

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Minutes

12/2/15, Dunn Co Ag Service Center, Menomonie, WI

Present at the meeting: Buzz Sorge – WDNR; Dan Prestebak, Lindsay Olson – Dunn County Land Conservation; Rod Olson – Desair Lake Restoration; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lake Association; Bill Miller – Big Chetak and Birch Lake Association; Kristina Olson – Chetak Lakes Protection Association; Nels Paulson – UW Stout; Ron Verdon – TMLIA; Mike Wendt – 3M; Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Julia Olmstead, Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Meeting minutes from the October meeting were presented, but no formal review was conducted.

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

- Dan Z: Announced to the Partnership that Buzz Sorge had received the DNR 2015 Rebecca Wallace Memorial Award. Also talked about a guest lecture he gave to Karen Mumford's UW-Eau Claire environmental policy class, where he talked about the Red Cedar Partnership and watershed planning. That class is doing group projects, and one group has chosen the Red Cedar River as its project. Also, Andrew Craig let Dan know that the Red Cedar Watershed Strategy document is still being reviewed by DNR.
- Julia: Had a field day a couple weeks ago but turnout was very low due to weather. The Hay River farmer-led council (FLC) will be meeting next week Tuesday. The council (along with the other three FLCs) has money left over from the McKnight funds, which McKnight is allowing to be rolled over into next year. The Dry Run Creek FLC in St. Croix County is looking into Ag-Solver software that will produce a field scale map (for those who have GPS technology in their equipment) that shows profitability down to a square meter (or foot or yard, not sure). Could help farmers determine which areas would be better off planted back to CRP. Also, the RFPs for DATCP money for FLC work are due in January, but rules are still being ironed out.
- Randy: Menomonie had a successful leaf pick-up this year, collecting bags as well as leaves via street sweepers. The LID/MIDS ordinance is still under review by DNR. The City also started trying anti-icing treatment of roads this year, and it's going well so far, and should reduce the amount of salt needed. He met with one of Nels' students who represents the Blue Devil Lake Alliance, and looked at boat ramps for possible runoff control projects.
- Rod: Nels' students toured some of the runoff control projects Rod has installed in and around the Rice Lake area. The Rice Lake District received an award from the local Chamber of Commerce for water quality work, indicating some interest in that topic from the Chamber. Rod is working with dozens of lake groups, river groups and other conservation organizations on a Wisconsin Shoreland Initiative, in an effort to modify some of what was

passed in Act 55 that basically outlawed local efforts to be more restrictive on shoreland buffers and development. Also gave an update on the Red Cedar River Conference coming up on March 10, 2016. Three keynote speakers will be Gabe Brown, Tim Davis, and Maude Barlow.

- Ron: Thanked the other lake associations present for contributing to the Red Cedar Conference. Handed out the latest edition of "Lake Talk", pointing out two articles; one that mentioned that Buzz Sorge had received the TMLIA "Good Neighbor" award, and the second article that talked about 3M's commitment to conservation on their land in Menomonie. Also talked about the Army Corps of Engineers and how they have dedicated funds (representing hundreds of thousands of dollars) to pay for 65% of the work needed on a streambank stabilization project near Colfax. They are also looking at a site near County Highway M that needs work. TMLIA did a presentation to 3M about the organization and their accomplishments/projects. They also presented at a Civic Governance meeting sponsored by the Minnesota Active Citizens Initiative, along with Dan Prestebak. Ron participated in a panel discussion at UW-Eau Claire's campus after a presentation by Nels that focused on work in the Red Cedar. TMLIA will also be contributing to the projects being looked at by the Blue Devil Lake Alliance (see above).
- Buzz: Attended the Green Lands/Blue Waters conference in the Twin Cities, along with Julia and John Haack. The director of GL/BW may be someone who could speak to the Partnership about what his organization is doing. There was a good presentation at the event focused on lease agreements for non-farming land owners. Rod pointed out that we will likely be having a breakout session on this topic at the Red Cedar Conference in March. Lake Leaders program will be back in 2016, and Buzz asked to make sure to spread the word to those who may be interested in participating. Also, there is an awards category at the annual Wisconsin Lakes Conference, and Buzz wants to nominate the RC Partnership for that award.
- Mike: 3M met with those leasing land at the plant (a four-year lease), and they had a good year. Three crops of alfalfa came off the land, and there is plant residue on the fields right now versus bare soil in years past at this time of year. USGS wants to look at some springs on 3M's land and study flow, etc. Mike is working with a class at UW-Stout on invasive plants on 3M land, and Chris Gaetzke from Dunn Co LCD and the Lower Chippewa Invasives Partnership is helping with that.
- Gerry: Passed around a new brochure for the Red Cedar Lake Association, and pointed out that there is a committee focusing on water quality. Curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) work is continuing on the lake, and they are in the third year of treatment, waiting on analysis of the effectiveness thus far. Some new beds of CLP have been discovered. Phosphorus (P) loading to Red Cedar Lake was substantially higher from upstream this year versus two years ago, nearly doubling. Most of this load is coming from Big Chetak Lake.
- Bill: The third year of treatment for CLP was done this year. Very little CLP is showing up in the north end of Big Chetak, but there are still turions present. There are several areas farther south, with two being in areas that may be treatable in years to come, but one is in a wild rice area, which will not be treatable. Bill James studied the feasibility of alum

