

# SAVE OUR STREAMS

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

ANNUAL REPORT  
2021



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## **Staff**

Clean Water Program Director – Samantha Briggs  
Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative Coordinator – Emily Bialowas  
Save Our Streams Coordinator, Mid Atlantic – Kira Carney  
Former Chesapeake Conservation Corps (Class of 2021) – Yanoua Kone  
Former Save Our Streams Coordinator, Midwest – Zach Moss

## **Photo Credits**

Cover: Paige Shafer  
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Dennis Carpenter (10), Sue March (13), Tom Myers (15)

# WELCOME

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Hello monitors, lkes, and friends,

2021 was certainly another year of change and growth for the Clean Water Program. Our Midwest Save Our Streams Coordinator Zach Moss left the League in July for a role at the Dallas County Conservation District, and our Chesapeake Conservation Corps Volunteer Yan Kone graduated from the program in August and is now a water quality monitor for an environmental restoration firm. We wish them well in their new roles.

It was not all goodbyes, though. In July we welcomed Kira Carney as our new Mid-Atlantic Save Our Streams Coordinator, who brings a wealth of outreach and engagement skills within the environmental field. Looking into 2022, we are excited to also hire a new Midwest SOS Coordinator and a new Salt Watch Manager to spearhead our expanding programming. It could not come a moment too soon, as our Salt Watch program is breaking records seemingly every day with our largest Salt Watch season yet!

Thank you for weathering the storms with us as we have gotten through lockdowns and social distancing. Our dedicated partners and volunteers have truly stepped up to help us maintain our data collection - and momentum - to protect and improve water quality across the country. Enjoy reading through the rest of this report and we look forward to a fruitful 2022.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Samantha Briggs".

**SAMANTHA BRIGGS**

Clean Water Program Director

# CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Samantha Briggs, Clean Water Program Director

The Izaak Walton League, founded in 1922, has a mission to conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including soil, air, woods, waters, and wildlife. The League is a member-based organization composed of 200 chapters across the United States, as well as a staffed national headquarters in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

2021 brought even more evolution and expansion for the Clean Water Program, but the core principles remained the same for Save Our Streams - to improve water quality and engage volunteers in water quality issues. Read on to learn more about the activities and successes our Clean Water Program has undertaken and experienced in 2021 through the following programs and projects:

- Winter Salt Watch
- Save Our Streams Chemical and Biological Monitoring
- Virginia Save Our Streams Biological Monitoring
- Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative Biological Monitoring
- Creek Critters Mobile Application
- The Clean Water Hub

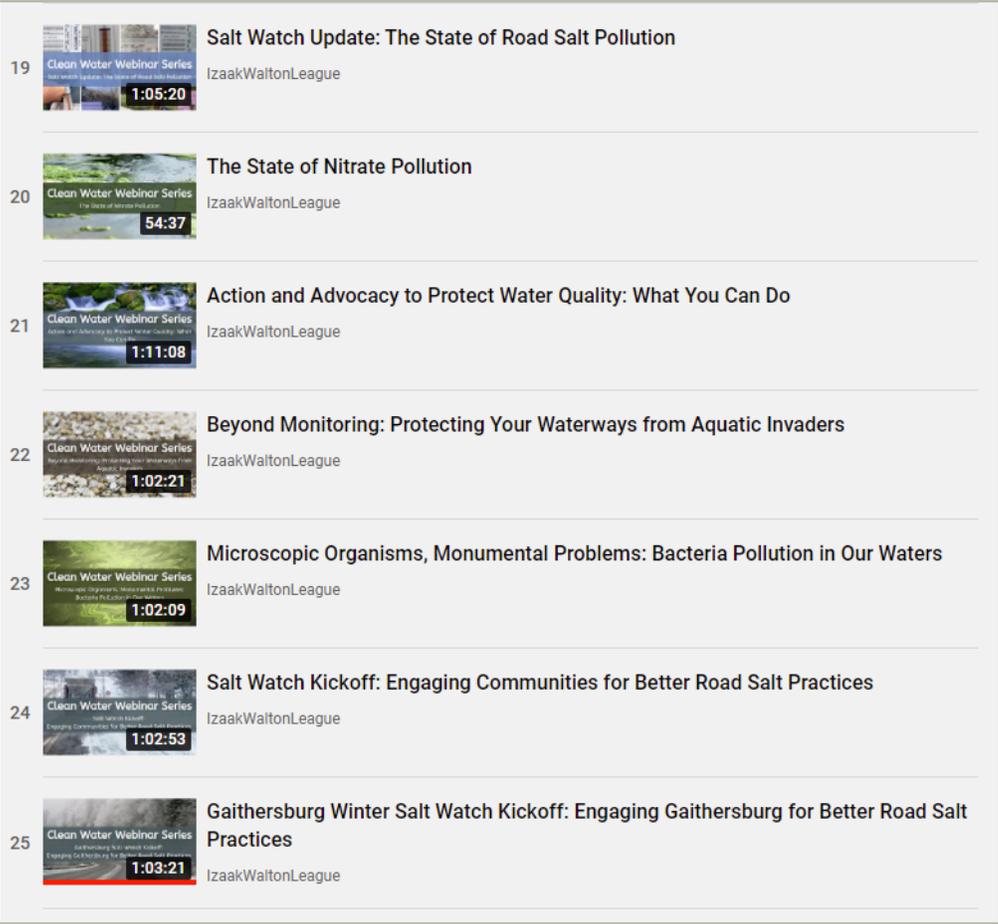


# CLEAN WATER WEBINAR SERIES

In 2021, staff held **7 webinars** of an hour or longer, and had **over 697 attendees!** Those watching including existing League members and volunteers, but we also expanded our audience to include many new people unfamiliar with the League.

