

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

4/4/18 Dunn County Ag Service Center, Menomonie, WI

Present at the meeting: Ron Verdon, Ben Hartenbower – TMLIA; Dan Prestebak, Amanda Hanson – Dunn County Land Conservation; Alyssa Quelling – UW Stout; Ted Ludwig – Red Cedar Basin Monitoring; Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Andrew Norman – WWLT; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Outcomes from the February meeting were reviewed. The current agenda was reviewed and discussed with no changes, but Dan Z later added a discussion of the recently awarded Lake Protection Grant that Dunn County received.

Discussion of Recent Storm Water Modeling for the City of Menomonie: Randy handed out maps and a report from Cedar Corp (done for the City of Menomonie) showing details regarding storm water runoff from various parts of the City draining to Lake Menomin. Report and maps are attached. According to the modeling, the City needs to get to a total of 573 lbs of phosphorus reduction to meet the TMDL goals. They currently are removing 323 lbs, so a further reduction of 250 lbs is necessary. The report points out some ways that this goal will likely be met.

Discussion of Lake Protection Grant award from DNR: The list of awarded lakes and rivers grants came out recently, and the Lake Protection Grant application that Dunn County submitted in February was approved for the full amount of \$200,000. The project, titled “Red Cedar Soil Health Education and Outreach Initiative”, will focus on hiring a soil health specialist who will work to educate farmers on the benefits of soil health practices such as no-till and cover crops, and also work to establish demonstration farms in the County that can be used for field days, educational events, and research into soil health practices on farms. Dan P wasn’t sure yet when the project would start, but likely this summer.

Discussion of Possible Social Media Presence for Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership:

Dan Z offered some ideas for outreach and education regarding what the Partnership is and what it does. Inspiration for this came for the Facebook presence of the Fox Demo Farms group, and the feedback that that group has received regarding what they publish on that site. Fox Demo Farms also has a texting network set up, which they use to text members about upcoming events, activities, accomplishments, etc. Dan asked the group to visit the Fox Demo Farms site and think about whether or not it’s something we’d like to do, how to do it, and to what extent, etc. He asked that people come to the next meeting in June ready to discuss further.

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

Dan Z: Eau Claire and Clark Counties are applying for a large-scale TRM grant to do demo farm work and soil health outreach in the Eau Claire River watershed. We may be able to use what they’re writing as a

template for applying for a TRM grant next year. Also told the group that he shared our Lake Protection Grant application with the EC River Team, as they may use it to apply for a LPG next year. Discussed the Red Cedar River Conference which was held on March 8. Turnout was a bit lower than last year, but still satisfactory, and made for a more comfortable environment. Also asked the group if anyone knew any information about two other DNR grants awarded to entities in the Red Cedar River watershed. One was an Aquatic Invasive Species grant of \$52,000 awarded to Vermillion Lakes. The other was a Lake Protection Grant of \$200,000 awarded to Beaver Dam Lake Management District for storm water improvements. No one at the meeting knew anything about these two grants.

Andrew: WWLT is working with a landowner on Gilber Creek to do some rotational grazing on this easement property. WWLT is in the process of hiring a new Executive Director.

Ted: Salt sampling has been continuing, and generally it seems to be not as bad as years past, though some sites/samples still are quite high. Ted will not be doing any lake monitoring this year (semi-retiring) but will keep doing streams.

Amanda: The Hay River Farmer Led Council has an active signup going on now for cover crops, and some folks have already done some cover crop seeding. The FLC will be meeting next week to discuss ways to use leftover grant funds from McKnight.

Dan P: Recently met with Ruth King from DNR to discuss a farm that may be large enough to be considered a CAFO. Met recently with Dunn County Highway Dept to discuss issues with runoff from some farm operations that maybe causing issues with some culverts under roads. Farmers in the Hay River Farmer Led Council recently used some McKnight money to purchase Ag Solver software to help with economic analysis of different fields. Recently attended a Pheasants Forever banquet where Jeff Lake and his family were honored for work they've done in farming and habitat protection.

Alyssa: Students for this summer's REU program have been selected. Some of last year's students were recently in Oklahoma City to present their work at a national undergraduate research conference. Nels and Chris Ferguson and Buzz Sorge are currently working on a paper about building community capacity.

