

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

11/30/22 Meeting held Virtually via Zoom (meeting off schedule due to conflicts occurring in December)

Present at the meeting: Chase Cummings – Dunn Co LCD; Liz Usborne, Alex Smith, Andrew Schneyer, Ruth King – DNR; Tara Daun – Farmers Union; Nick Stadnick – Rusk County LCD; Lynda Schweikert – Chippewa County LCD; Megan Hines – City of Menomonie; Lindsey Ketchel – Landmark Conservancy; Gerry Johnson – Red Cedar Lakes Association; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Review of minutes of last meeting and current agenda: The outcomes from the previous meeting were discussed with no changes and the current agenda was discussed with no changes. Dan missed most of the last meeting, so had a few questions about some of the items discussed.

Discussion of 2021 Annual Report: Dan sent the (finally) completed 2021 Annual Report of the Partnerships activities around to everyone several weeks ago, and it was discussed. Many people suggested we need to do more regarding getting such information, and the Partnerships accomplishments and work in general, out to the public. Dan will post the report on the Extension “Red Cedar River Watershed” website soon, and send everyone a link for that, and also will write a press release to go along with it. Megan suggested a Google Drive site for pertinent documents, and committed to creating it. Other suggestions included more social media presence possibly including videos.

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

Dan: Reminded everyone of the upcoming Cover Crop Conference, Producer Led Conference, and Discovery Farms Conference, all grouped at the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells on December 13 and 14. Also shared with the group that a combined event by many of the farmer led groups in NW WI is being planned for some time in February.

Liz: Recently gave a presentation to the Healthy Environment Action Team (HEAT) in Dunn County, focusing on HR 151 compliance issues and runoff rules. There have been some enforcement successes in the area (in Chippewa County and northern Dunn Co), but other challenges as well with some stalled compliance issues. There may be some Gulf Hypoxia money available in the future to hire positions that may help coordinate farmer-led groups in the state.

Ruth: Has been working with Tyler to get a beef producer in southern Barron County to fix some issues with erosion and runoff impacting a trout stream. Mary Anderson from DNR has also been helping with that. Has also been working on some stormwater runoff issues in the Birchwood area.

Alex: There were 12 new surface water grant applications in the Red Cedar during this most recent round of submissions. The Beaver Dam Lake District has applied for a couple including one help minimize runoff to Library Lake. The Chetek Lakes Association applied for a grant to do some sampling of all their lakes. They have water quality at times in some of the lakes that matches liquid dairy manure on certain parameters. Vermillion Lake as applied for a grant to help with Eurasian water milfoil issues. And Long Lake has also applied for funds to help with the writing of a lake management plan.

Andrew: Met with Chris Willger and Tara regarding monitoring in some of the farmer-led group watersheds. There isn't a lot of data out there for many of them, but hopefully more can be collected in the future.

Lynda: The part of Chippewa Co that's in the Red Cedar watershed is the far west of the county, and this area has some high groundwater nitrate issues. They have used some ARPA money and a smaller bit of money from MDV funding to pay cost share for more cover crop installation in these areas. And there has been some work on monitoring in those areas as well.

Chase: Reiterated the compliance issues mentioned by Liz above. Dunn County did get an NOD grant to address one such issue. Has been spending a lot of time on the proposed Tainter Lake District, which will likely be going to the County Board for a final vote in January, but some more work needs to be done between now and then, including soliciting Board member applications for the District. Both the Hay River and the Red Cedar River farmer led groups received funding from DATCP in the latest round of awards, but those funding requests were reduced from the ask due to so many requests for that funding. The County's no-till drill did not get much use this fall, mostly because of weather issues not cooperating. Participated in the HEAT meeting with Liz mentioned above, focusing discussion on groundwater issues. Some ARPA funds will likely be directed at this issue.

Nick: Has a TRM grant in place for next year for a project in the watershed in Rusk Co. A farmer-led group is forming in the County but is outside of the Red Cedar watershed. Is also working on an ATV ordinance for the County, as there is not one presently, and some erosion issues are occurring. A lake association from Two Bear Lake in the watershed is looking to write a new lake management plan.

Gerry: The Red Cedar Lakes Association did not apply for any new surface water quality grants this round, but did get an extension for a current AIS treatment and outreach grant. Three years of water quality data collected under a previous grant is now being incorporated into planning. An area of Hemlock Creek's watershed has been brought into the jurisdiction of the Association in hopes of addressing some runoff issues into Hemlock Creek and Hemlock Lake. Is working on a collaborative project with DNR and Barron County to protect and minimize runoff issues from a small island on Red Cedar Lake.

Lindsey: Landmark Conservancy is using science from The Nature Conservancy to find areas in NW WI to protect for water quality and climate resilience. They are using water quality as more of a focus in selling conservation issues in the area. One family in the Long Lake area is looking to protect several no-development areas. There has been a successful wild and scenic film festival in northern WI, and perhaps something like that would be appropriate in the Red Cedar.

Megen: All stormwater outfall inspections for the year have been completed in Menomonie. There is one outfall that has some serious erosion issues that are being worked on. The phosphorus modeling project is ongoing, and should be done early next year. Next week the City will be audited by DNR for the MS4 permit. City was awarded a DNR urban forestry grant which will help with planting new trees to replace ash trees taken out due to emerald ash borer. Randy Eide is retiring from the City early next year, and a replacement is being sought.

Tara: Had to leave early before check-in.

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 one ranking of 3-4, with a desire for more discussion about outreach and what else the group can do beyond the usual discussions.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next regular meeting is **Wednesday, February 1, 2023**. As the date approaches we'll decide whether to meet in person or virtually.