

NEWS



Land Services Department
Environmental Services
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CROW WING COUNTY

BRAINERD, MINNESOTA 56401

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CROW WING COUNTY TO OFFER FREE WELL TESTING

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department, in association with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, is pleased to offer free nitrate testing for residents of Crow Wing County and surrounding areas. "Landowners can bring in a fresh sample of water from their tap to the Land Services Building anytime that we are open. The test takes a matter of seconds and can often be conducted while they wait" stated Water Protection Specialist Mitch Brinks. For best results, a 1 cup sample should be taken after running the tap for several minutes and before any filtering is done. A disposable bottle or container should be used to collect the sample in case County staff is unable to run the test right away. In that case, the results will be sent to the landowner. Participants are also encouraged to bring the unique well number which can be found on the well and the approximate depth of the well.

Nitrates are a common contaminant found in many wells in Minnesota. Too many nitrates in drinking water can cause serious health problems for young infants, including "blue baby syndrome" (or methemoglobinemia). Nitrates in our environment come from decomposition of plants and animal wastes. People also add nitrates to the environment in the form of fertilizers. Although natural nitrate levels in Minnesota are generally quite low, elevated levels are often found in agricultural areas where nitrate sources are often concentrated. Nitrates are tasteless and odorless, so routine testing is important, especially for landowners with shallow wells. If high nitrate levels are detected, landowners will be directed to a certified lab for further analysis.

Crow Wing County also plans to offer free nitrate testing at various locations and times throughout the year, including the upcoming Mid-Minnesota Builders Home Show at the Brainerd Civic Center on March 30-April 1, 2012, the Crow Wing County Fair in August, and during four land use workshops held throughout the County in June and July. For a complete list of dates and times of upcoming nitrate clinics, please visit the groundwater page of the County website at: <http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us> and click on *Land Services*.

Groundwater protection is one of the 6 priorities of the Crow Wing County Water Plan. Water planning is identifying what works best to protect and enhance Crow Wing County's surface and groundwater resources by identifying existing and potential threats to these resources and implementing actions to minimize them. Most of Crow Wing County's residents rely on groundwater for their source of drinking water. Protecting this resource is one of the most important things we can do to help keep our water clean.

The Land Services Department is committed to providing excellent customer service while helping landowners make wise choices that protect Crow Wing County's extraordinary natural resources. Citizens are encouraged to contact the Environmental Services Office at (218) 824-1125 or environmental.services@co.crow-wing.mn.us to discuss land use and water protection activities. Crow Wing County information and resources can be found at www.co.crow-wing.mn.us

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