

Julie R. Schmidt — BRI Undergraduate Researcher

My name is Julie Schmidt, and I am a proud native of the great city of San Antonio. Although I am from the city, my love for outdoors began at a very early age. Growing up, my family had access to a ranch outside of Uvalde, Texas. My sister and I would hike, fish, hunt, swim, ride horses, and anything else we could think of. It was there that my love and respect for wildlife was instilled into me and is the reason I had decided by the age of 7 to pursue a career in the wildlife field. Throughout my childhood, my father would take us on father-daughter trips along with a few other families where we would travel the state and stay at state parks. That is when I made a life goal to visit every state park!



While in high school at Winston Churchill, my mother suggested Sul Ross State University. Weary at first as Alpine is such a small town, I was not too sure about it. But after a visit I instantly fell in love with the scenery, the fresh air, and all of the opportunities that the school could provide its students. I am now a junior double concentrating in both range and wildlife management. I know that I would not be this happy anywhere else.



Determining Data Loss by Elimination of Excessive Day Time Photos

1 April — 31 August 2018

The Trans-Pecos is a unique and highly diverse ecological region of Texas. During camera trapping studies, the grassland ecosystem and the windy plains cause game cameras to end up capturing thousands of photos of grass swaying in the breeze. Working with Borderlands Research Institute (BRI) and landowners throughout the Marfa grasslands, we have collected millions of game camera photos from various ranches in just a few months. My project will help determine the times of day various species (esp. meso-carnivores) are captured with the cameras, and see if there is a timeframe (e.g., 10am–4pm) that could potentially be ignored so we could avoid the mass amounts of ‘ghost’ (vegetation-, shadow-, heat-, wind-, etc.-triggered) photos.

This will be my second research project conducted through BRI’s amazing Undergraduate Research and Mentorship Program. Along with improving my technical writing and professional presentation skills I learned last year, I am excited to have been given another opportunity to learn and experience new things. With this new project, I have already began bettering my navigation skills, being trained in mapping using GIS software, learning how to identify species found in the Trans-Pecos, and experiencing first-hand how to analyze photo data. I can’t wait to complete my research and present all around Texas.



CONSERVING THE LAST FRONTIER



The BRI Undergraduate Research and Mentorship Program is proudly supported by a grant from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.