

LAKE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SOLID WASTE EDITION



WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT

The Environmental Services office holds a dedicated group of staff seeking to maintain the health and safety of residents as well as the environment in Lake County. This team is a hybrid of both the Solid Waste and Planning and Zoning Departments. Having both entities in one office allows for many opportunities to connect with Lake County residents, and to provide useful services to meet a variety of needs. These services come in the form of permitting land use activities, providing information on solid waste options, and maintaining facilities to provide services to Lake County residents. This letter will focus specifically on the Solid Waste Department activities.

Solid Waste staff priorities are guided by MN State Laws, the Solid Waste Management Plan as well as county ordinances which set goals and regulations for the county. If you would like more information on these documents, give us a call at 218.834.8304 or stop by the office located in the Lake County Courthouse; 601 Third Avenue, Two Harbors.

Lake County Solid Waste Staff

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- Neva Maxwell, Land Use Specialist: neva.maxwell@co.lake.mn.us
- Rachel Brodeur, MN GreenCorps Member (*temporary placement*): rachel.brodeur@co.lake.mn.us

Lake County Solid Waste Facilities

- **Lake County Recycling Center** – The recycling center is available to all residents and using it is an easy action you can take to support your community and protect the environment. Materials you can recycle include: paper, cardboard, plastics #1 and #2, aluminum and tin, as well as glass. For more details visit www.co.lake.mn.us.

Monday – Friday: 7:30A.M – 5:30P.M., Saturday: 8:00A.M. – 12:00P.M.
Recycle Center Drive, Two Harbors, MN



- **Fall Lake Transfer Station** - All recyclable materials (*see above*) can be disposed of at this transfer station, as well as waste oil and yard waste.

May-August: Monday, Wednesday and Saturday: 8: 00A.M – 4: 00P.M

September: Wednesday and Saturday: 8: 00A.M – 4: 00P.M

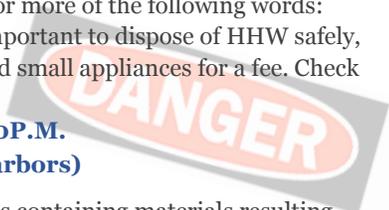
October-April: Saturday: 8: 00A.M – 4: 00P.M

303 Kawishiwi Trail Ely, MN 55731

- **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility** – HHW are products labeled with one or more of the following words: WARNING, DANGER, POISON, FLAMMABLE, REACTIVE, CORROSIVE or TOXIC. It is important to dispose of HHW safely, and to not place these items in the trash or down the drain. HHW also accepts electronics and small appliances for a fee. Check out the reuse center where you can find items like paint, cleaners and more for FREE.

Open Mid May- Mid September: Wednesdays 12:00P.M– 5:30P.M.

Located at the Recycling Center (Recycle Center Drive, Two Harbors)



- **Construction and Demolition Landfill** – This landfill is for the disposal of non-asbestos containing materials resulting from the alteration, construction, destruction, rehabilitation, or repair of all man-made structures.

Tuesday and Thursday: 12:30P.M-3: 30P.M.

First Saturday of the month: 8:30A.M-11:30A.M.

Bunker Hill Rd, Two Harbors

- **Yard Waste Disposal Sites** – Yard waste is banned from MN landfills. Placing brush, leaves, grass clippings and garden waste in the garbage is not allowed.

Yard Waste can be disposed of at the Construction and Demolition Landfill, Two Harbors Yard Waste Facility, and the Fall Lake Transfer Station



LAKE COUNTY AWARDED GRANT

This year, the Solid Waste Department was awarded an Environmental Assistance Grant giving Lake County the opportunity to expand their rural access to recycling, along with providing educational materials to residents.

These initiatives are in response to the recycling survey that was conducted last year. Residents and businesses throughout the county participated, and their feedback showed a great need for rural access to recycling, as well as more education in Lake County recycling regulations.

This is a two part project:

1. Two mobile recycling trailers are being ordered to provide recycling at community events and to serve as remote drop off sites in the rural parts of the county.
2. Educational programming is needed in our county to help everyone understand what can and can't be recycled. In 2019, a comprehensive residential waste guide will be mailed to all residents.

We are excited to see the results being put into action, and we thank you for the survey responses.



(example recycling trailer)

YOU RESPONDED, WE LISTENED!

Last year, Kendra Klenz (former GreenCorps Member) conducted a survey which was taken by many residents and businesses in Lake County. From this survey, we learned that there was an immense need for better access to recycling, as well as further education on the subject. The number of different projects, programs and groups described in this newsletter all go back to the survey that YOU were part of. Continue reading to find out how feedback from members of Lake County have sparked our offices interest to make significant changes in our communities. We appreciate everyone who participated in the survey and thank you for the impactful responses!

LAKE COUNTY WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LCWAC)

"I am interested to see how we can all work together on this, that is why I am excited to be at the table"

-LCWAC member

Last year, Lake County Environmental Services created a focus group to help guide decisions made throughout the county regarding waste reduction. This group is the Lake County Waste Advisory Committee (LCWAC), and we hope to see their presence continue to grow alongside the community in waste management strategies.

A wide variety of views were important for this group to succeed, which is why multiple different entities were invited. The goal for this committee is to include representatives from local waste haulers, local government staff, cities and townships, businesses and community members to improve the current recycling system and identify opportunities to reduce waste. The Environmental Services Department aims to make decisions that align with community perspectives to get a more well-rounded understanding for what the priorities should be in the county.

