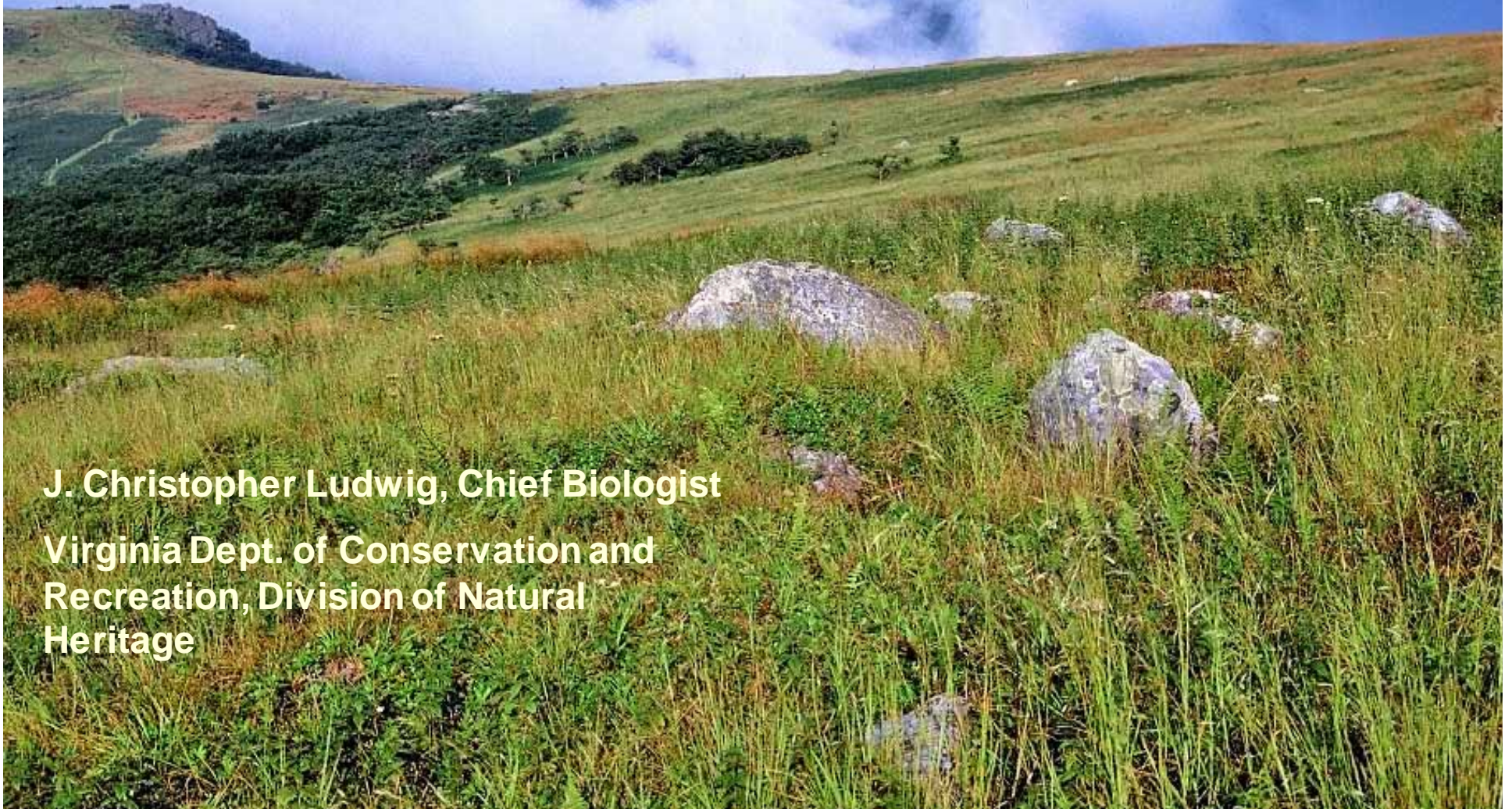


A HIGHLAND FLORA: 20 BOTANICAL HOT SPOTS TO EXPLORE THE FLORA OF VIRGINIA'S MOUNTAINS

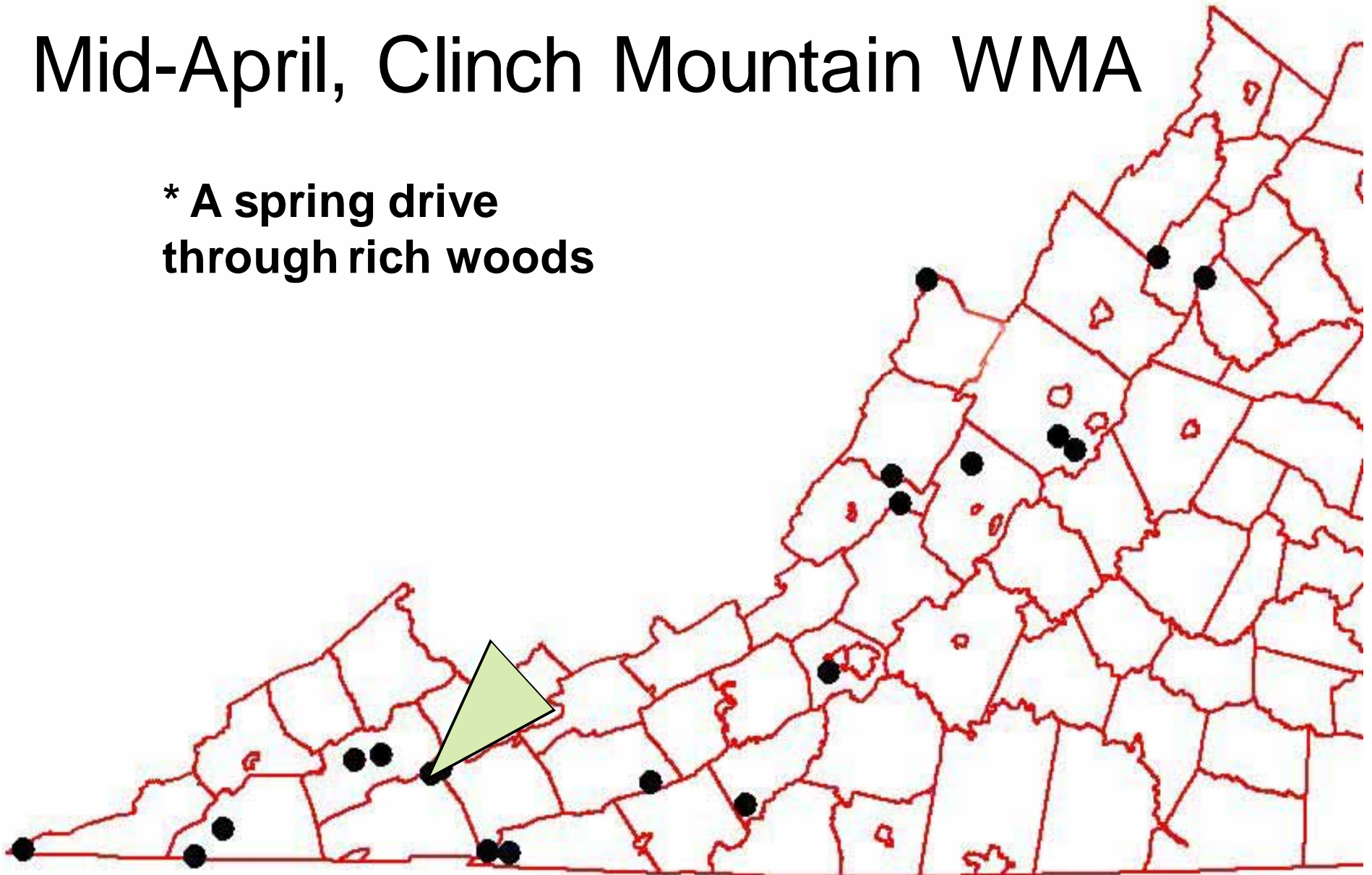
J. Christopher Ludwig, Chief Biologist
**Virginia Dept. of Conservation and
Recreation, Division of Natural
Heritage**



- M April Clinch Mountain WMA
- L April Douthat SP, New River Trail SP
- E May Red Rocks Mountain NAP
- M May Clinch at Carterton, Clinch in Scott County
- L May Cowbane Prairie NAP
- E June Laurel Fork (USFS)
- M June Pinnacle NAP
- L June Central SNP
- E July Buffalo Mountain NAP
- M July Grayson Highlands SP
- L July White Top Mountain
- E August Natural Tunnel SP
- M August Goshen Pass NAP
- L August Cumberland Gap NHP
- E September Maple Flat (USFS)
- M September Browns Hollow (USFS)
- L September Daisy Knob (USFS)
- E October Poor Mountain NAP

