



# Crow Wing County Water Plan News

Volume 5, Issue 2

Spring Edition

April 8, 2014

To Protect, Preserve, & Improve Water Resources in Crow Wing County

## Crow Wing County Water Plan, Next Step: Marketing!

by Mitch Brinks

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After adopting the 2013-2023 Water Plan last summer, Crow Wing County recently unveiled the first of many plans to effectively communicate the new Water Plan in an understandable format. Crow Wing County worked with a local graphic design company to develop a number of simple, visually appealing print media products that use maps, photos, and info-graphics to convey the key components of the Water Plan.

### Water Plan Poster

The first product developed was a large format (34" x 44") full color poster that walks viewers through the County's first-of-its-kind watershed protection approach, showcases a sample watershed, discusses ways to manage risks, and then provides landowners with ways that they can help protect our water resources. Two of the sections were also converted to 11" x 17" standalone handouts, which can be downloaded (along with the poster) from the website link at the bottom of this page. The poster is also on display outside the Customer Service entry of the Land Services Building (322 Laurel Street, Brainerd).

### 4 Simple Steps to Protect Lake Water Quality

In addition to the poster, Crow Wing County wanted a smaller version that could be used as an informational handout. In deciding what content to select, County staff identified four simple things that riparian landowners can do to make a difference for their lake. Flip the page to see this handout, which can also be downloaded from the Crow Wing County website at the link below. This handout was featured on the front

page of the Brainerd Dispatch's website on March 12:

<http://brainerddispatch.com/news/2014-03-12/four-simple-steps-protect-lake-water-quality>



### Future Plans

Depending on grant fund availability, the County has future plans to update the *Landowners Guide to Lake Stewardship* booklet, which has been handed out since 2008. If a grant could be secured, the Land Services Department also hopes to send out a mailer with this information to all riparian landowners in Crow Wing County. In addition, smaller 4" x 9" rack cards would potentially be developed with hopes to expand the reach of the Water Plan to folks who attend local events and visit local businesses / establishments.

### Water Protection Report

The Land Services Department also recently released its 2013 Water Protection Report. This annual report details County actions to address the priority concerns identified in the County's Water Plan including aquatic invasive species as well as surface and ground water protection. The report can also be viewed online at the link below.

Crow Wing County

Local Comprehensive Water Plan



2013 - 2023



The New 2013—2023 Crow Wing Water Plan is available to view online at:

[www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?nid=241](http://www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?nid=241)



To view and/or print the above factsheet, Water Plan poster, or other related information, please visit: [www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?nid=241](http://www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?nid=241)

## CROW WING COUNTY 2013-2023 WATER PLAN

A Watershed Protection Approach to Local Water Management



LAND SERVICES DEPT.

# Make a difference for your lake

## 4 Simple Things you can do

- 1 Manage runoff from impervious surfaces**  
 Impervious surfaces are anything that prevents water from soaking into the soil. Since most of the unwanted sediment, nutrients, and contaminants is found in the first 1" of runoff from impervious surfaces, simply landscaping your property to direct this first flush of stormwater to rain gardens, berms, or natural depressions will make a huge difference for the water quality of our surface waters.
- 2 Preserve vegetated shorelines and slopes**  
 Not only do vegetated slopes and shoreline buffers prevent erosion from runoff and wave action, they also add value for fish and wildlife. Buffers can be as simple as a no-mow/maintenance buffer or planted with native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees from a local vendor or the Crow Wing Soil & Water Conservation District.
- 3 Maintain your septic system**  
 Routine maintenance for a septic system can not only protect our groundwater, but it can also extend the life of the system. Crow Wing County recommends having your septic tank pumped every three years and inspected periodically to ensure that it is functioning as designed.
- 4 Prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS)**  
 Making sure your boat, motor, and trailer is clean of all aquatic plants and zebra mussels before you enter and exit public waters will help prevent the spread of AIS. Boats and tanks, including livewells, should be drained and plugs left out during transport. Live bait cannot be released back into any waterbody.



