



Pine thinning, Nine Mile Forest

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## Blastomycosis in Marathon County

Dale Grosskurth, Health Department

Blastomycosis cases have increased in Marathon County. Because not all cases fit the usual profile, the Health Department is working with the Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to better understand the disease.

Blastomycosis is a fungus that grows in nature and is more frequently found in acidic, sandy soils; decaying wood and other vegetation; and by waterways with fluctuating water levels. The fungus produces spores under specific conditions of temperature humidity, and nutrition.

The spores become airborne when disturbed. Blastomycosis develops when spores are inhaled by people and animals, particularly dogs. Most exposures occur in spring and fall, with disease incidence spiking 1-3 months later.

Blastomycosis primarily affects the lungs, but it can also affect skin and bone. While some people don't show any symptoms, Blastomycosis is generally more severe in the elderly and people with underlying health conditions such as a weakened immune system, asthma or other chronic lung conditions, smoking or diabetes.

Currently, there are no effective prevention measures for Blastomycosis, so knowing the symptoms is important.

Symptoms include fever and dry cough leading to weight loss, chest pain and a persistent cough with thick sputum. Other symptoms may include muscle aches, night sweats, coughing up blood, shortness of breath and chest tightness.

For more information:  
[dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/factsheets/PDFfactsheets/Blastomycosis\\_42030\\_0504.pdf](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/factsheets/PDFfactsheets/Blastomycosis_42030_0504.pdf)  
[www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/blastomycosis/](http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/blastomycosis/)

## Private Well Owners Urged to Test

Dale Grosskurth, Health Department

Clean, safe drinking water is an important element of good health. Testing well water on an annual basis is one of the easiest things a private well owner can do. According to State studies, it is estimated that as many as 20-25% of private wells may have bacterial contamination. In Marathon County, that represents approximately 5,000 wells.

For more information on how to have private well water tested, contact the Marathon County Health Department Laboratory: 715-261-1908

Marathon County Health Department recommends private well owners test their well water for coliform bacteria and nitrate. Coliform bacteria are microorganisms found in human and animal waste, in soil, on vegetation and in surface water runoff. While rarely causing sickness themselves, coliform bacteria are used as an indicator that other bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause sickness may also be present.

If infants under the age of six months and/or women of childbearing age drink the well water, test for nitrate. Nitrates can cause a serious health condition in infants called "blue baby syndrome", which has symptoms similar to suffocation. Research has also shown a connection between high nitrate levels in water and birth defects and miscarriages in pregnant women.

# Landfill & Incineration Disposal Prohibitions

Meleesa Johnson, Solid Waste Department

The 1989 Wisconsin Act 335 laid the groundwork for Wisconsin's recycling programs and set a schedule of landfill/incineration disposal bans. The law was in response to the provisions of the Resource, Conservation and Recovery Act and a predicted reduction in disposal locations and capacity.

Lawmakers were also responding to concerns about "human and public health and welfare and the environment through the emission of toxic air emissions" (Act 335) when waste materials were improperly disposed of or burned.

Act 335 prohibits the following materials from landfills:

- Lead-acid batteries
- Appliances
- Waste oil
- Yard materials
- Aluminum beverage containers
- Corrugated paper/boxes
- Glass containers
- Magazines
- #1 & 2 plastic bottles
- Newspapers
- Office paper
- Steel & bi-metal containers
- Waste tires

The above items must be either recycled or disposed of through local community programs.

Beginning September 1, 2010 electronic devices will be banned from landfills. They include televisions, monitors, computer hard drives, and office equipment.

Beginning January 1, 2011 oil filters and oil absorbents will be banned from disposal.

Questions?  
715-446-3101 extension 2



## What's In Your Tackle Box?

Meleesa Johnson, Solid Waste Department

Get The Lead Out is an ongoing campaign to spread the word about the dangers posed by lead fishing tackle. Lead is a common component in many kinds of fishing jigs and sinkers. However, lead is toxic to wildlife and can damage their nervous and reproductive systems. In fact, one loon sinker inadvertently consumed by a loon is enough to poison it and eventually kill it.

As a way to promote awareness of the dangers posed by lead tackle, the Solid Waste Department is offering to exchange lead tackle for that which is more environmentally sensitive. While supplies last, anglers may bring in lead tackle for free hazardous waste disposal and then receive a piece of lead-free tackle. Anglers may find other lead-free tackle choices at most sporting good stores.



## Annosum Root Rot- A Perilous Pine Disease

Doug Brown, Parks Recreation and Forestry

For more information on Annosum:  
[dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fh/annosum/](http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fh/annosum/)  
Or contact your local DNR Forester

Annosum root rot affects over 200 woody species but is most common in red and white pine plantations. The disease enters a plantation by spores from fungal mats landing on freshly cut stumps during thinning.

The disease moves through the roots of infected trees and spreads via root grafts. Infected trees are prone to reduced height & diameter growth and eventual death.

The 1<sup>st</sup> symptoms appear 2-3 years after thinning and result in dying or dead pockets of trees.

Currently, there are no known pockets in Marathon County. The disease has been confirmed in Shawano, Wood and Portage counties.

Currently, there is no cure for this disease. PREVENTION is the key.

To prevent the disease, freshly cut stumps are treated with fungicide to kill the spores. Marathon County Parks, Recreation and Forestry will require stump treatments on all pine sales on county forests beginning in 2011.

There are no requirements for private properties, but treatment is encouraged.

# Marathon County Branding Initiative

Karen Nerison, The Wausau Region Chamber and Mary Kluz, UW-Extension

Marathon County Economic Development Corporation (McDEVCO), a private and public partnership with Marathon County government and The Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce, has launched "Brand Marathon County." The initiative is designed to discover, define and design the area's competitive differentiator – that is, what makes the county special so it can stand out in the market place.

