



# WARM SPRINGS MOUNTAIN PRESERVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Handbook



Updated 2020 by Holly Lafferty



From top: View from Warm Springs Mountain © Jennifer Dalke/TNC; entry sign © Daniel White/TNC

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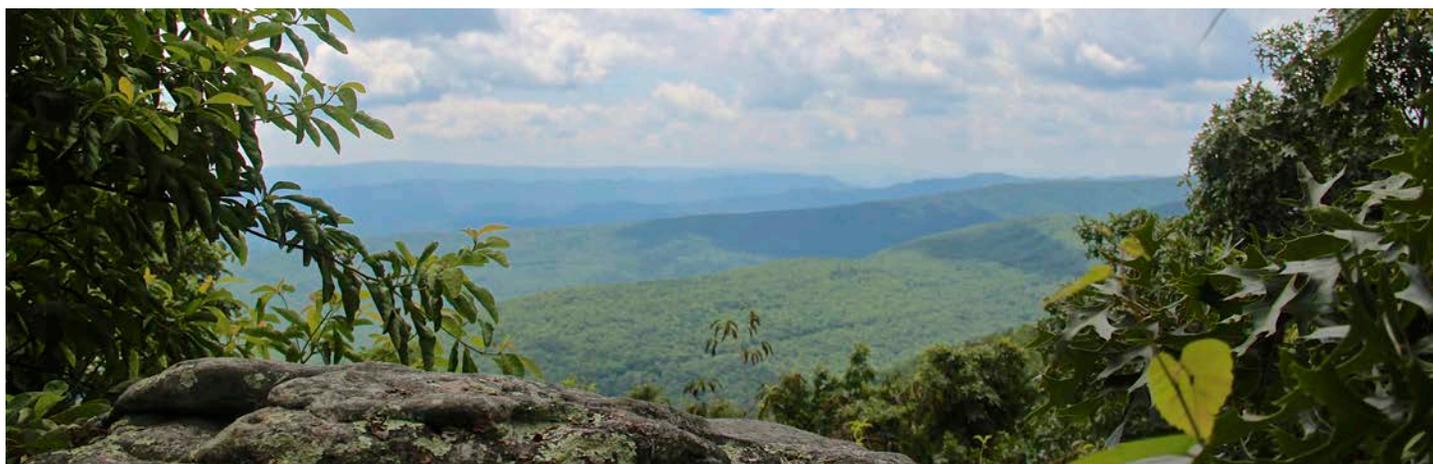


Photo © Glenna Goldman/TNC

# Preserve Volunteer Community Overview

With many preserves to manage around the commonwealth, it is not always possible for the staff of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to visit each preserve as often as we would like. This is why it is vital to have a community of volunteers at our preserves to help maintain and monitor their condition. TNC is dedicated to providing authentic and inspiring examples of natural Virginian habitats, and maintaining our public-access preserves is one of the best ways to accomplish this goal.



The Warm Springs Mountain Preserve Volunteer Community is organized into three tiers based on the amount of time you would like to dedicate to the preserve.

As a general member of the Preserve Volunteer Community, you will receive quarterly updates about the preserve and be the first to hear about workdays, guided hikes, and other events. Preserve Stewards commit to 4-6 stewardship hikes a year to maintain trails and monitor the condition of the preserve. Lastly, Preserve Leaders take on additional responsibilities for the preserve (e.g. manage schedule, lead 1-2 workdays a year).

**The Preserve Volunteer Program is split into three tiers based on how much time a volunteer is able to dedicate to the preserve.**



# Preserve Volunteer Community Member

**Summary:** Joining the Preserve Volunteer Community is a good way to become more involved with a preserve without committing time to stewardship work. Community Members are added to an email list to receive quarterly preserve updates and information about any workdays and events (e.g. citizen science projects, interpretive hikes). Community Members are also encouraged to reach out to TNC staff with anything interesting or concerning they come across when at or around the preserve.

**Time Commitment:** None

**Basic Qualifications:** None

**Benefits:** Community Members are able to learn more about the preserve and become an active volunteer. If you are interested in becoming a Preserve Steward but do not yet want to commit to stewardship hikes, becoming a Community Member is a great way to learn more about the program. Alternatively, if you have been a Preserve Steward in the past but do not currently have the time to commit to hikes, becoming a Community Member will allow you to stay in the loop about the preserve.

# Preserve Steward

**Summary:** Preserve Stewards visit the preserve approximately 4-6 times a year on a regular, rotating calendar schedule. When making a visit, stewards should thoroughly inspect the property by walking trails and various areas of the preserve while carrying a trail tool (e.g. loppers, hand saw) to perform basic trail maintenance by removing debris, fallen branches, overgrown vegetation, and trash as needed.

While at the preserve, stewards should also look for the following:

- Instances of trespassing and land abuse (trash dumping, unauthorized trail use, etc.).
- Condition of the parking areas, gates, kiosks, signs, trails, roads, and boundaries (vandalism, tree blow downs, erosion damage, etc.)

Any issues spotted should be included in the preserve inspection report so TNC staff are made aware of them.

Lastly, Preserve Stewards should also

- Complete the preserve inspection report and return to the Schedule Manager.
- Suggest ideas for improvement projects and future workdays.
- Serve as TNC's eyes and ears in the community surrounding the preserve if possible.

If there is news about a preserve or its surrounding area, please pass the information on to TNC staff.

**Time Commitment:** While flexible, a Preserve Steward should plan on doing at least 4-6 stewardship hikes a year. Preserve stewards will work with the Schedule Manager to sign up for weeks during which they are available to hike. Our goal is to have the preserve visited at least once a week.

**Basic Qualifications:**

- Demonstrated interest in the management of nature preserves and commitment to the mission of The Nature Conservancy.
- Some knowledge of the preserve (must have visited at least once) and the ability to hike the trails at the preserve.
- Ability to operate hand tools, such as loppers and handsaws, safely.
- Good communication between the Schedule Manager and TNC Staff.
- Self transportation to and from site.
- Ability to work outside in varying weather conditions.
- Willingness to participate in training sessions and hikes and attend Preserve Volunteer Program gatherings.



Trail Blaze 2013 © Glenna Goldman/TNC

**Preferred Qualifications:**

- Ability to take and send photos of issues (e.g. tree falls, trail erosion)
- Access to a smart phone or tablet with the application Avenza Maps to record the location of any issues (see [Avenza Maps](#))

**Benefits:** Being a Preserve Steward gives you the opportunity to help protect habitat for plants and animals that is quickly disappearing. Stewards will gain valuable experience in the field and have the opportunity to increase skills through potential trainings. It is also an opportunity to network with conservation-minded individuals from the community.

**Groups:** Groups and organizations (e.g. scout troops, hiking clubs) are welcome to become Preserve Stewards as long as there is a central organizer for the group who can coordinate with the Schedule Manager and TNC Staff.

