

UMF Student Employee Spotlight

Portia Hardy

*Research Assistant, Swift Fox
Research Project*

Portia Hardy is a freshman majoring in Earth and Environmental Science at UMF working as a research assistant for Dr. Schwalm.

During Summer Experience Portia met and talked to Dr. Passarelli about her interest in scientific journalism. From there, Dr. Passarelli put her in contact with Dr. Schwalm, who invited her to work on the Swift Fox research project. Portia, one among a small group of students with similar interests, has been working with Dr. Schwalm on this project ever since. Her role for the first semester as research assistant was to review the images taken by mounted cameras in different pastures in Texas. She would go through these images and record the different species and their behaviors. This coming spring, Portia will be more hands-on with her work and get time in the field setting up cameras in our Maine woods to examine and track more local species. Along with this, Portia and the small team will also be preparing lures and taking specimen samples.



"This job has brought my major to life for me and made me realize how much I enjoy it."

Through this job, Portia has gained insight into her interests and validation about her own academic and career choices: "It has made me realize that I am interested in conservation and I now hope to have a conservation-related career." Along with this insight, Portia has gained applicable skills that are much needed for this line of work. She has enhanced her species identification skills, behavior pattern recognition, experimental set ups, and technology skills as well. While fine-tuning these transferable skills that will doubtlessly help her in her future jobs, Portia has voiced that the job has enhanced her academic life as well: "This project has given me a better understanding of scientific research and methods that I will use in my own future projects."

Want to feature your student employee in **Student Employee Spotlight**?

Email the student's name
and job title to

Cynthia. McShane@maine.edu!

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By Amelia McCannell

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