

**Travel Funds to the International Urban Wildlife Conference**

**by**

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**Submitted to  
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## **B. Restatement of Professional Enhancement Opportunity**

The International Urban Wildlife Conference is organized by The Wildlife Society's Urban Wildlife Working Group of which I have been a member of since 2009 and a member of The Wildlife Society since 2002. My research interests focus on the interdisciplinary threads of urban wildlife ecology and management, human-wildlife conflicts, and human dimensions of wildlife. Unlike the annual conference held by The Wildlife Society, the International Urban Wildlife Conference is focused solely on the ecology and management of urban wildlife, reducing human-wildlife conflict, urban planning, and outreach and education as it relates to urban citizens. Although sporadic in occurrence (the last conference was 2010), the International Urban Wildlife Conference attracts >300 attendees across the United States and the world. Also unique to this conference in the field of wildlife science, is that conference attendees include not only researchers, managers, and students, but also elected officials from municipal and county governments, architects, urban planners, and private organizations. In order to work toward a sustainable future where natural resources, especially wildlife, exists in an increasingly populated and developed world, it is essential that this amalgam of people must collaborate. The International Urban Wildlife Conference was held at the Lincoln Park Zoo's Urban Wildlife Institute in Chicago, Illinois during 17 – 20 May 2015.

## **C. Brief Review of the Professional Enhancement**

I had 2 abstracts that were accepted for oral presentations at this conference. I was the lead presenter on one of these abstracts that was based on the research conducted by myself and Catherine Normand, my recent MS Graduate student in the Fish and Wildlife Program who completed her thesis in December 2014. The second abstract was based on a collaborative research project that I have been conducting since 2013 with the Lake County Forest Preserve

District, Illinois, and Southern Illinois University Carbondale. I was a co-author on that presentation and the abstract was part of a symposium on Chicago Metropolitan wildlife research. Lastly, I moderated a technical session on domestic cat research.

#### **D. Summary of Experiences**

Although the conference began on Sunday 17 May, there were only field trips scheduled so I did not attend. I spent 5 years conducting research in the Chicago Metropolitan area so both the sight-seeing trips and the excursions focused on showcasing local research were not novel to me nor worth the extra expense. On Monday, 18 May, I attended the opening plenary session in which I listened to a great speech by Dr. Marzluff, a renowned urban bird biologist, and a presentation by Jim Sterba, author of several books including *Natural Wars*. It was entertaining and informative to hear Jim Sterba's thoughts considering I spent all of Fall 2014 semester reading and discussing his book with Tech Fish and Wildlife seniors in their senior seminar course FW 4001. Monday evening ended with a welcoming reception where I made use of my time to network with colleagues from Canada, New York, and Chicago and discuss potential collaborations. On Tuesday, 19 May, my co-author presented one of my research presentations in which I was able to help answer questions during the session breaks. That day also involved a day-long Chicago Metropolitan research symposium in which I sat in on to hear updates on all of the research projects that are on-going in the area. On Wednesday, 20 May, I listened to a technical session on urban bats which is a topic of interest to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and may help with future collaboration with that agency. Additionally, I moderated a technical session on urban domestic cats where I also presented the research my previous graduate student and I conducted in Russellville, Arkansas. The remainder of Wednesday involved my attendance at a symposium on mesocarnivores in urban areas.

## **E. Conclusions**

In attending the International Urban Wildlife Conference, I learned about contemporary urban wildlife management problems and research studies that have inspired me for future research that can be conducted with Tech undergraduate and graduate students. In addition, I will be able to use this information in my classes to motivate students in their education. Due to the large number of attendees at this conference, I was able to network with other researchers for possible future research projects including a potential before-and-after public relations test on the human dimensions of releasing an endangered venomous snake population in a city. Lastly, both presentations and the technical session acknowledged my affiliation with Arkansas Tech University which will inevitably produce free publicity for the Fish and Wildlife undergraduate and graduate programs, and in turn, may recruit future students.