

Salt Management Strategy (SaMS)

3rd Education and Outreach Workgroup Meeting

August 29, 2019

The third meeting for the Education and Outreach Workgroup (EOWG) for the Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) was held from 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm on August 29, 2019, at the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) at 3040 Williams Drive, Fairfax, Virginia.

Attendance

Twenty-one (21) individuals, including three Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) staff and one staff from the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB; DEQ's contractual support), participated in the meeting.

Christina Alexander, City of Fairfax ^{i i}
Heidi Bonnaffon, MWCOG
Renee Bourassa, ICPRB*
Dionna Bucci, Fairfax County ⁱ
Emily Burton, Fairfax County
Cathy Cogswell, Loudoun Water
Mike Collins, Arlington County DES
Will Isenberg, DEQ*
Matthew Kaiser, Fairfax Co. Public Works ⁱ
Pam Kenel, Loudoun Water
Shannon Marshall, VDOT ^{i, i i}

Corey Miles, NVRC
Susan Miller, Fairfax Water ⁱ
Lauren Mollerup, VDOT
Merrily Pierce, McLean Citizens Assoc.
Anissa Rafeh, DEQ ^{i, i i}
Niffy Saji, Fairfax Water ⁱ
Russ Short, NVTU
Sarah Sivers, DEQ*
Kris Unger, Friends of Accotink Creek
Emily Wade, VDOT ^{i, i i}

* Facilitator

ⁱ General Public (Non-Member of EOWG)

^{i i} Participated via conference call

Meeting Highlights

At this meeting, the workgroup members primarily focused on the pilot outreach plan and the baseline awareness survey.

- The workgroup members reiterated the importance of “speaking with one voice” for SaMS messaging while acknowledging flexibility is needed for each organization to speak directly to their audience.
- Polls were held to make final workgroup decisions on a number of items. The results of those polls were all to approve the proposed initiatives outlined below:
 - Supporting the tagline “Winter Salt Smart” and hashtags (#WinterSaltSmart, #LearnAboutSalt)
 - Keeping “Virginia” in the SaMS logo
 - Using the SaMS logo from the beginning of the outreach effort
 - Developing criteria for how and when organizations can use the SaMS logo
 - Holding off on using the draft mascots, outreach ads, and coloring sheet until those can be revisited at the next meeting

- Moving forward with the pilot outreach campaign
- Holding a listening session as part of the pilot outreach campaign
- Continuing work on the elements of what should be included in/considered part of any future messages
- Not taking on the development of materials for the Non-Traditional Best Management Practices workgroup
- A Pilot Outreach Campaign will be implemented November through December to test SaMS messaging throughout Northern Virginia and with a listening session in the Long Branch watershed (in Fairfax County) in early December.
- A Baseline Awareness Survey of the public's knowledge and use of winter salt will be conducted by a market research firm. The survey should be wrapped up by the end of November.

Notes for Other Workgroups / Potential Areas of Overlap:

- The Non-Traditional BMP Workgroup would like to see materials developed for homeowners and commuters. The EOWG agreed that this is a good idea but they will not be able to address it within the given timeframe.
- Future development of educational materials for grades K-12 should be a recommendation in the final SaMS document as the EOWG will not be able to address it within the given timeframe.

Follow-up Action Items:

1. Convene the subgroup to plan, run, and review the outcomes of the listening session. *Volunteers: Kris Unger – Friends of Accotink Creek, Susan Miller – Fairfax Water, and DEQ. Others are encouraged to join.*
 - a. All workgroup organizations are encouraged to attend and where possible contribute to the listening session.
2. Convene the subgroup to work through the final details of the Pilot Outreach Plan, administer it, and summarize the results. *Volunteers: VDOT, Fairfax County, Arlington DES, and DEQ. Others are encouraged to join.*
3. Update SaMS Website so that it reflects the tagline and will show up in internet searches when individuals see the logo. *Volunteer: DEQ*
4. Develop draft criteria for when and how organizations can use the SaMS logo. *Volunteer: DEQ. Others are encouraged to join.*
5. Draft a new mascot, awareness advertisements, and/or coloring sheet for review at the next workgroup meeting. *Volunteers: Fairfax County and more TBD*
6. Assist in the implementation and review of the SaMS Baseline Awareness Survey. *Volunteers: Arlington County, City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Fairfax Water, Loudoun County, Loudoun Water, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Northern Virginia Regional Commission, Prince William County, and VDOT*
7. Submit feedback on the draft elements for future materials by Sept. 27th. *Volunteers: All workgroup members.*
8. Convene a subgroup to revise elements for future materials based on feedback. *Volunteers: DEQ. Others are encouraged to join.*

