

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

**3/29/22 Meeting held via Zoom due to Covid19 pandemic  
(off schedule due to Lakes and Rivers Conference on April 6)**

**Present at the meeting:** Chase Cummings – Dunn Co LCD; Liz Usborne – DNR; Nick Stadnik – Rusk Co LCD; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Brad Luedtke – 3M; Becky Brathal – US Fish & Wildlife Service; Megen Hines – City of Menomonie; Jamey Ladeen – Chetek Lakes Association; 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.

**Year-End Report Discussion:** Dan has been asking to get a small summary of the year's activities in the Red Cedar Basin by each of the Partners, and has received something from most everyone and still waiting on a few. Also he has not yet received any BMP cost-share data from NRCS as we got last year, and would like to have that in order to produce some load reduction estimates for the watershed. He has requested this info from NRCS but has not heard back from them. He hopes to have the report complete by the next Partnership meeting.

**Discussion of Grants:** TRM grants are due on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Nick said Rusk County will have one small-scale TRM grant application in the Red Cedar watershed. Chase will likely be pursuing one NOD grant and maybe a TRM grant. Tyler may have an NOD grant as well. Liz mentioned that this year's cycle for TRM grants focuses on construction projects. Urban TRM grants have to be inside a TMDL to be eligible.

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

**Chase:** Is using Multi-Discharge Variance (MDV) funds for a buffer program offering \$200 per acre over two years, and has been getting a few people interested so far. Has filed some reports for Dunn Co's current Lake Protection grant. Has also submitted some monitoring data to DNR. The Friends of the Red Cedar River group held a meeting for the County PRD committee on March 8 to discuss their ideas for a Lake District on Tainter Lake. There has been some heated discussion on this topic at public meetings. A proposed groundwater monitoring program is moving through channels and may be approved soon, with \$135,000 going toward groundwater quality testing. County Board elections coming up soon could spell changes in County priorities. Is currently recruiting a summer intern for the County.

**Brad:** The 300 acres of land around the 3M plant in Menomonie currently leased to Five Star Dairy will be taken out of production in 2023 (will likely be planted to all soybeans this summer). Not sure the reason for the change, but 3M is exploring what to do with that land with the likely scenario being some sort of native vegetation restoration that would not be for public use. Also looking at doing some prairie restoration on 13 acres of rough lawn onsite at the plant.

Megen: The third regional pond in the City of Menomonie is being explored. Soil and groundwater conditions at the site appear to restrict choices to a wet detention pond of some sort. Work will begin on that pond in 2023. No major construction projects scheduled for this year. Other detention pond inspections are coming up soon. Working with the Lower Chippewa Invasives Partnership on some shoreland restoration on Galloway Creek.

Nick: Rusk County's shoreland protection program has some small projects in the works in the SW part of the County in the Red Cedar watershed. As mentioned above, will be applying for one small scale TRM grant in the watershed this year. Is using a municipal dam grant from DNR for work on a dam on a tributary that eventually leads to Murphy Lake and then Hemlock Lake. Also working on another dam issue that is causing runoff issues into the Chetek Chain of lakes. Has been in touch with Dave Blumer about the rewrite of the management plan for Red Cedar Lakes.

Jamey: Is working on plans for summer work. The aquatic plant survey of the lakes will be starting soon. Has several Healthy Lakes projects coming up. Also working to update signage at a few sites on the lakes that have not yet been updated.

Becky: First meeting with the Partnership. Met with Brad regarding the 3M land and what can be done, and will continue working with him. Has been doing some sight visits in the watershed for wetland restoration and conversion. Took some time to describe some of USFWS cost-sharing programs for habitat restoration that may be suitable for projects in the watershed. It appears the long-eared bat is likely to be listed as endangered in WI soon, which may produce needs for specific habitat restoration.

Tyler: MDV funds will be used for buffer work, similar to Dunn Co. Is looking at some possible grassed waterway projects for this year. The new Demo Farm committee met recently. Some interseeding of red clover into wheat recently took place on the demo farm. Barron High School's FFA chapter may be helping out with some projects in the spring. Discussed some soil health classes with Kevin Erb, which may be held at the demo farm this summer. Sent out about 1,000 letters to ask people to participate in a groundwater study. Upcoming election features many new candidates presenting the possibility for rare turnover of County Board positions.

Liz: MDV funds are moving out to counties now. TRM applications due April 15. Andrew Schneyer, a new watershed restoration coordinator for DNR has been hired in the region, and is available to support partners in the Red Cedar basin. Is currently working on plugging some monitoring data into watershed models. Had a talk with Innesfree McKinnon at UW-Stout, who has some students doing some watershed modeling work. Dan talked with Innesfree as well about what kinds of modeling the students could do that may be helpful for the Partnership. She could not attend today's meeting but may be involved in the future.

Gerry (via e-mail): We don't have our first Red Cedar Lake Assn meeting until April, and we're still awaiting the first draft of our updated Management Plan from our consultant. Hopefully, I'll have some news to report at the next meeting.

**Evaluation:** All attendees ranked the meeting on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best, with most ranking the meeting a 5, with a few ranking lower, mostly because of low attendance at the meeting.

**Next Meeting:** The Partnership's next regular meeting is **Wednesday, June 1**. The group decided to meet **in person at the Barron County offices**. Tyler said there is the capability to do a hybrid Zoom meeting from there for those who wish to connect remotely.