

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

2/6/19 Meeting conducted online due to winter weather issues

Present at the meeting: Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Liz Osborne – TMLIA and St. Croix County; Lindsay Olson, Dan Prestebak – Dunn County Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County Land Conservation; Alyssa Quelling – UW Stout; Alex Smith – WDNR; Tom Quinn – Dunn County Board; Liz Osborne – St. Croix County Land Conservation/TMLIA; Rod Olson – Desair Lake Restoration; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of Last Meeting and Current Agenda: Outcomes from the December meeting were presented and discussed with no changes. The agenda was modified to reflect the online nature of the call, shortening the meeting and having no scheduled break.

End of Year Three Plan Update Discussion: Dan Z had sent a draft of the Year Three Plan Update to the group for their review in the days before the meeting, pointing out areas where there was still missing data. Those on the call who were charged with gathering this information committed to getting the information to Dan as soon as possible. The Update walks through the original Strategy chapter by chapter, skipping chapters 1 and 2 because those chapters contain mostly static background information about the watershed and its issues; information that does not need to be updated at this time. At the end of the Update are appendices showing work done by various partners over the last year, or in some cases, over the three years of plan implementation. This includes a spreadsheet showing BMPs installed and corresponding phosphorus load reductions (when calculable). Some modifications to the Update were made during the meeting, but others will wait until Dan receives further information from various partners.

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

Dan Z: Reminded everyone of the Red Cedar Conference coming up. Also mentioned that the farmer-led councils in the area that used to be affiliated with the Extension pilot project to get these councils started, had a meeting recently and are considering hiring a coordinator for the councils, similar to the job that Julia Olmstead used to do for the group. This would be funded mostly with a McKnight grant, which is in the process of being written. Julie Keown-Bomar with Farmers Union is assisting with the writing of this grant.

Dan P: Has been following many of the trends in precision ag and how it pertains to soil health. Updated the partners on the work being done under Dunn County's Lake Protection grant, including information that Jessica Schoen, who was hired as the soil health coordinator under that grant, has moved into a position vacated by Chris Goetzke in the Dunn County Land and Water office, so her former position is currently open. It's uncertain at this time if/when that position will be filled.

Lindsay: Is working with the new farmer-led council in Dunn County which includes four HUC 12 watersheds in the eastern part of the county. That group wrote and received a \$40,000 producer-led

grant from DATCP, which includes funds for well testing. Another privately owned demo farm has been added in the county, in the Town of Grant. Jessica has been working with the new demo farm to get them up and going. They may be looking into some low-disturbance manure injection. County is working on some CREP projects. The County has also formed a new ad hoc ground water committee, looking at existing data and data needs, and possibly policy issues.

Liz (St. Croix County): The County is in the process of a comprehensive zoning update and changes include the two residential districts being replaced by three, and the two commercial districts being replaced by four. Of interest, the three new residential districts are: o R-1 similar to the current Rural Residential (RR) District except that there is now a density limit of 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres (instead of 1 unit per 2 acres) and major subdivisions are not allowed. Animal units allowed are same as current RR District (up to 499 as a permitted use or more with a Conditional Use Permit). In addition, the minimum lot size has been revised from 2 acres to 1 ½ acres. (17.230) o R-2 similar to the current Rural Residential except that the limit on animal units is now just 200 (as compared to 500+) and the minimum lot size has been revised from 2 acres to 1 ½ acres. (17.231) o R-3 similar to the current Residence District except that it now requires public sewer or community septic, municipal water supply, and basic landscaping and screening improvements for multifamily structures. (17.232) Most of the Red Cedar Watershed within St. Croix County would be considered R-2 (proposed map here: <https://sccdd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=a0f6b268d308467294c65fd5ad242964>)

Liz (TMLIA): we wrote for two grants to support the Red Cedar Watershed Conference (\$5,000 from Dunn County Community Foundations, which we are still waiting to hear back from, and \$1,000 from Rain to Rivers, which we were awarded). We had Ted Rulseh, author of "Lakeside Companion," come to the library this past weekend and give a talk to about a dozen folks. We partnered with the local book store to offer 10% off the book, and Ted donated 20% of the proceeds from his sales at the event to the library. The attendees were mostly different than those that typically attend our events, so it was nice to have a fresh audience. Great conversation was had and a lot of discussion about what can be and is being done for water quality. Ted deferred to me to speak on behalf of local efforts, and so, of course I took the opportunity to expound on all the great things this group is doing. He is giving an interview this Friday on Wisconsin Public Radio at 6 am that will be recorded and you can listen on the website. The next event we are gearing up for is the Saint Valentine's Day Hustle Bike Race. Our station will once again be on/near Lake Menomin and feature a water themed challenge. I gave a talk to the Lion's Club last month (about 80 people), in which my presentation focused on our organization's objectives, activities, and partnerships, prominently featuring this group as a prime example. Upcoming matters we will be considering at our meeting next week is a resolution to present at the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation annual meeting and endorsing Conservation Lobby Day.

Randy: Working to get a second regional storm water pond installed in the City. Need approval of DNR to get a design going. There will be more dredging in Wolske Bay this year, and is working with DNR to get that approved. Work with the Permatrack software mentioned at December's meeting is going well so far, and shows promise.

Rod: Farmers of Barron County Watersheds group is meeting on Feb 12, and will be attending. Doing some work on a conservation trail in the Rice Lake area, and recently installed a small bridge.

Alex: It's grant season, so lots of review going on. A planning grant for the Red Cedar Lakes has been written and focuses on studying the nutrient budget, trying to better understand how nutrients move from Big Chetek, down through Red Cedar Lake and the other lakes in that group. Chetek Lakes group has written another Healthy Lakes grant for a total of \$38,000 worth of projects to improve shoreline property.

Tyler: Working on updating the Barron County Land and Water Plan, which will include a section on large dredging projects, and also focus on soil health, cover crops, no till, etc. Is meeting with Public

Health officials on groundwater issues. The number of farms continues to decline in the county. Many manure pit closures going on. Will also be attending the meeting on Feb 12 of the Farmers of Barron County Watersheds. DNR will be hosting a CAFO workshop on Feb 13 in Rice Lake.

Tom: Nothing more to add.

Alyssa (was at the meeting but left early, sending this update later): We will be reviewing student applications this week for this coming summer's LAKES REU. Nels and I are continuing to work on the Red Cedar Basin Community Capacity Report and it is coming together nicely.

Andy Bensed (via e-mail): Our Farmers of Barron County Watersheds group has its winter educational outreach meeting on Feb 12. All are welcome to come. We anticipate a good participation from producers in our area. I have recently gotten very enthused about unmanned aerial application of crop protection and the opportunities that may be therein for reducing sprayer tracks and crop damage in those sensitive areas of fields. Check out www.kiwi.aero for a quick peek at what could be coming. I think autonomous vehicles on the road are barely a scratch of the surface when compared to what we could see in the ag space. The more I think about this the more optimistic I become about its potential impacts on soil and water quality. Inter-planting, fertility application, crop protection,...are just a start of its enormous potential.

Gerry Johnson (via e-mail): the Red Cedar Lake Association has submitted two new three- year grants: 1) 2019-2021 Aquatic Invasive Species Control Grant; 2) 2019-2021 Water Planning Control Grant. We have not heard yet if either have been awarded by the WI DNR.

Evaluation: All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Rankings were all fives, and many people commented that the online format worked well.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next regular meeting date is Wednesday, April 3. Normally it would rotate back to Menomonie, but since we didn't drive to Barron this month, we will have the meeting in Barron in April.