- treatments in Big Chetek, and it would take about \$1.8 million over three years to treat about 450 acres. It is recommended that the alum treatment be done first, before any further treatments in the southern parts of the lake. Water quality testing in the lake has shown decreased P since the treatment for CLP, and people have noticed differences in water condition near their docks. The Lake Association needs to find someone to help raise money to pay for future treatments.
- Nels: Discussed his work with Stout students and the Blue Devil Lake Alliance (see above). The Stout LAKES project team is assembled and mapping out what they want to do next summer. Modeling work will be a priority. They will begin the search for students early next year. After his presentation during “Water Week” at UW-Eau Claire, he’s looking to forge more partnerships with UW-Eau Claire faculty.
 - Kristina: Her first meeting with the Partnership. Earlier this year the City of Chetek voted down a proposed lake district, and finding funding and grants for the things that the Lake Association wants to do is difficult. The lake management plan is being amended to include the purchase of weed and algae harvesting equipment. This will not handle suspended algal species, but should be able to harvest plants and filamentous algae. One farmer has begun pulling sediment from the bottom of the lake and spreading that on his fields instead of fertilizer. There is more interest in this, but it presents issues that can be problematic.
 - Lindsay: Dunn County applied for an NRCS Water Quality Initiative grant for BMPs in the Wilson Creek watershed. They also applied for a USFWS Fishers and Farmers grant for the Annis/Wilson Creek watersheds. This grant would be used for trout habitat and upland practices focused on water quality. The county is also funding Bill James and some Stout students to do more water quality testing above and below Menomin Dam. The County is also funding a vehicle to be used by Stout students and LAKES grant students for travel farther up the watershed for field work, survey work, and water quality testing.
 - Dan P: Nothing further to add.
 - Andrew Norman (via e-mail): We are finalizing a donated conservation easement in the Township of Otter Creek in Dunn County. The property is 40 acres and the easement will protect 3,200 feet of stream on Otter Creek, a class II trout stream and approximately 30 acres of wetland consisting of sedge meadow and shrub-carr. We are also working with Kinnickinnic River Land Trust to protect 2,400 feet of river on the Kinnickinnic River and 1,015 feet of stream on an unnamed creek also classified as a class II trout stream on 144 acres. However not in the Red Cedar Watershed it’s still a pretty cool project. I am also continuing to work with the DNR to help implement their Stream Bank Protection program.
 - Tyler Gruetzmacher (via e-mail): We have recently wrapped up two Barnyard Runoff systems in the Barker Creek watershed NE of Barron. Barker Creek drains to the Red Cedar just north of Hwy 8. One was the traditional concrete structure where all the feeding would take place and hold the cattle during times when the pasture cannot take the pressure. The other one was my favorite style, clean water diversions through a farmstead. This farm had some large open lots with water from the farmstead running off. So as an initial step, we have constructed about 900' of waterway to bring the water through the area without picking up any nutrients. We also built a few crossings to get back and forth across them.

Both barnyards were finished in November between rain and snow events. It's been a tough construction year. We have some of our 2015 funds remaining and have two more clean water diversion barnyard projects lined up for next year. I was pleased to see that West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) will be able to coordinate the grants for the Army Corp projects upcoming for the basin. I am excited to see this project developing. I unfortunately will be unable to attend that meeting as well. I really appreciate Ron Verdon's notes. One last note, we coordinated with NRCS to close an idle manure storage facility south of Barron. Nothing exciting in that, but it is on Upper Pine Creek right at HWY 25. I wandered down to the stream and it was gin clear and teeming with Brook Trout. There were schools of 20 scurrying all over the place. So all is not lost, there is some clean water around.

Discussion of Corps of Engineers Funding: A subgroup of the Partnership, along with a few others have been meeting to discuss funding from the Army Corps of Engineers through their Planning Assistance to States and Tribes programs. Others involved in the meetings have included COE staff, WCWRPC, and officials from Dunn County. The Corps would basically match other funds the Partnership would have. Right now, they will likely be able to match the LAKES grant funding that Stout has, and also match a possible DNR Lakes Protection grant. This would all total somewhere near \$300,000 meaning the 50/50 match would double that amount. Money from the match could be used for further sociological and economic work farther up the watershed, and also expand water quality testing proposed by Bill James, including establishing more weather stations in the watershed to better track precipitation. The Corps would want to be doing some of the work themselves, and would likely be working on some aspects of the monitoring.

There may be a need for a "research coordinator" to help alleviate some of the workload on Nels and other Stout faculty who have a heavy work load already managing the LAKES grant in addition to regular faculty teaching and other duties.

The subgroup will be meeting again this Friday, 12/4, to continue ironing out the details. WCWRPC has agreed to manage the logistics of the grant, and the Army COE has agreed to this. The subgroup will keep the Partnership informed of progress.

Evaluation: Dan Z had all attendees rank the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Many gave the meeting a "5", with a few lower ratings, mostly because the meeting went long and beyond the scheduled end time. Dan will try to move along the "check-in" portion of the meetings from now on.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next meeting will be Wednesday, February 3rd, in Barron.