Mid-April, Clinch Mountain WMA

*** A spring drive
through rich woods**

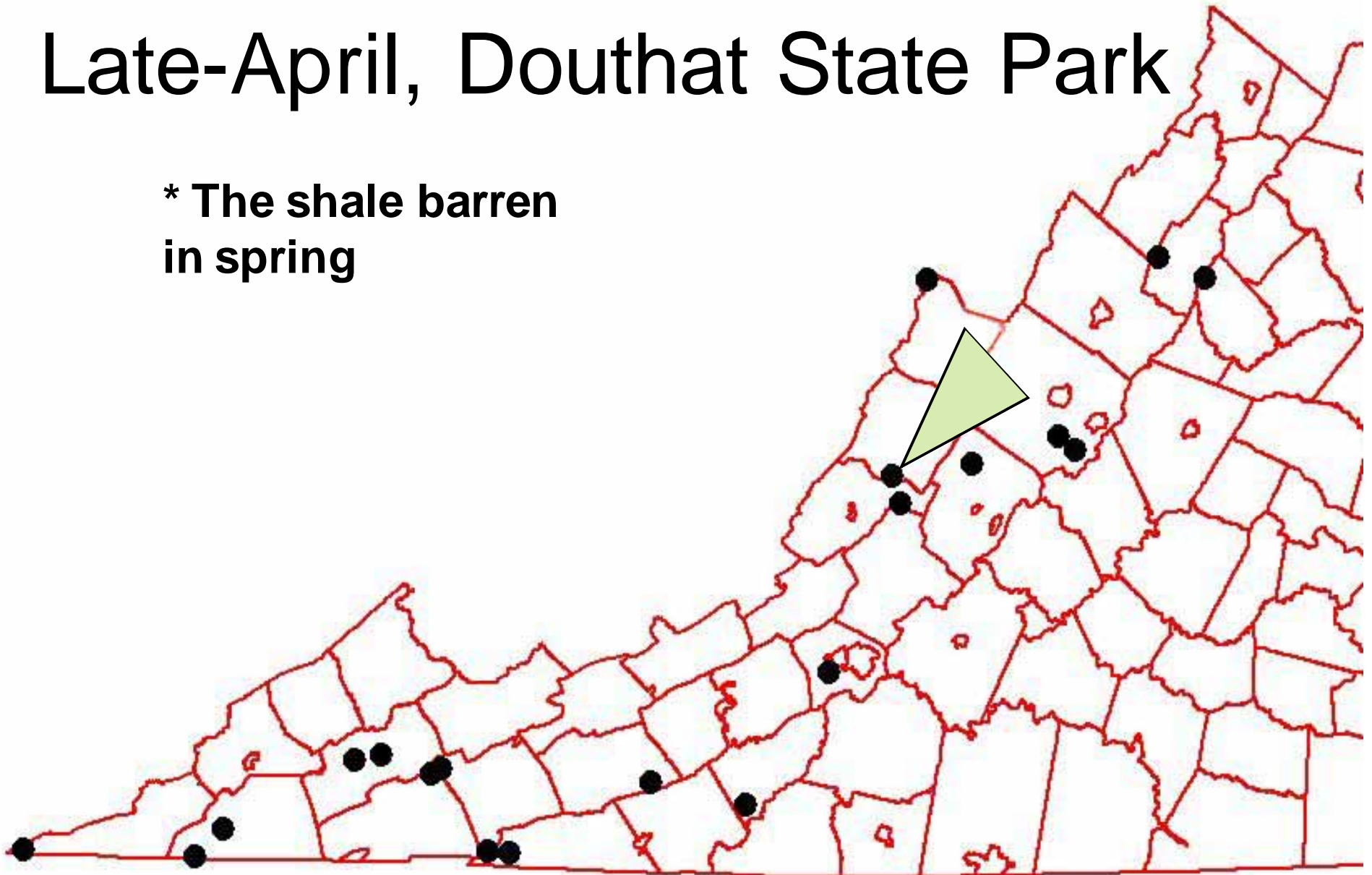


Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Washington County

- Drive up Tumbling Creek (the entrance to the W.M.A.) and botanize along both sides of road. Some of the specialties include:
 - Both *Prosartes maculata* (= *Disporum maculatum*) and *P. lanuginosa*
 - *Collinsia verna*
 - *Phacelia fimbriata* and *P. dubia*
 - *Stellaria corei*
 - *Saxifraga caroliniana*

Late-April, Douthat State Park

*** The shale barren
in spring**

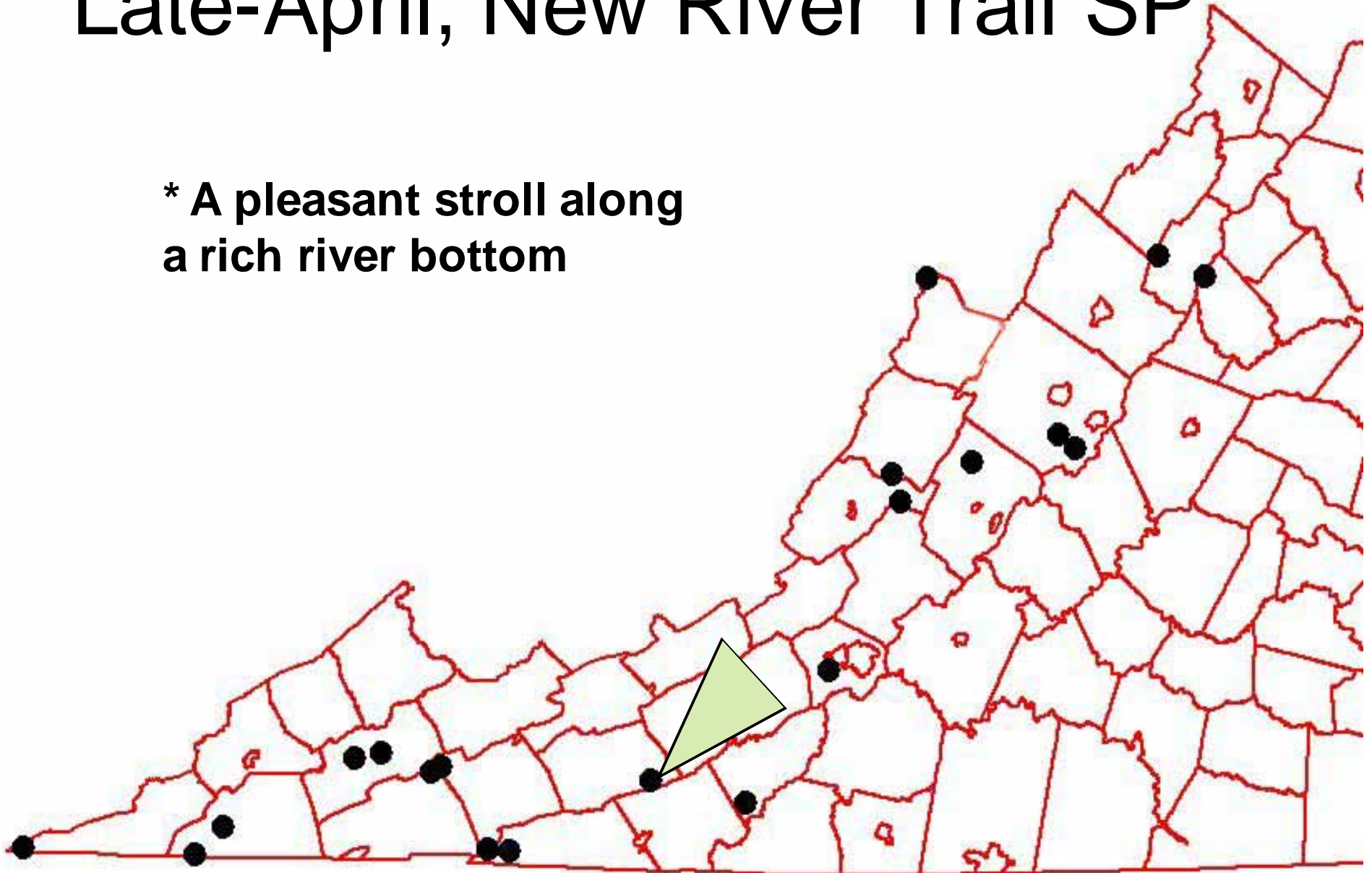


Douthat State Park, Bath County

- Walk east up Beards Gap Trail behind visitor center. Some of the shale barren plants:
 - *Trifolium virginicum*
 - *Clematis albicoma*
 - *Packera (=Senecio) antennarifolia*
 - *Viola pedatifida*

