

Crow Wing County Water Plan News

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



New Landowner Guidebooks...Hot off the Press!

By Mitch Brinks

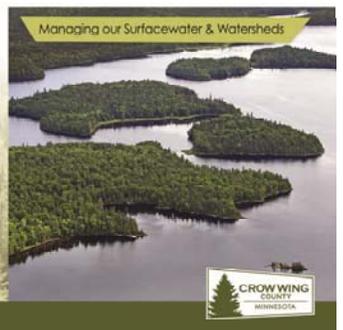
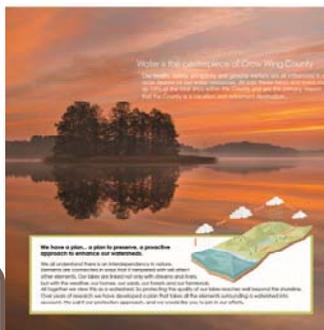
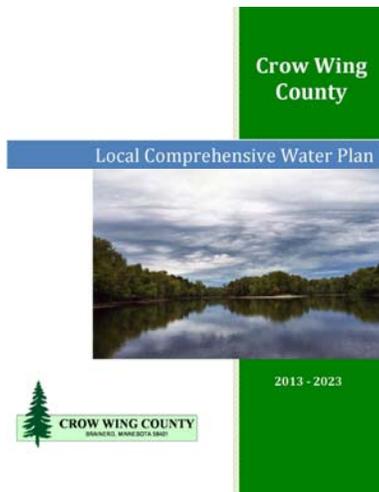
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In 2013, Crow Wing County updated its local comprehensive water management plan. It received numerous awards and accolades, including several achievement awards from the National Association of Counties (NaCo). Part of the success of the water plan was not only the first-of-its-kind watershed protection approach, but the way the County was able to tell the story of watershed protection using the limited funds available. To do that, the County partnered with a local graphic design firm to develop a large-format poster that told the story of the water plan using eye-catching and easy to understand info-graphics. From this poster, several factsheets were developed that have been distributed to 1000s of lake association members, County-fair goers, builders, realtors, as well as local, state, and federal conservation partners. This spring Crow Wing County received a Clean Water Fund grant (part of the Legacy Amendment Funds) to continue this proven community and landowner outreach campaign by developing new water planning tools to effect a positive change in the watersheds of the County.



Actually, the guidebook is not a book at all, but rather a series of fold-out posters that feature each of the three priority concerns of the water plan: surface water, groundwater, and aquatic invasive species. In addition, smaller posters for small lake management, agricultural best management practices, and private forest management are being produced and can be inserted into the main pocket folder along with the other posters as needed.



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

www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?nid=241



The primary focus of the grant was to update the County's *Landowner's Guide to Lake Stewardship*, which was last printed in 2008. Not only was the content outdated, but the old guidebook used more words than graphics to convey the message. The new guidebooks are very graphic heavy and much less wordy. Above is an example of the type of graphics that are part of this guidebook.

In addition to the posters, 4" x 9" rack cards have been created for each of the above topics. Several point-of-purchase displays have been created to hold the rack cards and are on display at various locations throughout Crow Wing County. Other factsheets and handouts are also being developed that will utilize the graphics from the posters.

Continued...

New Landowner Guidebooks (Continued)

Most of these products feature QR codes where users can scan the code with their smartphone or tablet and be directed to County staff and additional resources. Lastly, several new interactive maps have been developed along with these products:

Is your lake/river infested?

<http://cwccm.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=36e79c6c97194b7f856b7fd02256e32>
Map showing lakes and rivers infested with aquatic invasive species, specifically zebra mussels, milfoil, and spiny water flea.

Lake Water Quality:

<http://cwccm.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=403a692a82d54e669a19322151e4cd52>
Map showing the lake water quality trend for the larger lakes in Crow Wing County. Users can click on the lake to pull up additional information, including links to water quality reports and factsheets as well as the lake association website.

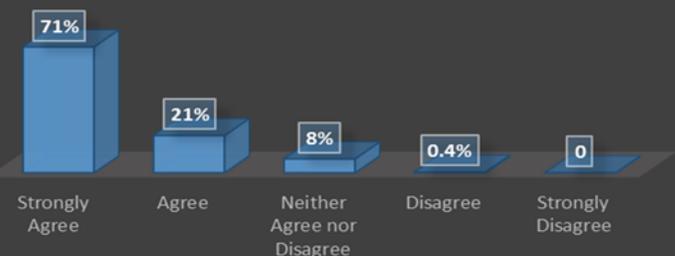
The new guidebook and rack cards were first distributed at the Crow Wing County Fair this past summer. They are currently available for free at the Land Services Department at 322 Laurel Street in Brainerd or at Crosslake City Hall at 37028 County Rd 66. So far, over 1000 copies have been distributed, with a more widespread distribution plan scheduled for late spring of 2016.

