

## Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

4/3/19 Barron County Government Center, Barron, WI

**Present at the meeting:** Dan Prestebak, Jessica Schoen – Dunn County Land Conservation; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron County Land Conservation; Alyssa Quelling – UW Stout; Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Alex Smith – WDNR; Andy Bensed – Barron County Farmer; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

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

**Discussion of Draft of Year Three Plan Update:** Dan Z sent the most recent draft of the Year Three Plan Update to the group earlier in the week for review. Edits from the February meeting were added. The only thing still missing is some practice data for 2018 from NRCS/FSA. Dan has requested this data from John Sippl. Those present were pleased with this draft and if the last bits of data can be inserted, it should be available for distribution on websites, etc.

**Update of Progress on Barron County Land and Water Plan:** The Barron County Land and Water Plan is due this August, and Tyler presented a summary of some of the water quality and soil health elements of the plan that he hopes to have included in the final version. Groundwater issues will definitely be discussed in the plan, perhaps including a well-testing program covering about 300 wells in various parts of the County per year. Barnyards will be mentioned, with a small handful of them still causing issues. Closing of abandoned manure storage facilities will be included. And long-term plans include two possible new positions in the County, a lake and invasive species specialist, and a soil health specialist. These could be funded using some outside sources such as grants.

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

**Dan Z:** Discussed the Red Cedar Conference, held this past March 14. Approximately 300 people attended the Conference, with good feedback from attendees.

**Tyler:** Nothing further to add.

**Jessica:** Her current position is now more of a conservation planner, but still doing some work outside a narrow definition, including working with the demo farms in the Dunn County. One producer is planting 70 acres this year to full-season cover crops, using a mix that will hopefully allow for the planting of corn in 2020 without additional nitrogen added. A group of UW-Eau Claire students is working on a capstone project to do some branding and outreach for the demo farms. The Red Cedar Conservation Farmers (the new farmer-led council group in the County) have been making progress, and have already decided what their priorities are and for what practices they will make incentive payments, and had a great conversation recently among their members on creative ways to plant cover crops into growing crops.

Had some conversations with Landmark Conservancy about how they are working with landowners in this region of the state to put language in easements that include land management using soil health practices in perpetuity.

Dan P: Lindsay Olson, who was part of the Partnership meetings in the past for Dunn County, has left her position and is now working for West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning. Dan is hoping to get empty positions within Dunn County Land Conservation filled. Attended the statewide Farmer Led Council meeting and Cover Crop Conference recently held in Stevens Point. Jeff Lake from Dunn County was a featured presenter. Mike Nelson from Dunn County was also on a panel. A livestock siting application was turned in to the County by Denmark Dairy for an expansion, and their manure pit has already been approved by DNR. Two Chippewa Valley Technical College students who do work at the Red Cedar Demo Farm presented to County Board members on the value of their experience. At the statewide Land and Water Conference in March, a resolution was passed to ask UW-Extension to come up with a groundwater protection standard for nutrient management.

Randy: New data shows that the City of Menomonie contributes 1,245 lbs of P to the Red Cedar system per year, and needs to remove another 160 lbs per year to meet the new goal set for their MS4 permit by DNR.

Alex: Landmark Conservancy is having a brainstorming meeting in Spooner on 4/5 to discuss how they can address climate change issues in their work. DNR may have more money coming to certain grant programs to address water quality issues in the coming years.

Alyssa: LAKES REU research projects for this summer have been announced, and they include some more research on wild rice, public opinion and media coverage of water quality issues, the economic value of watershed resources, and others. The need for a third cash crop in rotations may be a possible topic as well.

Andy: Some cover crops are starting to show some green color in the fields now. Many farmers, especially dairy operators are really struggling right now. The Farmers of Barron County Watersheds farmer led council has purchased soil probes that will measure real-time soil parameters, and these should be coming and installed sometime this month. Ten probes installed for three years is the initial plan, but could be expanded and/or extended. The cost is about \$500 per year per probe, and DATCP farmer led grant is paying for this. Since the Jennie O turkey store in Barron is no longer shipping manure to be incinerated to Minnesota, chances are more producers in the watershed will be getting turkey manure for application. Nutrients are fairly concentrated in such manure, and finding a way to get it applied below surface, maybe in pellet form, may be necessary.

Liz St. Croix County (via e-mail): I am leaving my post as Watershed Technician to take a position with the WI DNR as the new Nonpoint Source Coordinator out of the Eau Claire office starting April 15th. I'm not sure, yet, how exactly this will influence my involvement with the group, but I hope to remain active in the same partner networks, just with a different role. I will keep you all posted and forward along my new contact info. Tim Stieber has taken over as our Resource Management Administrator and I have filled him in on the work of the group. He has been cc'd on this email if you have questions regarding St. Croix County's continued participation with the implementation team.

Liz TMLIA (via e-mail): -Another successful Red Cedar Watershed Conference! TMLIA supplied scholarships for Menomonie Middle School and Colfax High School students to attend. We were also able to provide registration for the new Executive Director of Main Street Menomonie and a local

lumber professional. Our Legislative Chair, Dick Lamers, is presenting a resolution to help end phosphorus pollution to Wisconsin waters to the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at their annual meeting next week. -We are again collaborating with two of this semester's UW Stout Environmental Sustainability Capstone students on a pet waste station project. We are looking forward to their presentation later this month. -Our treasurer (and DNR Water Resources Engineer), Ben Hartenbower, will be attending the 3M Employee Earth Day event, April 17th, with a TMLIA booth. -We have been working on collaborating with AJ Leiden, AIS Coordinator out of Beaver Creek. Hopefully AJ will be a guest speaker at our May meeting to demonstrate some water quality sampling and AIS monitoring methods, and we can generate some interest in citizen scientist recruitment.

**Evaluation:** All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best. Everyone present rated the meeting a 5, except Alyssa rated it lower because she was slightly late, and Andy did not rate the meeting, as he came in for only the last 20 minutes or so.

**Next Meeting:** The Partnership's next regular meeting date is Wednesday, June 5, in Menomonie. Location will be determined later.