# Preserve Leader

**Summary:** Preserve Leaders are instrumental to the success of the Preserve Volunteer Program. Leaders are people who have demonstrated their commitment to the preserve and are willing to take on additional responsibilities. There are several leadership positions including the Schedule Manager, Workday Leaders, and Preserve Naturalists. Anyone interested in becoming a Preserve Leader should contact Jen Dalke ([jdalke@tnc.org](mailto:jdalke@tnc.org)) in order to receive additional information about the positions.

## Schedule Manager

**Essential Functions:** The Schedule Manager is in charge of organizing the Preserve Stewards schedules and sending reminders to volunteers signed up for stewardship hikes. They are also responsible for creating and maintaining the schedule for stewards on a regular basis (quarterly, monthly), ideally using Google Docs.

A week before a Preserve Steward is signed up to perform a stewardship hike, the Schedule Manager will send them a reminder email containing the previous week's report. This will not only serve as a reminder, but will make Preserve Stewards aware of any ongoing issues and which areas have recently been monitored.

### Basic Qualifications:

- Served as a Preserve Steward for 1+ years.
- Excellent communication skills with other volunteers and TNC staff.
- Great organization and ability to coordinate schedules.
- Basic computer literacy and the ability to use email and other necessary software (e.g. Google Docs) effectively.



Photo: Warm Springs Valley © Glenna Goldman/TNC

## Workday Leaders

**Summary:** Workday leaders will lead larger workdays (up to 10 volunteers) at the preserve as needed. Larger workdays could include trail infrastructure projects, invasive species removal, etc. Working with TNC staff, Workday Leaders will organize workdays, determine objectives and safety requirements, and supervise volunteers. If interested in becoming a workday leader, TNC staff can work with you to get the required first aid and youth certifications.

### Basic Qualifications:

- Served as a Preserve Steward for 1+ years.
- Excellent communication skills with other volunteers and TNC staff
- Ability to organize volunteers and communicate the objectives and safety concerns of a workday

### Preferred Qualifications:

- First Aid Certification or willingness to obtain
- Youth Certification or willingness to obtain
- Auto Safety Certification or willingness to obtain

**Time Commitment:** Workday leaders should plan on leading 1-2 workdays a year in addition to serving as a Preserve Steward (4-6 stewardship hikes a year).

## Preserve Naturalists

**Summary:** Preserve Naturalists have the important job of helping people connect with nature at TNC's preserves. Preserve Naturalists should have an interest in the plants, animals, geology, etc. of the preserve and a desire to help others learn about these topics. Naturalists are responsible for scheduling and leading two or more guided hikes a year. More information about this program will be coming soon.



Photo: LEAF Interns at Warm Springs Mountain Preserve 2018 © Laurel Schablein/TNC

# Preserve Information

## Guide to the Preserve

### Natural Features

Warm Springs Mountain Preserve helps stitch together thousands of acres of forest and conservation lands in western Virginia's Allegheny Highlands. The preserve anchors TNC's efforts to protect and restore a key wildlife corridor and habitat for an amazing diversity of natural communities, plants and animals.

Situated within a 77,000-acre unfragmented, largely roadless forest block, the preserve helps maintain healthy, breeding populations of interior-forest-dwelling songbirds, provides key habitat for wide-ranging mammals, and protects headwater tributaries of both the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers.

The preserve features Virginia's only substantial montane pine barren, a globally rare, arid, fire-dependent landscape. The mountain harbors at least two other rare natural communities, three rare plants and eight rare invertebrates.

### Ongoing Conservation

Through diverse conservation partnerships, TNC continues to research, protect and—in certain areas—restore the rich ecology of Warm Springs Mountain and the Allegheny Highlands.

Our key strategies include:

- Collaboration with federal and state agencies to restore the historic fire regime of fire-adapted and fire-dependent pine and oak forest communities
- Inventory, monitoring, and control of non-native invasive plant species
- Working with the George Washington National Forest to build and manage a network of resilient forest sites critical to the preservation of biodiversity within the Central Appalachians



Photo: Jen Dalke helps with a controlled burn at Warm Springs © Daniel White/TNC

# Public Access

Nature Conservancy preserves are private properties. They are managed to protect fragile resources – native species and plant communities. The point of allowing the public to visit the property is to educate and inspire. Warm Springs Mountain has three trails open to the public daily: the Dan Ingalls Overlook, Sandy Gap, and Bear Loop trails.

The Dan Ingalls Overlook Trail, located at the northern end of the preserve, provides a 2.4-mile round trip hike through scenic rock formations to views of Shenandoah Mountain and Cowpasture Valley. The first mile is lined with interpretative signs that provide an introduction to Warm Springs Mountain and the region's natural history.

The Sandy Gap Trail is a 3.2-mile hike (one-way trip) built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The hike boasts tranquil vistas and unique stone work. Located at the southern end of the preserve, the trail travels into the George Washington National Forest and connects to the Douthat State Park trail system.

Lastly, the Bear Loop Trail creates a 3-mile loop that is relatively flat. The trail offers several overlooks with stunning panoramic views and interpretive signs to highlight the mountain's diversity of wildlife and habitats and TNC's efforts to restore the region's fire-adapted oak and pine forests.

## Preserve Guidelines

The following are the guidelines for TNC preserves. As a general rule, do not confront rule-breakers while on a stewardship hike, especially if the situation does not feel safe. Depending on the situation and comfort level of the preserve steward, you can kindly remind visitors of rules (e.g. gently reminding visitors to not pick flowers). If you observe illegal activity (i.e. more serious than just breaking guidelines), you may call local law enforcement and report to TNC staff. Please report any evidence or observations of rule breaking in your inspection report.

- Preserves are open to the public from dawn to dusk.
- Passive recreation such as walking, bird watching, and photography is welcomed.



Photo © Mary Porter

## **The Following Activities Are Not Allowed:**

- Picking flowers, mushrooms, etc.
- Removing rocks or other parts of the landscape
- Smoking
- Camping
- Fires or cookouts
- Driving motorized vehicles, including ATV's, except on designated access roads. Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMD) as defined by the Americans with Disability Act are allowed unless otherwise prohibited.
- Biking
- Fishing, trapping or hunting, except as otherwise posted
- Horseback riding
- Feeding wildlife
- Releasing animals or introducing plants
- Disposing of trash or other waste, including biodegradable materials

## **To Minimize Your Impact, We Ask That You Please Also Observe the Following:**

- Stay on trails.
- Dogs must be leashed at all times.
- Avoid walking in wet, boggy areas.
- Inspect pant legs and shoes to remove seeds before entering and when leaving the preserve. Failure to do so could introduce invasive weeds to new locations.
- If you flush a ground nesting bird, stop and avoid walking near the nest area.
- Observe all posted signs.
- Please do not remove stakes, signs, flagging, tape or similar objects. These may be markers for a research project.
- Please do not trespass on private property adjacent to preserves.



