



**LA CROSSE COUNTY**

Exceptional services. Extraordinary place.

**2019**

# La Crosse County Solid Waste Annual Report to Stakeholders



**La Crosse Disposal System**

*A Responsible Resource*

**WDNR**



**GREEN TIER**

## List of Board/Committee Members Stakeholders

La Crosse County Board Chair  
Tara Johnson

### Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

Patrick Barlow, Chair  
Ralph Geary, Vice Chair  
Steve Doyle  
Ray Ebert  
Maureen Freedland  
Dave Holtze/Randy Erickson  
Matt Nikolay

### Solid Waste Policy Board

Maureen Freedland, Chair (La Crosse County)  
Patrick Barlow, Vice Chair (La Crosse County)  
Tom Jacobs (La Crosse County)  
Lewis Kuhlman (City of La Crosse)  
Jarrod Holter (City of Onalaska)  
Steve Hogden (Trempealeau County)  
Bruce Fuerbringer (Buffalo County)  
Teresa Walter (Houston County)  
Mike Wobbe (Wabasha County)

La Crosse County Administrator  
Steve O'Malley

La Crosse Solid Waste Department  
Jadd Stilwell, Director

### La Crosse Disposal System Private Contractors

Xcel Energy  
St. Joseph Construction Company, Inc.

### Consultants

Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH)  
Utility Safety & Design, Inc. (USDI)



Dear Stakeholders:

For the past 30 years, the La Crosse County Solid Waste System's annual report has been presented to our Stakeholders in person at our annual meeting. It has been an opportunity to connect and share in our successes. While this year will be different, it does not diminish our successes, but emphasizes our resilience as a community as we find new ways to come together and share information.

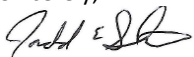
2019 was another busy and productive year for the La Crosse County Solid Waste System. While this report is focused on the accomplishments of 2019, we want you to be assured, we are working within the guidance of our State and County experts on how to conduct our business, keeping stakeholders and staff safe at the facility.

As discussed at the annual meeting last year, 2019 was a year intended to focus on minor site improvements and efficiencies, while kicking off the landfill expansion process. Many of the accomplishments from 2019 are addressed in more detail in this report and include:

- Initiating the landfill expansion process to permit additional air space that will carry the facility well into the future
- Implementing a radio-frequency identification (RFID) system at the landfill scale to allow frequent system users to check in/out more efficiently, saving our Stakeholders time and money
- Installing a landfill gas (LFG) treatment system to remove hydrogen sulfide from select wells to enable more LFG to be directed to Gundersen
- Planting of trees along the STH16 view shed to screen landfill operations, establishing a site tree nursery, and changing site grading for storm water management improvements
- Performing numerous community outreach projects and tours to connect the community to the landfill operations and vision

Our actions could not have resulted in accomplishments without the teamwork and dedication of Department staff and our valued partners. Decades of accomplishments and tough decisions have positioned us to be better prepared for challenging times we are currently facing. Every obstacle is an opportunity waiting to reveal itself, and are we are in a strong position to overcome the challenges currently presented to our team.

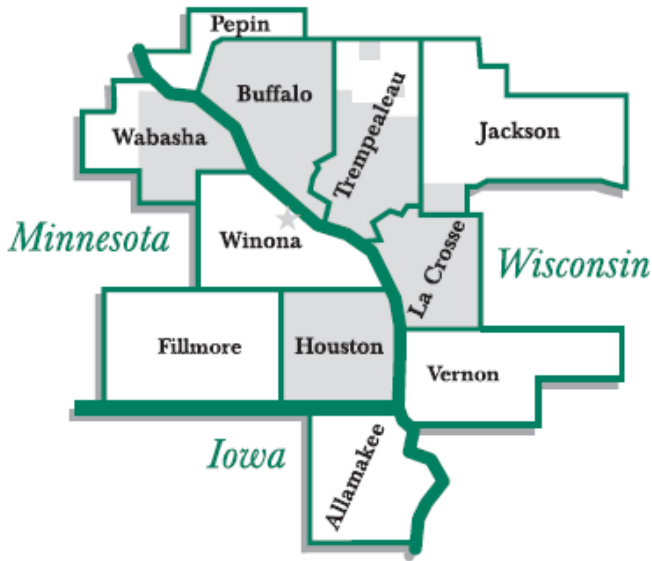
Sincerely,



Jadd Stilwell, Director

La Crosse County Solid Waste

## Service Area



**2019 Highway 16 Tree Screening Berm  
(Photo – Spring 2020)**

## 2019 Year in Review

**Expansion Process** – The Landfill expansion process was initiated in 2019, with the process taking between 3-4 years to complete. Items completed/started in 2019 include: Initial Site Inspection (ISI) Request, Meeting and Report to WDNR (COMPLETED), Initial Site Report (ISR), meeting and report to WDNR (COMPLETED), Preliminary Design and volume calculations (cell footprint boundaries) (IN PROCESS), Public/Community Outreach (IN PROCESS), Alternative Geotechnical Program Request and Report to WDNR (COMPLETED), Pre-Feasibility correspondence with WDNR (COMPLETED), Initiate Feasibility Report data collection- (IN PROCESS).

