

**Eau Claire River Watershed Coalition Action Plan
Meeting #4**

**December 8, 2015 @ 6:30 PM
Town of Washington Town Hall**

Meeting Highlights

I. Welcome and Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves.

II. Project Update

a. Overall Project Scope & Updated Project Timeline

Chris Straight provided a brief project overview and reviewed the updated timeline.

b. Update on the Sociological Survey

Distribution to begin after the holidays, with the report available in March for Meeting #6. The number of surveys increased from 100 to 300. The target HUC-12s are Bear Grass & Fall Creeks to the southwest and Wolf & Headwaters of N. Fork of EC River to the north. Surveys will target farmers with row crops and a minimum of 100 acres.

c. Other Activities

Over 65 on the email list. Chris asked to send reminders to email list on 3/10/16 Red Cedar Conference; we could do something similar, but we “don’t want to let it get so bad” in this watershed. December 19th “Into the Outdoors” program announced. Lake Eau Claire monitoring hope to show impacts of Summer 2015 aerators. Coalition web survey results reviewed and discussed.

III. Review Watershed Plan Overall Goals

a. Discuss Relationship to Lake Plans and Types of Sedimentation

Generally agreed to the following approach, which is consistent with the web survey results:

- rely on lake plans and groups as the experts on their lakes & those waters/shoreland areas immediately upstream
- reference and highlight, but don’t duplicate lake plans/studies
- include key findings from lake plans/studies
- ensure target objectives and recommendations are compatible
- include major or overlapping Lake District/Association projects, studies, strategies, etc. as part of the action and monitoring plans
- develop a shared civic engagement/coalition building approach

The group discussed potentially sharing some messaging/outreach with Red Cedar efforts, but need to target specific BMPs and sociological approach to individual subsheds; can’t combine efforts or be too broad.

There was lengthy discussion on the different types of sedimentation (e.g., wash load, bed load) were discussed. The suspended sediment, which is finer clays and silt, brings most of the Phosphorus; this is mostly wash load from upland areas. The bed load is larger sand “scour” and gully, often associated with heavy rain events. The bed load “travels” downstream along the bottom and cuts/creates new deltas when water begins to slow. Silts and fines (clays) are suspended and travel further past the deltas, but do settle at impoundments. We don’t strong data on the mix/sources of sedimentation in our lakes; core sampling has been suggested in the recent Lake Altoona study. The WDNR does not have models to estimate or set bed load sedimentation targets.

The following approach to sedimentation was recommended for this plan:

- Recognize the different types and sources of sedimentation, but don’t get overly scientific within the plan text...the big stuff is sandy bed load and travels more slowly than the suspended clays/fines that come from the uplands.
- Rely on lake plans and groups (+ Rod & Neil) as the experts on sedimentation within their lakes & bank erosion immediately upstream (with a particular focus on bed load).
- The Watershed Plan will reference, highlight, and support the lake plans and groups regarding bank stabilization, silt traps, and bed load sedimentation.
- The Watershed Plan will provide sediment target objectives for upland wash load at the HUC-12 level, potentially based on phosphorus loading reductions.

One attendee asked what did our rivers look like pre-European settlement in terms of sedimentation? Having a geomorphologist as a spring speaker or for a future event discussed. It was also noted that the lake districts/associations will need financial assistance with further testing and analysis; these studies have value to the entire watershed, so everyone should help contribute.

b. Overall Goals

The overall goals are general, long-term directional statements. The target objectives, indicators, and milestones will be more measurable. Chris compiled draft goals based on previous Coalition meetings, the 3 public discussion meetings from last summer, and the results of the Coalition’s web survey. And, as a bottom-up plan, the draft goals also closely resemble the existing goals found in the various lake plans within the watershed.

The draft goals were briefly reviewed. Some potential changes were noted. An attendee recommended keeping the water quality goal specifically focused on phosphorus and sedimentation. If we address phosphorus and sedimentation, then many other benefits and pollutant reductions will be realized.