Photo: Fall at Falls Ridge © Jennifer Dalke/TNC

# About The Nature Conservancy

## TNC's Mission:

Our mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. Our vision is a world where the diversity of life thrives, and people act to conserve nature for its own sake and its ability to fulfill our needs and enrich our lives.

In 1951 The Nature Conservancy started as a grassroots organization in New York in order to protect a 60-acre hemlock forest. TNC has since grown into an international non-profit, active in all 50 states and 79 countries and territories.

TNC employs scientists across the world in order to make strategic and informed decisions to drive conservation. From finding and protecting migration corridors to using fire to maintain landscapes, TNC is helping lead the way for science-based conservation.

Over the years, TNC has morphed from mainly focusing on protecting areas of pristine landscape to focusing on achieving global sustainability. To accomplish this, TNC is focusing on four main areas: Tackle Climate Change, Protect Land and Water, Provide Food and Water Sustainably, and Build Health Cities.

## TNC in Virginia

In Virginia, TNC has prioritized the conservation of several key landscapes: Clinch Valley in the southwest, Virginia Pinelands in the southeast, the Chesapeake Bay and Eastern Shore in the east, and the Allegheny Highlands in the west which includes Warm Springs Mountain. In addition to these landscapes, TNC owns and protects other nature preserves throughout the commonwealth. When possible, TNC strives to open these preserves to the public to provide authentic examples of natural Virginian habitats to inspire future generations.

For more information, please visit our [website](#).

## TNC At A Glance

- 100+ million acres protected around the world, including 350,000 acres in Virginia
- 121,000+ acres in Virginia protected as public land
- Programs in all 50 states and 70+ countries
- 600+ staff scientists worldwide
- Virginia teams based in Charlottesville, Richmond, Hot Springs, Abingdon and Nassawadox

## MILESTONES

- 1960 - All-volunteer Virginia chapter formed in Richmond
- 1970 - Acquired first barrier islands to create Virginia Coast Reserve
- 1973 - Brokered 50,000-acre land donation from Union Camp to establish Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge
- 2002 - Purchased nearly 10,000-acre Warm Springs Mountain Preserve
- 2019 - Negotiating tri-state deal to conserve 250,000 acres of Appalachian forest

# Stewardship Hike Guidelines

## What to Look for and Actions to Take

While on a stewardship walk, you should note the condition of the preserve's signs, trail markers, structures, and natural features. You should also keep track of anything unusual. Fill out a [Preserve Inspection Report Form](#) and email it to Jen Dalke ([jdalke@tnc.org](mailto:jdalke@tnc.org)), Sam Truslow ([struslow@tnc.org](mailto:struslow@tnc.org)), and the Schedule Manager. All issues encountered should be reported regardless of whether or not you were able to fix them.

### Parking Areas/ Signs/ Kiosks/ Structures/ Gates (locks)

#### What to Look for:

- Litter or dumped garbage
- Overgrown vegetation
- Condition of fences and gates
- Condition of kiosks and signs

#### Actions to Take:

- Pick up litter (if there is a substantial amount, we may need to schedule a workday)
- Weed-whack or trim overgrown vegetation with hand tools

### Trails/ Boardwalks/ Bridges

#### What to Look for:

- Overall condition of trails
- Tree blowdowns and other trail obstructions
- Trail erosion or wet spots
- Condition of bridges and board walks
- Presence of regular trail markers

#### Actions to Take:

- Remove overgrown vegetation with hand tools (e.g. loppers). We aim to have a path that is 4' wide and 7' tall (Tip: imagine someone carrying a child on their back to gauge height).
- Remove any blowdowns and obstructions (e.g. braches, small trees). Do not attempt to move large trees that need chainsaw work, but note their location with Avenza maps if possible (volunteers must be chainsaw certified and fill out additional forms. See Tools for more details).
- Replace trail markers as needed (contact TNC staff if you need markers).
- Note any damage to bridges and boardwalks



Photo: Volunteers install trail blaze at Warm Springs Mountain © Holly Lafferty/TNC

## Inappropriate Use

### What to look for:

- Evidence of inappropriate use (see [Preserve Guidelines](#) or [Preserve Inspection Report Form](#))
- Graffiti or other damage to signage
- Trash dumping
- Unauthorized vehicle use

### Actions to Take:

- In general, do not confront people who are using the preserve inappropriately
- Depending on the situation and comfort level of the preserve steward, you can kindly remind visitors of guidelines (e.g. gently reminding visitors to not pick flowers)
- Illegal activity should be reported to the Bath County Sheriff's office and TNC staff when appropriate (see [Additional Resources](#) for important phone numbers)

## Reporting

At the conclusion of each stewardship hike, Preserve Stewards should complete the [Preserve Inspection Report Form](#). This report is sent to Jen Dalke ([jdalke@tnc.org](mailto:jdalke@tnc.org)), Sam Truslow ([struslow@tnc.org](mailto:struslow@tnc.org)), and the Schedule Manager for the preserve. If you are unable to conduct a stewardship hike because of inclement weather, please send an email to the above three people anyway to keep them informed. Below are things to keep in mind when completing the report:

- You are our eyes and ears both at the preserve and in the surrounding community. If land is for sale or undergoing development around the preserve, please include it in your report.
- Be sure to note where you hiked so we can make sure no trail goes unmonitored for an extended amount of time. With three trails, this is especially important at Warm Spring Mountain Preserve.
- If possible, please use Avenza Maps to record where issues are (see [Avenza Maps](#)).
- Include any interesting animal or plant sightings with pictures if you can take one. We recommend using the iNaturalist App to record your observations as well (see [Citizen Science/iNaturalist](#)).

## Policies and Procedures

**Reimbursements** – The Nature Conservancy has certain vendor accounts where supplies can be purchased. However, purchases should be approved in advance by TNC staff in Charlottesville. Many field supplies are kept in Charlottesville, and efforts should be made to use these whenever possible.

**Visitor Liability** – The Nature Conservancy assumes no responsibility for accidents to visitors while at Warm Springs Mountain Preserve. All visitors to the preserve assume responsibility for their own safety.

**Preserve Publications** – All publications should be approved by TNC staff at the Charlottesville office. All inquiries from newspapers, magazines, television stations, etc. should be forwarded to TNC staff as well.

## Proper Preparation

Be sure to dress properly for stewardship hikes and wear weather-appropriate clothing. Generally, it is a good idea to wear long pants and hiking or work boots. You should also bring work gloves and water/snacks. Depending on conditions, a hat, sunscreen, and insect repellent are also helpful.

