

2014 Annual Green Tier Report La Crosse County Solid Waste Department

Introduction

The WDNR accepted the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department into the Green Tier program on June 1, 2011. Located at 6500 State Hwy. 16, the Department operates a waste disposal complex, which includes a sanitary landfill with a segregated cell for ash disposal; areas for recycling shingles, clean wood, and yard waste; a citizen's drop off site and a Household Hazardous Materials disposal facility. Collaborating with Xcel Energy, solid waste from the communities in the service area is processed into refuse-derived fuel and used to generate enough electricity to power 10,000 homes.

Environmental Management System (EMS)

In 2012, the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department completed an EMS that was determined to meet the Green Tier functionally equivalency requirements of Wisconsin Stats. 299.83(1) (dg).

Environmental Objectives and Targets

Environmental objectives and targets provide a framework for continual environmental improvement. Following the identification of its environmental aspects and impacts the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department approved the following objectives and targets for 2014.

2014 Environmental Objectives and Targets La Crosse County Solid Waste Department

OBJECTIVE: Reduce air emissions from the landfill operation.

TARGET: Operate the landfill at/or below air emission standards set by WDNR.

Met all applicable operational goals in 2014.

TARGET: Continuously review special wastes and their handling procedures to minimize excessively dusty loads.

Reviewed all special wastes and developed a SOP to standardize landfill operations regarding potentially dusty loads.

TARGET: Maintain landfill roads in a manner that minimizes fugitive dust.

Immediate maintenance reduced fugitive dust. Monitored construction activities and worked with contractor to minimize tracking of soils and clay onto haul roads.

OBJECTIVE: Reduce the risk of dangerous chemical reactions occurring in HHM operations.

TARGET: Maintain and operate facility ventilation systems according to manufactures' specifications.

Reviewed preventive maintenance with HVAC contractor. Relocated ventilation and waste storage to better manage fugitive emissions.

OBJECTIVE: Reduce the risk of dangerous chemical reactions occurring in HHM operations.

TARGET: Periodically review training and standard operating procedures to facilitate continuous improvement in the operation of HHM.

Completed

TARGET: Implement a minimum of three community outreach initiatives to better inform the public how to safely package and transport hazardous materials to the facility.

Completed

OBJECTIVE: Increase the diversion rate of waste in the La Crosse Disposal System.

TARGET: Restore the diversion rate to calendar year 2012 levels.

The diversion rate decreased by 2.3%. See discussion in the Environmental Performance section.

The annual review of the Departments environmental aspects and impacts are an important part of the Departments EMS and critical to continual improvement of environmental performance. Based on the most recent review, new objectives and targets were set for 2015. These targets are posted on the Department's website and will be discussed in the 2015 report.

<http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/SolidWaste/index.asp>

Internal EMS Audit

On December 11, 2014, Perfect Environmental Performance, LLC. conducted the 3rd year Green Tier Conformance audit of La Crosse County's EMS. The EMS was found to be in conformance with the requirements found in Wisconsin Statute 299.83. A Letter of Conformance was submitted to the WDNR.

Environmental Performance

Waste Diversion

The overall waste diversion rate for the La Crosse Disposal System (LDS) decreased from 35.3% to 33.0%. One of the prime reasons was the institution of single stream recycling in the Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska. While single stream recycling is the right thing to do and La Crosse County enthusiastically endorses it, there has been a negative impact in the volume and quality of the waste diverted for energy recover at

the Xcel facility. The Department's waste diversion goal is only a measure of the diversion of waste that is received by the LDS. While diversion in La Crosse Disposal System has decreased, La Crosse County believes that the overall diversion of waste within the county is increasing.

Recycling of shingles, concrete and asphalt fluctuates based on the construction activity in the area. Because these are heavy materials, changes in their volume can cause a significant variation in the landfills diversion rate. There has been an overall downward trend in recycling of these materials at the La Crosse County landfill. At the same time, other entities have increased the recycling of these materials. At this time, the county does not have the data to quantify this trend.

For the second year in a row, the diversion at the Household Hazardous Materials (HHM) program was included in the diverted materials report. In 2014 diversion rate at HHM increased by 10% to 76.8%.

The chart below shows the waste diversion for the last seven years, including the percentage and totals tons of waste diverted.

Year	Total Waste	Waste Diverted at Xcel Waste to Energy		Diverted at the Landfill		Waste That is Landfilled		Total Waste Diverted at the Landfill & Xcel	
	Tons	Tons	%	Tons	%	Tons	%	Tons	%
2014	159,477	40,644	62.05%	11,935	10.04%	118,833	74.51%	52,579	32.97%
2013	162,922	43,357	55.86%	13,835	11.62%	105,411	64.70%	57,511	35.30%
2012	138,408	48,473	63.66%	14,046	15.62%	75,889	54.83%	62,519	45.17%
2011	155,737	44,816	59.28%	*22,377	20.17%	88,544	56.85%	67,193	43.15%
2010	128,137	42,022	56.35%	13,040	15.14%	73,075	57.03%	55,062	42.97%
2009	140,654	66,923	59.77%	16,180	16.07%	84,476	60.06%	56,177	39.94%
2008	151,767	73,785	54.99%	12,447	11.19%	98,744	65.06%	53,023	34.94%

* In 2011, severe storm damage in La Crosse resulted in the diversion for recycling, of an additional 9,000 tons of shingles.

