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National Zoological Park
Conservation Biology Institute



Welcome 2024 VWL Volunteers!



Virginia Working Landscapes

Grassland Biodiversity Survey Volunteer Training

Erin Shibley
VWL Survey Coordinator

Natalie Izlar
VWL Botany Technician

Christopher Rademacher
VWL Biodiversity Technician



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Conservation Biology Institute*

April 13, 2024



Training Schedule

9:00-10:00 Grassland Biodiversity Survey Overview and Field Safety Briefing

10:00-10:30 Breeding Bird Survey Protocol

- iNaturalist Workshop: Plant Surveys Only Group

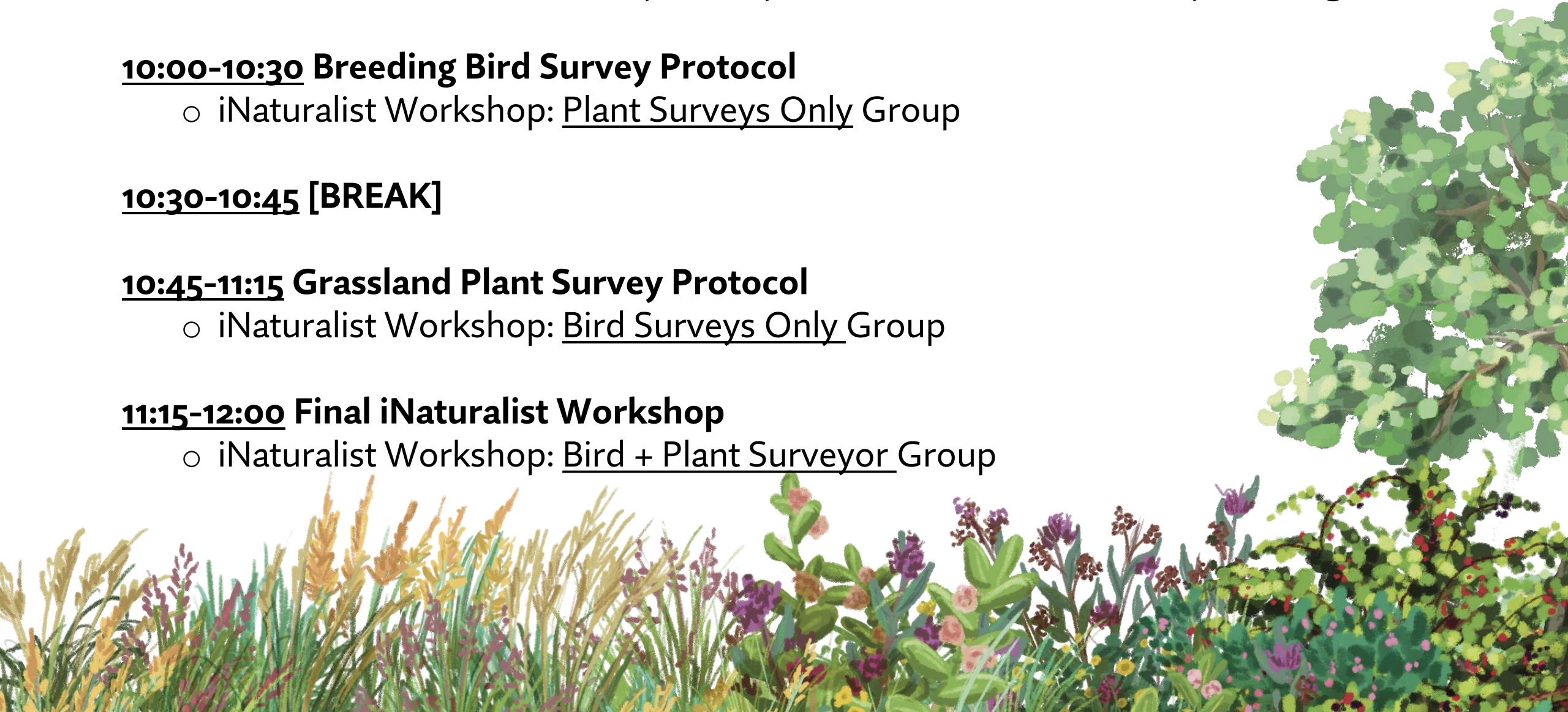
10:30-10:45 [BREAK]

10:45-11:15 Grassland Plant Survey Protocol

- iNaturalist Workshop: Bird Surveys Only Group

11:15-12:00 Final iNaturalist Workshop

- iNaturalist Workshop: Bird + Plant Surveyor Group







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Virginia Working Landscape

A Smithsonian-based program that brings together scientists, landowners, community scientists, and regional partners to study and promote the management of Virginia's landscapes for native biodiversity.





Natalie Izlar
Field Botany Technician



Erin Shibley
Survey & Volunteer Coordinator



Amy Johnson
Program Director



Justin Proctor
VGBI Coordinator



Brooke McDonough
Communications and
Development Assistant



Bernadette Rigley
Ph.D. Research Fellow
Avian Ecology



Chris Rademacher
Biodiversity Technician

Meet the VWL Team!



