

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

8/3/23 Meeting held at Dunn County Government Center

Present at the meeting: Chase Cummings – Dunn Co LCD; Liz Usborne, Andrew Schneyer, – DNR; Megen Hines – City of Menomonie; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Al Brown, Tom Bilse – Tainter Lake District; Tara Daun – Farmers Union; Brad Luedtke – 3M; Tom Goodwin – Red Cedar Lakes; Ted Ludwig – Tainter Lake Resident; Tina Lee – UW Stout; Kelsey Hyland, 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.

Discussion of 2022 Annual Report: Dan has received most everything needed to finish the report, but is waiting for a graph of P and N data for 2022 from Andrew. The group discussed how to use the report once completed. Dan agreed to make a press release along with a summary sheet highlighting the main takeaways from the year. Several press outlets were suggested, such as Eau Claire TV stations, Barron County News, a YouTube video, and others. Dan will distribute the documents once finished and others can use/distribute it to appropriate recipients as well.

Grasslands 2.0 Learning Hub Meeting Summary: Several members of the Partnership have been involved in setting up a Grasslands 2.0 Learning Hub in the Red Cedar watershed. This effort is being led by John Strausser out of UW-Madison. A meeting was held of this group in July and was discussed and summarized. Some number crunching/modeling was discussed showing how conversion of marginal cropland to managed grazing can help decrease phosphorus loads to the Red Cedar system. Also discussed at that meeting was working to connect producers doing soil health practices and managed grazing with lake residents interested in buying products from such producers. There is much to be done on all this, and at today's meeting the Partnership discussed some of the issues involved, had some questions, and discussed steps along the way.

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

Dan: Discussed his current job status (job ending at the end of December due to DNR funds being left out of the state budget, but hopeful that some alternative funding may come through for the program from NRCS). Also talked briefly about the process of the planning committee for the Red Cedar River Conference next March, with some keynote and breakout speakers already lined up.

Tina: Stout will be getting about \$25,000 as part of a National Science Foundation Engines grant program, focused on sustainable agriculture. It may be used to help develop a Center at Stout focused on rural sociology and sustainable ag in the Red Cedar watershed. This fall there will be a human dimensions of conservation focus available for the first time through Stout's environmental science degree program. Funds should be coming soon from the statewide Freshwater Collaborative to be used

for various purposes focused on water quality education. The LAKES REU poster reception by the summer's students is happening after today's meeting at the Raw Deal in Menomonie.

Megen: The City of Menomonie is currently working to update some storm water ordinance language, focused on more or less adopting NR151 in City code. The City bought a new street sweeper that is now in service, and it was displayed recently at National Night Out, along with a storm water plinko game. The City has finished pond inspections for the year. Also the City is ramping up work to plant more trees and natural vegetation in the Galloway Creek watershed.

Al: The first Annual Meeting of the Tainter Lake District will take place this Saturday, August 5, at Menomonie High School at 1 PM. A budget should be approved then, along with election of Board members (currently there are 5 candidates running for 5 seats). The District will be seeking a DNR surface water planning grant in this fall's round of grant applications.

Tom B: There is the possibility that there will be a motion at this Saturday's Annual Meeting to grow the Tainter Lake District from 5 to 7 elected positions. He believes expanding the Board will be good for adding expertise to the District.

Ted: Used to do a great amount of water quality monitoring in the watershed, and used to be a regular member of the Partnership, but hadn't attended in a while and wanted to come see what has been happening.

Tom G: First meeting with the Partnership as the new representative from Red Cedar Lakes Association. Has been on the Board for 7 years, and is now the Watershed Coordinator. The Association is working on getting their ten-year plan approved. They are seeing increased loading in the last few years from tributary streams, and are trying to determine the causes/sources of this. Also have the continuing problem of aquatic invasive species. Curly leaf pondweed chemical treatments have been done, but in areas of wild rice such chemicals can't be used, so diver-assisted suction harvesting (DASH) has been used. Purple loosestrife treatment with beetles is ongoing. Also have recently seen some infestations of yellow flag iris, and invasive species that is spreading in Wisconsin. Murphy flowage was recently added to the Association and has some water quality issues.

Tara: Farmers Union is considering another surface water grant to support her position. All four of the farmer led groups she works with, including the Hay River group in the Red Cedar, will be applying for this year's DATCP producer led grants. She is hoping to see more innovation among the groups she works with. Many of the farmers are wanting to do more to study nitrogen use efficiency on their fields.

Liz: Working with both Dunn and Barron Counties to address some bad erosion sites on farms, and also some NOD grants. Salt Wise training (sponsored by Rain to Rivers) will be happening August 24th at CVTC in Eau Claire from 8-11 AM. This training will be focused on managers of large parking lots and other impervious areas not associated with municipal governments. Will be doing a presentation to the Dunn County Planning Resources and Development Committee regarding NR151. The 2024 round of TRM grant applications will all be funded, as there was enough money to approve all applicants. 19 of 26

applications for urban non-point source grants were funded. Is the new DNR representative for the Wisconsin Land and Water PIC Committee which plans L&W's annual conference.

Chase: Ground water well sampling was finished up on July 17, and will be doing a session on the results (along with Tyler and perhaps other area counties) at the 2024 Red Cedar River Conference. The NOD grant for a farm in the Little Pine Creek watershed is a huge project, with the grant amount of around \$800,000 and a total project cost of \$1.3 million. Several notices of non-compliance have gone out to some other operations. Tina Barone in his office is working on DATCP grants for farmer led groups. There will be a field day at the Red Cedar Demo Farm sometime in September. Is doing some inspections of land that has been in CREP contracts for many years to make sure those sites are still meeting criteria. County budget talks are currently underway.

Brad: It's been hard to make progress with 3M corporate regarding how to manage the 300 acres of land around the Menomonie plant since it is no longer contracted out for farming. A 7-acre parcel on the east side of the building that was planted in a wild prairie mix is looking good. Other portions of the land may be sold off. And is hoping to get much of the remaining land returned to some sort of native vegetation as well.

Andrew: In the midst of field season with lots of monitoring. Five of seven HUC 12 watersheds in the Lower Pine Creek watershed are being surveyed with many trout waters found. There is also monitoring of Tainter Lake happening. Is looking at baseline data for some of the farmer-led watershed HUC 12 with an eye toward modeling how BMPs can affect water quality in those watersheds.

Kelsey: Is helping plan the combined cover crop and Discovery Farms Conference (now known as WWASH) to be held in Wisconsin Dells on December 7 & 8. Extension Ag & Water Quality section is beginning a soil test phosphorus survey in the state looking at P at various depths. This will help to understand better how P stratifies in the soil. Is also working on some guidance documents for nitrate testing and tile drain monitoring.

Tyler: Is proposing to the County Board at next week's meeting to get a lakes specialist position created in the County, and would likely be applying for a surface water grant to help initially fund that position. There has been \$69 million of improvements to lake properties in the county in the last few years, so it seems fair to ask that some of the increased property taxes from those areas go to help protect the lakes. Sampling from the sediments in the Chetek Lake chain has shown high N and P, but also high levels of iron, which can impede its use as fertilizer. Groundwater samples have been collected in the County and are all at the lab for study now. Is monitoring via grab sample the water quality of the Yellow River outside of Barron.

Evaluation: Everyone rated the meeting as a 5.

Next Meeting: The Partnership's next regular meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 4, 2023** in Barron, but Dan may have a conflict, and it's possible it may need to be rescheduled.