If the weather is bad (e.g. hurricanes, several feet of snow), please do not put yourself in danger to perform a hike. Your safety is our first priority.

## Tools

Hand tools, including loppers, clippers, hand saws, and swing blades, are helpful to remove overgrowth and small, downed branches and to fix sections of trail. Hoes can also be used to fix minor issues with the trail. You should only work with tools you feel comfortable and safe using. Always carry tools in a safe manner (sharp edges towards the ground) and use covers on sharp edges when possible. Be sure to keep tools well maintained to avoid injuries.

With the exception of chainsaws (see note below), motorized tools may be used at the preserve. This includes push lawnmowers, string trimmers, leaf blowers, and construction tools (e.g. drills, circular saws). Always be aware of other people in the area when using tools of any kind, especially if the tool inhibits your awareness. Try to avoid using motorized tools at peak visitor times for both the safety and enjoyment of visitors. Tools should always be used in accordance with safety protocols in the safety manual, including wearing all required personal protective equipment. It is also best practice to have another person present when operating tools if possible.

In order to use a chainsaw on TNC property, you must be chainsaw-certified by an outside agency (e.g. [Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#), [USFS](#)). If you are chainsaw certified or are interested in becoming certified, please contact Jen Dalke ([jdalke@tnc.org](mailto:jdalke@tnc.org)).



Photo: Two Sams Walking at Falls Ridge 2013 © Glenna Goldman

## Avenza Maps

Avenza Maps is a useful phone and tablet app that allows users to keep track of the location of issues that arise at the preserve. The app works even in the absence of cell phone service, and maps can easily be shared with TNC staff, allowing for more efficient workday planning.

Avenza maps can be downloaded from the Apple or Android app store. A TNC staff member will send an email with the map of the preserve which can then be opened in the app. More help setting up Avenza can be found at <https://support.avenzamaps.com/hc/en-us>.

When you encounter a problem on a stewardship hike (e.g. a treefall across the trail), open the app and drop a pin where you are located. Label the pin with a name that describes the issue. When you send your completed Preserve Inspection Report, you should also send your data layer of your pins as a KML file to Sam Truslow ([struslow@tnc.org](mailto:struslow@tnc.org)). For more detailed instructions, please see the [Avenza Map Help Sheet](#).

## Citizen Science/iNaturalist

We invite all visitors to help us track the plants and animals found at our preserves. [iNaturalist](#) is a free phone app and website that allows you to record observations of wildlife. It also helps to identify plants and animals, so no previous experience with identification is necessary. Each preserve has an iNaturalist project associated with it, and all observations made within the preserve boundaries will automatically be included in the project. This enables TNC staff to track when, where, and what species visitors and stewards are finding at the preserve.

It is not a mandatory for Preserve Stewards to use iNaturalist while on stewardship hikes; but, if it is something that interests you, please help us track any changes in plants and animals. If you get an especially great picture of something, please include it with your report or email it to Jen Dalke ([jdalke@tnc.org](mailto:jdalke@tnc.org)) if you are a Preserve Community Member.



# Safety and Guidelines

## Emergency Procedures and Guidelines

If you come across an emergency, first assess the situation. Do not involve yourself in a dangerous situation.

In the event of any accident that requires the immediate attention of medical personnel, call 911. Be advised that cell phone coverage varies. If you need to call emergency services, note the following:

- Know the directions to the trailhead closest to where you are.
- Take notes about the situation: names, what happened, in what way the victim appears to be hurt, etc.
- Use from a first aid kit only what you are trained to use.

If the injury does not warrant immediate medical attention, the person(s) injured should be transported to the nearest hospital.

After you have assessed the situation and dealt with the emergency, please call Jen Dalke (540-335-1302) or Sam Truslow (434-825-5550).

## Youth Safety

The Nature Conservancy is dedicated to the protection of youth (individuals under the age of 18). While Preserve Stewards will generally not be working directly with youth, Stewards may come across youth while on stewardship hikes. Because of this, we require that all Preserve Stewards sign TNC's Commitment to Youth Safety form (see [Commitment to Youth Safety](#)).

Volunteers who will interact with youth as a Workday Leader, Preserve Naturalist, etc. more than twice in a year must be youth certified by The Nature Conservancy. In order to complete Youth Certification, you must complete TNC's online youth training and pass a background screening.

## Auto Safety

Volunteers are not allowed to drive other volunteers or visitors while representing The Nature Conservancy unless they have been Auto Safety certified by TNC.

One of the most dangerous parts of performing a stewardship hike or helping with a workday is driving to and from the preserve. Please use caution and avoid distractions while driving.

# Additional Resources

## Contact Information

### **The Nature Conservancy in Virginia**

652 Peter Jefferson Pkwy #190  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22911  
(434) 295-6106

### **Jennifer Dalke**, Volunteer Program Manager

(434) 951-0572 (office)  
(540) 335-1302 (cell)  
[jdalke@tnc.org](mailto:jdalke@tnc.org)

### **Sam Truslow**, Land Steward

(434) 951-0579 (office)  
(434) 825-5550 (cell)  
[struslow@tnc.org](mailto:struslow@tnc.org)

### **Blair Smyth**, Allegheny Highlands Program Director

(540) 839-3599  
[blair.smyth@tnc.org](mailto:blair.smyth@tnc.org)