To view our archive of webinars, visit:

[www.iwla.org/water/webinars-from-the-experts](http://www.iwla.org/water/webinars-from-the-experts)



19		<b>Salt Watch Update: The State of Road Salt Pollution</b> IzaakWaltonLeague 1:05:20
20		<b>The State of Nitrate Pollution</b> IzaakWaltonLeague 54:37
21		<b>Action and Advocacy to Protect Water Quality: What You Can Do</b> IzaakWaltonLeague 1:11:08
22		<b>Beyond Monitoring: Protecting Your Waterways from Aquatic Invaders</b> IzaakWaltonLeague 1:02:21
23		<b>Microscopic Organisms, Monumental Problems: Bacteria Pollution in Our Waters</b> IzaakWaltonLeague 1:02:09
24		<b>Salt Watch Kickoff: Engaging Communities for Better Road Salt Practices</b> IzaakWaltonLeague 1:02:53
25		<b>Gaithersburg Winter Salt Watch Kickoff: Engaging Gaithersburg for Better Road Salt Practices</b> IzaakWaltonLeague 1:03:21

# WINTER SALT WATCH

Winer Salt Watch is growing faster than ever, and as a result we have some excited new facets to our programming.

First, we have implemented a "Salt Watcher of the Month!" Salt Watchers who go above and beyond with their efforts can be nominated by their peers and awarded the "Salt Watcher of the Month" title by Clean Water Program Staff. Our first Salt Watchers of the Month at the end of 2021 were Geoffrey Selling (and his partner Chrissa Pedersen) from PA, Karl Van Neste from MD, and Kelly Reyer from WI. Read more about them at [www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults](http://www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults).

Salt Watchers are also asked to "pledge" to be a part of Salt Watch when they request their kit. This has led to some great engagement, volunteer connections, and advocacy actions taken by Salt Watch volunteers!

## Salt Watchers of the Month

October 2021: [Geoffrey Selling and Chrissa Pedersen \(PA\)](#)



November 2021: [Karl Van Neste \(MD\)](#)



December 2021: [Kelly Reyer \(WI\)](#)



January 2022: [Woody Stanley \(MD\)](#)



### The Salt Watch Pledge

I plan to reduce road salt use in my community by:

