

## Women Hunt™ Testimonial: Gabriella Cohle

On July 30 I received an email from my husband. The email was forwarded to him from a family friend of ours that just said, "Neat opportunity for your wife!!" Attached to the email was the description of the Women Hunt™ Program. I thought it sounded really neat, but I wasn't sure if I should apply or not. I wanted to learn everything this program had to offer but the only thing holding me back was the fear of traveling alone and leaving my son for such a long period of time. I mulled over the idea of applying for a week or so and finally decided to request an application.

The application was so well thought out. The questions I had to answer really made me think and look inward as to my own thoughts and feelings of ethics and why I wanted to hunt. It was almost like I was learning about myself through the application process. I still remember how nervous I was hitting the submit button on my application right on the evening of the deadline.

Thankfully, I only had to wait a few weeks to find out if I was one of the lucky selections. I was on vacation when the day of the announcements was to be made. I decided to just check my email and there was an email from Women Hunt™! I was so nervous to open it but after reading the first few words I realized I was selected! I could not believe it! I remember reading the email over and over and then finally saying "oh my gosh I got it!" My husband didn't believe me at first but was over the moon excited for me when he read the email himself. I was so excited and shocked that I, of all people, was chosen for this incredible opportunity. Little did I know, this would change my life!

The communication between Women Hunt™ and myself and mentor was great. We were kept well informed on what to expect, what to bring and where to go. I felt so confident in this trip thanks to the emails and zoom meetings.

Packing my bags and going to the airport to go to Texas was surreal. I was filled with nervousness, excitement, and anticipation. I had so many family and friends reaching out to me about how pumped they were for me to have this experience. When I landed in Texas, I felt a huge relief. I was finally here, and I was ready to jump in headfirst into the program.

The women all created a group text prior to the trip so we had been communicating prior to heading to Texas. It felt like we had known each other for a while already. I just knew we were going to have an incredible time together! I met up with April and Stacey at the airport and we hit it off on the way to the hotel. We explored the Alamo and chatted and got to know each other. Meeting everyone else at dinner the first night felt like a group of old friends getting together. We all dove into conversations and spoke about experiences and goals and everything else under the sun. Everyone just clicked with each other.

Arriving at the FTW Ranch felt a lot like going to Disneyworld. There was so much to see and do. And the sense of awe driving around the ranch and seeing the landscape and the lodge was

overwhelming in the best way possible. I felt home! The instructors were incredibly helpful and knowledgeable. Renée and Linda were great to lean on and guide us.

I was nervous to shoot again as I had not shot a firearm in about 2 years at this point. But the classes were so informative, and I learned things I would've never learned anywhere else. The range drills and classes made me feel more confident in my rifle and my shooting skills than I have ever felt before. I had an absolute blast at the range and felt comfortable with shooting positions and learned what ranges I would be able to confidently take an animal. I am still amazed at how much I was taught in such a short period of time.

Going on our hunts was by far the most incredible experience. I have gone out hunting before but never like this. I had never done spot and stalk hunting before, and I have definitely fallen in love. It was eye opening to see how I would react when an opportunity to pull the trigger presented itself and how I can learn and grow. Learning about the gear needed and how to track game and how to properly field dress a harvest was all something I've always wanted to learn but never had anyone to learn from. Hunting from start to finish was absolutely thrilling even despite not harvesting a doe.

Learning everything about hunting and marksmanship was great but what really touched me is the friendships that I made while at Women Hunt™. We developed such strong friendships and deep connections. April, my hunting partner, became one of my best friends in a matter of a couple days. We connected so early on that we were asked multiple times if we had known each other prior to going to Texas. I definitely think we all made friendships that will last a lifetime and that is a gift in and of itself.

It makes me emotional to think about how blessed I was to have had this once in a lifetime opportunity. The generosity of all the donors is heartwarming. I am thankful to Renée for coming up with the idea for Women Hunt™ and to Women Hunt™ for the chance to learn how to hunt in a comfortable and friendly environment. I am appreciative of the time and patience given to us by the instructors at FTW Ranch. I left the Women Hunt™ Program feeling a sense of confidence that I definitely did not have before I got on that plane to Texas. I developed a passion for hunting and conservation and feel an excitement to continue with learning and experiences.

I am beyond excited for rifle season to start so I can get back in the woods and hopefully harvest my first deer. I hope to get out often during rifle season. I plan to learn as much as I can on hunting so that I can become a mentor in the future as well. I would love to become more involved in conservation efforts and definitely more involved with the Wild Sheep Foundation and be able to give back.

Working in the medical field the last 2 years has been difficult and draining to say the least. Through the Women Hunt™ Program I learned that hunting helps me center myself and brings me a sense of peace that I don't normally obtain. It's so nice to have a new outlet to just be at

ease and feel a new sense of worth and focus. Thank you so much Women Hunt™ and Wild Sheep Foundation!