



# Introducing the **Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota** Program



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*Water Resources Manager*  
City of Edina

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# Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota

An innovative new program that builds **community capacity** to maintain winter safety while **reducing chloride-based deicer use** and its associated damages **through relationships** with local properties managed by resident boards.



Development of this program was funded through a Clean Water Fund grant from the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources.

# In a nutshell

- Outreach and engagement program with technical support component.
- Program approach informed by research on barriers.
- Program elements informed and developed by marketing firm research and expertise.



# Hennepin County Chloride Initiative

- All 11 watershed organizations in Hennepin County
- Multiple cities
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
- Stop Over Salting (SOS) volunteers

The Low Salt, No Salt program is one of many things achieved by HCCI.

## Core group for Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota Program Development



**Laura Jester**, *Administrator*  
Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission



**Liz Forbes**, *Communications Manager*  
Riley Purgatory Bluff Watershed District



**Jessica Wilson**, *Water Resources Manager*  
City of Edina



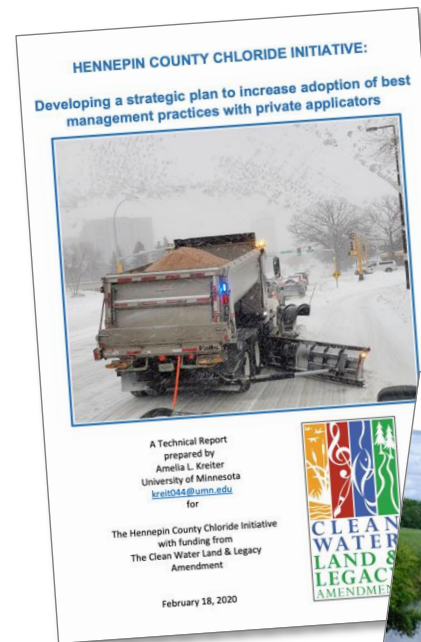
**Amy Riegel**, *Senior Engineering Technician*  
City of Plymouth



**Sue Nissen**, *Founding Member*  
Stop Over Salting

# What we learned

- Study of Barriers to Using Smart Salting Best Management Practices (2019)
- Our research showed that the **biggest driver of over-salting is client demand** due to fear of slip and fall lawsuits.
- Often, the **person applying the salt knows more isn't better**, but they are reacting to their customer's demand.



These are available on the webpage!



# Target Audience

## *Boards and Decisionmakers from*

- Homeowners' associations
- Townhome associations
- Faith-based organizations

## **Why this audience?**

- They live or worship on the property and have a strong interest/attachment
- They influence or make decisions about property maintenance
- We want to build a snowball of community desire for reduced winter salt use



## **What about the public sector?**

City, county, and state agencies are working to train staff, though there's always room for improvement.



## **What about commercial properties?**

More work is needed. How do you think the program can be modified for this audience?

# Market research and materials

In late 2021, we hired MP+G Marketing Solutions to

- Conduct market research
- Develop a brand, logo, & key messages

Here's what some participants said:

*Safe and environmentally responsible; that's a win, win.*

Property Manager

*It's a good story: cleaner environment and less costly.*

Condo/townhome association board member

*Three years ago, if you had told me that I could reduce salt and increase safety, I wouldn't have believed it.*

Grounds Maintenance Supervisor

*It's better for the environment, it saves the association money, and saves on repairs in the long run. It's a plus all the way around for us.*

Condo/townhome association board member

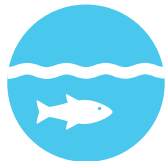
From our research, we know **three issues resonate** with all three of our target audiences:



**Keep community members safe**  
while using less salt.



**Save money**  
by using less salt.



**Protect the environment**  
by using less salt.

We used these three issues to develop messaging and the program tagline:

***Clearing a Path to Safety,  
Savings & Sustainability***



**LOW SALT. NO SALT.**  
**MINNESOTA**





# More than an education program



Goes beyond awareness-only  
to provide technical assistance



Builds relationships  
and trust



Develops a “community  
of practice”



Designed to be  
applicable statewide,  
delivered locally



Highly customizable  
and scalable

# How does it work?

Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota helps people address chloride overuse where they live, work, and worship so they can stay safe, save money, and protect the environment by using less salt.