"Educat[ing] my green school club about the salt watch."  
- Nara, MD

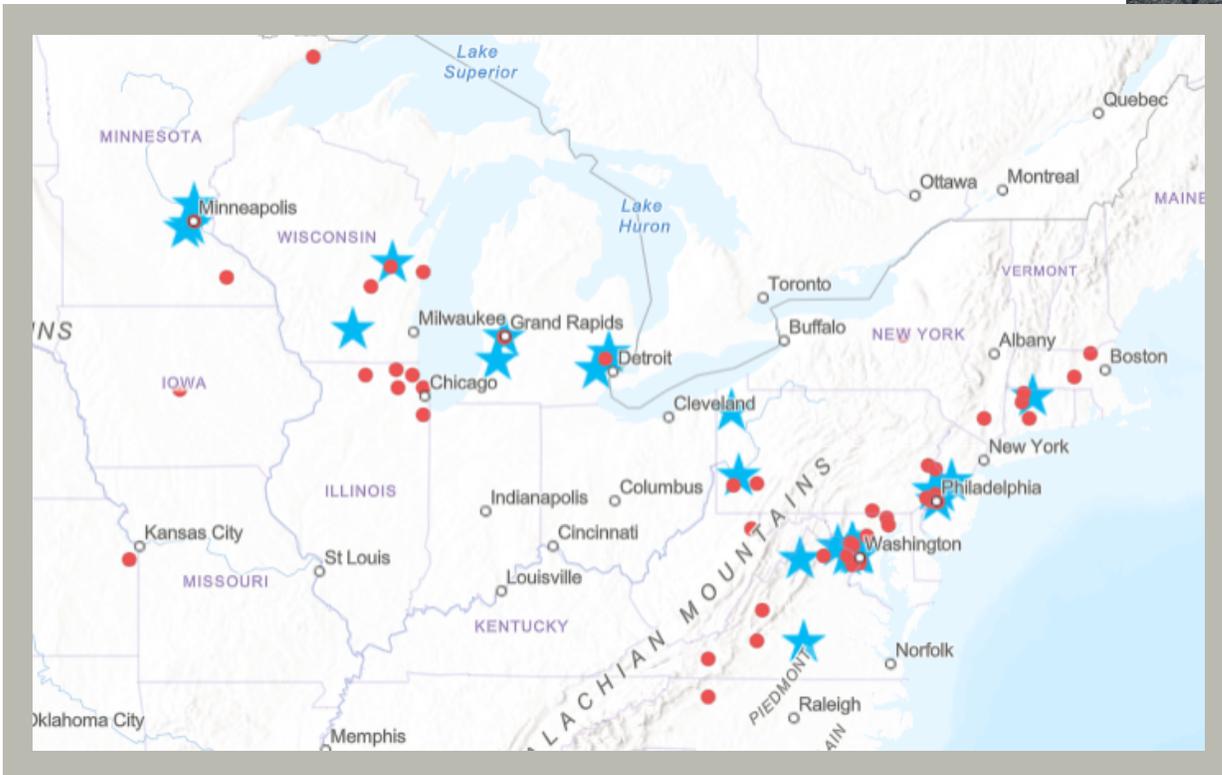


### The Salt Watch Pledge

I plan to reduce road salt use in my community by:

"Educating the community on safe alternative methods to deice the roads and sidewalks."  
- Robert, MI

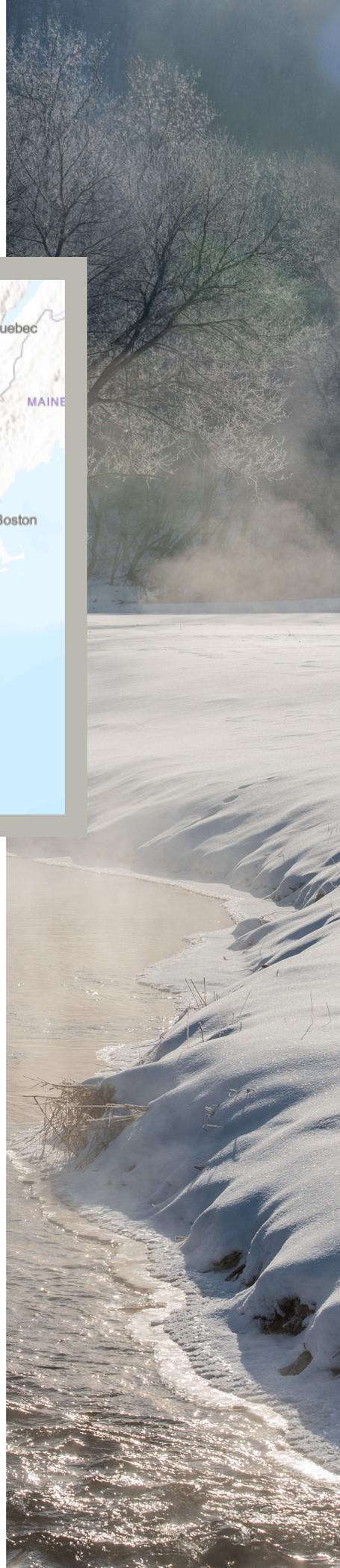
# SALT WATCH KEY PARTNERS



Salt Watch would not be a success without the hard work, dedication, and collaboration from our partners! And this year we made it official! With over **20 official partners** and 50 more participating organizations, we depend on groups to pick up the Salt Watch program. Schools and teachers have added Salt Watch to their curriculum, watershed groups have added it to their monitoring programs, and others are using Salt Watch to start monitoring for the very first time! Check out the above map to see more of our key partners across the country, from government agencies to school groups. This map is not comprehensive, and we are adding new partners every day! View the interactive Salt Watch Partner Map here: <https://arcg.is/01r8rD>

We'd also like to thank the Chesapeake Bay Trust, Izaak Walton League of America Endowment, Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, and many individual donors that make Salt Watch a success.

