

Outdoor Safety for All

Physical and Social



Kathy Granillo

What I Am NOT:

- Safety expert

• What I AM:

- Field Biologist with 40 years of experience

Why am I talking with you today?

Chaired a Panel Discussion in 2021 at the Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society on “Safety in the field: so much more than a first aid kit.”

Lead author for a new chapter for The Wildlife Techniques Manual on field safety.

Chapter Title - Foundations of Safety: Planning for risks and fostering inclusive safety culture in fieldwork

The Wildlife Techniques Manual – The Wildlife Society



- First published in 1960
- 9th Edition - In Progress



My Co- Authors

- Dr. Heather Bateman – Arizona State University
- Kaitlyn Gahl – Recent graduate of University of Arizona
- Dr. Kerry Griffis-Kyle – Texas Tech University
- Dr. Marcella Kelly – Virginia Tech
- Dr. Jennifer Smith – University of Texas at San Antonio

Special shout-out to Field Inclusive

- Address social field safety issues related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).
- Support all field biologists through identifying and addressing field safety issues, developing field safety resources, and supporting marginalized researchers through financial aid and experiential learning opportunities.
- *Co-Founders Lauren D. Pharr and Dr. Murry Burgess*
- www.fieldinclusive.org



Agenda

- Types of Safety – Physical and Social
- Planning for Safety
- Advice/Tips
- Q&A with the audience

Safety

Safety often seems to be an afterthought or an unwanted but required chore.

But **NOTHING** is more important. No field project is worth someone getting hurt or killed.



Working with Youth

- Everything discussed in this presentation applies to working with young people
- BUT there are other considerations I will not be addressing
- Seek out information specific to youth if they are part of your project



You Are
Responsible
for Your
Safety

It doesn't matter if you
are the one in charge
or not

Do not abdicate your
safety into the hands
of others

Field Worker Categories

New to field work

Experienced

Older

Non-traditional

More
Categories

Supervisor

Non-supervisor

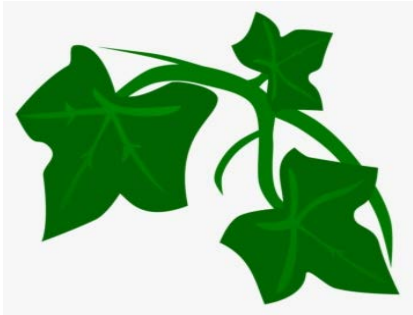
Defacto supervisor



Safe·ty

noun

the condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury.



- General first aid kit that is accessible
- Hydration, snacks
- Phone
- Insect repellent, sun screen
- Knowing how to identify poison ivy, venomous snakes, etc.

Safety is about risk assessment

- How close am I to medical care and law enforcement?
- Are there risks associated with local politics and culture?
- Am I following governmental regulations? (especially on international projects).
- Do I have proper equipment?

Risks are not the same for every person

Medical vulnerabilities like allergies

Disabilities

Experience

It can also include:

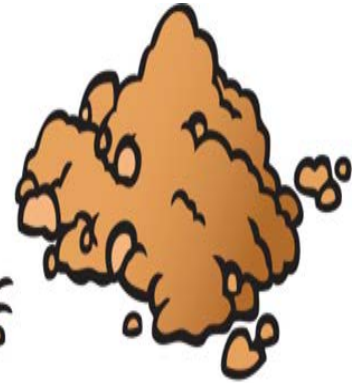
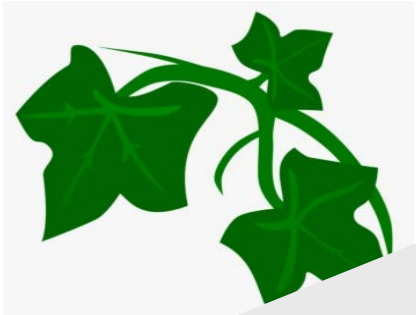
Discrimination towards a particular group



Safe·ty

noun

the condition of being protected from or unli
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PHYSICAL FIELD SAFETY

- First aid kit that is accessible
- Hydration, snacks
- Phone
- Insect repellent, sun screen
- Knowing how to identify poison ivy, venomous snakes, etc.



