

**Nomination of:** Travis Tulowitzky, Bayfield County Land & Water Conservation, 715/373-6167, [travis.tulowitzky@bayfieldcounty.wi.gov](mailto:travis.tulowitzky@bayfieldcounty.wi.gov)

**Outstanding Conservation Employee Award in the category of Technician/Planner/ Project Manager/GIS Specialist/Agronomist:** Bayfield County Land & Water Conservation, Conservation Technician, 11 Years of service.

**Education and Background, etc.:** Before working for Bayfield Land & Water, Travis worked for Bayfield Zoning for 6 years and still maintains a POWTs Certification. He holds significant levels of job approval in the following:

- Well Decommissioning
- Diversions
- Obstruction Removal
- Livestock Pipeline – for all 3, length, pipe diameter, and pipe design pressure
- Access Roads – both surface material and length
- Heavy Use Area Protection – both site surface area and surface protection
- Stormwater Runoff Control
- Soil Spreading
- Stream Crossings
- Wetland Restoration
- Vegetated Treatment Areas (VTAs)

In the past, Travis was the lead on updating NMPs with farmers throughout Bayfield County. Currently, he is the lead on all of the engineering projects and practices that Bayfield Land & Water completes annually, including all agricultural projects, shoreline projects, and habitat projects. Travis implements the shoreline mitigation program, served as the lead for 2 years on the SSOP project, and has taken on the lead in overseeing NRCS projects and practices in the field starting in 2021. On a very large and complex project Travis coordinated with Bayfield County Forestry and Highway Departments, DATCP, Wisconsin Emergency Management, and the Town of Delta, to revise a FEMA plan design to repair the Delta dump site damaged by major flooding. This project was two years in the making with an original estimate of \$350,000. Thanks to Travis's design and coordination efforts, he and Stacy Dehne, DATCP Engineer, were able to convince FEMA and WEM to supply an additional \$250,000 in funding to fix the site correctly. Travis has been responsible for surveying, design work, engineering oversight, permitting, and inspections for a project that will be implemented in 2022.

**Nominated by:** Quita Sheehan, Vilas County Land & Water Conservation, 715/479-3721, [mashee@vilascountywi.gov](mailto:mashee@vilascountywi.gov) and Heather Palmquist, Iron County Land & Water Conservation, 715/561-0238, [lakes@ironcountywi.gov](mailto:lakes@ironcountywi.gov)

**Summary:** Travis Tulowitzky led a group of northern Wisconsin LWCD staff to create "Shoreland Stabilization – A Guide for Homeowners and Conservationists on Inland Lakes & Flowages". Over several years of group and online meetings to develop content and bring it to a publishable state, Travis shepherded into existence a booklet that will be used by conservation staff to educate owners of shorelines about the different practices that can be used to address erosion issues and protect water quality. This resource is now available to LWCD offices across Wisconsin. Travis also has a wide variety of conservation responsibilities that his supervisor says he preforms exceptionally.

### **How Travis Tulowitzky meets the award criteria and guidelines:**

If you have the pleasure of knowing Travis Tulowitzky you know he is kind, intelligent, and a good listener. His humble attitude, combined with an enthusiastic can-do attitude, inspires others, and makes him ideally placed as Bayfield County's Conservation Technician helping landowners solve problems from farm land to shorelines. Travis excels at solving complex issues, working with a variety of personalities. At Bayfield County Land & Water, Travis is responsible for all engineering projects and practices, including all agricultural, shoreline, and habitat projects. He also implements the shoreline mitigation program, and oversees NRCS projects and practices in the field. Travis successfully led a very large and complex project to restore a Town dump site destroyed by recent floods. In addition to coordinating County, State, and Federal partners, Travis improved the design, and secured additional funding to not just restore the dump but also avoid impacts from future flooding.

In the last two years, Travis also stepped up to regional leadership when he identified a lack of materials to help the public understand how to restore shorelines and protect water quality in Wisconsin. To solve this problem, Travis took on a leading role in creating, editing, publishing, and distributing the booklet, "Shoreland Stabilization – A Guide for Homeowners and Conservationists on Inland Lakes & Flowages".