It is comparable to Home Energy Squad.



JuniorBoss  
Kit  
1 Frame  
+  
2 Panels

## Mike Jens

As the Twin Cities endured one of its snowiest winters on record, retired mechanical engineer Mike Jens led a project to establish an environmentally friendly snow melt system in his condominium's parking garage. His actions helped to protect Nine Mile Creek from contaminated runoff due to excessive salting in winter months, directly benefitting the delicate ecosystem.



Winter Site  
Maintenance Templates

# Toolbox: Guides

## Facilitator Guide

Program facilitator guide includes:

- How to get started
- Ideas for using tools
- Key messages to emphasize
- Messaging approaches for audiences we interviewed



## Branding Guide

Branding guide includes:

- Colors and fonts
- Logo use



**Multiple colors & formats of the logo can be downloaded from the webpage!**

# Toolbox: Printed Materials

Leave-behind  
card



All can be downloaded from the webpage!



### Frequently Asked Questions

The chloride in winter salt products permanently harms the health of our waters.

You can reduce your salt use while still maintaining safe paths and driveways. Check out these frequently asked questions about deicers.

#### What are deicers?

A deicer is a product that melts snow and ice. Common names for deicers include salt, road salt, and chloride. Chloride is the powerful chemical found in deicers that is responsible for melting but it also causes damage to water, infrastructure, and vegetation.

#### Why should I reduce the use of deicers?

All deicers impact the environment. Salt is permanently accumulating in Minnesota water – in both groundwater and surface waters like lakes and streams. There is no practical way to remove salt from water. Just one teaspoon of salt permanently pollutes five gallons of water making it toxic to aquatic life and potentially impacting human health. Salt hurts pets and wildlife, changes soil structure, and damages infrastructure and vegetation.

#### Is salt from winter maintenance the major cause of salt pollution in our Minnesota lakes and creeks?

Yes. In fact, a study by the University of Minnesota found that about 78% of salt applied in the Twin Cities for winter maintenance is either transported to groundwater or remains in the local lakes and wetlands. However, salt can also come from water softening, wastewater plant discharge, fertilizer, manure, and dust suppressants.

#### Why doesn't more salt provide more melting of snow and ice and more safety?

There is a point where additional salt does not yield better results. Winter maintenance crews certified in MPCA's Smart Salting techniques can discern whether more salt means more safety or when it is simply wasteful. They are also trained to use other winter maintenance best practices that reduce the need for salt.

#### Do we have to stop using deicers on our property?

The Low Salt No Salt approach supports you in making property management decisions that will reduce the need for salt on your property while still maintaining safety. There are many practices already in use here in Minnesota that you can adopt for before, during, and after the winter season. You can reduce the need for deicing salts on your property at your own pace and comfort level.

### Take the Pledge

The chloride in winter salt products permanently harms the health of our waters.

You can reduce your salt use while still maintaining safe paths and driveways. Take the pledge today to help curb chloride pollution in your neighborhood.

#### These are the actions I pledge to take to reduce chloride pollution:

Instructions: Check at least one box below. For accountability, please have two people sign at the bottom.

##### Winter Maintenance Basics

- Use a shoveler to remove ice
- At entrances, shovel snow instead of salting
- Sweep up excess salt
- Optimize use of salt products by following label instructions for temperature
- Load and store salt inside away from the elements
- Store snow in areas that reduce or eliminate melt/refreeze problems
- Clean blockages from storm drains
- Instead of rock salt, try or expand use of brine
- Use grit to create traction instead of applying rock salt
- Seasonally close an entry, sidewalk, or staircase (keep in mind emergency exits, accessibility, and community use)
- Use the right water pattern when applying salt
- Instead of a salt bucket, place a snow shovel at an entry

##### Outdoor Salting

- Post signs in common areas informing people about chloride impacts, best practices, etc.
- Host conversation or write an article for your building about chloride impacts, best practices, etc.
- Write your legislators about the importance of limited liability legislation
- Tell a friend or post on social media about the Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota initiative

##### Additional Options

In an effort to reduce chloride pollution, we are willing to explore the action(s) selected above.

