

# NEWS



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**CROW WING COUNTY**  
BRAINERD, MINNESOTA 56401

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## PUBLIC FEEDBACK GUIDES COUNTY WATER RESOURCE PLANNING

The Crow Wing County Land Services Department has begun revising the 2008 Local Comprehensive Water Management Plan. Water planning is identifying what works best to protect and enhance Crow Wing County's water resources. This update and revision process includes an identification of local priority water resource concerns which will lay the framework for a new comprehensive water plan document on how to best protect these resources.

The first water plan for Crow Wing County was adopted in 1990. Over the years it has been revised several times. The current Crow Wing County Water Plan was adopted in 2008. In that document, 6 priority concerns were identified with the goal to protect the surface and groundwater resources of the county. Under each priority concern were actions steps that specifically laid out tasks to accomplish the goal. The 2008 priorities included: maintaining a water quality database, addressing stormwater and wastewater, protecting ground water, minimizing the effects of development on water quality, and developing educational programs to promote water quality protection.

"For the 2013 update to the water plan, we wanted to see what the citizens of Crow Wing County identified as their top concerns" said Water Protection Specialist Mitch Brinks. In May 2012, a letter was sent to all riparian landowners in the County with Crow Wing County Zoning Authority. In addition to land use information, the letter asked respondents to participate in an online survey. The survey was available at the county website from May – October of 2012. Approximately 300 people responded to the survey. In addition, a request was sent to Crow Wing County stakeholder groups, including local, state, federal agencies involved in water management as well as builders, developers, consultants, educators, and landscaping and septic contractors. Approximately 200 people participated in this survey. Finally, approximately 100 people filled out the survey at the Crow Wing County Fair in the summer of 2012.

Based on all of the public input received, the Crow Wing County Board approved the following Priority Concerns in the fall of 2012. These priority concerns will provide the framework for re-writing the water plan in 2013.

1. Priority Concern: **Aquatic Invasive Species** (includes: lake association/improvement district coordination and water access monitoring)
2. Priority Concern: **Surface Water** (includes: stormwater management, shoreline buffers, wetland protection, land use and development, water sampling / data gathering)
3. Priority Concern: **Ground Water** (includes: septic system maintenance and inspection, testing for nitrates and other contaminants, wellhead and drinking water source protection, well sealing of unused / abandoned wells, and solid and hazardous waste disposal)

The State Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) also recently approved the County's priority concerns. In his letter recommending approval of the County's Priority Concerns, BWSR Board Chair Brian Napstad, "commends Crow Wing County for the outstanding process used to select the concerns."

The full Priority Concerns Scoping Document, which includes the citizen survey results, is available online at: [www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/4097](http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/4097) The 2013 Water Plan document will be drafted this winter. An additional public comment period, including a public hearing, will take place in May of 2013.

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@crowwing.us to discuss water planning or other land use questions. Information about water planning in Crow Wing County can be found at [www.co.crow-wing.mn.us](http://www.co.crow-wing.mn.us).

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