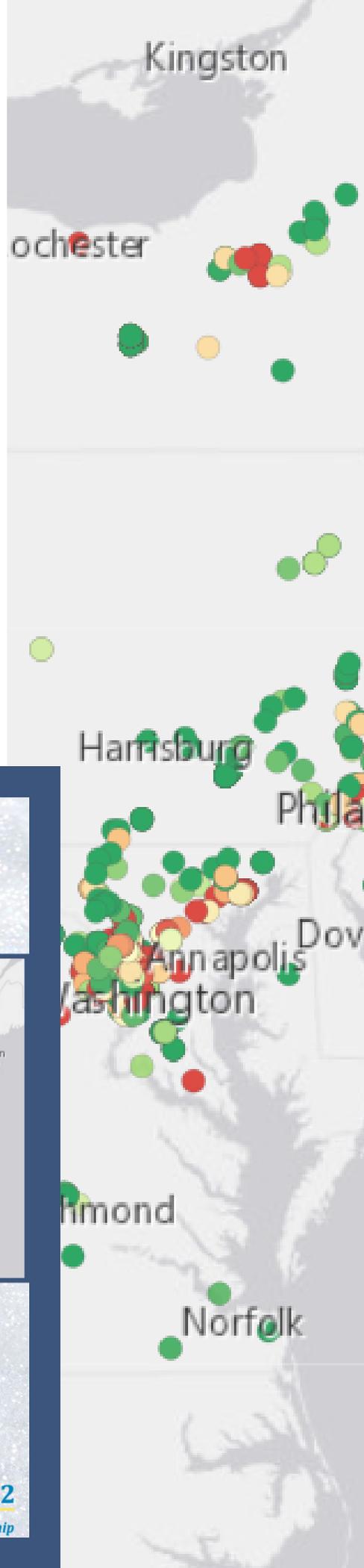
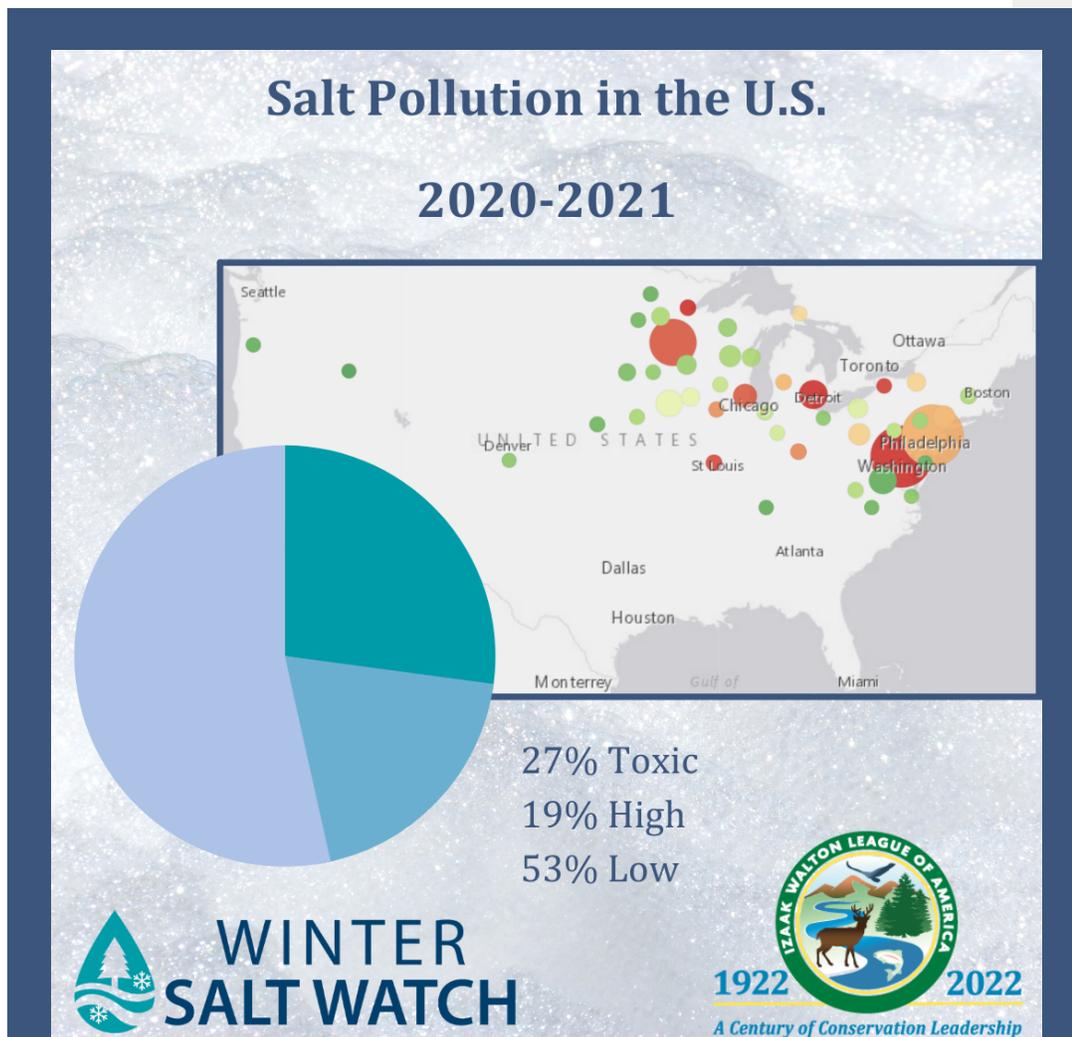
To get your organization involved in Salt Watch, please **email us at** [saltwatch@iwla.org](mailto:saltwatch@iwla.org)



# SALT WATCH 2020-2021 SEASON

In the 2020-2021 Salt Watch season, we saw growth compared to the previous season, distributing over **2600 Salt Watch Kits** and pulling in about **3100 Salt Watch readings**. We received Salt Watch reports in over 500 watersheds across the US! This winter was less mild than the 2019-2020 season, and as a result 194 watersheds had average chloride readings over 100 ppm - meaning we are seeing elevated chloride levels across the country.

To view past years' Salt Watch results, visit [www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults](http://www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults) and scroll down to view past season maps.

