



down to earth

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Copps Branch Stream Cleanup

By: Byron Madigan, Water Resource Supervisor

Each year the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) spends close to \$8 million removing litter along thousands of miles of highways throughout the State. Litter, just like other pollutants, is carried by stormwater through the storm drain systems and into our freshwater streams, eventually making its way to the Chesapeake Bay where it has the potential to entangle or be ingested by marine life.

A few times a year through the Chesapeake Bay Alliance's Project Clean Streams, the Monocacy River Board hosts volunteer stream cleanups, and on Saturday, December 7th, a stream cleanup was

done along 2,500 feet of Copps Branch, just outside the City of Westminster's Wakefield Valley Park.

The Copps Branch cleanup consisted of 7 volunteers who devoted a few hours on a cold Saturday morning, removing over 500 pounds of debris, filling bags, rolling out tires, and carrying out larger items along a 2,500-foot stretch of the stream paralleling the Wakefield Valley Trail.

Special thanks to Zac Amoss and Ronald Moore with the City of Westminster for their time on a Saturday morning, helping pickup and ultimately disposing of all the collected debris.



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<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/resourcemanagement/>

Protecting and managing Carroll County's natural resources for the pleasure and enjoyment of its Citizens

Carroll County's 3rd Annual Environmental Symposium

By: Kelly Martin, Watershed Grants Technician

The Department of Planning and Land Management held Carroll County's 3rd annual Environmental Symposium on Saturday, October 26 from 9:00 – 12:00 at the Carroll County Agriculture Center.

Twenty-four exhibitors participated in the Symposium, including: Friends of Hashawha and Bear Branch, Friends of Liberty Reservoir, Charlotte's Quest, Carroll County Bird Club, Gunpowder Valley Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited. An exhibitor passport encouraged citizens to gather fun facts from our exhibitors about their organization's mission and learn ways to protect our natural resources.

A recycled art contest for high school students was the highlight of the Symposium. Twenty-five high school students crafted works of art from recycled materials. Over 150 Symposium attendees voted for their favorite creation.

Ashlynn Kief, Manchester Valley High School, won first place with her sculpture "A Kiss from Mother Nature". Madilyn Conroy from Century High School came in second with her sculpture, "You Are What You Eat". Third place was awarded to Abigail Mastria, Century High School, for "Hummington".

Several presentations were made during the event, including a tree planting demonstration and a presentation on Composting in Sykesville by Girl Scout Troop 1290.

New this year, staff organized a plant swap and a rain barrel and compost bin giveaway. There were also two story times hosted by Carroll County Public Library.

Special thanks to all of the exhibitors and students that participated.



Ashlynn Kief
A Kiss From Mother Nature
Manchester Valley High School



Madilyn Conroy
You Are What You Eat
Century High School



Abigail Mastria
Hummington
Century High School

Restoration Update: Saint George's Gate

By: Claire Hirt, Watershed Management Coordinator

Construction has been completed at the Saint George's Gate restoration project off of Deer Park Road. The former stormwater detention facility has been upgraded to a surface sand filter, which will remove pollutants from stormwater as it flows down through the bottom of the facility. The design also provides improved protection of downstream waterways by controlling the rate of water being released from the facility after storm events.

The Center for Watershed Protection partnered with the County to incorporate biochar into the filter media, which offers a research opportunity for monitoring nutrient uptake, filter performance, and vegetative growth over the next few years. The photo shows where biochar was incorporated into the facility bottom (darker section) and the control area (lighter section) that will be used to make comparisons by researchers from the University of Delaware.

As warmer spring weather arrives, we look forward to grass becoming established on all surfaces of the facility. Thank you to our construction contractor, Magstone,

for their excellent work and for adapting to design and weather challenges throughout the project!