Nick Garnhart
Research Technician
& Science Illustrator



Allison Huysman
Ph.D. Research Fellow
Ecosystem Services



Brian Evans
Avian Ecologist
Biodiversity-Friendly Farms



Grant Connette
Quantitative Ecologist
Biodiversity-Friendly Farms



Jordan Coscia
Ph.D. Research Fellow
Restoration Ecology



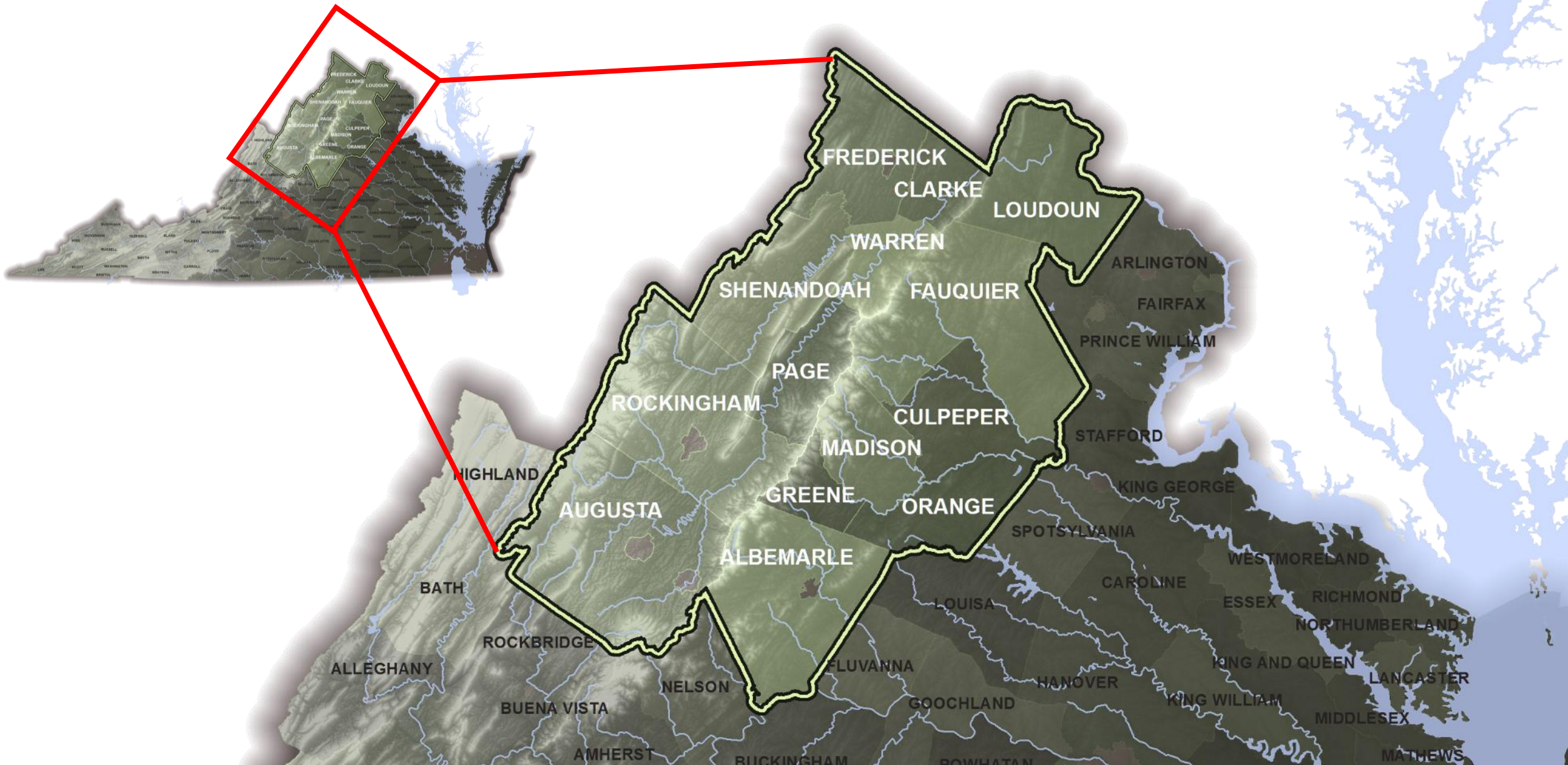
Graham Diedrich
Research Fellow 2024-25
Environmental Justice



Caylen Wolfer
M.Sc. Research Fellow
American Kestrel Tracking



Where We Work





Role Of Community Scientists in VWL

- Support program scientists with ecological monitoring
- Broad range of expertise and interests
- Inspire conservation leadership
- Enhance local conservation footprint



VWL Research



**Biodiversity
Surveys**



**VWL Focal
Projects**



**Partner-led
Projects**

VWL research aims to:

- Enhance our understanding of local ecosystems
- Generate information to inform best management practices for biodiversity
- Harness the expertise of research partners through collaborative projects
- Engage the community in conservation science



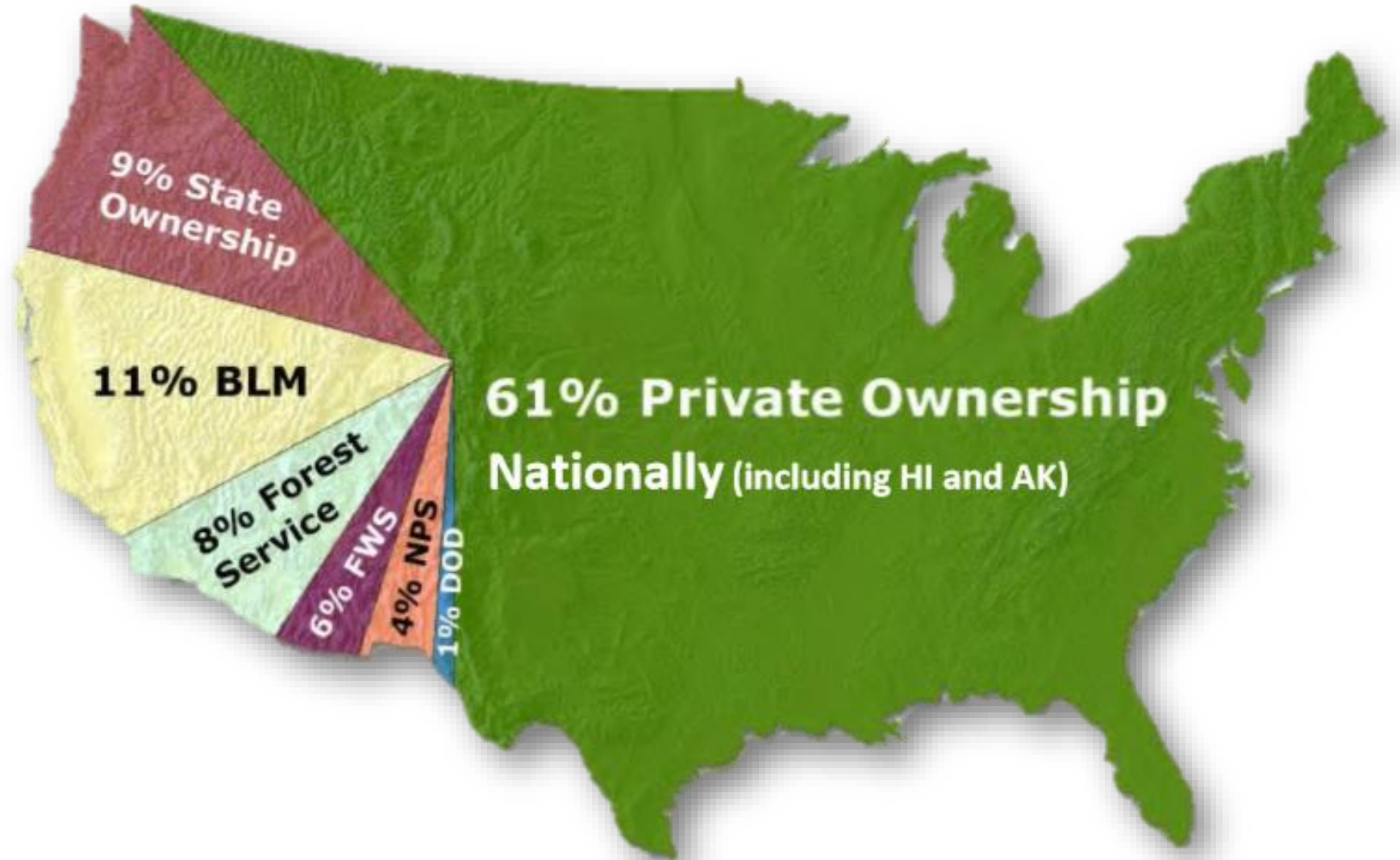
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Why Grasslands?



