



To: Local Elected Officials
From: Mark B. Liedl, Land Services Director
Date: May 3, 2013
Re: Land Services Department – 1st Quarter
Update for 2013

Office of Property Valuation and Classification
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Below please find our quarterly report to keep you up-to-date on the activities of the Land Services Department. Any questions or suggestions, please let us know. Thank you for your partnership!

Environmental Services
Chris Pence, Land Services Supervisor

* Permits as of 4/30/2013							
Township	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Township	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Bay Lake	2	2	1	Rabbit Lake	0	1	0
Center	3	0	1	Roosevelt	1	1	3
Daggett Brook	0	0	0	Ross Lake	0	0	0
Deerwood	0	2	1	St. Mathias	0	0	0
Fairfield	0	2	2	Timothy	0	0	0
Fort Ripley	0	0	1	Wolford	0	1	1
Gail Lake	0	0	0	1st Assessment	2	0	5
Garrison	0	1	1	2nd Assessment	0	0	0
Ideal	2	3	1	City of Jenkins	0	0	0
Jenkins	0	0	0	Breezy Pt. Septic	0	0	0
Lake Edward	2	1	2				
Little Pine	0	0	0	TOTAL	16	20	23
Long Lake	0	1	0				
Maple Grove	0	0	1				
Mission	1	0	2				
Nokay Lake	0	1	0				
Oak Lawn	0	1	1				
Pelican	1	0	0				
Perry Lake	1	1	0				
Platte Lake	1	2	0				

Land Use Ordinance Revisions: The County Board of Commissioners approved an amendment to Article 11 of the Land Use Ordinance on March 21, 2013. The amendment deleted the limitations on accessory structure size requirements within the Shoreland District. Accessory structure size limitations are now subject to 25% total impervious coverage on a lot.

Water Plan: The Crow Wing County Land Services Department has begun revising the 2008 Local Comprehensive Water Management Plan (i.e. Water Plan). Water planning is identifying what works best to protect and enhance Crow Wing County’s water resources. Part of this identification process is to measure the County’s water resources in order to observe trends in order to prioritize resources for protection or restoration efforts. As part of the revision process, the Department is working to include a number of recent scientific studies and data-driven measures that will provide a baseline to help guide land use planning and project implementation.

Recognizing that water does not follow political boundaries, the State of Minnesota has directed state agencies and local water planners to conduct water planning at a watershed level. Crow Wing County has 125 minor watersheds. Each minor watershed was classified and mapped by the amount of protected land as well as by various risk factors and water plan priorities. Protected land is defined as land in public ownership as well as lakes, rivers, easements, and wetlands on private lands. Risk factors include land that is converted from a natural, protected state to development, agricultural uses, extractive uses, or other disturbed conditions. Water plan implementation strategies such as aquatic invasive species prevention, stormwater management, shoreline buffers, private forest management, and agricultural best management practices were prioritized by minor watershed in order to manage limited resources to achieve the highest return on conservation investment.

A public hearing was recently held on April 23, 2013 before the County Board. The Water Plan is now under State Agency review before it receives final review and approval from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). The plan will then come back to the County Board for final review and approval in July.

Customer Survey Results: The Department received 97% positive reviews for customer service received regarding building permits and 100% positive reviews for septic permits, wetland and surveying issues.

The County's Development Review Team (DRT) continues to be a success, as 100% of those that responded indicated DRT was helpful or very helpful. The DRT process brings together zoning applicants, township officials, and relevant government agencies along with county staff in a pre-application meeting to discuss proposed land use map amendments, variance, conditional use, and plat applications prior to actually submitting such applications.

The survey, conducted annually in January, polled nearly 700 landowners, consultants, and contractors who interacted with the Environmental Services Office within the Land Services Department in 2012. 97% of those surveyed indicated that County staff provided them with complete and accurate information in a timely manner and that staff members were friendly and respectful.

One respondent noted that the public hearing process "works extremely well. I'm happy to see how the process has evolved from literally no help about 3-4 years ago to the complete opposite now."

County Landfill Open for Summer Hours: The Crow Wing County Landfill Site started their summer hours the first weekend in April and operate 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Saturday. The Landfill takes household garbage but many residents do not realize the landfill will accept other items such as fiberglass boats, mattresses, furniture, and mobile homes. The County Landfill also has a demolition landfill to dispose of demolition materials. Residents are also encouraged to use the free compost site to dispose of material from gardens, leaves, lawn clippings or branches.

Certain items are banned from the actual landfill; however, there are specified drop-off locations at the County Landfill Site to dispose of these items for a small fee. Appliances or white goods such as refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, washers and dryers, stoves, hot water heaters, microwaves; Electronics such as computers and their components, TV's VCR/DVD's, stereos and telephones; Tires with or without rims; Scrap Metals such as lawn mowers, grills, metal piping. These items are then recycled.