### **Bath Community Hospital**

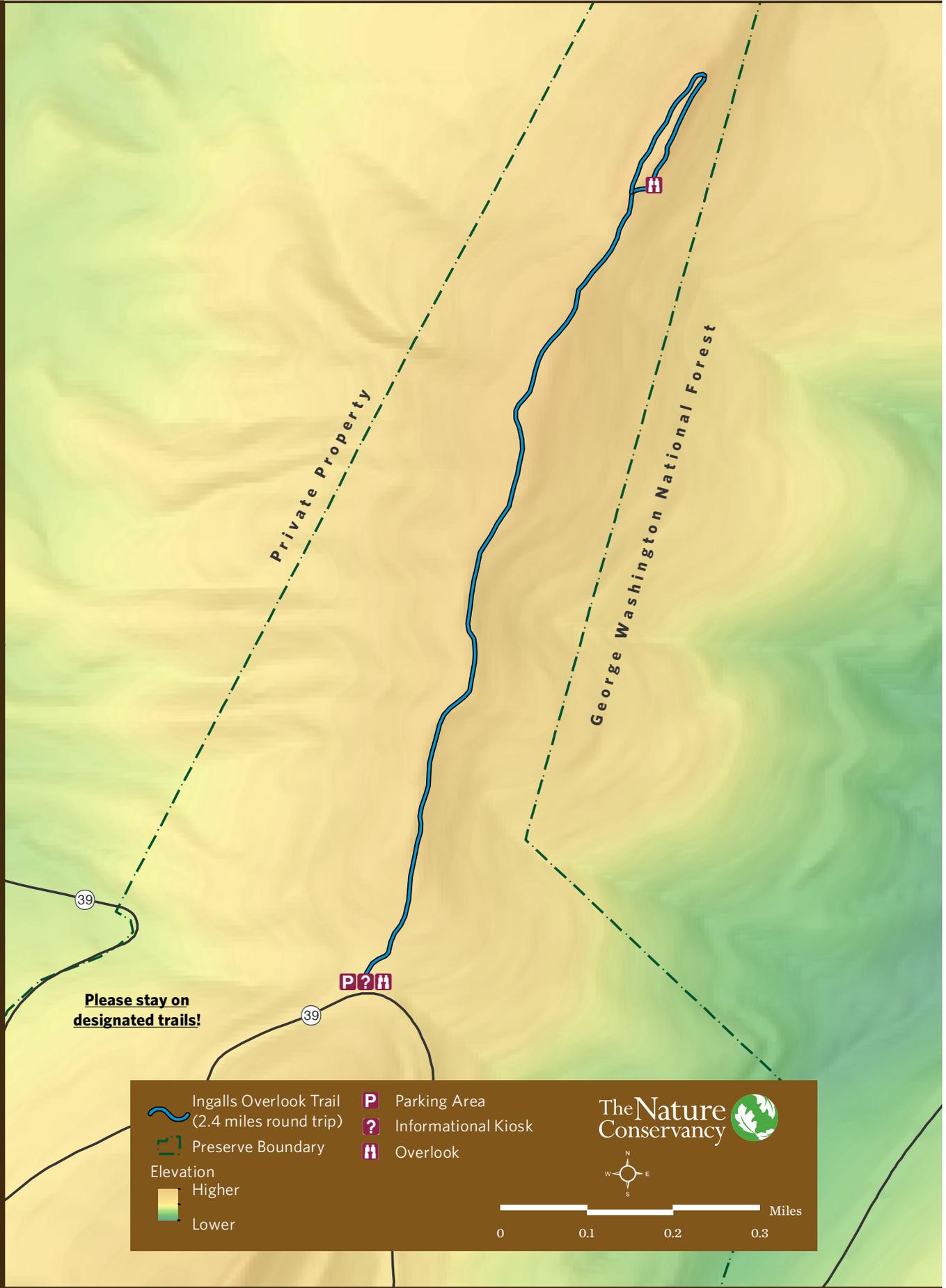
106 Park Drive  
Hot Springs, VA 24445  
(540) 839-7000



TNC staff from all across Virginia at a retreat in November 2019.

Photo © Daniel White

# Warm Springs Mountain - Ingalls Overlook



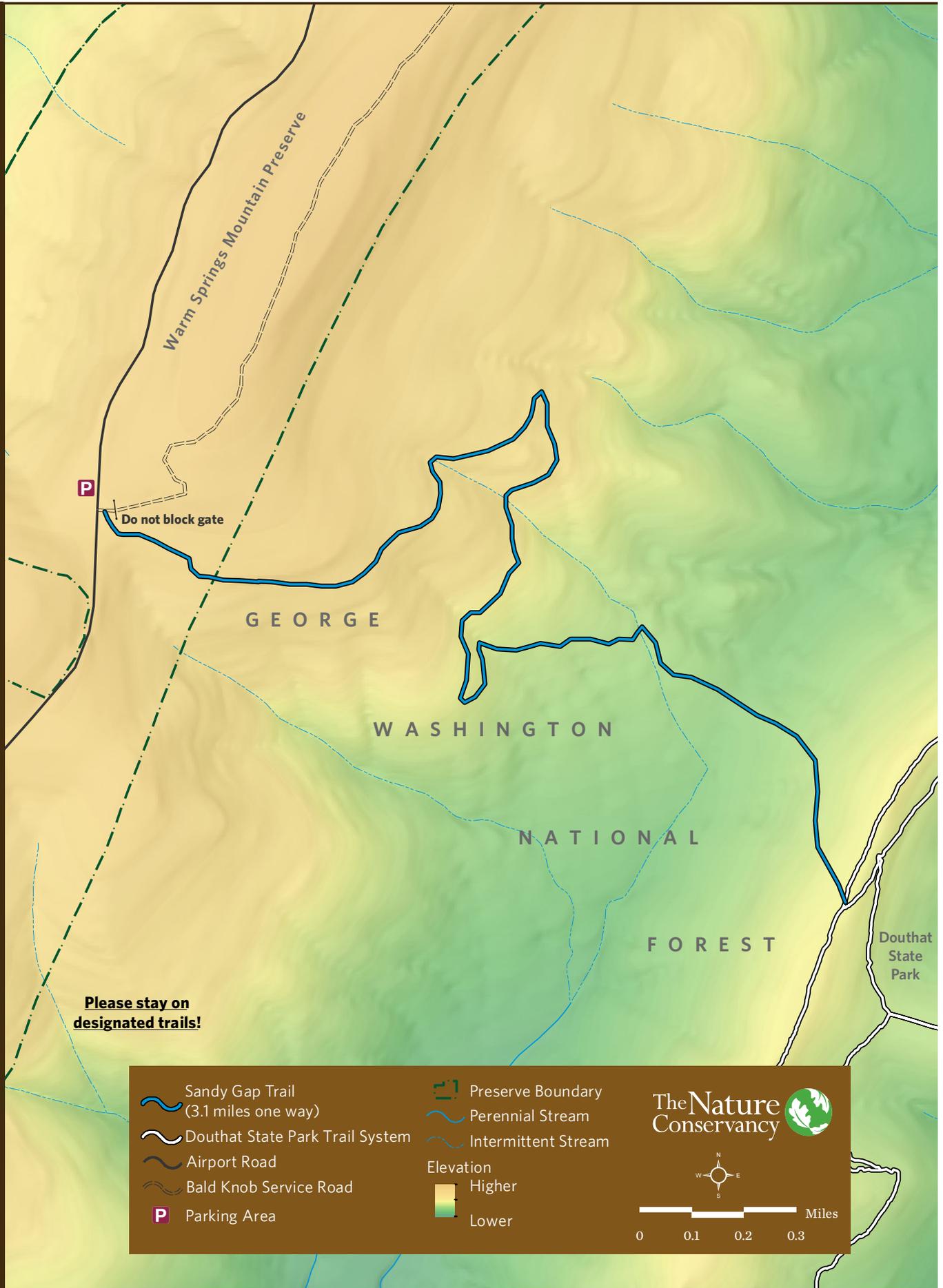
**Please stay on designated trails!**

 Ingalls Overlook Trail (2.4 miles round trip)	 Parking Area
 Preserve Boundary	 Informational Kiosk
<b>Elevation</b>	 Overlook
 Higher	
 Lower	