Randy: Nothing more to add.

Ben: Liz is in Pepin County today to give a presentation on citizen action at that county's water issues meeting. Amber Georgakopoulos from TMLIA is enrolled in this year's Lake Leaders class.

Tyler (via e-mail): Its looking like 2018 will be the year of the Grassed Waterway. We have about 25 of them signed up. We have a pretty good idea on many of them, but need to have spring arrive (July?) for further evaluation of several of them. I am also investigating options for a severe barnyard runoff site in the southern part of the county. I timed my visit last week to the start of the spring runoff and it really needs to be corrected. It might be our first roof project. We will be sending out a press release for our County Cover Crop program soon. Once again it will be \$25 per acre up to 40 acres per farm. We really want to see some farms try some new techniques with this incentive.

Lindsay (via e-mail): Obviously the big news is that our lake protection grant application was accepted! Now the planning begins. We are very excited and looking forward to implementing this project. I expect it will lead to large-scale adoption of soil health practices throughout the watershed, which will in turn lead to increased infiltration and reduced runoff and erosion. I look forward to continued discussions of this project with all of you. I have also been working on a couple of new CREP contracts in the watershed as well as several renewals of contracts set to expire in Sept. 2018. Overall we (NRCS, FSA,

and LWCD working together) are looking to expand this program in the county and enroll many more acres. These waterway and wetland buffers are great for filtering out nutrients in runoff. I am working on a water resources web page for our LWCD website. My goal is to have that live by mid-month, so keep an eye out for it. The purpose is to communicate to citizens about current projects, monitoring efforts and results, past projects and reports, and other general information about the water resources of the county, including both surface and ground water. The Red Cedar Watershed Conference was held on March 8. Attendance was great and the speakers seem to have been well received. The committee is meeting on Monday to debrief, look over evaluations, and discuss ideas for next year's keynotes. Please send any feedback or ideas to me or anyone else on the committee. John Sippl organized two cover crop discussions between landowners, him, and me. The purpose of the meetings was to get farmers who are using cover crops together at one table to discuss what they are trying for covers, what they like and don't like, what works and doesn't work, etc., and in general just get some conversations going between farmers on the topic. The first meeting was for farmers from the west side of the county and was held at the Menomonie Family Restaurant over breakfast on March 13. There were 10-12 individual farmers who attended. The second meeting was held in Colfax at Mom's Cafe for the east-side farmers. We had great turnout and discussion at that event as well. I received some interest in possibly starting another farmer led watershed in the Colfax/Grant township areas, so I will work to help that become a reality. Additional FLWs are a goal of our new grant as well. I am now gearing up for spring and working to expand the stream monitoring volunteer network. I have found some new volunteers to do the TP sampling for three HUC12s that DNR has prioritized for 2018 (Wilson, Big Beaver, and Vance Creeks). I hope to continue to build the volunteer network so that we aren't relying on just one or two individuals to do all of the sampling in the future. This will strengthen the stream monitoring program and hopefully generate new interest by people to take an active role in improving water quality.

Kris Olson (via e-mail): 1. We were awarded our Healthy Lakes Grant. It will be a busy summer restoring some of those tornado damaged lakeshores with raingardens and diversion channels, removing some seawalls and replacing with native plantings/fish sticks, and general native plantings for buffer zones. 2. We have the Governors Open this year so that will be quite the weekend. Maybe he will wear one of our hats! 3. Have been contacting whatever dredging contractor I can find for bids for our Moose Ear proposal. That has been tough, many don't do hydrolimnetic, just mechanical or the numbers are disconnected. So, anyone who may have any further contacts, I would love to hear from you. We hope to work through the plan this summer and apply for a lake grant in December for a feasibility study. 4. We are gearing up for another season of CLP removal and algae skimming. Plan on adding a survey to ask residents to fill out after we work their area.

Evaluation: All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Rankings occurred at the following frequency:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>No.</u>
5.0	2
4.75	2
4.6	1

4.5	2
4.0	1

Most of the reasons for the lower rankings was because of low turnout, and some lack of knowledge about the idea of building social media presence.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next regular meeting date is **Wednesday, June 6th at 9 AM in Barron.**