Meeting Summary

Introductions

The meeting opened with brief introductory remarks from DEQ. Participants then briefly introduced themselves, providing their name and the organization they represent.

The majority of the meeting's discussion was focused on the Pilot Outreach Campaign and the Baseline Awareness Survey. These two projects will run this fall/winter to provide time for review and analysis prior to the next workgroup meeting in February 2020.

DEQ explained the polling process used in the meeting to document workgroup decisions. The group took several polls during the discussion to gauge their satisfaction with various products and ideas. Each organization got one vote by holding up the card corresponding with their answer. A green card meant "*We are in support of it,*" a yellow card meant "*We can live with it,*" a red card meant "*We cannot live with it.*" The specific vote for each organization is not included in the meeting summary; however, the total number of votes in each category is listed. Note: When provided, the reasons for votes of "We can live with it" are provided below the poll results. There were no "We cannot live with it" votes.

Pilot Outreach Campaign

A pilot outreach campaign will be used to test the effectiveness of the draft messages that have been developed. The campaign will be administered through workgroup member and partner organizations' electronic communications in addition to a listening session in the Long Branch watershed in Fairfax County. The logo, taglines, and hashtags, and 1-page informational flyer will be tested via online communications and the Long Branch watershed listening session. After the campaign is run and any lessons learned are incorporated, a final version of the campaign will be included in the final SaMS document.

Messages and Tagline

The draft messages are:

- *Overarching message/tagline: Winter Salt Smart*
- *Hashtags: (Primary) #WinterSaltSmart, (Secondary) #LearnAboutSalt*
- *Teaser Language:*
 - *Learn more about salt use in Northern Virginia at: [web link]*
 - *Want to learn how we're doing this in Northern Virginia? Click here: [web link]*
 - *The pluses and minuses of salt use in Northern Virginia at: [web link]*

Some notes on the draft messages and tagline:

- Concerns were expressed that testing messages before obtaining the results of an awareness survey is not the "gold standard" for developing outreach messages. However, due to limited time to complete the effort, much of the workgroup agreed that providing conducting both, the pilot outreach campaign and the awareness survey, is preferred for drafting recommendations.
- The use of two hashtags was proposed to develop a cohesive message across the region. Because the primary hashtag is comprised of the overarching message/tagline, the secondary hashtag adds context and can be shared with other states/districts in the region.
- DEQ staff verified the hashtags are not presently being utilized on social media.

- Some members noted that the public might see the secondary hashtag (#LearnAboutSalt) as a comment on dietary restrictions. However, another view shared was that a benefit to having at least one hashtag that does not include the word *winter* is because salt use has negative effects year-round. In conclusion of the discussion on hashtags, the workgroup agreed that the SaMS should advise stakeholders to use the two hashtags together (as opposed to using them separately) to retain a winter context to the secondary hashtag.
- The workgroup members provided no additional input or edits on the feedback form disseminated for review prior to the meeting. However, later during discussion on the listening session, it was recommended this form also be used during the listening session to obtain feedback from on the draft messaging in addition to the version online. It was noted that results from the feedback form and discussions at the listening session will be used to make additional edits to the messaging.

POLL — Does the workgroup support the messaging that is on the [MS PowerPoint](#) slide No. 6: Green: 9, Yellow: 2, Red: 0.

One of the “yellow” votes wanted to results from the baseline awareness survey before committing. It was recommended that these messages also be tested in the listening session where more direct feedback and impressions can be garnered.

