



## CROW WING COUNTY

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**To:** Local Elected Officials  
**From:** Mark B. Liedl, Land Services Director  
**Date:** January 16, 2014  
**Re:** **Land Services Department – 4th Quarter  
Update for 2013**

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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!

### Public Land Management

*Kirk Titus, Land Services Supervisor*

#### Gypsy Moth Traps Collected

Twenty-five gypsy moth traps placed on county managed public lands in July as part of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's, 2013 Gypsy Moth Section Trapping Survey were collected in October. Survey results found no gypsy moths in the County traps.

The gypsy moth is an invasive species that, as a caterpillar, is a serious defoliator of over 300 tree and woody shrub species. It is invading Minnesota from Wisconsin and being carried in as a hitchhiker by unsuspecting tourists and visitors to Minnesota, who have been in infested areas to the east. Gypsy moths eat the leaves of many trees and shrubs, but favor oak, poplar and birch.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is proposing a quarantine of Lake and Cook Counties in the spring of 2014 to restrict gypsy moth movement and contain the infestation.

#### Sappi Paper Tour

In October, the Lands and Forestry Advisory Committee toured the Sappi paper mill at Cloquet. Sappi has just completed a nearly \$170 million capital investment project to convert the paper mill into a producer of cellulose pulp, which is used in textiles, pharmaceutical, beauty and household products. Sappi is the largest consumer of aspen and maple pulpwood grown on County managed forest lands. For 2013, the County sold 29,000 cords of certified wood to area loggers and mills. This compares to the nearly 30,000 cords sold in 2012. On average, aspen stumpage sold for \$20.84 per cord in 2013 compared to \$29.50 per cord in 2012. The decrease is a direct result of the closures of the Verso mill in Sartell and the Georgia Pacific mill in Duluth. The sale of timber at public auctions during the year funds the county's management of these lands, while providing revenues to local communities.

#### 2013 Tax Forfeited Land Sales

A second land sale auction was held on December 9 2013. Of the 96 parcels offered, five were sold for approximately \$16,000. In 2013, a total of 44 parcels valued at \$152,000 were sold at auction, through direct sale or over the counter and returned to the tax rolls. There are nearly 260 parcels currently on the unsold list that may be purchased directly from the County. The parcels can be viewed at the Lands Sales webpage: <http://www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?NID=269>

### **Forest Inventory and Regeneration Surveys**

County Natural Resources Managers inventoried 2,588 acres of forest land in 2013. Accurate forest inventory data provides the foundation for sustainable forest management decisions. The data is used for both strategic (long term) and tactical (short term) forest management planning.

The County has substantially increased its focus on the importance of accurate and reliable forest inventory in the past 5 years and has completed 27,600 acres of forest inventory.

Regeneration surveys are conducted on all County lands that have been planted, aerially seeded, direct seeded or naturally regenerated. Trees are a renewable resource and the 2013 regeneration survey of 1,174 acres showed that 100% of the harvested lands are fully stocked and growing the next generation of healthy trees.

### **Portable Tree Stands To Be Removed From County Managed Public Land**

Crow Wing County Land Services is reminding hunters that all portable tree stands or free standing stands must be removed from County managed public lands by January 1, 2014.

The Crow Wing County Hunting Stand Ordinance states that portable tree stands must be removed no later than one day following the close of Minnesota's big game hunting season, which ends on December 31, 2013. Permanent hunting stands are also prohibited by the ordinance.

Portable tree stands or portable free standing stands not removed from County managed public lands are considered abandoned personal property and will be removed pursuant to MN Statute 345.15 and the Crow Wing County Hunting Stand Ordinance. The County ordinance regulates the use of hunting stands on County managed public lands. The purpose of the ordinance is to minimize damage to trees, promote both public safety and equitable public use of the public land.

### **Property Valuation and Classification**

*Gary Griffin, Land Services Supervisor*

### **Land Owners Property Tax Relief Options**

Property owners with 20 acres or more of un-platted land may be eligible for property tax relief. Crow Wing County Land Services will present information on the 2c Managed Forest Program and the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act Program on February 3, 2013 from 6 PM to 8 PM at the Crow Wing County Land Services Building in Brainerd. This session will provide information about the programs, the requirements, and the potential benefits to qualifying property owners. Attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the enrollment process with Land Services staff. Please RSVP to Michaele at (218) 824-1010.

### **Quintile and Permit Follow up – the 2013 Assessment**

State statute requires us to physically examine all improved property parcels in the County, approximately 41,000 during a five-year period, so each year we examine 20% of the parcels, or approximately 8,200 parcels, which we call our "quintile" work. We completed the inspections in December, which marks the fourth year in a row this work has been completely tracked and documented. These inspections help ensure property assessments are based on accurate, up to date information.

In addition, we just finished visiting properties that had building permits issued during the year. This is also part of our statutory duty, to make sure property values are accurate. In 2013 there were 1,530 permits issued that we needed to review compared to last year's number of 1,731. Also we have approx. 1,000 follow up issues that were also reviewed. The majority of these are from permits that were issued and not started or construction that was not complete by January 2, 2013

### **Customer Surveys**

We sent out 641 surveys to customers in 2013 to help us improve our processes and to help gauge the level of

satisfaction with the services provided to them. Surveys went to property owners who had an assessor physically inspect their property for the quintile process and customers who appealed their value or classification after receiving their notice of valuation. We received a total of 376 responses to both surveys, and achieved an overall customer satisfaction rate of 92%. Although that's a good number, we think we can do even better in 2014. If you have any suggestions for how we can improve our services, please let us know.