The Nature Conservancy 

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 Miles

# Warm Springs Mountain - Sandy Gap



# Warm Springs Mountain - Bear Loop

**Please stay on designated trails!**

 Bear Loop Trail (2.9 miles)

 Preserve Boundary

Elevation

 Higher

 Lower

 Parking Area

 Informational Kiosk

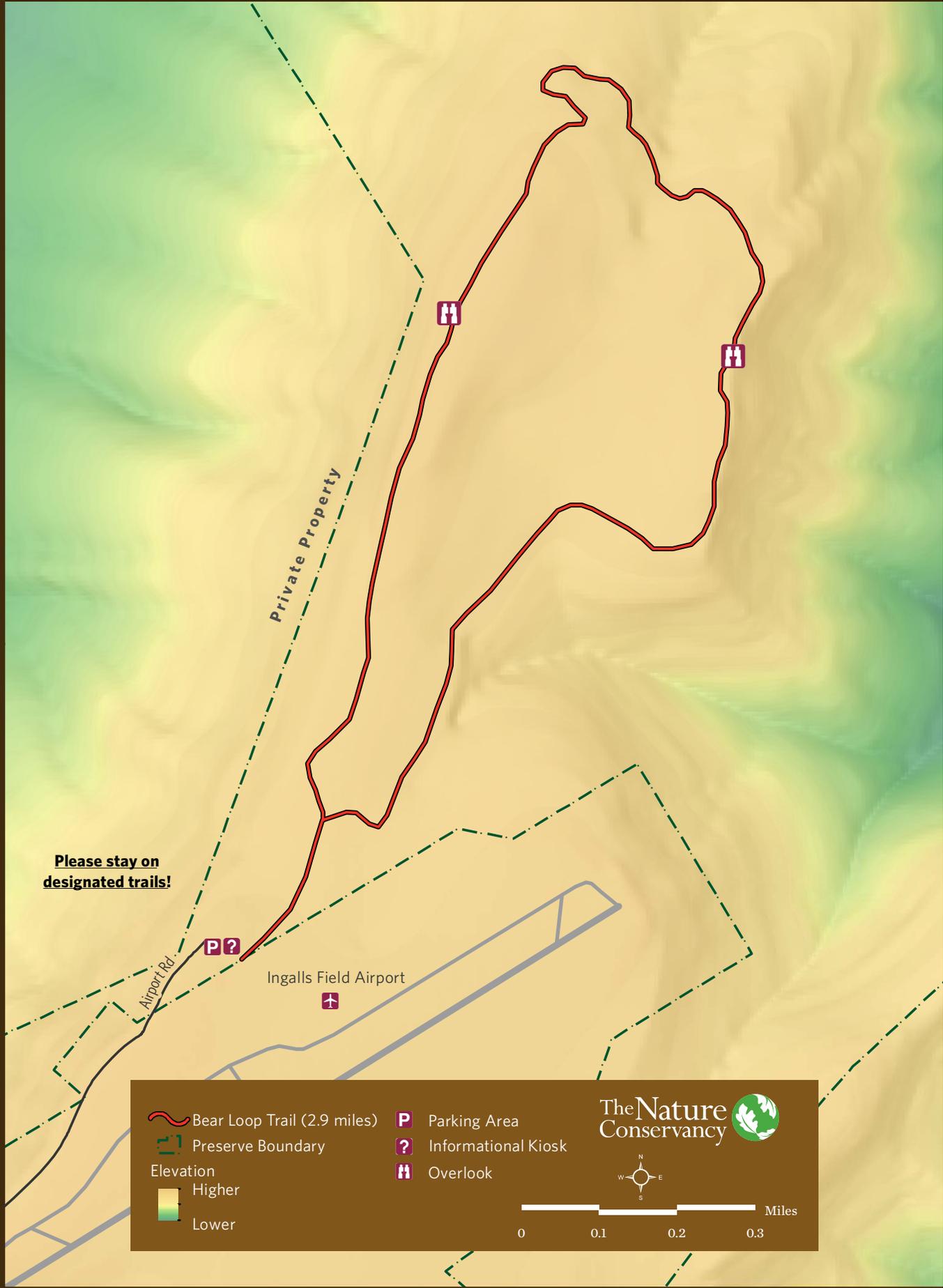
 Overlook

The Nature Conservancy 



 Miles

0 0.1 0.2 0.3



## Commitment to Youth Safety

The Nature Conservancy's Commitment to Youth Safety establishes behavioral standards to protect Youth and applies to all employees and volunteers. Relevant excerpts from the Manual can be found on the reverse side of this sheet. Whenever working with Youth, employees and volunteers shall:

1. Treat Youth (anyone under age 18) with respect and dignity regardless of race, color, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and birth or other personally defining characteristics or status
2. Plan activities with Youth to protect and enhance the highest level of safety of the Youth involved, whether or not the Youth is accompanied by parents/family
3. Adhere to uniform standards of physical contact and other conduct as outlined in the Manual<sup>1</sup>, and avoid physical contact with Youth when out of close proximity to or outside the view of other adults
4. Avoid being alone with one Youth, and in the rare circumstances that being alone with one Youth is unavoidable, follow the guideline for One-on-One Activities in the Manual<sup>2</sup>
5. When working with a group of Youth, wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present or nearby
6. Be sensitive to and observe boundaries with respect to language, conversation, and physical contact provided in this Standard Operating Procedure and the Manual<sup>1</sup>, following local and regional norms if these norms are more restrictive than the standards
7. For overnight activities with Youth, provide high levels of supervision and follow the guideline for Monitoring High Risk Activities, Overnight Activities in the Manual (not applicable to the Preserve Volunteer Program)
8. Follow any program specific Youth safety guidelines and safety plans for managing boundaries and high risk activities with Youth

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (**printed name of volunteer**) understand that I am responsible to not engage in actions or behaviors that could be harmful to Youth or construed as child abuse.

**Signature of Volunteer**

**Date**

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## <sup>1</sup>Appropriate Contact with Youth:

The following guidelines provide specific examples regarding appropriate behavior that promote a positive environment while protecting Youth, Employees and Staff Volunteers from misunderstandings. These guidelines should be followed by all Employees and Staff Volunteers working with Youth and will assist Employees and Staff Volunteers in fulfilling their Commitment to Youth Safety.

