

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Minutes

8/5/15, Dunn Co Ag Service Center, Menomonie, WI

Present at the meeting: Paul LaLiberte, Buzz Sorge – WDNR; Dan Prestebak, Amanda Hanson – Dunn County Land Conservation; Katie Wantoch – Dunn Co Extension; Nels Paulson – UW Stout; Ron Verdon – TMLIA; John Sippl – NRCS; Charlie Jones – Cedar Corp.; Lowell Prange – City of Menomonie; Steve Rasmussen – Dunn County Board; Mike Wendt – 3M; Julia Olmstead, Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Meeting minutes from the June meeting were reviewed with no suggested changes. Current agenda was also reviewed with no changes.

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

- Dan P: County groundwater study is underway, and two monitoring sites have been located within the Red Cedar Basin, monitoring groundwater levels. The County is now in the process of trying to fill the conservation planner position vacated when Amanda Hanson moved into her current position. Red Cedar Demonstration Farm Day is coming up on September 2.
- Julia: Tim Jergenson and Julia put on a field day in Barron County with good turnout. There is continuing talk in Barron Co about starting a farmer-led council. Hay River FLC met on 8/4. Julia also had a conversation with Jimmy Bramblett, WI State Conservationist with NRCS, about more cooperation between FLC projects and NRCS.
- Katie: Handed out a flyer for Red Cedar Demo Farm workshop day on 9/2. Event will feature an open house in the morning, and an Intro to Soil Health and Cover Crops workshop in the afternoon.
- Buzz: Hosting a watershed planning workshop on 8/6 in Eau Claire, with a focus on sociological and cultural approaches to watershed planning and implementation. Mentioned a grant opportunity for the US Fish and Wildlife Fishers and Farmers program, and although Julia indicated that this program had been considered in the past and didn't meet needs for her FLC work, Buzz indicated this program could be used for staffing funds for counties, and that perhaps counties would be better suited to apply.
- Charlie: Was attending in place of Randy Eide. Indicated that the City of Menomonie is continuing work on the LID/MIDS guidelines. City attorney is now looking at this. There is a grant application for a pond to be installed at the fairgrounds, and there are other opportunities being explored for grants in other areas, such as the mouth of Jarret Creek, where considerable erosion has happened.
- Lowell: Nothing to add beyond what Charlie discussed.
- Paul: DNR is undergoing a realignment. Some of the things that are of importance include a change to move more control to Madison than to local and regional offices, and now

regulatory programs for water are in the “Business Support” division. Focus is supposed to be on “core work” but it’s unclear what that means at this point. Education and science suffered cuts in this year’s budget. The St. Croix TMDL project has been able to obtain BMP data from NRCS on a HUC 12 scale, so that may be something the Partnership can look into for the Red Cedar.

- Nels: REU students will be presenting their results later today at the Raw Deal. Results are good and comparable or better than last year in terms of data generated and knowledge gained. Nels left early to get ready for the event.
- Ron: Handed out a summary of TMLIA accomplishments from 2014 to present. Substantial and impressive list. TMLIA is sponsoring showings of the keynote presentations from the 2015 Red Cedar Conference, showing on Wednesdays throughout September at the Raw Deal in Menomonie. Annual meeting is coming up on 8/8, where Buzz will receive the “Good Neighbor” award from TMLIA.
- Steve: County is disappointed with state budget and the actions that will affect and nullify good work being done by the County. Got a message from Sen. Sheila Harsdorf about perhaps convening a group to discuss what can be done in light of the nullification of the County’s shoreland/buffer ordinance. Told the Partnership that the County has decided on four priority initiatives. While these are still being finalized for specific language, the four initiatives are; 1) Develop an Environmental Policy, 2) Develop a Public Outreach and Information Policy, 3) Develop a Legislative Policy, and 4) Develop a Criminal Justice Policy.
- Mike: The lease has been formalized for the 3M land that has been converted from row crops to hay. Some hay has already been harvested. The Menomonie plant has a new manager who is supportive of sustainability and the work being done for water quality.
- John: Submitted an application for water quality initiative funds for two HUC 12s in the watershed. This would be extra EQIP money, around a couple hundred thousand dollars, for each HUC.
- Amanda: The Hay River FLC is talking about possibly doing a newsletter, and perhaps sponsoring some social events for outreach and education about what they’re doing. Had a conversation with Sauk County about their desire to learn more about the FLCs, as they are thinking about getting one going there. Also mentioned the “Waterways” newsletter that she is publishing about water issues in the watershed.
- Andrew Norman (not present, but check-in done via e-mail): The DNR had their checking-in meeting regarding the Stream Bank Protection program and the topics discussed were: Statewide Policy Updates, Overview progress among each LIT, SBP outreach database & LATS, DNR Managed Land SBE Theme, Valuations, Additional Items as suggested. Basically what came out of the meeting was that there was a need to assist a few implementation teams that are behind in the process. There is also a need to retrain staff on how to use the LATS program for tracking easement acquisitions. A poll was taken to determine what trainings would be the most beneficial to staff. This training will hopefully take place during the annual meeting, maybe in August. Talk was done on how to prioritize what parcels to go after. Other news, WWLT finalized the purchase of 80 acres in NW Chippewa County. The forested property is located immediately adjacent to the Chippewa

Moraine State Recreation Area. Our plans are to open it up for primitive camping to Ice Age Trail users. At first I thought this property was in the Red Cedar Watershed, but it ended up being 1.5 miles from the Red Cedar Watershed.

Discussion of Governing Document: Dan Z distributed what will become an attachment to the watershed plan, which is basically a governing document for how the Partnership will function. Comments and edits were suggested. Much of what Dan wrote was taken from a Civic Governance Policy Document, from Civic Organizing, Inc (the group conducting civic organizing training for some members of the Partnership), and also from a civic governance summary document produced by Ron. Dan will incorporate edits and add to the plan.

Discussion of Plan: E-mails had been sent out soliciting ideas for a name to give the plan, and the final name, mostly suggested by Tom Quinn of Farmers Union, was approved. The plan is officially titled: "A River Runs Through Us: A Water Quality Strategy for the Land and Waters of the Red Cedar River Basin".

One suggestion for an additional edit was to add information about the Red Cedar Demonstration Farm. Dan P or Katie will send Dan Z some text, which will be added to Chapter 4. Also John Sippl's name is spelled incorrectly in the "Acknowledgements" section, and will be fixed. Once these last few edits are complete, Dan Z will send this to Andrew Craig for DNR review, and hopefully on to EPA. After EPA's comments are received and addressed, the plan will be formatted with some more attractive and professional features, and made ready for public consumption by the Publications Unit at the UW Extension Environmental Resources Center in Madison.

Evaluation: Dan Z had all attendees rank the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Everyone rated it a "5", with a few comical suggestions that a lower rating was perhaps appropriate because of a lack of bagels (usually supplied by Dan Z, but neglected on this particular occasion).

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next meeting will be Wednesday, October 7th, in Barron. The Partnership is now meeting every other month, on the first Wednesday of that month.