



CITIZEN SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

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# Volunteer Field Work Town Hall

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Adventure Scientists



Kris Stepenuck



Adventure Scientists



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# Agenda

Introductions

Getting to know you - polling questions

The problem

Actions of and impacts to water monitoring programs

Case studies from Adventure Scientists

Town Hall conversation

## Housekeeping



We are recording

You will be automatically muted

Ways to communicate

- Write comment in chatbox
- Speak up (raise hand in participant box)
- Add to Google sheet
- Direct email to hosts
  - [kstepenu@uvm.edu](mailto:kstepenu@uvm.edu)
  - [jenelle@adventurescientists.org](mailto:jenelle@adventurescientists.org)

# The Problem

## Health Concerns:

- COVID spreading person to person
- COVID spreading via contaminated surfaces
- How to ensure safety of volunteers

## Project Coordination Concerns:

- Lack of existing relevant guidelines for volunteer-based field work activities
- Making program decisions when future COVID conditions and guidelines are unknown

## Goals Today:

- Provide a space for groups to express concerns and to share ideas
- Add to a list of best practices that groups can use to make decisions



# Sharing Ideas, Decisions and Impacts to Date

## Compiling our Recommendations

### For Coordinators

- Project Considerations

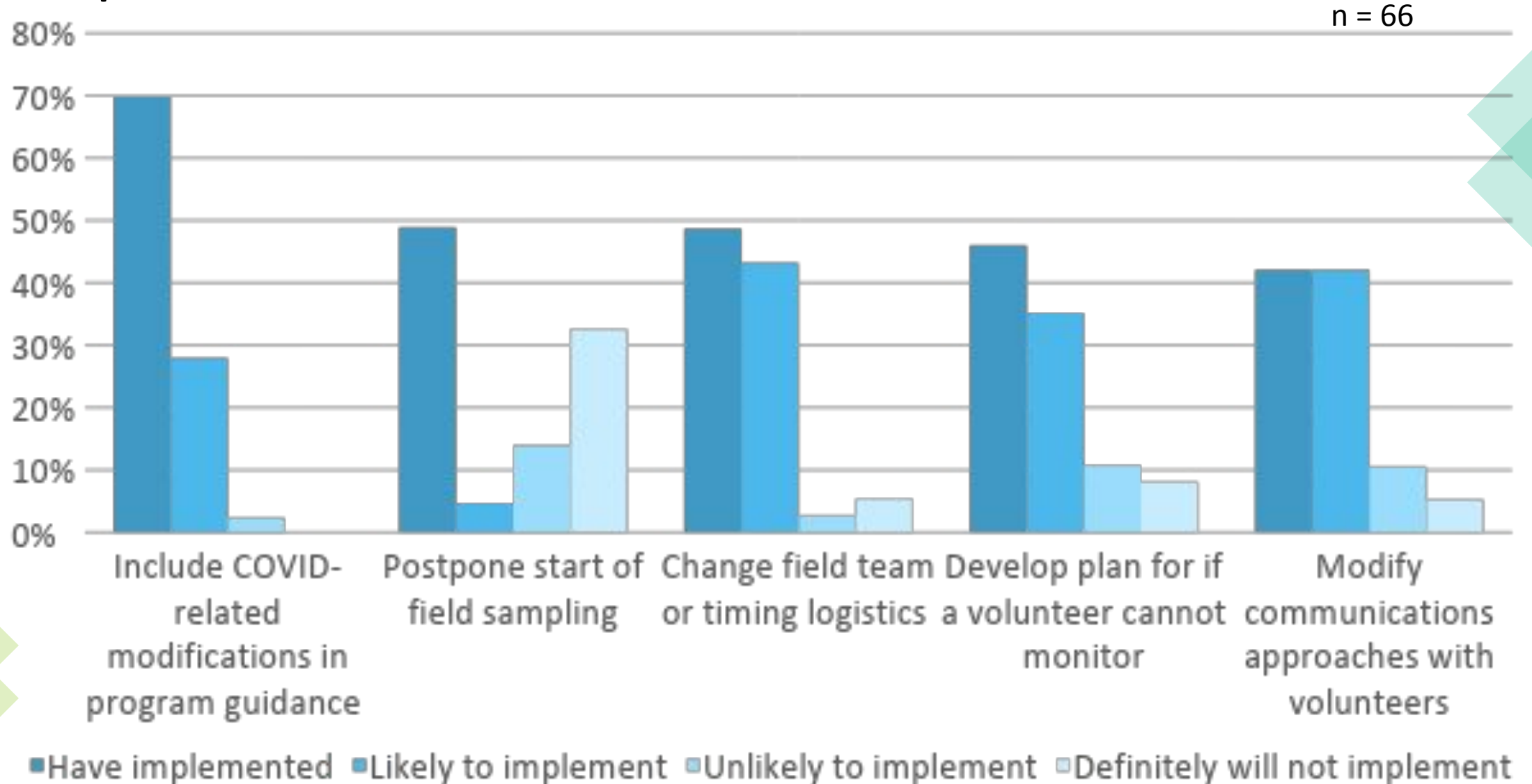
### For Field Crews

- Before Leaving Home
- In the Field
- In the Lab

Follow along and contribute input here:

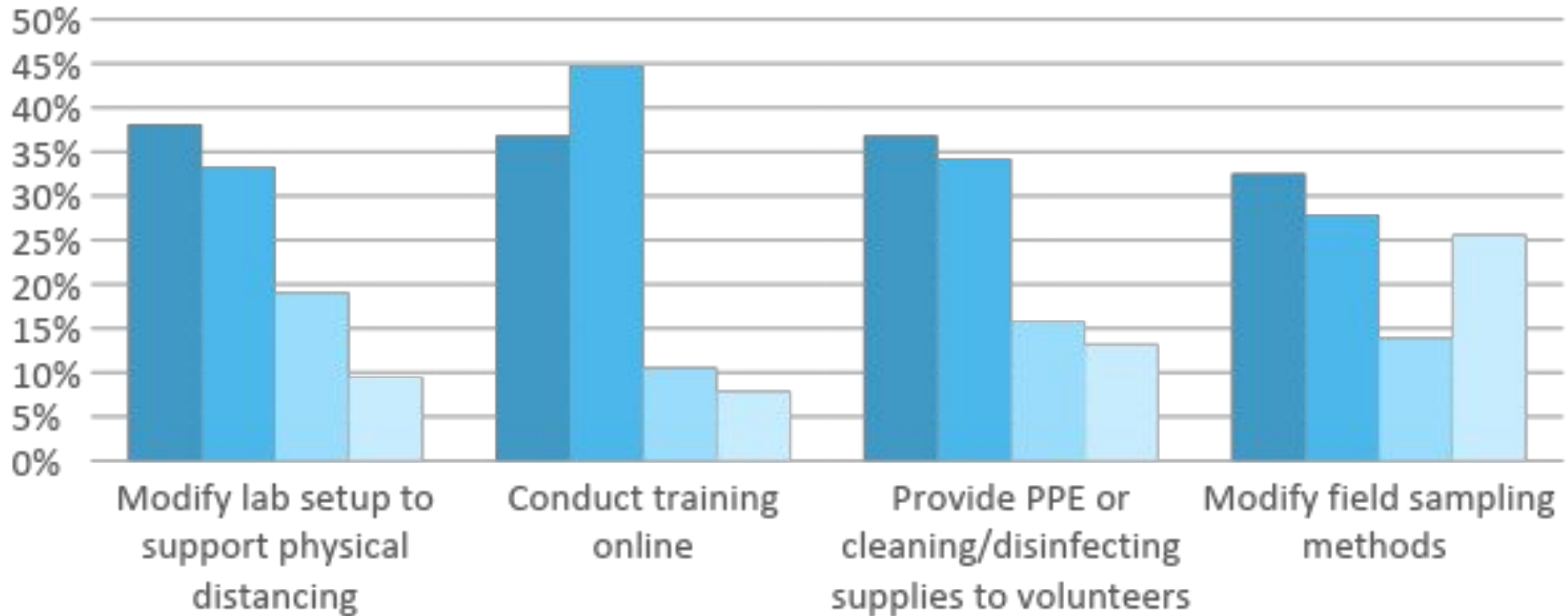
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1StnCymErhwz9aXkN7-eQmUWeJLdHRBbD3ZgWwiE67b8/edit?usp=sharing>

