

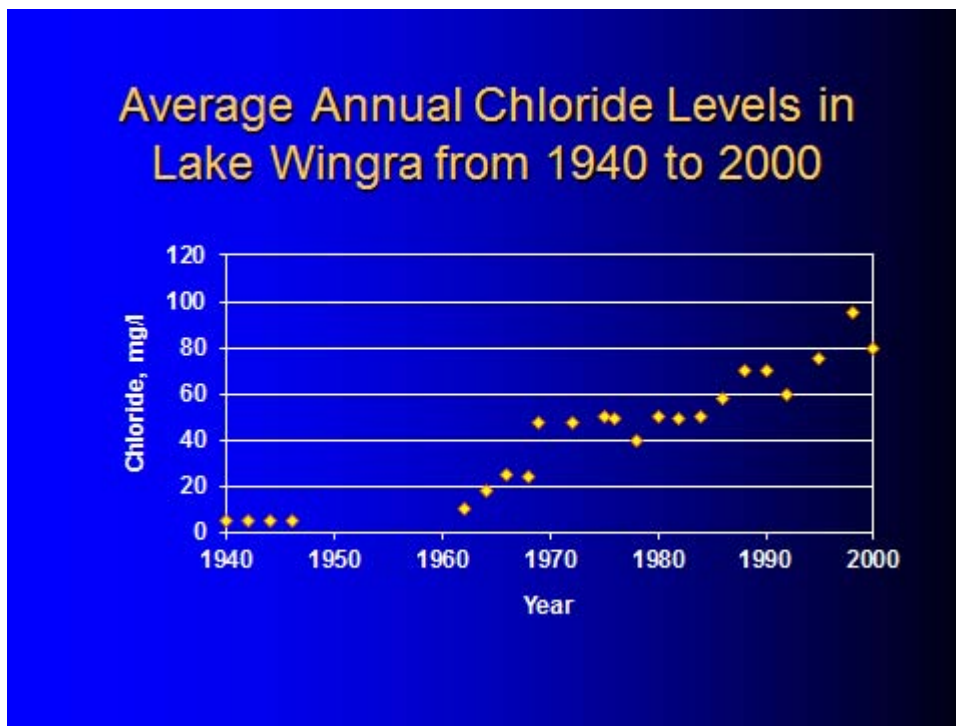
Roger Bannerman
April 28, 2014

Results of Interviews with Property Managers about Salt Use in the Lake Wingra Watershed

People Interviewed

Marge Axelson – West Gate Shopping Center 288-1100
Cory Baldweg – Midtown Construction; 833-2102
Philip Meyer – Fiore Company; 255-5060; Monroe Street mall
Matt McConnell – Oakbrook Corporation; mmcconnell@oakbrookcorp.com; research park

Problem



Since salt use began the concentration of chloride in Lake Wingra has increased from about 10 mg/l to an average of around 100 mg/l. Chloride is a toxic chemical and the concentrations in Lake Wingra could reach toxic levels. The Friends of Lake Wingra is working with the City of Madison and Strand Consulting Firm is exploring ways we can safely reduce the amount of salt used in the watershed. An analysis of salt usage in Madison shows about one half of the road salt is applied by private applicators.

Sources

Private applicators working in commercial/business/institutional/Multi-family residential land uses contribute 50 to 60% of Cl load to Lake Wingra each year – Strand and Associates. To achieve the most effective results, commercial applicators in the Lake Wingra watershed would need to reduce their application rates by at least 50 percent or more, if possible.

Private Applicators Use Almost the Same Amount of Salt on Parking Lots as the City uses on City Streets

Assumptions: 0.14 tons\acre x 3200 acres x 20 events = 9000 tons – Madison COE

Questions

1. What do you know about the impacts of salt use on the environment, including Lake Wingra?
2. Here are some specific questions that would help us understand your policy.
 - a. What kind of arrangement do you have for plowing and salting your parking lots?
 - b. Do you have any specific requirements of the contractor or do they make their own decisions about salting?
 - c. What problems have you seen with your existing arrangement - if any?
 - d. Is your contractor's billing related to how much salt they use?
 - e. Can you see any ways you might reduce you salt use on your parking lots.
 - f. What do you think might be the biggest obstacle to reducing salt use?
3. Would you be willing to attend a meeting with other property managers in the Lake Wingra watershed to discuss possible changes to everyone's salting policies?
4. Would you be willing to work with us and your contractor to discuss ways of safely reducing the salt use on your parking lot? If so, would you mind talking about a schedule?
5. Is there any more information you would like in the near future, such as knowing more about salt use reduction projects to protect local lakes at other commercial property sites?

Answers to Questions

Marge Axelson

Type of Interview: Phone

Answers to Questions: She was very pleasant and shared our concern about limiting the use of salt, but she said liability problems prevented her from answering our questions. She said that answering our questions would imply she is involved in the decision making about when and how much salt to apply to the parking lots she managed. She referred me to her private applicator, who does carry liability insurance. The contractor is Midtown Construction.

Midtown Construction

Type of Interview: Phone

Answer to Questions: A senior person working for Cory Baldweg. He said they really do not have time for meetings.

1. What do you know about the impacts of salt use on the environment, including Lake Wingra?
Answer: He was aware of some impacts, but I told him about some of the things we are learning now.
2. Here are some specific questions that would help us understand your policy.

