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

**12/3/20 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, Bryan Crum, Jessica Schoen – DNR; Rod Olson – Desair Lake; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Jamey Ladeen – Chetek Lakes Association; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lakes Association; Randy Eide, Megen Hines – City of Menomonie; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

***\*The Partnership would like to take this opportunity to thank Dan Prestebak for all his hard work over the Partnership’s existence and before, on behalf of water quality and the natural resources of Dunn County. Dan is retiring before our next meeting. Much of what’s been accomplished by this group and by Dunn County toward water quality improvements in the Red Cedar Basin would not have been possible without his hard work, dedication, and willingness to innovate. His work and presence will be missed, and we wish him well in retirement.***

**Review of minutes of last meeting and current agenda:** The outcomes from the October meeting were discussed with no changes and the current agenda was discussed with no changes.  
  
**Discussion of end-of-year reporting:** As we approach the end of the year, Dan Z would like to gather data from members of the group regarding what kind of BMPs and other activities they have overseen that will lead to load reductions, and plug the appropriate information into the calculations used in the Watershed Strategy to estimate how much phosphorus we’ve been able to remove from the system in the past year due to these activities. Several people in the group said they have data to contribute, and Dan will send out a formal request to the Partnership soon.  
  
**Check-In and Discussion:** Everyone shared any new information/developments pertinent to the Red Cedar River Watershed effort.

Dan Z: Nothing much new to report.

Rod: Got some water quality data from Alex recently showing that phosphorus levels in Desair Lake have been on a steady decline leading to better water quality. Continues to work on catchment basin projects in the Rice Lake region. These basins help slow flow of streams, allow for more infiltration, and help keep nutrients from entering the system. Also brought up a product called Pivot Bio Proven, that helps put nitrogen into ag systems without applying too much external nitrogen, but rather by maximizing nitrogen production my microbes. Tyler said several producers in Barron Co are very familiar with it and may be doing some sample plots next year using this and some other new products.

Alex: Has been doing a lot of grant work (many grants were due in November). Saw a good presentation at online Discovery Farms event this week about soil carbon, and also a good soil health demonstration using flour, water and bread to demonstrate the idea of soil acting as a “sponge”. IT folks within DNR are looking at using satellite data to be able to remotely categorize field conditions, focused mostly on residue cover. Also, DNR is in the process of updating aquatic plant management guidelines.

Dan P: Applied for a $200,000 Management Plan Implementation grant from DNR for the purpose of extending the soil health specialist position in the County. He is grateful for the many good letters of endorsement received from partners for the grant application. Is working to update the County’s manure storage ordinance to help increase awareness and enforcement of NR 151 standards. There will be a public hearing on this process on December 22.

Jessica: Her position with DNR revolves around wetland and waterway enforcement issues. There have been many complaints filed in the watershed on this topic, including wetland draining and filling, spills, etc. May be able to provide some data on any wetland restoration or creation projects.

Jamey: Working on an update to the aquatic plant management guide for the Chetek Lakes area. Also looking at some aeration products to help with all the small back bays in the lake chain. Will have 4-5 new Healthy Lakes projects happening in 2021.

Liz (DNR): Is working on three enforcement issues within the watershed. There are several TRM grants in the watershed including an extension for the City of Menomonie’s grant for work at Wakanda Park, and a barnyard project in Rusk County. Leftover funds from the 2016 TRM program have been made available for areas that already have a nine-element plan, and who also already have a TRM or water quality grant, with funds to be used mostly for personnel. DNR is working on their BMP implementation tracking system (BITS) to make it more widely available in grant programs. Attended the Leadership for Midwestern Watersheds Conference in November, and thought it was lacking compared to years past.

Liz (TMLIA): In 2021 TMLIA has no Board Officers, as her and others are stepping down and no one has stepped up to fill those positions…thus the future of the organization is currently uncertain. The Red Cedar Conference will go ahead as a virtual event in March, and be part of “Wisconsin Water Week”. UW-Stout student did an article on TMLIA that may show up in other publications as well. Fundraising calendars are available online and at stores in downtown Menomonie.

Tyler: Submitted a Management Plan Implementation grant to fund a position focused on soil health and some special projects. Recently worked on a project at the Chetek Lakes installing infiltration trenches. Many construction projects going on in the County including some manure storage closures. Also has several people interested in grass waterways. Will be attending statewide County Con meeting tomorrow.

Gerry: Working on year-end paperwork for grants. In the second year (2021) of a three-year aquatic invasive species grant. Applied for a Clean Boats Clean Waters grant. Also had nine more applications for Healthy Lakes projects for 2021. Also doing some monitoring in the lakes and in a few tributaries where there may be some ag issues with runoff. Since our October meeting, the Red Cedar Lakes group has formed a committee focused on the wake boat issues we discussed, and has had one meeting so far.

Randy: Provided some numbers on phosphorus removal for the City’s MS4 permit. Work on the next regional pond in the City is in development while the extension for the Wakanda pond has been submitted to DNR. The City may be working on a better strategy for street sweeping soon. Hoping to get some new boat washing stations installed around the lake in the City. Working on a grant with the Mayo System to put a kayak launch at Riverside Park. Introduced Megen who is working for the City as an environmental program coordinator.

Megen: Not much more to add beyond Randy’s comments.

Heather: Not much more to add beyond Dan P’s comments.   
  
 **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, February 3.** This will likely be another Zoom meeting if travel restrictions have not been lifted.