

Sauk River Watershed District



Need a Reduced Salt Diet?

The average annual snowfall throughout the area is about 40-45 inches. January has the highest snowfall on average of 11 inches. However, ice and blowing snow make the roads slippery more often than snow. When the roads are slippery salt and sand are used to insure our safety. Yet salt and even sand can hurt our rivers, lakes and streams. Sand can plug culverts and storm drains and can contribute to high suspended solids, making our rivers and lakes murky.

Salt can be much more harmful to fish, wildlife and water quality. Road salt is not the same as your sidewalk deicer. Road salt includes an anti-caking agent that contains cyanide. Bacteria and sunlight breakdown the anti-caking chemicals and release the cyanide. "Cyanide is acutely toxic. It interferes with fish's breathing mechanism", states MPCA toxicologist

Keith Cherryholmes. The fish essentially suffocate and die.

The chloride in road salt is another problem, it can contaminate surface waters. Shingle Creek in Minneapolis is impaired due to chloride. Chloride can dramatically change salinity levels and the chemical composition of the receiving waters. Chloride is toxic to fish if levels of over 230 mg/L are experienced more than one tenth of the fish's life span. Currently there are few streams, rivers or lakes where chloride is tested, but it is becoming increasingly common.

There are alternatives to road salt, such as potassium chloride or calcium magnesium acetate (CMA). However, they all have one drawback or another. Rock salt costs \$30-40/ton and all other alternatives are more expensive. For example, CMA costs \$2,000/ton.

Others, such as potassium chloride, won't work in temperatures below 10-15 F. There is a series of alternatives called "M-50" products becoming more available. These are liquid by products from beer, agricultural and distilled alcohols processing combined with magnesium chloride. Many products are being used more as pre-treatment or anti-icers, rather than just de-icers. Anti-icers are applied before snow or ice accumulations. This requires confidence that there will be an accumulating snow or the entire application is a costly waste.

In addition to finding less harmful alternatives states, such as Massachusetts, have roadways next to sensitive bodies of water designated as low-salt areas and install signs to notify drivers of these areas. While solutions continue to be found, salt will undoubtedly continue to be the standard for keeping winter driving conditions safe for Minnesota travelers.

Sources: www.duluthstreams.org,
www.forester.net,
www.pca.state.mn.us

**Thank You 2004
Volunteers for
all your time,
effort and energy
given to help
water quality!**

Did You Know?

- The SRWD covers portions of Douglas, Pope, Todd, Stearns and Meeker Counties.
- The SRWD has 9 board members representing the 5 counties of the watershed.
- Meetings are held at 7PM at the District office on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of every month.
- The District **monitors** 20 streams and 11 lakes throughout the 1,007 square mile watershed.
- **Services are provided** to residents wishing to volunteer.
- The SRWD has an active education program for **schools**.
- Assistance is available for land use **improvements** that positively affect water quality.

Check out our new website!



We are pleased to announce the launch of our new website!

WWW.SRWD.MN.ORG

The website has important information for you to check out, especially if you are interested in topics such as:

- Information on Volunteering
- Upcoming events
- Monitoring data
- Board meetings/agendas
- Best Management Practices
- Educational programs
- On-going projects

You can download monitoring data and a free statistics program to conduct your own analysis. Permit and cost share funding applications and other forms also can be downloaded.

The site will be continually updated. We welcome your suggestions to make it even more useful.

There's a Treasure Waiting For You!

Upcoming Events

January 27

Erosion, Stormwater and Shoreland Issues for Contractors
Paynesville

February 24

Small City Stormwater and Erosion Control Workshop
Melrose

April 23

Training for Water Quality Monitoring Volunteers
Melrose

May 13

Middle Sauk Water Festival
Sauk Centre

Check out our website for future events on:

Restoring your shoreline

Macro-Invertebrate Stream Sampling
Aquatic Plant ID

Sauk River Watershed District

524 Fourth Street South
Sauk Centre, MN 56378
320-352-2231

Send Comments and Questions to:
info@srwdmn.org

What is: hands-on, educational, attention grabbing and FREE to SRWD watershed schools?

Our Fresh Water Treasure Chests!

In September 2004, we launched a new education program adaptable for kindergarten through 12th grade science curriculums.

We have six individually themed 'treasure chests' that help students learn the importance of our diminishing fresh water resources in the area. This educational tool is available for loan and is free to any school or club within our watershed, thanks to the many project sponsors.



The themes include: Wacky Watersheds; Wonderful Wetlands, Fresh Water Habitat, Incredible Macro-Invertebrates, Water Quality Monitoring, and Pollution Prevention.

These chests are designed to reach students with different learning styles: seeing and hearing, acting and reflecting, reasoning logically and intuitively, as well as, analyzing and visualizing.

This program is designed to get professional quality resources delivered right to schools, free of charge, and available most anytime.

A big thanks to the treasure chest sponsors: the Lake Association of the Sauk River Chain of Lakes, Big Birch Lake, Big Sauk Lake and Osakis Lake; and the Stearns County Local Water Plan for partnering with the Sauk River Watershed District to make this program a huge success.

Contact Amy by phone or send her an email at amy@srwdmn.org for more information or to reserve a Treasure Chest for your school or group.



Sauk River Watershed Groups Receive River Friendly Award

On the evening of August 10, 2004 representatives from five groups throughout the Sauk River Watershed were honored by the Rivers Council of Minnesota by receiving the River Friendly Community Award, sponsored by Wenck Associates.

The award was presented during the Rivers Council's annual RiverNight aboard the Harriet Bishop paddleboat. The Rivers Council of Minnesota recognized the many and diverse cities and organizations that are part of the Sauk River

Watershed Community. Senator Norm Coleman presented an award to each of the those honored representing:

- City of Cold Spring
- City of Melrose
- Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Sauk River Watershed District
- Friends of the Sauk River

Each of these groups were selected because they have "demonstrated dedication to taking on the challenges impacting the health of the Sauk River and a commitment to public and private

partnerships in getting things done" said Bruce Johnson, Executive Director for the Rivers Council of MN. Examples of their combined efforts include:

- Erosion Control and Stormwater Projects
- Comprehensive Water Management planning
- Farmland and feedlot improvements
- Water quality educational programs

Congratulations to all the recipients for helping protect the Sauk River!

