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Register Now for GrasslandsLIVE, A FREE Distance Learning Adventure

(May 16, 2016) Manassas, Virginia—Registration is now open at <https://GrasslandsLIVE.org> for a free distance learning program geared towards students, teachers and people interested in the environment and wildlife of North America’s grasslands. The webcast will be live from the Pawnee National Grassland in Colorado on May 17, 2017.

GrasslandsLIVE will include information on the importance of conservation and management of grasslands, the animals that depend on them and the connection between grasslands in North and South America. The LIVE program will also address the role of citizens, public land management agencies, and non-governmental organizations in protecting and conserving grassland resources.

The ENGLISH program will be webcast from 11 a.m. – noon Mountain Time, and there will be a SPANISH program webcast from 12:30 – 1 p.m. Mountain Time.

Grassland areas are known by different names throughout the world including grasslands, prairie, savanna and scrublands. They can look desolate, generally containing few or no trees, except in areas along rivers and streams, but they are vibrant ecosystems that provide habitat for birds, fish, mammals, insects, and plants as well as key ecosystem services such as capture of carbon and water. Many migratory bird species use grasslands for breeding, wintering, and as stopover sites. However, grasslands throughout the United States and Western Hemisphere are among the most threatened ecosystems in the world.

Ownership of these lands are held both publically and privately. There are 20 publicly owned National Grasslands totaling almost four million acres, administered by the USDA Forest Service. All grasslands, regardless of ownership, may face challenges including conversion to agriculture and bio-fuels, invasive species, climate change, fragmentation, and overgrazing.

National Grasslands are rich in mineral, oil, and gas resources. They also provide diverse recreational uses, such as mountain biking, hiking, hunting, fishing, photography, bird watching, and sightseeing. Fossils, prehistoric and historic resources as well as many cultural sites, are being discovered.

The National Grasslands are being managed to protect these important legacy resources while providing for sustainable multiple uses as part of the National Forest System. The USDA Forest Service has made important contributions to conserving grassland ecosystems while producing a variety of goods and services, which, in turn, have helped to maintain rural economies and lifestyles.

Several resources are available to learn more about grasslands. Check out the web site at <https://GrasslandsLIVE.org> for links to citizen science activities, information about grasslands, lesson plans, and more. Got a question about grasslands? Ask a scientist at: <https://grasslandslive.org/students/ask-a-scientist>.

GrasslandsLIVE visited the Janos Valley Grasslands in the Chihuahua State of Mexico in October 2017. Go to https://grasslandslive.org/espanol/programa_mexico to watch that program. The Janos Biosphere Reserve was established in 2009 by the Mexican government and marked the first time that Mexico was officially protecting grasslands for the benefit of people and nature.

Information on past distance learning adventures is available at <http://FSNatureLIVE.org>. Click on Video Adventures to find downloadable videos to use in classrooms, presentations or visitor centers. Find citizen science opportunities, access an inventory of instructional resources, download lesson plans, and view archived webinars and webcasts.

CONNECT with us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/FSNatureLIVE> or Twitter at <http://www.Twitter.com/FSNatureLIVE>.

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USDA Forest Service

Established in 1905, the Forest Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Forest Service manages public lands in national forests and grasslands and encompasses 193 million acres which is an area equivalent to the size of Texas. The mission of the Forest Service is "To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's **forests** and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." Its motto is "Caring for the land and serving people."

Prince William Network

Prince William Network (PWNet) is a part of Prince William County (Virginia) Public Schools and provides quality, distance-learning opportunities to students, educators, and communities across Virginia and the nation. PWNet is a leading provider of live, electronic field trips for students and has won numerous national awards. Electronic field trips bring the excitement of learning to remote places with the ability to converse with experts.

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