



## Fieldwork Toolkit Leadership Training Series

This workshop is being recorded.  
Please keep your audio on mute, except  
during breakout sessions.  
Thank you.

[training.ucr.edu/fieldworkleadership](https://training.ucr.edu/fieldworkleadership)

## Trip Planning: Risk Management for Field Settings

Speaker: Chris Lay  
Ken Norris Center for Natural  
History, UC Santa Cruz

March 3, 2021

9 am – Noon PST

University of California

Field Research Safety | Risk & Safety Training

## Planning Team



**UCLA EH&S**  
**Claudia Alli**  
[calli@ehs.ucla.edu](mailto:calli@ehs.ucla.edu)



**UC Davis Dive Safety**  
**Jason Herum**  
[jsherum@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jsherum@ucdavis.edu)



**UC Field Research Safety**  
**Sara Souza**  
[sarasouza@berkeley.edu](mailto:sarasouza@berkeley.edu)



**UCOP Event Services**  
**Berni Fitzsimmons**  
[berni.fitzsimmons@ucop.edu](mailto:berni.fitzsimmons@ucop.edu)



Slides and related content will be posted at  
<https://training.ucr.edu/fieldworkleadership>  
*Thank you to our speakers!!!*

*March 3: 9 am – Noon PST*  
**Trip Planning: Risk Management  
for Field Settings**

*March 10: 10 am – Noon PST*  
**Creating, Enforcing, and Promoting  
Safe Fieldwork Culture: Strategies  
Aimed at Protecting Diverse  
Researchers**

*March 17: 10 am – Noon PST*  
**Mental Health in the Field: Best  
Practices and Pitfalls**

*March 24: 1:30 – 3:30 pm PST*  
**Building a Better Fieldwork Future:  
Preventing Harassment & Assault**

*Today's speaker:*

**Chris Lay**  
**Ken Norris Center for Natural History at UC Santa Cruz**



Chris Lay is the Administrative Director of the [Ken Norris Center for Natural History](#) at UC Santa Cruz, where he teaches field classes every year. In addition to his over 25 years of teaching students in remote field settings, he has also taught Wilderness First Aid, outdoor leadership, wilderness risk management, and helped develop the UC Field Operations Safety Manual. This workshop builds on his [Safe Learning Environment](#) webinar from April 2020.



# Tools for Improving Communication (and Outcomes!) in the Field



Chris Lay  
Administrative Director & Lecturer  
Ken Norris Center for Natural History  
UC Santa Cruz  
[cml@ucsc.edu](mailto:cml@ucsc.edu)  
[norriscenter.ucsc.edu](http://norriscenter.ucsc.edu)

# Overview

- My background
- Workshop format
- Field Group Challenges
- Solutions: Structure-Rapport-Skills
- Active Listening
- Feedback
- Resolving Conflict
- Discussion/Questions





# My background



# We Want You to Participate in this Workshop!

- Listen to others and share your own wisdom/experience
- Zoom mindfulness
- Be welcoming and respectful
- Three breakout sessions
  - We'll give you instructions!
  - We'll ask for your input





# We incorporated some of your ideas!





# Accidents Happen!



**BUT....** rarely do they happen “randomly”. Most accidents result from a combination of challenging conditions, inadequate preparation, AND .....

