

## Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Minutes

6/24/14, Dunn Co Ag Service Center, Menomonie, WI

**Present at the meeting:** Bob Fitzwilliam-West Wisconsin Land Trust; Katie Wantoch-UW Extension Dunn Co.; Dave Blumer-Lake Education & Planning Services; Mike Wendt-3M; Ron Verdon-TMLIA; John Sipple-NRCS Dunn Co.; Dan Prestebak-Dunn Co. Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher-Barron County Conservationist; Buzz Sorge, Paul LaLiberte-WDNR; Nels Paulson-UW-Stout; Rod Olson-Desair Lake Association; Julia Olmstead, Dan Zerr-UW-Extension; and guest professors and students doing research through UW-Stout's REU grant.

**Updates:** Everyone shared any new information/developments pertinent to the Red Cedar River Watershed (RCRW) efforts.

- Nels: He introduced other UW-Stout faculty and the students (from all parts of the country) who are working at Stout for the summer through the REU grant. The students may be contacting people from the Partnership about research items. Nels also mentioned an upcoming meeting on July 8<sup>th</sup> with Kristen Flores at UW-Stevens Point to discuss sociological issues in the Wisconsin River watershed. There will also be the annual meeting of the TMLIA on August 2, and the REU students and faculty will present at the meeting.
- Bob: The WWLT is new to the Partnership, and Bob will be sending Rick Remington to future meetings. WWLT is partnering with DNR in a streambank easement program that helps establish 66 ft. easements on streambanks. The program runs for one biennium.
- Rod: He kayaked the Chetek River and chain of lakes since our last meeting and took pictures and collected water quality samples. He also met with Superior Silica Sands in Barron Co. They have some ideas on reclamation of land and holding ponds that may prove to be positive. He also met with Randy Bina, a farmer who is also with River Country Co-op, who may be interested in joining the Partnership later in the year when he's not so busy. He also talked to the Red Cedar Lake Association and is interested in somehow hooking them up with a farmer-led council in the watershed. He also mentioned the possibility of an easement on the east shore of Balsam Lake (north of Red Cedar Lake). Also the Wisconsin Realtors Association is considering a rain garden at a public landing somewhere on the Chetek chain.
- Katie: Passed on comments.
- Dave: He is working with many lake groups and on many projects in Barron Co. Also mentioned that some of the money that the Dept. of Transportation provide in a settlement of runoff issues with the Highway 53/County Rd V project, is being managed through the Rice Lake District for water quality implementation projects.
- Paul: Mentioned that there are many cold water streams in Dunn Co with no trout in them due to habitat issues, and that habitat on these streams that would help restore trout could be good implementation projects.

- Mike: 3M is active in providing money and resources to projects, including water quality monitoring, and the Jarret Creek project. They are working with Dunn Co LCD and NRCS to manage their land better. They are exploring the idea of a lease for cover crops for hay on 250 acres of their land.
- Buzz: Discussed the meeting that he, Randy Eide, Ron Verdon, and city officials from Menomonie had with Emmons & Olivier Resources Inc. in the Twin Cities to discuss minimal impact design standards (MIDS) for storm water. City officials came away with a better understanding of storm water runoff issues and how they can be addressed. Also mentioned the meeting with Kristen Flores discussed above. Also mentioned that DNR field staff doing plant studies on Tainter and Menomin Lakes noticed that there are parts of the delta where the Red Cedar comes into Tainter that are no longer accessible since the last survey done three years ago, due to sedimentation. Also mentioned that Wayne Sabatke of the Long Lake Preservation Ass is interested in joining the Partnership, as is Alex Smith who is Buzz's counterpart in Barron Co.
- John: New to the Partnership. He mentioned that NRCS is focusing on and has been doing field days on workshops about soil health. This is a good way to reach farmers, as they see learn the value of soil health which also involved keeping soil in place, which leads to water quality benefits.
- Ron: Also talked about the Twin Cities MIDS meeting. He will be having a follow-up meeting with City of Menomonie officials on 7/10. Mentioned a recent article featured in the Rice Lake Chronotype about Rod Olsen and his paddling and monitoring of waters in the Red Cedar watershed. He also mentioned that, since a TMLIA-sponsored workshop on the topic of shoreland buffers and restoration that was held a few months ago, they are beginning to see shoreland projects at various properties on the lakes. Also mentioned that the erosion assessment report done for the Red Cedar River is now on the TMLIA website.
- Tyler: Also talked about field days for soil health and how well received and educational they are, and mentioned that soil infiltration tests done during these workshops show how dramatically healthy soil (mostly some fields that had been in no-till for years) will infiltrate water versus soil that is in poor health (plowed up every year). Also mentioned that regional LCD staffs recently toured a digester in Turtle Lake that handles cheese waste and other food waste products.
- Julia: Mentioned that there will be a forum/field day held in association with the farmer-led councils on 9/4. A climatologist from Madison will be there to talk about climate change as it relates to farming. There will also be a speaker on cover crops, and some soil health demonstrations. The forum will be held in St. Croix Co. She said she is seeing lots of erosion in the St. Croix and Red Cedar watersheds due to all the rain events. She is also working on surveys for farmers in cooperation with Nels and students. She mentioned that Amanda (who didn't attend today's meeting) has been doing a lot of field work...mostly whole-farm assessments...that are part of the incentive program for the FLC in the Hay River watershed. Also mentioned the need for a grazing lands specialist in the region.
- Dan P: Recent projects focused on the lake, habitat and water quality were completed in Lake Menomin Park. Steve Rasmussen, the County Board Chair, recently wrote a letter to

the City of Menomonie, laying out the some of the county's plans for water quality management including their desire to perhaps hire a water quality management specialist, and also asking the City to not adopt a resolution toward a Lake District for Tainter and Menomin Lakes. This request was mostly because of the county's desire to focus on long-term, watershed-wide solutions, whereas those proposing a Lake District, believe quicker, in-lake solutions are the answer. The County Board also has expressed desire to be part of the Partnership. Dan also talked to Mark Deitch (Town of Grant) to ask that he be part of the Partnership, but Mark is too busy and may ask some others from the Town of Grant who may be interested.

**Update on TMDL Implementation Plan:** Dan Z told the group that he is going to focus on developing an outline of the plan to give everyone a chance to review and discuss. The Partnership is well established and a good sense of shared purpose has developed, and this should make the process of planning more efficient and effective.

**Next Steps:** A few possible stakeholders will be pursued for the next meeting. Someone from the Dunn Co Board, perhaps a farmer from the Town of Grant, as well as Wayne Sabatke and Alex Smith (mentioned above). The Partnership will now begin to move more toward writing the TMDL implementation plan, likely beginning in the next few meetings.

**Next Meeting:** The Partnership's next meeting will be Tuesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM in Barron.