Travis successfully steered the Shoreland Stabilization Outreach Project (SSOP) group to create the booklet by using the collected expertise of northern Wisconsin LWCD's staff, our DATCP engineer, and a colleague at UW Extension - Lakes. He organized meetings, kept minutes, developed work groups, assigned homework, and kept everyone on task with good humor. Travis also guided the collective through using Google Docs and going online once COVID hit, and navigated issues that Conservation Technicians might not be expert at, such as securing photo credits, copyrights, and an artist to develop drawings for each practice. In addition, he collaborated with WI Land+Water to assist with funding and editing this project.

The booklet includes stabilization practices that mitigate shoreline erosion on inland lakes to protect water quality. From passive restoration to biologs and log revetments, to riprap and geogrids, this booklet helps landowners and conservation staff understand the limitations and benefits of each practice, and which to choose for each site. Practices included in this publication are eligible for BOND funding from DATCP.

Through Travis's dedication and leadership, the Shoreland Stabilization booklet has been made available to every Land & Water Conservation Dept across the state. It has been well received by LWCDs, Lake Associations, Lake Consultants, WDNR Water Regulation Staff, Zoning Department's and more. Travis promoted it at the Northwest Lakes Convention and through a WI Land+Water training session, assisting in training folks on the intent of the document, how to evaluate a site and choose a practice, and to weigh the pros and cons of each practice. Thanks to Travis's vision and hard work, landowners and natural resource professionals are now better equipped to evaluate a property and navigate potential remedies for shoreline erosion issues on inland lakes in Wisconsin.



State of Wisconsin  
Governor Tony Evers

**Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**  
Secretary Randy Romanski

Wisconsin Land & Water  
Professional Improvement Committee

December 14, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to support the nomination and recommendation of Travis Tulowitzky for the conservation employee award. I first met Travis while in Bayfield County assisting their Land Conservation Department for the day. There was a luncheon at the County services building, and Travis was being recognized as an outstanding employee in the Bayfield County Zoning Department at that time. Luckily enough, after serving 6 years in the Zoning Department, Travis came over to the Land & Water Conservation Department and has been there 11 years and counting! Even before I got to know him, he struck me as a genuinely nice guy and a dedicated worker. Turns out that first impression was spot on and getting to know him more has me really appreciating him not only as a Land Conservation Technician I get to work with, but as a true friend as well!

As a DATCP engineer who serves 14 counties in the Northern Area, a self-sufficient, go-getter technician whom I can trust to take care of business is what I get with Travis. He is always willing to do whatever it takes to make a project or an idea successful. He is excellent with landowners and has navigated some rather difficult contractor situations with ease due to his outstanding personality and people skills. Travis has consistently maintained high levels of certification in the engineering practices so that he can work his way through most any type of project he encounters. He asks all the right questions to even keep me on track when out of the ordinary circumstances arise. Not only does he manage to meticulously work on any and all projects for the Bayfield County programs, he also takes the time to do extra in order to assist NRCS and Statewide initiatives.

Recently, Travis was the lead on forming a team to work on a shoreline erosion control design tool. He was approached by a landowner who wanted more information on shoreline stabilization. Finding very little to refer to, Travis immediately set out on creating the Shoreline Stabilization Outreach Project packet with a group of his peers. He organized the team members, coordinated team meetings, took minutes each time we met, and ultimately kept us on track to see the idea and resulting pamphlet through to completion. He maintained the team and forged ahead through setbacks such as staff turnover, COVID restrictions, and even some grant oversight and budget issues. Largely due to his efforts, we now collectively have a document we can share with landowners as well as peers to show how we attack a shoreline erosion project within the County Cost Share Programs. Each of 72 counties in the State has received this document for their use in promoting their program and protecting Wisconsin shorelines.

