



## **Salt Management Strategy Update December 2018**

As we reported last quarter, in 2017, DEQ completed a TMDL study for the Accotink Creek watershed that identified chloride (salt) from snow and ice management as a contributing cause of a water quality impairment. To bring chloride loads down to levels identified in the TMDL report, DEQ has begun developing a Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) that will describe best management practices for more efficient and effective salt application. The SaMS project area includes all of Northern Virginia as defined by Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties and the cities of Alexandria, Manassas, Manassas Park, Falls Church, and Fairfax.

DEQ is working with a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) to develop the SaMS. From September through December 2018, the SAC divided into workgroups to meet and discuss ways to achieve the larger goals of (1) addressing regional salt issues; (2) generating public awareness to encourage positive long-term behavioral changes to improve deicing practices; and (3) ensuring protection of public safety, improvements to water quality and habitat, and reducing impacts on drinking water resources, property, and roads.

The SAC workgroups are: Education & Outreach; Traditional BMPs; Salt Tracking & Reporting; Non-Traditional BMPs; Governmental Coordination; and Water Quality Monitoring & Research. Each workgroup has at least one objective related to its title. For example, the Education & Outreach workgroup's primary objective is a "comprehensive education and outreach campaign and materials/social media toolkit." Likewise, the Non-Traditional BMPs workgroup's primary objective is to develop "best practices to minimize the negative effects of salt," to identify "incentives such as certification/training programs and potential tort reform," and to explore "funding opportunities." The full list of objectives is as follows:

- Comprehensively describe the effects of deicing/anti-icing salt use and identify and summarize the costs and benefits of winter storm operations.
- Collaboratively develop a suite of best practices to minimize the negative effects of deicing/anti-icing salts.
- Develop a comprehensive education and outreach plan to increase awareness of the benefits and impacts of winter salt use for both the public and political leaders to promote positive behavioral changes.
- Explore funding opportunities, operational cost savings, and broader incentives, such as certification requirements/tort reform, to support implementation.
- Develop recommendations for a monitoring and research program to better understand water quality patterns and impacts related to salt application throughout Northern Virginia.



- Develop options to assess effectiveness and methods to track and report salt usage.

DEQ does not intend for the SaMs to serve as a TMDL implementation plan; rather, it is a broader strategy to help regulated and non-regulated sources in the Accotink Creek watershed and across Northern Virginia address impacts from salt. For regulated sources in the Accotink Creek Watershed, like municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), the SaMS will be a resource for TMDL action plan development. For unregulated sources and those outside the watershed, the SaMS will be a guide for voluntary action. In addition, DEQ ultimately hopes the strategy will result in fewer future chloride impairments (and the need for chloride TMDLs).

DEQ will continue to meet with the SAC through the end of calendar year 2019. We will continue to monitor this work, and report back as appropriate.