

2015 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, cement, blacktop, mattresses and yard waste; a residential 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. At the end of 2015 Xcel Energy was approaching a milestone of processing its 2 millionth ton of solid waste into electricity. This milestone is expected to be reached in the spring of 2016.

Environmental Management System (EMS)

In 2012, the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department completed an EMS that was determined to meet the Green Tier functional 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 2015.

2015 Environmental Objectives and Targets La Crosse County Solid Waste Department

OBJECTIVE: Reduce air emissions from the landfill operation.

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

Met all applicable operational goals in 2015.

TARGET: Continuously review special wastes and their handling procedures to minimize excessively dusty loads. **Completed, on-going process.**

TARGET: Maintain landfill roads in a manner that minimizes fugitive dust.
Immediate maintenance reduced fugitive dust. Experimented successfully with the application of a dust suppressant.

TARGET: Increase awareness of the harmful effects of exposure to hydrogen sulfide.
Completed

OBJECTIVE: Reduce exposure to air emissions at the Household Hazardous Materials Facility.

TARGET: Continuously improve HHM processes and procedures to minimize the generation of air emissions at the source.

Completed

OBJECTIVE: Continuously improve the diversion programs for waste generated in the La Crosse Disposal System.

TARGET: Seek opportunities to improve diversion programs; implement as practical.

See discussion in the Environmental Performance section.

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.

Reviewed waste handling and revised SOPs accordingly.

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

TARGET: Investigate the feasibility of conducting an emergency response exercise at HHM.

Not completed. Planning to conduct exercise with local hazardous materials team in 2016.

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 2016. These targets are posted on the Department's website and will be discussed in the 2016 report.

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

Internal EMS Audit

An EMS internal audit, conducted in December of 2015.

Environmental Performance

Waste Diversion

The overall waste diversion rate for the La Crosse Disposal System (LDS) increased from 33.0% to 34.2%. Single stream recycling in the Cities of La Crosse and Onalaska continues to have an impact on the diversion programs of the LDS. 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 recovery 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.

In 2015, LDS worked with a local recycler to trial collection and recycling of mattresses. 41 tons of mattresses were collected at the La Crosse County Landfill and delivered for recycling. This program continues in 2016.

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 third year in a row, the diversion at the Household Hazardous Materials (HHM) program was included in the diverted materials report. In 2015 diversion rate at HHM was 73.6%.

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		Total Waste Diverted at the Landfill & Xcel	
	Tons	Tons	%	Tons	%	Tons	%
2015	176,244	48,876	63.06%	11,212	8.83%	60,390	34.27%
2014	159,477	40,644	62.05%	11,935	9.77%	52,579	32.97%
2013	162,922	43,357	55.86%	13,835	11.62%	57,511	35.30%
2012	138,408	48,473	63.66%	14,046	15.62%	62,519	45.17%
2011	155,737	44,816	59.28%	*22,377	20.17%	67,193	43.15%
2010	128,137	42,022	56.35%	13,040	15.14%	55,062	42.97%
2009	140,654	66,923	59.77%	16,180	16.07%	56,177	39.94%

* 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.

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
VSQG (Small Business) Users	482	508	465	341	391
VSQG (Small Business) Waste (lbs)	118,420	165,124	164,899	105,644	111,690
Household Users	10,008	10,955	10,265	9,915	6,454
Household Waste (lbs)	639,039	766,718	711,377	708,753	436,572

The Household Hazardous Materials Program conducts clean sweeps in 6-8 neighboring counties each year. In 2015, clean sweep events served 1,660 users and collected over 55,000 pounds of household and agricultural hazardous wastes.

Environmental Improvement Activities in 2015

- Land use planning and management activities on the landfill property:
 - Expanded on its 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 continues on another section in the community forest.
 - Working with a Boy Scout (Eagle project) and other local businesses constructed a boardwalk over a wetland to allow for expansion of the walking trails.
 - Another Eagle Scout candidate constructed a hibernaculum for snakes.
 - Working with local Boy Scouts and other organizations to enhance wildlife habitat including elimination of invasive species and building bat and bird houses.
 - 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 1,050 people toured the landfill in 2015, and 880 people attended presentations by Solid Waste Department 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.
 - Hosting a community education event in conjunction with the annual “Bioblitz”.
- 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.

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 inspections in 2015. 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.