

NEWS



Land Services Department
Environmental Services
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CROW WING COUNTY
BRAINERD, MINNESOTA 56401

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CROW WING COUNTY RECEIVES NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has selected Crow Wing County for a National Achievement Award. In NACo's 44th year of recognizing innovative achievements among counties across the nation, Crow Wing received the award for its Lakeshore Impervious Surface Coverage Research Study conducted in 2012.

In an email to the county announcing the national award, NACo noted "Congratulations to everyone involved who were able to help develop this innovative program! Your hard work will yield positive results for Crow Wing County."

Crow Wing County Chair Rachel Reabe Nystrom said "It is an honor to be selected for this national award two years in a row from NACo. This local data about Crow Wing County lakes will make for better decisions to keep our lakes clean."

Impervious surface data was calculated on 32 lakes over 500 acres in size using high-resolution aerial photography and property sketches from the Property Valuation and Classification Office. The amount of impervious surface was calculated for the entire riparian lot as well as within 250 feet and 500 feet of the shoreline to determine how much impervious surface was located close to the shoreline. Impervious surface coverage is hard surfaces on a lot such as rooftops, sidewalks, patios and driveways that don't allow water to soak into the ground. Studies have shown that water quality begins to decline when impervious surface coverage reaches 12-15 percent. This local data will help guide land use decisions about keeping lakes and rivers clean within the county.

Land Services also tracks the amount of impervious surface coverage for each building permit that is issued in order to determine the amount of phosphorus loading that occurs and whether additional performance standards are required as part of the permit. These performance standards are from the Land Use Ordinance which requires stormwater management and a shoreline buffer analysis at 15% and 20% total impervious coverage, respectively. The County's goal is to reduce phosphorus inputs by implementing enough stormwater plans to offset phosphorus loading from the increased impervious surfaces on permits that do not require stormwater management. Phosphorous is a nutrient in lakes that causes excess growth of aquatic vegetation and algae.

Impervious coverage data is an integral part of the revision of the 2008 County Water Plan. A key objective of the water plan update is to determine impervious surface coverage on the large, more developed lakes within the county. The results of both phases of the project indicate that the average impervious surface percentage on riparian lots on the County's larger lakes is less than 10%. For example, Lake Edward, Hubert, and Lower South Long were all measured at 6%, Upper South Long was measured at 7%, and Whitefish was measured at 5%.

The Land Services Department is committed to providing excellent customer service while helping our residents make wise decisions that protect Crow Wing County's extraordinary natural resources. Citizens are encouraged to contact the Environmental Services Office at (218) 824-1125 or to visit the Crow Wing County Web Site www.crowwing.us for more information.

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