Social Field Safety

Social Field Safety seeks to provide precautions, preventions, and resources for at-risk field workers who may be targeted or discriminated against in the outdoors.

At-risk individuals may include minority identities of the following: race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and/or religion.

When individuals from these backgrounds enter unfamiliar communities in the course of fieldwork, they may be placed in an uncomfortable and potentially unsafe 'othered' position, and prejudice may manifest against them.

Common Risky Social Situations

- Sources

- Law Enforcement
- Property Owners / Managers
- Local Community
- Team Members / Supervisors

- Causes

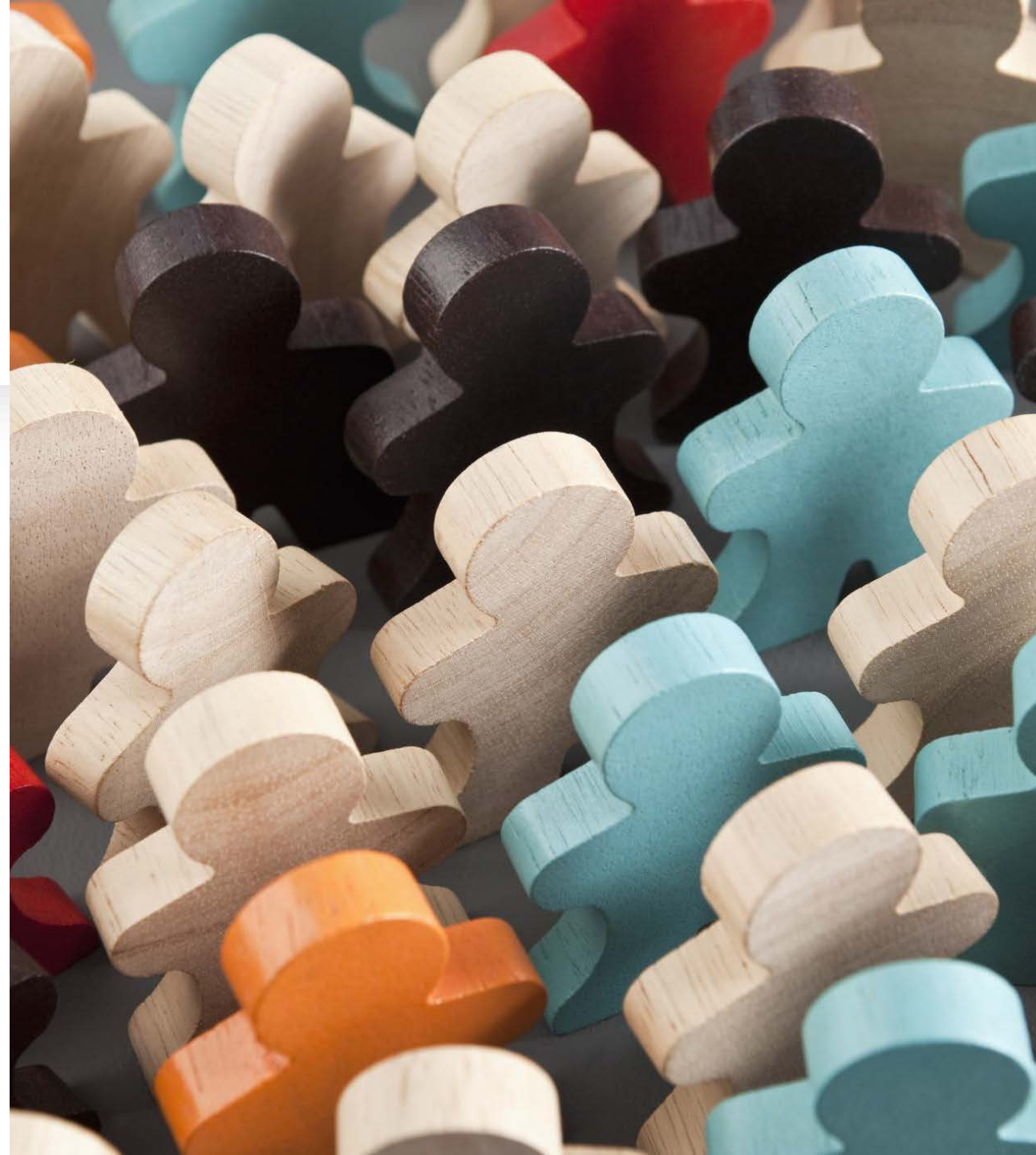
- Power Differential - perceived vulnerability
- Stereotypes / Otherness - biased marker of danger
 - Race / Ethnicity
 - Gender / Sexual Orientation
 - Religion
 - Physical or Mental Disability
 - Body Shape



