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

**8/5/20 Meeting held via Zoom due to Covid19 pandemic**

**Present at the meeting:** Dan Prestebak, Heather Wood – Dunn County Land Conservation; Liz Usborne – DNR & TMLIA; Alex Smith – DNR; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Brad Luedtke – 3M; Nick Stadnyk – Rusk County LCD; Jamey Ladeen – Chetek Lakes Association; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lakes Association; Rod Olson – Desair Lake; Randy Eide – City of Menomonie; Dick Lamers – TMLIA; John Sippl – NRCS; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

**Discussion of meeting format, etc.:** Brief discussion of Zoom technology took place, but most people by now are getting quite used to meetings via such technologies.   
  
**Check-In and Discussion:** Everyone shared any new information/developments pertinent to the Red Cedar River Watershed effort.

Dan Z: Nothing much new. Still working from home for the most part. Still not allowed travel or to put on much in the way of events.  
  
Randy: Showed everyone some maps of location of new wet detention pond in Wakonda Park in Menomonie. City applied for a DNR grant for the next pond to be constructed. Looking to upgrade boat ramp at Lakeside Park including adding a wash bay, and is working on a grant for that. Dredging has begun on another part of Wolske Bay in Lake Menomin, and is going well so far.  
  
Nick: Submitted an application for extra TRM grant money for construction on a barnyard in the Moose Ear Creek watershed.  
  
Heather: Working on a farm education day with the Red Cedar Conservation Farmers group discussing conservation practices. The week of 8/10 there will be an educational event with elementary school students in Boyceville. Will also be doing some water quality sampling that week with Red Cedar Conservation Farmers.  
  
Dan P: Received an NACD grant that will be used to help pay for conservation planner’s time to visit farms who have signed up for cover crop cost share to gather info. At the Red Cedar Demo Farm, full season cover crops have been planted. Applied last year for multi-discharge variance (MDV) money, and was approve for $2,500, and is looking for a project to spend this money on. Beaver Creek Reserve has been doing aquatic invasive species (AIS) education in the area for years. Dunn County is looking to work with them to do more such education in Dunn Co.  
  
Liz (TMLIA): Was in attendance but also provided the following notes:  
• We were able to keep our Social Media Intern for the Summer. She is working remotely and is managing our Facebook and Instagram pages, and TMLIAphotos@gmail.com account. TMLIA is helping her answer questions we receive through messages in those platforms.

• Tainter Lake "Slow-No-Wake" Buoy questions came in right before 4th of July and after heavy rains relocated and submerged many. Currently, they are installed, removed, stored, and maintained by volunteers who live on lower Tainter, however, they are selling the boat they use to work with the buoys. When we receive complaints about the buoys, I take that chance to request replacement volunteers 😁 I believe all but one of the buoys have been replaced. As a reminder, 30.66 , Wis. Stats. restricts motorboat speeds to less than slow-no-wake within 100 feet of the shoreline of any lake. The additional slow-no-wake zones on Tainter, and the corresponding GPS coordinates for buoy placement, are a Town Ordinance, and clearly states, "the Town of Tainter shall be responsible for enforcement of the provisions of this Ordinance and all costs associated with buoy placement and buoy maintenance (Sec. 4.2)."

• Menomin Meander (press release) and Wild and Scenic Film Festival events we were planning have been canceled.

• The concrete footing for the sign at the Lakeside Park rain garden has been installed and we are waiting to hear back from Sign Art for questions on logo printing.

• We were awarded a $1,000 Rain to Rivers grant to fund installation of educational signs at stormwater ponds constructed as part of the City of Menomonie’s Urban Stormwater Plan. The signs were designed by University of Wisconsin-Stout students as a project we provided in cooperation with the Environmental Science & Sustainability Capstone course.

• The Alliance of Dunn County Conservation and Sports Clubs has received a Wisconsin Habitat Partnership Fund (WHPF) grant of $20,150 for Dobbs Landing Restoration. TMLIA is one of the many organizations that form 'The Alliance,' whose members, in 2014, raised enough funding to purchase the property Dobbs Landing. The acquisition resulted in the preservation of 178 acres of natural area with over a mile of Red Cedar River frontage just upstream from Tainter Lake. For many years Dobbs Landing was a hidden spot to launch a canoe in the upper Red Cedar River. After the purchase, it remains open to public use and the site of restoration efforts. The site is important not only for it's recreational access, but also as a priority for habitat value and erosion concerns along the Red Cedar River. The results of the restoration this grant will support have many benefits, including improvements to water quality. It will support an expansion of the native short grass prairie that exists on the property. The removal of invasives and the expanded prairie, with its vast network of native plant roots, hold soil in place, infiltrate rain water, and purify runof. These efforts will need local volunteers to complete, whose hours will fulfill the match required by the grant. This is a good chance to work outdoors and be with people who work to promote wildlife habitat, all while meeting Covid 19 recommendations. There is a calendar with the general project time-line and activities, but we have until the end of 2021 to complete the funded portion of the project

• This may be my last year as President. If so, I will continue to serve in the role of Past President for 2021.

