

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Minutes

4/6/16 Barron County Government Center, Barron, WI

Present at the meeting: Dan Prestebak, Lindsay Olson – Dunn County Land & Water Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County LCD; Bill Miller – Big Chetac and Birch Lake Association; Alex Smith, Buzz Sorge, Paul LaLiberte, Ruth King – WDNR; Kristina Olson (by phone) – Chetek Lakes Protection Association; Julia Olmstead, Dan Zerr-UW-Extension.

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Meeting minutes from February meeting, along with agenda for current meeting, were handed out and discussed.

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

- Dan Z: Shared the news that both the Lake Protection Grant from DNR, and the matching funds from the Army Corps of Engineers' "Planning Assistance to States and Tribes" program were approved. Initiation of the tasks using these funds will be discussed and planned by the subgroup who put the grants together. Also summed up the Red Cedar River Conference held on March 10th and briefed the Partnership on some of the feedback from Conference evaluations and discussions by the Conference planning team. Approximately 415 attendees was great, but also brought some issues that come with very high attendance. Overall the evaluations were very good. Briefed the Partnership on a presentation given by Dan Z, Ron, and Ted Ludwig at the Lakes Partnership Conference the previous week in Stevens Point. Ron and Dan Z will also be presenting at the Yahara Lakes Watershed Partnership Summit coming up on April 9 in Waunakee.
- Ruth: The City of Rice Lake has applied for an urban construction grant for a retention pond that will help them meet the goals of their MS4 permit.
- Alex: Not much to add at this time.
- Buzz: Discussed the good news about the Lake Protection Grant and the Corps of Engineers money. Also informed the group of a project on the Kinnickinnic River being conducted by UW-River Falls, and suggested more communication and sharing with that group.
- Lindsay: Dunn Co received a NWQI grant from NRCS of \$300,000 that will be used in the Wilson Creek watershed focused on BMP installation with the goal of delisting Wilson Creek from the 303(d) impaired waters list. There will be lots of monitoring and sampling along with this project. Attended the statewide Land and Water Conference in March. Also, Dunn Co is going to sponsor a conservation day for 5th graders in the Menomonie School District on May 6. Also Menomonie High School took first place at Science Olympiad held at UW-Stout.
- Dan P: County Land and Water Plan update is going well. Decided not to put a "9 Element" plan for Wilson Creek into the County Land and Water plan. Had a Land and Water Plan

meeting after the Red Cedar Watershed Conference to iron out some last details, with attendance of about 20 people. Discuss the idea that producers may not always be ready to convert to no-till/cover crops because of the complications and provisions of the federal crop insurance program, with the program basically promoting the idea of careless farming (limited risk and no need to worry about profitability...focus on yields). Dan attended Ron Kind's listening session, and talked with him about water quality projects. Kind is committed to assisting the Partnership in any federal grants and assistance that may be sought. In elections this week, two strong advocates for water quality issues, Bob Walter and Kitz Cleary, did not seek reelection to the Dunn County Board.

- Bill: The Big Chetac group is still working on a revised management plan. They are in the process of hiring Dave Blumer (consultant) to help with communications, education and public relations regarding efforts of the association. The board met with the DNR in February to discuss how best to spend the funds remaining in their AIS grant.
- Tyler: Barron County LCD signed on as a partner in the "Farmers of Barron County Watersheds" group, a farmer-led council organized mostly by Farm Bureau in Barron Co. Tyler also wants to initiate an invitation to that group to join our Partnership, and the members present agreed this would be a good idea. The group also held a field day this week looking at cover crops. About 15 people attended. Some fields looked good, others not as good. There were issues with incorporating manure on some fields. Tyler thinks barnyard runoff systems regulations may be changing, and thinks that roofs may become a necessary addition to many operations.
- Julia: Held a STEPL training session for the counties involved in the farmer-led council project, featuring Andrew Craig going over some of the basics of using the STEPL model to model the BMPs/load reductions in the project's watersheds. Was valuable training. Also held a field event in Ridgeland for the FLC folks a few weeks ago. There will also be a meeting at the River Falls Town Hall on April 19th featuring Ryan Stockwell of the National Wildlife Federation on the topic of cover crops. He presented something similar at the St. Croix River Conference on 3/23. Also, Julia and Amanda sent out the incentive letter to the Hay River FLC this week.
- Paul: Rod had inquired about water quality trading and adaptive management in the watershed, and Paul mentioned that it has not been very popular in the watershed for several reasons, but encouraged Dan P and Tyler to let him know if any communities show interest. A statewide DNR water quality meeting was held and focused on watershed-scale work, with discussion about trying to focus monitoring programs in areas where management is more likely.
- Kris: The Chetek group has raised the \$69,000 needed for a weed/algae harvester, so that will be moving forward soon, with a committee now appointed to oversee the logistics of how, when and where to use the harvester. They are also looking into starting a program focused on rain gardens and other shoreland infiltration techniques.
- Mike Wendt (via e-mail): Mike did not attend due to 3M having their 3M Employee Earth Day event on the same day. Nearly 20 different groups are participating (including Randy Eide and Ron Verdon, which precluded them from attending as well). Mike also let Dan Z