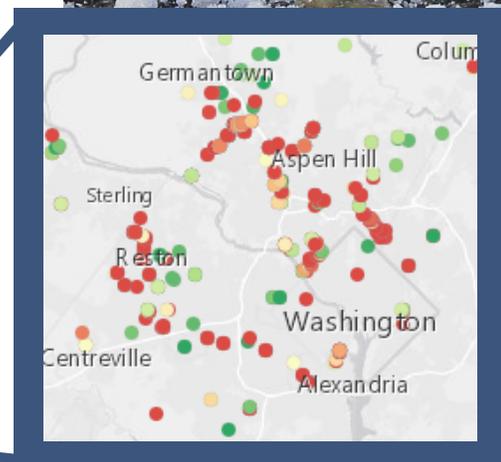
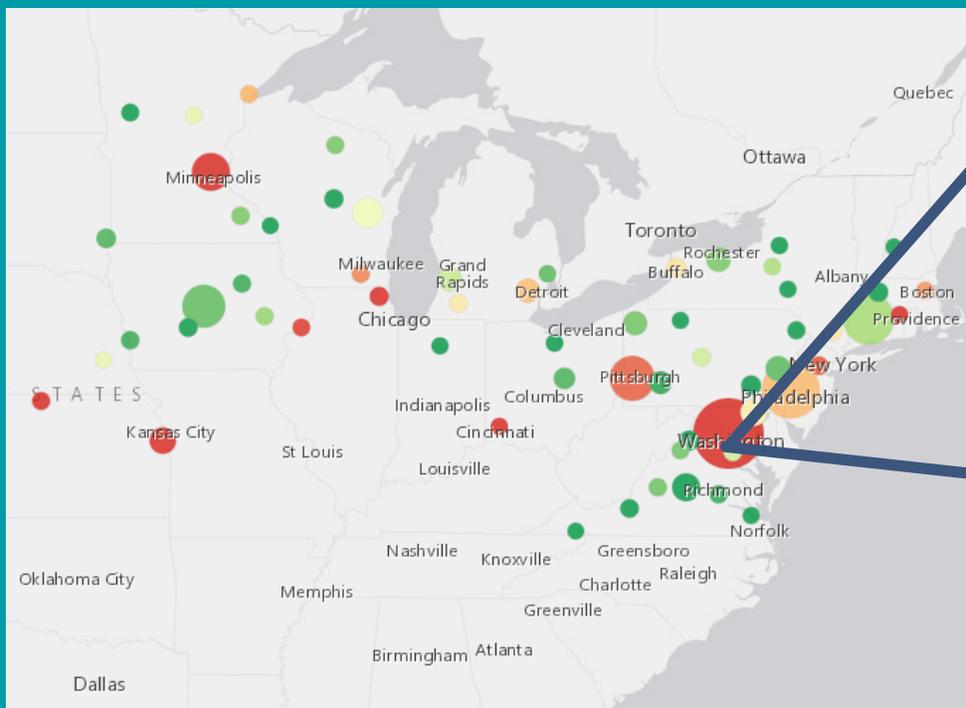


# SALT WATCH 2021-2022 SEASON

In the 2021-2022 Salt Watch season, it has already surpassed our expectations in terms of interest and growth! As of February 2022, we have sent over **3100 kits** and seen over **2000 results** come in...and we are receiving over 100 new reports every week! Staff can barely keep up with the influx of data, but we are loving it.

This increased winter precipitation has resulted in extremely high chloride levels across the country (and thus, more red dots on the map shown below). These spikes have even garnered media attention in areas like the Philly metro region and Connecticut. To read these articles and more, visit [www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults](http://www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults) and scroll down to see news articles.

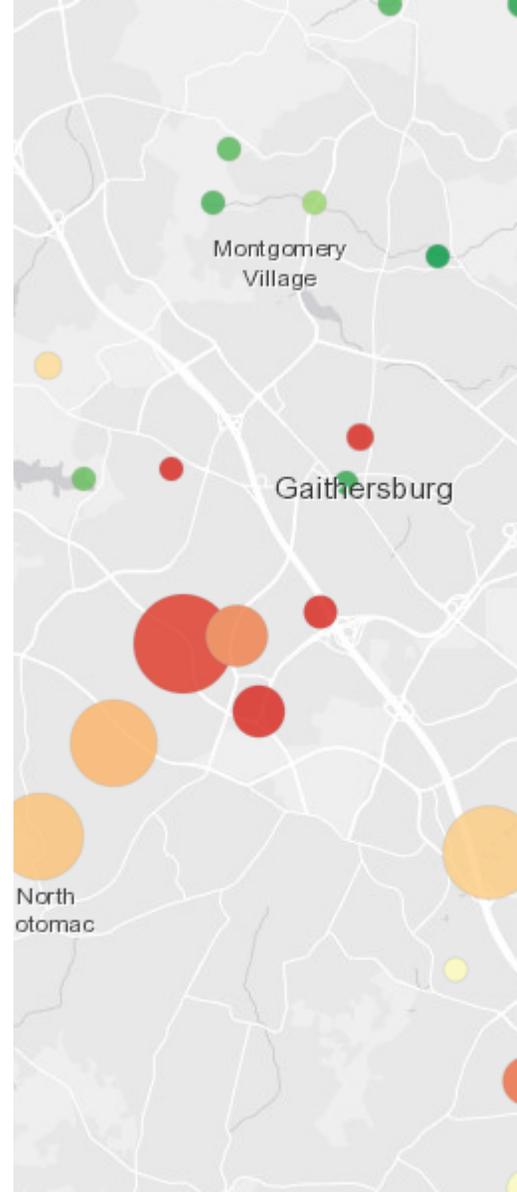
To view this season's Salt Watch Map (updated weekly), visit [www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults](http://www.iwla.org/saltwatchresults).