The goal of this community-wide initiative is to attract residents, businesses and visitors to the community and to improve/maintain quality of life for those residing here.

The Brand Marathon County Marketing Team has recently completed the initial research phase. More than 15 pieces of qualitative and quantitative research have been gathered to help describe where Marathon County is today.

North Star Destination Strategies will present a review of the research and recommended strategies to stakeholders representing the Marathon County area. A platform statement will identify the target audience, a frame of reference and the message about what makes Marathon County unique and attractive.

The final stage includes ideas for communications, signage, special events, community outreach, online initiatives, and more. A local creative agency will bring the ideas to life.

For more information contact Karen Nerison at 715-848-5947 or visit [www.brandmarathoncounty.com](http://www.brandmarathoncounty.com).

Visit the website and submit your photo of Marathon County!

## 2011 Farm Technology Days Comes to Marathon County

Melissa Ploeckelman, UW-Extension VISTA volunteer

The Wisconsin Farm Technology Days Inc. and UW Extension look forward to your attendance at the 2011 show hosted in Marathon County.

This agricultural show is designed to bring agriculture clientele in contact with the latest agriculture technology, research and practical application of developments for farms and businesses of various sizes and enterprise sizes.

The show includes over 600 exhibitors, farm operation demonstrations, and youth activities. About 80,000 visitors are expected to visit July 12-14, 2011 at Seehafer Acres, Marshfield.



You can learn more about the plans for the 2011 show at the Fall Fest on Sunday August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010 from noon to 5 pm at Willow Springs Garden just north of Wausau.

There will be activities for everyone: a pig roast, watermelon seed spitting, dunk tank, pedal tractor races, and a band. Free admission.

Farm Technology Days  
<http://www.marathonfarmtech.com>

## Comprehensive Plan Consistency

Diane Wessel, Conservation, Planning & Zoning

At the end of the 2009-2010 legislative session, AB 834/SB 601 was passed into law. The new law, Act 372, defines "consistent with" as "Further or does not contradict the objectives, goals and policies contained in the comprehensive plan."

Municipal comprehensive plans are on the Marathon County website under Conservation Planning and Zoning

This definition of consistency gives the local governmental unit discretion to determine if changes to zoning, subdivision, or official mapping ordinances are consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan.

It is important to look to the **text** of the comprehensive plan to evaluate consistency. It is not necessary for changes to zoning districts (map) to mirror the future land use map in the plan.

If an amendment or update to the comprehensive plan is necessary, the procedure is the same as the adoption of the plan. For those communities that participated in the Marathon County planning process, amendment procedures can be found in the implementation section of the comprehensive plan.

# Community Connections

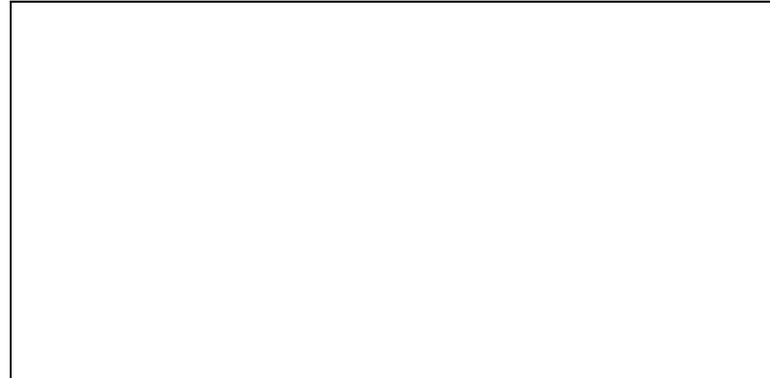
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## A PERIODIC NEWSLETTER BY THE MARATHON COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE AND DEPARTMENTS

Conservation, Planning & Zoning: 261-6040  
Health: 261-1900  
Highway: 261-1800  
Parks, Recreation & Forestry: 261-1550  
Solid Waste: 446-3339  
UW-Extension: 261-1230

The Marathon County Environmental Resources Committee provides guidance on policies and strategies that balance, protect and enhance environmental and community resources through cooperation with all levels of government.



## Clean Sweep Event in Stratford

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Stratford Clean Sweep Event will be October 2 at the Stratford Area Fire Department, 613 S. Webster Street, 9AM-12PM.

Businesses and farmers with hazardous waste & those with electronics should contact the Solid Waste Department at: 715-446-3101 ext 2

We're on the Web!  
[www.co.marathon.wi.us](http://www.co.marathon.wi.us)

## Success Leads to Expansion of Medication Collection Program

Meleesa Johnson, Solid Waste

From 2005 until 2009 the solid waste and health departments worked collaboratively to offer one day collection events for old and unwanted medications. Then on January 1, 2010 a new era in pharmaceutical collections began in Marathon County. Full-time drop boxes, located at Everest-Metro, Rothschild and Wausau police departments, went online. These drop boxes gave residents year-round medication disposal options.

The full-time drop boxes have been widely used during the first six months and resulted in the collection of over 450 pounds of medications such as antibiotics, heart medications and anti-depressants. Additionally, nearly 100 pounds of dangerous narcotics were also collected.

However, the need for safe medication disposal options reaches beyond the metro area. As a result of this recognition, the Colby-Abbotsford Police Department will provide medication drop off services for the western portions of Marathon County.

Citizens may drop off medications at the police department during standard business hours. Because these hours may vary, persons traveling long distances are advised to call ahead.

**Colby-Abbotsford Police Station**  
112 W. Spruce Street, Abbotsford  
715-223-2313

Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 8AM-5PM  
Tuesday & Thursday: 8AM-1PM

