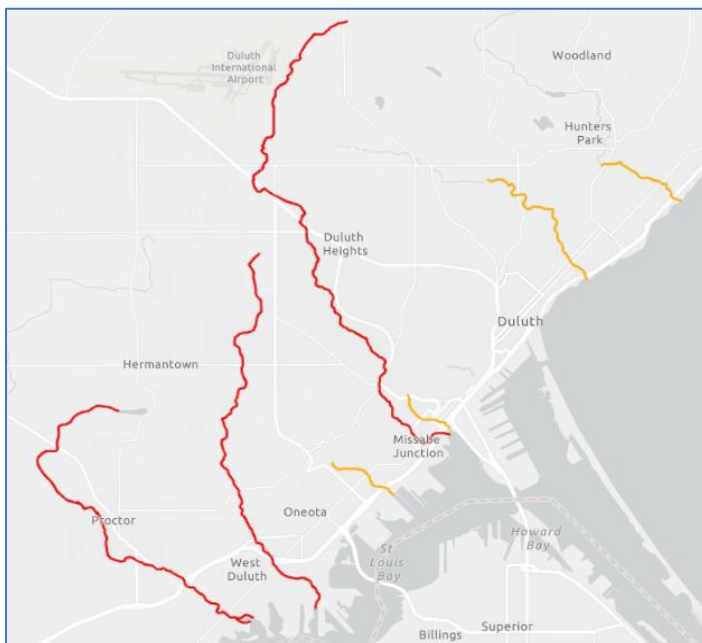
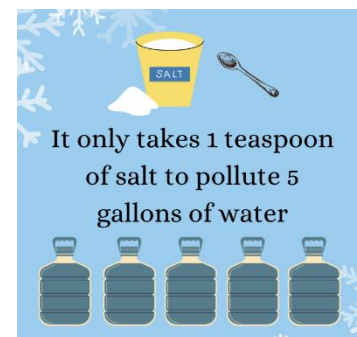




***Please support passage of a bill to establish limited liability protection for certified salt applicators***

Across the United States, starting in the 1940's, salt was adopted as a tool to improve winter driving conditions on state highways, county and township roads, and city streets. Soon residential and business property owners were applying salt to parking lots, driveways, and sidewalks, too. Year after year, these salts have washed off these hard surfaces and entered our lakes, streams, and groundwater. While protecting public safety is important, it is also necessary to protect our infrastructure from corrosion and our environment from pollution. Once in our water, there is no cost-effective way to remove it.

As salts accumulate in the environment, more and more water bodies exceed water quality standards for chloride. (Just one teaspoon of salt will pollute five gallons of freshwater at levels that are harmful to many aquatic organisms. **The number of chloride impairments in Minnesota has been increasing.** As of January 2024, we have reached [67 impairments](#). Although these are mostly concentrated in the metro area, they are appearing elsewhere (see the [Chloride Condition Map](#).)



In Duluth, Kingsbury, Keene, and Miller Creeks are already impaired because their chloride levels are too high. Merritt, Coffee, Chester, and Tischer Creeks are listed as “high risk” for a chloride impairment – and Tischer Creek was just nominated to become impaired. Just as concerning: only 3 Duluth streams meet standards and 34 Duluth streams are not monitored for chloride, so we don't know how many other salty streams we have. Our City's economy is heavily dependent on tourist dollars that are stimulated by our freshwater resources. We need to take more action to stop the build-up of excess salt now. **We believe it is possible to use salt wisely, balancing safety and the environment!**

**Minnesota has already taken steps to become a leader in salt management.** Our state has:

- ❖ written a [MN Statewide Chloride Management Plan](#)
- ❖ developed salt management guidance in [The Minnesota Stormwater Manual, Ch. 9](#)
- ❖ created a certified salt applicator program to provide [Smart Salting Training](#) on best management practices about using the right product at the right time in the right place
- ❖ adopted [calibration and brining practices](#) for the snow & ice fleets of road authorities
- ❖ led [Local Road Research Board](#) experimentation about chloride alternatives and provided guidance on snow and ice control strategies

**But this is not enough!** The practitioners that have taken advantage of these tools to make improvements are primarily those entities that *must* do so as a requirement of their municipal separate storm water permits. That leaves two big gaps: property owners and commercial applicators. Local units of government certainly can do more to adequately fund their snow management fleets, develop ordinances to better manage snow storage sites, and educate their citizens. But we also need a legal incentive for commercial applicators to become certified smart salters and follow these same [practices](#) for their customers.



### ***What do we need from the legislature?***

Two sets of related bills have been introduced this session: [HF820/SF755](#) and [HF3565/SF3954](#). These bills would limit the liability of certified commercial applicators from slip/trip/fall lawsuits if they get trained, retain a current certification status, keep records of the best management practices they use, and report the amounts and types of deicers they use each year. We believe that giving limited liability protection to service providers meeting these criteria is an appropriate next step to protect public safety and our built and natural environments.

**Want to learn more?** [Watch and listen](#) to what New Hampshire Environmental Services staff had to say about their GreenSnowPro program at a recent joint session of the LWV of Duluth and the McCabe Chapter of the Izaak Walton League. Their program, [promoted](#) by a member of the New Hampshire Association of Insurance Agents, is based on their Liability Limited for Winter Maintenance law ([RSA 508:22](#).) a Voluntary Certified Applicator Program law ([RSA 489-C](#).) and administrative rules ([Env-Wq 2200](#).)

***Thank you for your efforts to keep our freshwater fresh!***