

NEWS



Land Services Department
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CROW WING COUNTY

BRAINERD, MINNESOTA 56401

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CROW WING COUNTY RECEIVES LAKE ASSESSMENT GRANT

Crow Wing County recently received a \$13,550 challenge grant from the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) to conduct water quality assessments on 20 area lakes, which range in size from 500 to 1000 acres. A similar grant was received in 2008 that allowed for the assessment of lakes over 1000 acres in size. The Initiative Foundation and several area lake associations provided the required 50% matching funds for this grant.

Utilizing this grant, the Land Services Department will coordinate water quality studies on the following lakes: Upper South Long, Ossawinnamakee, Gilbert, Rabbit, Clearwater, Upper & Lower Mission, Portage-Crooked-Hanks chain, Nokay, Rush, Emily, Lower Hay, Upper Hay, Ruth, Smith, Camp, Lower Cullen, and Red Sand. Lakes assessed in 2008 include Bay, Big Trout, Borden, Cedar, Cross, Gull, Edward, Hubert, Lower South Long, Mille Lacs, North Long, Pelican, Platte, Roosevelt, Round, Serpent, and Whitefish.

“This grant will begin the development of a county-specific database to measure water quality in our lakes” stated Mitch Brinks, Water Protection Specialist. “This data will then be used to measure whether our land use regulations are working, and if they are not, what changes may be needed to achieve the outcome of clean water”.

The assessments compile and analyze data derived from water samples collected over the years by citizen volunteers and then delivered to an environmental laboratory for analysis. Tests for phosphorus and chlorophyll *a* are used to determine the amount of nutrient loading and algae in the water. Transparency readings are also taken using a secchi disk. These three measurements provide the County information about the health of the lake. Looking at trends in this data over time can help identify lakes with potential threats to water quality.

These assessments will be used to target grant opportunities, such as the Clear Water Legacy funds, in order to implement water protection strategies such as stormwater management and shoreline buffers. Assessment data also forms a baseline from which to quantifiably measure the outcomes from these protection strategies. Each assessment and corresponding one-page water quality factsheet will be posted on the County website: www.co.crow-wing.mn.us. More information about this grant can be obtained by contacting Mitch Brinks, Crow Wing County Water Protection Specialist, at 218-824-1128 or mitch.brinks@co.crow-wing.mn.us.

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