More information can be found online at [www.crowwing.us](http://www.crowwing.us)  
 (Go to the Land Services Department, then to Environmental Services, then to Water & Wetlands)

To view and/or print the above factsheet, Water Plan poster, or other related products, please visit:

[www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?nid=241](http://www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?nid=241)

## Crow Wing County News

### **City of Crosslake Adopts Land Use Ordinance Revisions**

The Crosslake City Council approved revisions to the Land Use Ordinance and Zoning Map at the regularly scheduled meeting on March 10, 2014. The ordinance revision was a collaboration between the City of Crosslake and Crow Wing County. Below is a summary of the changes to the ordinance and map:

- 197 fewer pages than previous ordinance, with improved organization and accessibility
- Reduced zoning districts from 16 to 7
- Stormwater management required on all permits for lake lots where impervious surfaces exceed 15%
- Shoreline buffers required on all permits for lake lots where impervious surfaces exceed 20%
- 120 sq. ft. water-oriented accessory structure (shed) allowed by shoreline (must be 20' from lake)

The ordinance mirrors key provisions of the County Ordinance, which was overhauled in 2011. Included in the slimmed down version of the Ordinance are a set of performance standards for lake lots that need to be adhered to as a condition for receiving land use permits from the City. These site-based performance standards apply practical approaches based on the actual characteristics of a property. The standards are designed to achieve measurable results in achieving the goal of keeping our lakes healthy. Rather than a one size fits all approach to land use, site specific performance standards such as stormwater management, vegetated buffers and septic system maintenance are part of the ordinance requirements.

## Upcoming Events

### **3rd Annual CWC Lake Association Open House: Friday May 9, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM in Brainerd**

The annual Crow Wing County Lake Association/LID open house is set for Friday, May 9th in the lower level meeting rooms of the Crow Wing County Land Services Building (322 Laurel St., Brainerd—same location as the past few years). Representatives will be on hand from Crow Wing County, DNR, et. al. We plan to give associations a DVD video summarizing changes to the Crow Wing County and Crosslake Land Use Ordinance. Dan Swanson (DNR) will be there to discuss AIS from 10 to noon. We will also have a CD of information (lake assessments, maps, videos, factsheets, etc.) for each lake association as well as copies of our new factsheet *Make a Difference for Your Lake: Four Things You Can Do* (see previous page).

### **The State of Water Conference, May 1-2 @ Cragun's Resort**

Minnesota and water: two words synonymous to Minnesotans. But people are the third critical leg of this triangle. We all depend on -- and impact -- water through decisions we make every day. This conference is an opportunity for citizens to come together and learn and share what we know so we can all be better stewards of our water resources. Who is this conference for? Lake association members, lake and riverfront property owners, local leaders, and all concerned citizens. How will this conference benefit me? \*Select from over 70 presenters and 35 breakout session topics \*Go in-depth with a half-day workshop (4 to choose from) \*Hear the latest news about water issues from 4 plenary speakers \*See new products and services offered by 40+ expected exhibitors \*Connect with lake associations, watershed districts, citizen groups, state agencies, non-profit organizations, universities, and colleges. For more info: [www.conservationminnesota.org/state-of-water-conference/](http://www.conservationminnesota.org/state-of-water-conference/)

### **Ice Out Dates Needed**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is asking citizens to document lake ice-off dates, or the date when ice is essentially gone from a lake. The MPCA collects both lake ice-on and ice-off data and makes it available for use by researchers and the State Climatology Office. Citizen observers make it possible to maintain records of ice data across the state on vast numbers of lakes. If there is some ice pushed up on shore, but the water is ice-free, the ice is considered to be out. Normally, lakes do not refreeze in the spring once the ice has gone, but if ice does form again after the majority of it has melted, record both dates of ice-on and ice-off for the spring. The most important thing is for the observer to document their own perception of ice-off for the lake in question. For one observer, that might mean the ability to navigate a boat from one point to another; for another, it might mean that a lake is ice-free as far as they can see from their house. It is, however, critical for each observer to use consistent criteria from year to year. To submit information about ice-out dates on a lake near you, send an email to [ice.pca@state.mn.us](mailto:ice.pca@state.mn.us)

**Citizens are encouraged to contact the Environmental Services Office at (218) 824-1125 or [environmental.services@crowwing.us](mailto:environmental.services@crowwing.us) to discuss water planning efforts.**

