

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

12/6/16, Dunn County Ag Service Center, Menomonie, WI

Present at the meeting: Dan Prestebak, Amanda Hanson – Dunn County Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County Land Conservation; Alyssa Quilling – UW Stout; Rod Olson – Desair Lake Restoration; Buzz Sorge – DNR; Ted Ludwig – Red Cedar Basin Monitoring; Andrew Norman – WWLT; John Sippl – Dunn Co NRCS; Deb Carty – 3M; Bill Miller – Big Chetac and Birch Lakes Association; Ron Verdon TMLIA; Kristina Olson – Chetek Lakes Protection Association; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Welcome and Introductions: Everyone at the table introduced themselves.

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

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

- Tyler: Met with DNR groundwater staff to discuss recent spikes in nitrates in some wells, up to 20 ppm. Seeing good practices on the ground, and recently heard about one producer putting in 600 acres of cover crops.
- Rod: Working with Rice Lake District on some small waterways and catchment basin projects. Planning for the Red Cedar Conference is going well, with the keynotes set, and other break-out sessions coming together.
- Andrew: WWLT has one project in the Red Cedar, the “Russian slew” area, not too far upstream from Tainter. Should hear from DNR on confirmation of this easement by March.
- John: Finishing up this year’s EQIP work. About 10,000 acres of cover crops put in this year in Dunn County (and speculation that it was something similar in Barron Co). Offered some rough estimates of how much phosphorus this could be keeping out of surface waters.
- Deb: 3M’s lease with Five Star Dairy for the ag land around the 3M plant is continuing. It’s a 5-year lease. Also, a 5.2 acre parcel of prairie that 3M manages near I-94 could not be burned this year, so was mowed instead.
- Buzz: Passed (but spoke plenty other times during the meeting!)
- Amanda: Hay River Farmer Led Council members went beyond what they estimated for cover crop installation this year. They would like some more information on how to deal with compaction and erosion issues. A field day held in August went well, but were some issues after the fact with some finger pointing going on. We want to avoid such things between the ag and non-ag sectors of the community if possible.
- Ted: Handed out results of fall testing. In October 7 out of 18 sites were still over the phosphorus standard.

- Bill: The economic study released early this year from the Chetek region has been mostly well-received. Looking at invasive plant data, lots of curly leaf pondweed (CLP) came back strong in some places. Dave Blumer interviewed many local town officials. Some people are entrenched in the idea of doing no management of CLP in the lake. A committee was formed out of these interviews that will complete the management plan for the lakes.
- Ron: Handed out copies of the fall edition of "Lake Talk" from TMLIA, which featured a list of many of this year's accomplishments. The Interstate Civic Organizing Agency of which Ron and several others are a part, is coming to its two-year end, and plans are to try to continue into next year. Ron sits on the newly formed committee put together by the County Board to study the CAFO moratorium, and what can be done beyond, and that committee is working well so far. Ron also started a discussion about cover crops with the group (see below).
- Allison: Surveys for non-operating farmers have been sent out, and some are coming back already. Mentioned that Nels is trying to assess the potential for an outdoor lab for Stout at Lakeside Park. Also some research is being conducted to determine the capacity of other Universities to do some of what Stout is doing with the REU project.
- Dan P: LCD office is looking at options for managing leachate, in light of the CAFO issues in the county. The town of Rock Creek is doing some information and education events on the CAFO issue. Keven Masarik from UW-Extension/Stevens Point spoke at a recent event. Dan recently was in Madison and submitted the Dunn Co Land and Water Plan for approval. He got some questions from DNR about how NR151 is being enforced. He has seen some issues with DNR not doing proper review of CAFO manure storage engineering plans.
- Kris: The skimmer being used on the Chetek chain had some issues early in the season, but then worked well, and smells and such were reduced in some areas due to algae removal. Dredging issues are being researched. Is participating in a UW-Eau Claire community leadership class, focusing on messaging.
- Lindsay (via e-mail): We finished our 10-year Land and Water Plan. I assume it was approved at yesterday's Land and Water board meeting, but I will defer to Dan on that. The plan includes many activities that will benefit the Red Cedar watershed, including educational and outreach events as well as establishing new farmer led watersheds around the county. I finished Lake Leaders training at the end of October. This was an outstanding series of three 2-day seminars focused on developing leadership for Wisconsin lakes. Through this program I was able to identify strengths in our partnerships and projects as well as discover some new ideas that may help us achieve our goals. I had the pleasure of attending the program with a great group of people from around the state; it is rewarding to know how many folks are working so hard for better water quality in Wisconsin! We are looking into tracking software along with our zoning division and will be selecting something by the end of the month. We are hoping it will be up and running by frost-out. This will be used to track BMP and CREP contracts, farmland preservation, and perhaps NMP acres and other activities. Our nutrient management class, which is taught along with Mark Denk at CVTC is going on now. Farmers who take this class learn to put together their own nutrient management plan and it helps them really get in touch with their goals and plans. Amanda and Rick Ingli from

