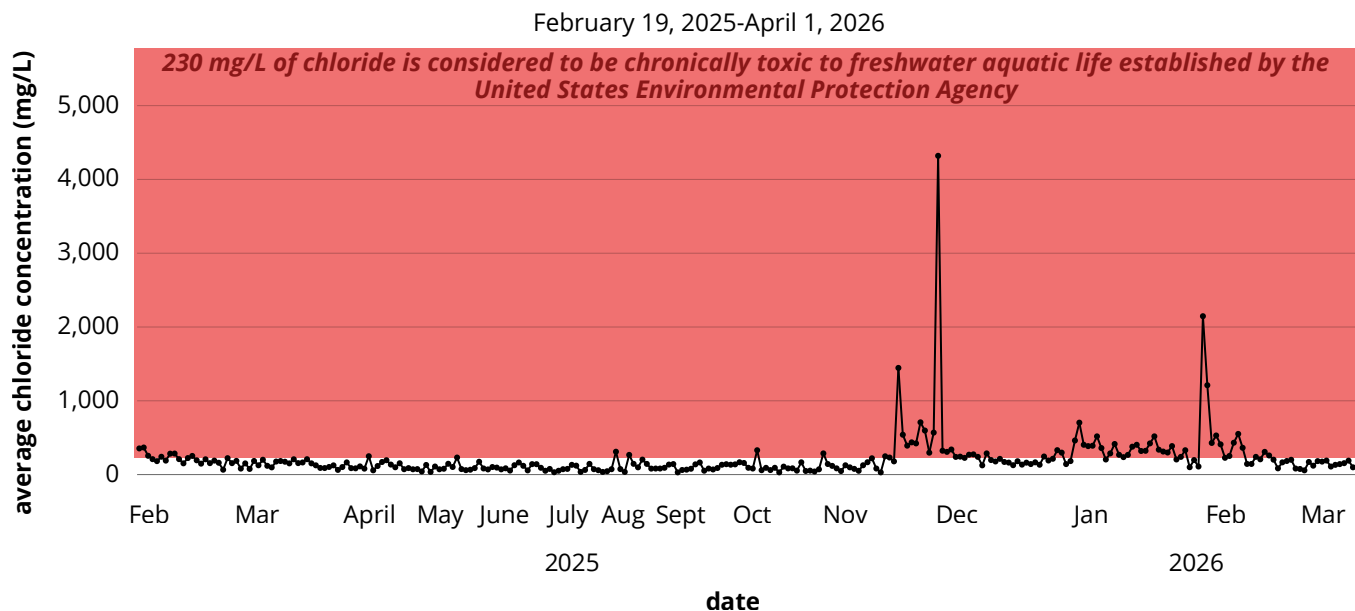


SALT WATCH[®] RESULTS

Chloride concentrations in waterways tend to fluctuate throughout the year depending on seasonal variation in weather and salting practices. In northern urban areas in particular, we often see chloride spikes in the winter months after storm events or after rain or thaw events that flush salt pollution off the streets into local waterways. Chloride spikes can also be seen during summer and fall drought events, where chloride becomes concentrated due to lower water levels.

The graph below showcases the seasonal variation in chloride (Cl-) levels reported to the Clean Water Hub between February 19, 2025 - April 1, 2026. It plots the average chloride (Cl-) concentration reported in surface water each day. Note how concentrations spike in the winter months and there are also some elevated levels during the fall.

Average chloride (Cl-) concentrations (mg/L) in water reported by Salt Watch volunteers in Montgomery County, Maryland



The red shaded portion of this graph represents chloride (Cl-) concentrations at or above 230 mg/L, the level considered to be toxic to freshwater aquatic life according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency. **The daily average chloride concentration reported by our volunteers was 230 mg/L or greater on 73 days between February 19, 2025 - April 1, 2026.**

OUTREACH

This is the third year the [Izaak Walton League of America \(IWLA\)](#) has been funded for community and business outreach and engagement with the Salt Watch program within Montgomery County, Maryland. Special thanks to the [Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection](#) and the [Chesapeake Bay Trust](#) for funding these projects.