Liz (DNR): • The preliminary ranked list of this year's Runoff Grant applications (includes Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) and Urban Stormwater (UNPS) programs) was presented at the Land and Water Conservation Board (LWCB) meeting on August 4th and is included in the meeting materials posted on the DATCP LWCB website. The Red Cedar Basin had two projects apply this year (details in following bullet points). Typically, the preliminary joint allocation plan between DNR and DATCP is presented at the August LWCB meeting. This year, again, due to the uncertainty in the budget, we are postponing the presentation, but hope to have it available as soon as possible and no later than the October 6th LWCB meeting. This may mean that we will not have the funding line drawn in the ranked lists until the December LWCB meeting.

• Menomonie's Regional Pond #2 Urban Nonpoint Source (UNPS) -- Construction grant project ranked 15th out of 31 applications statewide, and was one of only a very small number of applicants representing this region. It is predicted that we will have approximately $2.5 mil allocated for these grants. This is a combination of the dollars allocated in the budget and underspending of closed projects. We cannot make final funding decisions just yet because we are still waiting on guidance on if/how potential budget cuts will affect our funding or not.

• Rusk County's TRM grant application ranked 13th out of 16 statewide applications in the "Small Scale TMDL TRM" category (one of four categories in the TRM program). I am going to follow up with the staff member who scored applications and pass along constructive feedback. TRM grant funding allocation totals are more complicated because of the multiple funding sources and the 4 grant categories. So, this information might not be helpfully predictive, but the estimated allocations for TRM grants are:

o 319 - $1,095,661 - cropping, local assistance, structural

o TRM Bond - $3,920,474 - structural and force account

o SEG - $200,000 - cropping, local assistance

• A large (almost half million dollar) Notice of Discharge (NOD) grant was awarded to Chippewa County to resolve a liquid manure storage issue in the lower eastern side of the Red Cedar Basin.

• Working with St. Croix County to address a landspreading complaint that came in last week in the lower western area of the watershed.

John: Statewide local working group meeting was happening that this same morning (NRCS decided to do one statewide virtual meeting in place of several regional meetings). Provided info on how to join the meeting.  
  
Rod: Red Cedar Conference Planning Committee working on organizing an online conference for 2021. Desair Lake got a lake planning grant for $38,000 and is using it to put in small catchment basins in their watershed on mostly dry runs. Rod installed these with volunteer help. Monitoring of Desair Lake water quality is showing a slow decline in P levels over time. So far this year there was a small algae bloom on the lake in mid-June, and another recently following a major rain event.  
  
Jamey: There are lots of people on the Chetek Lakes this year. The lakes association is focusing on more education. They’ve updated their brochure and are doing monthly newspaper articles. They’re putting together a plan to upgrade educational signs at boat landings. They’re also putting up educational yard signs in yards that have participated in healthy lakes projects. They are currently looking at a study to do some spot dredging.  
  
Brad: Corn on the land Five Star Dairy is leasing from 3M looks good, and there have been a few cuttings of alfalfa. Corn was no-tilled into the alfalfa. After the corn is harvested they will be planting oats as a cover crop.  
  
Gerry (was in attendance but also provided the following notes): \*The WDNR has approved the RCLA 2020-2025 Aquatic Plant Management Plan.

\* In July, bed mapping was conducted on Red Cedar, Balsam and Hemlock lakes by volunteers following early June treatment of Curly Leaf Pondweed. Very low levels of CLP was present, with the highest amount in the north end of Balsam. Consistent previous years treatments of mid-to-heavy beds of CLP and positive spring weather conditions likely contributed to these positive results. Native plant growth is abundant and healthy.

\* Phosphorous readings in Red Cedar have been in the 16 - 20 parts per billion through mid-July, contributing to very good water quality conditions. However, two 4-plus rain & wind storms in mid-to-late July caused extensive shoreline runoff, high water and erosion. This has negatively impacted water clarity the past two weeks (SWIM data not available yet).

\* All property owners were sent a Septic Tank Survey. Result will be available later this year.

\* A Red Cedar Lake Shoreline Study of all properties was conducted and results tabulated. In-person meetings are being conducted by our Shoreline Restoration Committee volunteers with land owners who have potential Healthy Lakes Grants opportunities. As of now, RCLA will be submitting at least 12 HLG applications this fall for work to be accomplished next year. A Balsam Lake Shoreline Study will be conducted this fall, followed by Hemlock Lake next spring.

Tyler: Out in the field during the call, working on a gully project with a dry dam. A few other barnyard and waterway projects happening as well. Working on closing about a dozen manure pits. A lot more folks seem to be seeing the value in nutrient management planning. Some sand mine reclamation happening as sand mines close. Is working on some way to get a demo farm in the county.  
  
Alex: Is able to get out in the field now and then. There’s a new process in place for lake grants. He needs to be notified by Sept 2 regarding grant applications. And grants must be submitted by Nov 1.  
  
Dick: Mostly listening today, grateful for everyone’s work.

**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, October 7.** This will likely be another Zoom meeting if travel restrictions have not been lifted.