Late-April, New River Trail SP

*** A pleasant stroll along
a rich river bottom**

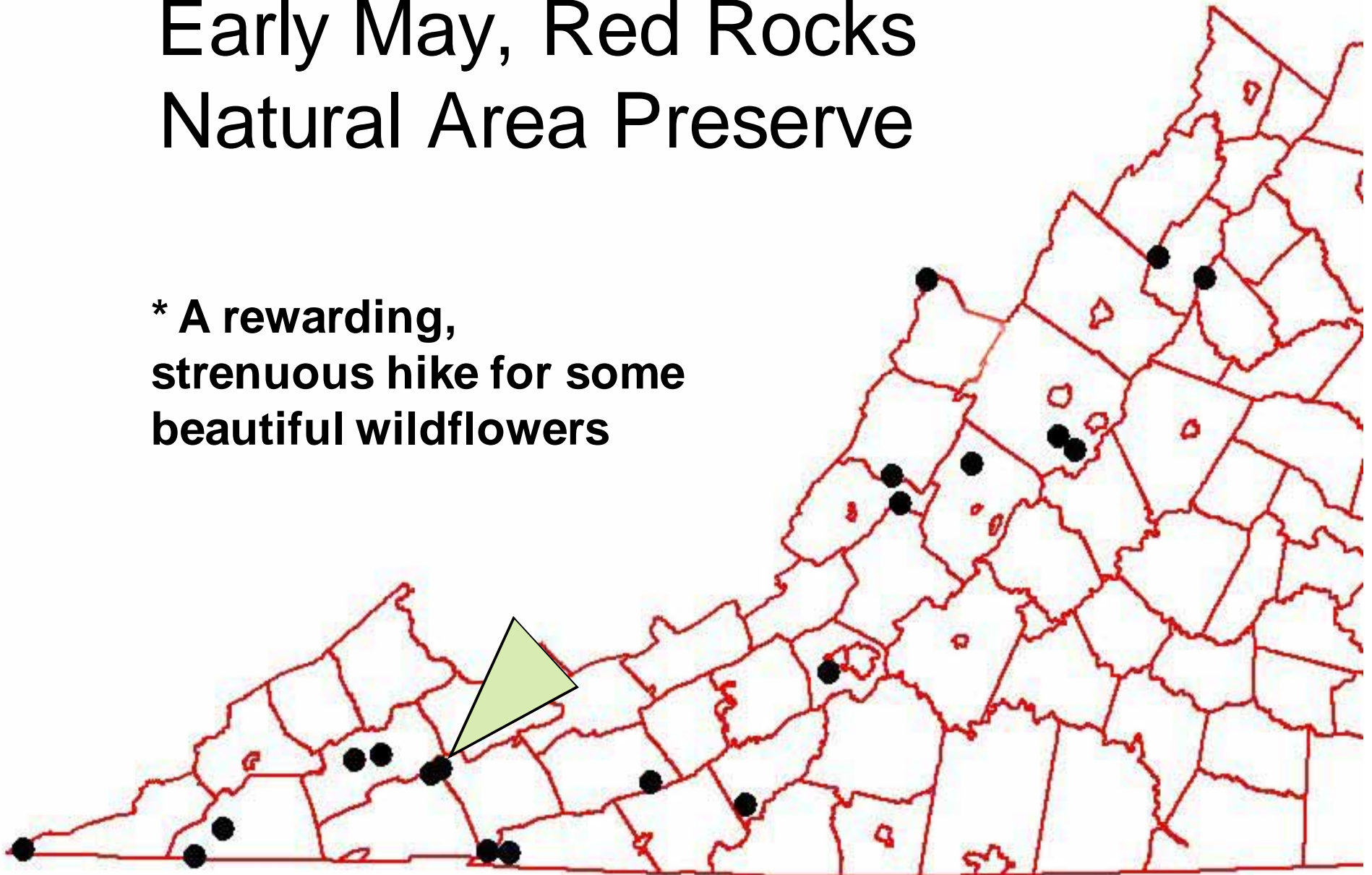


New River Trail, Wythe County

- Walk south (up river) from the Lone Ash parking area for beautiful displays of our rich woods flora. Look for *Dryopteris celsa* off the trail at the first big bend.

Early May, Red Rocks Natural Area Preserve

*** A rewarding,
strenuous hike for some
beautiful wildflowers**

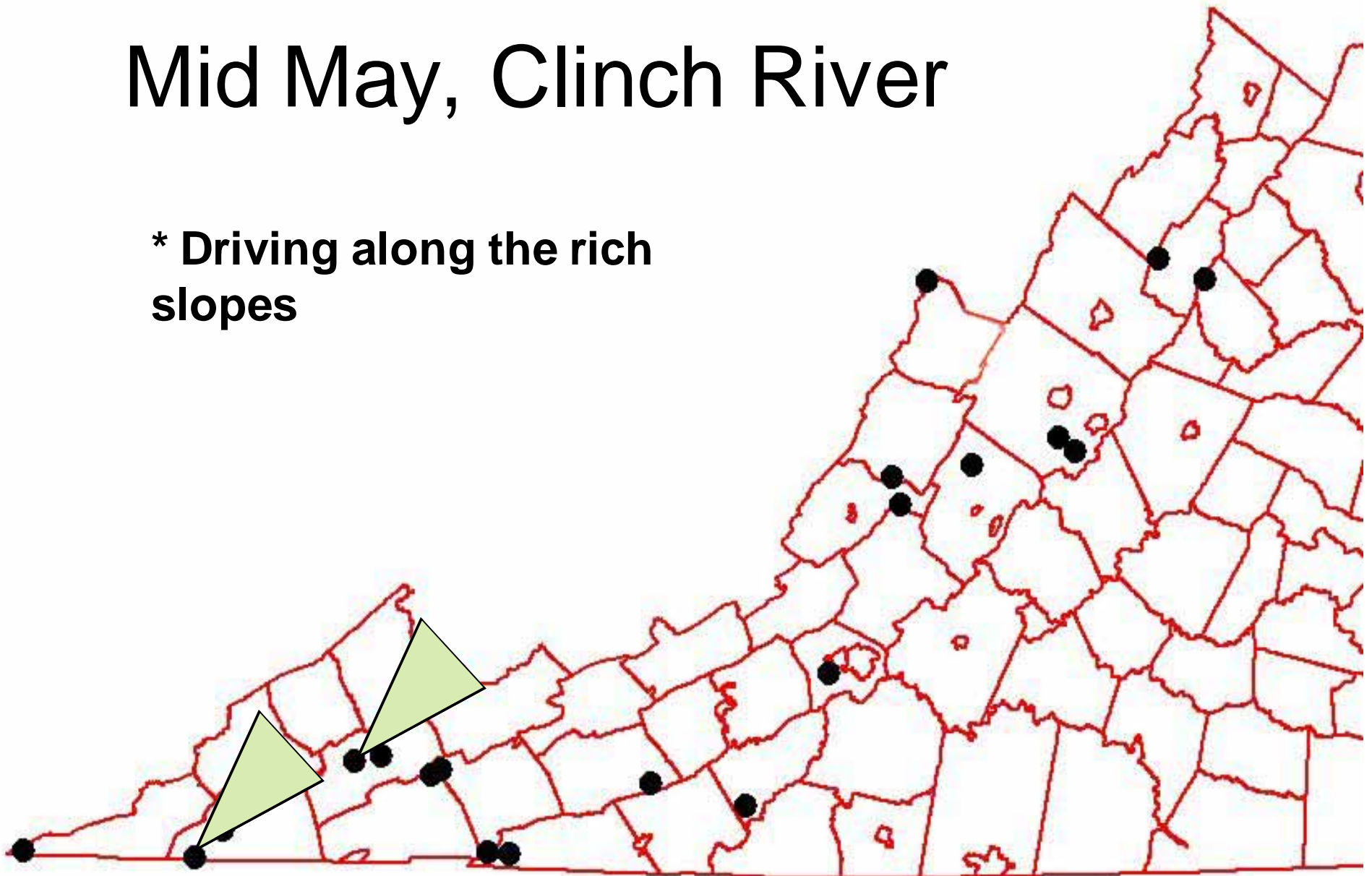


Red Rocks Natural Area Preserve, Smyth County

- A hike for the hardy – walk south from Clinch Valley W.M.A. up the north-facing slope of Redrock Mountain to the preserve. Lots of *Delphinium tricorne* and *Trillium* on your way up. A gorgeous view and cliff at the summit and even more wildflowers including a large population of *Saxifraga careyana* and *Rudbeckia triloba* var. *pinnatiloba* on the cliff.

Mid May, Clinch River

*** Driving along the rich slopes**

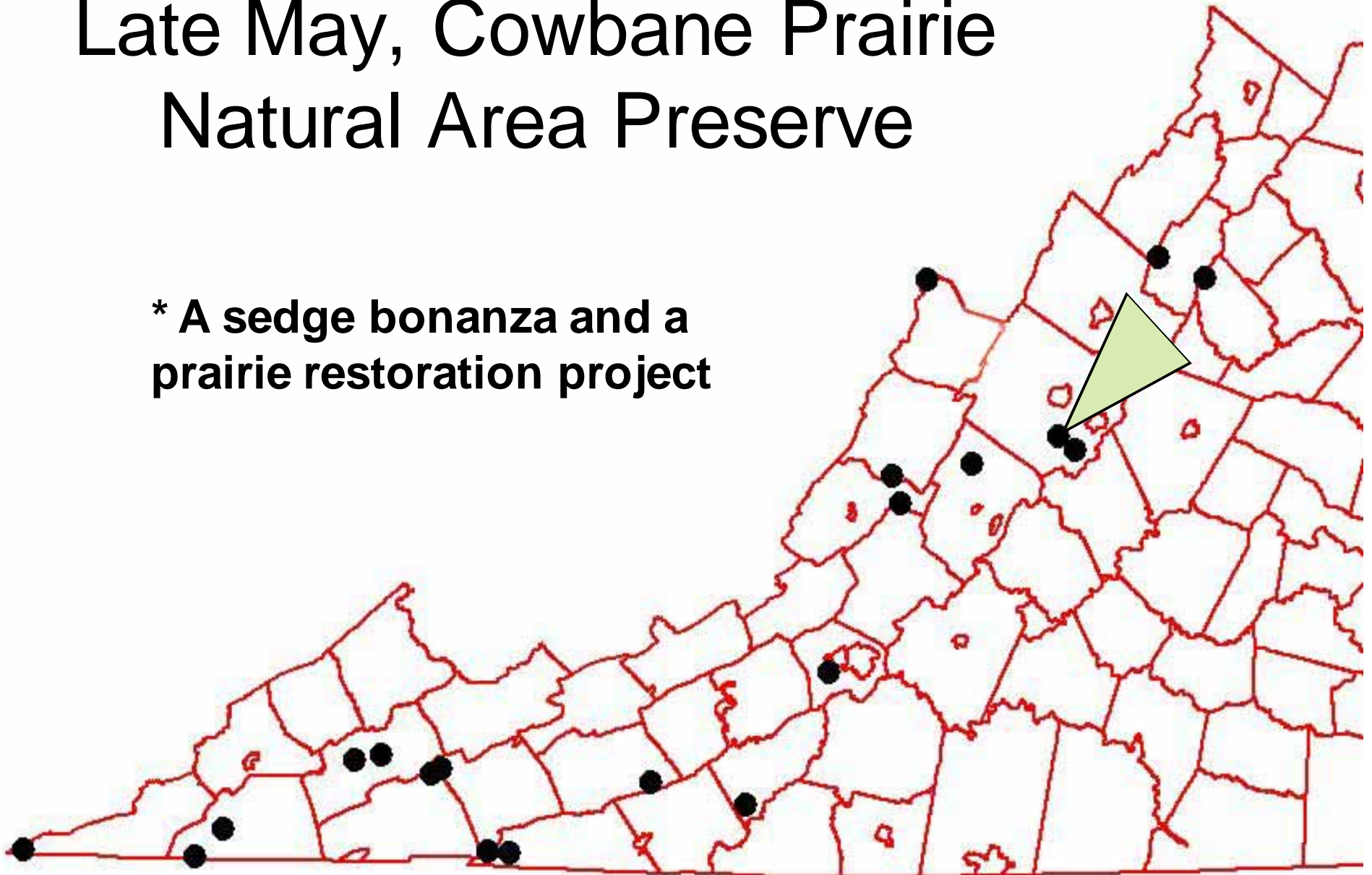


Clinch River slopes, Russell and Scott Counties

- Drive on state roads along bottomland of the Clinch River at peak of wildflower display. The first drive is just upstream of Carterton in Russell County on State Route 665. The second is downstream of Speers Ferry on State Route 627 in Scott County. *Stylophorum diphyllum* is the April highlight, while *Synandra hispidula* blooms in May. Dazzling rich slopes. Look for the basal leaves of *Cimicifuga rubifolia* in Scott County.