# GAITHERSBURG SALT WATCH

This year was our first being funded for a focused Salt Watch program in one community with Gaithersburg Salt Watch. It has been a great opportunity for us to see what it takes to turn the tide around salt use at the community level. We want to see what we can learn from Gaithersburg to help partners across the country make meaningful change in their own communities.

Staff has participated in community events, like farmers markets and a holiday Jingle Jubilee, giving out Salt Watch kits and information about chloride runoff to community members. **Over 500 salt watch kits** have gone out to school groups and residents in Gaithersburg. The Muddy Branch watershed, in Gaithersburg, is our most monitored watershed in the entire Salt Watch program! Learn more about Gaithersburg Salt Watch at [www.saltwatchgaithersburg.org](http://www.saltwatchgaithersburg.org). Special thanks to the Chesapeake Bay Trust in partnership with the City of Gaithersburg for funding this project.



Request a  
free Salt  
Watch Kit!

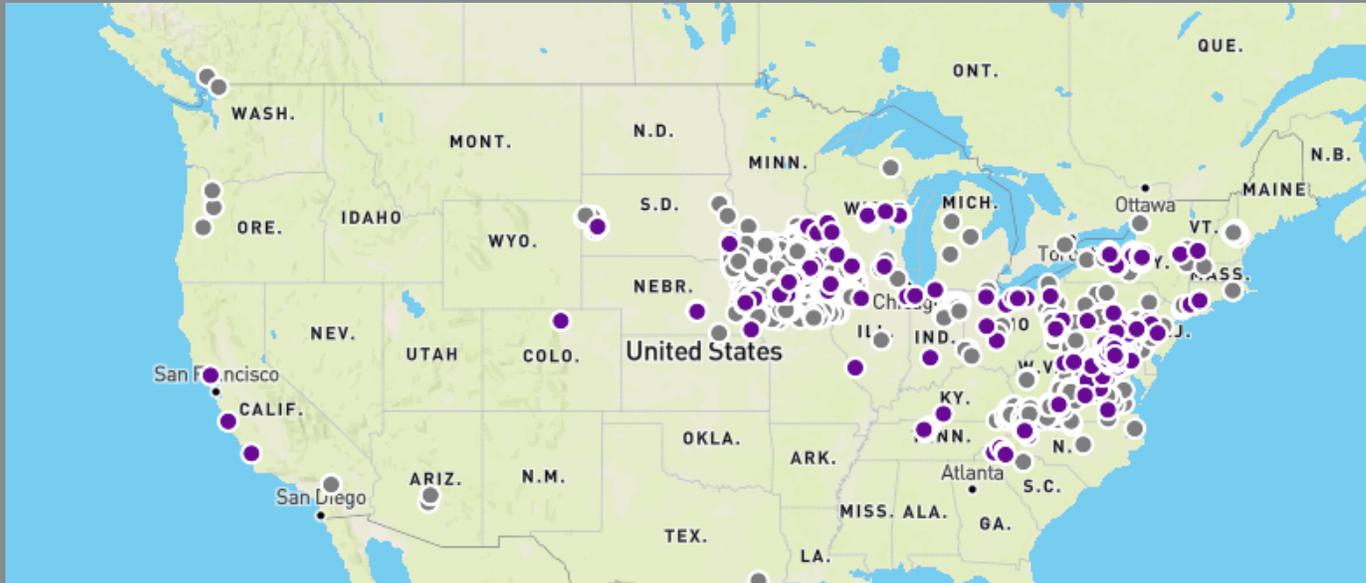


[SaltWatchGaithersburg.org](http://SaltWatchGaithersburg.org)



*The Paint the Plow Project! Photo credit: Gaithersburg Parks, Arts and Recreation Corporation and the City of Gaithersburg*

# CLEAN WATER HUB



**5358**

Stations

**49838**

Samples

**108**

Organizations

**510**

Members

The Clean Water Hub had even more development and growth in 2021, adding numerous monitoring sites, readings, organizations, and members contributing data. Now, if the most recent data submitted to a site is older than a year old, the pins displayed will be grey. If the data is new, the pins will be purple. This helps users quickly identify which sites have new information vs. legacy data.

In 2022, stay tuned for new protocol capability (like bacteria data) and new display features!

To join the Clean Water Hub, see water quality data (new and old), and add your own data, visit [www.cleanwaterhub.org](http://www.cleanwaterhub.org)!

# SAVE OUR STREAMS



While we encountered ongoing challenges to hosting field trainings in 2021, we were able to welcome many new participants into the SOS program. In the second year of virtual training, **148 people** began the online certification process and **72 people completed the online certification**. They are now ready to attend a field session to complete their certification this spring.