# Almost half of water monitoring programs have postponed start of the field season



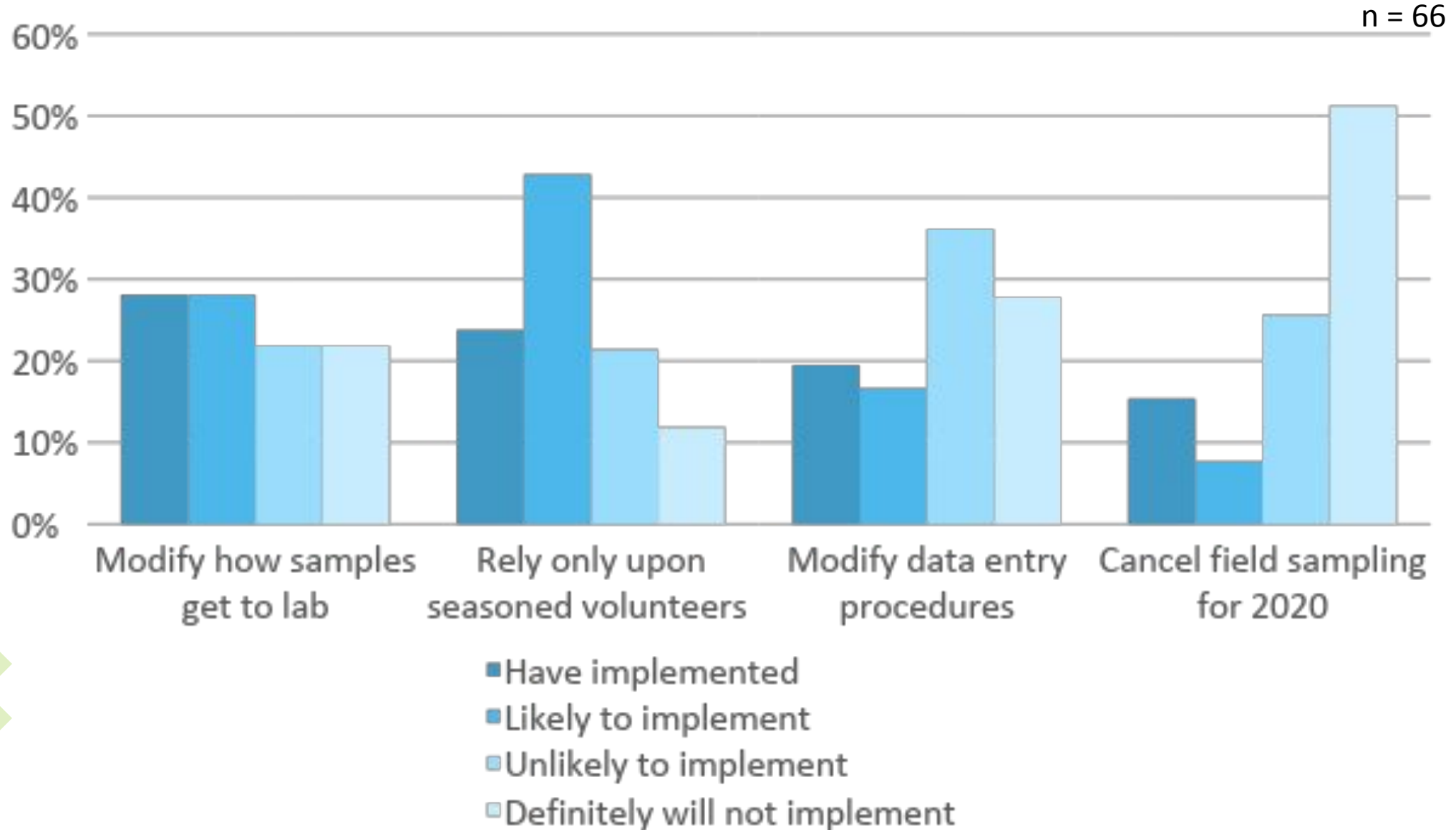
# Just over a third of water monitoring programs have conducted online training and provided PPE

