

Salt Management Strategy

Government Coordination Workgroup Meeting

December 3, 2018

The first Government Coordination Workgroup meeting for the Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) was held from 9:30 am – 12:00 pm on December 3, 2018 at the office of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission at 3040 Williams Drive in Fairfax, Virginia.

Attendance

Twenty-two (22) individuals, including three DEQ staff members and one staff person from the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (DEQ's contractual support), participated in the meeting.

Christina Alexander, City of Fairfax
Heidi Bonnaffon, Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments (MWCOG)
Glenda Booth, Friends of Dike Marsh
Renee Bourassa, Interstate Commission on the
Potomac River Basin (ICPRB)*
Joni Calmbacher, City of Alexandria
Mike Collins, Arlington County
Scott Crafton, Virginia Department of
Transportation (VDOT)
Ben Eib, Prince William County[□]
Dave Evans, DEQ*
Norm Goulet, Northern Virginia Regional
Commission (NVRC)
Gabe Guevara, Federal Highway
Administration[†]

Tracey Harmon, Virginia Department of
Transportation (VDOT)
Marty Hurd, Fairfax County
Will Isenberg, DEQ[†]
Pamela Kenel, Loudoun Water
Doah Kwiatkowski, Virginia Department of
Transportation (VDOT)
Mary Mahoney, Virginia Department of Health –
Office of Drinking Water
Ivy Ozman, City of Manassas[□]
Merrily Pierce, McLean Citizens Association
Greg Prelewicz, Fairfax Water
Sarah Sivers, DEQ*
Kevin Utt, City of Fredericksburg

*Facilitator

[†]Participated via teleconference

[□] Non-Members of Government Coordination Workgroup (may subsequently join)

Meeting Highlights

At this meeting, members articulated the desired scope of the workgroup's recommendations, identified government coordination priorities to support the SaMS, and the needs and timing for its second meeting. The main take-aways from this meeting are:

- The level of government coordination is already high before and during storm events. Coordination after winter storm events is an opportunity to discuss how well storm plans, operations, and messaging worked during the storm.
- Public messaging, levels of service, and legal authority needs to support the SaMS are important areas for the Government Coordination workgroup's attention.

- The Government Coordination Workgroup relies on the outputs from the other workgroups, and will not meet next until after the 3rd SAC meeting when preliminary recommendations from other workgroups will be presented/discussed.
- It was recommended that the Government Coordination Workgroup continue to meet after the SaMS development is complete to support and promote implementation.

Notes for Other Workgroups / Potential Areas of Overlap:

- The Government Coordination Workgroup could act as an umbrella group to the other workgroups by assisting in disseminating their products. (All SaMS workgroups)
- Understanding existing monitoring activities and parameters could strengthen coordination among the area's governments. (Monitoring and Research workgroup)
- Consistent, coordinated messages that could work for a variety of situations is needed. This includes setting expectations for what a cleared road looks like. (Education and Outreach and BMP workgroups)
- A toolbox with “pre-storm messaging” (e.g. salt isn’t the answer to all situations) would be helpful. (Education and Outreach workgroup)

Follow-up Action Items:

Workgroup volunteers are pursuing follow-up action items prior to the next meeting of the Government Coordination Workgroup:

- Develop a list of existing communication forums where SaMS information can be shared (Heidi Bonnaffon, MWCOG; Norm Goulet, NVRC).
- Request the other five SaMS workgroups develop a paragraph summary of their workplan to help the Government Coordination Workgroup assess ways support plan development (DEQ workgroup leads)
- SaMS representatives to give an overview of the program at future NVRC sponsored Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) and Chief Administrative Officers meetings (DEQ staff).
- Create a timeline flowchart to help workgroup members better visualize the SaMS process (DEQ staff).
- Provide updated language in the scope for the workgroup regarding the legislative changes that may be needed to implement SaMS efforts (Greg Prelewicz, Fairfax Water).

Meeting Summary

Introductions

The meeting started with brief introductory and opening remarks from DEQ, with a focus on identifying the purpose and scope of the workgroup. The Government Coordination Workgroup’s purpose is to focus its discussions on effective government coordination related to pursuing SaMS goals and objectives.

