

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

6/6/18 Barron County Government Center, Barron, WI

Present at the meeting: Liz Osborne – TMLIA; Lindsay Olson, Dan Prestebak – Dunn County Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County Land Conservation; Alyssa Quelling – UW Stout; Rod Olson – Desair Lake Restoration; David Cotts – 3M; Ted Ludwig – Red Cedar Basin Monitoring; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lakes Association; Andy Bensed – Area Farmer; Alex Smith – WDNR; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Outcomes from the April meeting were presented and discussed. The current agenda was reviewed and discussed with no changes.

Dunn County Lake Planning Grant Discussion: The newly-awarded Lake Planning Grant from DNR was summarized by Dan P and Lindsay. The grant total is \$200,000 from DNR, and \$66,000 of local match. Official start date was this past April 15th. The grant will help the County create a Soil Health Specialist position, and help create two new demo farms. Jeff Lake and his family have stepped up to be the first of these two demo farms. Initially the idea is to pay demo farms \$20 per acre as an incentive, but paying for seed may be something that is more appealing, though that may not match the grant requirements. This will be investigated. The advertisement for the position should be posted in a few weeks.

Bonneville Environmental Foundation Discussion: Dan Z had a conversation with Robert Warren from the Bonneville Environment Foundation in Oregon on June 5. They had e-mailed him several months ago regarding a desire to partner with some groups in Wisconsin on watershed projects. They are looking for long-term (3-5 years) commitment to a project with amounts from \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year. Robert stressed in the conversation that the Foundation wants to work with partnerships that have diverse members, are focused on long-term goals, and sustainability of effort. The Partnership has a few more questions, mostly regarding level of strings attached to any money that may be received, and also who would qualify as a receiving entity. Dan solicited ideas from the Partnership on ways the money could be used, and will pass this, along with questions, to Robert.

Update on REU students/projects: Alyssa updated the group. Students will be coming to Stout June 17th. This year there will be eight students, which is a bit fewer in order to balance out the higher number of students last year. Tentative dates for end-of-summer receptions are August 8th in Menomonie, and August 10th in Chetek.

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

Liz St. Croix County: The Transect Survey started this week and is currently going on. Rick Ingli and I have completed roughly 400 of the 900 points so far, and I will share the no-till/PI/T results for the Red

Cedar like I have in the past when it is complete. I am also working on using Landsat imagery in GIS to analyze cover crop and no till trends. This will help fill in some of the knowledge gaps for us about landscape conservation efforts in the watershed. I was contacted by a UW-Eau Claire student who wanted to volunteer for the summer. I had planned on having her take out our water quality monitoring equipment to some points in the Red Cedar watershed. Since she never showed up, the plan is on hold, but I'm looking into coordinating with some Master Naturalists to pick it up. I heard back from DATCP regarding our Land & Water Resource Management Plan. We received very positive feedback and was told they are very impressed with the work the county is doing on tracking. As the Lake St. Croix TMDL covers the lion's share of land area, it receives more of the priority attention, but I made sure to address and advocate the Red Cedar TMDL in the plan as well, as it takes up 1/4-1-3 of the eastern portion of the county. This group is also called out in the plan as part of our new, fifth goal regarding partnerships. I will be presenting the plan to the state board in Madison in August.

Liz TMLIA: We are working on internal capacity issues and might take some time to refocus on sustaining the governing of the organization. In the meantime, our Vice President spoke with 200 local 6th graders on water quality issues and what they can do to help, she also represented TMLIA at the inaugural environmental committee meeting of the League of Women Voters-Chippewa Valley Chapter. We are both non-partisan groups; they provide platforms to discuss the issues and help people register to vote. We were asked to lend our perspective and experience to their fledgling environmental committee. Our Education & Outreach Chair and I had a booth at the Red Cedar Trail Days, an event geared towards getting kids out and excited about outdoor recreation. Our Past President spoke on the Sustainability Panel put together by the Joint Sustainable Working Group TMLIA is a member of. Our Treasurer and I attended a work day for the Dobbs Landing property, a public land acquisition facilitated by the Dunn County Alliance of Sportsman and Conservation Clubs, which TMLIA is a member and contributed funds to the purchase. We piled brush and reseeded native plants on this property that contains 2 miles of Red Cedar River shoreline. Our Legislative Chair attended the Lakes Partnership Conference. We hosted a guest speaker at our last monthly meeting, Bill James, to speak on his research on lakes Tainter and Menomin, focusing on the significance of soluble P transport and the effect of hydraulic residence time on cyanobacteria blooms. The Mayor of Menomonie attended. Our representative on the Red Cedar Watershed Conference Planning Committee and I thanked the City of Menomonie at their City Council Meeting for their contributions to the conference. We were awarded a \$2,500 Xcel grant which will go towards completing the interpretive signage at the Lakeside Park Rain Garden, and we've been invited to apply for a \$2,500 3M grant. *If the group has any ideas we could partner with for this funding opportunity, we are seeking input* (so far, some ideas are installation of pet waste stations along trails and in parks adjacent to our waterbodies, or educational signage at stormwater ponds informing citizens of their benefit to water quality and combating the notion they are mosquito breeding grounds). We have received this grant for the past 5 years and it has funded such projects as the Jarrett Creek streambank stabilization, Red Cedar River shoreline erosion and habitat restoration, and the Lakeside Park Rain Garden.

Alyssa: Nothing further than the REU update above.