**RFID System** – In 2019, as part of the scale software update, the Solid Waste Department implemented a new RFID system. RFID is an acronym for “radio-frequency Identification” and refers to a technology in which digital data encoded in RFID tags or smart labels (defined below) is captured by a reader via radio waves. This technology allows trucks to scale in, most of the time, without the assistance of a scale attendant. This method has greatly decreased the amount of time spent scaling in.

**Gas-to-Energy** – For the past several years the landfill has been dealing with increased hydrogen sulfide levels within the collected LFG. To maintain compliance with the power purchase Agreement with Gundersen Health System, the County purchased a hydrogen sulfide treatment system to optimize LFG recovery and achieve Agreement emission limits. After reviewing options, the Schlumberger Purification Solutions (Sulfa Treat) System was selected. The portable gas conditioning system was installed in February of 2019.

**Construction/Land-Use Activities** – In order to insure proper discharge of stormwater, the landfill repaired three stormwater conveyance ditch lines on the East, South, and West sides of the existing site. Additional visual improvements included the Highway 16 Right-of-Way Tree Planting project. This project is meant to act as a screening berm for future landfill development. The project consisted of planting 321 various trees and shrubs along 1,850 feet of the Right-of-Way. The landfill also installed a new tree nursery on site in the spring of 2019. Over 150 juvenile trees were planted in the nursery. This project was listed in the Master Land Use Plan and the trees will be used on future site screening berms.

**Outreach** – The Department partners with area organizations to provide proper waste disposal and hauling services at no charge. The program prioritizes individuals whose health and home are at risk, environmental groups, and community improvement projects. In 2019, we partnered with groups like Mississippi River Clean Up, the Northside Clean Up and the Neighborhood Revitalization project. For 2019, this program managed transportation and disposal of almost 135,500 pounds of waste.

**Tours/Presentations** – In 2019, the Department provided tours and onsite training for over 1,000 individuals. Organizations and classes from UW-La Crosse, Logan Middle School, Brookwood H.S., Viterbo, Boy Scouts, Holmen Elementary, and Western Technical College visited the site. These tours facilitate in providing an in-depth look at the Landfill processes and discussion about our regional waste management approach.

**FINANCIALS**  
**LA CROSSE COUNTY, WISCONSIN**  
**STATEMENT OF NET POSITION**  
**SOLID WASTE**

**UNAUDITED**

	<b>2019</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Cash and investments	\$ 4,325,552
Restricted investments	-
Receivables (net of allowance for uncollectibles)	816,064
Prepayments	69,084
Total current assets	<u>5,210,700</u>
Noncurrent assets	
Receivables	88,564
Restricted investments	9,387,628
Total noncurrent assets	<u>9,476,192</u>
Capital Assets	42,255,666
Construction in progress	92,937
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(27,022,808)</u>
Total capital assets - net	<u>15,325,795</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>\$ 30,012,687</u>
<b>DEFERRED OUTFLOWS OF RESOURCES</b>	<u>\$ 2,486,164</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Current liabilities	3,361,717
General obligation bonds payable	8,271,635
Landfill long term closure cost liability	8,349,474
Net pension obligation	108,598
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>\$ 20,091,424</u>
<b>DEFERRED INFLOWS OF RESOURCES</b>	<u>\$ 153,393</u>
<b>NET POSITION</b>	
Net investment in capital assets	9,669,272
Unrestricted	2,584,762
<b>TOTAL NET POSITION</b>	<u><u>\$ 12,254,034</u></u>

**FINANCIALS**  
**LA CROSSE COUNTY, WISCONSIN**  
**STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND**  
**CHANGES IN NET POSITION**  
**SOLID WASTE**

**UNAUDITED**

	<b>2019</b>
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>	
Public charges for services	\$ 12,576,888
State grant	22,978
Interdepartmental revenues	14,791
Miscellaneous revenues	45,436
Total operating revenues	<u>12,660,093</u>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	
Personnel services	845,598
Contractual services	6,420,760
General and administrative services	380,874
Supplies	10,351
Utilities	118,219
Depreciation and amortization	1,174,245
Other services and charges	2,833,279
Total operating expenses	<u>11,783,326</u>
 Operating income (loss)	 <u>876,767</u>
<b>NONOPERATING REVENUES (EXPENSES)</b>	 (79,661)
 <b>CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>	 797,106
 <b>NET POSITION-BEGINNING</b>	 <u>11,456,928</u>
<b>PRIOR YEAR ADJUSTMENT</b>	
 <b>NET POSITION-ENDING</b>	 <u><u>\$ 12,254,034</u></u>