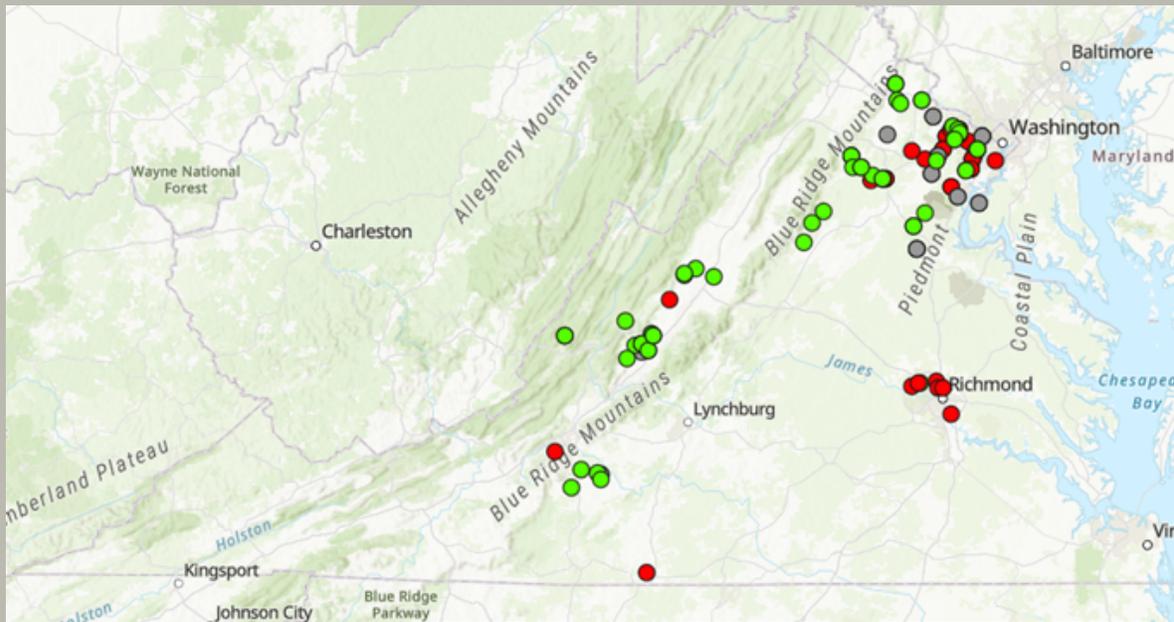
By modifying outdoor trainings to allow for social distancing and other COVID safety protocols, program staff and volunteer SOS trainers were able to host **19 trainings this year** and officially **certify 73 new monitors** in Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Zach Moss (Midwest Save Our Streams Coordinator) left the League in July 2021 to pursue another position in Iowa, but we are looking forward to filling that staff vacancy in the first quarter of 2022.

# VIRGINIA SAVE OUR STREAMS

2021 was a great year for VASOS data collection. Monitors returned to the field to submit **311 data entries at 176 sites**. 42% of stream sites earned a stream health score of Unacceptable, 45% of sites earned a stream health score of Acceptable, and 13% of sites could not be determined.

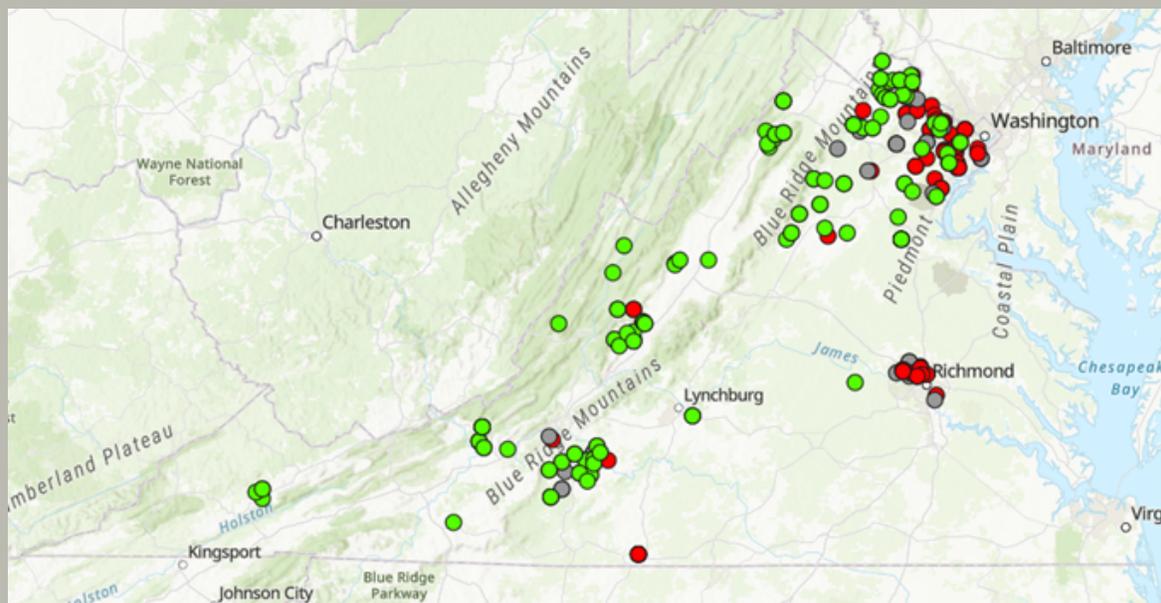
The VASOS network also grew in 2021! **47 people became fully certified monitors** this year and another **93 people started the online certification process** and may complete their certification in 2022. In addition to new monitors, A Mid-Atlantic Save Our Streams Coordinator was hired to coordinate the VASOS program (Kira Carney) and **5 new volunteer trainers were certified** to train new monitors throughout Virginia.