# Accidents Happen!



**Poor Communication**

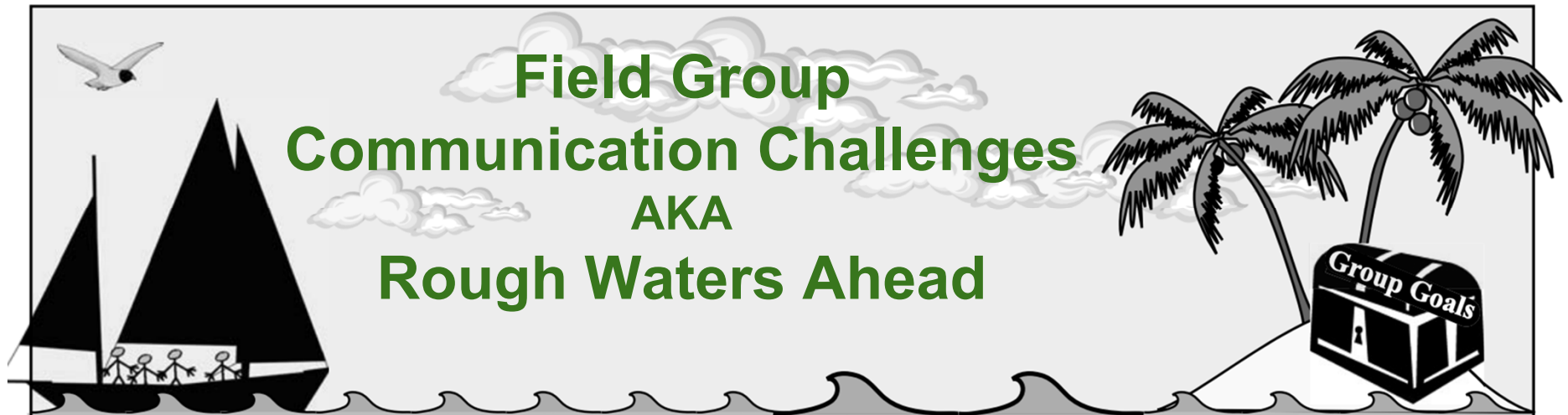
# Poor Communication

- Increases the likelihood of accidents

## **BUT ALSO**

- Hampers group goals
- Leads to less enjoyable experiences
- May lead to experiences that cause lasting psychological damage





### **Group Dynamics**

- Negative Group Norms
  - Inclusivity Issues
  - Power dynamics
- Leader-Participant Tension & distrust

### **Person-to-Person**

- Conflicts between individuals
  - Little effective feedback, lots of gossip

### **Intra-personal**

- An Individual is well outside group norms; They may be ostracized by group or refuse to adopt community expectations

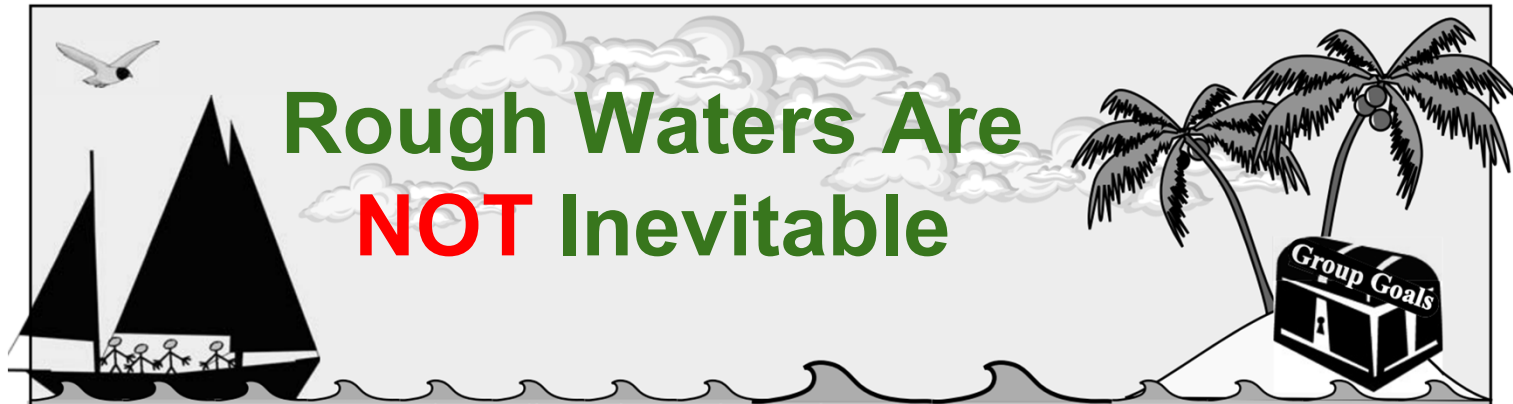


A sailboat with a large white sail is on the left side of the image, sailing on a calm blue sea. The sun is setting on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water. The sky is a clear blue. The text "Smooth Sailing" is written in a large, bold, black font in the upper right quadrant of the image.