# Waste Diversion

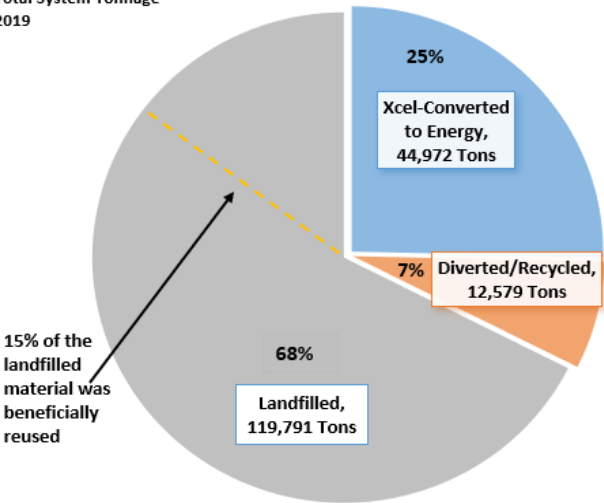
The overall waste diversion rate for the La Crosse Disposal System increased slightly from 32.16% in 2018 to 32.45% in 2019. While we did not see significant increases in our percentage of materials diverted, due to higher than expected landfill tonnages, several areas noted substantial increases in tonnages. Xcel Energy was able to convert an additional 3,589 tons of material to RDF in 2019. Of the 119,791 tons of material landfilled (up 11,471 tons from 2018) we were able to increase our beneficially reused landfill material by 6% in 2019. Proper utilization of these waste materials in road base, berm construction and daily cover prevents the utilization of clean soils and aggregate materials being used within the landfill. The County continues to provide opportunities to our customers to divert reusable resources from the landfill, while working with our stakeholders to find uses for diverted waste streams.

Recycling of shingles, concrete and asphalt fluctuates based on the construction activity in the area. Our 2019 percent of diverted/recycled materials increased by 1% which equates to an increase of 2,601 tons over 2018. The current trend is for this material to be reincorporated into active projects as a subbase. This reduces costs on construction projects and minimizes utilization of virgin materials. In 2019, a total of 5,107.34 tons of residential shingles were processes and supplied locally for incorporation into asphalt and aggregate for road base.

For the 7<sup>th</sup> year in a row, the diversion at the Household Hazardous Materials (HHM) program was included in the diverted materials report. In 2019, the program achieved a 76.84% diversion rate.

**177,341**  
Total System Tonnage  
2019

## 2019 WASTE DIVERSION



### Diverted/Recycled Waste in Tons:

Shingles	2,629
Concrete and Blacktop	4,315
Wood	3,195
Xcel Metals	1,461
HHM	205
Landfill Metals	161
Tires	113
Yard Waste	122
Mattresses	69
Clean Soil	309

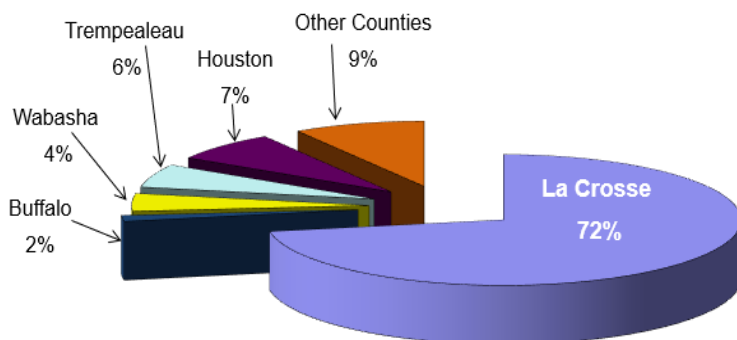


## Annual Tonnage to Xcel and Tonnage by County

The volume of tonnage delivered to Xcel for 2019 was above contract minimum and up 4% from 2018. The largest area of impact was Other Counties – up 3% from 2018. This category consists of companies outside of the region that have set zero landfill initiatives. These waste streams consist mostly of manufacturing waste that does not have a recycling value or incinerated due to proprietary requirements. The largest drop in materials to Xcel was residential waste (-2%) from La Crosse County. The average OBW delivered to Xcel (as a % of total waste) was 1.34% in 2019. This is a slight increase from 1.20% in 2018.

Of the 75,436 tons of MSW delivered to Xcel in 2019, 77.22% of All Waste Processed (AWP) was converted into Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF). This is up 3.72% from 2018. One component of this significant increase was the installation of a front end waste shredder at Xcel, replacing the existing flail mill in 2019. A second in-line shredder is currently scheduled for installation in June of 2020. During the first quarter of 2020, Xcel is operating at 78.62%.