Logo

To build the SaMS “brand” and reduce clutter of including all member organizations’ logos in other documents, social media, and other platforms, the SaMS logo will be used to represent the SaMS and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). The final SaMS document will include the SaMS logo and also recognize all SAC organizations through an acknowledgment section which will include their name and associated logo (if the organization is willing to share their logo for use in this manner).

The SAC provided insights and edits into the design of the logo. A draft version was presented to the workgroup. There will be some final, minor edits, mainly a more bold, larger typeface for the word *SaMS*.

General discussion on the logo included the need for it to have a “web presence.” In other words, if people see the logo and Google it, top search results should be the SaMS website. Currently, that website is the SaMS development website on DEQ’s webpage, but it is proposed it be transferred to another website at some point to be managed by an organization that assumes leading SaMS implementation.

There was some discussion about whether the location “tag” in the logo should say either *Virginia* or *Northern Virginia*. Although the project is focused in northern Virginia, keeping it as just *Virginia* can open it up to other regions in the state. It also keeps the logo less cluttered.

A discussion on oversight and management of the use of the logo was tabled for a future meeting, but certain exceptions and social media flexibility (i.e., ease of use) were discussed.

POLL — Keep the location tag as *Virginia* ([MS PowerPoint](#) slide No. 7) in the SaMS logo: Green: 9, Yellow: 2, Red: 0.

One of the “yellow” votes wanted to add “Northern” to the location tag so that it read “Northern Virginia.”

POLL — Include SaMS logo in the messaging from the beginning: Green, 10, Yellow: 0, Red: 0.

POLL — Criteria should be developed (at a later date) for when and how organizations can use the SaMS logo: Green: 9, Yellow: 1, Red: 0.

Mascots/Outreach Ads/Coloring Sheet

An illustrator/artist, contracted by Fairfax Water, developed several drafts of possible mascots, outreach ads, and coloring sheets for the SaMS. As funding for that contract is depleted for the current year, further work by the artist is currently not possible. However, Fairfax Water is working on renewing the contract for next year, at which time any requested revisions may be possible by the artist.

A workgroup member commented that the draft mascots, outreach ads, and coloring sheets are “one-sided” and do not address the full scope of sources of salt in the water. The workgroup discussed the results of the SaMS project area spatial analysis that showed there was relatively even distribution between impervious surfaces among potential salt sources (transportation, residential, government, and commercial). Considering this, the workgroup agreed that these materials should be tailored towards the general public (such as a cup to represent appropriate amount for homeowners to use, etc.) and what they can do to make a difference. A general comment provided during this discussion and throughout the meeting is outreach should be positive in nature and include tips for winter weather.

A workgroup member suggested the mascots, outreach ads, and coloring sheets can be taken out of the final message if they are too contentious.

POLL: Hold off on using the draft mascots, outreach ads, and coloring sheets ([MS PowerPoint](#) slide No. 9) until they can be revisited at the next EOWG meeting: Green: 10, Yellow: 0, Red: 0.

The workgroup agreed that for consideration at the next meeting, new materials (mascot, ads, and coloring sheet) will need to be drafted because the workgroup preference for different materials will not change. The artist contracted by Fairfax Water may be available to assist with revisions or alternative designs (contingent on the availability of funding) or graphic artists from other partner organizations can develop drafts.

Listening Session

A face-to-face public meeting or listening session component of the campaign was discussed. This is a tool to introduce the SaMS to the public and obtain direct feedback on the messaging. A listening session, previously anticipated to be held in Spring 2019, will be planned for the beginning of December 2019 in the Long Branch watershed. The specific location is to be determined.

The 2-hour event will be hosted by DEQ and open to the public. SaMS partner organizations are encouraged to attend to share their viewpoints on their participation in the SaMS effort and engage with the public.

It will be a “cafeteria style” event, showcasing various booths with topical information about SaMS and people available to answer questions from the public. The event will be in the evening when participation is typically more convenient for the general public.

