

Salt Management Strategy (SaMS)

4th Education and Outreach Workgroup Meeting

February 25, 2020

The fourth and final meeting for the Education and Outreach Workgroup (EOWG) for the Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) was held from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm on February 25, 2020, at the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) at 3040 Williams Drive, Fairfax, Virginia.

Attendance

Seventeen (17) individuals, including two 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.

Heather Ambrose, Fairfax County
Craig Belanger, Amplitude Research, Inc. ^{i, ii}
Michael Bochynski, Clean Water Action
Heidi Bonnaffon, MWCOGⁱⁱ
Renee Bourassa, ICPRB*
Sandy Burkholder, Arlington Citizen &
Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia
Cathy Cogswell, Loudoun Water
Satoshi Eto, City of Fairfax

Will Isenberg, DEQ*
Jenni McCord, VDOT
Corey Miles, NVRC
Susan Miller, Fairfax Waterⁱ
Lauren Mollerup, VDOT
Merrily Pierce, McLean Citizens Assoc.
Anissa Rafeh, DEQ^{i, ii}
Niffy Saji, Fairfax Waterⁱ
Sarah Sivers, DEQ*

* Facilitator

ⁱ General Public (Non-Member of EOWG)

ⁱⁱ Participated via conference call

Meeting Highlights

At this meeting, the workgroup members received updates on the pilot outreach campaign and the baseline awareness survey. This was followed by a polling process on various recommendations for the final SaMS Toolkit.

Notes for Other Workgroups / Potential Areas of Overlap:

- The Residential BMP Infographic developed by the Non-Traditional BMP Workgroup was approved by the EOWG.

Follow-up Action Items:

- There were no follow-up actions as this was the final meeting.

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 meeting started with a [re-cap of the 3rd EOWG meeting](#) from August 2019, followed by a summary of the recently completed awareness survey and the pilot outreach campaign. This was followed by a discussion and voting on the various workgroup products and recommendations.

Awareness Survey

Craig Belanger of Amplitude Research, Inc. presented the results of the *2019 Northern Virginia Winter Salt Impact Survey*. The survey presents a baseline for the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of Northern Virginia residents concerning salt usage and impacts during a winter ever. The [SaMS Baseline Awareness Survey Summary](#) and the [SaMS Baseline Awareness Survey Data Summary spreadsheet](#) can be found on the SaMS website.

Only people who lived in the Northern Virginia region were included in the survey. The number of survey respondents per area and the ethnicity/race of the respondents are proportional to the population in the targeted area.

The survey can be used as a benchmark to see how the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of area residents change after the implementation of the SaMS Toolkit over the next few years. Among many things, the survey results show people know the least about the impacts of salt use, in particular the impacts to drinking water. Additionally, the survey results show people are open to support reductions in salt use on roads, shopping centers, places of work, other public places, and at home if they knew of the impacts of salt use on drinking water and the environment in addition to being open to reducing or eliminating their travel during winter storms if salt use had to be reduced.

It was noted by a workgroup member that the next iteration of the survey should examine the question regarding application rates of “deicer” and “abrasive for traction” since survey respondents might get the two options conflated. This was based on the possibility that some people may use deicing salt as an abrasive.

The survey was completed by a panel of respondents that Amplitude Research typically uses. The survey was only offered in English.

Pilot Outreach Campaign

The Pilot Outreach Campaign was based on a [plan](#) developed in previous EOWG meetings. The execution of the campaign was split into two sections: (1) a social media/e-newsletter campaign and (2) a community listening session. A [Summary and Outcomes of SaMS Pilot Outreach Campaign](#), including lessons learned, was provided to the workgroup. Both events were judged to be successful based on the metrics gathered.

Social Media/E-Newsletter Campaign

This campaign was conducted in two steps over two weeks: (1) an introduction to SaMS over the week of November 18 through 24, 2019 and (2) an awareness-building campaign of the pros and cons of deicer use over the week of December 9 through 15, 2019. The language for each of these two steps was developed by the EOWG, but organizations could adjust the language to suit their audience.

There were 35 total digital communications that garnered an audience of almost 21,000 impressions. Traffic to the DEQ SaMS website increased by 400-700% during the campaign. Posts by organizations that used their own language in the social media posts were more successful than the posts that used the provided language. Social media posts with the infographic were more successful than posts without an infographic.

Community Listening Session

The listening session was held on December 3, 2019, at the Kings Park Community Library in Burke, Virginia. Twelve members of the EOWG and thirteen members of the public attended the meeting. The first half of the event was information sharing through table displays and a presentation. During the second half of the event, the attendants broke out into smaller discussion groups to discuss messaging and outreach efforts.

Recommendations from the public at the listening session included support for a positive tone in the messaging, encouragement to focus on drinking water impacts and actions that individuals can take to reduce their deicer use, and there was a general willingness to change personal behavior.

There was a survey provided at the event, but no conclusions were drawn due to the small number of completed surveys.

Discussion of Workgroup Products and Recommendations/Final Polling

The workgroup members discussed the products and then took a poll for whether or not to include the products in the final SaMS Toolbox. Since this was the last workgroup meeting, no additional edits will be made to the products before inclusion in the SaMS Toolbox.

Discussions during the polling process are noted in the results below. If there was no discussion on the topic, just the polling results are noted.

DEQ explained the polling process used in the meeting to document workgroup decisions. 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, and therefore in all cases consensus was achieved.

