

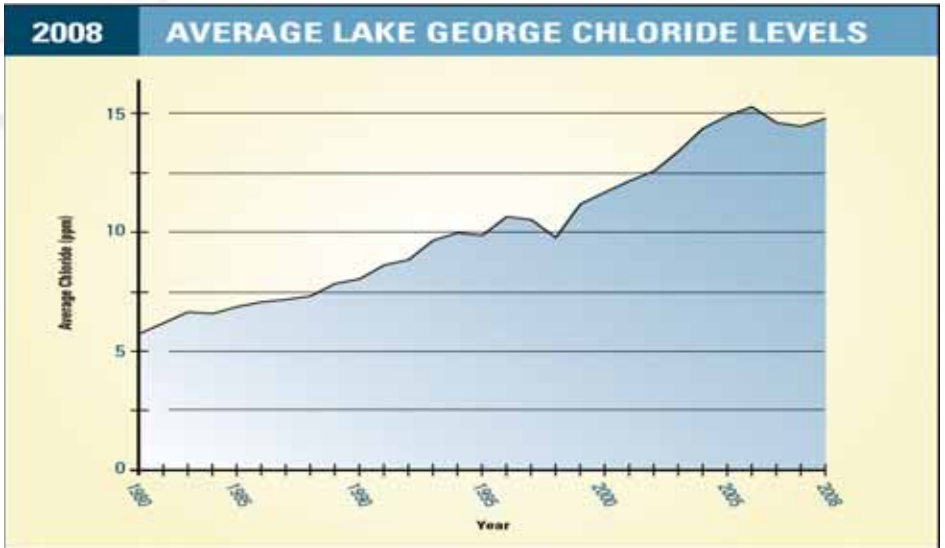
SALT LEVELS HAVE NEARLY TRIPLED IN LAKE GEORGE SINCE 1980

Salt levels in Lake George have nearly tripled over the past 30 years. As the chart on the right shows, there has been a dramatic and steady rise in salt concentrations throughout Lake George. This trend mirrors many other parts of the U.S. Highest levels occur during the annual ice-out and snowmelt where high salt concentrations in streams flowing into Lake George have been linked to die offs of fish and stream organisms, what is known as a "spring shock."

The current high salt levels pose a long-term major environmental threat and public health hazard as this trend shows no sign of abating. It is foreseeable that levels could reach the point where salt concentrations stress Lake George aquatic habitat and water quality, negatively impact fish populations, and becomes a public health concern for those who drink water from the lake.

The chief cause of the rising salt

SALT POLLUTION



The salt concentration in Lake George has nearly tripled over the past 30 years. If current trends continue, high salt levels will be a major threat.

levels in Lake George is salt use during winter months as a road de-icer. Most road salt is derived from sodium chloride. There is no natural ecological process whereby chlorides are broken down, somehow metabolized, or taken up in high volumes by plants, like some nutrients. Salt is conserved in the lake and stockpiled. Because of this, the salt concentration level in Lake George is expected to continue to rise. The south basin of Lake George, the area below Tea Island, contains the highest levels and areas in the north contain lower levels. This is attributable to higher levels of stormwater runoff

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Salt Pollution

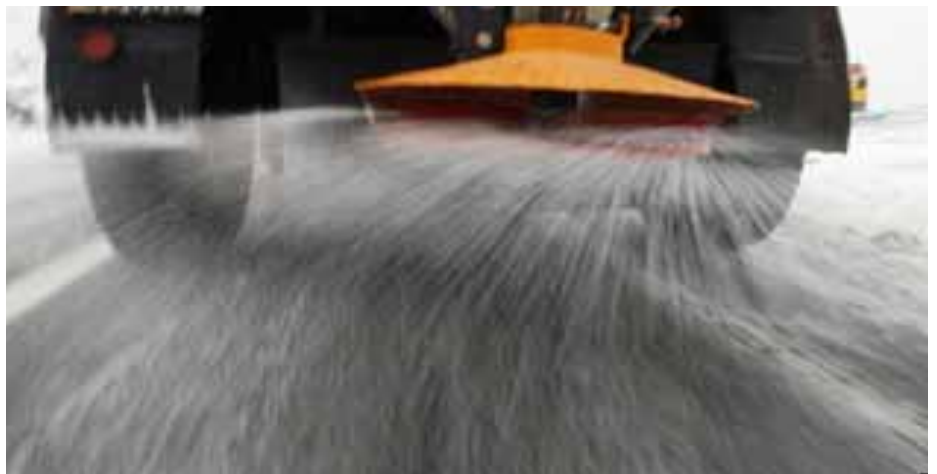
LAKE GEORGE FACT SHEET

from the more urbanized south basin of Lake George. Heavy salt use on roads for de-icing varies little throughout the Lake George watershed.

Bare roads policy: Currently, the State of New York operates a “bare roads” policy that has been adopted by county and town highway departments. This policy utilizes a mixture of salt and sand and is very effective at maintaining safe, dry roads through the winter that allows for regular, high-speed travel. Salt is extremely effective because it is highly water soluble and washes away after application into streams, soils, and groundwater, eventually reaching Lake George. While excellent for road management, continued reliance on heavy salt use will create a significant ecological problem for Lake George.

Another impact of salt is found along roadsides where native vegetation is stressed and it is believed that high salt levels have weakened native plants, making areas more susceptible to invasive nuisance species, like Japanese knotweed and Garlic mustard, among others.

Look ahead: Reversing the problem involves minimizing both



The State of New York employs a “bare roads” policy, which requires a mixture of sand and salt for ice and snow removal during winter.

new road construction and our dependence on salt-based deicers. The science is clear that road salt is a freshwater contaminant. Unfortunately, it is both cheap and unregulated. More thought needs to be given to the quantity of salt applied, the ecological costs of road salt pollution, and available alternatives, such as potassium acetate and urea, or other heavy calcium-based substitutes. As well as winter highway regulations that enforce slower driving speeds.

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