

Smart salting training, in Spanish



Lower Mississippi River WMO's efforts to reach Latino communities, reduce chloride pollution enlist MPCA, BWSR and Dakota County SWCD staff plus Bolton & Menck engineers and All in One Translation



The Clean Water Fund supports Watershed-Based Implementation Funding for watersheds participating in One Watershed, One Plan or the Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act.

The Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization (LMRWMO) plans to host a Spanish-language Smart Salting for Property Management Certification and training course to better serve Latino communities and reduce chloride pollution in lakes, rivers and streams within the watershed.

A virtual training is planned for 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Sept. 19.

Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Senior Resource Conservationist Joe Barten said the training's target audience is people who own or manage private and public buildings within the watershed and throughout the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. This includes building maintenance and janitorial staff, private business owners, and anyone who regularly shovels snow and applies de-icing salt at public and commercial properties. Attendees will complete the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Smart Salting and Property Management Certification during the six-hour training.

MPCA data indicate chloride from de-icing salt frequently enters lakes and streams, plus groundwater sources that supply drinking water. One teaspoon of salt can permanently pollute 5 gallons of water. Chloride is extremely difficult to remove from water, so prevention is a key strategy in reducing chloride pollution.

The LMRWMO is organizing the training along with the MPCA, which is providing course content. Engineering firm Bolton & Menk will run the training with All in One Translation offering live Spanish translation. Course materials and the certification test will be offered in Spanish.

"We hope to gain a better understanding of how we can best serve all members of our watershed communities and bring them information where they are, in a meaningful way that positively impacts our water resources," Barten said.

The Metropolitan Surface Water Management Act, passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 1982, requires WMOs to create and

From left: A 12-ounce smart salting-themed cup indicates an appropriate amount of salt to use on 10 sidewalk squares. Snowplows apply de-icing salt on University Avenue in St. Paul. A broom can be used to evenly distribute de-icing salt on walkways. **Photo Credits:** Clean Water MN

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—Joe Barten, Dakota County SWCD senior resource conservationist



implement 10-year watershed management plans. The LMRWMO identified multilingual education and outreach as a priority in its 10-year watershed management plan.

A \$144,670 Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) supports the training, which leverages about \$40,000 of the total grant funds, plus matching funds from the LMRWMO. The LMRWMO and MPCA plan to share information created during this process to help other metro-area WMOs to develop their own Spanish-language education and outreach materials, such as social media templates or future trainings.

“This information doesn’t belong to the WMO, we



A Spanish-language poster for the LMRWMO's smart salting training describes the ways de-icing salt can contaminate water resources, including drinking water. **Graphic Credit:** Bolton & Menck

want it to be shared back to communities and other watershed management organizations throughout the metro,” Barten said.

The LMRWMO plans to use the remaining WBIF grant funds to complete two feasibility studies. A study of Lake Augusta in Mendota Heights will evaluate resource concerns to help identify projects to improve water quality in the lake and watershed. A second study will evaluate erosion issues in the three major stream reaches of Interstate Valley Creek, which runs through Mendota Heights, with the goal of identifying areas in the watershed to implement water quality improvement and volume reduction stormwater management practices. Matching funds provided by the city of Mendota Heights will contribute to both studies.