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

**2/3/21 Meeting held via Zoom due to Covid19 pandemic**

**Present at the meeting:** Chase Cummings, Heather Wood – Dunn County Land Conservation; Liz Usborne – DNR & TMLIA; Alex Smith – DNR; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Jamey Ladeen – Chetek Lakes Association; Megen Hines – City of Menomonie; Nik Stadnik – Rusk Co Land Conservation; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension
 **Review of minutes of last meeting and current agenda:** The outcomes from the December meeting were discussed with no changes and the current agenda was discussed with no changes.

**Introduction and Briefing for Chase Cummings:** This was Chase’s first meeting with the Partnership in his first week as the new County Conservationist with Dunn Co Land and Water Conservation. The group took some time to brief him on the group and their own roles, and answered his questions as well.

**Discussion of end-of-year reporting:** Dan asked that those who have not yet sent anything in the way of a year-end summary to please get that to him so he can compile a list of accomplishments for 2020. He has sent a request to NRCS/FSA for cost-share data from within the watershed to Justin Burchett with the Eau Claire County FSA office. Justin replied last week that he was working on it. The recent Red Cedar River Basin Assessment Project Final Report is certainly an accomplishment and will be referenced in the document. He will likely not have time to get this all compiled until spring.

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

Dan Z: Updating everyone on the Red Cedar River Conference (virtual) coming up on March 11, and that it’s part of Water Week.

Liz (DNR): Several enforcements are happening within the watershed on some farming operations. Educational webinars on grant programs are coming up. TRM administration webinar will be Thursday, Feb 4. The deadline for submitting runoff grants is April 15. Webinars about the submission process will be held soon for both TRM grants and for Urban NPS grants.

Liz (TMLIA): Is now acting in a “past president” status. There are no new Board officers at this point. The organization has until September (state deadline for non-profit status) to decide whether to sunset. TMLIA still has over 50 members, and Liz is working on putting together native seed packets for everyone for native plantings. Supplied a letter of support for a grant applied for by the City of Menomonie for the installation of boat ramps at Lakeside Park. Recently had an intern write a good article about TMLIA submitted to the Dunn County News, and was published.

Tyler: Nine manure pit closures took place in 2020. Has about a half dozen more signed up for this year. County is submitting a proposal for MDV funds. In years past there hasn’t been enough dedicated to Barron County to bother with, but this year it looks like there may be about $23,000 available. The plan is to use this for a planting program for end rows in crop fields to get those marginal acres out of cropland and planted with harvestable grasses. There is a possible demo farm opportunity arising with some land near Desair Lake. Some of the land could be going to the Rice Lake School District for an outdoor classroom, and some could be used as a demo farm. City of Chetek is looking at building a new waste water treatment plant with a likely cost of around $22-$25 million.

Megen: The next regional pond for the City has been funded and work will likely begin next year. Modeling for that pond shows about 70 lbs of phosphorus will be removed annually from the City’s runoff. City is working on an updated street sweeping program. The grant for boat ramps at Lakeside Park (mentioned above) will go toward two new boat ramps and a washing station. Also hoping to do some updates to the City’s stormwater GIS layer including trees. Megen and Randy Eide will be attending the Fox/Wolf Conference this year (virtual).

Jamey: Chetek Lakes newsletter was sent out as a separate mailing recently and that led to several new members joining the organization, and also led to some folks interested in Healthy Lakes projects. In preparation for summer visitors, distribution of brochures to various outlets is taking place. Also updates are being made to many of the landing signs around the lakes.

Alex: Many surface water grant applications have been submitted in this part of the state. Is working with Chris Willger to figure out ways to continue Bill James’ monitoring work on the Red Cedar and Hay Rivers in order to keep tracking changes at some of the sites Bill monitored for the recent Basin Assessment project. There may be a new point source in the watershed as a cheese plant in Almena is considering discharging waste rather than land spreading. General Mills is looking to set up a processing plant in the southern part of the state that takes exclusively products grown through the use of regenerative ag practices. Alex has commented to some people involved that something similar in this part of the state would be a good idea as well, using much of the work in the Red Cedar as an example of reasons for such a plant to locate here.

Chase: Working to get caught up on things. Today was his fourth day on the job, and is looking forward to working with the group.

Heather: Has been doing a lot of groundwater work lately. The farmer led group in the Hay River watershed did not get DATCP funding in the latest grant cycle, but the Red Cedar farmer led group did get $30,000. Is hoping that some of the funding for that group may be used for water quality monitoring.

Nik: Had to leave before check-in.
 **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, April 7.** This will likely be another Zoom meeting if travel restrictions have not been lifted.