### A. Physical Interactions

Appropriate Physical Interactions	INAPPROPRIATE Physical Interactions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Side hugs or shoulder-to-shoulder hugs</li> <li>▪ Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>▪ Handshakes</li> <li>▪ High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>▪ Verbal praise</li> <li>▪ Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>▪ Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>▪ Hands on shoulders</li> <li>▪ Holding hands (with young Youth in escorting situations)</li> <li>▪ Allowing pre-school or kindergarten Youth to sit on Employees or Staff Volunteers' knees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>▪ Tickling</li> <li>▪ Showing affection in isolated areas</li> <li>▪ Allowing Youth older than kindergarten (5 or 6) to sit on Employees' and Staff Volunteers' knees or laps</li> <li>▪ Wrestling</li> <li>▪ Piggyback rides</li> <li>▪ Kisses</li> <li>▪ Whispering/talking close to ear</li> <li>▪ Encouraging Youth to hug/show affection to one another</li> <li>▪ Picking up/carrying Youth older than kindergarten (5 or 6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Touching/combing hair</li> <li>▪ Allowing a Youth to cling to an Employee's or Staff Volunteer's leg (suggest hold hands with younger Youth if needed for escorting situations)</li> <li>▪ Any type of massage given by or to a Youth</li> <li>▪ Any form of affection that is unwanted by the Youth or the Employees and Staff Volunteers</li> <li>▪ Compliments or comments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>▪ Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li> </ul>

### B. Verbal Interactions

Appropriate Physical Interactions	INAPPROPRIATE Physical Interactions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Positive reinforcement</li> <li>▪ Appropriate jokes</li> <li>▪ Encouragement</li> <li>▪ Praise</li> <li>▪ Asking questions/inviting conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Name-calling</li> <li>▪ Secrets</li> <li>▪ Cursing</li> <li>▪ Off-color or sexual jokes</li> <li>▪ Shaming, belittling</li> <li>▪ Bullying</li> <li>▪ Derogatory remarks</li> <li>▪ Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate Youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussing sexual encounters</li> <li>▪ Involving Youth in the current personal problems or issues of Employees and Staff Volunteers.</li> <li>▪ Sharing confidential information (for example, "Your friend Charlie got in trouble for X.")</li> </ul>

## <sup>2</sup>One-on-One Interactions:

Most abuse occurs when one adult is alone with one Youth. The Nature Conservancy aims to eliminate or reduce these situations and prohibits private one-on-one interactions unless for emergency safety reasons or approved in advance by the Business Unit Director.

In those situations, where one-on-one interactions are approved or cannot be avoided, Employees and Staff Volunteers should have the activity be observable and interruptible by following these guidelines:

- When meeting one-on-one with a Youth, always do so in a public place where you are or can be in full view of others.
- Avoid going to secluded areas where the presence of others cannot be known.
- Avoid physical contact that can be misinterpreted by the Youth. Limit contact to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an open area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other Employees and Staff Volunteers that you are alone with a Youth, and ask them to randomly drop in.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

# Preserve Inspection Report Form

PRESERVE:  DATE:

STEWARD'S NAME:  APPROX. TIME IN FIELD:  hrs.

TRAIL/AREA(S) VISITED:

1. Was the parking area in good condition along with all signs, kiosks, structures and gates including locks)? Was the vegetation trimmed around these areas?

**Actions Taken/Comments:**

2. Were the trails in good condition? Any blow downs, obstructions, erosion problems?

**Actions Taken/Comments:**

3. Were there any signs of the following?

Vandalism       Illegal Hunting       Fire       Camping       Biking/Horseback Riding   
 Dumping       Unauthorized Vehicle Use       Litter       Safety Hazards       Damaged Vegetation

**Actions Taken/Comments:**

4. Did you notice any changes in surround land use or status?

**Comments:**

5. Describe any interactions you had with preserve neighbors or visitors.

**Comments:**

6. Describe any significant wildlife or plants you encountered at the preserve. We like to hear about what you observe! Please include photos if you have them.

**Comments:**

**General Comments:** Did you notice any other problems or have suggestions for improvements?

This information is very useful! Thanks for your help!  
 Please send this to Jen Dalke ([jdalke@tnc.org](mailto:jdalke@tnc.org)), Sam Truslow ([struslow@tnc.org](mailto:struslow@tnc.org)) and the schedule manager.  
 Please include any photos and/or KML Avenza files you have in the email.

## Avenza Map Help Sheet

Avenza Maps is a useful phone and tablet app that allows users to keep track of the location of issues that arise at the preserve. The app works even in the absence of cell phone service, and maps can easily be shared with TNC staff, allowing for more efficient workday planning.

Avenza maps can be downloaded from the Apple or Android app store. You can download the preserve trail map from TNC website, or a TNC staff member will email you a copy. More help setting up Avenza can be found at <https://support.avenzamaps.com/hc/en-us>.

The following steps outline how to mark issues with placemarks and then send them to our Land Steward, Sam Truslow. Providing this information is extremely helpful and saves our stewardship staff valuable time.

1.

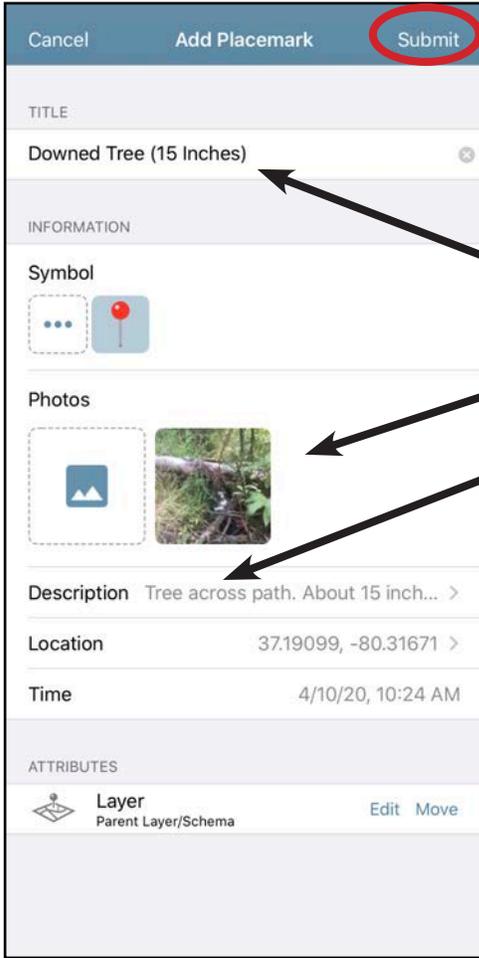


When you get to an issue to report, open the app. Your location is shown by a dot.

Press the arrow in the bottom left corner to center the map at your location.

Next, use the pin button by the arrow to create a new placemark.

2.



You can add a title, photos, and description to the placemark. The more information, the better!

When you are done, select Submit in the top right corner.

