

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

8/2/17 Dunn County Ag Service Center, Menomonie, WI

Present at the meeting: Dick Lamars, Ron Verdon – TMLIA; Lindsay Olson, Amanda Hanson – Dunn County Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County Land Conservation; Nels Paulson, Alyssa Quelling – UW Stout; Bill Miller – Big Chetac and Birch Lakes Association; Andrew Norman – WWLT; John Sippl – NRCS; Rod Olson – Desair Lake Restoration; Alex Smith –DNR; Ted Ludwig – Red Cedar Basin Monitoring; Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Katie Wantoch, Josh Herron, Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Outcomes from the June meeting, as well as the current agenda, were reviewed and discussed.

Discussion of possible Lake Protection Grant ideas: At the June meeting and in subsequent e-mails, some preliminary discussion took place on possible ideas for DNR Lake Protection Grants (LPGs). The group discussed some of these ideas and brought new ones as well.

Nels had mentioned via e-mail earlier that incorporating 4-H into some sort of education funding would be good, with young people learning more about soil health practices. Tyler mentioned some projects going on in Green Lake in southern Wisconsin where they leveraged LPGs with Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) grants, and got a lot of money to do extensive work in their watershed. He suggested we could do something similar. Dick suggested that the extreme bank erosion issues may be addressed by such a grant as well. Randy suggested the possibility of using such grants for the City of Menomonie's planned detention ponds, but thinks it may not be possible since the City is required by permit to meet their runoff goals. John suggested that field days at the Red Cedar Demo Farm could fit into such grants. And Nels discussed using some funds to send farmers to conferences they would find valuable for soil health/water quality practices.

The group discussed putting together a subcommittee to address these possibilities. Dan agreed to survey those names mentioned via e-mail to set up a conference call.

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

-Dan Z: Mentioned that the Lakes Partnership is having a meeting the next two days in Menomonie to discuss some of their work planning issues, in addition to hearing presentations from some of our Partnership members, including Nels (speaking about the LAKES REU), Ron and Steve Rasmussen (discussion the Red Cedar Partnership) and Dan (discussing the Red Cedar Partnership and Eau Claire River Implementation Team).

-Dick: Said that getting money from Colfax to help with cost-share for stream bank stabilization projects is difficult to do.

-Rod: Rice Lake beach walk project is continuing, and other smaller runoff-control projects as well.

Talked to Tyler about things happening at Chetek, with a particular farmer wanting to do some research on dredging sediment from Moose Ear Lake and applying it to nearby fields he owns, and monitoring how it affects the soil. A Lake Planning Grant would be needed for such work. Red Cedar Conference planning continues, with all three keynote speakers lined up, and more planning to begin in September for break-out sessions, etc.

-Nels/Alyssa: LAKES REU poster session coming up today at 5 PM, and one will also be held this Friday in Chetek at Gilligans. Students did great research and are looking forward to showing it off.

-Lindsay: Is dealing with renewal of many CREP contract renewals, with about 150 acres being renewed, and many of those in the Red Cedar watershed, plus some new land being enrolled as well. Some CREP contracts that involve land owners in the Wilson Creek watershed (which is not part of the TMDL) will feature land that IS in the Red Cedar watershed because some of the farmers in Wilson Creek also have land in the Red Cedar Basin. Did a presentation last week at the national Soil and Water Conservation Society conference in Madison.

-Andrew: WWLT has acquired three new parcels of land since our last meeting, with one of them...the Russian Slew parcel...located in the Red Cedar watershed. They are currently developing several other possible projects, but all those are located outside the watershed.

-Ron: Dunn Co Livestock Study Group gave their recommendations to the County Board, who approved them, and passed them onto various departments for recommendations on implementation. The City Plan Commission approved signage for the Lakeside Park Rain Garden.

-Katie: Dunn Co has acquired a no-till drill and the Land Conservation Dept will be in charge of renting it out. It will also be used at the Red Cedar Demo Farm. There will be a field day at the Red Cedar Demo Farm on Wednesday, September 27th.

-John: Working on some grazing field days. Also working on some intra-agency grazing training for NRCS, Land Conservation Departments, and UW-Extension.

-Amanda: Rumors and such about what the Dunn Co Livestock Study Group is recommending are eroding some trust and such with some farmers. People need to be clear about what changes are actually in place, and what other things may be speculation at this point.

-Ted: 10 of 11 stream sites that flow to the Red Cedar were above water quality standards for phosphorus in July. Three sites on Tainter were the worst he's ever seen for secchi depth.

-Josh: Is a new intern with UW-Extension in Dunn Co. Is working on the economics of cover crops and other projects involving the Red Cedar Demo Farm.

-Bill: Chetac and Birch stakeholder group has been meeting regularly. Progress is slow, but working on a lake management plan. First public meeting was held recently and went fairly well. The goal is to have a completed management plan by early 2018. Native plants are up in the lake, but so is curly leaf pondweed, and water quality is down this year.

-Tyler: Did some searching of conservation land rental leases and found that most of them are not well done, and involve renting land to the highest bidder regardless of how that person will treat the land. Proposed some basic suggested guidelines to the Partnership for lease agreements, and is hoping to bounce these ideas off some landowners and renters, and perhaps present this information at the Red Cedar Conference in March. A storm water plan for the Barron Co Fairgrounds is being worked on by CedarCorp. He is also working on some small barnyard projects.

-Randy: A demonstration took place a few weeks ago at the Menomonie waste water treatment plant,

put on by Clearas, a company out of Montana. They are testing a system that uses algae to pull phosphorus content in water treatment effluent down to very low levels. They ran some tests on water at the plant. Current effluent was testing at about 0.8 ppm, and after running it through their system, they got much lower readings down to less than the future requirement of 0.1 ppm. The City Council is looking at the Jarret Creek delta, where it empties into Lake Menomin, and considering a dredging project there.

Evaluation: All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Everyone rated the meeting as a 5, with many good comments. A couple people indicated that they liked having the discussion item on the agenda before the check-in. Dan will determine if everyone is okay with that idea.

Next Meeting: Early dismissal took place so people could go to the LAKES REU presentation. The Partnership's next regular meeting date is Wednesday, October 4th in Barrion.