# Smooth Sailing

**“To get the job done safely, do good science, all while creating opportunities for learning and making sure all participants have their voices heard.”**





- Leaders have powerful tools
- And so do group members!
- And some groups are still difficult

# What Can Leaders Do?

- Plan ahead and prepare
  - Engage with supervisors
  - Meet with co-instructors
  - Make a Field Safety Plan
    - Include plans for structuring a Safe learning/working environment



# What Can Leaders Do?

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Establish & maintain a clear group structure
  - Discuss goals, roles, expectations, rules, behavioral norms
  - Get buy-in
  - Revisit as necessary



# What Can Leaders Do?

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Establish & maintain a clear group structure
- Build rapport with your group
  - Be present!
  - Learn names early
  - Listen!
  - Give positive feedback!
  - Invite feedback
  - Informal fun time
  - Let group members contribute



# What Can Leaders Do?

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Establish & maintain a clear group structure
- Build rapport with your group
- **Learn, role-model, and teach leadership/communication skills**
  - Classes, reflection, peer feedback
  - Leadership skills
  - Communication skills





# What Can Group Members Do?

- **Encourage and Support Group Structure**
- **Build rapport with your group**
- **Learn, role-model, and teach leadership/communication skills**



# What Can Group Members Do?

- **Encourage & Support Group Structure.... if unclear, then ask:**
  - Who's in charge?
  - What are our goals? My role?  
Expectations of group?
  - How can I get feedback?
  - How can I give feedback?
  - What resources can I go to if I have an issue?
  - If I'm feeling unsafe, what are my options?

# Communication Skill 1: Active Listening

- Good listening invites everyone to speak up, question and share observations without fear of reprisal
- Probably THE most important way to build trust and connection with your group
- Practice helps! You can keep improving!



# The Levels of Listening

- Ignoring
- Pretend Listening
- Selective Listening
- Listening in order to Respond
- **Listening in order to understand**



# **“Seek first to understand, then to be understood”**

## **Key Skills for Listeners:**

- Slow down & be patient
- Strive for >80% listening
- Make eye contact
- Open body language
- Paraphrase what you heard and check for understanding
- Ask non-directed questions
- Avoid turning the conversation to yourself, giving advice, etc.





## **Breakout Session 1:**

### **Practice Active Listening (18 min)**

- Open the Breakout Session Guide
- Groups of 3 or 4
- Go in alphabetic order by first name (1-2-3-4)
- Introduce yourself (5 minutes)
- Question 1: Practice Listening (10 minutes)
  - 1 talks & 2 listens, while 3&4 observe
  - 3&4 offer quick feedback to listener before switching
  - 2 talks & 3 listens, while 4&1 observe, and so on
- Discussion (3 minutes)
  - Add valuable wisdom to Jamboard #1: Listening
  - Save 1 question to put in the chat

# Break Time!!

- Add 1 valuable insight about listening you got from your group discussion to the jamboard
- Put any questions about listening in the chat
- Take a 5-minute break, then we'll debrief



## Communication Skill 2: Inviting & Giving Feedback

- Feedback helps us see our strengths and identify areas for growth
- Give LOTS of Positive Feedback!!
- Invite others to give you feedback (both positive and constructive)
- Effective Communication = Honesty + Tact
- Choose your battles





# Receiving Feedback

- Goal is to understand the sender's perception
- Use active listening skills
- Acknowledge the sender: "I know giving feedback is hard, and I just want to thank you.."
- Avoid problem-solving or defending yourself
- If either of you are getting upset, **STOP**:  
"I really want to hear what you have to say and this conversation will go better at a different time."
- If more context would help the sender understand your actions, ask them if they want to have a longer conversation



# Giving (Constructive) Feedback

- Be timely, but wait for appropriate time & place
- Think through what you'd like to say first
- Be specific- give examples
- Be growth-oriented
- Use "I" statements: "When you did this, I think the result was..."
- Give positive feedback too!
- Include a request, with an emphasis on the future: "Next time, could you....."
- Be prepared to deal with someone's reaction
- Don't expect people to always be receptive



