



# **Illinois Conservation Foundation Announces Recipients of 2020 Conservation Achievement Scholarships**

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois Conservation Foundation (ICF) has announced the selections of Audrey Batts of Elburn, Henry Eberhart of Evanston, Alexander Morelock of Taylorville, and Natalia Rosinski of Chicago as the recipients of the 2020 Conservation Achievement Scholarships. The high school seniors each will receive \$2,000 to apply for specified college expenses.

“Congratulations to our 2020 scholarship recipients and thanks to all the donors to the Illinois Conservation Foundation’s scholarship fund,” said ICF Executive Director Crystal Curfman. “Since 2005, the ICF Conservation Achievement Scholarship program has provided \$146,000 to 71 high school seniors to support the academic endeavors of young conservationists from throughout Illinois who have demonstrated effective, voluntary, long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement and promotion of Illinois’ natural resources.”

## **Audrey Batts, Elburn; Kaneland High School**

Audrey Batts developed her love of nature as a preteen, studying the decline in populations of pollinating bees, and as a teenager participating in the annual Backyard Bird Count, monitoring frogs and studying the importance of freshwater mussels in Illinois waterways. A member of the FFA at Kaneland High School, Batts credits camps at the Fox Valley Wildlife Center and her volunteer work at the Cosley Zoo in Wheaton with spurring interest in conserving Illinois’ native wildlife. Her work at the zoo has included assisting in wildlife education programs for the public. She and fellow students also assisted in tree planting at the Big Rock Forest Preserve in Kane County. Batts plans to attend Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, enrolling in the Animal Science program.

### **Henry Eberhart, Evanston; Evanston Township High School**

Henry Eberhart recalls his interest in conservation and sustainability emerged at age 6 when he helped prompt a change in school policy and started a recycling program. Beginning as a high school sophomore, he served on the Evanston mayor's Climate Action and Resilience Plan working group to formulate city policies intended to help Evanston become carbon neutral, expand use of renewable energy and cut citywide waste output over the next 30 years. Eberhart also worked with Environmental Justice Evanston (EJE), conducting a survey and examining inequities in trash removal in low-income communities of color, and addressing with fellow students and community leaders the effects of climate change relative to racial and economic issues. He also led student protests over a lack of action on climate change issues. Eberhart plans to attend Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire where he hopes to continue his conservation activism while enrolled in the Native American Studies program.

### **Alexander Morelock, Taylorville; Taylorville High School**

Alex Morelock says his interest in conservation started early, when he attended events for youth hunters and hunters with disabilities with his father, an Illinois Conservation Police Officer. From helping build a pond and working on invasive plant removal on his grandparents' property, he carried his conservation ethic to service projects at Taylorville High School. Morelock organized a student Green Committee to work on trash cleanups in the community and fundraise for local ecofriendly causes. Students also planned an Earth Day event. Morelock plans to attend Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri studying in the Pre-Law and Political Science programs with an interest in specializing in environmental law.

### **Natalia Rosinski, Chicago; John F. Kennedy High School**

Natalia Rosinski first joined fellow biology students her freshman year at John F. Kennedy High School in Chicago in volunteering at Cook County's Arie Crown Forest Preserve assisting in invasive plant removal as a community service project. That work hooked her on conservation efforts and habitat restoration. Summer conservation internships through the Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps led to habitat work at the nearby Theodore Stone Forest, cutting invasive buckthorn, honeysuckle, Canada thistle, canary reed grass and white sweet clover to enhance the woodlands, oak savanna and prairie, helping native species to return and preserving the natural ecosystem. She's recommended the internships to other students. Rosinski also volunteers at Bemis Woods and Bob Mann Woods forest preserves on invasive plant removal, helping inexperienced volunteers learn about the value of habitat restoration. Rosinski plans to attend DePaul University in Chicago and enroll in the College of Science and Health.

Applicants for the ICF Conservation Achievement Scholarship program must be outstanding high school seniors in Illinois who have demonstrated effective, voluntary,

long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement and/or promotion of Illinois' natural resources. Other criteria also apply. For more information, check the ICF website at [www.ilconservation.org](http://www.ilconservation.org).

For information on donating to and supporting the Conservation Achievement Scholarships or other ICF programs, contact the foundation at 217-785-2003, or donate online at [www.ilconservation.org](http://www.ilconservation.org).