Late May, Cowbane Prairie Natural Area Preserve

*** A sedge bonanza and a
prairie restoration project**

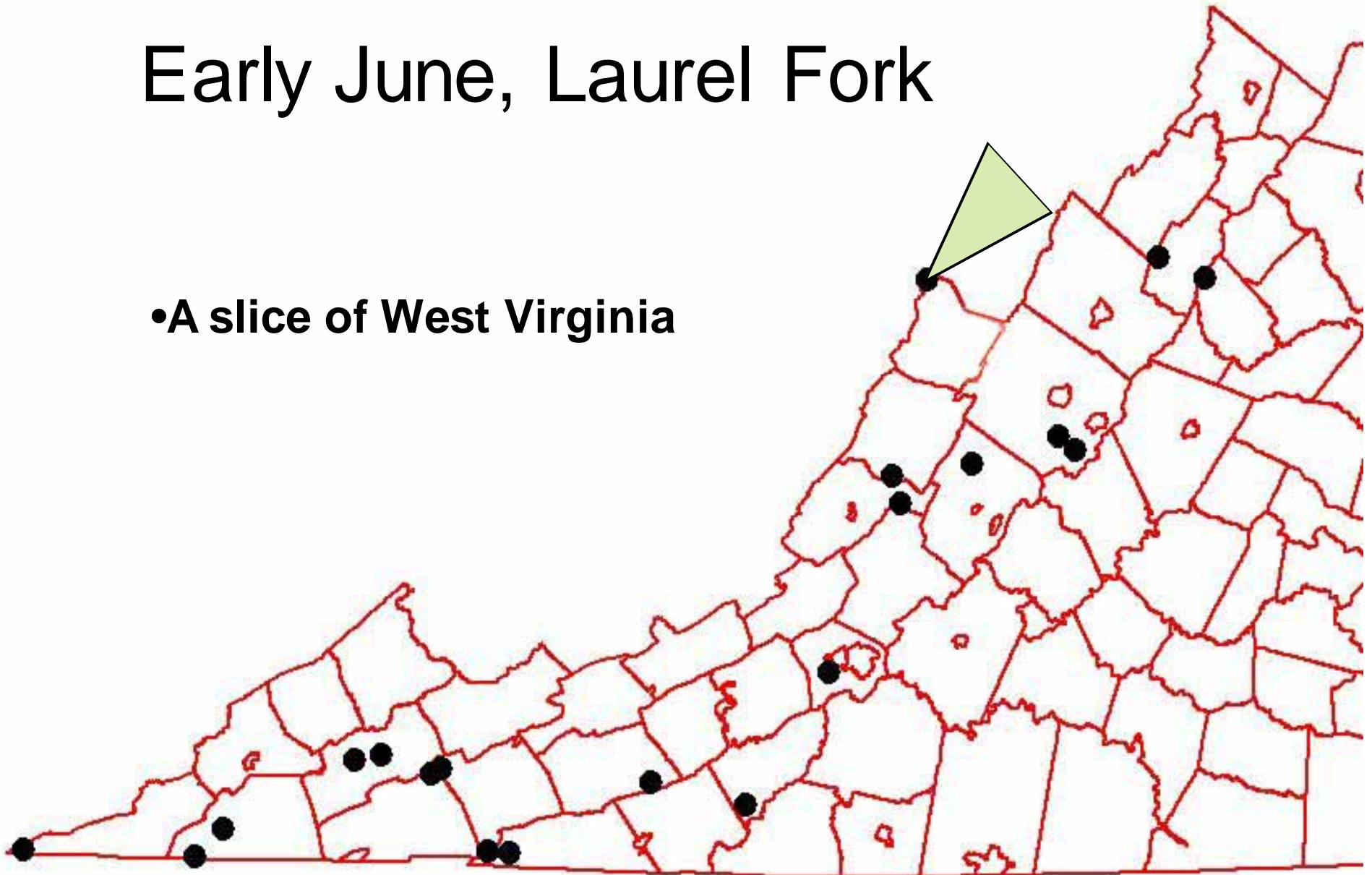


Cowbane Natural Area Preserve, Augusta County

- This site was open to the public until recently, but illegal activities forced us to close the public access. However, field trips can be arranged to visit this small, but exciting prairie remnant very near the heart of Stuarts Draft.

Early June, Laurel Fork

- A slice of West Virginia

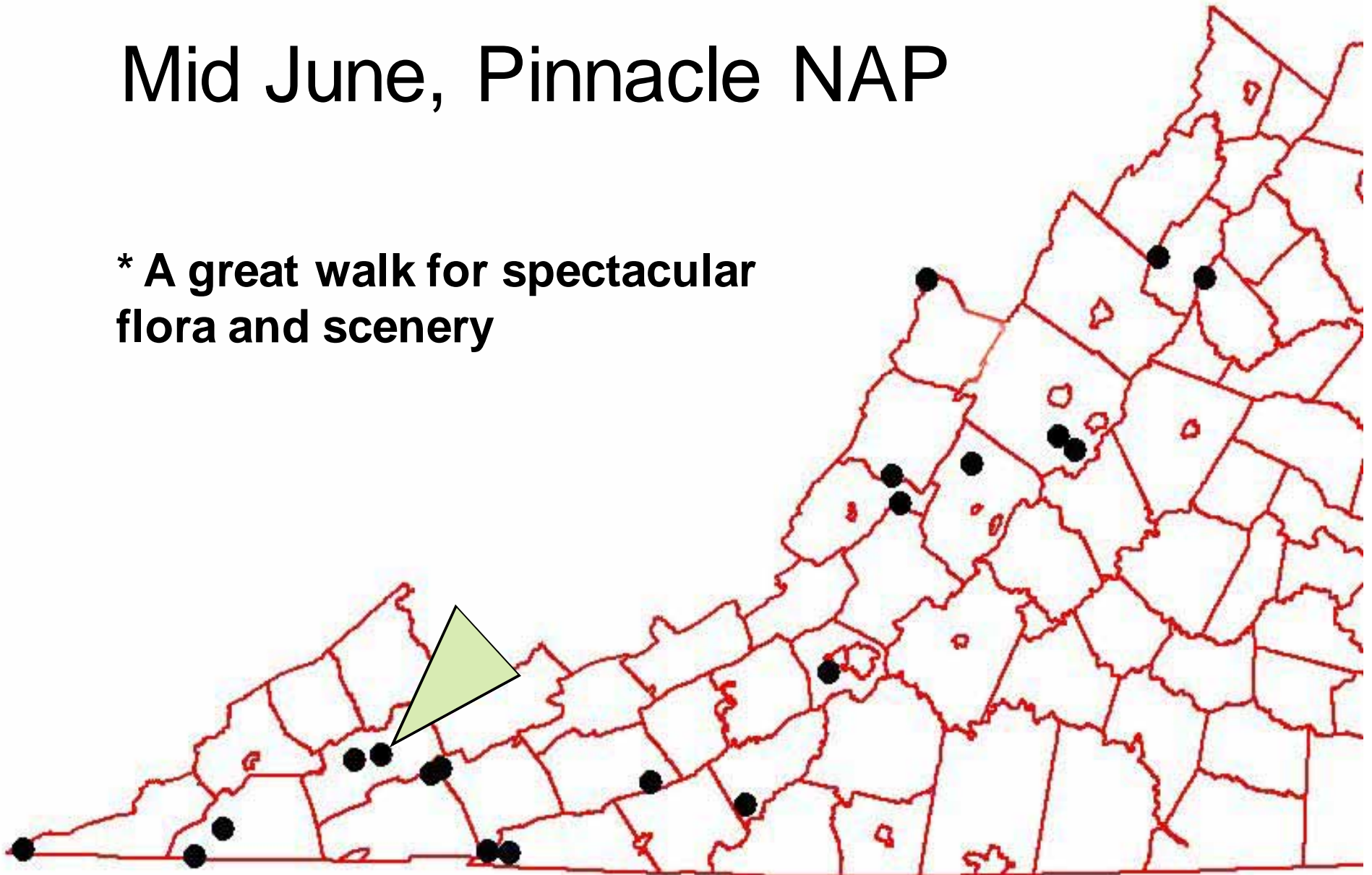


Laurel Fork, George Washington National Forest, Highland County

- Drive Forest Service Road north from Route 642 in NW corner of Highland County. Walk down any trails leading east into drainages of Laurel Fork. Many northern plants amidst the red spruce and northern hardwoods.