Inclusive field safety

– Why is it desirable?

- Inclusive environment = highest levels of safety
 - People are more likely to speak up
 - People are more likely to communicate problems
 - Team members feel empowered to do something when they see a problem
- Diverse viewpoints and experiences provide alternative ideas and other perspectives





istockphoto.com/cienpies

**Be
An
Ally**

How do you plan to be safe?

Planning – before the field, in the field

Location specific considerations

Safety Plan

Who is doing the fieldwork? How are they selected? What experience do they have?

Training



Planning

- Project goals and objectives guide the planning
- Methods that keep people safe physically also keep people mentally and emotionally safe
 - Identify hazards (physical and social) and process for dealing with them
 - Create a safety plan
 - Communication
 - Inclusive culture of safety

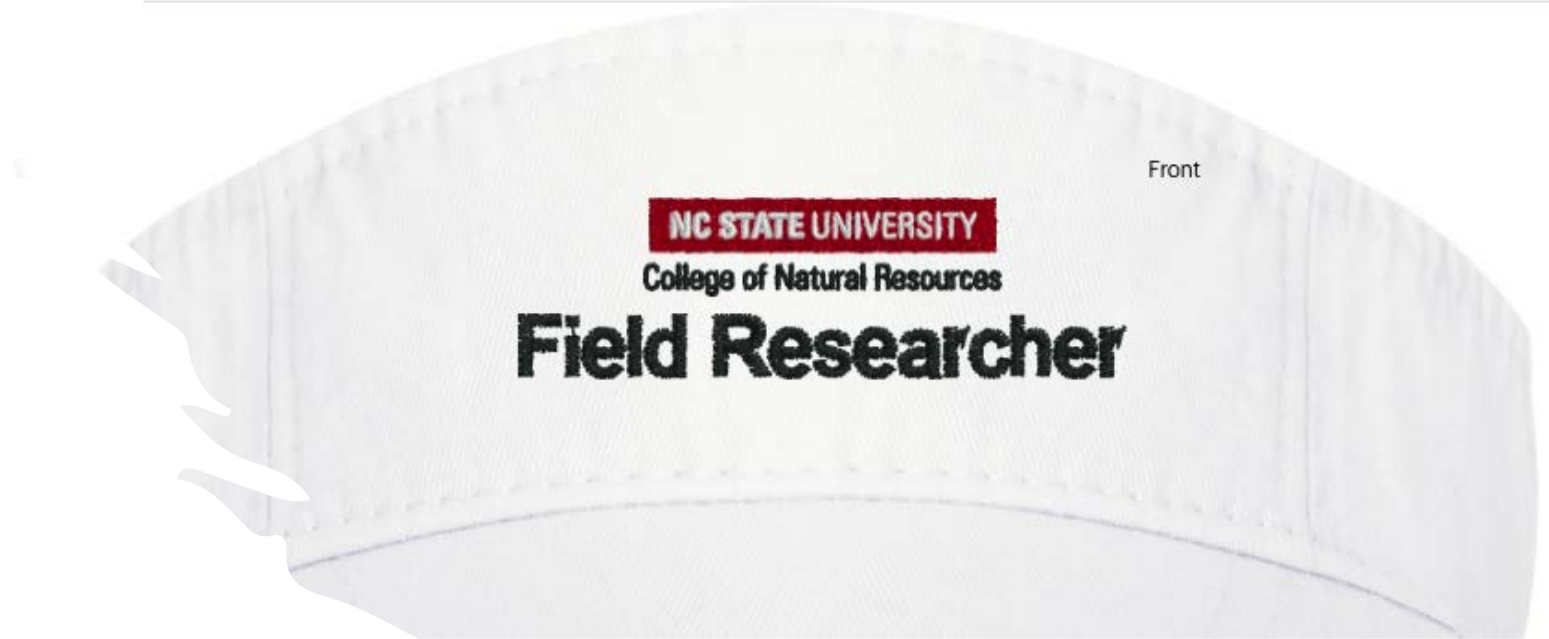
General and Site-Specific Hazards

- General
 - For the system – invasive species, diseases
 - For the field worker – physical and social
- Site-Specific
 - Vehicles and equipment
 - Chemicals
 - Animal handling



Field Safety Gear

- Physical:
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Vehicle emergency equipment
 - Communication devices