n = 66



- Have implemented
- Likely to implement
- Unlikely to implement

# Just 15% of water monitoring programs have canceled their full field seasons





# Up to about a third of programs reported some type of negative impact

n = 66



Resources shared address a variety of needs. Please share your resources too!

- Training videos
- Information about water contamination by COVID
- Field equipment disinfection
- Safe use of disinfectants
- Liability waiver examples
- How to clean microscopes
- COVID guidance shared with volunteers by various programs

# For Coordinators: Project Considerations

- Defer to your local BoH advisories and regulations. Check for updates regularly to ensure your compliance
- Use solo samplers or same-household teams
- Conduct training sessions online
- Use social distancing, no-contact protocols when passing off equipment, datasheets or lab samples
- Consider making cleaning supplies available to samplers: hand sanitizer, gloves, disinfecting wipes
- Supplement SOP documents with COVID recommendations
- Reconsider sampling sites which:
  - Are in high-traffic areas or tend to engage passers-by
  - Require samplers to park in State or other lots that may be closed
  - Require more samplers than you can safely assign to site
  - Are prone to raw sewage releases (CSOs)
- Assign individuals with specific equipment and tasks that will minimize equipment-sharing
- Contact funding sources to understand changes to your grant requirements (e.g. EPA grant info [here](#))

# Before Leaving Home

- Always defer to your local Board of Health's advisories and regulations.
- If you or any member of your household is feeling unwell with COVID symptoms, do not sample
- Do not carpool with partners from outside your household
- Bring your own PPE
- Discuss any sampling concerns you may have with your coordinator
- Have a plan for parking, restrooms, meals, etc. that allows you to practice social distancing

# In the Field

- If working with partners from outside of your household, maintain a 6-ft distance
- Wear PPE (cloth face mask, rubber gloves) when in public places and when working near individuals that are not from your household
- Wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer regularly
- Minimize equipment-sharing: stick to one task for the day if possible. If equipment must be shared, do not pass it hand-to-hand. Be especially mindful of writing instruments.
- Use disinfecting cloths or spray to wipe down sampling equipment prior to returning it, especially high-touch points like pencils, clipboards, and tote handles.
- Denote any temporarily modified practices used on data sheets and chain-of-custody paperwork
- If engaged by passers-by, maintain social distancing and refer questions to your coordinator