Participants then introduced themselves and provided their expectations and interests in the Government Coordination Workgroup. Some common themes included initiating government engagement and creating a communication and outreach plan with a common voice.

Membership, Roles and Expectations

DEQ explained the roles and expectations of primary and alternate workgroup members. The roles, expectations, workgroup purpose, and meeting goals can be found on DEQ's [Salt Management Strategy Meeting Materials Webpage](#).

Workgroup Scope

DEQ presented the proposed scope of the Government Coordination Workgroup. This includes folding SaMS into existing government process/operations (including MS4 permits), fostering improved coordination among local governments in Northern Virginia for winter maintenance activities, informing and engaging MWCOG agencies, area governments, and elected leaders in SaMS development, and funding options/sources for implementation. The scope in the meeting materials already included some feedback from Stakeholder Advisory Meeting (SAC) members.

Feedback on the scope from workgroup members included:

- The Government Coordination Workgroup is reliant on the other workgroups output. The majority of the work in this workgroup will take place in the final phases of SaMS, and possibly even after it is finalized.
- The Government Coordination Workgroup could act as an umbrella group to the other workgroups by assisting, disseminating, and advocating for implementation of other workgroups recommendations. This could ensure that the SaMS products do not become “out of date” or irrelevant as soon as they are published.
- VDOT is proactive in planning during and management of winter maintenance activities, and area governments already coordinate well prior to storm events.
- VDOT has an “after action” event to figure out what worked and what did not work during a storm, and local government representatives indicated they also have internal post-storm reviews.
- Each jurisdiction manages winter maintenance activities differently.
- It could be helpful to identify ways to partner to use resources more efficiently (e.g. bulk purchasing to get a better price).
- A variety of shared, consistent public messages could be helpful so that each jurisdiction can decide what works best for them.
- A toolbox with “pre-storm messaging”, (e.g. salt isn't the answer to all situations) would be helpful.
- Sharing best practices for a variety of contract templates (HOA, commercial, etc.) could be helpful.
- It was suggested that the Government Coordination Workgroup develop recommendations on regulatory and/or State or local legislative efforts that could support SaMS implementation efforts since new policies/legislative action could help drive public and private BMP adoption.
- The final SaMS should recommend that the Government Coordination Workgroup continue to meet to further the implementation of the plan. This could ensure that the SaMS products do not become “out of date” or irrelevant after their completion.

It was discussed whether MS4s should be a focus area for Government Coordination workgroup discussions/recommendations, and addressed explicitly in the final SaMS. Several members expressed concern that if MS4s were highlighted it would give the impression that SaMS is regulatory in its focus, which is not accurate. Others perceive that it does not matter if SaMS mentions MS4 since localities

must comply with any applicable Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), regardless of what is mentioned in the document.

DEQ and others shared the perspective that MS4s can use SaMS as a guide/resource and selectively choose from the BMPs it recommends to meet their permit requirements. DEQ noted that the SaMS itself will not be a regulatory document. Ideally, the SaMS will be used proactively in the Northern Virginia region to avoid the need for future Chloride TMDLs. Workgroup members agreed that it was better to leave MS4s out of the final SaMS products and focus on the main two audiences: the public and private entities. It was suggested that DEQ representatives give a presentation at a NVRC sponsored MS4 meeting to help clarify the issue and seek additional input.

Content Development:

The group was tasked with prioritizing several issues related to recommendations for the final SaMS document. An informal poll was held regarding the level of priority the workgroup members would like to ascribe to the various issues in the “Guiding Questions” section of the meeting materials.

Local government coordination and coordination between local governments and state agencies were given the highest priority. Metro Washington regional coordination was given medium/high priority. Although coordination with the federal government was not seen as a high priority, coordination with local federal facilities (e.g. Fort Belvoir and George Washington Parkway) was deemed important.

Workgroup members expressed uncertainty as to what “coordination” means in this context. There is already significant coordination among governments during a storm. A 3:00 am conference call is held to discuss imminent storms (among operations managers, public information officers are not typically on these calls). Operations may also benefit from an “after action” meeting among governments to learn what worked and what did not during a storm. The Government Coordination Workgroup could propose a regional debriefing to see how monitoring, maintenance and messaging worked during a storm event. A structure would need to be put into place for this to happen, and it was suggested that DEQ/SaMS representatives should get on the agenda of an upcoming monthly Chief Administrative Officer’s meeting.