LWCD are teaching alongside Mark. There was another Science Olympiad event this past weekend. Boyceville and Menomonie again did very well (top 10 out of 45 teams) in my hydrogeology event. We really do have some excellent teachers here in Dunn County who are doing a great job of giving our youth an environmental education. A rain garden was put in at Lakeside Park in Menomonie in early October. This is on the west side of Lake Menomin, not far from Wolske's Bay. The rain garden captures water from the parking lot which has about one acre of impervious surface. The runoff from this area previously ran directly into the lake via the boat ramp. The project was a great example of collaboration in our region, with City of Menomonie, TMLIA, Dunn County, UW-Stout Blue Devil Lake Alliance and other students and professors, Bobolink Nursery, UW-Extension, and Lower Chippewa Invasives Partnership coming together to make it happen. CVCCTV recorded a segment on the installation, which will likely be used in part to re-make the Rain to Rivers educational DVD.

- Randy (via e-mail): Regional Pond #7 by the Dunn County Rec Park is complete, I'd encourage members to swing by and take a look while they are in town (the pond is treating 170-acres including the Rec Park). This is the first of eight regional ponds we have planned. Hope to get to the next one in 2018. We just passed the 2017 Storm Water Utility Budget last night.... same rate as last year and same \$ contribution to the Red Cedar Conference as last year. Excellent salt application training for Operators this past October.
- Gerry (via e-mail): I do not have anything new to report since my October 5 update, as we had basically implemented all of our management actions for 2016 by then.

Cover Crop Discussion: Ron asked what the obstacles are to cover crop installation. Tyler said mostly it's the issue of weather. Also it would be helpful if there was more information for farmers regarding the economics of using cover crops. There are opportunities for better return on cover crops locally, with malting barley demand on the increase, along with demand for food-grade oats.

Discussion with Dan Masterpole on Trout Creek Watershed Project: Dan M is the LCD in Chippewa County, and came to discuss a couple items with the group. He provided some background on his office and priorities in Chippewa County. The project in the Trout Creek watershed is Scott Culver Farms, where they have been storing manure in a natural depression on the land, with no containment or structure. It overruns often in rain events into Trout Creek. The TRM grant is for \$150,000 which represents less than half the total cost.

Additionally, Dan had questions for the group on our plans for tracking BMPs and also on future plans for other large facilities with manure issues; and also wanted more details on our plans for tracking BMPs (see some of the discussion above).

Discussion of Strategy Goals: An update on where we are in the Strategy took place, showing we are on track with early goals, such as survey work, monitoring, and working on a method for tracking. Other discussion focused on the effectiveness of field days and some demonstration equipment such as rain simulators. Many members of the group said they'd been exploring the purchase of such equipment, but that it may be more efficient to book those who DO us this demo equipment already to do more

field days in our watershed. County fairs were suggested as places where such demos would be valuable and reach a diverse audience.

Evaluation: All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Ratings were all "5".

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next meeting will be Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at 9 AM in Barron.