

Privately Funded Program to Assist More than 7,000 Students in Learning about Illinois' Natural Heritage

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – More than 7,000 students will visit Illinois state parks, natural areas, museums and other natural resources sites this year to learn about nature and conservation thanks to grant funding through the Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant Program. Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Director Colleen Callahan today announced more than \$96,000 in donated funds had been awarded for 120 field trip grants. Winners represented 31 counties in the state.

“This program allows students to visit locations throughout the state to see first-hand what they’ve been learning about in the classroom,” said Director Callahan. “Our future conservation leaders need the opportunity to experience Illinois’ natural resources in person. We are pleased to be able to support learning outside the classroom with these grants.”

The entire \$96,605.88 being awarded for 2020 was made possible by private donations from the Independence Tube Corporation of Bedford Park, the Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Foundation of Skokie and the D. F. and M. T. Grohne Family Foundation of Wilmington. The donations and funding for the grants are coordinated by the Illinois Conservation Foundation (ICF).

The Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant Program has now distributed more than \$1,287,000 and more than 117,000 students have been provided with the opportunity to take part in a field trip since the program’s inception in 2001. Grant recipients are located throughout Illinois and represent students from pre-kindergarten through high school.

The competitive grant program allows Illinois teachers to apply for funds to take students on a field trip to study Illinois’ natural resources. Learning activities must directly relate to the school’s curriculum. The annual application deadline is January 31. Funding administered by the ICF covers expenses such as the costs of transportation and substitute teachers.

For more information about the Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant Program, contact the IDNR Division of Education at dnr.teachkids@illinois.gov or 217-524-4126. The ICF gladly accepts donations for the Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant Program. Visit www.ilcf.org for additional information.

For a list of this year’s grant recipients, check the IDNR website at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/education/Documents/IBFTGAwardees2020.pdf>.

The 2021 application form will be available soon at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/education/Pages/GrantsIBFTG.aspx>.