

Adirondack Almanack  
April 28, 2010

BLOG ENTRY

## Conference on Winter Road Maintenance Set for May 17th

AdkAction.org and the Adirondack Council will sponsor an inter-organizational meeting at Paul Smith's College at 10 a.m. on May 17th to discuss ways to solve the growing problem of winter road salt damage in the Adirondack Park.

Two recent studies, *Review of Effects and Costs of Road De-icing with Recommendations for Winter Road Management in the Adirondack Park* [more], and *Low Sodium Diet, Curbing New York's Appetite for Damaging Road Salt* [more], that were underwritten by the conference sponsors document the damage done by our current winter road maintenance procedures.

The latest study by the Adirondack Watershed Institute under sponsorship of AdkAction.org compares peer-reviewed literature from around the world and reports specific cost and damage assessments, along with recommended changes in practices that could dramatically reduce the environmental impact of winter road treatment without increasing costs or reducing safety.

Dan Kelting, Executive Director of AWI and primary author of the latest study, will summarize the key findings and issues as an introduction at the May 17 meeting. A pdf summary of the findings of that study can be found [here](#) ). A pdf of the Adirondack Council's Low Salt Diet study is on their website.

The May 17th meeting is expected to put the recent data and recommendations into the hands of the state and local officials who handle the day-to-day decisions for road maintenance in the Adirondacks. Representatives from local, county and state government, including NYSDEC and NYSDOT, as well as environmental and landowner associations will attend.

This initial, formative meeting will not address specifics such as techniques and practices identified in the two studies as possible fixes for overuse of road salt. Rather, the goal of this formative meeting will be to see if an inter-organizational task force can be assembled to tackle such specifics in subsequent meetings. Participants also will attempt to determine the best lead organization to assume responsibility for future of the task force and further its mission.

The evidence suggests that salt damage in the Adirondack Park could be reduced by 50% or more with changed practices, at no increase in long-term cost or reduction in safety, according to Lee Keet, chair of the AdkAction.org water quality committee. Some of the advanced technologies implemented in other parts of the county to reduce the amount of salt necessary to clear roads have paid for themselves in the first year of use, he said.

Seating for the conference is limited. Invitations have been sent to all of the responsible state agencies, advocacy groups, lake associations, and other qualified participants. Anyone who has not received an invitation is welcome to request one by emailing Keet at [Lee@AdkAction.org](mailto:Lee@AdkAction.org)