Baseline Awareness Survey

There was a discussion on the recommendations that should be included in the SaMS Toolkit based on the results of the [Baseline Awareness Survey](#). A few notes from the discussion:

- The spreadsheet can be used by organizations to help target the location and message of outreach efforts.
- There was support for highlighting the public's openness to change their behavior and expectations.
- Follow-up surveys could consider additional questions to better target messaging, explore more specific topics, or explore how the season or weather influence answers.
- It is important to implement the SaMS Toolkit before conducting the survey again.
- Wait three winter seasons before conducting the survey again. Since the SaMS Toolkit will not be available until mid-winter 2020/2021, that gives two full winters to implement awareness campaigns before surveying again.
- Workgroup members noted that the new road condition reporting feature by the [Waze app](#) may have an impact on deicer application over this three-year time period as well.

POLL — One poll was taken for the following group of recommendations:

- Include the [SaMS Baseline Awareness Survey Summary](#) and the [SaMS Baseline Awareness Survey Data Summary spreadsheet](#) as appendices.
- Recommendation to reconduct the survey after 3 winter seasons. Before conducting the survey again, the content should be reviewed.
- Recommendation to include the following survey results in the SaMS Toolkit: residents are open to change their practices around their property with more education about the environmental impacts, there is an opportunity to create more public awareness, and people are willing to change their behavior with an improved awareness of the impacts.

Green: 8, Yellow: 0, Red: 0.

Pilot Outreach Campaign

The guide for the pilot outreach campaign was the [SaMS Education and Outreach Final Pilot Outreach Campaign Communications Plan](#). The final document was the [SaMS Education and Outreach Pilot Campaign Summary and Outcomes](#). The SaMS Toolkit will provide a summary of the campaign and the lessons learned from the effort.

POLL: Include the two documents in the SaMS Toolkit as appendices. Include the recommendations and lessons learned in the body of the SaMS Toolkit. Green: 9, Yellow: 0, Red: 0.

Guide for Developing Education and Outreach Materials

The [SaMS Guide for Developing Education and Outreach Materials](#) are the 5 principles developed through the EOWG for consistent, unified SaMS messaging. The workgroup agreed that these 5 principles would make a good tear-away page in the SaMS tool-kit that can stand alone.

Poll: Include the Guide in the SaMS Toolkit. Green: 8, Yellow: 1, Red: 0.

Yellow Card Concern: Five is too many on the list. Three or less is better.

SaMS Messages

The messaging used in the Pilot Outreach Campaign includes the tagline *Winter Salt Smart*, the hashtag #WinterSaltSmart, the [SaMS Awareness Infographic](#), and the [SaMS Awareness 1-page Flyer](#).

The hashtag #learnaboutsalt did not perform well so it was taken out of the materials.

The messaging can be used by SaMS organizations when conducting outreach on salt management.

POLL: Include these messages in the SaMS Toolkit. Green: 10, Yellow: 0, Red: 0.

Mascot / Outreach Ads / Coloring Sheet

POLL: Do not include the mascot and flyers that were previously developed in the SaMS Toolkit. Green: 10, Yellow: 0, Red: 0.

Infographic: Best Management Practices for Residents

The Non-Traditional BMP Workgroup developed the [Residential Best Practices](#) Infographic. The graphic will be included on a future website for organizations to use.

There was concern over the photo used in the graphic since the man's head is not visible and because it was a man. It was noted that the information in the graphic should focus more on the lesser-known aspects of deicer application BMPs.

POLL: Include the Resident BMP Infographic as-is as a resource in the SaMS Toolkit and encourage organizations to provide their own context to the infographic through a caption. For example, that context can include why exercising these practices are important. Green: 10, Yellow: 0, Red: 0.

SaMS Logo and Use Policy

The [SaMS Logo and Use Policy](#) were developed by an EOWG subcommittee. It is a guideline document to ensure the use of the logo is standardized and within the standards of the SaMS process.

The use of the logo would be approved through a communications subcommittee that will be formed at a later date. The governance body of the final SaMS Toolkit will be the one to initiate the subcommittee development. The subcommittee will have oversight of how the logo is used. The guidelines are a starting point, but they can be changed depending on future discussions. The guidelines' intent is to have the SaMS organizations speaking in "one voice" when using the logo.

Workgroup member suggestions for the Policy:

- The version and date of the guidelines should be tracked within the document.
- The asterisk note in the document could be a subheading of *Logo Use*.

Workgroup member suggestions for the communications subcommittee:

- The subcommittee should have people from a variety of organizations (similar to how the SAC is setup).
- One of the first orders of business for the subcommittee is to determine voting rules, which should include considerations for how to deal with no response from voting members.

POLL: Approval of the SaMS Logo and Use Policy with the member suggestions noted above.
Green: 8, Yellow: 1, Red: 0.

Yellow Card Concerns: Version tracking is important.

POLL: Create a communications subcommittee in the next year to implement the recommendations. Green: 7, Yellow: 2, Red: 0.

Yellow Card Concerns: It is unclear who will set up the communication subcommittee and there is concern that it may overlap with many existing governance structures. More information on the process is needed.

Funding Opportunities

A [List of Funding Opportunities Identified for SaMS at Large](#) was developed for an earlier EOWG meeting.

POLL: Include the possible funding opportunities as a resource in the SaMS Toolkit with a note that these are only possible opportunities and that the list is not exhaustive. Green: 8, Yellow: 0, Red: 0

Recommendations for Future Action and/or Conclusions

POLL: A future recommendation to develop an education and outreach program, in collaboration with professional educators, that focuses on grades K-12. Green: 6, Yellow: 1, Red: 0

Yellow Card Concerns: It is unclear what the agency roles would be in this process.

Recommendation to Maintain Education and Outreach Program

POLL: Include a recommendation in the SaMS Toolkit to accelerate and maintain the pace of the current education and outreach program to raise awareness on this topic. Green: 7, Yellow: 1, Red: 0

No additional recommendations were made by the workgroup.

Meeting Wrap-up:

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission will most likely take the leadership role over the SaMS Toolkit implementation once the product has been finalized.

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

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. However, no responses were received following the meeting.