



# **Ecosystem Hypertension Prevention**

## **Getting Our Rivers off Salt**



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## Policy

- Road salts were added to the Priority Substance List of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA) in 1995
- Five-year assessment process reviewed the environmental impacts of road salts
- The Priority Substance List Assessment Report for Road Salts was released in 2001





## The Canadian Context

- 5 million tonnes of road salts used in Canada annually
- City of Toronto uses ~ 130,000 tonnes annually, although it has reached >200,000 tonnes





## Assessment Report Findings

- Surface Water
- Groundwater
- Vegetation
- Wildlife





## Final Assessment

"Based on the available data, it is considered that road salts are entering the environment in a quantity or concentration or under conditions that have or may have an immediate or long-term harmful effect on the environment or its biological diversity, and that constitute or may constitute a danger to the environment on which life depends. Therefore, it is proposed that road salts be considered "toxic" under Section 64 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999."





## Managing Road Salts

- **Code of Practice** for the Environmental Management of Road Salts
  - Applies to road authorities:
    - Using >500 tonnes of road salts and/or
    - Apply road salts in vulnerable areas
  - Guides road authorities in the development of SMP consisting of best practices for:
    - Salt storage
    - Salt application
    - Snow disposal



## Managing Road Salts

- **Best Practices Guidance Document** for the use of road salts on parking lots and private properties.
  - Draft document just issued for review.
  - Final: spring/summer 2004?





## RiverSides Low Salt Diet

- Participation on Environment Canada's multi-stakeholder working group on road salts
- Chloride monitoring with the City of Toronto in 2000/01
- Municipal Low Salt Diet (MLSD)
- Participation on EC's working group on parking lots and private properties