A Case for Private Lands

- 71% of land in the lower 48 states is in private ownership
- 2/3 grasslands in private ownership

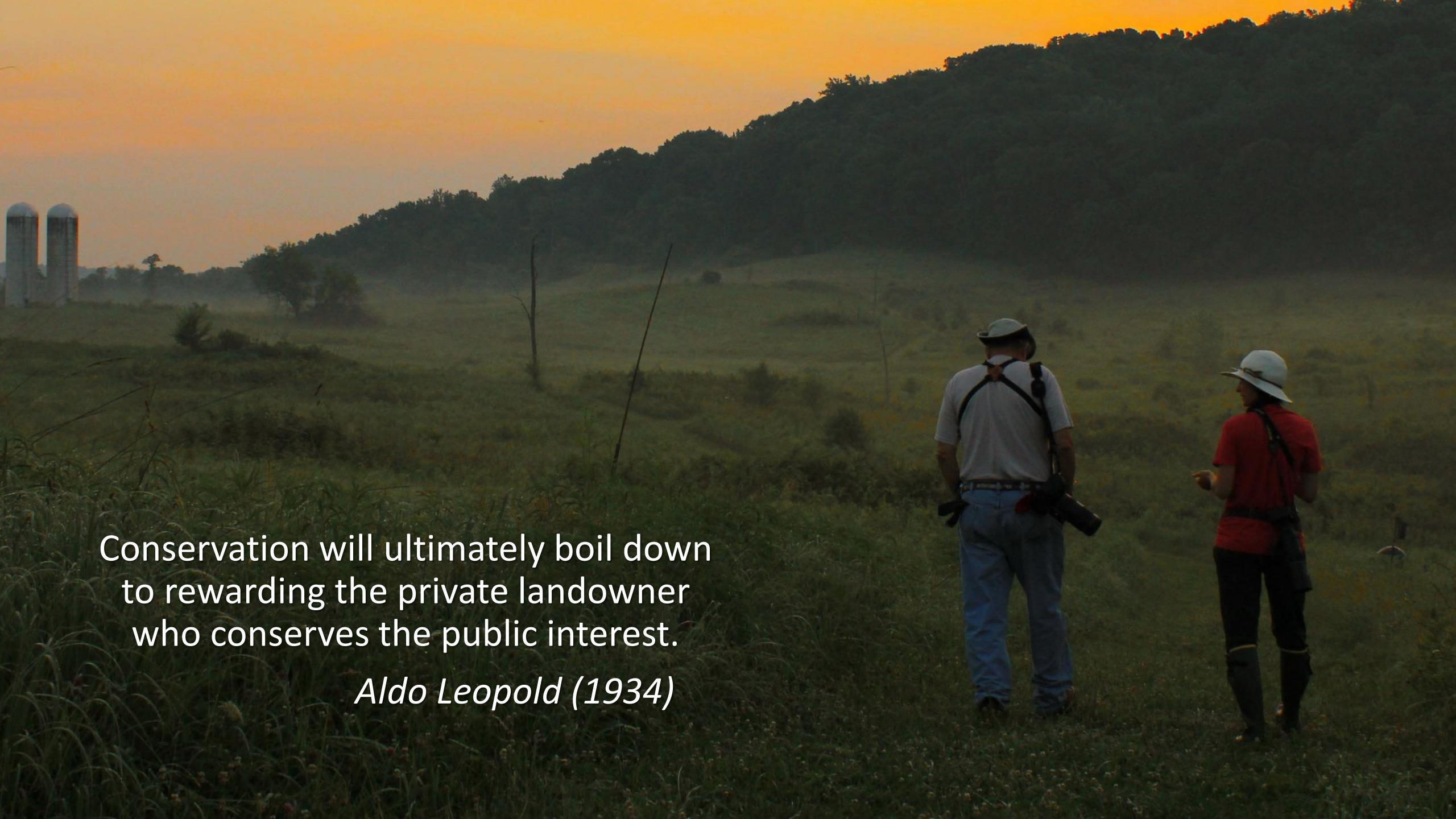




Hugh Kenny



Hugh Kenny



Conservation will ultimately boil down
to rewarding the private landowner
who conserves the public interest.

Aldo Leopold (1934)



VIRGINIA
WORKING
LANDSCAPES

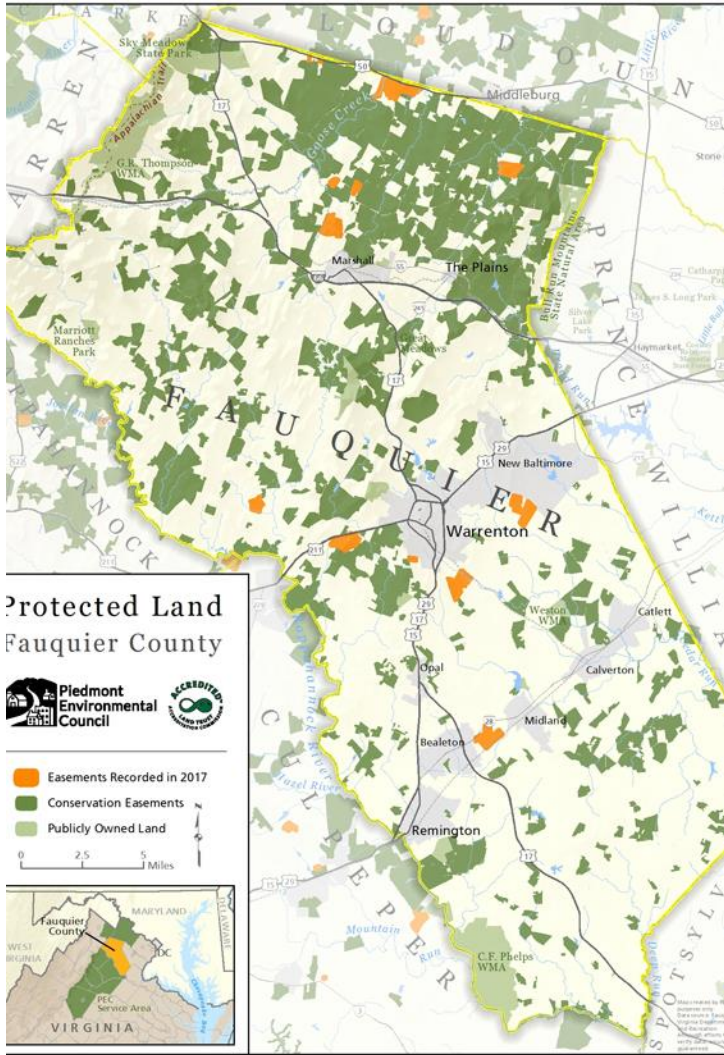


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Virginia Working Landscapes Research Updates





VWL Grassland Biodiversity Surveys

How are the data being used?