- Social:
 - Identification Vests, visors, hats, badges, decals for vehicles



Safety Plan

- **Project specific information**
 - PI contact information
 - Project objectives
- **Location specific information** – for each location
 - Contact information (site manager, site access, law enforcement)
 - Access to site
 - Location and contact information for emergency services
- **Safety protocols** - Hazards and mitigation
 - Include sanitation and PPE
- **Communication protocols**
 - Entry and exit of field and procedures to follow if crew doesn't return
 - Emergencies/injuries



Communication

- Communications with parent institution/agency
 - Advocate for the safety of your team (safe equipment/vehicles, policies)
- Communications within team (start early)
 - Hazards and responsibilities starting during the interview
 - Set expectations on communication
 - Check-in/out
 - Injuries and incidents
 - Changing conditions
- Communicate outside of team
 - Local law enforcement and property managers/owners
 - Introduce personnel that will be doing the daily/weekly communication



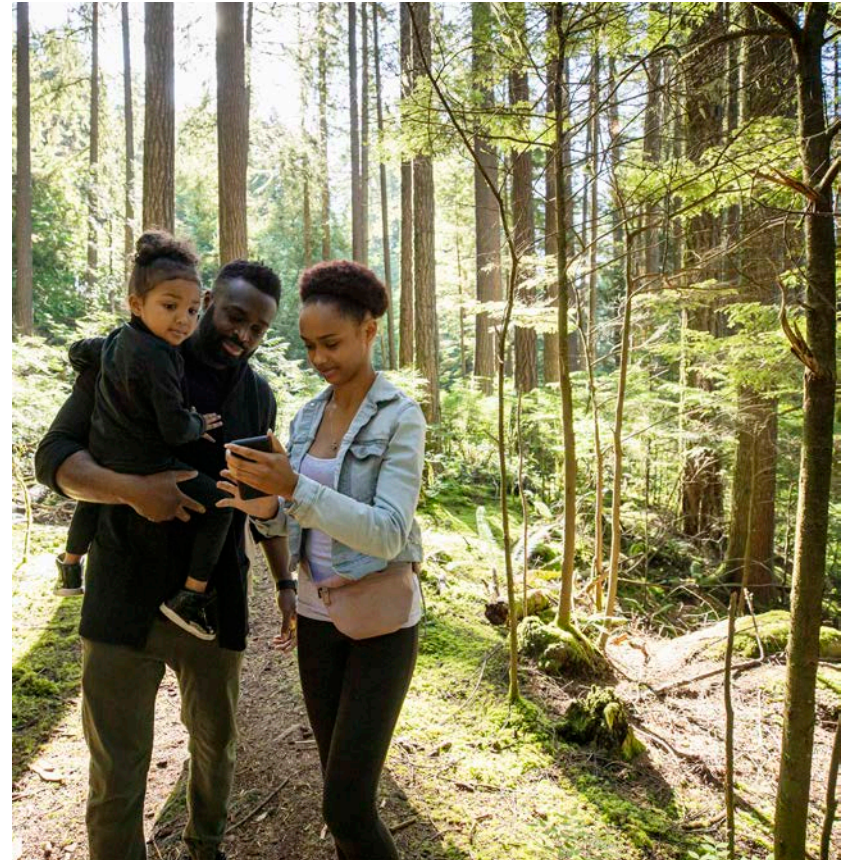
Communication

- iPhone:
- Settings
- Emergency SOS
- Pick how to activate it
- Call after severe crash –decide if want to activate it
- Emergency SOS Via Satellite