Mid June, Pinnacle NAP

*** A great walk for spectacular
flora and scenery**

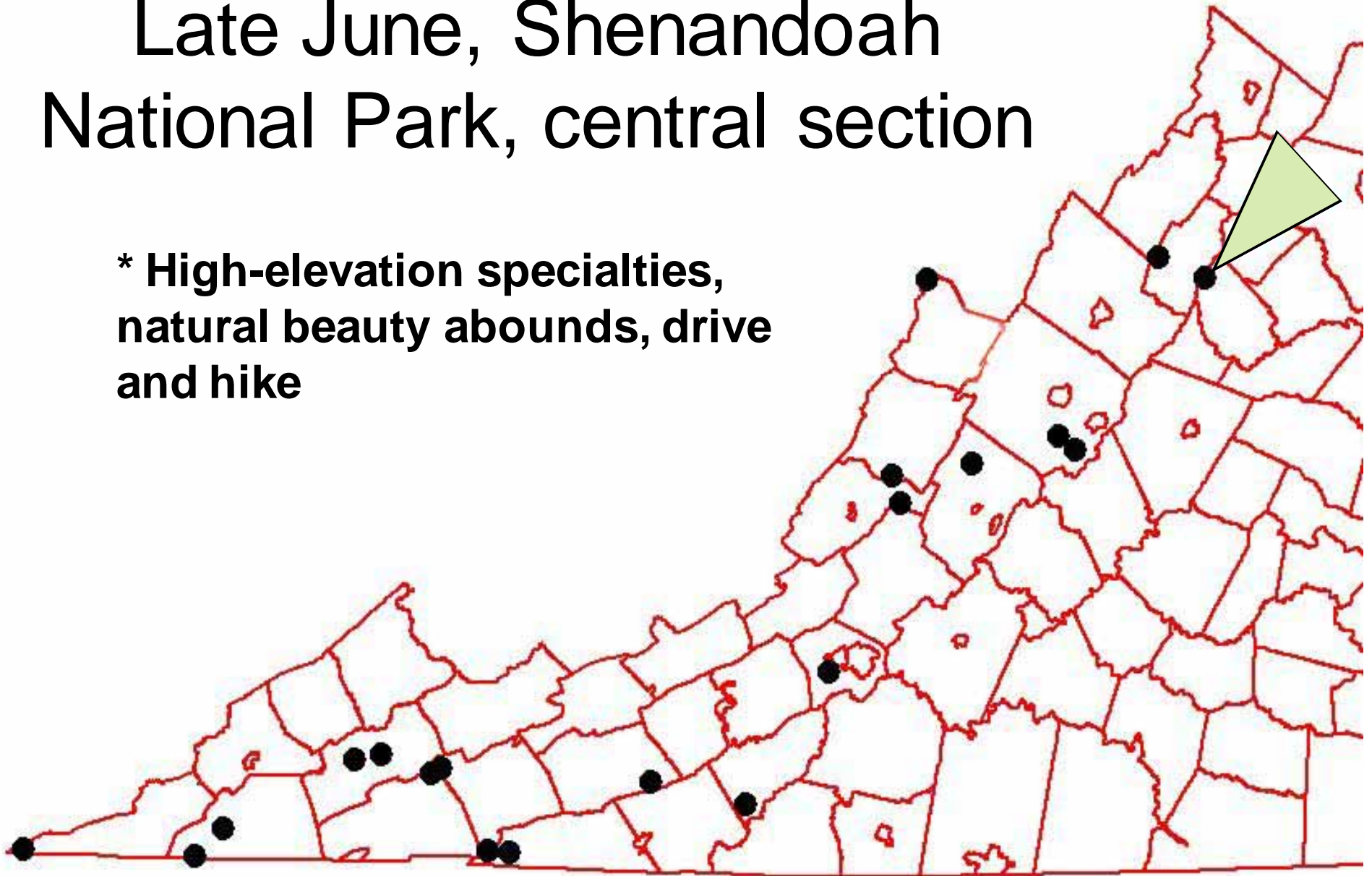


Pinnacle Natural Area Preserve, Russell County

- A well-maintained parking lot and footbridge across Big Cedar Creek provide access to a trail leading to the Clinch River. Be sure to take the trail up to the overlook. Some of the interesting plants include:
 - *Paxistima canbyi*
 - *Lithospermum tuberosum*
 - *Xanthoxylum americanum*
 - *Gymnocladus dioicus*

Late June, Shenandoah National Park, central section

*** High-elevation specialties,
natural beauty abounds, drive
and hike**

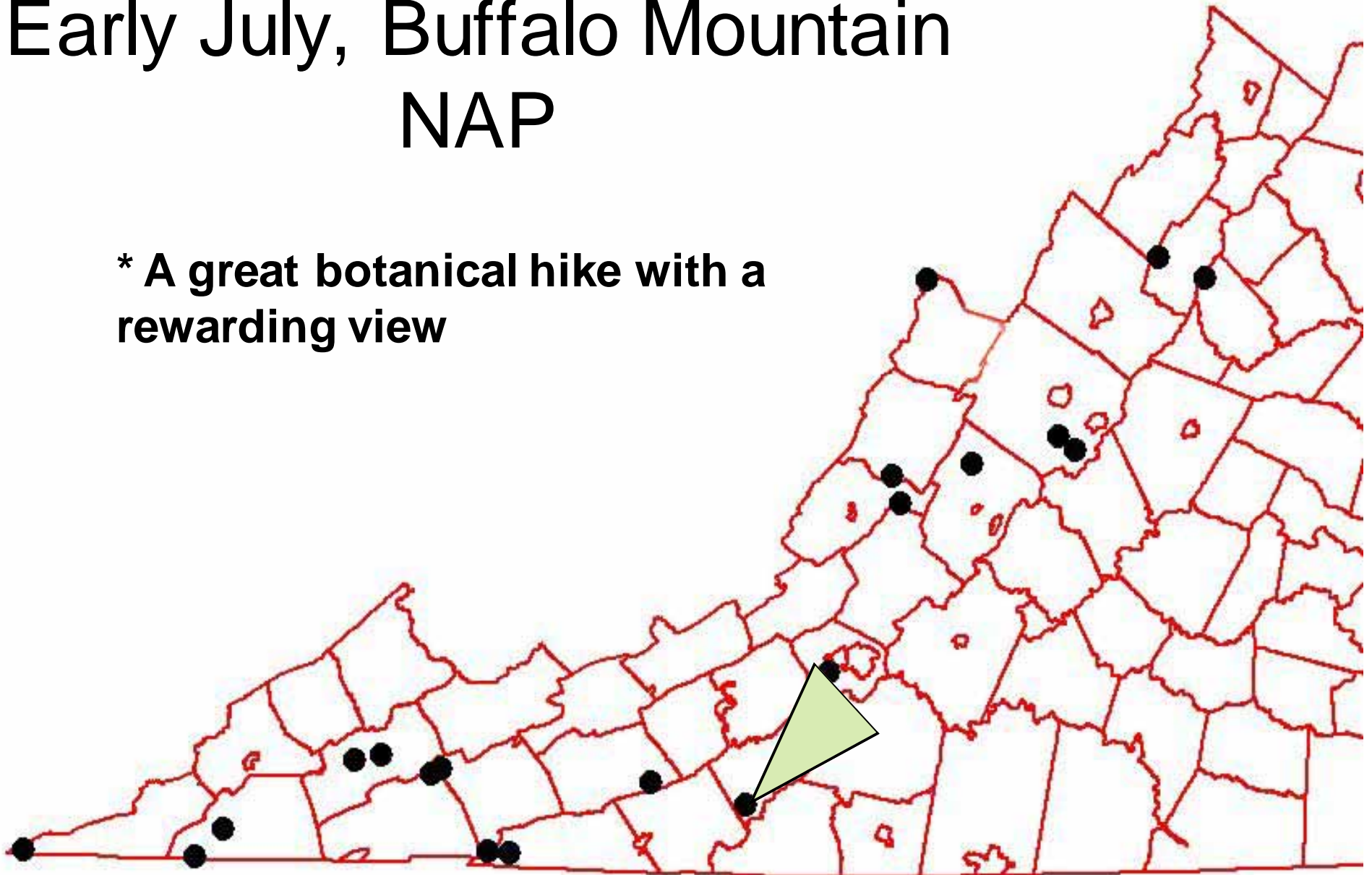


Shenandoah National Park, Central section

- The park is vast, but your best bet for interesting flora is the higher elevations of the central section. For a good sample, check out Big Meadows, Hawksbill, Crescent Rocks, Stony Man, and (if you're up for a longer hike) Old Rag.

Early July, Buffalo Mountain NAP

*** A great botanical hike with a
rewarding view**



Buffalo Mountain Natural Area Preserve, Floyd County

- A well-maintained parking lot and trail to the top of the mountain provide access to a natural bald with numerous rare species and a tremendous view. Some of the specialties include:
 - *Minuartia groenlandica*
 - *Paronychia argyrocoma*
 - *Huperzia appalachiana*
 - *Packera (Senecio) paupercula*
 - *Sibbaldiopsis (Potentilla) tridentata*

