

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Minutes

3/6/15, Dunn Co Ag Service Center, Menomonie, WI

Present at the meeting: Paul LaLiberte, Buzz Sorge, Andrew Craig (phone) – WDNR; Dan Prestebak, Amanda Hanson – Dunn County Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County Land Conservation; Rod Olson – Desair Lake Association; Nels Paulson – UW Stout; Mike Wendt – 3M; Andrew Norman – WWLT; Ron Verdon – TMLIA; John Sipple – NRCS; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Meeting minutes from the February 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: Talked briefly about the status of his job, likely being eliminated in the Governor's budget, and what that might mean for the group.
- Paul: The monitoring proposal that Paul and Buzz had proposed to DNR for the Red Cedar Basin is still in play, but no decision made yet. Also, there are budget issues concerning water quality in the Governor's new budget that may affect the group. Amanda and Dan P will be speaking at the Wisconsin River meeting coming up in a few weeks. And Buzz and Paul will be meeting and sharing the Red Cedar and St. Croix experience with the Rock River Basin group.
- Dan P: Provided some initial comments on Chapter 3 of the plan. Will be attending the WLWCA conference next week, at which Dunn Co will have two young people participating in the annual speaking contest, with both talks about conservation.
- Tyler: Barron Co is updating their Farmland Preservation Plan. Attended a cover crop field day put on by Julia and others associated with the Farmer Led Council project earlier in the week.
- Andrew N: Nothing new to report from WWLT.
- Ron: Also attended the cover crop field day. More than 70 people were there, including 40+ farmers. A lot of registrations coming in for the Red Cedar Conference next week. The erosion project for the sites on the Red Cedar River is moving forward.
- Buzz: Also attended the cover crop field day. Had lots of praise for the event, and pointed out that farmers were taking the lead in much of the event.
- Nels: Students have been selected for this coming summer's REU work. Bill James will be an additional mentor this year. There were hundreds of applicants for the summer positions.
- Andrew C: The St. Croix River TMDL Implementation Plan was fully approved two weeks ago.
- Amanda: Was involved with the cover crop field day. Thought it went very well, and was very much a team effort with involvement from the farmers. The Hay River FLC is talking about what incentives to pay for. There was a meeting for farmers in the FLC project to

- meet with government folks in Menomonie on 2/10 that Andrew C attended, and two farmers from the project attended as well.
- Mike: Previous person leasing the 3M property is not very interested in what the Partnership is doing, and it's these kinds of people that we need to reach and educate. There are two people quite interested in the new lease for haying. Also a bike trail land acquisition has been finalized, where 3M has sold some land for a trail along I-94. Also 3M's Earth Day event for employees is coming up on 4/7.
 - John: NRCS has had several soil health events over the last several months, including over 300 attendees. Next Friday after the Red Cedar Conference, Ray Archuleta from NRCS will be available Friday morning from 10-noon in Baldwin for discussion with farmers and others.
 - Rod: Just returned from a walk-through of the conference venue at Stout. Also, the "Heart of the North" group took some folks to Madison from Barron Co to talk about issues in this part of the state, including natural resources. Conference registrations currently stand at 210 with 6 days left until the event.

Discussion of Chapter 3 and 4 Drafts: Dan Z had e-mailed copies of chapters 3 and 4 to everyone the day before the meeting, so some people had not had a chance to look things over yet. But many comments were taken for revisions and edits:

Chapter 3: We should talk about the NRCS standards for some of the practices we list, such as no-till and nutrient management. We need a paragraph or two to talk about how the estimated costs (very high) for all the work may not end up being that high due to citizens taking ownership of the process. We could also talk more about soil health, and how that plays into specifically three of the practices we discuss – no till, cover crops, and nutrient management. The interim goal for the plan needs to be explained better. Are there other ways to estimate loads and costs for barnyard issues? Also it would be good to have data for transition costs/process for going from conventional farming, to more of a soil health approach.

Chapter 4: Can we use a different graphic than what we have (MN Extension), for instance, the one from Davenport and Seekamp, 2013? The Active Citizen website may have some better wording for describing CG/CE. St. Croix group will be modifying their CE plan, and ideas may come from that.

Discussion of Chapter 5: A team was formed to work on Chapter 5, including Dan Z, Paul, Buzz, Nels and Andrew C. The group met on 2/20 to start sketching out the chapter. It will include three charts or tables, discussing the timelines for social science research, the development of citizen groups and participation, and actual on the ground practice tracking and monitoring.

The Partnership also had a vibrant discussion about possible funding for various aspects of the project. Several ideas were mentioned, including NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The idea of putting a list of possible sources of funding into the plan was discussed, and several people will work on putting that together. The need for a possible grant writer for the project was also discussed. The Chapter 5 team will meet again sometime after the Red Cedar Conference.

Dan Z may have to be absent from the conference for personal reasons, and the group discussed a possible substitute for his presentation. Dan P and Amanda agreed that they would do what was needed to fill in if the need arose.

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. All members present rated the meeting as a 5.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next meeting will be Wednesday, April 8th in Barron.