All participants must review the safety guidelines in advance on the NPS website and sign a declaration that they have read them completely, agree to all required protocols, and have not shown any signs of illness as shown on the CDC website, including fatigue, sore throat, and the other more commonly-known signs of the illness.

The main points of the general safety guidelines are restated below. All safety protocols are subject to change as more information and/or additional orders, guidelines, recommendations, policies, and procedures are announced.

1. General Guidelines for Any Activity

A. We start with the precept that our top priority is prevention of any illness. We must prevent any of our precious participants from contracting Covid-19 and all the uncertain outcomes that could follow.
B. No one is expected to participate. We actively encourage those who have any concerns in participating to opt out of activities and wait until a future that is safe.
C. Any guidelines set forth by the State of Washington, Washington State University Extension, Thurston County, CDC, WHO, NIH, and any other relevant local governments will be the minimum standards for all our activities.
   a. Permission for individuals to gather in small groups has been granted by the office of the Governor. Note that this means that some types of field activities will be able to resume earlier than others, and permission to engage in a particular activity does not necessarily mean that all traditional NPS activities are therefore permissible. We will follow Washington’s “Safe Start” and Washington State University Extension protocols, and the timing issued by the Governor’s office for each type of activity.
   b. Any Executive Orders issued by the Governor will take precedence over less conservative measures outlined in the current Phase under Safe Start, until such time as the Governor rescinds an order and the Safe Start requirements are the more conservative approach (e.g., limits to size of gatherings).
D. All participants must register in advance of the event. In order to maintain a limited number of participants at any time, no “walk-in” participants will be permitted.
E. Upon arrival, guidelines will be reviewed with each participant verbally and temperatures may be taken.
F. Each event will have a designated Person In Charge (PIC). The PIC will be responsible for ensuring that all safety requirements are followed, including: requirements for onsite education before event commences; prior signatures on liability waivers and agreements to abide by safety requirements; no participation by individuals that are not pre-registered; agreement that any future symptoms (regardless of testing and including notification by
authorities that they may have been exposed; or a positive Covid-19 test) will be reported to authorities; and all PPE, social-distancing, and hygiene protocols are followed.

G. Registration and liability waivers will be managed and completed online to the extent feasible. Designated box(es) will be provided for any on-site paperwork required. Participants will be encouraged to bring their own writing tools. A separate box will be maintained for any NPS pens used by participants; these will be sanitized with 80% alcohol spray. The PIC will designate one person to manage onsite paperwork boxes to limit potential for virus spread.

H. PIC will ensure that a roster will be kept of each event detailing participants, their email addresses, and phone numbers. All participants will be required to notify NPS if they later experience any of the following: symptoms of COVID-19 (regardless of testing); notification by authorities that they may have been exposed; or a positive Covid-19 test.

I. NPS will then notify Thurston County and/or Washington State health authorities and provide the roster of all participants. Following notification of authorities, all participants present at the same event will be notified and will be instructed on how to proceed by health authorities.

J. Full compliance of these safety measures is mandatory for any participants in field-based learning activities outlined below. Any participant who does not abide by these measures will be asked to leave the educational event. Consistent inability to maintain safe distancing after reminders will also be grounds for dismissing participants. The PIC and NPS staff will have authority to enforce the guidelines.

2. Mandatory Field-based Learning Event Measures

A. All field-based learning events must be held entirely outdoors. Under no circumstances will any learning activities be offered inside enclosed structures.

B. The maximum number of participants permitted at an event will be determined based on the phase of Washington’s “Safe Start” guidelines, as well as any overriding requirements from Thurston County, Washington State University Extension, and the Governor’s office.

C. Events will be held at underutilized locations so we can retain our distances of 8-10 feet. Sites will be selected that offer opportunity for all participants to spread out widely for introductory orientations, possibly with the use of a portable PA system to ensure all participants are included.

D. Regardless of allowable gathering size, the size of Field Event gatherings will be limited to the number that: (1) can be safely physically distanced 8-10 feet apart at minimum on the site; (2) can receive educational instruction in a meaningful way, e.g., an appropriate instructor-to-learner ratio. In some locations, this may mean that no more than two participants per instructor are permissible, and instructors may need to offer the same content in multiple sessions in order to adequately meet the educational demand.

E. Instructors may divide the group to better maintain distancing. Leaders will discuss and reference plants or other materials from a distance with pointing tools.
F. Leaders may carry bamboo poles or other physical devices to effectively ensure minimum distances are maintained.

G. In settings where space is limited, e.g., narrow trails, instructors may use small field flags to temporarily mark plants or other key features so that participants can observe the specimen closely and self-instruct as they proceed.

H. Given that some field-based learning topics typically require close work between instructors and learners, to facilitate physical distancing, instructors will provide participants with educational materials in advance of the training and/or in-class handouts or laminated materials to facilitate field-based learning with instructors distanced from learners.
   a. Any in-class handouts will be contained in designated box, and the PIC will ensure one person oversees managing this box to reduce potential virus spread.
   b. Paper handouts must be kept by participants once they are taken.
   c. Laminated handouts may go back in a designated box and will be sanitized with 80% alcohol spray.

I. No one may participate without gloves and a mask that fully covers their mouth and nose.
   a. If a participant does not have a securely-fitting mask, NPS will provide one that will then be that participant’s to keep. But all participants must arrive with a face covering of some sort, at minimum a bandana or something similar.
   b. Participants are encouraged to bring their own gloves (disposable or gardening) to safely share plant specimens. If participants do not have them, NPS will provide them.

J. Learning will be separated into “COVID-quarantine Units” (CQU) so physical distancing is always maintained.
   a. A “Covid-quarantine unit” means those with whom you have been sharing contact during this time of social isolation, such that you are already safe to be in proximity to each other, including--perhaps--those in your household as well as friends in your close circle.

K. CQUs must plan to physically distance from each other by 8-10 feet. Participants must remind each other if they feel someone is encroaching closer than 8 feet from them. We will identify “choke points” and “high-risk areas” (such as walking paths and key plants).

L. Carpooling will **not** be encouraged outside of CQUs. Maplinks will be provided to all participants. For field-learning sites that are not local, a meet-up location may be identified as an option for vehicles to caravan to the site of the event, if required or desired.
M. If a space must be shared (e.g., checking out the one plant specimen on site), those collaborating must adhere to the requirements above by waiting to approach the area until the other participants have moved away to a safe distance, as required.

N. Participants understand that these measures will slow down the flow of the learning event and must be patient with the process. Participants must also understand that if a fellow learner expresses concern about closeness, it is not meant as a personal criticism, but a reminder that care must be taken. Each of us has the responsibility to show grace to our fellow participants and understand that we can only continue to collaborate if everyone accepts the most conservative measures possible (outside of not collaborating at all).

O. There will be no provision for food or water. Participants must plan to bring their own and to eat or drink in an area away from other persons.

P. Following any eating activity, masks must be tightly re-secured and proper hand hygiene must be adhered to: Sanitize hands and replace gloves.

   a. NPS will bring various types of hand sanitizers and wipes, and will encourage participants to bring their own supplies too.