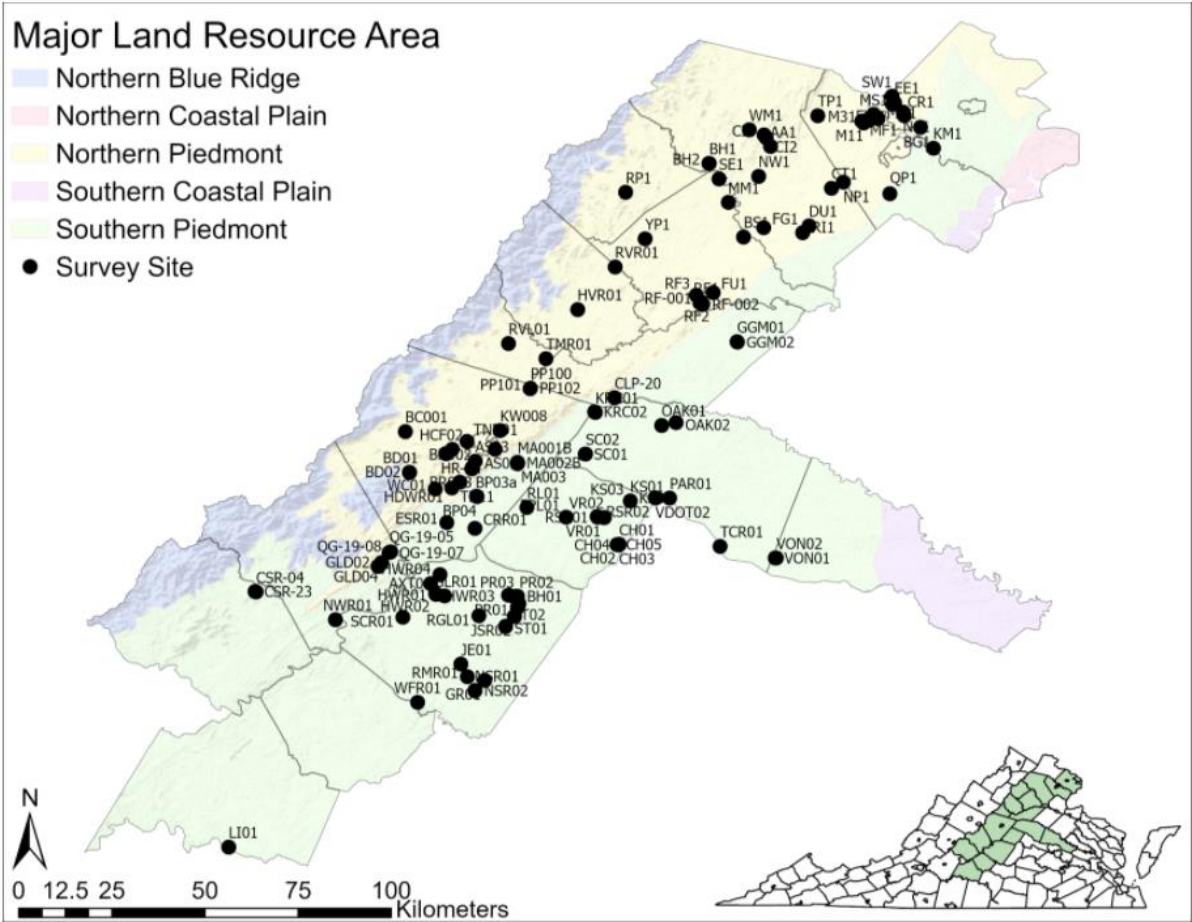
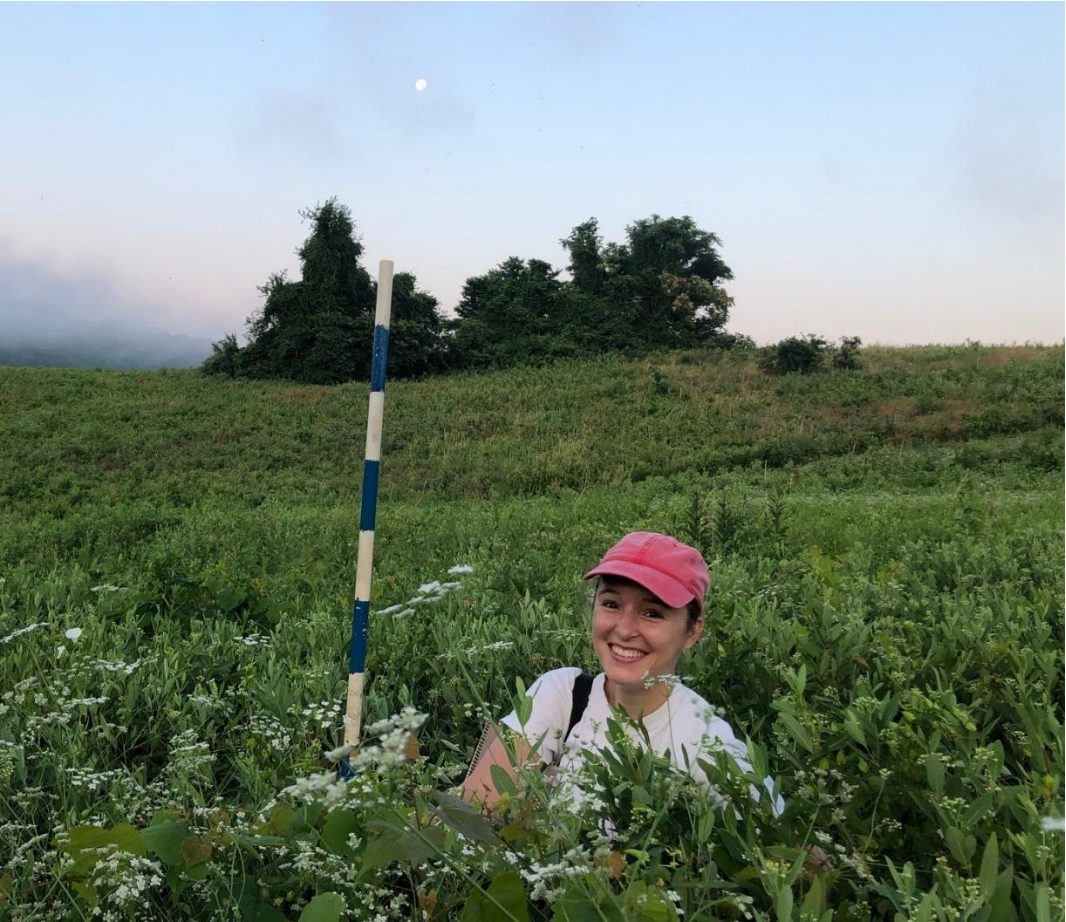
Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative

<https://www.vagrasslandbirds.org/>



VWL Research Fellow Feature: Jordan Coscia

Ph.D. Student, Virginia Tech, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences



For for information,
contact Jordan Coscia:
CosciaJ@si.edu



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Development of a Biodiversity-friendly Farm Scorecard Program