The County Landfill Site also provides the following services for free or a small, nominal fee: recycling of glass, plastics, metal and paper, used motor oil/antifreeze, and lead-acid car/marine batteries for residents. There is a 50¢ fee for oil filters and \$1 per gallon of antifreeze. The County does provide other recycling/used oil locations throughout Crow Wing County.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection: The Crow Wing County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility opened for the season on April 24, 2013 at the Crow Wing County Landfill Site. Starting in May, the HHW Facility will be open the second Wednesday and second Saturday through the month of October from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Citizens may bring hazardous waste from households such as: latex & oil paints, stains, aerosols, automotive, household cleaners, yard and garden pesticides batteries, & mercury containing devices such as thermometers and switches.

Upon arriving at the County Landfill Site, residents must stop at the Landfill Office. The attendant will discuss the items to be disposed and provide directions to where the HHW Facility is located at the site. It is important to note that all loads coming to the County Landfill must be covered to ensure our roadways are not littered with debris.

Public Land Management

Kirk Titus, Land Services Supervisor

Temporary Forest Trail Closures on Crow Wing County Managed Forest Lands: Due to vulnerable trail surfaces during the spring thaw, selected forest trails administered by Crow Wing County Land Services are temporarily closed to motorized vehicles.

Closure signs are installed at vulnerable trails to inform the traveling public. Trail conditions will be periodically monitored by forestry staff and when appropriate, the closures will be lifted. The County is asking all citizens to please observe these trail closures during spring thaw to protect our natural resources and minimize maintenance costs.

The townships and cities where trail closures exist are identified on the Crow Wing County web site at <http://crowwing.us/index.aspx?NID=318> . For more information, contact Crow Wing County Land Services at 218-824-1115.

Native Plant Community Mapping Project Completed: A cooperative project with the University of Minnesota to map the Native Plant Communities on county managed public lands is completed. A native plant community is a group of plants that interact with each other and the environment. They have uniform soil texture, soil moisture, soil nutrients, topography and disturbance regimes. These groups of native plant species form recognizable units, such as oak savannas, pine forests, or marshes.

The plants growing on the forest floor are good indicators of what tree species will grow best on a particular site and this new data will assist natural resource managers make the best long term forest management decisions.

The data is incorporated into the Geographic Information System (GIS) and will be used for strategic forest management planning purposes to identify the desired future forest conditions in a new Crow Wing County Forest Management Plan.

Timber Auction: The spring timber auction was held on March 22, 2013. 14 of the 15 tracts offered were sold. Timber sale revenues were down approximately 25% from previous spring auctions. Aspen prices were down 12% from the fall 2012 auction and the lowest prices paid since 1997. Higher fuel prices and long haul distances to major markets continue to drive down timber prices. Two previously unsold sales from the fall 2012 auction were re-offered and sold. A portion of the surplus revenues from these timber sales are returned annually to Townships, Cities and School Districts.

Recreation Trail Planning: The Miller Black Bear Trail project plan was approved by the County Board on 2-26-13. The Cuyuna Iron Range Riders have made an application to the MN DNR for grant in aid trail status. If approved, the county would act as the trail sponsor.

Both the Miller Hills Off-Highway Motorcycle Trail expansion and the Portage Lake Trail have completed the 30-day public comment period. Land Services staff has responded to comments. The trail proposals were presented to the Parks and Trails Advisory Committee on April 24 2013. A request for approval by the County Board is expected in May.

A new trail application has been received from the City of Cuyuna for the Cuyuna Pump Track Trail. This trail would create a mountain bike trail segment from the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area to the soon to be developed pump track. Land Services staff is currently developing the criteria evaluation.

A recreation trail planning webpage has been developed on the county website at <http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/index.aspx?NID=291>. Scroll to the bottom of the page to view all the trail applications and proposals.

Property Valuation and Classification

Gary Griffin, Land Services Supervisor

Valuation Notices Mailed: The Land Services Department mailed approximately 73,500 notices for the 2013 assessment. Each notice lists the assessed value of the property along with the tax classification. These assessments are used to calculate 2014 property taxes. This year the notices were mailed with the tax statements to save money on postage. \$6,200 is the estimated savings. Along with the notice an insert was included containing an article explaining the assessment process and data illustrating county spending and levy reductions achieved over the past three years.

We have encouraged taxpayers to contact the property valuation and classification office with any questions they may have about their properties valuation or classification.

Local and County Boards of Appeal and Equalization: If a property owner should disagree with the assessor about the value or class of a property they can appeal the assessment to either the Local Board of Appeal and or to the County Board of Appeal. The property owner must present supporting evidence to convince the board that the current year valuation or classification is incorrect. The supporting evidence can be presented in person, through a letter, or through an authorized representative. The board should not make changes to peoples assessments just for "showing up". For the appellent to appeal his assessment to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization they need to have appealed to the Local Board of appeal or attended the Open book meeting for that district.

Again we encouraged taxpayers to contact the property valuation and classification office first with any questions about their property's 2013 assessment before they attend any appeal meeting. A list of the dates and times of the Boards of Appeal were posted on our website. <http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us>.

We look forward to providing the customer service you expect from us.

Please contact our office with any questions you have.

Enjoy the spring, it's finally here!

Please do not hesitate to email any feedback you may have to Darleen at: darleen.wood@crowwing.us, and she will make sure we hear it.