Carroll County Water Resource Coordination Council

By: Kelly Martin, Watershed Grants Technician

The Carroll County Water Resource Coordination Council (WRCC) was created by a formal joint resolution in 2007 forming a cooperative partnership between the County, the eight municipalities (Hampstead, Manchester, Mount Airy, New Windsor, Sykesville, Taneytown, Union Bridge and Westminster), and the Carroll County Health Department. The WRCC, which meets monthly, provides a mechanism for developing a regional watershed or county-wide approach to the solving of critical water resource management issues facing the County and its municipalities. The Committee provides a forum for the dissemination of ideas, solutions, and cost-saving approaches to water resource

development and protection in the County. The Department of Planning and Land Management provides staffing assistance to the WRCC.

Because of the success of this partnership, Carroll County and the County's eight municipalities have a joint National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit which eliminates political boundaries as a watershed planning and restoration consideration. A Memorandum of Understanding outlines specific responsibilities related to permit reporting and support. This working relationship has made compliance

with the NPDES MS4 requirements more purposeful and effective.

The County and municipalities have developed a Memorandum of Agreement which addresses a cost-share arrangement and the delegation of administrative responsibilities for the Permit. County staff make recommendations to the WRCC for project priorities, but the Committee serves as the forum for process oversight, program evaluation, and the setting of priorities for NPDES MS4 Stormwater Mitigation.

Kevin Hann, Town of Hampstead, serves as Chair of the WRCC.



Winter “Smart Salting” News

By: Glenn Edwards, NPDES Compliance Specialist Source Credits: MDE, CCLC, UMDUFC

MDE’s “411-On-Salt”

As part of **Maryland’s Salt Reduction Strategies**, Maryland Department of the Environment’s informational webpage on **Winter Salts**, the **“411-On-Salt,”** provides an array of informational resources for all salt applicators, including homeowners. After winter storm events, runoff from surfaces treated with winter salt (mostly sodium chloride) tends to have very high chloride concentrations that can impact soils, vegetation, and aquatic life, contaminate drinking water, damage roads, and corrode infrastructure pipes. “Smart Salting” provides a set of practices and guidelines for reducing the amount of salt used during winter weather conditions while keeping our roads, parking lots, and sidewalks passable and safe.

Everyone can help make a difference. Learning to apply the proper amount of salt (at home or as a professional on the job) is important in helping to keep our waterways fresh. You are encouraged to take a tour of MDE’s “411-On-Salt” interactive webpage by clicking on the link below or via your internet search engine.

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/319NonPointSource/Pages/411-on-Salt.aspx>

Maryland Smart Salting Professional Training



As part of Maryland’s Salt Reduction Strategies, **Smart Salting: Enhanced Winter Maintenance Training Series** has been developed in partnership with the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council (CCLC) in coordination with the University of MD Environmental Finance Center (UMDUFC). Limited training was held last fall (CCLC blog post link below). **This program will be offered again in the Fall of 2025. Now is a good time to consider the training opportunity and ask questions.**

Who: Property managers, business owners, landscaping companies, and other private contractors and salt applicators interested in effective ice melting strategies that protect the environment while also

maintaining profitability and meeting customer expectations.

What: Topics include pre-season planning, site analysis, and ice fighting strategies. Contracts and cost benefits will also be covered.

Why: The use of salt and brine during winter weather months has increased exponentially during the past decade. The chemical properties in salt lower water’s freezing point and allow for safer use of roadways and sidewalks. However, once in the environment, salt accumulates in the soil and travels into local streams, wells, and drinking water reservoirs, causing damage to infrastructure, the environment, and potentially human health.

Smart Salting: Enhanced Winter Maintenance Training addresses salt overuse on parking lots, driveways, and sidewalks. The goal of this program is to provide a voluntary, statewide road salt certification for private applicators that balances the safety and mobility of people during winter weather months with minimizing salt application and improving application practices to reduce contamination. **If you are interested in participating in the training program, click the link below and fill out the online form to indicate your interest and the project team will follow up with you when details are available.**

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sv/NRAOkNX/salttraininginterest>

Questions? Please contact Natalia Sanchez, Program Manager at the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center at nsanchez@umd.edu or (301) 405-5421.

Also see Fall 2024 CCLC blog/post at this link: <https://www.chesapeakelandscape.org/2024/03/we-didnt-know-what-we-didnt-know/>