

# Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

## 10/22/25 Meeting held at Dunn Co Government Center

**Present at the meeting:** Tom Bilsle, Al Brown – Tainter Lake District; Megen Hines – City of Menomonie; Tom Goodwin – Red Cedar Lakes Association; Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Chase Cummings – Dunn Co LCD; Becky Brathal – Farmers Union; Liz Usborne – WDNR; Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

**Discussion of 2024 Annual Report:** The 2024 Annual Report of the Partnership’s activities was completed in September and distributed to media outlets. Several folks said they saw it in some social media posts and local news outlets.

**Discussion of Plan Update:** Dan sent a draft of the first few pages of the Plan Update to the Partnership for their review. Mostly it contains some updates to data such as population, land cover, some new monitoring and modeling that resulted from the Basis Assessment Project that was completed in 2020. The group discussed elements of the draft, and had further discussion on what’s to come.

A few HUC 12 watersheds were discussed as possible watersheds of focus in the Update. These were the Lower Pine watershed and Barker Creek. These won’t necessarily be the only HUC12s mentioned in the update, but are a good place to start. Other watersheds could include ones where overlap with one of the Producer Led Watershed Groups is, areas where certain information is more available, or areas where there is more potential for certain BMPs such as conversion to managed grazing. Chase mentioned that the Dunn County Land and Water Plan update needs to be completed by next spring, so there may be some overlap between what that plan says about watersheds of interest.

Other items of interest mentioned were those areas that may be outstanding waters and in need of protection; making sure to correlate any water quality monitoring with HUC12s of interest; and looking at other data that could be used for monitoring such as soil test phosphorus.

**Check-In and Discussion:** Everyone took a few minutes to update the group on their activities over the last few months pertaining to the work of the Partnership.

**Dan:** Reminded everyone of the WWASH (Wisconsin Watershed and Soil Health) Conference coming up on December 16-17. Mentioned a presentation given at UW-Eau Claire by Lisa Schulte Moore a few weeks ago on research she has done showing how well prairie strips can mitigate runoff and P and N load when used in crop fields.

**Tyler:** Is losing an office staff person, so a lot of transition work is underway. Wrapping up a large grazing project. All funding for the County’s cover crop program has been allocated for this year. Is trying to figure out ways to use such county funding as match to leverage other funding sources. Is working with

Nick Stadnick of Rusk County on a survey of tributaries to Red Cedar Lake, as P loads from those tributaries have increased, while there is basically no farmland in those watersheds.

Megen: Curbside leaf pickup is happening in Menomonie now, and street sweepers are all busy. Completed some pond and outfall inspections. Salt application training for staff took place with help from Allison Madison of Salt Wise. Rain to Rivers will be utilizing volunteers to test local waters for chloride starting soon, with some of that funded by an Xcel Energy Chippewa River Fund grant. Clean Sweep was completed recently. Tree planting happening soon.

Tom B: Tainter District had its regular monthly meeting last week. Someone from Carp Solutions was there to discuss carp study and/or removal in the lake and answer questions. Muskies Incorporated will be stocking muskies in the lake soon. A DNR surface water grant will be submitted to plan work on high eroding bank issues. Some events for removal of aquatic vegetation in some areas of the lake will be scheduled soon, and there was discussion of buying a mechanical harvester. There will be a meeting held on December 3 to discuss slow/no wake zones.

Al: The Tainter District is learning a lot as they go, about the interconnectedness of all the issues and activities in the watershed, and how they affect water quality as well as socio-economic factors. The District is looking into writing a new lake management plan for the lake sometime in the near future.

Becky: Listed off the many events/field days that have been conducted in the watershed this year. Ducks Unlimited, after hiring then losing a grazing specialist in NW Wisconsin, is in the process of filling that position again. In November. DATCP will be informing producer led watershed groups across the state how much in grant money they will receive, which will likely be less than what has been asked, since there are more groups and not enough money to fund them all at full levels. Has been talking with farmers in the NW part of the state about renewable energy issues.

Liz: Working on some violation issues, working with TRM grant recipients, and other activities.

Tom G: Red Cedar Lakes Association has an updated aquatic plant plan. The board has expanded a position to work on stocking of the lakes with different game fish, and has reached out to Walleyes for Tomorrow, as well as regional tribes who have done stocking in the past. Will likely be submitting a few DNR surface water grant applications this fall for various needed work. Dam management at the lakes this year has been very minimal, as conditions seemed to have kept the lakes at good levels all year. The lakes have been very clear this year. However, Big Chetac had a bad year in terms of water quality, so it's curious how that didn't seem to affect things directly downstream in Red Cedar Lake.

**Evaluation:** On a scale of 1 to 5 (five being the best), everyone rated the meeting as a 5. Al abstained due to arriving late.

**Next Meeting:** If the "4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday" routine would be followed, the next Partnership meeting would fall on Christmas Eve, so the group rescheduled and **will instead meet in Barron on Friday, December 5 at 9 AM with a Zoom option.**