Coordination needs may be better clarified at the next SAC meeting in Spring 2019. Currently, workgroup members believe it is premature to prioritize other issues like winter maintenance planning, training, BMP lessons learned, resource support, etc. The other SaMS workgroups need to flesh out their recommendations before the Government Coordination Workgroup can consider the best ways to support them.

The question was raised regarding the best ways to communicate and seek support for SaMS, and several existing forums were noted where communication materials can be shared (e.g. the Potomac River Basin Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership, MWCOG and NVRC sponsored groups). Heidi Bonnaffon of MWCOG and Norm Goulet of NVRC will work with DEQ to document relevant forums and opportunities for SaMS communication and coordination.

It was asked whether the Government Coordination Workgroup would be transitioning to the steering committee that was mentioned in earlier SAC discussions. DEQ responded that the steering committee is envisioned as a smaller (than SAC), representative group that will assist DEQ to review and refine the draft SaMS. The Government Coordination workgroup would instead focus its attention on ways to

ensure involved government agencies coordinate effectively to support further development and future implementation of the SaMS.

Current challenges to government coordination noted by the group include inconsistent messaging among politicians, governments, and organizations. The message should be consistent to all groups so that they can pass on a consistent message to the general public.

Opportunities for government coordination include creating consistent messaging, identifying best management practices, and creating a process for a post-storm debriefing among governments. Several members suggested it would be highly valuable to develop and communicate a commonly held definition/expectation of what a “Clear Road” is, with consistent levels of service goals.

Additional Workgroup notes:

- MWCOG already coordinates with the local federal facilities.
- The SaMS expectations of snow management should focus on Northern Virginia. While information sharing with neighboring jurisdictions (MD and DC) is worthwhile, they have their own salt management efforts underway.
- Many snow-removal professionals attend regional conferences regarding snow management. It was noted that it would be good for a future conference to be held in the Northern Virginia area.
- VDOT has joined an organization called [Clear Roads](#) that shares research for winter highway maintenance and commended their products and information to others.
- A consistent public messaging platform could be used to coordinate among governments.
- A presentation on current messaging would be helpful to address any possible gaps.
- It is important to maintain an emphasis on water quality throughout the SaMS process.
- A web portal for shared resources would be useful. DEQ noted that, ideally, the DEQ SaMS website would transition to a SaMS-specific site administered by another organization. NVRC may be willing to host the website.
- A timeline flowchart may be helpful for the SaMS workgroups to get a better idea of how the SaMS process will move forward.
- If the other workgroups could develop a paragraph of their workplan, it would help the Government Coordination Workgroup assess the best way to coordinate.
- Once the other workgroups provide input, the Government Coordination Workgroup could subdivide the coordination work since it will be a lot of work in a limited timeframe.
- Once the SaMS product is in the final editing phases, it may be helpful to get other states' and organizations' input.

Meeting Wrap-up:

The Government Coordination Workgroup members agreed that it would be most efficient to hold the next Government Coordination Workgroup meeting after the third SAC Meeting (Spring 2019). There will be a total of at least three Government Coordination Workgroup meetings held during the SaMS development, if more is needed, we will determine that later in the workgroup process.

The workgroup decided that a 10:00 am to 12:30 pm meeting would work best due to traffic issues.

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

All information, questions, additional resources, etc. should be emailed to Dave Evans (david.evans@deq.virginia.gov) and Sarah Sivers (sarah.sivers@deq.virginia.gov). DEQ will consolidate information received and distribute it to workgroup members as needed.

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

Additional Feedback Contributed to the Follow Up Survey:

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

Purpose and Scope

"I agree that this workgroup should not get into the "weeds" that other workgroups are focusing on, but I do believe that a proper purpose of this workgroup is to coordinate information/tool/resource sharing among the various governmental partners (the web portal/clearinghouse idea). I also sense that WashCOG would probably be the most appropriate host for such a portal."

Next Steps

"No - I agree that it would be most helpful for our efficient use of time to wait until after the next SAC meeting to meet again, when we are likely to have a list of more specific recommendations to discuss."