

Jennifer Schori

As a passionate outdoors person, I am personally invested in conservation and I have always had a strong desire to aid in the recovery of endangered species. During my undergraduate degree I became aware of the irreplaceable role that many insects play in ecosystem functioning, and the importance of insect diversity. As my knowledge of insects grows, both through study and work experience, I have become more and more passionate about understanding their role and how to conserve them. Furthermore I have become aware of how disproportionately overlooked insects are in comparison to birds and mammals, both a national and global scale, when it comes to conservation. As such I have realised that there is a niche which desperately needs to be filled. My broad goal for the future is to carry out research which will contribute towards this important but largely unexplored area of conservation.

This year represents my first major step towards achieving this goal. It is my first attempt at carrying out scientific research as I embark upon completing a Master of Science in Ecology. My research project will involve the development of insect conservation and monitoring techniques using the nationally endangered Robust grasshopper, *Brochospis robustus*, as a study species. The Robust grasshopper is endemic to the MacKenzie Basin, thus I will be based in Twizel for the duration of my field research period which will extend from 26th October 2015 until the 27th March 2016. Knowing that the outcome of my research will contribute to the rehabilitation of a critically endangered species is possibly one of the most gratifying things I could hope to achieve out of a Master Project.

Following my MSc, I plan to complete a PhD after-which I hope to continue research in ecology. Ideally I would be working as a researcher either at a Crown Research Institute or a University. I also hope to broaden my knowledge through overseas research at some stage, however it is difficult to ignore how critically endangered many of New Zealand's unique species and habitats are, so my return is inevitable.

Purpose for which funding is sought:

This funding will be used to cover personal expenses during my thesis year and to purchase personal