



SRADER CASSATA

Undergraduate Mentorship Program
Botany and Desert Bighorn Sheep
Flower Mound, Texas

STUDENT PROFILE

Srader Cassata is a senior at Sul Ross State University, working on a degree in biology with a concentration on natural history and botany. Srader became passionate about the Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem after several childhood camping trips to the canyons of West Texas, where he observed the awe-inspiring and sometimes alien flora and fauna of the desert country. With experience working in conservation on both the Canadian border of Maine and the Puget Sound region of Washington state, Srader is thrilled to continue working in conservation with Borderlands Research Institute and continue his passion for plants while working on native botanical conservation at the university's greenhouse.

PROJECT PROFILE

Srader's responsibilities as a BUMP student involve helping study the fecal nitrogen concentrations of desert bighorn sheep within the Elephant Mountain WMA. As an undergraduate technician, he assists Hailey Barton with the tracking of bighorn sheep and the collection of samples in the field. Along with collecting samples, he also catalogs and preps samples to be shipped off for chemical analysis. He has also been part of population surveys conducted by TPWD to estimate the overall population and health of desert bighorn sheep on the mountain. This research will hopefully shed light on the quality of diet these threatened animals have within their sanctuary site on Elephant Mountain, and could give insight on management practices in the future.