HOMEWORK: Review the draft goals and provide comments to Chris by January 15th.

IV. Discuss Results of the GIS Modeling and Proposed BMPs

Lindsay presented the results of her EVAAL and STEPL modeling. She reviewed the BMPs suggested by the County LCDs and the estimated phosphorus/sedimentation reductions. The

results were discussed at length. Chris will make the maps available at the project website once the final version are available.

The group discussed why this is important:

- The plan must have measurable target objectives and 10-year indicators for the reduction of phosphorus and sedimentation. The target objectives are the phosphorus levels we ultimately want to achieve (like a TMDL). The indicators are how much progress do we expect in the next 10 years.
- WDNR is calibrating the SWAT model to consider Lindsay's results and to reflect the existing phosphorus and sedimentation lake goals. The WDNR will use this information to set the target objectives for phosphorus. The upland sedimentation target will likely be a percentage of phosphorus.
- Lindsay's modelling shows us: what areas we might want to focus our efforts to give us the "biggest bang for our buck" and what BMPs we want to recommend in order to meet the target objectives.
- In short, the total estimated reductions of all of the recommended BMPs must allow us to achieve the target objectives and indicators.

The group identified ways in which the results of Lindsay's analysis may be used:

- Supplement with the results of sociological studies to focus pilot projects, outreach, BMPs, and plan recommendations.
- Help prioritize BMPs to meet goals. Certain types of BMPs are more effective than others in reducing loading.
- Target specific areas for farmer-led councils. It was discussed that there would likely be multiple, smaller councils for specific subsheds or areas, rather than a single larger council for the entire watershed.
- Help identify areas for additional sociological surveys
- Target 1-on-1 contacts and additional outreach in high loading and high potential areas.
- Identify priority areas for potential water quality trading, resource conservation, or other such projects.
- Help us get the most "bang for our buck." Attendees noted that certain types of projects (e.g., bank stabilization, dredging) are very expensive, so the group will have to decide how best to coordinate limited resources.

V. Begin Discussing Target Reductions Objectives, Indicators, and Milestones/BMPs

Chris reviewed the basic structure of the action plan and related definitions (see next page). Not all target objectives and indicators need to be measurable. The group agreed that separate target objectives, milestones, and recommendations for the Recreation goal are not needed; the Recreation goal for this plan will be met if the objectives, etc., for the other goals are met. The action plan tables for the draft Fisheries & Habitat goal were distributed and attendees were encouraged to be considering this for the next meeting. Completing these tables will be the focus of the upcoming meetings.

Target Objectives – *Ultimate, long-term “goal”; measurable if possible (“think TMDL”). May not have baseline levels for some objectives.*

example: 50 micrograms/l of phosphorus at a lake

Indicators – *10-Year progress towards targets. Some may be less numerical and more narrative. Product (outcome) measures of success.*

example: reduce phosphorus loading by 25%

Milestones – *For each recommendation or best practice, how much “stuff” do we plan to do in next 10-years to achieve the indicators? Process measures of success.*

example: + acres or #s of recommended BMPs

VI. Next Coalition Meeting

The next Coalition meeting will occur in late January. Attendees were generally okay with the meeting time and day of the week.

HOMEWORK was reviewed:

- Chris is working with some individuals on 1/3-page topic “vignettes”
- Review of Watershed-Level Overview Section; will be online in January
- Email to Chris comments on the draft overall goals by 1/15/16
- Email to Chris additions and changes to the DRAFT subshed, lake group, & plan summaries by 1/15/16
- Given some thought to the Fisheries & Habitat Action Plan – Target Objectives & Recommendations (don’t worry about the resources)
- Have a safe, merry holidays

Chris commented that the homework is important in order to keep our remaining schedule and number of meetings. We want the plan to come from the Coalition members, which requires everyone to contribute. Chris was asked to send homework reminders to the email list.