Other Environmental Performance Indicators - Household Hazardous Materials Facility

La Crosse County Solid Waste Department operates a permanent, year round household hazardous and VSQG waste facility. The following chart shows the number of VSQG and household users and the pounds of waste collected from each.

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
VSQG (Small Business) Users	508	465	341	391	524
VSQG (Small Business) Waste (lbs)	165,124	164,899	105,644	111,690	185,119
Household Users	10,955	10,265	9,915	6,454	6,398
Household Waste (lbs)	766,718	711,377	708,753	436,572	365,316

The Household Hazardous Materials Program conducts clean sweeps in 6-8 neighboring counties each year. In 2014, clean sweep events served 1,789 users and collected over 54,000 pounds of household and agricultural hazardous wastes.

Environmental Improvement Activities in 2014

- Land use planning and management activities on the landfill property:
 - Started a partnership with a local non-profit, Outdoor Recreational Alliance to develop walking trails on landfill property that eventually will connect to other area trails. Specific planning has taken place to locate the trails and construction has begun on a small section in the community forest.
 - Working with a Boy Scout (Eagle project) and other local businesses constructed a bridge over a wetland to allow for expansion of the walking trails.
 - Working with local Boy Scouts and other organizations to enhance wildlife habitat including elimination of invasive species, cleaning up a farmstead dumping site and removing old farm fencing.
 - Constructed a section of hiking trails in the bluffs on the eastern portion of the landfill site.
 - Conducted a Bioblitz where local experts assessed the populations of flora and fauna on the landfill site.

- Community outreach and educational activities:
 - Conducting tours and educational programs for community leaders, area groups and the public. Over 730 people toured the landfill in 2014, and over 555 people attended presentations by Solid Waste Dept staff.
 - Conducting an open house and customer appreciation event each year.
 - Assisted the Boy Scouts with a Scrap-A-Thon, which encouraged households and businesses to recycle metal scrap, donating the proceeds to the local Boy Scout Camp scholarship fund.
 - Participating in the Empire Screen Printing Stakeholders Group and sharing information regarding developing an EMS. Empire Screen Printing is a local manufacturer that has applied for the Green Tier program.
 - Collaborating with the La Crosse County Prevention Network (LCPN) and local law enforcement agencies to increase the availability of collections of unwanted medications.

- Activities by the La Crosse County Sustainability Coordinator:
 - Participating as a board member of the Western Sustainability Institute and Coulee Partners for Sustainability and as staff to the La Crosse Sustainability Commission, a joint organization between the County and the City of La Crosse.
 - Facilitating the updating of county department's sustainability goals as well as giving an annual report to the County board on accomplishments by departments.
 - Collaborating with Western Technical College to develop business sustainability programs.
 - Working with the universities on educational opportunities to use the landfill complex as a living lab.
 - Coordinating with science teacher's in the public schools to use the landfill complex as a teaching tool for students.

Stakeholder Involvement

Because the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department is a public entity, there is a high level of transparency with the public and the Department's stakeholders. The La Crosse County, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee have oversight authority over the Solid Waste Department. This committee meets monthly and these meetings are open to the public. The committee's agenda and meeting minutes are posted on the County's website and the local media covers its activities.

The La Crosse Disposal System has a Solid Waste Policy Board that provides representation to all member communities in the Disposal System and advises the Solid Waste Department on policy matters. This Board meets four times per year and is informed of all matters relevant to stakeholders, including the Departments EMS and Green Tier activities.

The La Crosse Disposal System Annual Meeting and quarterly meetings with the haulers also serve as opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback to the Solid Waste Department.

Compliance

The WDNR conducted solid waste and air inspections in 2014. There were no issues found.

Relationship with the WDNR

The La Crosse County Solid Waste Department had a positive working relationship with the WDNR prior to entering into the Green Tier Program. Participation in the Green Tier program has enhanced this relationship.

Since 2009, the two parties have met annually in December to review the results of the current year and to discuss plans for the upcoming year. The Solid Waste Department is looking forward to increased collaboration with the WDNR, especially with activities relating to its Master Land Use Plan. The WDNR met with La Crosse County staff to discuss the details of an application for a plan modification for the disposal of Xcel RDF facility ash. Because of this meeting, the review process was significantly shortened.

Looking to the Future

The La Crosse County Solid Waste Department and the WDNR concluded that the issues that La Crosse County were putting forward in the Tier 2 contract discussions could be as easily discussed within the current terms of the Green Tier agreement. Discussions regarding a Tier 2 contract can resume in the future if the parties feel such an agreement would be beneficial to pursue.

La Crosse County would like to increase collaboration with the WDNR in land management activities including wetland restoration, habitat management and invasive species control. La Crosse County is updating its Solid Waste Management Plan and will be looking to the WDNR to review this plan when completed.

The Green Tier program has proven valuable to the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department. As both parties, better understand each other's positions, La Crosse County looks forward to continuing this relationship regardless of whether or not the County pursues Tier 2 status.