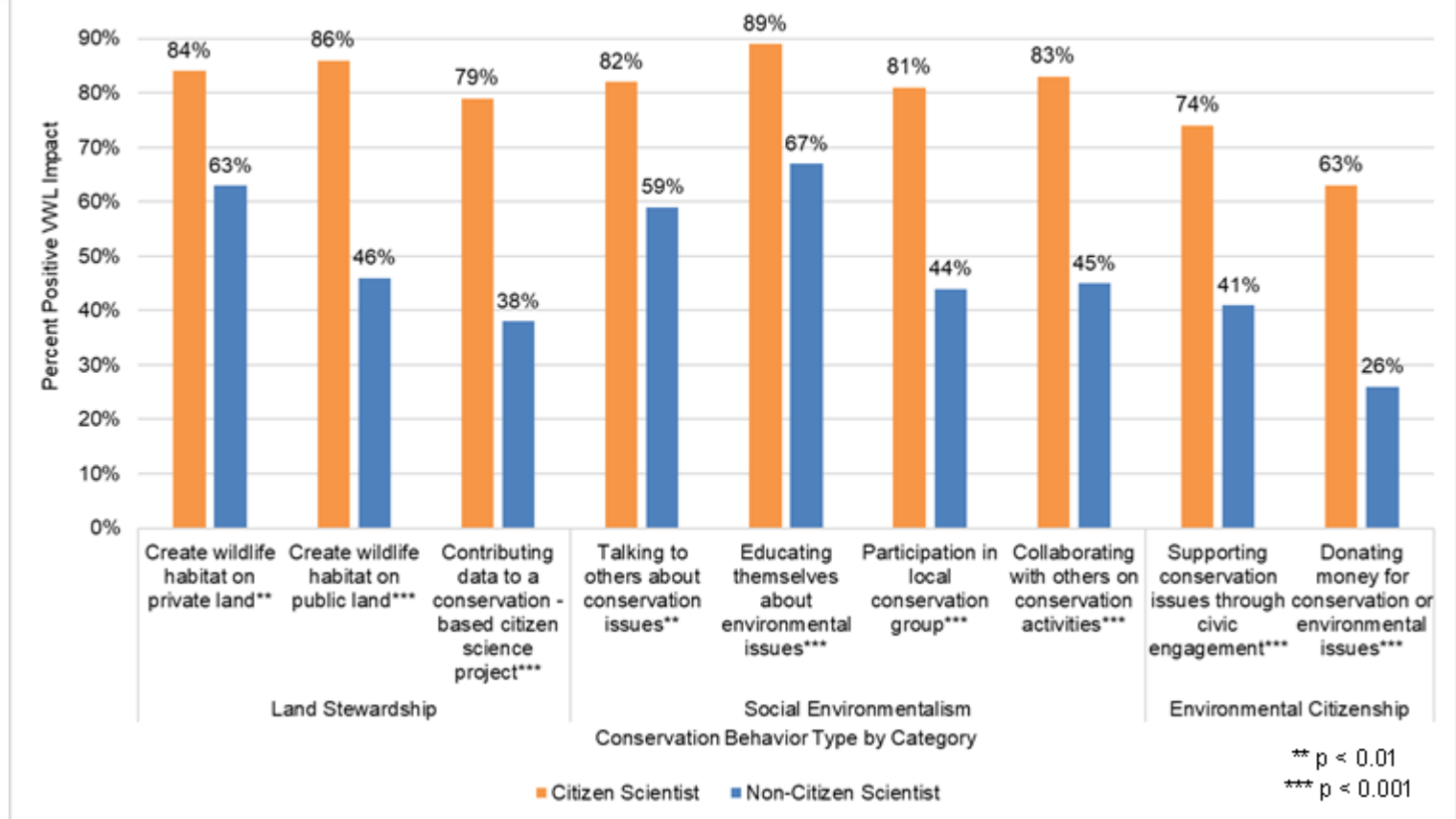


VWL Research Fellow Feature: Rachael Green

Master's Student, Virginia Tech, Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation



Virginia Working Landscapes impacted conservation behavior adoption of citizen scientists significantly more than non-citizen scientists



Dayer Human Dimensions Lab
Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation

For for information, contact Rachael Green: GreenRE@si.edu



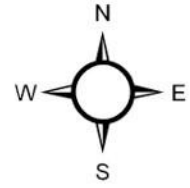
VWL Grassland Biodiversity Surveys



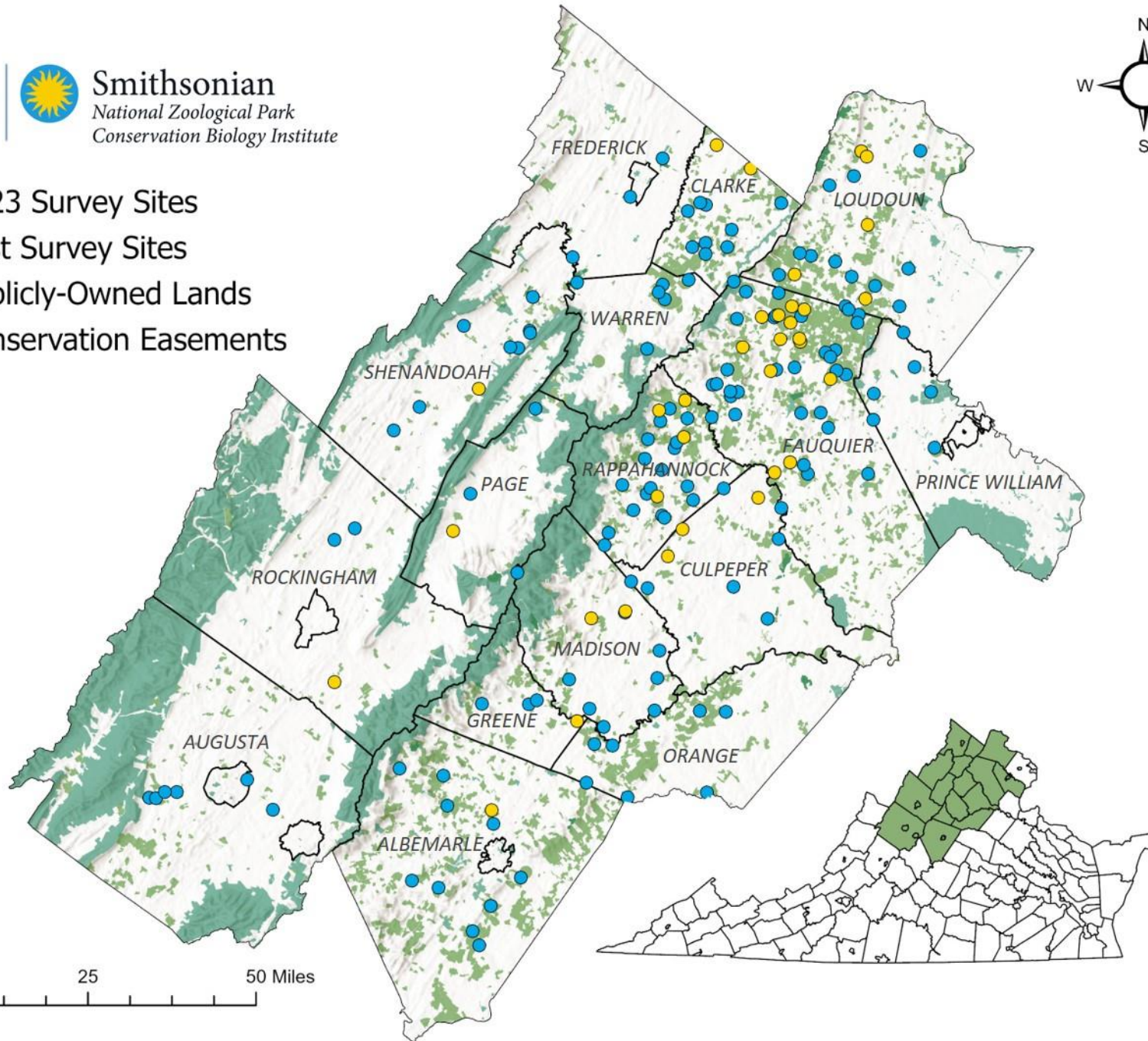
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- 2023 Survey Sites
- Past Survey Sites
- Publicly-Owned Lands
- Conservation Easements