Communication

- Android Phones
 - Personal Safety App
 - Pressing the power button 5 times



Field Crew

- Code of conduct with consequences
- Provide training on the risks and protocols for dealing with risks
- Set expectations
 - Job responsibilities
 - Responsibilities to self and team
 - Communication
 - Model communication
- Send people out in pairs
 - Pair an at-risk person with an experienced person



Pre-field Training

- Roles and responsibilities for crew members and leaders
- Chain of command and where they fit, how to report issues/incidents
- People skills - conflict resolution, obligations to safety
 - Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Expected weather and what gear is needed
 - Weather monitoring - who decides when to move out/cancel field work
 - Ethical workplace training - teach the crew how to do the right thing
 - Importance of transparency, honesty, accountability
 - Importance of data accuracy
 - Bystander intervention training
 - Social media - what should and should not be shared



Pre-field Training



First Aid/Wilderness First Aid



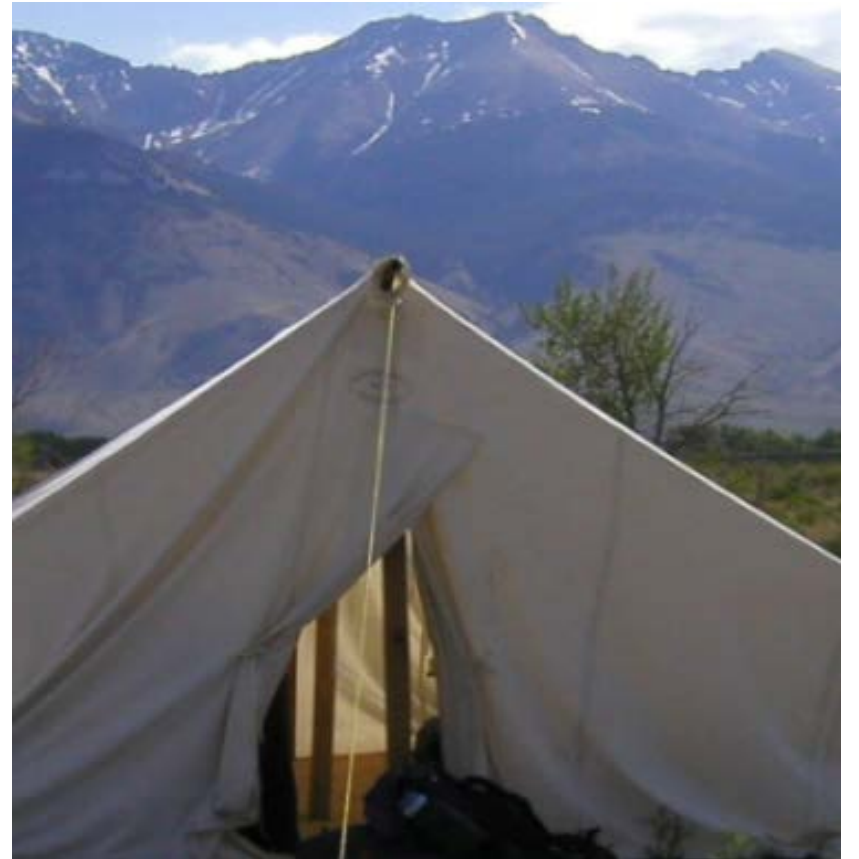
CPR/AED



Vehicle use and safety

Convey the basics

- Many just starting out in wildlife may not have much, if any experience with hiking, camping, boating, 4-wheel drive vehicles and how to drive them in rough terrain
- They probably don't know what appropriate gear is or where to acquire it
- Personal hygiene
- Peeing/pooping and menstruation products protocols
- Privacy etiquette in the field
- Where to set up tents
- What to do if it rains/snows
- Importance of thermoregulation
- Appropriate cell phone use