2020 VASOS results (160 data submissions). Green dots are acceptable water quality, red dots are unacceptable, and grey dots are grey area and need further monitoring.



2021 VASOS results (351 data submissions). Green dots are acceptable water quality, red dots are unacceptable, and grey dots are grey area and need further monitoring.



# CHESAPEAKE MONITORING COOPERATIVE



The League started a new 6 year grant with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Chesapeake Bay Program for our work as a partner in the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative. This new agreement continues our work supporting volunteer and community monitoring, and expands the type of groups that we work with across the Chesapeake watershed . As the CMC, we work with about **100 groups** who have uploaded over **500,000 data points** to our Chesapeake Data Explorer.

We also received a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to develop a new benthic monitoring method to collect field samples for lab processing. This protocol is meant to help fill in data gaps in rarely sampled areas, and help the Chesapeake Bay Program have a better understanding of stream health across the watershed.

The CMC team also was awarded a new grant from NFWF to develop a program monitoring habitat and stream health at restoration projects in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. To learn more about the CMC, visit [www.chesapeakemonitoringcoop.org](http://www.chesapeakemonitoringcoop.org)



*The CMC Team practicing the new benthic monitoring method*

# CREEK CRITTERS



In partnership with the Audubon Naturalist Society in Maryland and with support from the Raines Family Foundation, IWLA has continued to promote the Creek Critters app to users around the country! Free to download for iOS or Android smart phones, Creek Critters introduces kids, adults, and everyone in between to macroinvertebrate monitoring.

IWLA has promoted Creek Critters through social media posts that have reached thousands of viewers and through tabling events and presentations. The Mid-Atlantic Save Our Streams coordinator promoted the app at the Virginia Association for Environmental Education and the North American Association for Environmental Education virtual conferences and at family festivals and farmer's markets.

Thanks to our outreach, the Creek Critters app collected **1682 stream health reports** throughout the country, 433 of which have been transferred to the Clean Water Hub. To see the Creek Critters data in the Hub, visit [www.cleanwaterhub.org/organization/72](http://www.cleanwaterhub.org/organization/72).

To get involved with Creek Critters, all you need is a small aquarium net, a smart phone, and access to a stream! To learn more about the app, visit [www.iwla.org/creekcritters](http://www.iwla.org/creekcritters).



# OUR VALUED VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are seemingly more engaged than ever, and reaching new milestones! Salt Watchers have made the news with their letters to the editor, and others and contacting their city, homeowners association, or county council to ask for change when it comes to improving their water quality. Are you going above and beyond? Send us your successes to [soseiwla.org](https://www.soseiwl.org) to be featured on our social media channels, and thank you for all that you do!

Also this year, we had 5 great Save Our Streams photo contest winners! Check out some of the winning photos below.



*Clockwise, from top left: "Herping for Frogs" by Marissa Jacobs (Grand Prize), "Macro Count 2021" by Jodi Dziedzic, "Wild and 'Woody' West Virginia" by Glenn Nelson and "Off Season" by Kate Abbott*



# GET INVOLVED

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Want to become an advocate for local streams? There are so many ways to get involved with Save Our Streams, and anyone can volunteer! Find out how to get involved in our different programs today:

Save Our Streams: [www.iwla.org/sos](http://www.iwla.org/sos)

Winter Salt Watch: [www.iwla.org/saltwatch](http://www.iwla.org/saltwatch)

Clean Water Hub: [www.cleanwaterhub.org](http://www.cleanwaterhub.org)

Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative:

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

Virginia Save Our Streams: [www.vasos.org](http://www.vasos.org)

Creek Critters: [www.iwla.org/creekcritters](http://www.iwla.org/creekcritters)

Follow us on social media to keep up with the latest SOS news and updates, and subscribe to our Stream Monitor newsletters at [iwla.org/water](http://iwla.org/water)! Share your own success stories and lessons learned by tagging us on social media or emailing us directly. Drop us a line at [soseiwla.org](mailto:soseiwla.org).

Our work simply couldn't be done without our hundreds of dedicated volunteers. THANK YOU to all of our monitors across the country: you are the first line of defense for clean water. Now more than ever we need your data and your voice to protect our nation's waterways. Together we can educate our communities, collect critical data, and Save Our Streams!



@saveourstreams



@saveourstreamsIwla



*Eight One Four Photography*