In 2025, the [Salt Watch](#) program successfully led two "Walk in the Woods" events to engage residents across Montgomery County in hands-on watershed stewardship. Hosted in partnership with the [Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin \(ICPRB\)](#), these field-based outreach events focused on connecting the community with local trails while highlighting the specific impact of road salt on suburban stream health.

During these events, hosted at Cabin John Creek and Sligo Creek, participants received on-site training in water quality monitoring, learning how to use Salt Watch test kits to identify chloride spikes in nearby waterways. These walks proved essential for building hyper-local awareness, transforming recreational trail users into active citizen scientists who are now better equipped to advocate for "smart salting" practices in their own neighborhoods.

Staff also attended 6 farmers markets ([Olney, Crossroads Farmers Market](#), and the [FRESHFARM Silver Spring Farmers Market](#)).



Photo above shows table setup from Montgomery County Greenfest 2026.



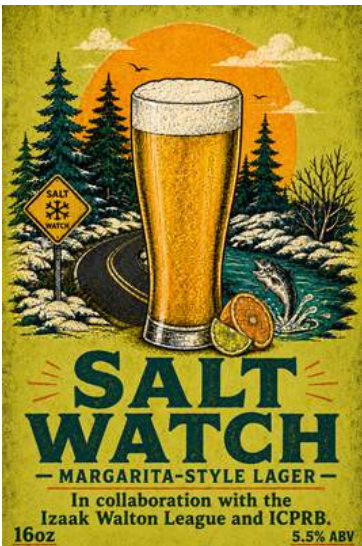
Photo above shows monitoring during a "Walk in the Woods" event. Photo credit: ICPRB



Photo above shows monitoring during a "Walk in the Woods" event. Photo credit: ICPRB

OUTREACH

NO CLEAN WATER, NO GOOD BEER



In a novel way to meet people where they are, Salt Watch staff have been teaming up with local breweries in the DC, Maryland, and Virginia region. Breweries are brewing salty beers and Salt Watch staff are talking to customers about road salt pollution!

The first of the salty beers called "[Salt Watch](#)" is now available at [Lone Oak Farm Brewing Co.](#) in Olney, MD. Keep an eye out for other salty beers dropping soon!

Left image by Lone Oak Farm Brewing Co. showing sign for Salt Watch beer.
Right image showing salty beer.

WINTER SALT APPLICATION RESOURCES:

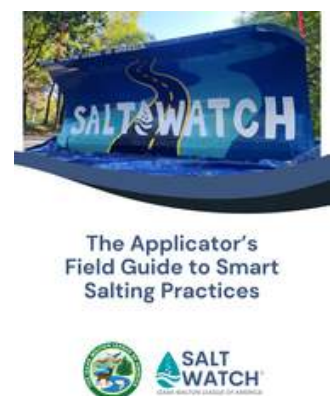
Salt Watch staff released "[The Applicator's Field Guide to Smart Salting Practices](#)" to help winter salt applicators use smart salting practices in the field.

For the second year, Salt Watch staff also developed a [webinar](#) for property managers and HOA/Condo Association board members to learn how to write performance-based salting practices into contracts with winter maintenance professionals.

Winter Maintenance Contracts that Reduce Costs & Protect Liability (Webinar)



