**Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes**

**4/1/20 Meeting held via Zoom due to Covid19 pandemic**

**Present at the meeting:** Dan Prestebak, Steve Olson – Dunn County Land Conservation; Liz Usborne – DNR & TMLIA; Alex Smith, Bryan Crum – DNR; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lakes Association; Rod Olson – Desair Lake; Brad Luedtke – 3M; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

**Discussion of meeting format, etc.:** Since the meeting was being held via Zoom, there was some brief discussion of the format, some quick Zoom training, and other general online meeting preparation. No major agenda topics were listed or discussed. Instead, everyone simply took some check-in time to talk about what they can/can’t do because of the pandemic, and what services or needs their agency/constituency may be dealing with.

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

Dan Z: Extension is completely forbidden from travel, and also everyone is working from home. Will continue to conduct necessary meetings online and be a resource for information should people need, and also be a resource for Zoom or other online meeting platforms if people need. Had shared some graphs of nitrogen and phosphorus in the Red Cedar (measured below the dam in Menomonie) by e-mail a few weeks ago, with nitrogen showing a steady climb (which likely means it’s also getting higher in groundwater in the area) but phosphorus now on a decline for the last 9 years.
Gerry: Is currently in Arizona. The RC Lakes Board is hoping to conduct a meeting sometime in April. Grant work is being interrupted by the quarantine, and some aspects of the grants they currently have may not get implemented on time.
Alex: Most DNR grants will be granted extensions due to the pandemic, so people shouldn’t worry too much about meeting deadlines for grant work. Most DNR field work is not happening right now, though some emergency situations, such as manure spills and fire response will be addressed. Wardens are still out and about. A new watershed restoration specialist has been hired in Eau Claire, Kristen Rathbun. She will be working on areas of 9-key element plans (she is funded by 319 funds), and has a background in engineering, so may work on modeling for some of those areas.
Rod: Will continue to do work on some grants in the field (as he does much of the work on his own) installing catchment basins and such in the Desair Lake watershed. Is also still doing citizen monitoring in the watershed. Is also helping Barron Co coordinate medical and health responses to Covid19.
Tyler: New LIDAR data for Barron Co will be coming very soon…in the next few weeks. The County office is still running but he is mostly working from home. Has been working on manure storage closures and some barnyard runoff issues, as well as doing site surveys. Installing grass waterways will likely be a high priority in the coming season. Some spring cover crop fields are greening up. Saw a presentation at the WI Land and Water Conference about how Marinette Co has used plastic “curtains” in innovative ways to close off areas of lakes for treatment of Eurasian water milfoil with good success.
Liz DNR: TRM and Urban runoff grant application deadline has been extended to May 15. Has been working with Menomonie and Cedar Corp on the third storm water detention pond in the City. Shared some info on proper disposal of milk (market issues and processing issues are causing milk to need to be dumped in many instances).
Liz TMLIA: Red Cedar Conference was able to be held on March 12…probably the last major water quality conference in Wisconsin this spring, with about 250 people in attendance. Conference went well, with a few presenters having to present online rather than in person because of travel restrictions. Many of TMLIA’s scheduled events for the spring have been cancelled.
Steve: Discovery Farms is discontinuing work in Dunn Co on nitrogen use efficiency testing. Surface water sampling in the county has been delayed, and scheduled groundwater testing will likely be delayed as well. Work that Bill Hogseth was going to be doing under the Cover Crop Champions grant will also likely be delayed. CREP projects are moving forward. Working with the Red Cedar Conservation Farmers (farmer-led group) on SNAP+ load reduction tracking. The Dunn County Dairy Breakfast has been cancelled, which was going to be hosted by the Red Cedar Conservation Farmers. County office is still functioning, about half the staff is working remotely. The County position formerly held by Jessica Schoen will be filled, as applications closed last week. The County is on a soft hiring freeze, so not sure when that position will be filled.
Brad: Five Star Dairy, who manages the 300 acres around the 3M plant will be adding some corn to the rotation this year where alfalfa had been, and minimum tillage/no till will be used. There is also some invasives removal work going on around the grounds.
Bryan: Because of pandemic, driving around and checking on fields for runoff and NR151 issues is mostly on hold, but is working with folks in the watershed to see what he can do. Getting citizen input of any issues spotted, including photos and narration, is encouraged.
Dan P: Had to leave early.

**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, June 3.** This may likely be another Zoom meeting if travel restrictions have not been lifted. If travel is authorized for most people, the meeting will be held in Barron.