AIS Boater Survey

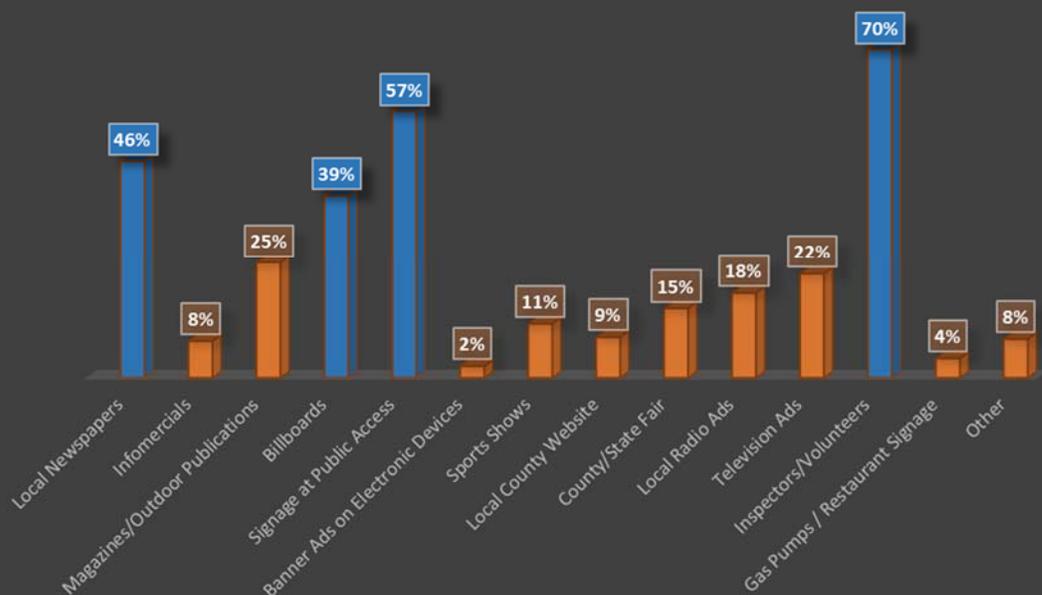
This past August, Crow Wing County, in partnership with the Mississippi Headwaters Board conducted a 3 question survey of recreational boaters at various public landings across the County. The survey asked how well informed boaters were about the risks of AIS as well as the actions they needed to take with their boat/trailer. In addition, the survey asked where the respondents received information on AIS. The results indicated that a high percentage (90%+) considered themselves well informed about the issue. Although the sources of AIS information varied, the top four responses were Watercraft Inspectors at Public Accesses (70%), Signage at Public Accesses (57%), Billboards (39%), and Local Newspapers (46%).

For those that only selected one source for their AIS information, inspectors and local newspapers were by far the top selections. The survey will be conducted again in 2016 to determine if there is any change in boater awareness from the various local, state, and regional AIS education campaigns.

I FEEL I AM WELL INFORMED ABOUT THE RISKS TO OUR LAKES/RIVERS POSED BY AIS



SOURCES OF AIS INFO

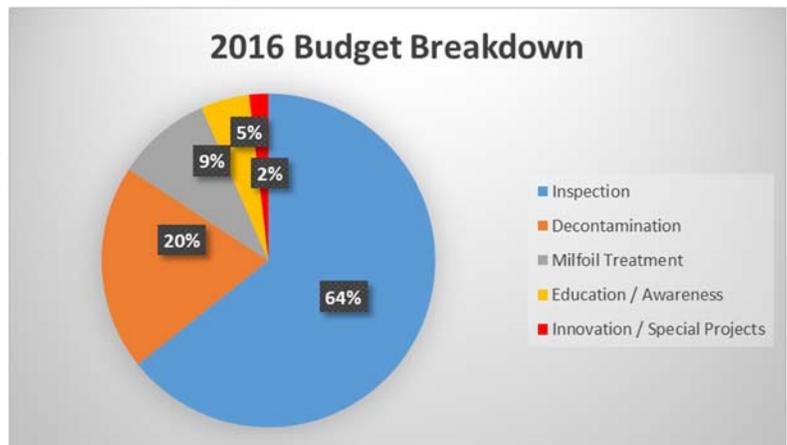


Proposed 2016 AIS Plan

online @ <http://www.crowwing.us/1004/Aquatic-Invasive-Species-AIS>

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department is requesting public comment on the proposed 2016 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Plan. The 2016 AIS plan can be viewed on the County website at the link above or by going to www.crowwing.us by typing "AIS" in the search box. Written comments on the plan will be accepted until November 30, 2015, and may be submitted to the Environmental Services Office at environmental.services@crowwing.us or mailed to 322 Laurel Street, Suite 14 Brainerd, MN 56401. Crow Wing County has been allocated \$450,000 by the State legislature to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species within County lakes and rivers in 2016. The AIS plan proposes to accomplish this through:

- **Watercraft inspections**
Crow Wing County has assigned a risk classification to each of the nearly 200 public and private boat ramps. The classification is based on the use, location, and infested status of each landing and ranges from low to very high risk. Over 15,000 hours of inspection will be conducted at high and very high risk landings.
- **Decontamination units**
Crow Wing County plans to maintain the AIS decontamination station at the Crosslake Joint Highway Maintenance that will be open daily to the public, free of charge.. Watercraft decontamination consists of a very hot water rinse used to kill zebra mussels and a high pressure spray to remove material from boats, motors, trailers, and gear.
- **Treatment of Eurasian water milfoil**
The County has 9 lakes that are infested with milfoil that also have a public access. As in previous years, funds will be allocated for chemical or biological treatment of milfoil in these lakes.
- **Education & Awareness**
In 2014 and 2015, Crow Wing County allocated funds directly to lake associations to conduct an education outreach campaign to their members. Over 30 lakes have participated. In 2016, the County plans to again offer this program. In addition, the County plans to use targeted signage, print media, news releases as well as radio, TV, and movie theater advertising.
- **Innovation / Special Projects**
The County plans to continue to work with area lake associations and an environmental lab to conduct veliger testing again in 2016.



AIS News & Updates

More Crow Wing County Lakes Free of Zebra Mussels

Crow Wing County has released additional test results confirming another seven area lakes remain free from zebra mussels. Lab analysis revealed that no microscopic zebra mussel offspring, known as 'veligers,' were detected in Roosevelt, Serpent, Lougee, Borden, Clark, Little Hubert, and Little Pelican lakes during recent testing. This brings the total number of lakes tested to 37. No veligers were detected in any of the lakes tested. As part of this cooperative effort, the Crow Wing County Land Services Department wants to remind homeowners to be on the lookout for zebra mussels as they remove their boats and docks for the season. Hard surfaces are prime candidates for zebra mussels to reside. State law prohibits moving docks, lifts and swimming rafts from one lake to another without 21 days to dry. Information about county AIS prevention efforts, including a complete list of lakes tested, interactive maps to search for the status of area lakes, and a map showing the location of the County's AIS decontamination station in Crosslake can be found on the web by visiting www.crowwing.us, and searching for "AIS."

Ruth Lake Zebra Mussel Control—Pilot Project

The Ruth Lake Improvement District, in partnership with the DNR, Crow Wing County, and others, is moving ahead with a pilot program for zebra mussel control. An adult zebra mussel was discovered in July along the eastern shore of Ruth Lake by a 15-year-old vacationer. Follow-up dives turned up dozens more adult mussels in that area, confirming the only infestation discovered thus far in a Crow Wing County lake in 2015. The mussels appeared contained to the immediate area and further testing indicated there are no veligers present in the lake's waters. The lack of veligers, which are the larvae of zebra mussels, shows it's unlikely the zebra mussels are reproducing, making the lake a prime candidate for localized eradication efforts. A copper product is being used, which is similar to the approach used in Rose lake (Ottertail County) in 2011, which was successful. Treatment commenced earlier this week. For more, please read the article in the Brainerd Dispatch by going to www.brainerddispatch.com and searching "Ruth Lake."

NEW! Crow Wing County App Available for download...Free!

Download from iTunes and Google Play stores.

The new app features popular content from the current County website such as County news, the incustody list, and county board meeting information as well as new interactive maps (water, land, trail, transportation), property document search, and links to pay taxes and apply for permits online.



NEW! Take it to the Box Medication Disposal Site in Pequot Lakes

A new free medication disposal box is now available for the public located at the Pequot Lakes City Hall. The Pequot Lakes disposal box is the fifth free medication disposal site available in Crow Wing County. Crow Wing County is serious about preventing the abuse or misuse of old or unneeded medications. To assure that these medications can be disposed of in a healthy and environmentally safe manner, free disposal sites have been offered since 2012. The drop off boxes at each site will accept unneeded over-the-counter medications, prescription and narcotic medications from community members. The new drop-off site in Pequot Lakes will be open Monday – Friday and is located at: Pequot Lakes City Hall, 4638 County Road 11, Pequot Lakes, MN 56472. Hours: 8am- 4pm. Contact: Police Chief Eric Klang, 218-568-8111

Medications should be left in their original container, with the names and other identifying information removed. Medication may be disposed at any of the five disposal locations listed here. Drop off Sites cannot accept the following items: syringes, needles or sharp's and chemotherapy or radiological medicine. Medication disposal sites are open Monday-Friday. Other locations include: Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office, City of Breezy Point Police Department, City of Crosby Police Department, Nisswa City Hall.

Local Grant Opportunities for 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 tullibee, 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. A number of property tax-incentive programs are also available for property owners in Crow Wing County. See www.crowwing.us/index.aspx?NID=258 for more information.

Conservation Easement Grant: Wild Rice Lakes

The 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 currently 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.). More wild rice lakes are being considered for this program. To apply or for more information, please contact Crow Wing SWCD via e-mail: melissa.barrick@crowwingwcd.org or by phone: 218-828-6197.

Low-Income Septic System Upgrades

Crow Wing County and the Region Five Development Commission also have remaining funds to assist with replacement or repair of septic systems for low and very low income landowners in order to improve and protect groundwater quality in Crow Wing County. For more information or to have an application mailed to you, please contact Sandy Voigt at Region 5: 218-894-6017 or svoigt@regionfive.org. Funding for this grant is from the Clean Water Land & Legacy Amendment.

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.