

# Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Minutes

1/14/15, Dunn Co Ag Service Center, Menomonie, WI

**Present at the meeting:** Paul LaLiberte – WDNR; Dan Prestebak – Dunn County Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County Land Conservation; Rod Olson – Desair Lake Association; Nels Paulson, Cassandra Beckworth – UW Stout; Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Mike Wendt – 3M; Katie Wantoch – Dunn Co Extension; Andrew Norman – WWLT; Ron Verdon – TMLIA; Julia Olmstead, Dan Zerr-UW-Extension.

**Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda:** Meeting minutes from the December meeting were reviewed, with no changes. Agenda for the day was also reviewed with no significant changes.

**Check-In:** Everyone shared any new information/developments pertinent to the Red Cedar River Watershed efforts.

- Dan Z: Mentioned that subgroups had been meeting since the last Partnership meeting to work on chapters 3 and 4, and would discuss this further down the agenda.
- Nels: Presented summer REU results to the most recent Hay River Farmer Led Council meeting. Also announced that UW-Stout has hired a new geography professor who focuses on land resource planning, and may be interested in the Partnership's work.
- Randy: The City of Menomonie passed the storm water utility budget at their last monthly meeting. Some rates went up a bit. The City is still looking for people to lease about 200 acres of city land in the watershed and manage it with water quality concerns in mind.
- Mike: Still not much new to report regarding the leasing of 250 acres of 3M land in the watershed. Passed around some pictures to show that dust blowing from that land is an issue, and getting it covered with vegetation for hay is needed. People at 3M are very interested in what the Partnership is doing. 3M is sponsoring an Earth Day event for their employees on 4/7.
- Katie: Dunn Co has approved a cooperative agreement between Co Extension, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Dunn Co LCD, and the City of Menomonie to manage 150 acres of county land and use as an outdoor classroom experience for CVTC students. Alteration of pH on land is needed before it can be planted.
- Dan P: Staff from his department created some maps of the subwatersheds showing among other things the phosphorus load data per subwatershed provided by Paul. The Town of Grant Ag Enterprise Area has had its first official sign-up from a land owner.
- Andrew: West Wisconsin Land Trust is working on a few easements on land in the watershed.
- Paul: Is hosting a groundwater workshop at UW-Stout on 1/15. Brought a photo by photographer Jake Avery showing the Red Cedar River, and inspired a discussion about incorporating artwork into the Red Cedar Conference.

- Tyler: Barron Co's farmland preservation plan is being updated for the first time in many years. The idea for a lake district for Chetek is moving forward. Chippewa Co did some infiltration tests on some forested hills in conjunction with some sand mine research, and they found that the sandy soils of many of the hills in the area had infiltration rates that would produce little, if any runoff. There is currently a lot of water in the Red Cedar system, as many dams are open and river levels are fairly high.
- Ron: Submitted a grant to DNR in early December for more civic governance training in the watershed. Applicants will be notified by February 1. There is some work being done on some of the erosion sites on the Red Cedar River identified in a study that TMLIA sponsored. The sites are above Tainter Lake. Dunn Co LCD also met with a land owner to discuss possible work on another erosion site. TMLIA will be participating in the 3M Earth Day event mentioned above.
- Rod: Updated the group on the Red Cedar Conference planning process. Conference is coming up on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Bill James gave a presentation to the Lake Desair group on his work on that lake. Greater than 50% of the phosphorus coming into that lake is soluble P, which presents challenges for managing. Met with Rice Lake officials and discussed installing about 10 rain gardens around and near the lake. The City of Rice Lake is also looking for ways to catch runoff from dumped snow piles to keep the pollutants in those piles out of the lake.
- Julia: The Hay River farmer led council will be meeting again soon. One of the fields in this watershed that has an edge-of-field monitor set up has been showing a lot of runoff for quite some time, and it was unclear why. A spring was suspected, and recently the spring was indeed found and was determined to be the cause of the excess runoff. This negates runoff data from the site, and another field may have to be located that will work better for measuring surface runoff. The cover crop working group that Julia is working with has met twice so far and now has a Facebook page (as NW Wisconsin Cover Crop Resources). A soil health/cover crop workshop is now planned, likely for late February.

**Discussion of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 Drafts:** Another iteration of each chapter was sent to the Partnership before the meeting, and comments were taken. Chapter 1 was considered okay by the Partnership as is. Chapter 2 brought some comments and suggestions for minor changes. Dan Z took down comments and will make changes.

**Discussion of Chapter 3:** Although the Partnership had set a deadline to have a draft of Chapter 3 done by this meeting, the subgroup working on this draft is still working on it. Dan P, Tyler, Paul, Dan Z, and Andrew Craig have been meeting via web conference and are moving forward. The subgroup discussed what had been done so far, and what remained. The Partnership had questions about the proposed 41% reduction goal (the ten-year interim goal), and were wondering if this was too lofty. After discussion it was determined that this goal is suitable and workable, and we will proceed forward with that goal in mind. The Partnership also had questions about some of the smaller sources of phosphorus, such as stream bank erosion, and how such things should be treated in the plan. After discussion the Partnership decided that a good narrative about these other sources would fit into the "everyone has a

role in reducing phosphorus" theme, but that trying to quantify all these smaller sources may not be possible. A full draft of Chapter 3 should be ready by the next Partnership meeting.

**Discussion of Chapter 4 Draft:** A subgroup consisting of Nels, Julia, Ron, Buzz and Dan Z have been working on a draft of Chapter 4. Nels delivered a draft to the subgroup a few days before the Partnership meeting, and comments and edits were added by the others. The latest version of the draft was not sent to the entire Partnership until the night before the meeting, so many people had not looked at it in detail. But some discussion took place. The subgroup will work on updating the draft and hope to have a revised version by the next Partnership meeting.

**Evaluation:** An evaluation of the meeting was conducted, with each Partnership member rating the meeting from 1 (worst) to 5 (best). If anything less than a 5 was given, the person was asked to elaborate on the gaps that caused a lower rating. Members of the Partnership mostly rated it as a five, with a few exceptions. Some of the gaps included worry that we would not meet the deadline of a mostly complete draft by March 12<sup>th</sup> (the date of the Red Cedar Conference), and others were critical of themselves for not being better prepared for the meeting.

**Next Meeting:** The Partnership's next meeting will be Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> in Barron. The Partnership also discussed moving the March meeting, now scheduled the day before the Red Cedar Conference and also overlapping with the statewide WLWCA conference, to a different day. Dan Z will send around an e-mail seeking confirmation on a day that works for most everyone.