

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

10/5/16, Barron County Government Center, Barron, WI

Present at the meeting: Dan Prestebak, Lindsay Olson – Dunn County Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County Land Conservation; Alyssa Quilling – UW Stout; Rod Olson – Desair Lake Restoration; Buzz Sorge, Alex Smith –DNR; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lake Association; Ted Ludwig – Red Cedar Basin Monitoring; Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Welcome and Introductions: Everyone at the table introduced themselves.

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Outcomes from August meeting, as well as the current agenda, were reviewed and discussed. No changes added.

Check-In and Discussion: Dan Z asked the Partnership if they still wanted to continue the off-month e-mail check-ins. They decided these were not necessary, and instead agreed that everyone should share important developments with the Partnership via e-mail as these events happen. This was also part of a discussion about the length of check-ins at the meetings, and how they tend to get long. Dan agreed to work harder at limiting people's time, and the group agreed to try to keep things short and concise, and wait for discussions afterward.

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

- Tyler: Shared some video of the recent soil health training that took place on 9/29 in Menomonie. Was an excellent training and others in the Partnership commented on their experience with it as well. In addition to the NRCS cover crop cost-share programs, Barron County's cover crop cost share program added about 700 acres of cover crops this year. There still seem to be some holdouts in the county who are plowing under their cover crops (green manure), and Tyler is hoping to get them to change this practice.
- Dan P: Red Cedar Demonstration Farm field day was held on 9/28 and went very well with about 70 attendees. Lots of information on cover crops and a demonstration of aerial cover crop seeding using a helicopter. There is a fall tech tour through WLWCA going on this week in Dunn County as well. There was recently a public hearing in the Town of Rock Creek on the proposed expansion of a dairy operation that will be going from 2,000 up to 5,000 head. The hearing was very contentious, with many people against the expansion, and some farmers whose names were on the list to receive manure from the operation, protesting that they were not even aware of being on the list. The building permit for manure storage has been approved, but no action has yet been taken on other aspects of permitting including the nutrient management plan.

- Lindsay: Talked about the Hay River Farmer-Led Council, with comments from others. The FLC hosted a field day in August that went very well. They will be working with other FLCs in the region to apply for another McKnight grant for the four FLCs. Is working on coming up with some sort of BMP tracking program, but nothing in place yet. Nutrient management is hard to track, as are practices being removed or discontinued. Attended ACPF training in August along with Alyssa. ACPF is the watershed modeling program that the Army Corps of Engineers will be using on two HUC 12 watersheds in the Red Cedar Basin. ACPF is also being run on several counties in a multi-state region including WI, by the Ag Research Service in Iowa. Dunn and Barron Counties will eventually be included in this. Lindsay also participated in the most recent class for 2016's Lake Leaders program.
- Alex: Beaver Dam Lake District and the City of Cumberland are working on a project for Library Lake in Cumberland, trying to figure out ways to disconnect some outfalls to Library Lake, and reroute the storm water runoff to some new ponds. This project will also involve some limited dredging on Library Lake.
- Rod: Red Cedar Conference Planning is moving forward. The three keynote speakers have been chosen, and breakouts will be cut from 9 down to 6. The Conference is Thursday, March 9, 2017 at UW-Stout. Five new rain gardens have gone in around Rice Lake. Also worked on raising a detention pond by moving the outlet pipe up in elevation. Also working on some check dams for a few streams.
- Gerry: Grant for treating curly-leaf pondweed (CLP) ended in 2015, but an extension on the grant is in effect for 2016-2017 to be used on some other projects. Students from Blue Hills Charter School in Birchwood have been helping with some hand-pulling of CLP. Tyler suggested using some type of seine upstream above the Chetac Dam to see if turions could be caught before moving downstream to Red Cedar Lake. The Clean Boats Clean Waters program has expanded to 9 weekends over the summer, with Boy Scout troops helping with this. Also beetles are being used to attempt control of some large areas of purple loosestrife. Phosphorus loads in the water column of the lakes was high this year. Also, Gerry is part of the committee that is writing an updated lake management plan for Big Chetac Lake.
- Ted: All streams sampled in August exceeded the phosphorus standards, some of them by three times the limit. Tainter and Menomin Lakes are still quite turbid this late in the season. No new areas of purple loosestrife have been discovered, and there seems to be no spread of CLP.
- Alyssa: Also participated in August Lake Leaders session. Stout has sent in a request to the National Science Foundation to extend the REU grant for Stout for the next three years. They should hear back on this proposal in December. Work is now being done on surveying non-farming land owners in the watershed.
- Buzz: Also attended the soil health training and had many good things to say about it. And also attended Lake Leaders. Will be retiring at the end of the year, so will only be with the Partnership for one more meeting.
- Randy: Regional storm water pond #7 is being worked on currently. Coming up on Monday, Oct 10, there will be planting and invasives removal going on at the new rain garden at

