

## Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

### 4/7/21 Meeting held via Zoom due to Covid19 pandemic

**Present at the meeting:** Chase Cummings, Heather Wood – Dunn County Land Conservation; Liz Osborne – DNR & TMLIA; Alex Smith – DNR; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Jamey Ladeen – Chetek Lakes Association; Megan Hines – City of Menomonie; Nik Stadnik – Rusk Co Land Conservation; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lakes Association; Brad Luedtke – 3M; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

**Review of minutes of last meeting and current agenda:** The outcomes from the February meeting were discussed with no changes and the current agenda was discussed with no changes.

**Discussion of end-of-year reporting:** Dan had assembled a year-end summary of Partnership activities in 2020 based on what others sent to him, as well as notes from last year's meetings. He distributed this summary to everyone the day before today's meeting. The report was discussed and a few suggestions were made for additions including getting the 2020 monitoring data from DNR (from below the dam in Menomonie) to graph onto past year's data. Dan will try to get that info, make any other needed changes, and redistribute to the group. Everyone is encouraged to share the summary with anyone who may be interested in the work being done.

**Future of Red Cedar River Conference:** The 2020 Red Cedar River Conference was virtual, held last month, and was part of the broader "Wisconsin Water Week" events coordinated by the Extension Lakes program at UW-Stevens Point. Around 200 people registered for the Red Cedar Conference events.

The sponsor and financial manager of the Conference since its inception 10 years ago has been the Tainter Menomin Lake Improvement Association. Unfortunately, TMLIA may end up dissolving as a non-profit entity due to lack of a functioning Board of Directors by this fall. If that happens, the Conference will need another non-profit to manage the financial logistics of the Conference. This situation will be discussed by the Conference Planning Committee in a few weeks, but feedback from the Partnership was solicited. Several people had suggestions including West Central Regional Planning Commission acting as a possible sponsor. It's also true that Wisconsin Lakes has already stepped up to say they'd be willing to temporarily be the financial entity for the Conference if need be.

Others discussed Conference content, and how more focus on local issues and local solutions may be needed, thinking that too many keynote presenters at the Conference lately have had national and global perspectives, but failed to localize their presentation to issues in the Red Cedar. All discussion and suggestions will be brought to the Conference Planning Committee, as several members of the Partnership are also on the Committee.

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

Dan Z: Extension employees were told that the plan right now is for a full return to office work and travel by July, but this is fluid depending on Covid. As of today, indoor meetings are okayed for no more than 30% of room capacity. So, our next meeting in June could be in person depending on everyone's situation. Bill Hogseth's position with Farmers Union as the coordinator for the four pilot farmer-led councils in Pierce, Dunn, St. Croix and Polk Counties is opening (Bill took another position with FU) and is being advertised. Interviews may happen in a few weeks.

Nik: Working on a design for a barnyard project under a TRM grant for this year, and one perhaps in the works for next year as well.

Gerry: AIS control grant is in its third year. The Association has hired a consultant to do aquatic plant surveys pre and post chemical treatment, as well as a possible turion survey. Purple loosestrife monitoring and control continues near the lakes. Have applied for a water quality grant to do testing on all three lakes and on two streams plus the inlet from Big Chetac. They have nine healthy lakes projects approved for this year.

Jamey: Two more fish sticks (tree drops) took place this year. They are currently wrapping up some of this year's healthy lakes projects. Some experiments taking place in a few of the back bays of the lakes, whereby techniques are being tried to increase the movement of water through those areas to avoid stagnation and nurturing of algae. Updates currently being made to informational signs at boat landings.

Liz (TMLIA): Red Cedar Conference was the best-attended of all the Thursday events during WI Water Week. Xcel Energy contacted her to let everyone know that, although some rehab work will be done on the Cedar Falls Dam (spillway work) this year, there will not be any need for a lake drawdown (contrary to rumors). A volunteer has stepped up to take charge of the rain garden at Lakeside Park in Menomonie. Seed from some of the plants there has been collected and folks at UW-Stout are attempting to germinate those seeds in labs.

Liz (DNR): Nicole Hayes from UW-Stout is trying to take over some of the work done by Bill James. She would like to be included on the e-mail list for the Partnership. DNR has hired a BITS coordinator who is very helpful and available for questions regarding the grant and reporting system. Deadline for TRM and urban non-point grants is April 15. Several grants likely to be submitted within the Red Cedar watershed. DNR staff still mostly working from home, but things may change with Covid developments.

Megen: The City of Menomonie is now having small internal meetings in person. Is currently working on the MS4 permit annual report. Her and Randy Eide attended the Fox/Wolf Conference during Water Week. An NPS planning grant is being submitted for phosphorus modeling in the TMDL region in the City. All public stormwater ponds have now been put into GIS software, and outfall locations are also now in GIS to make it easier to do field work with notebook computers. The City would like to pursue a better GIS tree inventory as well. The stormwater pond near Wakanda Park has had some minor issues

this spring that may need to be addressed. The City is working on acquiring land for next year's stormwater pond construction. The City is also discussing offering hazardous materials collection services next year.

Chase: In month three of new job and still learning. Working on budgets for 2022 and hoping to maintain staffing levels. County Land and Water Plan was recently presented to the state. Working on updating the County's manure management ordinance, likely incorporating the state's ag performance standards. Has been watching discussions of the NR 151 nitrate standard revision, and seeing some possible contentious issues with that.

Heather: Working on a TRM grant application (outside the watershed in the southern part of the County). Likely a field day coming up in June by one of the County's farmer-led groups.

Tyler: Lots of cover crops seen when driving across the state. Army worms seem to be presenting some problems for some cover crops. MDV funds will be large enough this year to dedicate to some targeted work, likely some focus on getting grass planted in headland areas. Some gully projects underway in Upper Pine Creek watershed. Barron County got new aerial photos flown this past week.

Alex: Surface water grant program has awarded this year's grants. Chetec and Beaver Dam Lakes have received some funding. Aquatic plant permit work has been taking a bit of his time, looking at tribal issues with wild rice and spearing. Also working on number crunching for lakes in the area for the biannual 303(d) impaired waters list update.

Brad: Working on a full revision of the 3M plant's stormwater management plan (they are separate from the City's plan). Also looking to cooperate with the Lower Chippewa Invasives Partnership on some invasive plant issues on 3M land.

**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 2**. Dan will check with everyone a few weeks before the meeting to see if meeting in person is possible. If not, it will be via Zoom again.