Mid July, Grayson Highlands State Park

*** A high-meadow hike to the spruce/fir**

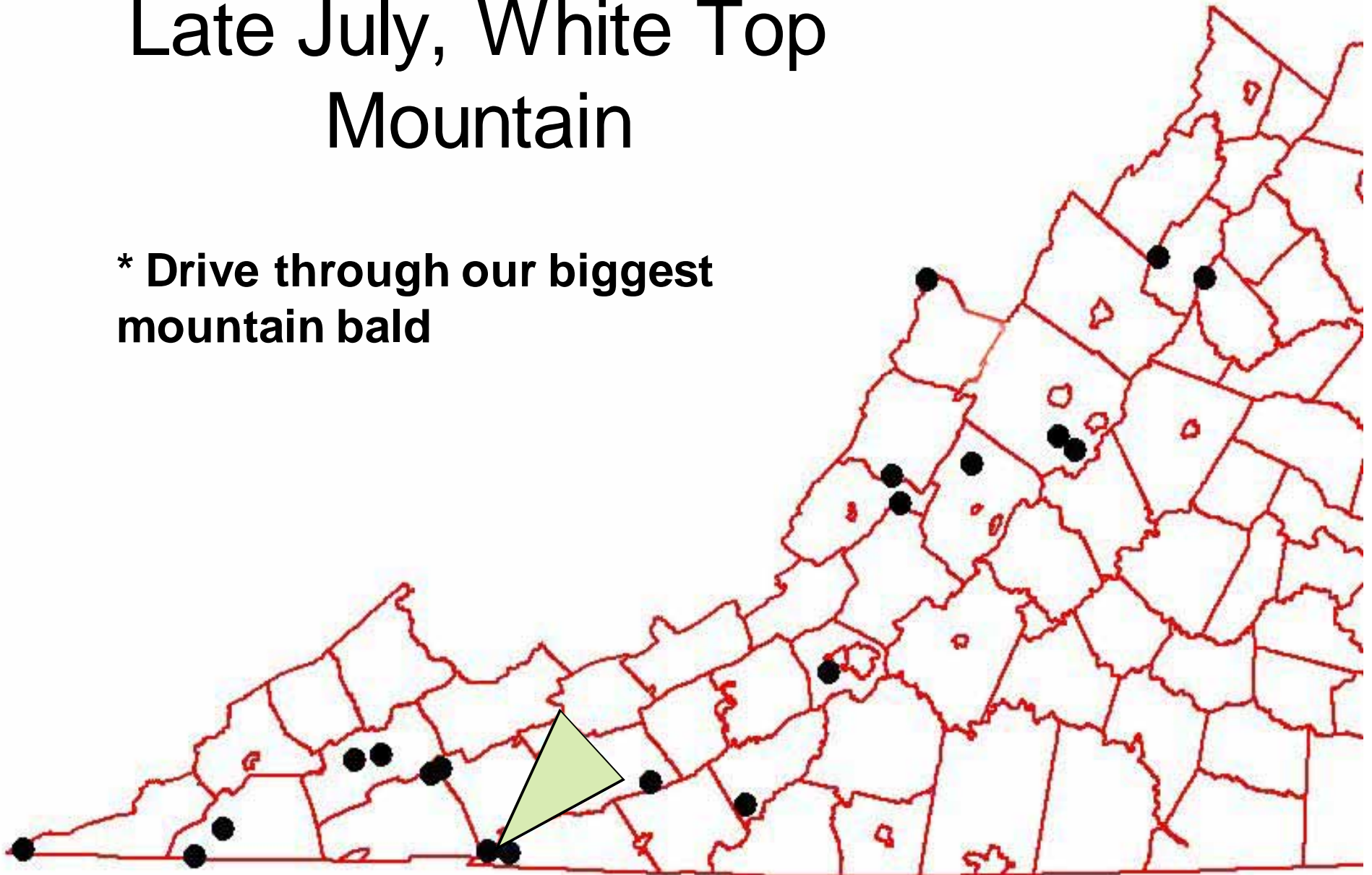


Grayson Highlands State Park, Grayson County

- A beautiful State Park and gateway to Mt. Rogers via Wilburn Ridge and the high-elevation spruce – fir forest. Plan for a full day to explore.

Late July, White Top Mountain

*** Drive through our biggest mountain bald**



White Top Mountain, Grayson County

- Take the US Forest Service Road west off of Route 600. First enjoy the northern hardwoods and spruce, then the bald, then the Spruce forest at the top. Stop everywhere along the road and plan for a full day to explore. Two must-see plants: *Lilium grayi* and *Diphylleia cymosa*.

Early August, Natural Tunnel State Park

*** Easy walks to limestone cliffs**

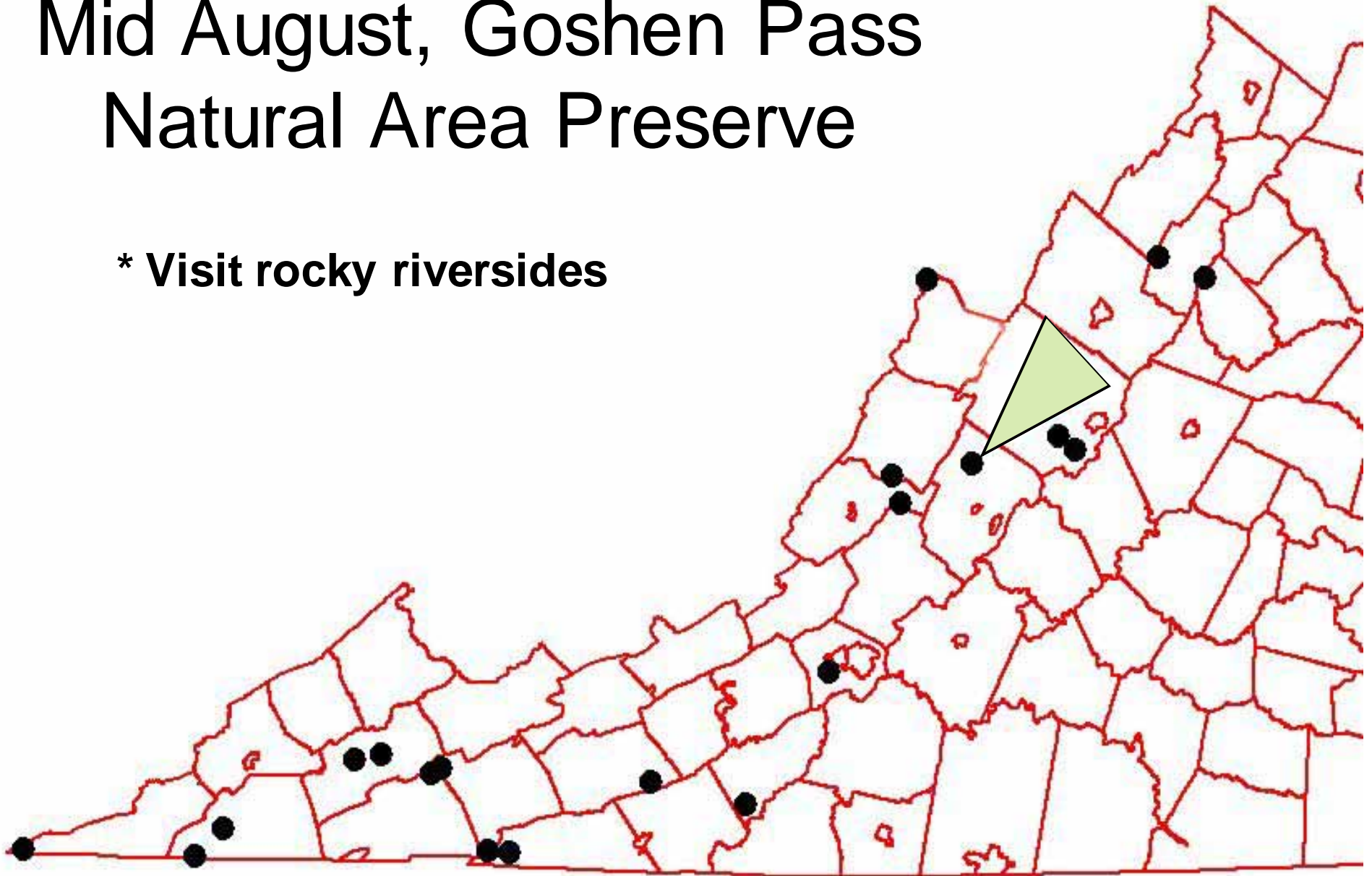


Natural Tunnel State Park, Scott County

- The paved trails from the visitor center to the overlooks and down to the stream bottom provide a great opportunity to observe typical and unusual plants associated with limestone. *Paxitima canbyi* and *Houstonia canadensis* can be found growing around the overlook.

