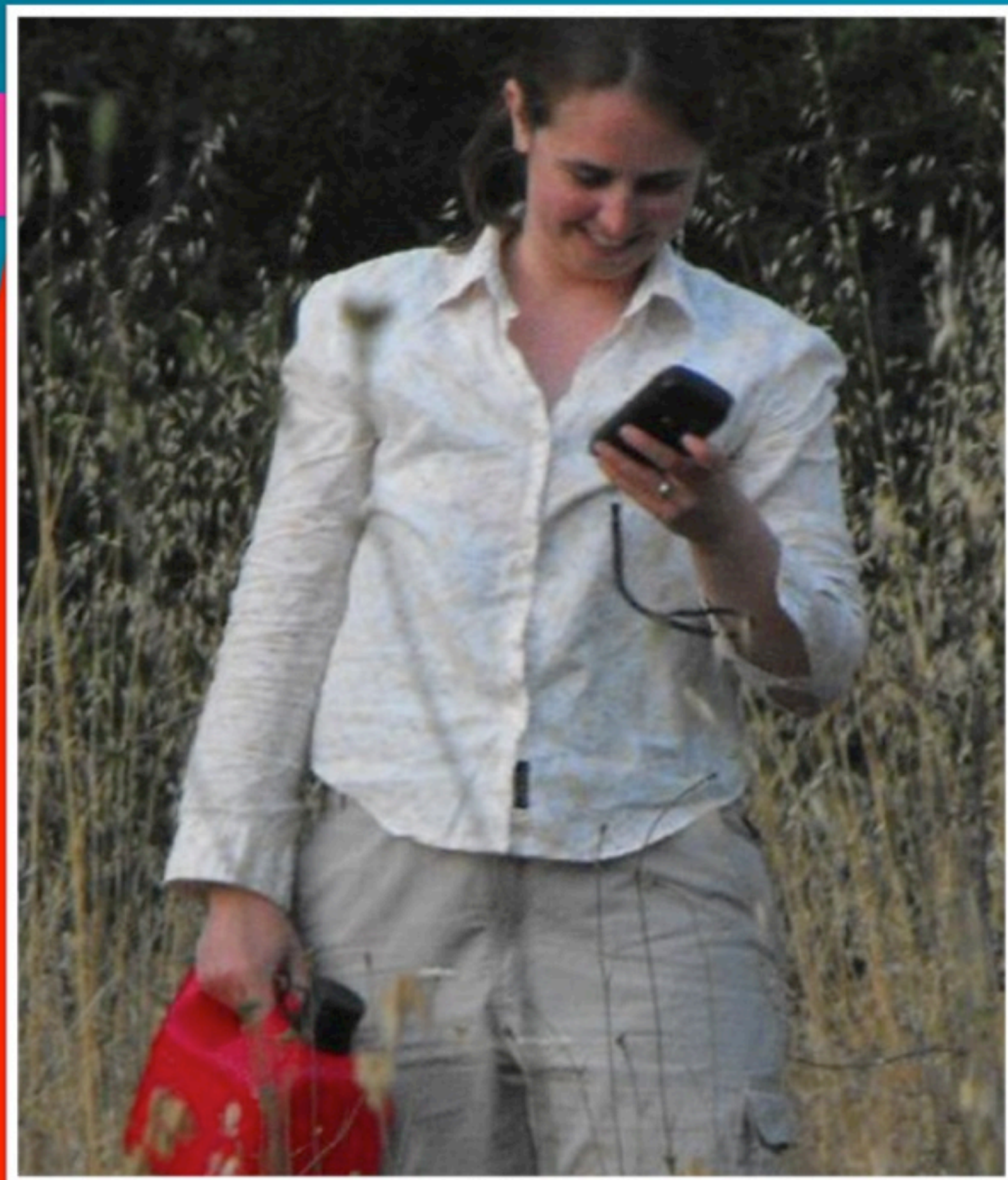


...PRESENTS:

TARA CORNELISSE

ESNR SCIENTIST IN RESIDENCE, 2010-2011



Here I am using a GPS device to mark the location of field plots near the UCSC campus.

Some stuff about me:

- Ⓢ **Age:** 28
- Ⓢ **Where I grew up:** Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Ⓢ **High school:** East Kentwood High School
- Ⓢ **Favorite subjects in high school:** Biology
- Ⓢ **College (undergraduate):** Boston University
- Ⓢ **Some of my favorite things:** Baking, traveling, dogs, camping
- Ⓢ **Something weird about me:** I had a pet beetle for 4 years named Herbert. He flew to Michigan with me twice in my sweater pocket!
- Ⓢ **What I do when I get frustrated:** I talk about what's bothering me with my partner or a friend and usually realize it isn't as big of a deal as I thought it was. Also, I bake when I'm stressed and it calms me down.



Measuring plant height in a quadrant of beetle habitat in the Moore Creek Preserve. (Rubén Mejía, photo)



The Ohlone tiger beetle (*Cicindela ohlone*) is an endangered species that is only found here in Santa Cruz County. It is called a 'tiger' beetle because it has long fangs and stalks its prey (other insects) in the grass.

Scraping the ground to create habitat for the beetles. They need bare ground to lay their eggs in and to hunt for food.



What I study

I'm passionate about conservation and I love insects, so I combine the two by studying the conservation of insects.

It may sound strange to you that I want to conserve insects (aren't they everywhere?) but in fact many insects are just like rare mammals, needing certain places to live and certain things to eat, and are just as likely to be negatively impacted by people destroying their habitat as, say, a mountain lion.

Also, insects are very important in nature: they pollinate flowers, they decompose all the dead plants and animals, and they are sources of food for many other animals. My research on the endangered Ohlone tiger beetle is one way I'm working to understand human impacts on important insects in our community.

As a part of SCWIBLES, I'm excited to share my enthusiasm for science. I believe it's important to understand how our lives are connected to the environment. That's why I love to share the knowledge I have about science and the cool processes that occur on this unique planet we live on.