### **Environmental Services**

*Chris Pence, Land Services Supervisor*

#### **Permit/Enforcement Tracking**

815 permits were issued in 2013 compared to 977 in 2012, for a 17% overall decrease. 169 new homes were permitted in 2013 compared to 192 in 2012 for a 12% overall decrease. 91 enforcement cases were closed out of a total of 115 cases reported for a closure rate of 79%. Decreases in permits are generally related to the late spring which in turn reduced the construction season for the county.

#### **Septic System Tracking**

687 inspections were conducted on existing septic systems in 2013 with 665 meeting applicable requirements, meaning that 96% of septic systems inspected in 2013 were performing at standards. 154 permits were issued for new septic systems in 2013 and 110 permits were issued for existing septic system upgrades for a total of 264 new septic systems.

#### **Stormwater Management**

Since 2012, Land Services has reviewed and approved 133 stormwater plans prior to issuing land use permits. In addition, information about stormwater best management practices was provided as part of all land use permit approvals. Implementation of these stormwater plans will result in 33.25 pounds of phosphorus not going into Crow Wing County lakes and rivers. One pound of phosphorus equals 300 pounds of algae – this means an overall reduction of algae in our lakes by almost 10,000 pounds!

#### **Shoreline Rapid Assessment Model (SRAM)**

Implemented the SRAM assessment, which is used on all riparian properties where the impervious surface percentage is greater than 20%. Based on the SRAM, 8 no-maintenance shoreline buffers were required as part of land use permit approval.

#### **AIS Boat Inspection Program**

Crow Wing County is taking steps to be an active participant in the AIS battle. In the summer of 2013, Crow Wing County partnered with 10 area lake associations covering 17 lakes to provide watercraft access inspectors at various boat landings on lakes across the County. A total of approximately 4,000 boat inspections were conducted. Of the watercraft inspected by County inspectors, 2 were determined to have zebra mussels attached on Bay Lake and Lake Hubert. The watercrafts were decontaminated before being allowed to enter into the lakes.

Crow Wing County Land Services plans to again offer the AIS inspection program to lake associations in 2014 and will again apply for a DNR grant to help cover the costs of the inspectors. Preliminary reports show that the DNR may be reducing the grants from \$7,750 to \$5,000 which will only increase the cost for lake associations that choose to participate in the program.

#### **Land Use Ordinance Revisions – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update**

The Crow Wing County Planning Commission held a public hearing for the review of the proposed revisions to Article 37 of the Land Use Ordinance related to septic system regulations on December 19, 2013. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed ordinance revisions to the County Board of Commissioners. This will go to the Commissioners for final review and approval at the February 11, 2014 regular County Board meeting.

## 2013 Permit Data by Township --- Permits & Enforcement through 12/31/2013

Township	*												TOTAL Permits *
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
1st Assessment	2	3	5	4	14	17	20	18	14	15	12	2	126
2nd Assessment	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	6
Bay Lake	2	2	1	3	8	13	6	11	9	9	5	1	70
Breezy Pt. Septic	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	2	0	0	0	1	10
Center	3	0	1	2	10	7	3	1	2	4	0	0	33
City of Jenkins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Daggett Brook	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	2	1	0	8
Deerwood	0	2	1	1	12	3	3	6	6	7	0	1	42
Fairfield	0	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	3	1	0	0	16
Fort Ripley	0	0	1	0	2	3	6	3	4	1	1	0	21
Gail Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	4
Garrison	0	1	1	1	4	6	4	9	7	3	1	1	38
Ideal	2	3	1	3	10	21	15	7	16	10	6	1	95
Jenkins	0	0	0	1	3	2	2	5	1	1	2	0	17
Lake Edward	2	1	2	2	10	9	6	8	5	7	6	1	59
Little Pine	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Long Lake	0	1	0	4	3	5	4	1	5	4	2	1	30
Maple Grove	0	0	1	0	2	6	4	2	3	2	1	2	23
Mission	1	0	2	4	3	6	4	6	1	5	2	0	34
Nokay Lake	0	1	0	2	3	1	3	4	3	3	1	0	21
Oak Lawn	0	1	1	0	2	2	3	3	2	4	0	1	19
Pelican	1	0	0	3	6	2	5	6	6	6	2	0	37
Perry Lake	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	10
Platte Lake	1	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	0	13
Rabbit Lake	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	8
Roosevelt	1	1	3	2	5	5	4	0	7	3	1	0	32
Ross Lake	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	5	3	0	1	0	15
St. Mathias	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	7
Timothy	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	5
Wolford	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	2	3	1	0	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	16	24	24	37	113	121	105	109	105	98	49	14	815

**We look forward to providing you excellent customer service.  
Please contact our office with any questions you have.**

Please do not hesitate to email any feedback you may have to Darleen at: [darleen.wood@crowwing.us](mailto:darleen.wood@crowwing.us)