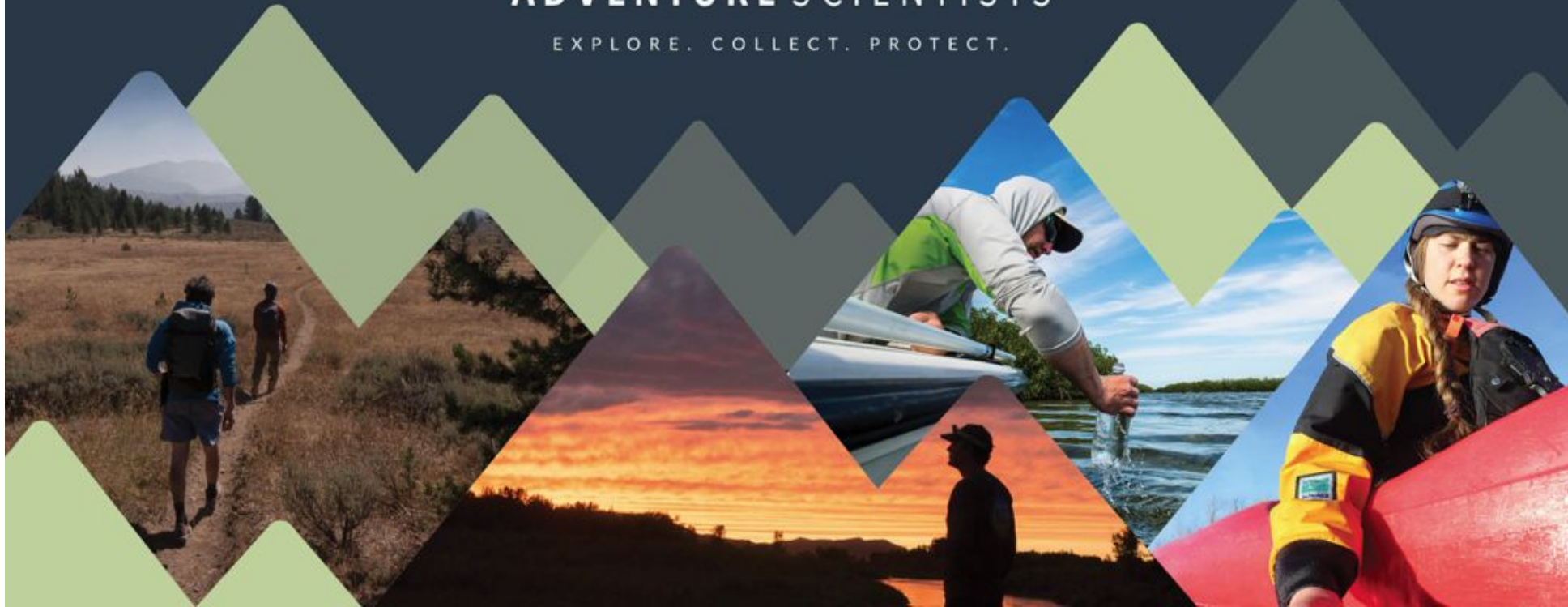
# In The Lab (or gear shed, or office)

- Staggered drop off of samples
- If possible, practice no-contact relay of equipment or samples with individuals already inside (be sure to disinfect first)!
- Disinfect laboratory equipment before and after use
- Limit number of staff in the lab at any time
- Consider ingress/egress that reduces contact



# ADVENTURE SCIENTISTS

EXPLORE. COLLECT. PROTECT.



We mobilize outdoor adventurers to collect data needed for progress in science, conservation, and human health

# Adventure Scientists' volunteer management

- Clear, appropriate research goals
- Specialized team + support
- Recruit based on data needed, and train carefully
- Continuous support and communication
- Evaluate progress towards our volunteer management goals



# Adventure Scientists' volunteer management

- Keep volunteers and communities safe
- Clear, appropriate research goals
- Specialized team + support
- Recruit based on data needed, and train carefully
- Continuous support and communication
- Evaluate progress towards our volunteer management goals

# Adventure Scientists' volunteer management

- Comprehensive online trainings
  - COVID-19 safety protocols within training

# Chime in!

## Ways to communicate



- Write comment in chat
- Speak up (Raise hand in participant window if needed)
- Add to Google sheet
  - <http://volunteermonitoring.org/covid>
- Direct email to hosts
  - [kstepenu@uvm.edu](mailto:kstepenu@uvm.edu)
  - [jenelle@adventurescientists.org](mailto:jenelle@adventurescientists.org)

# A few challenges to get our conversation started

- Concerns about losing a season of data
- How to keep volunteers engaged
- Existing SOPs for handling emergency situations programs can share?
  - Are they effective?
- How have programs incorporated COVID guidance into manuals/procedures?
- Safely interacting with the public at monitoring sites
- Accessing sites when lots are closed

# Next steps

- Additional meetings based on survey feedback
- Sharing slides, Zoom recording and recommendations
  - Email to participants, listservs
  - CSA website and YouTube  
(<https://www.citizen science.org/events/webinars/>)
  - USA Volunteer Monitoring Network, COVID Page  
(<http://volunteermonitoring.org/COVID>)

# Thank You and Stay Well!

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