



Land Services Building  
322 Laurel Street  
Brainerd, MN 56401

**TO:** Local Elected Officials  
**FROM:** Mark B. Liedl, Land Services Director  
**DATE:**  
**SUBJECT:** Land Services Department-  
2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Update for 2014

Office of Environmental Services  
Telephone (218) 824-1125  
FAX (218) 824-1126

Office of Public Land Management  
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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!

**Property Valuation and Classification**

Gary Griffin, Land Services Supervisor  
[gary.griffin@crowwing.us](mailto:gary.griffin@crowwing.us) / 218-824-1016

**2014 Property Tax Appeals**

One of the keystones to our property tax system is the right of property owners who disagree with the classification or valuation of their property to access the appeals process through the Local or County Boards of Appeal and Equalization. For 2014, 413 appeals occurred, down from 454 in 2013, representing a 10% reduction in appeals. These reductions stem from efforts to proactively communicate about our assessment process through press releases, outreach events, and op-ed publications. Decreased appeals are a sign we're on the right track in providing a uniform, fair, and transparent assessment and appeals process to property owners.

**Appeals Process Customer Service Survey Results**

Every year, Land Services surveys every person who contacts our office to appeal their property tax valuation or classification. This year 98% responded that the assessor who answered their question was prompt, professional and respectful. 90% responded that their overall experience was satisfactory. Overall, 381 surveys were sent and 130, or 34% responded. These results are a testament to the quality work of our assessors and staff, and the Land Services Department's commitment to providing excellent customer service and responding to all inquiries in an efficient, courteous and professional manner.

**Local Boards of Appeal and Equalization Survey Results**

For the first time in 2014, Land Services conducted surveys of elected officials who serve on Local Boards of Appeal and Equalization. 61 officials were surveyed with 33 responding, a 54% response rate. 100% responded the overall experience was satisfactory, the assessor was professional and respectful, and that the assessor explained all options in the appeal process. Again this information is very helpful to improving our assessment and appeals process, and reinforces the quality work of our staff.

**Our Vision:** Being Minnesota's favorite place.

**Our Mission:** Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

**Our Values:** Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

For those who participated, thank you for your partnership this year. The process continues to improve year over year, and input from decision makers about their familiarity and comfort level with the process and procedures is key. Please feel free to share any improvements or suggestions you may have for next year.

### Annual Property Inspections

You may see or hear about our assessors out in the field visiting properties in the next few months. Assessors have begun the state mandated "quintile" process of physically viewing 20% of the parcels within the County for property valuations effective in 2015. State statute requires each county to review properties annually to verify the accuracy and completeness of assessment records used to determine property taxes. There are approximately 41,000 improved parcels in the County, and this year each property assessor will view around 8,200 parcels across the County.

During quintile review visits, assessors are looking to identifying inaccuracies on the property record, checking measurements and conditions of buildings, and interact with and educate the public about the assessment process. Our goal is to have this completed by the end of September. We also will be surveying customers as to the level of service provided during these inspections. We look forward to providing the customer service you expect from us. Please contact our office with any questions you have. Thanks and have a great summer!

### **Public Land Management**

Kirk Titus, Land Services Supervisor  
[kirk.titus@crowwing.us](mailto:kirk.titus@crowwing.us) / 218-824-1138

### Tree Planting

Crow Wing County Land Services has completed its annual tree planting program for 2014. This year nearly 65,000 white spruce, white and jack pine seedlings were planted on approximately 81 acres located in Crosslake, Oak Lawn and Lake Edward Townships. More than 3.6 million seedlings have been planted on County managed forest lands over the past 30 years. Survival rates are expected to be excellent again this year, because of the timely rains the county has received this spring and early summer.

### Tax Forfeited Land Sale

On May 16 Land Services conducted its Spring Land Sale of tax forfeited parcels. Sixteen parcels, valued at over \$80,000 were sold and returned to the tax rolls. Parcels offered which did not sell at auction this year and parcels previously unsold at past auctions are available for direct purchase from the county. If you or your residents are interested in learning more about available land, visit the Land Sale webpage at <http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/index.aspx?nid=269> or contact [landservices@crowwing.us](mailto:landservices@crowwing.us), call 218-824-1115 or. A fall Land Sale has been tentatively scheduled be held November 14.

### County Forests Pass Audit

Crow Wing County managed forest lands have been recommended for continued certification to the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Cooperative (FSC).

Certification is based on principles that promote sustainable forest management, including objective standards and measures to provide wood fiber for local economies while protecting water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and species at risk.

The recommendation for continued certification comes after a week-long audit conducted by independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditors focusing on the County's forest management practices against over 300 different environmental principles. This important certification validates that County forest lands are sustainably managed, and will continue to provide multiple benefits for future generations.

