



SAVE OUR STREAMS

IZAACK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

SUCCESS STORIES



SUCCESS STORIES

Changing Road Salt Use in Minnesota

Some groups can make a big difference without monitoring their waterways first. The citizen group Stop Over Salting started when the Minnesota Master Water Steward Program held a class on road salt. “When we heard about salt and the damage that it did, we started thinking about all the salt that would be put down the next winter, and we couldn’t live with ourselves.” The new group started meeting with local officials in Edina, MN to express their concerns. The city started a workgroup that advocated for changes in salt use at the city and county level, as well as with private applicators and property managers. They listened to stakeholders and discovered the challenges to salt reduction, and how ingrained salt usage is not only in the minds of the public, but in the minds of the applicators and property managers.

Stop Over Salting noticed a recurring fear of liability among road salt applicators. “Limited Liability” legislation, designed to protect applicators and building managers from slip-and-fall lawsuits, had periodically been introduced in Minnesota’s legislature. Stop Over Salting advocated for passage of this legislation for two years. Although it did not pass, their advocacy started a dialogue with officials in many cities and counties and raised public awareness about the impacts of road salt across the state. Today, they are working with these cities on ordinances for improved salt storage, clean up, and contracting with companies that use best management practices for snow and ice maintenance.



SUCCESS STORIES

Making Change for Bear Trap Creek

After years of SOS biological monitoring, the Central New York Chapter of the Izaak Walton League noticed a sudden drop of stream health scores in Bear Trap Creek. County officials were informed of the change, and it was determined to have been from de-icing chemicals from Hancock Airport. The airport was then mandated to install a multi-million dollar runoff filtration system. Beartrap Creek has since improved!

Finding Jordan's Branch Pollution Problem

Monitors in Henrico County, VA discovered troubling levels of E. coli bacteria at their stream site. They and their partners at the local Soil and Water Conservation District contacted the Public Works Department and Public Utilities to see if there were any broken sewer lines upstream. None were found, and the PWD suggested that the bacteria were coming from geese and other wildlife.

The next spring, the monitors once again discovered high levels of bacteria. They contacted the local government departments a second time, and this time PWD tracked the pollution source to a local pet daycare center that was improperly disposing of pet waste. The public utilities worked with the kennel management to educate employees and establish safe waste disposal techniques to eliminate this clean water threat.



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Protecting Aquatic Life in Quarter Section Run

Officials in Pam Wolter's city of Denver, Iowa hired a contractor to apply pesticide to trees in a city park and prevent the spread of the emerald ash borer. Some of these trees were growing very close to the bank of a local creek named Quarter Section Run. Pam was worried that pesticide being applied so close to the stream might make its way into Quarter Section Run.

Pam is a certified SOS monitor and previously participated in a state volunteer monitoring program, IOWATER. Looking at past IOWATER data, she found that there were once healthy populations of aquatic macroinvertebrates in that part of Quarter Section Run. She wanted to see if the population had changed, so she monitored Quarter Section Run for macroinvertebrates within and upstream of the park in 2019 and 2020. She found plenty of macroinvertebrates upstream of the park, but almost none in the park - indicating that the pesticides in the park were hurting the aquatic macroinvertebrates.

Pam created an educational report of her findings and gave a presentation to the city administrator, mayor, and city council. After educating them and sharing her data, Pam swayed the council to vote to stop the application of pesticides on those trees in the future in order to protect the aquatic life in Quarter Section Run!



SUCCESS STORIES

Making Change with Bacteria Monitoring

Members of the Austin, Minnesota chapter of the Izaak Walton League were concerned about the presence of harmful bacteria in their local streams. They developed a bacteria monitoring project in the headwaters of the nearby Cedar River. They found high levels of *E. coli*, indicating that fecal matter was present in the water, though they didn't know what the source was. With support from a grant, water samples were collected and sent to a lab, and tests showed that the bacteria was coming from human waste in faulty septic systems. Through further monitoring, they were able to pinpoint problem areas in the county that were in need of septic system upgrades.

The Austin Chapter then began a campaign to engage county officials on this issue. Utilizing their data, they pushed for a change in Mower County's septic system ordinance to require upgrades to failing and outdated septic systems. Now, backed by the data they have collected and a new partnership with the county, they have begun the process of seeking and allocating funds to assist landowners and homeowners with upgrades to their septic systems.





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