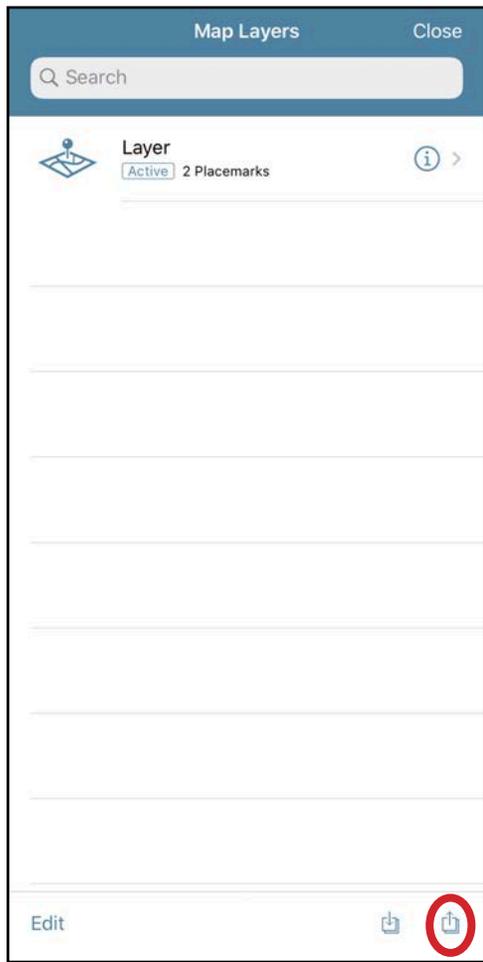
You can add multiple placemarks to a map, so keep track of all issues you come across.

Once you finish your stewardship hike, send the information to Sam Truslow. You need cell service or internet to do this, so you may need to wait until you are home.

To send the data you collected, select the layer button in the bottom right corner.

3.

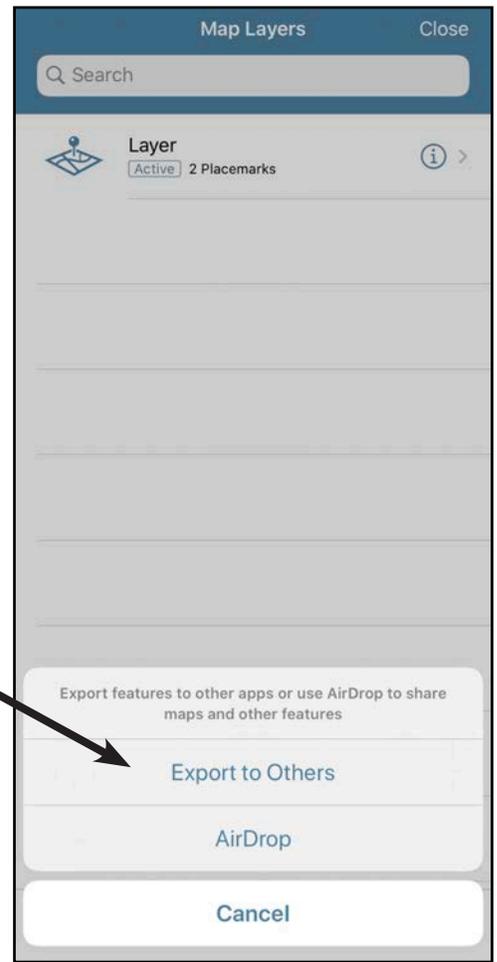




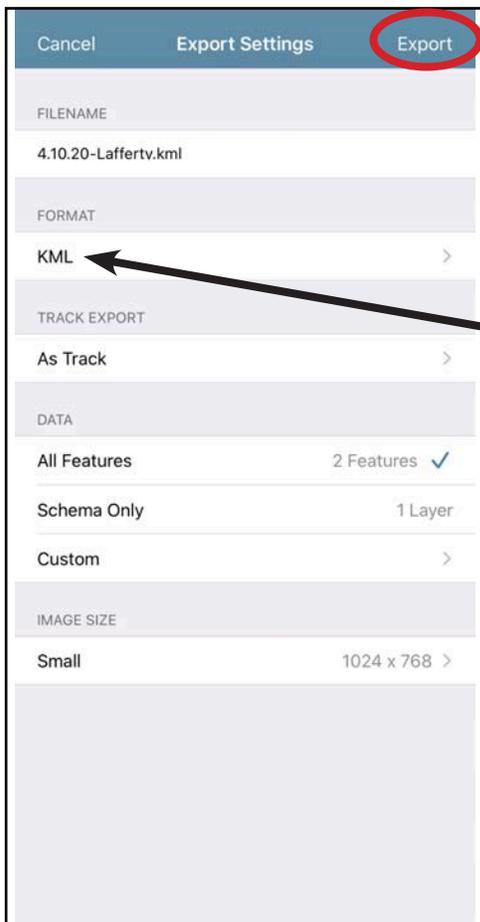
4.

Select the button with the up arrow in the bottom right corner.

Next, select Export to Others.



5.



Feel free to rename your file to something more descriptive before sending.

Be sure to select KML as the file format if it is not already selected.

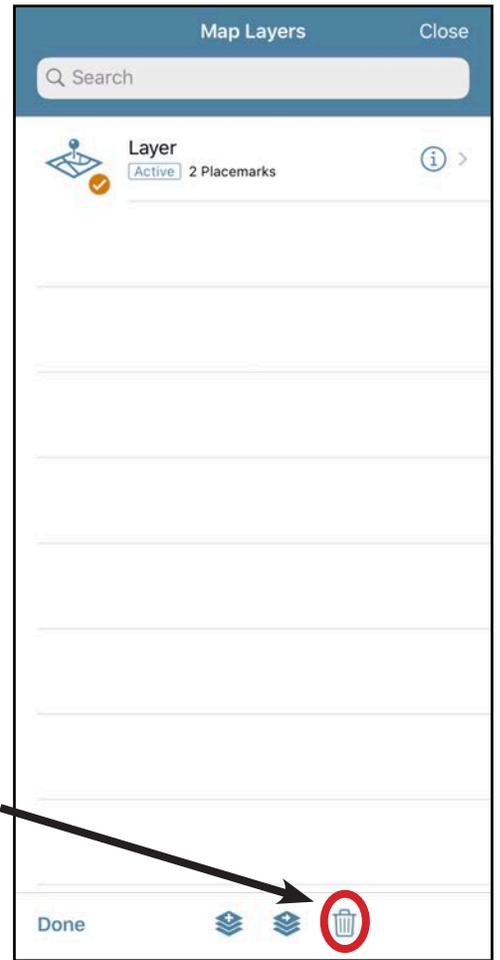
Once you are done, select Export in the the top right corner. Pick your email app of choice and send the file to Sam at [struslow@tnc.org](mailto:struslow@tnc.org).

# 6.

After you send the file for your stewardship hike, clear the map so you are ready for your next hike.

From the Map Layers screen (from Step 4), select Edit in the bottom left corner.

Select the layer you created and then press delete at the bottom.



Thank you for collecting valuable and time-saving information!