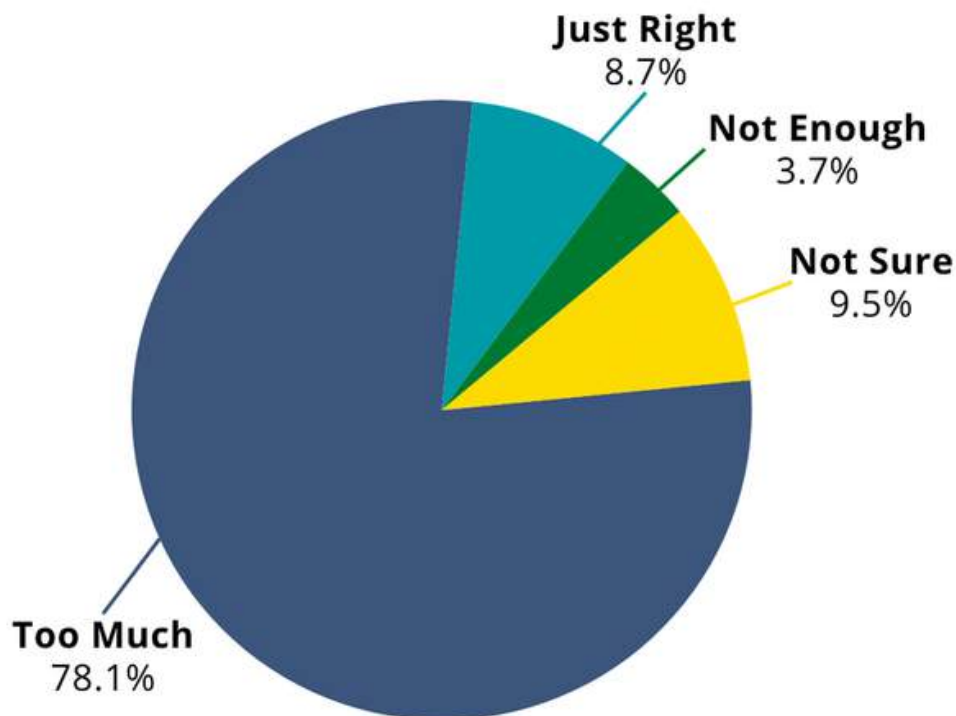
The Applicator's Field Guide to Smart Salting Practices



POLL RESULTS

Salt Watch staff led or participated in 25 events throughout the County including library tabling, continuing professional development for MCPS staff, farmers market tabling, festivals, “Walk in the Woods” events, MoCo H2O Summit, school presentations, committee meetings and more. During in-person outreach initiatives, Salt Watch staff asked audiences to answer the question “How much road salt is used in Maryland?” to gauge the general perception around road salt use in the state. The answer choices to this question were “too much”, “just right”, “not enough” and “not sure”. **462 people** answered this question; their responses are below.

How much salt is used in Maryland?



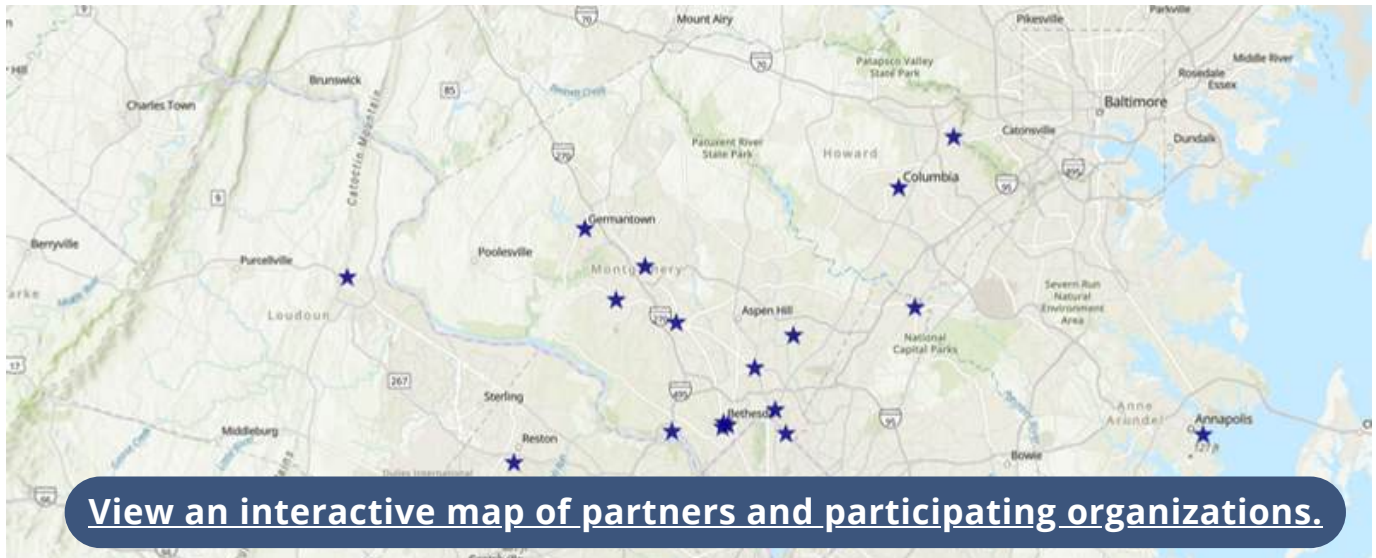
Graphic above represents responses from 462 individuals answering the question, 'How much road salt is used in Maryland?'