- a. What kind of arrangement do you have for plowing and salting your parking lots?
Answer: They have contracts with property managers.
 - b. Do you have any specific requirements of the contractor or do they make their own decisions about salting?
Answer: They make their own decisions. Property manager just wants the surfaces to be safe.
 - c. What problems have you seen with your existing arrangement - if any?
 - d. Is your contractor's billing related to how much salt they use?
Answer: NA
 - e. Can you see any ways you might reduce you salt use on your parking lots.
Answer: We use recommended amounts.
 - f. What do you think might be the biggest obstacle to reducing salt use?
Answer: Liability.
- 3. Would you be willing to attend a meeting with other property managers in the Lake Wingra watershed to discuss possible changes to everyone's salting policies?
Answer: Maybe
 - 4. Would you be willing to work with us and your contractor to discuss ways of safely reducing the salt use on your parking lot? If so, would you mind talking about a schedule?
Answer: NA
 - 5. Is there any more information you would like in the near future, such as knowing more about salt use reduction projects to protect local lakes at other commercial property sites?
Answer: NA

Philip Meyer

Type of interview: e-mail

Answer to questions:

- 6. What do you know about the impacts of salt use on the environment, including Lake Wingra?
Answer: Only that salt is not a useful substance for our lake system.
- 7. Here are some specific questions that would help us understand your policy.
 - a. What kind of arrangement do you have for plowing and salting your parking lots?
Answer: This depends on various properties. We are obligated by our insurance companies to reduce / eliminate sources of slips and falls.
 - b. Do you have any specific requirements of the contractor or do they make their own decisions about salting?
Answer: We work with our contractos to provide a safe environment for our tenants and clients at our properties.
 - c. What problems have you seen with your existing arrangement - if any?
Answer: We are not experiencing any issues that I am aware of.
 - d. Is your contractor's billing related to how much salt they use?
Answer: Most of the salting occurs via our staff and tenants so there is not a financial incentive to use high levels of salt.
 - e. Can you see any ways you might reduce you salt use on your parking lots.
Answer: No I do not.

- f. What do you think might be the biggest obstacle to reducing salt use?
Answer: Insurance claims for injuries.
8. Would you be willing to attend a meeting with other property managers in the Lake Wingra watershed to discuss possible changes to everyone's salting policies?
Answer: This would depend on scheduling conflicts.
9. Would you be willing to work with us and your contractor to discuss ways of safely reducing the salt use on your parking lot? If so, would you mind talking about a schedule?
Answer: I don't feel we are over-using salt at this property. Safety is our number one concern so no one is injured while using our properties. We have had multiply complaints from our tenants and clients this year for an increase in salt usage. This winter has been extremely difficult.
10. Is there any more information you would like in the near future, such as knowing more about salt use reduction projects to protect local lakes at other commercial property sites?
Answer: Not at this time. We try to be very aggressive with our salt usage but the underlining factor is we MUST error on pedestrian safety at all times.

Matt McConnell

Type of interview: In person – he was very cooperative and the meeting lasted 2 hours

Answer to Questions:

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Minutes of Lake Wingra Issue Team Meeting – March, 2013 (Strand and Associates)

Barnes, Inc. (Steve ?)

- a. *Anti-icing Pre-application*: He has not traditionally used these, but is looking into its use for private properties.
- b. *Deicing*: He uses 100 percent road/rock salt.
- c. *Road Salt Application Rate*: No rates were mentioned. Steve said lower salt rates are used in later-winter as the sun angle increases.
- d. *Training*: Barnes, Inc. participated in the salt application training that the City of Madison sponsored a few years ago.
- e. *Factors Affecting Salt Usage*: Steve said public education is huge in terms of public acceptance of lowered salt usage. Also, private applicators are in court every year because of slip and fall incidents and thus are reluctant to reduce salt usage. Steve was not aware of an acceptable salt application rate stemming from these lawsuits. Many private applicator contracts are written based on the amount of salt used, which would work against salt reduction efforts.
- f. *Potential Pilot Projects*
 - (1) *Salt Usage Tracking*—Roger asked if there would be resistance from private applicators to have voluntary or required tracking/reporting of application rates and total salt usage each winter. Steve said that Barnes would be willing to participate in this and that Barnes tracks this information already. Barnes does not have a lot of data in the Wingra Watershed. Steve said other applicators would probably be resistant to tracking salt usage because it requires extra effort.
 - (2) *State or County Program*—Similar to the New Hampshire program described above, the state or country could require training of private applicators, which would reduce their liability when implementing a reduced salt application program.

Regulatory and Policy Alternatives— New Hampshire has a private applicator certification that, if trained, the private applicator has some level of protection (reduced liability) against lawsuits stemming from reduced deicing usage.

Steve was asked if it would be helpful to have ordinances limiting the amount of salt applied. He said it would, because in a lawsuit they try and show they were not negligent. Others stated it may be difficult to pass a salt application ordinance in Dane County. Others maintained it was worth pursuing.

Recommendations

1. Arrange a focus group meeting of private contractors and property managers – especially those working in the Wingra watershed. Agenda for meeting would involve developing answers to some of the questions and solicit volunteers to work on demonstration project. Find out if contractors can be change so they do not depend on the amount of salt used.
2. Explore cities interest in developing certification program for private applicators with a focus on education.
3. Present idea of a county ordinance limiting salt use on parking lots to the Lakes and Watershed Commission. An ordinance might reduce liability for the private applicators.
4. Encourage city and county to continue funds for training private applicators. Increase funds first year to train local consulting firm, so we do not have to ask Connie in Minneapolis every year.
5. Initiate salt use study on municipal parking lot. Track effect of different application rates – safety first. Include use of alternative products and methods, such as anti-icing.