Additionally, Crow Wing County has partnered with Beltrami, Carlton and Koochiching counties as members in the Minnesota Counties Sustainable Forest Cooperative. This unique partnership has resulted in lower costs, increased efficiencies and the sharing of best practices used in managing the County's 105,000 acres of forest land for timber production and diverse recreational opportunities for multiple users.

### Forest Management Plan Update

Crow Wing County Land Services is in the process of updating the forest management plan during 2014. The plan will establish the managing principles and practices for county-managed forests. A public forum was held in late June for the public, stakeholders and customers to have an opportunity to inform the future strategic management direction of county-managed forest lands. A public comment period will also be held on the draft forest management plan later this year. The draft plan will be posted on our website for people to review and submit comments. The County is developing a plan that balances the economic, social and ecological values derived from forests, including timber harvests, recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat and clean water.

### **Environmental Services**

Chris Pence, Land Services Supervisor  
[chris.pence@crowwing.us](mailto:chris.pence@crowwing.us) / 218-824-4222

### National Achievement Award

Crow Wing County Land Services has been selected to receive a National Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for the third consecutive year. The excellence award recognizes the County's watershed-based local Water Plan approved in 2013 by the County Board of Commissioners. NACo is in its 45th year of recognizing innovative achievements among counties across the nation.

The Crow Wing County Water Plan is the first of its kind watershed-based, land protection model for county water planning in Minnesota. The innovative model allows for identification of local priority water resource concerns, and facilitates action plans based on data-driven strategies specifically tailored for each of the 125 minor and 5 major watersheds found in the County. Developing water resource protection strategies within a watershed context is a logical, scientific approach rooted in the common sense fact that upstream activities affect those downstream. The model integrates Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to analyze and classify land

based upon its protection level with water quality data to identify trends, assign risk classifications and to create specific implementation strategies for each sub-watershed.

#### Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program

The 2014 Minnesota Legislature appropriated funds for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention directly to Minnesota counties. Crow Wing County was allocated \$202,713 for 2014 and will receive approximately \$450,000 in 2015 and years following. The County Board adopted a resolution on June 24, 2014 approving an allocation plan for 2014 funds to be received in July. After the 2014 field season, the County will develop a plan for utilizing the funds in 2015 and beyond.

The following plan was approved for allocation of the 2014 funds:

- Watercraft Inspections using DNR trained Level I inspectors
- Education & Awareness
- Lake association marketing/mailings for public awareness
- Signage at Crow Wing County owned landings for public awareness
- Development of an AIS poster, rack cards, & other public awareness strategies
- Pilot / Special Projects: possible activities include: wash station pilot, decontamination unit(s) purchase, milfoil prevention efforts (including lake surveys and/or in-lake treatment on lakes with a public access)

#### Land Use Ordinance Revisions

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department is requesting public comment on proposed revisions to Article 11 of the County Land Use Ordinance. The ordinance revisions can be viewed on the County website at [www.crowwing.us](http://www.crowwing.us) by clicking on the “CWC Listens” button on the home page. Written comments on the proposed changes will be accepted until August 15, 2014, and may be submitted to the Environmental Services Office at [environmental.services@crowwing.us](mailto:environmental.services@crowwing.us) or mailed to 322 Laurel Street, Suite 14 Brainerd, MN 56401.

A public hearing for the review of the proposed revisions to the land use ordinance is set for September 18, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. before the Planning Commission. The meeting will be held in the County Board Room on the third floor of the Historic Courthouse at 326 Laurel Street Brainerd, MN 56401. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the proposed ordinance revisions to the County Board of Commissioners for final review at the October 14, 2014 meeting.

## 2014 Permit Data by Township --- Permits Issued through 6/30/2014

Township	*												TOTAL Permits*
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
1st Assessment	5	3	6	11	18	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	55
2nd Assessment	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Bay Lake	0	0	0	3	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Breezy Pt. Septic	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Center	0	1	1	4	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
City of Jenkins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Daggett Brook	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Deerwood	1	0	2	1	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Fairfield	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Fort Ripley	0	0	1	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Gail Lake	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Garrison	1	0	0	2	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Ideal	0	3	5	15	9	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	39
Jenkins	0	0	0	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Lake Edward	1	0	1	3	6	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
Little Pine	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Long Lake	1	0	0	4	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Maple Grove	0	0	1	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Mission	0	2	2	3	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
Nokay Lake	0	0	0	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Oak Lawn	0	2	2	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Pelican	0	0	1	1	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Perry Lake	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Platte Lake	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Rabbit Lake	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Roosevelt	1	3	2	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Ross Lake	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
St. Mathias	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Timothy	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Wolford	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	12	16	25	63	106	106	0	0	0	0	0	0	328

We look forward to providing you excellent customer service. Please contact Dan Listug in our office at [daniel.listug@crowwing.us](mailto:daniel.listug@crowwing.us) or 218-824-1002 with any questions or comments you have.