0 25 50 Miles



Survey Timeline

May 15 – June 30  **Bird Surveys**

June  **Plant Surveys**

August  **Plant Surveys**

June-August  **BFB Pollinator Surveys**

Sept - Oct  **Soil Surveys**

April | May | June | July | August | Sept | Oct | Nov

▲
Today



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Survey Assignments and Site Directions

Woodside Farm Site Directions

Point of Contact: Barbara & Andy Ferrari (Landowners) / bferrari@gmail.com / 540-664-1146

Method of contact: text at least 2-3 days in advance of the planned survey date

Address: Farm Entrance: 39.050242, -78.058345

The house is located on 735 Nelson Lane, White Post, VA. Searching for this address on Google Maps will take you to the wrong location. Please use the coordinates to navigate.

Directions:

- Enter through the farm entrance off Nelson Rd (39.050242, -78.058345).
- Park at barn and walk to Points A, B, & C.

Property Notes:

- These fields are hayed after July 5th
- Beware holes in field near Point C

Survey Point GPS Coordinates

A) 39.042147 -78.060844

B) 30.041369 -78.063836

C) 39.043007 -78.065068

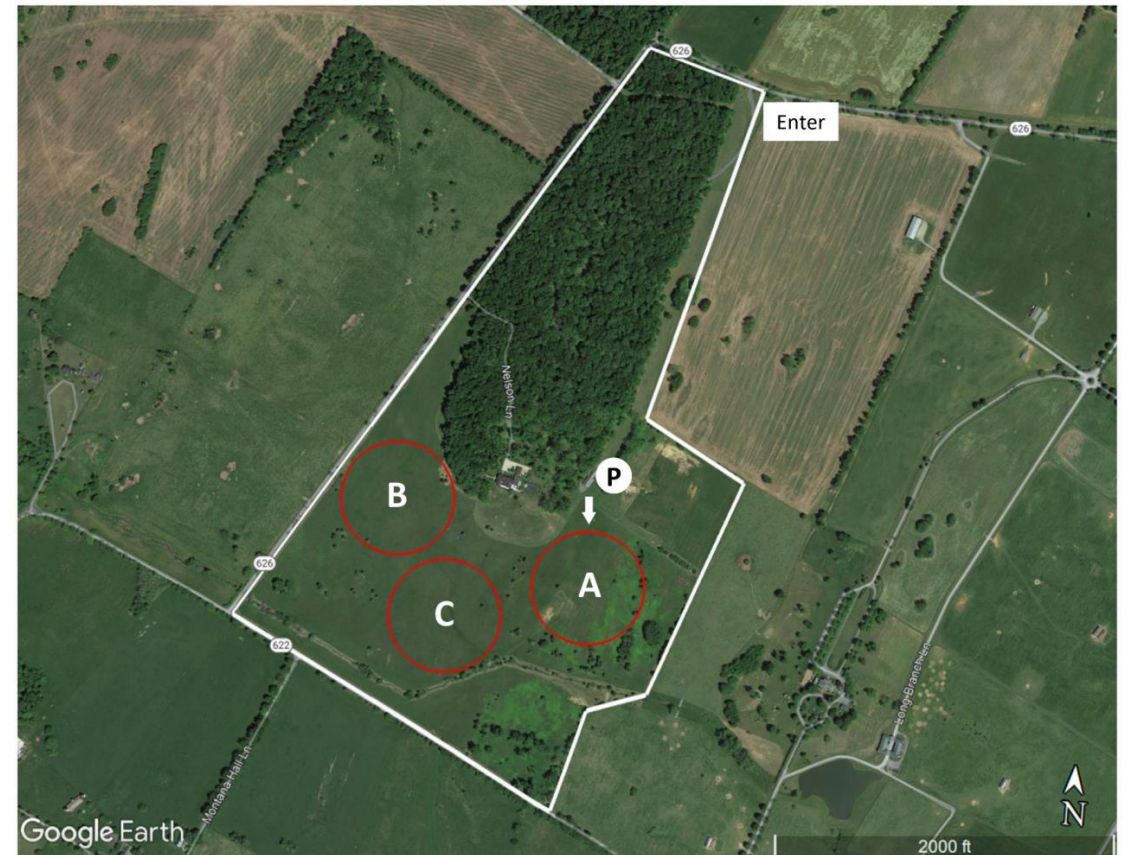
Plant Survey - Bearings and Distances (in meters)

A) (at 50 degrees): 5, 15, 25, 35, 40, 45, and 75

B) (at 160 degrees): 1, 10, 25, 30, 35, 45, and 70

C) (at 280 degrees): 2, 10, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 75

See Map Below: Red circles represent 100m survey boundaries and letters represent point count stations.





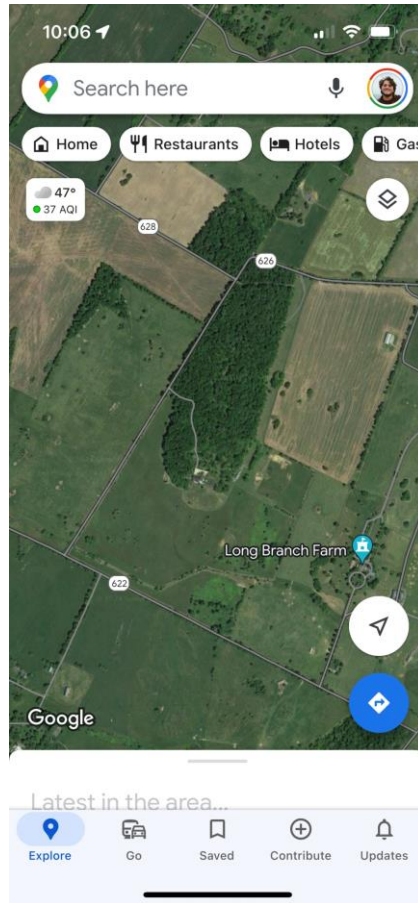
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Working on private lands:

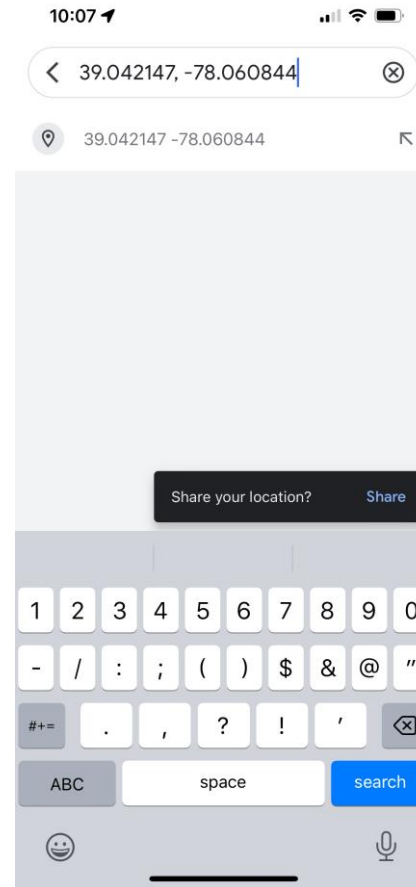
- Landowner communication preferences
- Accessing survey points on working farms