Mid August, Goshen Pass Natural Area Preserve

*** Visit rocky riversides**

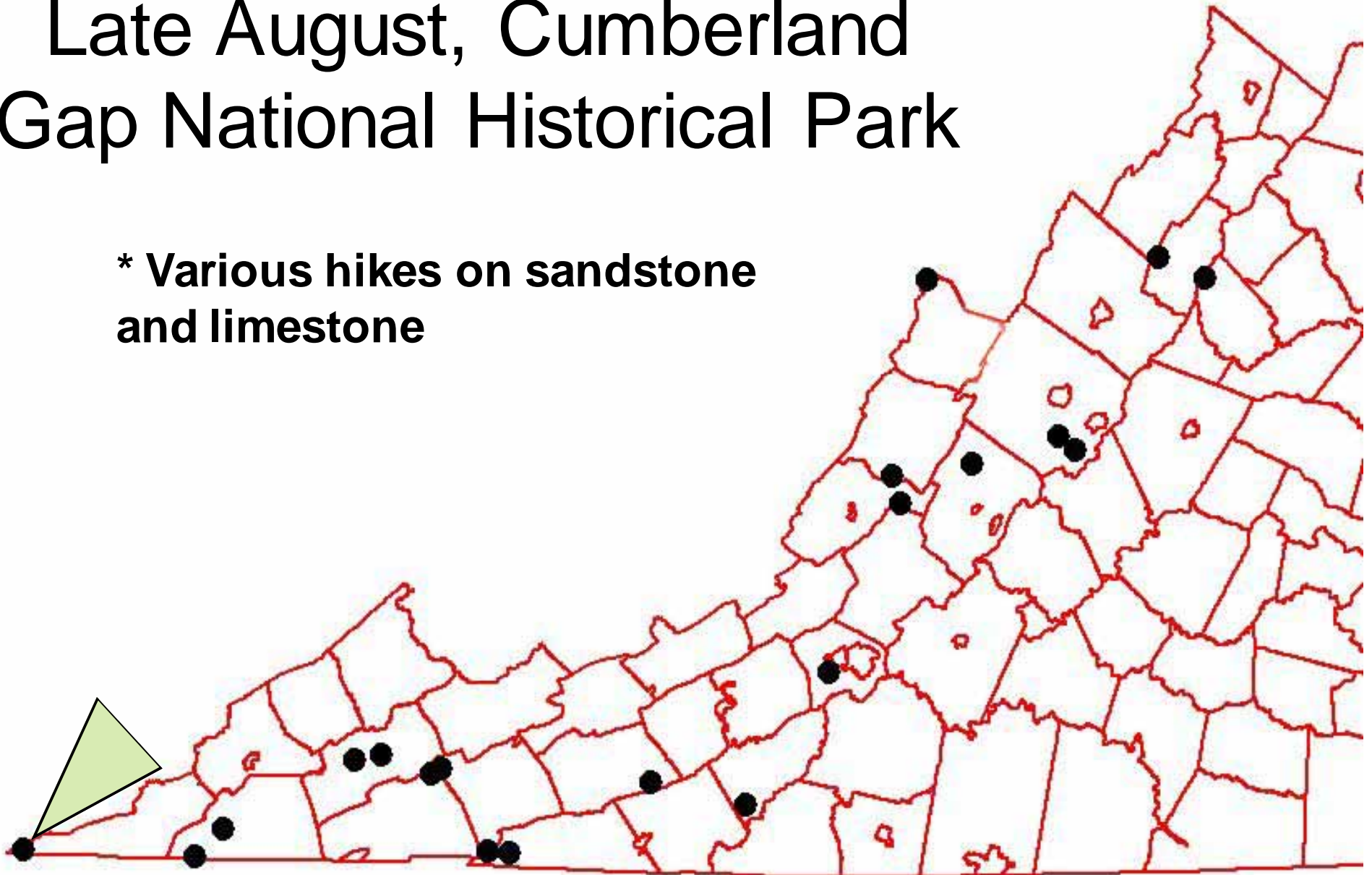


Goshen Pass Natural Area Preserve, Rockbridge County

- State Route 39 cuts through Goshen Pass and numerous pull-offs provide access to the Maury River. In late summer, the river runs low and it is easy to explore the riverside for interesting plants. One rare grass, *Spartina pectinata*, is found growing amidst the rocks. A footbridge at the upper end of the gorge provides access to miles of hiking trails through hardwood forest.

Late August, Cumberland Gap National Historical Park

*** Various hikes on sandstone and limestone**

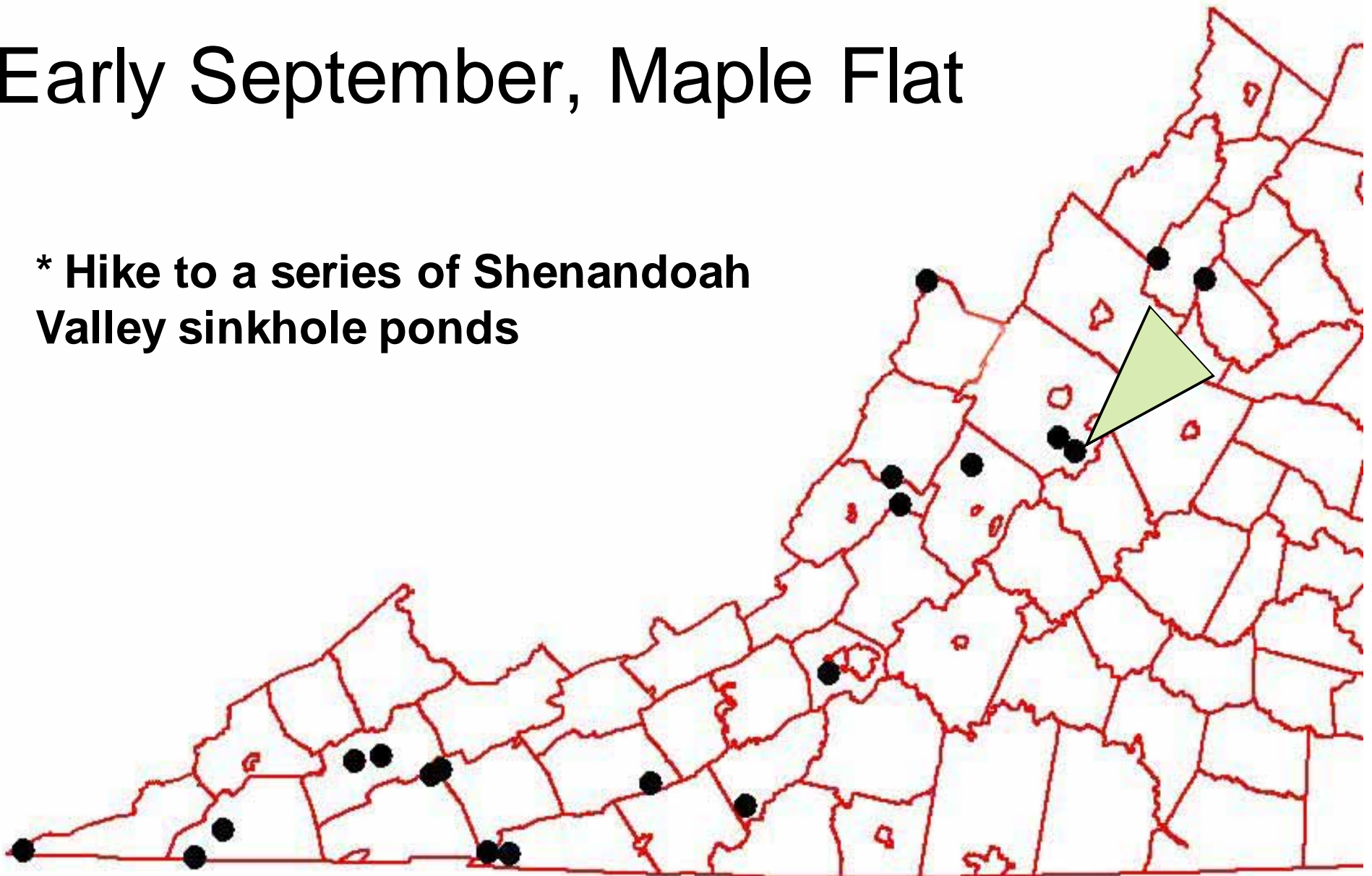


Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Lee County

- This National Park provides access to large tracts of intact forest on the edge of the Cumberland Plateau. Any trail is productive, but take time to explore them all. *Magnolia macrophylla* can be found with a bit of hiking.

Early September, Maple Flat

*** Hike to a series of Shenandoah Valley sinkhole ponds**

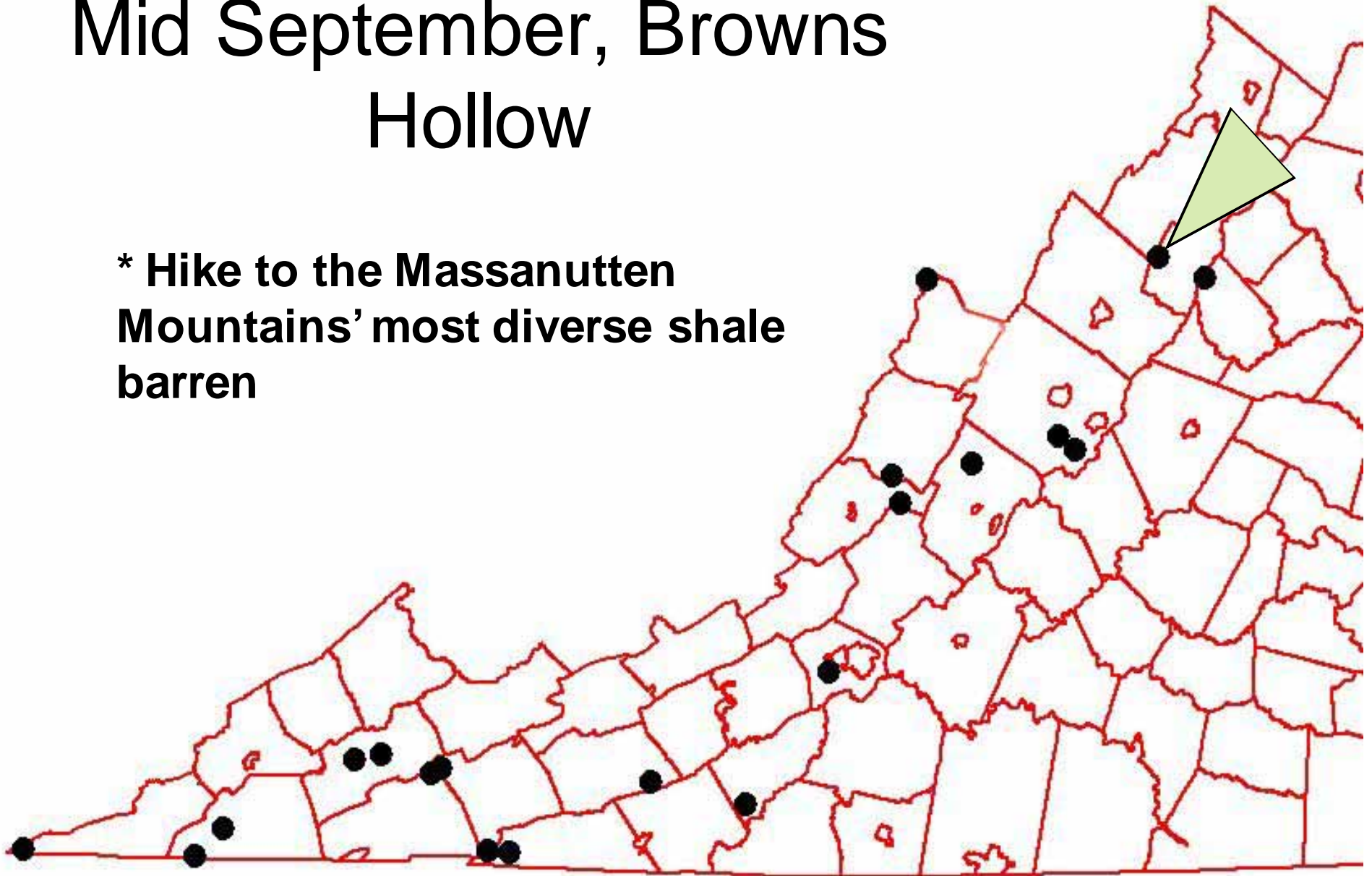


Maple Flat, George Washington National Forest, Augusta County

- This pond complex is a short hike north from Coal Road (USFS road #42) about 2 miles west of Sherando Camp. Late summer plants include:
 - *Helenium virginicum*
 - *Boltonia montana*
 - *Eriocaulon aquaticum*
 - *Eleocharis robbinsii* and *E. melanocarpa*