## **Breakout Session 2: Practice Feedback (18 min)**

- Refer to the breakout session guide file
- Same groups of 3 or 4
- Go in alphabetic order by first name (1-2-3-4)
- Question 1: Give everyone a chance to share answer (8 min)
- Question 2: Discuss and brainstorm how to respond (5 min)
- Question 3: Discuss (if there's time) (5 min)
- General discussion
  - Add brief valuable wisdom to the Jamboard #2
  - Save 1 question to put in the chat

### Sloppy Data Scenario

As a group member of a field team of 6 people, you have been working together at a remote field station in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. For the last week, you have been partnered with Gizelle as you collect data along long rugged off-trail transects. These transects leave you both incredibly exhausted at the end of each day. Over the last several days, you've noticed that Gizelle has seemingly been "cutting corners" with her data collection. On several occasions, you've had to correct her sloppy data sheets after the fact and you've noticed her overlooking some data that should have been collected. She also seems more impatient and frustrated with each passing day. You decide to give her some feedback. At the beginning, your PI did a good job in setting clear goals and expectations and role-modeling how to give and receive feedback. She also got you super excited about the project and the value of collecting precise and accurate data.



# Break Time!!

- Add 1 valuable insight about feedback you got from your group discussion to the jamboard
- Put any questions about feedback in the chat
- Take a 5 minute break, then we'll debrief



# Power Dynamics:

## Giving feedback to your boss

- A supervisor should welcome and maintain a safe space for feedback
- It's still possible to give supervisors feedback when they don't do this..

### Try these actions

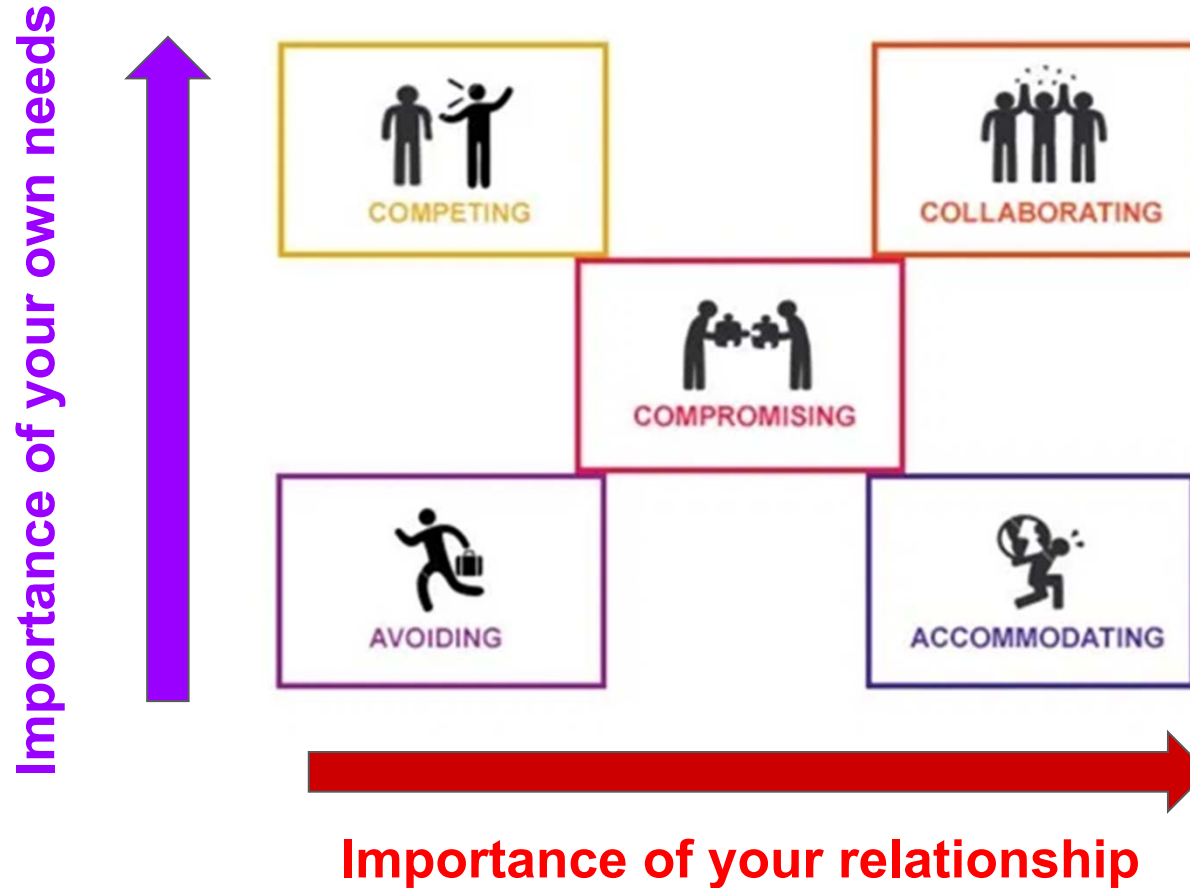
- Establish good rapport first!
- Wait for the right time/place
- Good to ask within the context of something new:  
*"Would it be helpful to you for me to give you some feedback now that we're starting this new transect."*
- Demonstrate your commitment to helping reach project goals
- Focus on your perspective, not what you would do if you were the boss
- Give Positive Feedback too!
- If they get defensive/upset, ask what would be useful going forward?
- Try asking for feedback first..  
*"Can you give me some feedback.... I'd be happy to give you some feedback too if you'd find that useful."*

