

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

2/1/17, 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; Alex Smith – DNR; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lake Association; Ted Ludwig – Red Cedar Basin Monitoring; Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Outcomes from the December 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: The Barron County producer led group recently held a workshop in Ridgeland. Soil scientists from USDA and from UW-Madison/Extension were the presenters. Also there is a CAFO workshop coming up in Rice Lake next week.
- Dan P: The livestock CAFO study group in Dunn Co is still meeting. A possible outcome of that group may be a livestock siting ordinance. The moratorium on new CAFOs in Dunn Co expires in May. Dunn Co is in the process of creating maps of groundwater data for the county using data, mostly from Public Health, that is of varying ages. County is also researching ideas for a third crop for rotation with corn and soybeans. Crop rotations are good for soil health and help prevent the establishment of pests. One crop being discussed is flax. There is a Prairie Pride Chickens feed mill being built in the county, and feed crops may fit the “third crop” idea as well. County also working to resolve two barnyard runoff issues at operations near Ridgeland. 120 trees were dropped into Lake Menomin by Dunn County Fish and Game to promote fish habitat. They were dropped on the ice which caused some trees to shatter. Amanda has been busy distributing McKnight grant funds to producers in the Hay River farmer led council for incentive payments. The County may purchase Ag Solver software which is helpful for farmers to identify areas on their farms that are not as profitable, and may be better if not farmed and set aside in CRP or some other program. Dunn Co is giving \$4,000 to the Red Cedar Conference as a sponsorship for this year’s conference coming up on March 9.
- Gerry: The Red Cedar Lakes Association is in a two-year extension for a grant to treat AIS in the lake, mostly curly-leaf pondweed. They are monitoring and mapping the locations of CLP beds in the lake. But they are also monitoring for other invasives. Zebra mussels have appeared in Big McKenzie Lake in Burnett County, so these could be a problem in the future. Educational kiosks have been installed at points on the lake focusing on AIS issues. Some small DNR healthy lakes grants will help install some runoff control projects this year. They may be working with Dave Blumer this year to update their Lake Management Plan.

- Gerry (for Bill Miller regarding Big Chetac): A stakeholder committee of the Big Chetac and Birch Lakes Association is working on improving public relations regarding the treatments for CLP that have taken place. This group met in December. A DNR lake planning grant has been submitted to do a lot of survey work covering the fishery, aquatic plants, and water quality.
- Alex: Rice Lake District applied for two lake planning grants, one for intense water quality monitoring that will help them to write a nine-key element plan for the lake, and a second for some urban runoff control projects near the fairgrounds. The City of Cumberland is looking to do more urban runoff control work to address issues with Library Lake.
- Rod: Because of many projects done recently in Rice Lake, 170 acres of city runoff is now moving to detention ponds instead of into the Red Cedar River. There are projects underway on swim beach to address some runoff and erosion issues there. Plant harvesting is continuing. There are also many small projects happening in the Desair Lake watershed to address runoff issues. Red Cedar Conference is pretty much set, with all speaker slots filled.
- Ted: DNR recently distributed a list of preferences for citizen monitoring. All relevant sites in the Red Cedar watershed will be covered by Red Cedar Basin Monitoring. Randy also requested that they monitor Wolske Bay now that dredging is complete.
- Alyssa: Preliminary word is that Stout has been approved for another three-year NSF grant for the LAKES REU program. Stout and the City of Menomonie are discussing ways to develop a water science museum at Lake Menomin, perhaps at Lakeside Park. Some of the REU students from 2016 have been accepted to a national undergraduate research conference coming up later this year. Some current Stout students are looking for work on watershed projects in the area.
- Lindsay: Has been spending a lot of time on the Wilson Creek project, which features the installation of many different BMPs. Gabe Brown will be doing a seminar for farmers in Amery later this month. Dunn Co will be producing a new newsletter soon, and Dunn Co Land and Water Conservation will be part of that. Some advanced nutrient management classes will be offered this spring for people who have taken the basic course. County LWC will be having a booth at this year's Red Cedar River Conference. ACPF (runoff model) data is now available for Dunn and Barron County in GIS format from the Agricultural Research Service. Lindsay will send the link for this data out to everyone. She and Alyssa will be presenting at the national conference of the Soil and Water Conservation Society in Madison this summer.
- Randy: The waste water treatment plant in the City of Menomonie is doing a facility plan update. And water quality trading is being explored as an option to help minimize the expense of upgrades. 2,800 lbs of phosphorus will have to be removed at the plant, or removed (perhaps at a higher ratio) from land upstream, to get to 0.1 ppm P.

Discussion of recent DATCP grant opportunities for nutrient management training or other possible trainings: DATCP and DNR recently sent out announcements for grant opportunities for

nutrient management training and other programs. The partners discussed if any of these are something that anyone in the Partnership would be interested in exploring. Tyler and Dan P explained

some of the programs in more detail, and it was decided that there was no interest in pursuing these funds.

This did lead to a discussion of whether Randy could approach Dan Masterpole from Chippewa County about providing some funds through trading for the Menomonie waste water treatment plant (see Randy's check-in above) for Dan M's project/TRM grant in the Trout Creek watershed. Dan M talked to the Partnership in December 2016 about this project, looking for ways to find more funding beyond what he was able to get through the TRM grant. Randy will explore this.

It's been one year since Strategy approval. How are we doing? The Strategy for the Red Cedar River watershed was approved in January 2016. Now that the Partnership is one year into implementation, the group looked back at accomplishments in 2016, and brainstormed about ideas for 2017. Dan Z handed out a summary of 2016 activities for everyone to look at and add to if need be.

Some of the ideas discussed were to consider using volunteers or others to help do county transect surveys at a time of year that would detect cover crops. Since we had such an increase in cover crop acreage this past year, we'd like to be able to maintain some sort of tracking, not only of the cost share acres that go in, but also any other acres of cover crops and other BMPs. A transect survey beyond the annual one that counties do during the growing season would help detect and record some of these other BMPs.

Also discussed was the idea of creating some sort of system for writing letters of support for entities in the watershed (such as the farmer-led council) who are applying for other grants.

There was also good discussion on how to include in-lake work in modeling and tracking. While it's difficult to estimate what is happening to in-lake and river phosphorus loads when doing things like chemical weed control or harvesting of aquatic plants, it would be good if we could include this. New modeling for the watershed (funded by the Army Corps of Engineers project) may be able to help with this.

Evaluation: All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Ratings were generally in the 4 to 5 range. The reasons given for the lower ratings mostly were focused on check-ins being too long. Dan Z will work on keeping everyone on task and on time for check-ins in the future.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next regular meeting date would be Wednesday, April 5 in Menomonie. However, this is the first day of the statewide Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Conference in Stevens Point. Since several partners are attending this conference, the group chose to move the meeting date to the previous week, so the next meeting will be Wednesday, March 29, at 9 AM in Menomonie.