Mid September, Browns Hollow

*** Hike to the Massanutten
Mountains' most diverse shale
barren**

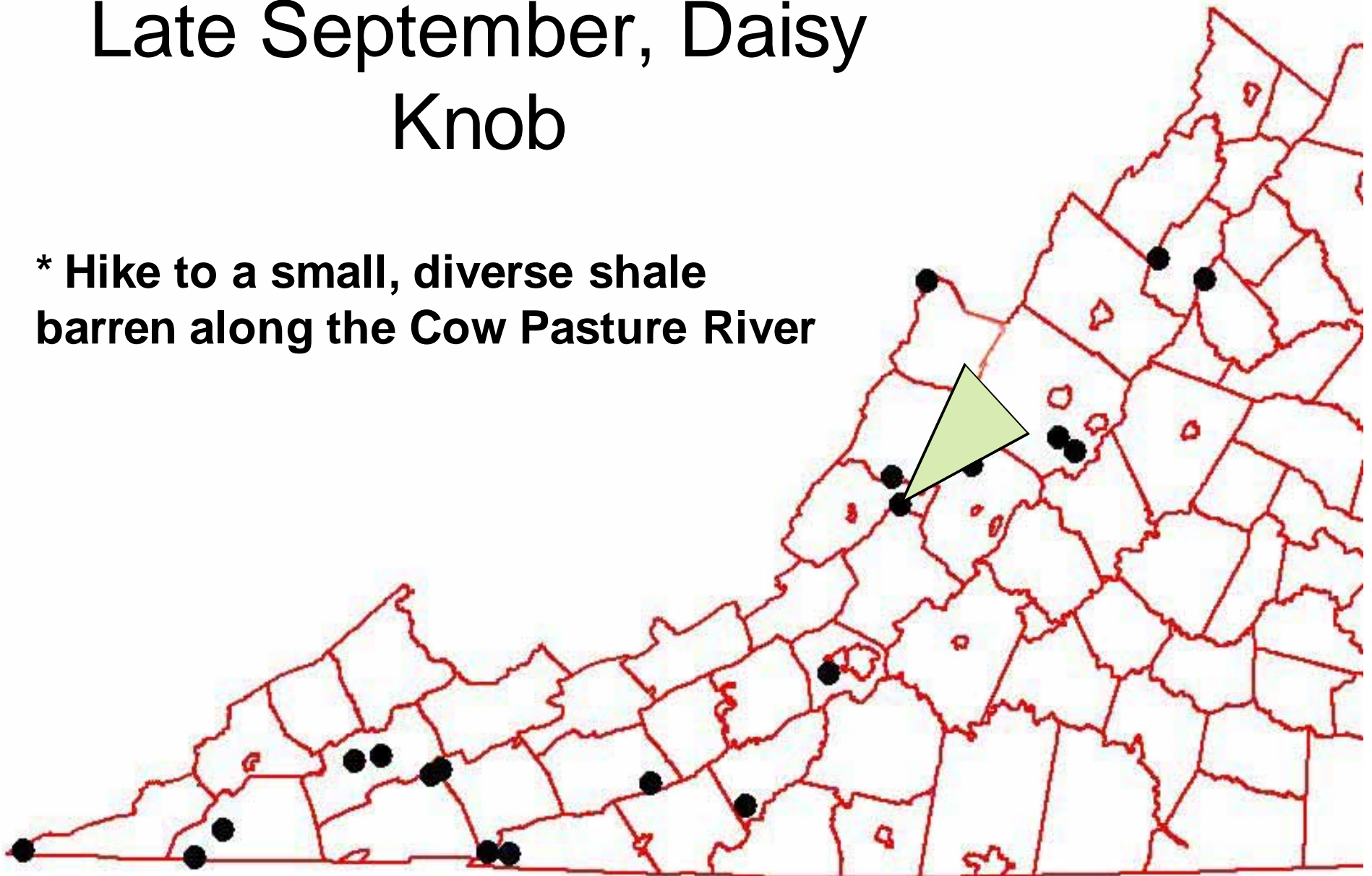


Browns Hollow, George Washington National Forest, Page County

- This string of barrens is along Browns Hollow. Hike south from the picnic area on Route 211 east of New Market Gap to Browns Run and walk up the hollow on the west side of the stream. Look for:
 - *Arabis serotina*
 - *Trichostema setaceum*

Late September, Daisy Knob

*** Hike to a small, diverse shale barren along the Cow Pasture River**

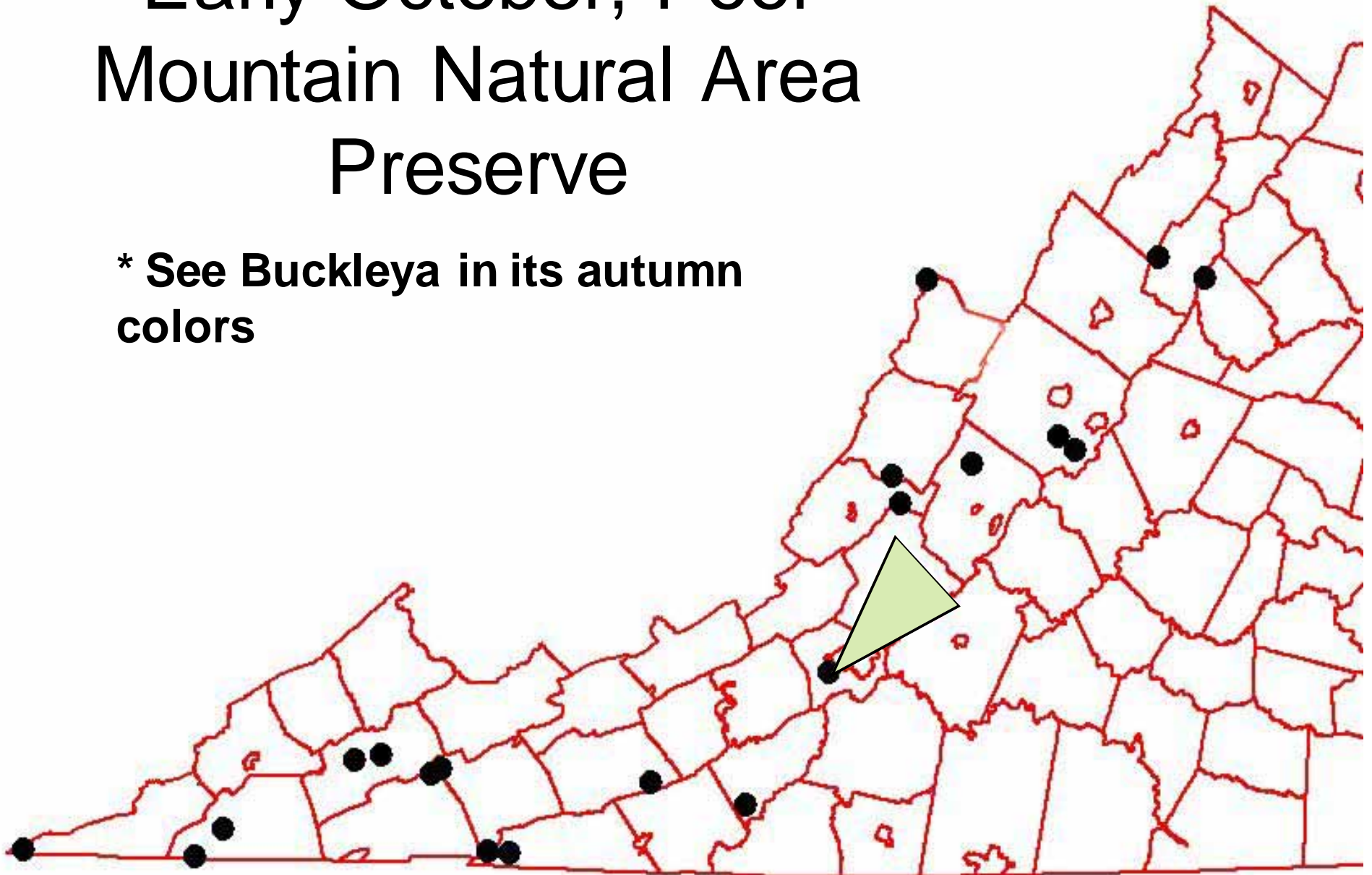


Daisy Knob, George Washington National Forest, Alleghany County

- This barrens is along the Cowpasture River about a mile walk northeast (downstream) of the Route 633 bridge in Alleghany County east of Iron Gate. Along with a number of the shale barren plants, look for *Gaylussacia brachycera* along the ridge of the barren.

Early October, Poor Mountain Natural Area Preserve

*** See Buckleya in its autumn colors**



Poor Mountain Natural Area Preserve

- To get up to the preserve on Poor Mountain, take 12 O'clock Knob Road (Route 694) to the preserve entrance and a small parking area and trail. This area is characterized by acid soils and pine-oak / heath forest. The site features a thriving population of *Buckleya distichophylla*.



http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/