## Communication Skill 3: Addressing Conflict

- Just Do It!
- Conflict in a group often arises when:
  - Roles and expectations are unclear
  - Information is inadequately communicated or misunderstood
  - Individual needs are not being met
  - Roles and expectations need to be modified
  - Commitment to a safe learning/working environment is not universally held
- Some conflicts are unresolvable



# What are your Goals?





## **A Recipe for Resolving Conflict**

1. Plan all this out first!
2. Connection before Correction
3. Identify what you're noticing & set up a time to meet
4. State your goals at the meeting
5. Take time to listen, listen, listen
6. Invite and give feedback
7. Take one of several actions
8. Make a plan to check in again
9. Reassure them, appreciate them, and thank them for talking.

### Possible actions:

- Make a request
- Clarify expectations and suggest ways they can meet them
- Collaboratively problem-solve
- Help them understand the ramifications of their actions
- Agree to meet again and continue discussing

## **Breakout Session 3:**

### **Practice Addressing Conflict (23 min)**

- Refer to the breakout session guide file
- **NEW** groups of 3 or 4!
- Go in alphabetic order by first name (1-2-3-4)
- Introductions: (5 min)
- Question 1: Give everyone a chance to share answer (8 min)
- Scenario 1: Read the scenario together and follow the recipe and try writing out a sentence of exactly what you might say for each step of the recipe. (8 min)
- General discussion (3 min)
  - Add any brief valuable wisdom to Jamboard #3
  - Any leftover time, take time for personal reflection

### Offensive unsupportive behavior

As a fourth year female graduate student, you are now 2 weeks into leading your second field season at a remote study site in the Sonoran Desert. Your field team consists of 6 total undergraduates, four (3 female and 1 male) who are returning from last year and 2 other undergrads (both male) who are new to your team. A significant conflict has recently emerged. Two of your female undergrads have come to you with concerns about Jordan- one of the new male undergrads. Jordan has been consistently dismissive of any direction given to him by the three more experienced females, whom you put in charge of several parts of the project. On several occasions, he disregarded their directions, which led to confusion, frustration, and poor data quality. In addition, Jordan has made several remarks that were offensive to the females, including commenting about their “inefficient decision-making” and that they’re “too sensitive to be in charge”. The two females directly approached Jordan to give him feedback. According to them, he was completely unreceptive and is now avoiding them and only interacting with the other males in the group. At the beginning of the season, you did a good job in setting clear goals and expectations and role-modeling how to give and receive feedback with your group. Knowing that your two new team members are unfamiliar with everything, you deliberately have been making an effort to build some rapport with them. Now, however, you need to address Jordan with the goal of trying to resolve conflict.

