



IUSSI - North American Section

The Tschinkel Ant Natural History Research Grant supports graduate student research into the basic natural history and biology of ants. It is given annually to the student whose proposed research promises the best contribution to this often-neglected field of study. The winner of the 2017 Tschinkel Grant is **Kim Drager**, who will receive a \$2,500 grant to support her research. Kim is a member of the IUSSI and holds both a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and a Master's degree in Geography from the University of Kansas. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Animal Biology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, under the direction of Andy Suarez. Her Tschinkel Grant proposal is entitled "Variation in *Dorymyrmex bureni* ant nest architecture along hillslope sequences." It was selected from nine highly competitive applications, making the Awards Committee's work quite difficult. Kim's proposal stood out for its novel combination of geology and biology to address the mutual relationship between ant nest structure and soil properties. Her work has great potential to unearth new phenomena about this critical feature of ant natural history. She will combine extensive data collection in the field with modeling intended to explore the implications of nest structure for the physical and biological properties of soil. The Awards Committee agreed that her clear research plan, very appropriate interdisciplinary training, and novel exploration of ant natural history make her highly deserving of this grant.

IUSSI-NAS Awards Committee

Terry McGlynn and Stephen Pratt (Co-Chairs)

Rebecca Clark, Hongmei Li-Byarlay, Juliana Rangel, and Chris Smith