Google Maps GPS Point Set-up

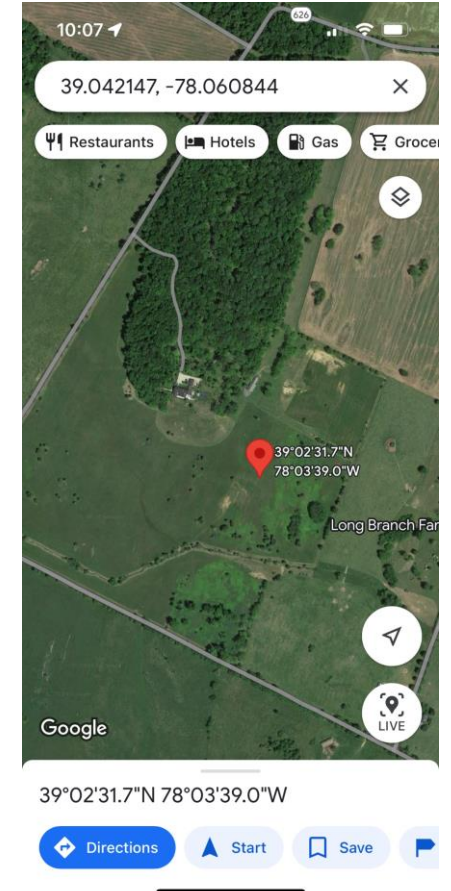
1. Open Google Maps



2. Type Survey Point coordinates into “Search Here”

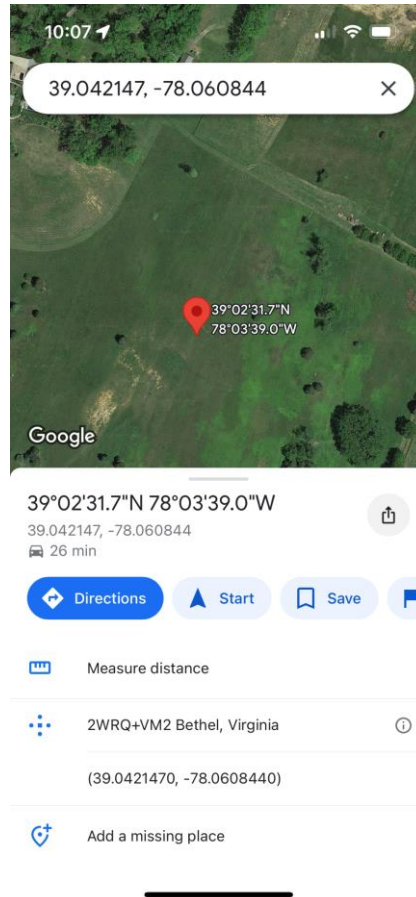


3. After selecting “Search”, the Survey Point will appear on the map

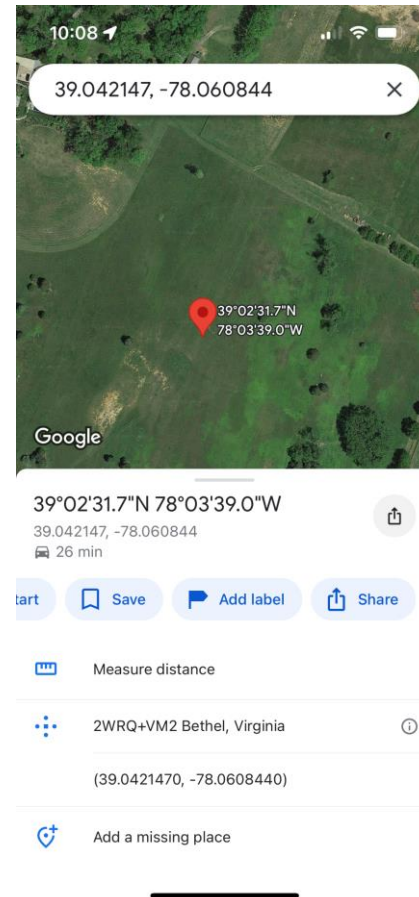


Google Maps GPS Point Set-up

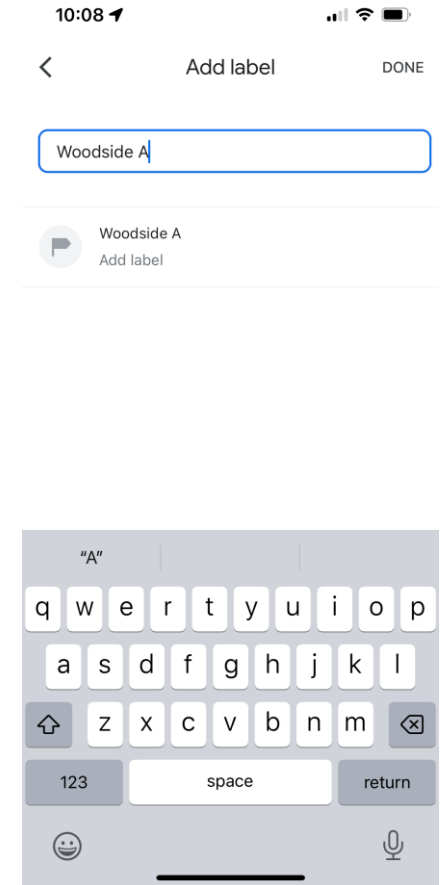
4. Click on the Survey Point and these options should appear