# Review

- **Rough water is not inevitable**
- **Leaders and group members have powerful tools**
  - **Create clear structure**
  - **Build rapport with others**
  - **Practice communication/leadership skills**

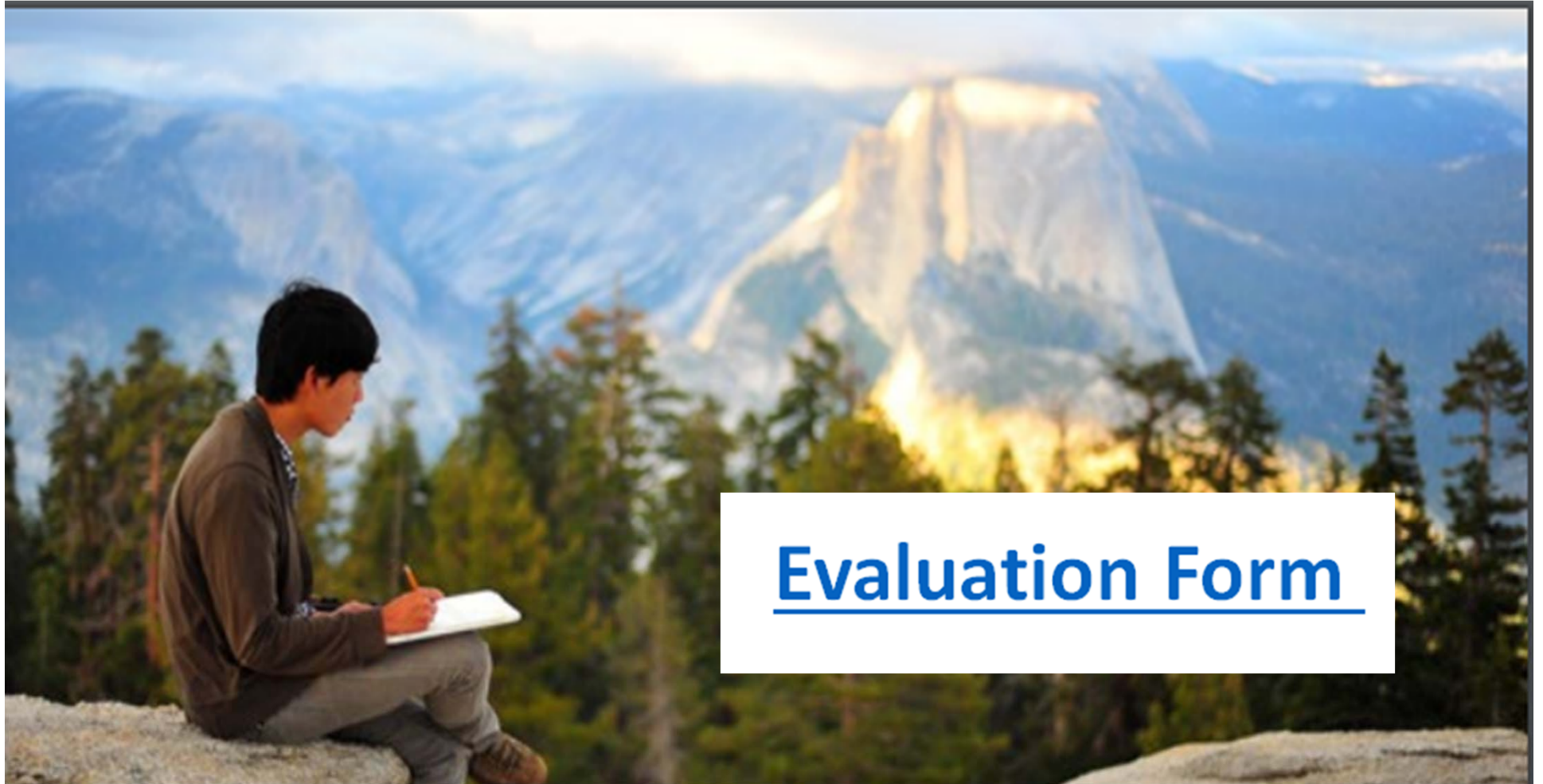




**THANKS!**



Feedback



Evaluation Form





Slides and related content will be posted at  
<https://training.ucr.edu/fieldworkleadership>

*Thank you to our speakers!!!*

***See you next Wednesday at 10 am!***

Please read the related [Nature Ecology & Evolution](#) article prior to the workshop

**March 10: 10 am – Noon PST**  
**Strategies Aimed at Protecting Diverse Researchers**

Monique Avery Pipkin  
Amelia-Juliette Demery