Lakeside Park on Lake Menomin. He showed some photos of the area and discussed what would be done additionally. Dan Z mentioned that there may be a film crew from Chippewa Valley Community Television there to film the planting work. Also there is a winter salt application class coming up in Menomonie on 10/28. Randy will distribute more details to others in the group if interested.

- Bill (via e-mail): On Lake Chetac we are progressing with our work with Dave Blumer. We expect to have a draft of his report in our hands within a couple of weeks. Our board will be meeting with him sometime in the next couple of weeks to discuss and plan our next steps (formation of a committee to finalize our management plan revision). Our goal is to get that committee formed and meet at least once if not twice before the end of the year. You all were provided copies of our economic study in our mid – meeting update. That study is really interesting and adds to the foundation of knowledge out there regarding the true cost of poor water quality. We clearly need more work done in this area as to the cost of other economic inputs. It would be great to have someone develop a similar model which can easily be applied to any community in terms of say a % of revenue increase per foot/meter of water clarity improvement (similar to the model for property values). That would avoid every community which has this issue from having to do a detailed analysis of all economic inputs. Hopefully, that model might come out of the work that is currently being done by this partnership.
- Ron: (via e-mail): As you know we are collaborating with UW-Stout Blue Devil Lake Alliance, City of Menomonie, Dunn County and area schools to install the Lakeside Park Rain Garden near the Public Library in Menomonie. We continue to work on the Red Cedar: Land, Water and People Conference scheduled for Thursday, March 9, 2017. Work continues on the Interstate Civic Organizing Project for Watershed and Lake Management. The TMLIA Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 15 at 9:00am at the Stout Ale House in North Menomonie. Dan Zerr will be honored at that event as the TMLIA Good Neighbor!!

Discussion of Chippewa County's TRM project in Trout Creek watershed: Trout Creek is a HUC 12 watershed in the Red Cedar Basin, located in the very western portions of Chippewa County. Dan Masterpole of Chippewa County Land Conservation contacted Dan Z and Dan P to discuss a TRM grant they currently have for a large ag project in the Trout Creek watershed. Dan M couldn't make it to this meeting but wants to get on the agenda for the December meeting to discuss possible collaboration on this project.

He also wanted the group to know that there is an inactive USGS gauging station on Trout Creek, and they are going to dismantle it unless the Red Cedar Partnership can make use of it. Dan Z agreed to call Bill James to see if he could foresee some use for it.

He also wanted the Partnership to know Chippewa County has been collecting a lot of groundwater data in the western part of the county, and wanted to let the group know it was available if anyone needed it.

Strategy/Plan Update: Dan Z initiated a discussion on how things are coming regarding our timeline in the ten-year Strategy document. This included an update on the \$600,000 project through DNR and Corps of Engineers shared by several people who were at the quarterly meeting for those involved in that project, which took place in September. Much of that meeting was dedicated to logistics on reporting and tracking hours and such.

Lindsay's work toward developing a tracking program for BMPs was also mentioned, as the Strategy calls for having this in place by the end of year two.

The development of farmer-led councils (FLCs) was also discussed, as the Strategy calls for the development of 10 of these by year ten. Since it's still unknown if the position of FLC Coordinator will be filled (since Julia Olmstead's departure in May), the group discussed how to move forward. Dan Z and Dan P were on the recent FLC conference call and it appears everyone is in favor of pursuing a coordinator, but are willing to go on without if necessary. Further discussion on FLCs led to brainstorming other ways that farmers can collaborate and learn from each other, and take more ownership of moving toward a soil health-based approach on their land, without necessarily forming more formal FLCs. The group agreed that other methods could be used in lieu of formal FLCs. Generally, it was discussed that in the 3-year update of the Strategy, it may be necessary to modify the section about more FLCs in the watershed.

Evaluation: All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Ratings were generally averaging around "4". The reasons given for the lower rating mostly were focused on promptness and meeting management. The meeting started about ten minutes late, and went about 45 minutes long. As mentioned above, better management of check-ins will be in order.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next meeting will be Wednesday, December 7 at 9 AM in Menomonie.