Representative 1	Representative 2
Name	Name
Rule	Rule
Signature	Signature

### Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota

HELLO,

I represent the City of Edina. We are looking to facilities like yours to work with us on a critical, timely, chloride reduction program.

Did you know de-icing salts are a growing pollution problem in Minnesota's water resources? – Just 1 teaspoon of salt pollutes 5 gallons of water forever. In fact, they are becoming so prevalent and present such a detrimental risk not just to our lakes and streams, but also potentially to our drinking water, the City of Edina has made it a priority to help facilities like yours reduce their salt use. At no cost to you.

We are reaching out to ask you to participate in our free, new program – "Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota." Through this program you will receive customized solutions and support that will aid you in reducing your dependence on de-icing salts and help you to change your winter maintenance practices. All while keeping your residents/members safe, saving money, protecting your landscaping, sidewalks and buildings, helping to sustain our natural environment, and being good stewards of our drinking water.

The "Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota" program includes a visual presentation and discussion about winter maintenance and chloride (salt) pollution reduction led by local experts from your city, county, watershed district, and nonprofit organizations.

After the presentation, the conversation continues with an optional walk around your building and grounds to identify problem areas and discuss best practices. Time commitment for the program itself is about an hour with an additional 30 minutes or so for the walk and talk around your grounds. The program can be tailored to meet the needs and availability of the group. This way, it can fit nicely into your monthly board or standard meeting schedule.

We hope you will consider participating in this critically important, free program. We are scheduling presentations this fall and will continue throughout the winter months. If you are interested, let us know a date and time convenient for you and your staff.

If you have additional questions, please reach out to me. I will follow up with you again in the coming weeks.

Jess

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### Conversation Starters

Use these ideas to begin a conversation about reducing chloride use.

#### Ice-breaker questions

- Introductions: What is your name, how long have you lived/worked/worshipped here?
- Are you on a board or committee for this place?
- Who has been involved in winter maintenance?
- What do you love about the place where you live/work/worship?

#### Site assessment questions

- What are your known problem areas? How are you managing them currently? How would you like them to be managed?
- Do you have a written plan with protocols for winter maintenance? If so, are you following the plan?
- Do you have a service provider or is the service provided by 'in-house' maintenance or management staff? If it's hired out, do you know your service provider? Are they Smart Salting certified?
- Tell us about your common area. Do you have a salt bucket/shovel/ice pick in a common area entrance?
- Is salt stored at your property? Where?
- Do you regularly communicate with your customers/residents/parishioners about winter maintenance operations and snow/ice hazards?
- Do you have a history of slip and fall accidents?
- Where do you get the most complaints for too little or too much salt?
- Do you have any drainage-related problem areas?
- Do you have any snow storage related problem areas?
- Are there any areas that are seasonally closed or could be seasonally closed? (Keep in mind emergency exits.)
- What do you think is low hanging fruit for smarter salt use?
- Is there anything you'd like us to see?

#### General discussion questions

- What's your reaction to the video? To the presentation?
- What was surprising?
- What did you already know?
- How does this relate to your property?
- What is working well regarding winter maintenance?
- What is not working well regarding winter maintenance?
- Can you think of an example in your community where winter maintenance is done well? Where it could be improved?