In the latest meeting held on November 28, we discussed several matters regarding upcoming projects and plans. The agenda was set for discussion on the recently received EA Grant (*see left column*), the Community Education Class that will be starting in January (*page 4*), the proposal for an alternative tire disposal system, as well as the potential for a spring cleanup day that will hopefully take place in the Spring of 2019. The committee provided meaningful input on how they feel the community would respond to these initiatives and showed overall excitement for the progress being made. Be sure to keep an eye out for more LCWAC news to come!

THE NEW NORMAL

Have you ever wondered what happens to your recycled bottles, cans, paper or glass after it has been tossed in the bin? Typically, after materials are sorted, they are bundled and sold for their “next life” which is then brought to the *market*, where the items can be purchased and sold. Currently, there are big changes happening in the recycling industry and this is largely due to a shift in these markets.

For more than 25 years, many developed countries, including the U.S., have been sending massive amounts of plastic waste to China instead of recycling it on their own. Some 106 million metric tons — about 45 percent — of the world's plastics were exported to China since they began reporting to the UN in 1992. At this time, China did not have the infrastructure to create their own recyclable materials that would go into a cycle of reuse. Recently, however, they have created a system to provide a full circle for recyclables and are no longer in need of taking them from other countries.

Due to the high amounts of contamination (*garbage mixed in with recyclable materials*) in the recyclables, and the shift in providing their own source of material, in 2017, China passed the National Sword policy banning plastic waste from being imported. This move was made “for the protection of the environment and people's health”, set to begin in January, 2018 (Watson, 2018).

More than half of the U.S. recycling was being sent to China, and now we are bound to manage this on our own grounds. This means a shift in the markets, increasing the garbage and recycling prices, as well as a need—more than ever— to think about a major reduction in consumer products being purchased. This shift is what experts are calling the “New Normal”.

“What we need to do is take responsibility in making sure that waste is managed in a way that is responsible, and wherever that waste goes — responsible meaning both environmentally and socially” – Jenna Jambeck

Watson, Sarah Kiley. Author. 2018. NPR.

Jambeck, Jenna. Associate Professor of engineering at the University of Georgia. 2018. NPR.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We need to start being creative in all aspects of our waste, and it starts with us! Solutions include increasing our domestic demand for recycled products and decreasing our overall waste. You can do your part by reducing packaging and looking into brands that use recycled materials to create their product. By doing this, we will increase the need for recycled goods, therefore providing a market for recycled materials to be used here in the US. You can find labels like the one shown on the right seen on products like *Seventh Generation*, *Recover Tees*, *Green Forest* and many others. These companies have committed to making post-consumer recycled content part of their business plan, and with the shifts in markets, they will likely be ahead of their competitors when it comes to packaging.



Labels you should look for when purchasing products.

One recent change Lake County underwent was replacing garbage bags in the Courthouse and the Health and Human Services building from traditional 15% recycled plastic, to 94% recycled plastic. This switch was made at a competitive price and will continue to increase demand for post-consumer recycled plastic domestically.

RECYCLING REMINDER!

Plastic bags and film cannot be recycled at the curb or the recycling center.

Consider bringing used bags to your local drop off sites - stores such as *Super One* or *Goodwill*.

Better yet, use a reusable shopping bag to reduce the overall use of non-recyclable plastics.

MN GREEN CORPS – CONTINUING TO SERVE LAKE COUNTY



Lake County Environmental Services has been granted the opportunity to host a Minnesota GreenCorps member for the second year in a row. The Minnesota GreenCorps program is a statewide initiative, coordinated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment while training a new generation of environmental professionals. The program places AmeriCorps members with host organizations around the state to assist communities and local governments in addressing a variety of statewide needs.

This year we are hosting Rachel Brodeur, 2018 Luther College graduate. Rachel's role with the county is to continue working with the data former GreenCorps member, Kendra Klenz, collected from her recycling survey. The data shows a great need for more access to recycling, along with education and outreach in this subject. Fortunately, this is Rachel's strong-suit and she has plans to do as much education (*see below*) on the topic of waste management (reduction, recycling, composting) as she can. If you have any questions about the program, suggestions for education opportunities, or just want to chat with Rachel, she is excited to talk with you. You can contact Rachel at rachel.brodeur@co.lake.mn.us or 218-834-8581.



Rachel Brodeur, MN GreenCorps Member

COMMUNITY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

Looking for a New Year's Resolution? Trying to find ways to save money after this holiday season? Or maybe you just want to become less wasteful in your home... Whatever the reason, we have the class for YOU!

GreenCorps member, Rachel Brodeur, is facilitating a FREE, yes, a FREE class that will cover several different topics that come together to create an "Interactive Homeowners Guide" towards a less wasteful life. The seven sessions will be taught by local specialists in subjects such as energy and water efficiency, waste reduction, recycling, yard waste, gardening, composting, and will even be hosting a repair workshop. We are excited to start the New Year off right with some great reminders in creating a more efficient home, and ultimately saving money! Better for you, better for your wallet, better for the environment... sounds like a win to us!

DETAILS

- **Dates:** Tuesdays from January 15th to February 26th 6pm – 8pm
- **Location:** Lake County Law Enforcement Center (LEC), 613 Third Ave. Two Harbors
- **Register:** You can register online on the Lake County Community Education page at ww.isd381.org
- **Cost:** FREE to everyone

