

SAFER Apps
West Virginia Field Trip Itinerary
FINAL
Updated 8/22/25

The project **Science to Advance Freshwater Ecosystem and Community Resilience in the Appalachians (SAFER Apps)** is a planning grant, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), with the broad goal of bringing together university researchers, conservation organizations, government officials, planners, and other academic partners to consider the flood resiliency needs of communities in the Appalachian mountains and opportunities for conservation measures to advance flood resilience.

National Science Foundation planning grants *support initial conceptualization, planning and collaboration activities that aim to formulate new and sound plans for large-scale projects in emerging research areas for future submission to an NSF program.*¹ The SAFER Apps planning grant is funded under NSF's relatively new program [Confronting Hazards, Impacts, and Risks for a Resilient Planet](#) (CHIRRP). All CHIRRP projects are expected to achieve three outcomes: (1) advance understanding, forecasting and/or prediction of future Earth system hazards and risks, (2) engage communities in development of research questions and approaches, and (3) produce actionable, science-based solution pathways for adaptation methodologies, products, and services.

Our second SAFER Apps field trip provides an opportunity to continue to build cross-state relationships, foster understanding of challenges faced by communities and conservation organizations, and explore tools the research community might advance to contribute to flood resiliency in mountain settings.

Specifically, on this field trip we aim to:

- expose visiting participants to flood impacts experienced in the mountainous settings of West Virginia, along a gradient from headwater to valley floor and flash flood to riverine settings;
- learn from professionals engaged in community response, flood risk mitigation, and flood resiliency planning, with a focus on engagement with “nature-based solutions” for flood mitigation and discourse on formal and informal infrastructure in rural, mountainous settings
- Learn from staff of conservation organizations on the roles they play in engaging communities in river stewardship, advocacy, and flood resiliency projects

¹ From the National Science Foundation's Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide, page II-43 at https://nsf-gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/nsf24_1.pdf.

Participants:

Name	Organization	Status/notes
1. Beverley Wemple	Univ of Vermont	confirmed
2. Michele Braun	Friends of the Winooski	confirmed
3. Erin DeVries	Vermont River Conservancy	confirmed
4. Rob Nicholas	Penn State Univ	confirmed
5. Eric Chase	Penn State Center for Dirt & Gravel Roads	confirmed
6. Nico Zegre	West Virginia Univ	confirmed
7. Madison Ball	Friends of the Cheat	confirmed
8. Amanda Pitzer	Friends of the Cheat	confirmed
9. Jennie Smith	WV Rivers Coalition	confirmed
10. Abigail McQueen	Trout Unlimited	confirmed
11. Adam Webster	WV Land Trust	confirmed
12. Rick Chaney	Camp Dawson	confirmed
13. Justin Wolfe	Preston County OEM	confirmed
14. Nazma Ahmed	West Virginia Univ	confirmed
15. Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy	American Rivers	confirmed
16. Jeremy McGill	WV Division of Forestry Assistant State Forester	confirmed
17. Todd Miller	WV TNC	confirmed
18. Edwin Martin	American Flood Coalition	confirmed
19. Grace Dever	West Virginia Univ	confirmed

Wednesday Sept 3

8:45 - Load vehicles and depart Camp Dawson for Woolen Mills Road (39°32'58.4"N 79°37'57.5"W)

9:00-9:45 am - Roadside tour and discussion of Muddy Creek mine blowout, acid mine remediation, sedimentation, and private & public infrastructure ([park here](#)) - Madison Ball and Amanda Pitzer (FOC).

9:45 - 10:00 am - Load vehicles and travel to Friends of the Cheat Festival Site (Google [Google Map link](#)).

10:00 - 10:45 am - Bathroom break/water refill. Overview of flood dynamics and risk in the Cheat River basin and West Virginia - Nico Zegre (WVU). Exploration of Muddy Creek/Cheat confluence, floodplain, Cheat River Festival. Madison Ball and Amanda Pitzer (FOC).

10:45 - 11:00 am - Load vehicles and drive to Albright Power Station dam in Albright, WV ([Google Map Link](#)).

11:00 - 12:00 pm - Discussion of the 1985 flood, role (and future) of the dam, community vulnerability, failed governance, flood mitigation efforts, river connectivity, economic development. Madison Ball and Amanda Pitzer (FOC) and Lisa Hollingsworth- Segedy (American Rivers) .

12:00 - 12:15 pm - Load vehicles and drive to Cheat River Rail-Trail & Trailhead ([Google Map Link](#)).

12:15 - 1:00 pm -Lunch, bathrooms, water fill. Discussion of economic revitalization of trailhead site, recreation access, and story of hope (Amanda, Maddy, Nico).

1:00 - 1:20 pm - Load vehicles and drive to Rowlesburg Community Center ([Park Here](#)).

1:20 - 2:00 pm - Walking tour of Rowlesburg; '85 flood inundation, railroad bridge, tree planting, CSO/stormwater infrastructure @ park (Amanda, Maddy, Nico).

2:00 - 3:00 - Rowlesburg Community Center ([Google Map Link](#)). Voices from the community - social fabric, '85 flood, school consolidation, and community aspirations. Coffee (?), bathrooms, water refill. Katie Wolfe & Shirley Hartley.

3:00 - 4:15 pm - Load vehicles and drive up Saltlick Road. Roadside tour with various stops at DIY stream crossing (culverts, bridges, low water ford), railroad and road grade challenges.

4:15 - 4:30 pm - Complete drive and arrive in Terra Alta at High Ground Brewing ([Google Map Link](#)). End of formal tour and adjourn for drinks/foods

4:30 - 6:00 pm - Catered picnic-style dinner at High Ground Brewing.

6:00 - 6:20 pm - VT and PA participants load up and drive back to Camp Dawson via Route 7
([Google Map Link](#))