Lindsay: Transect survey is underway this week. Not able to complete the cover crop transect earlier due to weather and other issues. County is looking for capstone project ideas for Krista James' students at Stout. There are new CREP signups in the watershed (see John Sippl's check-in below). There is a

new intern from Stout working at the County for the summer working on various projects and tasks. Dunn County has met their match for the Red Cedar Basin Assessment project. On June 21st a regional Land and Water Conservation will be coming to Dunn Co, and will be shown various accomplishments in the county. Is helping DNR coordinate some new monitoring in the county, with one sample per month being collected at specific watershed sites. The City of Menomonie is looking to do water quality trading with land owners in the county to meet effluent requirements at the waste water treatment plant. The County Land Committee will be meeting soon and Lindsay will be talking to them about possibly updating LIDAR data for the county.

David: 3M's Earth Day event went well in April. For the rented land they own, they may be talking about contracting row crops on that land in the near future.

Ted: Stream monitoring is under way. Twelve streams in the TMDL area will be monitored with ten on the west side of the watershed and two on the east. Salt monitoring in the southern part of the watershed showed lower levels this spring, likely due to quick melting.

Gerry: Implementing the Red Cedar Lakes AIS grant. Clean Boats Clean Waters has expanded to more locations and more frequent visits at those locations this year. Two sites were treated for curly leaf pondweed on May 23rd. Would like to do some treatment on Balsam Lake but DNR won't permit it due to possible effects on wild rice beds. A dye study will done sometime soon to try to map flow in the lakes system, and determine if Balsam Lake could be treated without negative effects on wild rice. AIS monitoring has begun, with nothing new detected in the first month of the season. Water quality monitoring is expanding in Big Chetak, Red Cedar Lake, Birch Lake. Tributary monitoring is being done by students from University of St. Thomas in the Twin Cities.

Alex: Big Chetak is a bit stalled in their writing of a lake management plan, but hope to get back on track soon. Regarding the Lake Protection Grant awarded to Beaver Dam Lake District (questions about this were asked at the last meeting), this grant will be used for some catch basins along and near the lake in the City of Cumberland.

Dan P: Working with Chippewa County on a manure issue on a farm near the county line in the Trout Creek watershed. County Sportsman's Alliance recently sponsored an event on the water for seniors and handicapped residents, with pontoon rides and fishing. The county's no-till drill has been rented out a lot this spring, with two sites planted in the Red Cedar watershed. The drill will be on display at the Dunn County Fair. County highway department is redoing County Road F, with concern about slope issues. Because of work done previously by the County Livestock Study Group, there seems to be some increased interest in the county regarding water quality and ground water issues.

Dan Z: In April, brought a group of approximately 40 UW-Eau Claire students to the Red Cedar Demo Farm, where they learned more about soil health from Dunn County and NRCS.

Rod: Red Cedar Conference Planning Team is working on securing keynote speakers for the 2019 conference. Is talking to Bear Lake Association at their annual meeting this month about water quality issues. In a three-inch rainfall last week, some obvious erosion issues showed up, with some recently installed rain gardens at Rice Lake filling up with sediment.

Tyler: The inlet at a rain garden at the county fairgrounds failed, and needs to be repaired. Working on many grass water ways. County cover crop program is accepting signups, at \$25 per acre, up to 40 acres.

Andy: Had a good and busy planting season. Also has been building a lot of grass waterways for people.

Has seen that no-till by itself is not as effective in stabilizing soil and preventing runoff as no-till combined with cover crops because enough rain/runoff on no-till fields will still cause gullies without the vegetation in place.

John Sippl (via e-mail): I was able to work with Jeff Lake and our Soils Staff to set up a soil sampling protocol on the newly established Lake Demo Farm. We completed a portion of the sampling on May 31, 2018 and plan to continue with additional sampling and monitoring this week. We have set up several full season cropping demo's and plan to do several different timings of cover crop plantings. NRCS has approached the county to add an additional dollars to the lake protection grant to extend the position to about 5 years. We have initiated several new CREP agreements establishing perineal stream buffers in the months of April and May. The newly seeded buffers will consist of warm and cool season grasses. We have several additional new contracts to be enrolled by Oct 1, 2018 along with six renewals. Our spring "frost seeding" demo on the Red Cedar Demo farm was another success, even with the limited amount of moisture and the late spring. Barley was again the leader from a growth perspective. Word from around the state was this was another successful year in spring frost seeding (2 in a row).

Randy Eide (via e-mail): We are still looking at Trading Options for the Wastewater Treatment Plant and we submitted a grant to the DNR for our 2nd regional storm water pond. Hope to hear on the regional pond grant by early fall.

Andrew Norman (via e-mail): The process of merging West Wisconsin Land Trust and Bayfield Regional Conservancy is still underway. Our new board of directors voted on a name for the new organization. Our new name will be Landmark Conservancy, we are still in the process of working with a marketing company to finalize our new logo. We are waiting to release this to the public until we have the logo completed. We hired a new Executive Director, her name is Lindsey Ketchel. She was previously the Executive Director for the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation in Minnesota. Yesterday was her first day, I'm hoping to bring her to the next Partnership meeting in Menomonie. I spoke with the Vice President of the Red Cedar Lake Association about working together to protect some undeveloped land on Balsam Lake. Rick is planning on meeting with the VP to discuss this project further.

Evaluation: All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Everyone ranked the meeting as a 5.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next regular meeting date is Wednesday, August 1, in Menomonie. However, this may change to the 8th to coincide with the REU students reception. Dan will keep everyone informed.