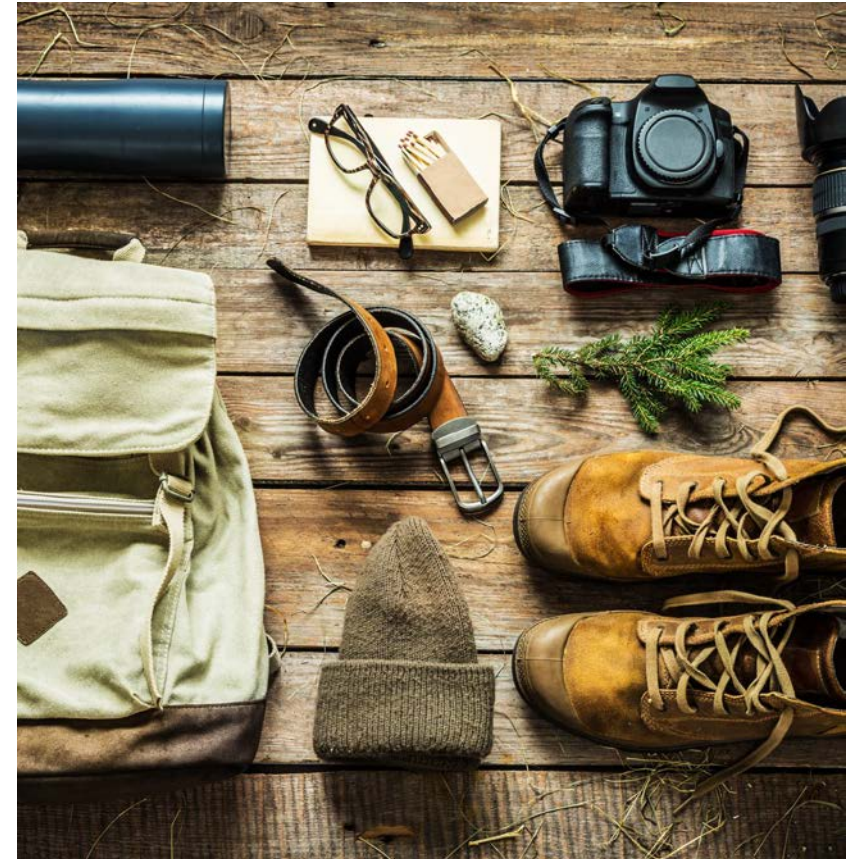


Basic Field Gear

- . Ways to help:
 - . Gear closets
 - . Thrift stores
 - . Include it in grant proposals

Core PPE

- long pants
- long sleeve shirts
- hiking boots
- gaiters
- socks
- hat
- buff to protect against sun and wind
- gloves (working gloves or winter gloves depending on activity)
- headlamp, flashlight
- sunscreen
- bug spray
- sunglasses
- sandals or extra pair of shoes to change into after boots
- Waterproof jacket and pants
- mini-personal first aid kit



Project-specific PPE

- snake chaps
- wet suit
- climbing gear
- waders (and wader repair kit!)
- rubber boots
- life vest
- reflective vest/clothing
- hard hat
- hearing protection
- safety glasses



Before Fieldwork

- Vet the field site and local culture
 - Introduce yourself to managers, law enforcement, neighbors
- Confirm you have appropriate gear
- Emergency lists for pack - contacts, allergies, medical



In the Field

- Daily safety meeting
- Ask yourself and/or your crew “How can I hurt myself or others on this project?”
- “What tools are we using and how can they hurt me?”
- “What is the plan for the day?”
- “What is our plan if someone gets hurt?”



Fieldwork

- Let someone know where/when you will be in the field
- Wear field safety gear - appropriate for conditions, include affiliation if appropriate
- Non-lethal self-defense tools
- Pay attention to hydration and food
- Watch out for team members!



Please don't make safety an afterthought.



Key Take- Home Points

YOU are responsible for YOUR safety

Preparation and Training - Embrace it!

Think about the safety of your fellow workers

Live, breathe, and talk safety