

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Lyn Litchke, for her nomination for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Service.

As a disabled veteran myself, and a 1990 graduate of Texas State University, I am intimately aware of her outstanding efforts with the VETREC on H2O initiative, and her personal care and concern for our nation's military veterans.

I first heard of Dr. Litchke from the Recreation Therapists working with disabled military veterans, and active duty personnel, in San Antonio. I am still being treated for injuries related to my military service, and I also work as a volunteer within the Veterans Administration Health Care System.

I am the area Program Lead for Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing ([phwff.org](http://phwff.org)). We work with injured and recovering individuals, and help them regain use of their injured limbs, and restore their mental health. Three of the Recreation Therapists that we work closely with in San Antonio are graduates of TSU, and were trained by Dr. Litchke.

In 2015, I visited the TSU campus to meet Dr. Litchke. We discussed ways reach out to military veterans in our area, many of whom are TSU students. We brainstormed ways to involve several water sports, and water related activities, as therapy. The VETREC on H2O was born.

Dr. Litchke possesses the rare combination of professional expertise, vibrant enthusiasm, and compassion for hurting people.

This was evident in her organization of water sport experts for the recent ATRA conference, on the River Walk in San Antonio, in February of this year.

Heather Miller, a former student of Dr. Litchke, is the lead Recreation Therapist at the Center For The Intrepid, a world class rehabilitation facility, located at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio. Heather began the ATRA conference with a virtual tour of the CFI rehabilitation

center, and each of the affiliated water sports had a session to present their subject. ATRA participants received hands on training, and had front row seats to the type of water sports used in the rehabilitation process.

Without Dr. Litchke, none of this would have been possible. She organized and coordinated the event through a series of on campus meetings, and numerous phone calls and emails, over the course of several months.

Currently, Dr. Litchke is planning and organizing a VETREC on H2O Initiative for the TSU community. In April 2016, the San Marcos River will be transformed into a water Recreation Therapy headquarters for local military veterans. TSU students, faculty, and local water sports experts will combine their efforts to host a first ever recreation day for area veterans and their families.

Fly fishing, kayak fishing, white water kayaking, paddle board yoga, water skiing, and scuba diving will be featured events. Games and activities will be provided for the veteran's families as well.

Dr. Litchke is a professional, energetic, enthusiastic Recreation Therapist, with a sincere heart of compassion. She is deserving of recognition with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Service. I highly recommend her for this award.

Michael Schlimgen  
Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing  
San Marcos Program Lead