



## **The Longspur Prairie Fund Longspur Fellowships in the Natural Sciences FAQ**

### FAQ

#### *What is a Longspur Fellowships in the Sciences?*

Longspur Fellowships in the Sciences were established in 2013 by the Longspur Prairie Fund (LPF) to provide financial support to individual researchers of exemplary talent working in the Red River Valley. Cash awards are paid directly to researchers, and are meant to facilitate their work.

#### *How many fellowships are awarded each year?*

0-3

#### *What is the amount of the award?*

\$5,000-10,000 per researcher. This amount can be received in a single year or spread over two years.

#### *What kind of research does the Longspur Prairie Fund support?*

LPF supports scholars of demonstrated talent. More specifically, LPF is interested in supporting the work of scientists involved in concrete experiments and studies of High Plains prairie flora, fauna, and ecosystems.

#### *Who is eligible for a fellowship?*

Longspur Prairie Fellows directly engage the ecologies and environments of our local area and communities. Applicants must be either residents of the Red River Valley and its surrounding counties (MN: Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Kittson, Marshall, Mahnomen, Norman, Ottertail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Traverse, or Wilkin counties; ND: Barnes, Cass, Cavalier, Grand Forks, Nelson, Pembina, Ramsey, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele, Traill, or Walsh counties), or be willing to travel to the Red River Valley and its surrounding counties for at least part of the duration of their fellowship.

#### *How do I apply for a Longspur Fellowship in the Sciences?*

To be invited to apply, researchers must be nominated. There are no open applications.

#### *How does the nomination process work?*

Three nominators, with a deep knowledge of scientific issues relevant to the twelve-county Red River Valley area and representing a wide range of expertise and experience, have been identified by LPF in consultation with the advisory board. Responding to specific criteria, these three nominators will each be asked to recommend two researchers, thereby creating an applicant pool of 6 scientists who will be invited to apply for a fellowship. The nominators will remain anonymous to ensure the integrity of the process; however, the substance of their recommendations will become part of the material reviewed with the researcher's application to the program.

*What are the criteria by which researchers will be nominated, evaluated, and selected?*

A researcher's applications are evaluated according to:

- their track record of scientific excellence and/or potential;
- their potential for the fellowship to facilitate subsequent research;
- their willingness and ability to use Longspur sites effectively in their work.

*If I am nominated, what happens next?*

Each nominated researcher will be notified by LPF of his or her nomination and be formally invited to apply for a fellowship. Researchers will fill out an application form and submit support materials as appropriate to their work. Once all of nominees have completed and submitted their applications, the selection process follows a two-tiered review process: First, evaluation by experts in the researcher's field of study; and second, final selection by an interdisciplinary panel. All panelists are composed of scientists from inside and outside the region.

*If I am selected to receive a fellowship, how will I be notified?*

All researchers who apply are notified by mail, simultaneously, of their application status and the panelists' final decisions. For the next – 2016 – cycle, fellowship application results will be announced in late June 2015.

*Why are the nominators kept anonymous?*

We believe this helps to assure the integrity of the process.

*Does LPF refer researchers to the nominators?*

No. The LPF does not in any way influence the selection of researchers. The nominators themselves name two scientists who, in their opinion, are producing outstanding work worthy of a Longspur Fellowship.

*Can someone apply to be a nominator?*

No. Nominators are chosen in consultation with the advisory and come from a highly qualified and knowledgeable community of field biologists, ecologists, chemists, and other scientists. No one will be chosen who would have a financial or personal incentive to nominate one scholar over another. Nominators sign a stringent code-of-ethics and conflict-of-interest statement.

*How are evaluators and panelists chosen?*

Recommendations for potential evaluators and panelists come from many sources including past panelists, colleagues at science and conservation organizations around the region and nation, and suggestions from active scholars. All potential evaluators and panelists must be practicing, knowledgeable science or conservation professionals from inside of the Red River Valley. When selecting evaluators and panel members, LPF takes into consideration age, gender, expertise and experience, ethnicity and geography to put together a well-balanced group. The ultimate selection of evaluators and panel members is at the sole discretion of the Director of the Longspur Prairie Fund.