

**WISCONSIN LAND+WATER CONSERVATION
2024 OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION EMPLOYEE
AWARD NOMINATION**

Award Category

Outstanding Conservation Employee, Technician/Planner/Project Manager/GIS/Agronomist

Nominee Contact Information

Brian Smetana

Senior Conservation Technician

Years of Service: 37.5 years

Walworth County Land Use and Resource Management Department

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Nominator Contact Information

Mandy Bonneville

County Conservationist

Walworth County Land Use and Resource Management Department

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Nomination Summary

Brian Smetana has been employed with Walworth County's Land Use and Resource Management Department for over 37 years. During his career Brian served in the Department's Conservation Division, first as a Conservation Technician for 26 years, and then as a Senior Conservation Technician for 11 years. Brian's expertise, passion, and commitment have led to many conservation successes in Walworth County and southeastern Wisconsin. There is no doubt his contributions will benefit the area for generations to come. There is no one more deserving of WI Land + Water's Outstanding Conservation Employee Award.

Nomination

Brian graduated from UW-Platteville as an Agronomist and shortly thereafter was employed with Walworth County as a Conservation Technician. Brian excelled in this position and was ultimately promoted to a Senior Conservation Technician responsible for implementing conservation programs to protect the county's land and water resources. His initiative and independence have helped our department to achieve a high volume of conservation projects with limited staff. That said, the work Brian performs goes well beyond simply administering conservation practices and programs. He has been the catalyst to furthering our department's conservation goals and efforts.

During Brian's career, he has built vital relationships with area landowners, farmers, stakeholder

groups, local government officials, state and federal agency partners. It is because of these relationships with the agricultural community that Brian is often able to achieve voluntary compliance in situations that may otherwise require regulatory enforcement. He is skilled at bringing together various groups with differing priorities and interests to achieve common conservation goals.

Brian is highly respected and sought after for technical assistance by members of the community and his peers. He serves on WI Land + Water's Technical Committee and has presented in the past at the organization's annual conference. He freely shares his knowledge, hosting annual nutrient management planning workshops, holding soil health field days, and speaking to numerous school and community groups about soil and water conservation.

Brian willingly serves as an advisor to various watershed stakeholder groups, including the Water Alliance for Preserving Geneva Lake and the Delavan Lake Improvement Association. His contributions are sought after in development of watershed plans and implementation of those plans to improve area soil health and water quality. He played a critical role in the development of Jackson Creek's Nine Key Element Plan, and now in the securing of funds to implement recommendations of that plan. He routinely serves as an advisor to local officials and area groups. In recent years, Brian was a member of a team of individuals who, along with The Nature Conservancy, completed a comprehensive conservation partnership that ultimately won an award from the Wisconsin Business Journal.

It is a common occurrence for our office to receive compliments from Brian's peers and members of the community. The common theme relayed is how Brian took the time to share his knowledge and provide assistance. Brian fully embodies going "above and beyond" in his position. Our department has been fortunate to have such a dedicated employee committed to furthering conservation efforts for Walworth County.