

Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership Meeting Outcomes

4/22/26 Meeting held at Barron Co Government Center

Present at the meeting: Tyler Gruetzmacher – Barron Co LCD; Chase Cummings – Dunn Co LCD; Jamey Lideen – Chetek Lakes Association; Liz Osborne, Alex Smith – WDNR; Todd Prill, Dan Zerr – UW-Extension

Discussion about Red Cedar Watershed Conference: The Red Cedar Watershed Conference was held in March at UW-Stout. The group discussed the Conference, highlights and issues, and discussed ways to improve. Several people said it's hard to have a "conference for everyone", discussing the lack of farmer attendance. Folks were in favor of using some Conference funds to sponsor or co-sponsor events designed more for farmers during the year. Jamey also mentioned that the strength of the Conference in his mind is the breakout sessions, and thinks we need more of those, or perhaps having two sessions of the same topic so people would have more opportunities to attend sessions of interest. Several people commented on the strength of Tara Grieman's presentation.

Discussion about the 2025 Annual Report: Dan has received input from a few people, but reminded folks to get their portions of the report to him as soon as they can.

Discussion of Plan Update: Progress is being made on the plan update, the latest draft of which was shared with everyone before the meeting. Dan had some specific questions and areas where he needs input from others. The various BMPs in the draft were discussed with some ideas for how to modify and how to calculate probable load reductions. Tyler and Chase will get Dan some data on barnyards, manure storage needs, ways in which they hope to use the demo farms in each county, and details about what they want to focus on in the HUC 12 watersheds in which the group decided to concentrate some efforts (Lower Pine Creek, and Barker Creek).

Monitoring was discussed. Some monitoring is included in county land and water plans, we do have at least one creek (Pokegama) being monitored by WAV volunteers, and grants could be obtained for other sorts of monitoring. The HUC 12s of interest would certainly be a good place to get some baseline data to assess current conditions before any focused implementation takes place in those watersheds.

Other things mentioned included a need to do a better job of communicating value for the work being done and the people doing it; more bodies to do all aspects of plan implementation including collecting and processing data; and building relationships with farmers. Focusing on human health and how that ties into water quality may be another addition to the plan. And making sure that the plan mentions all areas where possible load reduction could occur, including the highly eroding banks on parts of the river. Those areas may not offer great return for the large amounts of money needed, but to mention them in the plan may make it easier to get funding when it is available.

The idea of lobbying on behalf of the agencies doing the work, and trying to get more resources (mostly personnel) in place to do all that needs to be done, was also discussed. Groups affiliated with some of the Partners, such as farmers and lake front property owners, if acting in large numbers, may be able to influence lawmakers...locally, state-wide, and nationally...to allocate funds to the needed areas and agencies, and put rules and regulations in place to make improving water quality more of a priority.

Dan will continue to work on the plan, and hopes to have a complete draft available for everyone to review by July or August.

Check-In: Plan discussion took most of the time, so there was not time for a check in at this meeting.

Evaluation: On a scale of 1 to 5 (five being the best), everyone rated the meeting as a 5.

Next Meeting: The next Partnership meeting would normally be the 4th Wednesday of June, but that date has a conflict for several people, so **the date for the next meeting was set for Tuesday, June 23 at 9 AM in Menomonie.**