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Another excellent example of Travis's willingness to put his heart and soul into his work can be found in his efforts on a FEMA project in the Town of Delta in Bayfield County. After the floods of 2016 in the area blew out a channel adjacent to an old solid waste/town dump site, Travis has been the catalyst to get the project site on its way toward restoration. As many know, working with multiple government agencies is not an easy task and takes patience and perseverance. Travis manages to handle these frustrations and setbacks with ease. Though FEMA dollars had been awarded to this location, a fully engineered plan had not been completed when the original dollars were allocated. With the help of Travis coordinating with the Bayfield County Forestry Dept (owner) and WDNR (adjacent landowner), the Town of Delta and Wisconsin Emergency Management, a design has been completed and put to paper. Thanks to this design, the project has received approval for the additional funding necessary to complete a full mitigation of the area rather than a "band-aid" fix. The project is now able to move forward with necessary permitting reviews, cost and material estimating, and ultimately get from a project that is a good idea to take care of to a project that can actually be bid out and constructed. Though it has been five years since the original catastrophic episode, Travis's involvement in the past 2 years has made it a reality that the site will be repaired and restored in 2022 with a solid waste/dump no longer eroding a channel bed and banks upgradient of the White River, a Class I trout stream.

The value of a great technician should not be overlooked or taken for granted. Technicians the caliber of Travis Tulowitzky are the ones who get the projects to a point where we can move forward with the process and get the conservation on the landscape where it is valuable! Travis exemplifies the best type of technician who take the initiative and have the ability and steadfastness to turn a good idea into a project that can be built for the sake of water quality protection and conservation. I whole-heartedly support his nomination!

Sincerely,

Stacy D. Dehne P.E.  
DATCP Conservation Engineer

Extension Lakes Program  
College of Natural Resources / UW-Stevens Point  
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December 29, 2021  
Wisconsin Land+Water Professional Improvement Committee

Dear conservation award review committee,

This letter comes to you in support of Travis Tulowitzky's nomination for the *Outstanding Conservation Employee Award* sponsored by the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association. I understand this award seeks to recognize those who have gone above and beyond with their leadership and significant contributions to county land and water conservation. I feel Travis's ongoing work as a Land Conservation Technician in Bayfield County coupled with his exemplary leadership on the "Shoreline Stabilization Outreach Project" makes him an ideal candidate for this award.

Over the last two years, I have had the pleasure of working with Northwoods county land and water conservation department staff led and coordinated by Travis Tulowitzky to develop a new guide around erosion control on shorelands. The team named the effort the "Shoreline Stabilization Outreach Project or SSOP". The guide takes people through the common best practices associated with shoreland management, following guidelines and state standards put together by the Standards Oversight Committee (SOC) for Wisconsin.

Shoreline protection, management, and stewardship by landowners is one of the big three challenges we work on around our waterways. The collaborative effort of SSOP led by Travis has resulted in a useful tool for resource professionals across the state to educate landowners on the different methods of mitigating shoreland erosion, when each is used, limitations to each method, and pictures of projects from across the state. This booklet is beneficial for landowners to easily grasp and visualize what can be done on their eroding shoreline. The booklet also includes a shoreline assessment for landowners to understand what practice may be applicable to their shoreline need. Landowners will also find a basic soil test guide to assess their soil type. Each of these critical components combined, provide a valuable resource for resource professionals as well as shoreland property owners to better explain why techniques are being used and what those techniques look like when installed on the landscape.

I have shared this resource with the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership, a team I work with regionally on these water issues. We are excited to have another "go-to" resource for erosion control and stabilization that can be shared with Wisconsin shoreland property owners and beyond to other states.

This guide will be a terrific resource for lake and river organizations, watershed alliances, conservation groups, zoning departments, land and water conservation departments, nature centers, research centers, land trusts, and others interested in conserving shoreland systems in a healthier state around Wisconsin. Given that the loss of riparian vegetation along our waterways is a major stressor to our lakes, rivers, and streams, this guide addresses a major challenge currently affecting Wisconsin water. This guide can aid in shoreland property owners raising their game at better controlling soil loss and nutrient pollution coming off their properties.

Travis led this effort through some trying circumstances, including navigating the Covid protocols and hurdles, finding graphic design support and expertise, and negotiating with the SSOP team and partners the printing costs of this important new resource. Through Travis's leadership and the SSOP team's hard work, all 72 counties have received this new document for use in promoting clean water and healthy shorelands.

I highly recommend Travis for the Outstanding Conservation Employee Award presented by Wisconsin Land+Water; I thank you for considering him for this award.

Best regards,

*Patrick Goggin*

Patrick Goggin,  
Extension Lakes Program / University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point