### FRENCH ISLAND RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY -2019



**Total Tons in 2019 - 75,436**

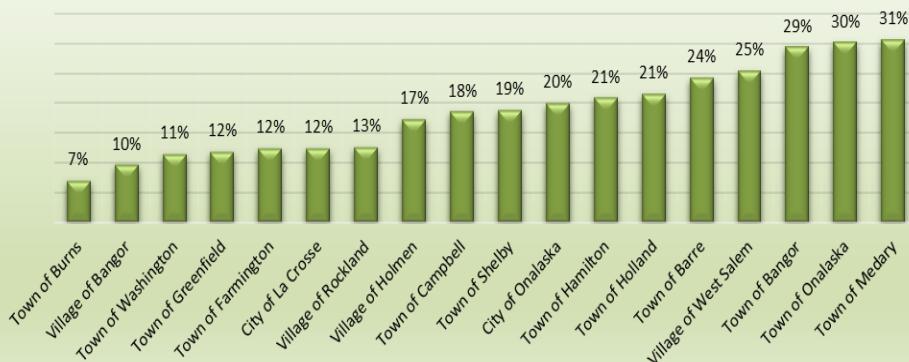
As reported by Xcel Scale

# Household Hazardous Materials Program (HHM)

Program accomplishments for 2019 include:

- 8,413 residential users dropped off 466,054 pounds of waste. Since the program's 2003 inception, over 115,000 residential users have brought in nearly 7.5 million pounds of waste.
- Qualifying small businesses and organizations are served on a fee for service basis. 230 of these entities utilized the facility contributing 56,378 pounds of waste.
- 930 participants in four Wisconsin counties disposed of 17,386 pounds of hazardous waste via Clean Sweep partnership events. An additional 221 participants disposed of 14,689 pounds during Houston County, MN collection events.
- 78% of the waste collected by HHM is reused, recycled or beneficially used in some way.
- The Reuse Room program has grown from annually providing a few thousand pounds of materials back to the community to over 82,000 pounds in 2019. With an estimated worth of \$1.50/pound, the value of these reusable products is over \$124,000.
- Throughout the year, HHM staff responded to over 1,800 inquiries, distributed hundreds of program brochures, contributed content to the County's website and Facebook pages and participated in several medial interviews.

**Utilization Per Municipal Household\***



\*Number of households obtained from the US Census Bureau 2017 American Community Survey

## Anticipated Accomplishments for 2020

Work on the Expansion process continues in 2020. The major activities as related to the expansion process in 2020 listed below. Since this work requires the collaboration of numerous groups, we are projecting some delays in 2020 due to COVID-19.

- Continuation of Siting Resolution and Negotiations with Cities
- Alternate Geotechnical Investigation Approval: Anticipated late March
- Geotechnical Investigation
  - Began the week of March 30 (2-3 weeks of field investigation)  
6 months of groundwater data collection
- Continued Expansion Design and Operations Refinement
- Public/Community Outreach
- Feasibility Report Preparation (likely extend into 2021)
  - Environmental review, needs analysis, alternatives analysis
- Clay Borrow Identification and Potential Study
  - Clay borrow permit and local approvals a requirement of vendor

### **Xcel Energy Update**

Requests for utilization of Xcel, by zero landfill organizations, continue to increase. Eight companies currently access the facility in order to divert waste from landfills. We will continue to monitor this trend moving forward due to its impacts on contract terms and landfill airspace. We are also in the process of working with the Xcel Energy French Island Facility on a plan to meet their long-term goal of reducing the cost per Megawatt. 2020 goals include: increasing efficiencies, reducing fuel costs, and increasing percent RDF combusted.

For the past few years the Solid Waste Department has worked towards inclusion into 2013 Wisconsin Act 301, under the budget cycle. Currently, La Crosse County is charged a WDNR environmental landfill tipping fee for residue brought to the landfill from the Xcel Energy French Island Facility. Under the current proposal, put forward as Assembly Bill 713 and Senate Bill 670, these residuals would be exempted from environmental landfill tipping fees. Due to the impacts to Covid-19 the last Senate session was dismissed. Moving forward in 2020 the Department will re-initiate the steps to try and get this important bill passed. It will allow us to redirect these funds to limit local tipping fee increases, and to continue to invest in numerous other beneficial reuse programs, providing a significant value to our stakeholders and region while operating outside of the County tax levy.

# Mission Statement – La Crosse Disposal System

*A publicly managed, integrated solid waste disposal system provided through public/private partnerships, and committed to a responsible and sustainable approach to solid waste management.*



La Crosse Disposal System

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A Responsible Resource



[www.lacrossecounty.org/SolidWaste/](http://www.lacrossecounty.org/SolidWaste/)