NEWSLETTER

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Ideas for Protecting our Lakes and Watershed

Winter Focus: Reduce Salt Use

14 Mile Watershed Friends and Supporters . . .

Winter in Wisconsin means icy conditions. No one wants to slip on the ice and risk injury. That's why we often have a bucket of salt handy in the garage.

As salt use is common, we've recently become aware of its impact on the environment in general and on our lakes and streams in particular. High chloride levels in freshwater can be toxic to fish and other aquatic life, increase the potential for harmful algae blooms, disrupt the ecosystem of a lake and also seep into our groundwater. Compounding the problem, chloride is a permanent pollutant. Once it reaches a body of water, it's nearly impossible to remove.

While we are likely to continue to use salt, here are some suggestions for **reducing** the amount of salt while still staying safe from slips and falls:

- **Use less salt.** Clear as much snow and ice from your sidewalk and driveway before applying salt to any remaining ice, and then, just apply to heavily-trafficked areas.Such everyday products as sand, kitty litter (non-clumping), sawdust or ashes can also be effective in adding traction to a slippery surface.

- **Consider alternatives that provide traction.** Such everyday products as sand, kitty litter (non-clumping), sawdust or ashes can also be effective in adding traction to a slippery surface.

- **Switch to an environmentally-safer product.** Read the ingredient list on the bag and avoid products that contain chloride or sodium chloride. "Pet-friendly" usually means eco-friendly – for you, your lawn and plants and for the lakes.

- **Sweep up excess.** If you can still see crystals after the ice has melted, sweep up the excess and save it for future use.

- **Watch the thermometer.** If the temperature dips below 15 degrees, salt will not work properly and is more likely to end up in our lakes and streams.

Let's all stay safe this winter and
keep our lakes and watershed safe at the same time.

The 14 Mile Watershed Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of surface and groundwater in the 14 Mile Creek Watershed in central Wisconsin. See us at 14milewatershed.org or https://www.facebook.com/14MileWatershed

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