



WPRA 2027 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

February 2-5, 2027

Kalahari Resort & Convention Center • Wisconsin Dells, WI

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE *(subject to change)*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1 - PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

	AQUATICS	AQUATICS	EXECUTIVE	EXECUTIVE	PARKS	PARKS	RECREATION	RECREATION	DEI/Emerging Professionals
8:30am – 4:30 pm	CPO Certification Course Carrico Aquatic Resources								

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2 - PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

8:30am – 4:30 pm	CPO Course Carrico Aquatic Resources							
1:00pm – 4:00 pm				Rooted & Resilient: A Mental Wellness Workshop for Parks Professionals Juliet Kuehnle		People, Processes and Politics - Staying True to Your North Star Farrell Buller		
8:00 pm – 12:00 am	Alhoo WPRA Conference Social: Tom Foolery's at the Kalahari Resort & Conventions							

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

8:30 am – 9:30 am	Not Everyone Wears the Same Goggles: Understanding Personality Differences in Aquatics Elaena Noffsinger	Mastering the Six: Leadership Skills to Elevate Teams, Trust and Results Farrell Buller	Paddle Forward: Turning Wisconsin Waterways into Destinations Sheri Omerik		ADA Jeopardy! John N. McGovern & Tatum N. Storey		Intro to WPRA and First Time Conference Attendees Emerging Professionals/ Conference Committee	
9:45 am – 10:45 am	Keynote Opening Session - What the Public Never Sees (And Why it's Quietly Breaking the Best of Us) - Brooks Williams							
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Lifeguard Recruitment & Retention Shane Wampler	When the Splash Pad Closes Brooks Williams	Blinded by the Light: Bright Ideas for a Darker Sky Scott Lind	Your Worst Resident: Navigating People in a Politicized World Chris Astrella	Developing and Engaging Staff for Retention Jessica Montgomery & Austin Lane	Save, Shift or Sunset: Rethinking a Program's Lifecycle Kristin Grissom	The Courage to Be Unfair Farrell Buller	
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch & WPRA Annual Meeting							
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Trade Show							
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Emerging Professionals Speed Networking							
7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Region Meet-ups: Kalahari Resort & Conventions							
8:00 pm – 12:00 am	Beach Bash Conference Social: Bobbers Island Grill - 750 Wisconsin Dells Pkwy S, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965 Lake Life Wisconsin - Tivia Social: Kalahari Resort & Conventions							

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4

8:30 am – 9:30 am	Set Up for Success: Creating Your Onboarding System Chelsea Moberg	Pool Maintenance 101 for New Operators Shane Wampler	Basketball to Board Rooms: Leadership Lessons From a Professional Basketball Player, WNBA Referee, and Park and Recreation Director Jan Herke	The Future of Local Government Leadership Brooks Williams	Shorelines: Rising from the Ruins Suzanne "Suzie" Fromson & Michael Kading	Smart Asset Management: Leveraging Technology for Longevity + Efficiency Jay Lothhammer	Silver Star Awards	Prepared, Not Panicked: Proactive Safety Strategies for Recreation Leaders Brandon Loomer	Strategic Planning in Recreation and Leading Change Niki Wendt
9:45 am – 10:45 am	All About Audits: How to Start, Refine, and Document Effective Audits for Aquatic Staff Kate Connell	Unlocking Potential for Full-Time Engagement with Part-Time Staff Marisa Hoff	Ride the Wave of Innovation: Preparing for Leadership Before It's Your Turn Jan Herke	Building Psychological Safety: The Key to Trust, Innovation and Team Success Lori Hoffner	Guidance for Completing Facility Analysis for Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Trevor Frank	20 Key Strategies to Maximize Food & Beverage or Concession Operations John Prue		Winning the Day, Every Day! Farrell Buller	Cultivating Inclusivity: Navigating Diversity in Parks and Recreation Debbie Woodbury
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Inclusive Language for Aquatic Professionals Kate Connell	Meetings That Matter: Turning Team Time into Results Marissa Hoff	Leadership Beyond the Job Description Sam Jenkins	Challenging Conversations Don't Have to Weigh you Down: Elevating Team Success through Effective Communication Lori Hoffner	Design Charrettes in Action: Turning Community Input into Winning Master Plans Andreas Symeonides & Rocco Castellano	From Reactive to Resilient Sarah McDonald & Hannah Cramer	E.P.I.C Youth Ali Mayer	Stop Begging for Coaches Brian McFadden & Kent Hunt	Rec 101: The Stuff No One Explains When You Start in Parks & Rec Kristin Grissom
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm	Networking Lunch								
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	Mythbusters: Aquatics Industry Edition Pool Myths Adam Janesz	Personality Awareness Power-Up: Elevate your Communication Skills for High-Impact Leadership Kelly Martinez	AI for Parks & Recreation: Building an AI Operating System for Your Department Mike Lannen	Superwoman is Tired Debbie Woodbury	Park Design Awards	Growing Together: Exploring opportunities with the Urban Forestry Council Travis Derks	Marketing On Your Phone Jan Herke	Get Her in the Game: Designing Youth Sports Where Every Girl Belongs Brian McFadden & Kent Hunt	Creating Positive Practices to Reduce Unconscious Bias Lori Hoffner
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Leading with Heart: Using Emotional Intelligence to Build Retention Nathan Lahti	WOW Factor: Techniques to Motivate Your Team into Providing Exceptional Guest Service Kelly Martinez		The Power of Community, Connection and Solidarity Sammie Vance		Species Selection Travis Derks	Reimagining Success in Youth Sports Nick McDuffee	First Aid Kits - Bandages, Ointments and... Ears?!: Skills and Tools to Help our Kids' Emotional Injuries Mike Zussman	The Hidden Work of Leadership: Navigating Staff, Parent, and Community Conflict Jen Fry
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm	WPRA Foundation Basket Raffle & Social Hour								
6:00 pm	Awards Banquet								
To follow	Conference Social: Cinco Ninos at the Kalahari Resort & Conventions								

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5

9:30 am – 10:30 am	Aquatic Section Meeting & Facility Presentation	Panel Discussion	Disc Golf from Concept to Community Asset: Planning, Funding, and Programming for Success John Jimenez	Voices That Matter - Why Park and Recreation Agencies Should Intentionally Include Older Adults Stephanie Ehle	Supporting the Front Line: Leadership Practices for Stronger Teams Sam Jenkins
10:45 am – 11:45 am	Endnote: One Cap at a Time - Sammie Vance				