Clean Water Action has funds to send postcard mailers to residents in the Long Branch watershed advertising the event. Partner organizations are encouraged to advertise the event, as well. It was noted

that the invitations should try to reach a new audience and not “preach to the choir” (i.e., environmentally focused residents that likely attended Accotink Creek TMDL development meetings). It is anticipated that a larger audience will be reached than was capable during the TMDL development due to use of the mailers and other neighborhood forums as well as any workgroup members’ organizations that advertise the event.

The workgroup discussed whether it would be best to try to build baseline knowledge on the topic among potential meeting attendees before the meeting. Ultimately, the workgroup decided it would be best not to bias their perspectives so that feedback on messaging will come from an unprimed audience.

The details of the meeting will be worked out in a subgroup that will be comprised of DEQ, Kris Unger (Friends of Accotink Creek), and Susan Miller (Fairfax Water).

POLL — Hold a listening session ([MS PowerPoint](#) slide No. 8): Green: 7, Yellow: 3, Red: 0

Pilot Outreach Campaign Implementation

There will be two steps to implement the Pilot Outreach Campaign, which is proposed to run November and December 2019.

The first step (“What is SaMS”) in the Pilot Outreach Campaign is to start with an introductory message from the partner organizations as a part of an email to their listservs, a part of one of their newsletters, and/or a post on social media that explains what SaMS is and why the partner organization is involved. The message will also encourage the audience to sign up for the SaMS newsletter if they want to learn more. This will help develop the audience for the newsletter distribution in the second step and future communications during implementation of SaMS.

The second step (“Awareness”) of the campaign is for partner organizations to share the message/tagline, hashtags, and teaser language with a link to the 1-page informational flyer via a social media post and for the SaMS newsletter to share the message/tagline, hashtags, and information in the 1-page information flyer.

It was clarified that participation in the pilot is optional and that there is no requirement for partner organizations to participate. Participation is strictly voluntary and encouraged to help broaden the audience reached by the pilot and increase the volume of results/feedback. Additionally, it was discussed that some organizations may choose to participate only in the first step (“What is SaMS”) where they have the opportunity to share their reasons for participating in the SaMS, but may choose not to participate in step 2 (“Awareness”).

The messages to be tested in the second step (“Awareness”) have been developed and approved by the EOWG and include options for teaser language to introduce the 1-page informational flyer. While format and more specific language for the first step (“What is SaMS”) still needs drafting, it is recommended that a brief statement on what SaMS (sourced from the 1-page flyer), a link to sign up for the newsletter, the hashtags and perspective on the organization’s participation in the SaMS be included. With this outline (details to be further fleshed out in a subgroup) the SaMS partner organizations can speak with one voice but also exercise flexibility to speak directly to their audience. The first and second step will include the SaMS logo.

Metrics will be tracked to calculate the success of the campaign, and the collection of that information is proposed to be coordinated through shareable Google spreadsheet).

Discussion notes on implementation:

- DEQ will send out the initial SaMS newsletter.
- Communication staff at the partner organizations need flexibility to speak to their audience.
- If possible, some results from the Baseline Awareness Survey could be included in the second step of the campaign.

A question arose as to who will assume the role of managing the SaMS newsletter during SaMS implementation. While further consideration and discussion is needed in regards to this and in general SaMS implementation, preliminary it was suggested that this responsibility fall to an organization that assumes the role of leading the SaMS during its implementation.

POLL — Moving forward with the pilot outreach campaign as discussed ([MS PowerPoint](#) slide Nos. 10-13): Green: 6, Yellow: 4, Red: 0.

One of the “yellow” votes expressed the hope that the timing of the pilot outreach campaign can be modified to occur after the awareness survey is complete.

A subgroup will be convened to work through the details of the Pilot Outreach Plan. Workgroup members from the following organizations will be involved with this subgroup: VDOT, Fairfax County, Arlington County, and DEQ. Other organizations are encouraged to get involved.

Baseline Awareness Survey

Several EOWG organizations came together to fund an independent 3rd party market research firm called Amplitude Research to conduct the awareness survey. The contract is currently being finalized.

