



## **GUIDELINES FOR THE ILLINOIS CONSERVATION FOUNDATION TODD FINK MEMORIAL AWARD [2024]**

### **History**

The Todd Fink Memorial Award was established at the request of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Fink, on behalf of the family following the death of Todd Fink in July 1995. At the time of his death at age 36, Todd Fink was a Natural Heritage Biologist with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. He had earned his M.S. from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and considered himself a vertebrate zoologist with a specialty in ornithology. He was widely regarded as an expert on birds and his opinions in all matters biological were valued by his colleagues and friends.

### **Purpose of fund**

To help support Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC) graduate students who are engaged in research that will, or indirectly benefit, state threatened or endangered species of plants or animals.

### **Annual Stipend**

A maximum of \$500 shall be made available from the fund annually in the form of a single \$500 stipend or two \$250 stipends. In a given year SIUC may recommend the issuance of a single \$500 stipend, two \$250 stipends, one \$250 stipend, or none at all, depending upon the need and the availability of qualified students. The annual stipend will be provided as long as funds are available for the annual grant.

### **Use of funds**

To help offset travel expenses (lodging, meals, operation of vehicle) directly associated with the student's graduate research and for paying registration fees only to attend university-approved professional and scientific conferences, workshops, or similar functions which will enhance the student's educational experience.

## **Requirements**

To qualify, students must be enrolled in a graduate program in Plant Biology, Plant and Soil Sciences, Forestry, Zoology, or Biological Sciences. \*Please note that 2024 will serve as a pilot year to also include students enrolled in a graduate program in Geology, Geography, and/or Chemistry. Students must be engaged in graduate research that will directly or indirectly benefit state threatened or endangered species of plants or animals.

## **Accountability**

Students will be required to establish proof of enrollment prior to accepting the stipend and will agree to use the funds in accordance with the stated requirements. No other accounting shall be required excepting that which may be deemed necessary by the Graduate School and/or the various affected departments at SIUC.

## **Deadline**

- **Monday, 5:00 p.m., May 13, 2024:** Deadline for submission of award nomination application to the Graduate School.
- **On or about Monday, July 12, 2024:** Award offers are to be announced by Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

## **Submission Process**

The award nomination application should be submitted via email (in .pdf format) to [charris@siu.edu](mailto:charris@siu.edu)

Departments submitting multiple award nomination applications should create a .pdf file for each individual nomination packet.

## **Selection Process**

**By June 1** of each year, the Graduate School will notify the Illinois Department of Natural Resources - Division of Natural Heritage (or its successor) and the Illinois Conservation Foundation (or its successor) of the student nomination(s) for the Todd Fink Memorial Award. The Graduate School will also provide notification in the event that there are no nominations. The Division of Natural Heritage, in consultation with the Executive Director of the Endangered Species Protection Board (or its successor) and the Illinois Conservation Foundation will review the nomination(s). Upon favorable review, the stipend will be issued **on or after July 1** of the same year.