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TPWF Selects First Women in Conservation Science Scholarship Winner

Hondo Native Leanna (Lilly) Morin is First-Generation College Grad

Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) has selected Hondo native Leanna (Lilly) Morin as the first recipient of the Women in Conservation Science Scholarship. The scholarship fund was established to encourage and support young women who are pursuing careers in conservation. Morin is a grad student at the Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas.

“I aspire to be a wildlife biologist in Texas and am one year away from earning my master’s degree in range and wildlife management,” said Morin. “I want to research native threatened and endangered species to help us more thoroughly discern their habitat and life requirements, so scientists and stakeholders can take management actions to help them thrive. In the future, I hope to share what I’ve learned with others through outdoor outreach and education. I am thrilled to be the first recipient of this scholarship and am so grateful for the support.”

Morin grew up in Hondo, near San Antonio, and is a first-generation Latina college graduate. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M Kingsville. As a graduate student at Sul Ross, she is studying pronghorn, which is a North American native ungulate found in semi-arid landscapes, including the Trans-Pecos in West Texas. Pronghorn populations have drastically declined in recent decades, and university researchers, wildlife biologists and nonprofit partners including Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation are working to restore their numbers in Texas. For her thesis project, Morin is researching the links between pronghorn nutrition and seasonality and the response of forb communities to livestock grazing systems. She hopes her research will help land managers and biologists to better assess habitats for future pronghorn restoration efforts.

TPWF’s Women in Conservation Science Scholarship advances conservation by encouraging and supporting female undergraduate and graduate students pursuing studies related to natural resource

conservation. The scholarship is open to female students who are interested in a career in the fields of range science, forestry, biology, botany, earth science, wildlife management and other majors related to conservation science. The application period for next year's scholarship will open on April 1, 2022.

The scholarship was set up thanks to a [planned gift](#) to TPWF by a retired Texas Parks and Wildlife Department employee and his wife. Steve Boles and Vicki Giere hope the scholarship will result in more women in the ranks of conservation agencies and organizations.

"We hope this scholarship will help more young women achieve master's degrees in conservation," said Boles. "We need more advocates for the environment, and we hope future scholarship winners will use their education and their skills and knowledge to help further conservation of fish, wildlife and natural habitats."

Find out more about the Women in Conservation Science Scholarship:
<https://www.tpwf.org/scholarships/>

Read more about Steve Boles and Vicki Giere's gift: <https://www.tpwf.org/donor-profile-boles-giere/>

Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation raises private funds to advance Texas' proud outdoor traditions and conserve our state's wildlife, habitat, recreational areas, and natural resources. Since 1991, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation has raised more than \$205 million in private philanthropy to ensure that all Texans, today and in the future, can enjoy the wild things and wild places of Texas.

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