The firm will look at the original questionnaire that the workgroup developed and evaluate each question individually to ensure there is no bias. The questions are expected to be finalized in the next few weeks and launched by the end of September. The survey audience will be the SaMS project area. Due to financial constraints, the survey will only be conducted in English. The firm plans to launch the survey by the end of September and will run it for 6 weeks to get a minimum of 500 responses, a statistically significant sample size for Northern Virginia. Once complete, the firm will compile and summarize the results. The results are anticipated to be available by the beginning of December.

The survey questions will be reviewed and approved by the subgroup (as agreed to by the EOWG at the meeting) before the final survey is disseminated.

Elements for Developing Future Materials

Four elements for developing future education and outreach materials were proposed. The intent of these elements is to “speak with one voice” by providing a guide for stakeholders to develop messages and materials in line with the [Goals](#) of the SaMS, while also providing the flexibility for organizations to speak directly to their audiences. The four proposed elements include:

- The importance of public safety is not marginalized.
- Pros and cons of winter salt use, when identified, are fairly balanced. Cons associated with salt use are not be presented without also identifying its benefits.

- Frame the message/material in a positive light.
- Include information on ways the targeted audience can make a difference (actionable item), as appropriate.

Due to limited time and to maintain the focus of the meeting on upcoming tasks, DEQ proposed a poll to support the concept of these elements and to solicit feedback and continue development of the elements for the 4th and final EOWG meeting.

POLL – Support the concept of these elements and continue to develop those ([MS PowerPoint](#) slide Nos 17-18). : Green: 9, Yellow: 1, Red: 0

Non-Traditional BMP (NTBMP) Materials

The NTBMP workgroup suggested that the EOWG develop materials to share information that the NTBMP workgroup is developing for residents and commuters. There was some discussion on this before the members took a poll.

POLL – The EOWG does not have sufficient time during SaMS development to give these materials the attention needed to be effective. However, the NTBMP material development was proposed as a recommendation in the final SaMS document ([MS PowerPoint](#) slide No. 19): Green: 10, Yellow: 0, Red: 0.

Meeting Wrap-up:

The 4th and final Education and Outreach Workgroup meeting will be held in February 2020. The meeting was proposed to be 3 hours long to allow sufficient time for discussion and decision-making. A conference call may be held in the interim to ensure final decisions can be made during the final workgroup meeting.

Handouts from the meeting are available on the SaMS Meeting Materials [website](#).

A link to the MS PowerPoint used to guide meeting discussions is available [here](#).

All information, questions, additional resources, etc. should be emailed to Sarah Sivers (sarah.sivers@deq.virginia.gov) and Will Isenberg (william.isenberg@deq.virginia.gov) to reduce email traffic among EOWG members.

Meeting notes were prepared and submitted by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin.

Additional Feedback Contributed to the Follow Up Survey:

A survey was shared with workgroup members following the meeting to capture any additional thoughts members may have had following the meeting. Feedback is arranged below based on the sections of the agenda. Only sections where additional thoughts were provided are included:

Wrapping up Previous Action Items - Pilot Outreach Plan

“For the hashtags, perhaps DEQ could check with DC and Maryland what hashtags and taglines they are using--maybe at the upcoming DE Snow conference? Even though we agreed as a group that the

artwork developed will not be piloted, I still think we could consider working with that artist in the future. The elements should help provide artistic parameters.”

“I was pleased to see that we reached an agreement with regards to the logo, tagline, and messages. I am disappointed to see that the workgroup will not have any outreach materials/mascot to include with the pilot communications plan. It sounds like the other workgroups were hoping to see us release outreach materials and also begin work on outreach materials specific for K-12. I believe we need to shoot for having at least a couple of examples prior to the 4th Outreach Workgroup meeting, but I don't know if we'll be able to reach agreement on the content.”

Wrapping up Previous Action Items - Baseline Awareness Survey

“Thank you to Corey Heidi for their work on the survey!”

Additional Thoughts

“I believe we need to quickly create some outreach materials to go with the Commutations plan. It would be ideal to have the survey results first so that the materials can be tailored to that. If not, we should at least get some products going to show the other workgroups.”