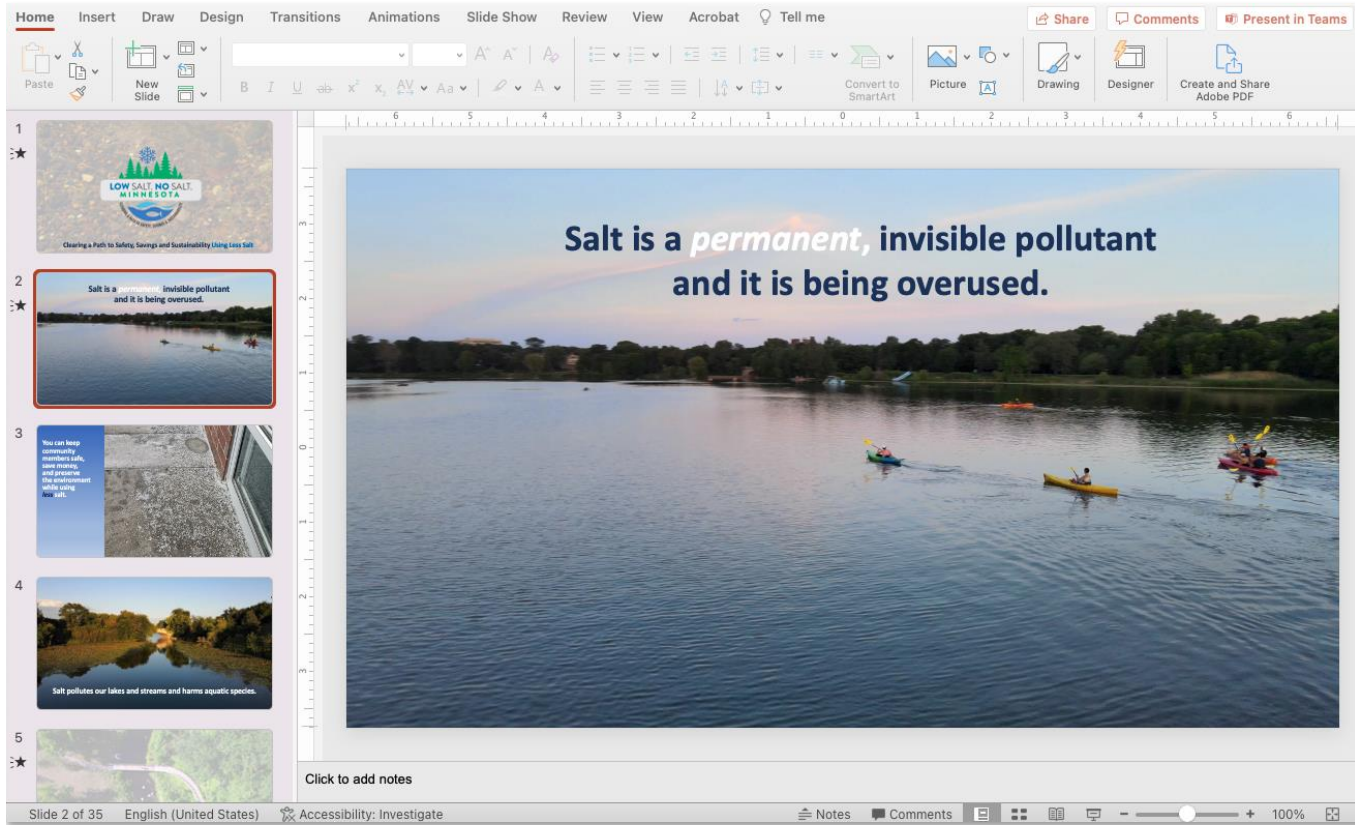
FAQ

Pledge form

Recruitment letter  
template

Conversation starters

# Toolbox: Presentation



## Customizable PowerPoint Presentation



Modify content,  
use only the slides  
you want, add  
your own slides!

# Toolbox: Videos



Show during a presentation, embed on your website, share on social media!



**Oversalting problems & solutions**  
*Full version*  
4 minutes 45 seconds



**Oversalting problems & solutions**  
*Short version for social media*  
40 seconds



**Liability & winter  
maintenance planning**  
2 minutes 34 seconds



# Customization Examples

- Ultimate Scraper giveaway
- Adapt PowerPoint to include local data
- City of Edina used the leave-behind card as calling card for their Green Business Recognition Program

**You can add your organization's branding (logo, contact info, etc.) to most materials.**



Giveaway  
scraper

Leave-behind card



**There's space to  
add your own info!**

# Additional Resources



**Model Winter  
Maintenance Contract**



**Winter Site  
Maintenance Templates**



**Other Online  
Resources**



**Calculator for Selecting  
a Maintenance Template**





# low-salt-no-salt-mn.org

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