know that he will be retiring from 3M this summer, and hopes to have 3M name a replacement to our Partnership.

- Ron Verdon (via e-mail): TMLIA and planning team reviewed the Red Cedar Conference evaluations and they were very good. 2017 conference planning is already in progress and final 2016 close-out reports are commencing. If anyone has suggestions for breakouts, let us know. 2016 Red Cedar Conference Keynote videos are on TMLIA, UW-Ext and UW-Stout Conference websites. TMLIA is working with Colfax High School to explore the remediation of the erosion site on the Red Cedar River on the backside of their athletic field. We are meeting with the National Guard Engineering Training Battalion to determine if they can assist. The project is already engineered and ready to go. TMLIA is assisting with the Lakeside Boat Landing rain garden project in Menomonie. Two TMLIA Board of Director members have been nominated and accepted to the 2016 WI Lake Leaders Institute. We continue work on the "Civic Organizing for Watershed and Lake Management" project to establish a new approach for managing our waters. TMLIA attended the St. Croix River Summit and WI Lakes Partnership Convention. TMLIA presented to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on civic governance and at the Red Cedar Conference. Upcoming are the Yahara Summit, 3M, Chippewa Valley Learning in Retirement, Lake Wissota Association and Menomonie Rotary.

Discussion of DNR Lake Protection Grant/US Army Corp of Engineers Funding: Now that these two funding opportunities are secured, plans for implementation need to be discussed. A kickoff meeting of some sort will take place. Chris Straight from WCWRPC has sent an e-mail out to the subgroup that coordinated the writing of the grant applications discussing a meeting, but nothing has been solidified yet. It may be that more members of the Partnership should attend that meeting and be more involved in the implementation of those specific grant items. Dan Z will coordinate with Chris to make sure everyone is aware of what's happening, and can be involved if need be.

Discussion of Frequency of Meetings: Some partners have discussed with Dan Z the scheduling of Partnership meetings, and whether or not every other month is still appropriate. The group agreed to keep it that way for now, with the added possibility of GoToMeeting being used for specific needs, or, as was the case with the February meeting, if weather is an issue. More discussion of this will take place at future meetings, once the schedule for subgroup meetings (for grant implementation projects) becomes clearer.

Discussion of Possible New Members Added to the Partnership: As mentioned above, Tyler will inquire of the Barron County Farmer Led group if they would like to join the Partnership, and the members present agreed. Dan Z also brought up the idea of adding Ted Ludwig of the Red Cedar Basin Monitoring Group to the Partnership, as they are critical in the citizen monitoring efforts going on, which will also be part of future efforts. Those present agreed, and Dan will extend the invitation to Ted. Dan was also approached by Linda Zellmer of the Village of Birchwood asking to be added as a Partner. Those present discussed this. It was decided that having Birchwood as a partner was not something the group would like at this time. The Partnership is getting large, and the group agreed that

any new partners added should be those critical to efforts laid out in the Plan (“A River Runs Through Us...etc.”), focusing on the priorities in the Plan. Limiting partner membership to those involved in the planning priorities focused on phosphorus reduction efforts will allow the Partnership to maintain efficacy, and keep meetings from getting any longer than they already are.

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. Everyone rated the meeting a 5.

Next Meeting: The Partnership’s next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, June 8th, at 9 AM in Menomonie**. This is off the usual “first Wednesday” schedule, since the first Wednesday of June would be the 1st. But several people were not available on the 1st, so the meeting was moved to the 8th.