5. Scroll right on the blue bubbles until reaching “Add label”



6. After selecting “Add label”, you will be prompted to name it

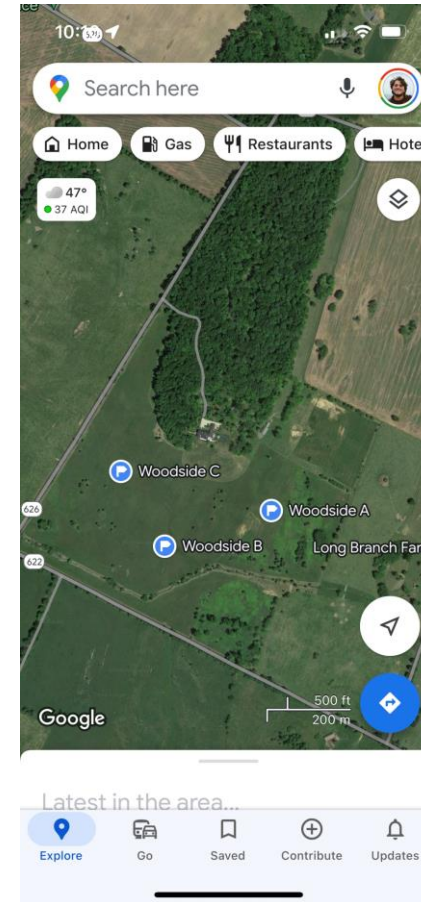


Google Maps GPS Point Set-up

7. Once named, the label will appear on the map



8. Repeat Steps 1-7 for each additional Survey Point.





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Field Safety





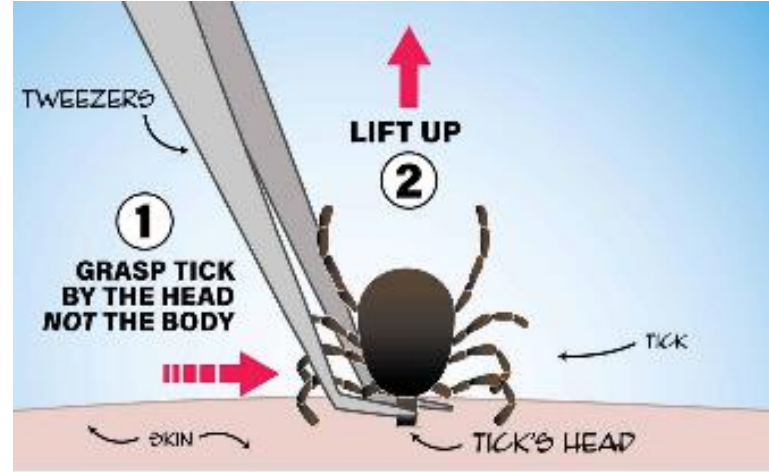
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Field Clothing/Footwear





Uneven Field Terrain



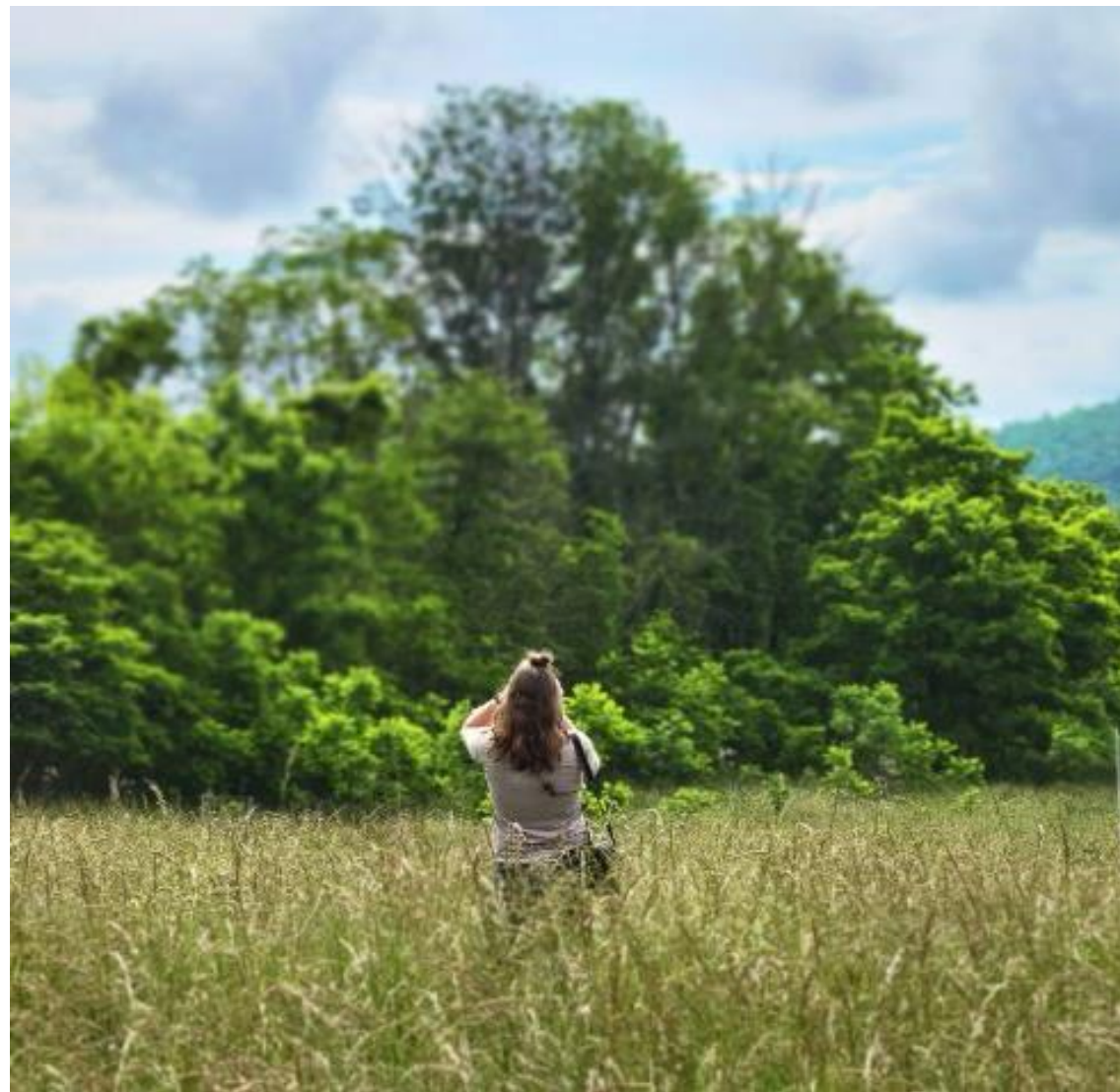
Removing a tick with a pair of tweezers



Ticks and Biting Insects

Heat Exhaustion and Sun Exposure

- Check temperature before going out
- Drink plenty of fluids and bring field snacks
- Sun protection: sunscreen, hats, and protective clothing
- Take breaks- you can always finish a survey another day if it gets too hot



Poisonous Plants



Poison Hemlock



Poison Ivy

Livestock Safety





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Incident Reporting

- Emergency? **Call 911!**
- Contact landowner and survey partners for assistance
- Contact Survey Coordinator Erin Shibley **ASAP**
 - You must report any incidents, injuries, accidents, or illnesses that occur while conducting VWL field surveys



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Volunteer Responsibilities

- Complete annual Smithsonian volunteer requirements
- Send Survey Coordinator total volunteer hours every month
- Check in with Survey Coordinator and/or supporting field technicians after every survey to let us know the survey was completed safely
- Send us your survey data in a timely manner





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Communication



REGULARLY
CHECK EMAIL



WORKSHOPS AND
EVENTS



VWL MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER



FOLLOW VWL ON
SOCIAL MEDIA



VWL VOLUNTEER
WEBSITE PORTAL

<https://www.vaworkinglandscapes.org/volunteer-portal/>



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Volunteer Reminders



Field Training

May 4, 2024

7:00-11:30am

Eldon Farms, Rappahannock
County





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Questions?

- **Erin Shibley**
- **VWL Survey Coordinator**
- **ShibleyE@si.edu**
- **540-635-0073**



vaworkinglandscapes.org