OUR PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful for our expanding coalition of conservation partners and are thrilled to welcome **3 new partner organizations** between February 19, 2025 - April 30, 2026, bringing our network to **11 official partners across Montgomery County**.

These dedicated groups serve as vital regional hubs, empowering local volunteers and driving grassroots action. By logging water quality data, amplifying the Salt Watch mission and championing smart salting policies, our partners are instrumental in protecting local watersheds from hazardous winter salt pollution.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARTNERS



[View an interactive map of partners and participating organizations.](#)

*Interested in becoming a Salt Watch partner organization?
Email us at saltwatch@iwla.org.*

WINTER SALT WEEK 2026

Winter Salt Week 2026 (January 26–30) further evolved from a regional Wisconsin effort into a premier national awareness campaign connecting scientists, public works crews and residents. The week served as a critical platform to broadcast "Smart Salting" strategies through technical webinars focusing on contract management, engineering, local advocacy and water monitoring.

The week concluded with an Open House at the Izaak Walton League's National Headquarters. The event featured hands-on sidewalk salting demonstrations, water testing, local organizations tabling and speakers including regional environmental leaders, equity advocates and water utility executives.

[Read more highlights from Winter Salt Week 2026.](#)



Photos clockwise from top: Salt Watch partners and speakers at the 2026 Open House, Delegate Foley presenting a citation to Salt Watch staff from the Maryland District 15 Delegation, Maryland Department of the Environment's Greg Sandi speaking at the Open House, and Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council's Jason Swope giving a salting demonstration.



BUSINESS OUTREACH & APPLICATOR TRAINING

During the 2025-2026 year, the Salt Watch program expanded its regional footprint through targeted community outreach and education, teaching winter maintenance best practices to local businesses, HOAs, condo associations and churches. Staff led or attended seven regional events to promote smart salting strategies.

On September 26, 2026, the program delivered its largest technical training to date through the online [Smart Salt Certification Training: Parking Lots and Sidewalks](#) course, contracted through [Bolton & Menk, Inc.](#) This hybrid training was streamed to in-person hubs hosted by the [Izaak Walton League of America](#), the [Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission \(M-NCPPC\)](#) and [Montgomery County Public Schools \(MCPS\)](#), where attendees received printed training manuals. Out of 160 registrants, 140 individuals completed the training, and 120 earned certificate plaques by passing the final exam. These certified applicators represented M-NCPPC, MCPS and the Montgomery County departments of [Environmental Protection](#) and [Transportation](#).

One applicator noted that, "Using the ice scraper (thin, flexible blade floor scraper) demonstrated in the [applicator training] made a big difference by reducing the amount of ice melt material needed. I highly recommend this... We bought a couple to try... It was a big help scraping the ice and packed-down snow. We used no salt for our office walks and steps."

Additionally, Salt Watch hosted a specialized property management webinar titled [The "Smart Salting" Strategy: Winter Maintenance Contracts that Reduce Costs and Protect Liability](#). This session provided property managers and HOA board members with a roadmap for integrating smart salting language into applicator contracts. The webinar featured industry expertise from Jason Swope ([Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Professionals](#)) and Benjamin Rhoades ([Reston Association](#)), drawing 106 live attendees and accumulating 84 subsequent views on YouTube.

As also noted earlier, Salt Watch also released ["The Applicator's Field Guide to Smart Salting Practices"](#) to help winter salt applicators use smart salting practices in the field.

THANK YOU!

Special thanks to the [Chesapeake Bay Trust](#) and the [Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection](#) for making the Salt Watch program possible and accessible to community members of Montgomery County, Maryland.



For more information, visit saltwatch.org.