**Crow Wing County information and resources can be found at: [www.crowwing.us](http://www.crowwing.us)**



## **Grants—Available to Landowners**

### **Forestry Grants**

An opportunity is available for landowners in Crow Wing County with forested parcels greater than 20 acres in size to receive cost-share funds to write forest stewardship plans and implement forestry practices in order to protect lakes with populations of Tulibee, which is a type of whitefish also known as Cisco. Good forest management can protect these lakes and the quality of these important fisheries for generations to come. Target lakesheds include: Bertha, Big Trout, Borden, Cedar, Clear, Crooked, Island/Loon, Kenney, Kimball, Long/Tame Fish, Lower Hay, Ossawinnamakee, Pelican, Pig, Portage, Round, Roosevelt, Star, and Whitefish. Cost-share funding is available to cover up to 50% of the cost of forest management practices for each landowner who has a current forest stewardship plan for his or her property. Examples of eligible practices include tree planting, selected harvest, and wildlife openings. For landowners without forest stewardship plans, funds are available to receive a plan at a flat rate of \$200. Interested landowners should contact Darren Mayers, District Technician with the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District, at 218-828-6197.

### **Conservation Easement Grant: Wild Rice Lakes**

Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District has funds available for private landowners who own land adjacent to Shallow Wild Rice Lakes. Funding is available to enroll private land into voluntary land preservation agreements called conservation easements. Conservation easements protect land from future development while keeping land in private ownership and on the local tax rolls. Landowners can be paid up to 60% of the estimated market value of the tract for enrolling into the program. Wild Rice provides great habitat for ducks and birds and also is the Minnesota State Grain. The following Crow Wing County lakes are eligible : Arrowhead, Dahler, Dog, Garden, Goggle, Hole-in-the-Day, Little Pine, Lizzie, Lower Dean, Lows, Mud (18-137), Mud (18-326), Nelson, Rice (Blomberg's), Rice (Clark Lake), Rice (Deerwood), Rice (Hesitation WMA), Rice (Pratt's), Rice Bed, Terry, Twin Island, Unnamed (Lost Rice), and Unnamed (Nokasippi R.). To apply contact Crow Wing SWCD via e-mail: [melissa.barrick@crowwingswcd.org](mailto:melissa.barrick@crowwingswcd.org) or by phone 218-828-6197.

### **Shoreline Restoration / Stabilization & Stormwater Management**

Crow Wing Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, have grants available to help offset the cost of shoreline buffer projects, which can also include stormwater management. For more information, please contact Crow Wing SWCD @ 218-828-6197.

### **Septic System Improvements**

Crow Wing County and the Region Five Development Commission have received a grant from the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources to assist with replacement or repair of septic systems for low and very low income landowners in order to improve and protect water quality in Crow Wing County. Applications are available online at: [www.regionfive.org/forms](http://www.regionfive.org/forms). For more information or to have an application mailed to you, please contact Anne at Region 5: 218-894-6011 or Crow Wing County Environmental Services @ 218-824-1125 or [environmental.services@crowwing.us](mailto:environmental.services@crowwing.us)

### **Conservation Easements Grant**

The Minnesota State legislature approved a grant for *Protecting Sensitive Shoreland in North Central Minnesota Using Conservation Easements*. Crow Wing, Cass, and Aitkin Counties, in partnership with the Minnesota Land Trust and Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation, will receive approximately \$1 million in funding to pay for the closing costs associated with establishing conservation easements on large parcels of sensitive shorelines. For more information on program eligibility, contact Mitch Brinks @ 218-824-1125 or [mitch.brinks@crowwing.us](mailto:mitch.brinks@crowwing.us)

### **Well Sealing**

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department received a BWSR Clean Water Fund grant for \$20,000 to start a 50/50 cost-share program for sealing abandoned / unused wells. For more information, please contact Mitch Brinks @ 218-824-1125 or go online to: <http://www.crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/2382>

**As the LGU responsible for the development and implementation of the Local Comprehensive Water Management Plan, the Crow Wing County Land Services Department is committed to protecting, preserving & improving water resources in Crow Wing County by being proactive, efficient, customer focused, organized, and innovative while being good stewards of the county's resources.**