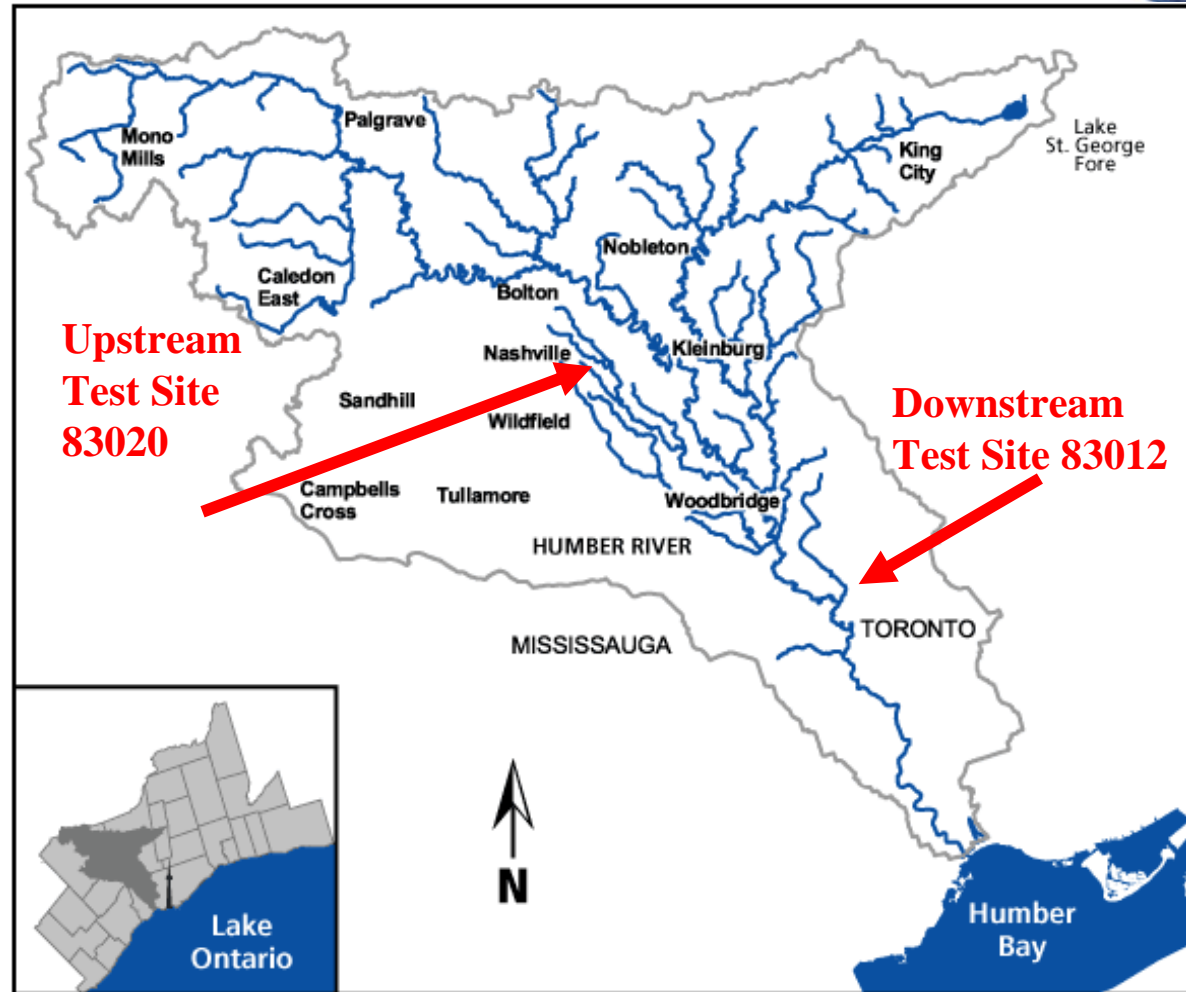
## Chloride monitoring 2000/01

Site 83020 Jan.23, 2001

– Cl Levels 50mg/L

Site 83012 Jan. 23, 2001

– Cl Levels 1147 mg/L





## Municipal Low Salt Diet

- Working with owners/operators of parking lots and private properties in the GTA to demonstrate how salt impacts the environment and how to manage its use.
- Stakeholders include:
  - Building Owners & Manager's Association (BOMA)
  - Toronto Transit Commission
  - Go Transit
  - Toronto Parking Authority
  - York University and University of Toronto





## Municipal Low Salt Diet

- Hosted 2 stakeholder workshops in January and February 2003
  - Reviewed current practices
  - Identified challenges
  - Proposed demonstration sites





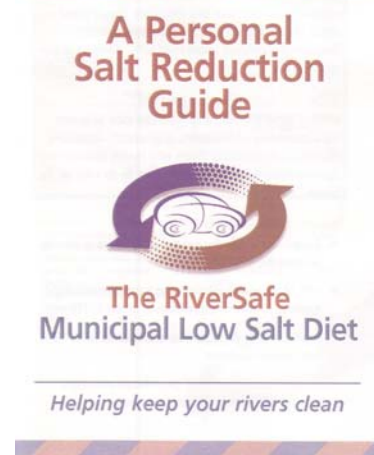
## MLSD Success Stories

- Pilot projects to demonstrate BMPs and alternative products use:
  - University of Toronto: improving salt storage facilities
  - York University: use of sodium acetate on parking structures



## Municipal Low Salt Diet

- Public education (lot/property user) education on road salt impacts and BMPs
  - Brochures
  - Parking lot kiosks
  - Signage



# Municipal Low Salt Diet

- Chloride monitoring
  - Stream and sewer flows
  - Runoff sampling





## RiverSides Low Salt Diet

- Participation on EC's working group on parking lots and private properties
- Upcoming initiatives:
  - Community-based chloride monitoring
  - Public education campaign with the City of Toronto





## Challenges

- Opposition from salt industry
- Freshwater protection community uninformed/uninvolved in chloride pollution prevention
- Lack of knowledge within the foundation/funding community





## Opportunities

- Working with the alternatives industry
- Building a source water protection constituency around the issue
- Educating funders
- Connection to Smart Growth
- Still time to make a difference!





# RiverSides Stewardship Alliance

## Other RiverSides P2 initiatives

- Five Things You Can Do For the Don
- H2infO Water Info Network
- RiverSafe Carwash Campaign
- RiverSides RainBarrel
- What's in Your Sewers
- Water In the City Walks

[www.riversides.org](http://www.riversides.org)

