



# WPRA 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW

February 3-6, 2026

Kalahari Resort & Convention Center • Wisconsin Dells, WI

## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE (subject to change)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2 - PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP									
	AQUATICS	AQUATICS	EXECUTIVE	EXECUTIVE	PARKS	PARKS	RECREATION	RECREATION	DEI/Emerging Professionals
8:30am - 4:30 pm	AFO Certification Course Carrico Aquatic Resources <i>Banyan</i>								

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 - PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS									
8:30am - 4:00 pm	AFO Certification Course Carrico Aquatic Resources <i>Banyan</i>								
1:00pm - 4:00 pm	AFO Certification Course Carrico Aquatic Resources <i>Banyan</i>						Hands-On AI Lab for Parks & Rec: Build and Promote a Program in One Afternoon Jason Peters & Sam Lunt <i>Guava</i>	Beyond Basics: Leading Successful Disability Inclusion in Recreation Settings Lisa Drennan <i>Tamarind</i>	
8:00 pm - 12:00 am	Camp WPRA Social: JustAGame Fieldhouse (200 La Crosse St, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965)								

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4									
8:30 am - 9:30 am	Behind the Scenes Tour of Kalahari Waterpark Kalahari Staff <i>Kalahari Waterpark</i>		How to Make Your Community Fall in Love with You Lyn Hulgan <i>Marula</i>	Trends in Play Space Design Melinda Pearson <i>Guava</i>	Smart Trails: Using GIS to Map, Monitor, and Manage Your Trail System Kiley Scherer <i>Tamarind</i>		Delivering Superhero Level Service: Building a Culture to Wow Patrons! Hank Ebeling <i>Tamboti</i>		Intro to WPRA and First Time Conference Attendees EP/Conference Committee <i>Mangrove</i>
9:45 am - 10:45 am	Keynote Opening Session: Moving from Best Practices to Next Practices with the Power of One - Neelay Bhatt - <i>Kalahari Ballroom A/B/G/H</i>								
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Aquatics Section Meeting <i>Portia</i>	Perfectly Polished Professional Lyn Hulgan <i>Marula</i>	WPRA's Legislative Agenda and its Impact on YOU(R) Community Caly McDermott <i>Aralia</i>	The Business of Movement: Economic Impacts of Bike and Pedestrian Projects Kim Biedermann <i>Guava</i>	From Bids to Builds: Mastering Wisconsin's Public Bidding Requirements Emma Wenman & Raine Gardner <i>Tamarind</i>		Nature-Based Solutions for Your Recreation Programming Robert Yankee <i>Aloeswood</i>	Build Your Dream Team! Attract, Develop and Retain A+ Talent Hank Ebeling <i>Tamboti</i>	Difficult Conversations Neelay Bhatt <i>Kalahari Ballroom A/B/G/H</i>
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch & WPRA Annual Meeting - <i>Kalahari Ballroom A/B/G/H</i>								
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Trade Show - <i>Kilimanjaro Ballroom</i>								
4:00 - 5:00 pm	Emerging Professionals Speed Networking Event - <i>Mangrove</i>								
8:00 pm - 12:00 am	All in for WPRA Social: The Grateful Shed (1470 Wisconsin Dells Pkwy, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965)								

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5									
8:30 am - 9:30 am	Hands on Water Session: Practical Swim Lesson Strategies for a Lifetime Courtney Kline & Cory MacKline <i>Kalahari Waterpark</i>	Right Fit, Right Facility: Tailoring Aquatic Spaces to your Community Adam Janesz & Carter Arndt <i>Portia</i>	I Lead My Organization, But Why Do I feel Alone? Confronting Imposter Syndrome Chase Ellis <i>Suite A</i>	Generating and Leveraging, Buy-in, (Literally) for your Parks Guy Smith & Becky Stoner <i>Suite H</i>	What is CPTED Phil Johnson <i>Guava</i>	Preserving Urban Forests: Strategic Management in the Face of Environmental Challenges Emily Helm <i>Tamarind</i>	Activating Your Goals: An Odyssey to Unstoppable Professional Progress Scott Mason <i>Suite B</i>	Silver Star Awards <i>Suite G</i>	Keeping Your Fire Lit Without Burning Out Bobbi Nance <i>Mangrove</i>
9:45 am - 10:45 am	Grants: A Guide to Free Money Trace Hoekstra & Jodi Rhone <i>Wisteria</i>	How to Create a Championship Team in 22 Seconds Wes King <i>Portia</i>	Connection Is Key: Why Building Meaningful Connections is a Need in Our Profession Chase Ellis <i>Suite A</i>	Beer Gardens in Parks: Public and Private Partnerships Joe Mrozinski <i>Suite H</i>	From Theory to Practice: Just What the Heck IS a Reasonable Modification? John McGovern <i>Guava</i>	Rooted in Carbon: Dane County's Climate Action on the Ground and in the Grid Joleen Stinson & Michelle Probst <i>Tamarind</i>	WWYD - 25 Years of Crazyness in the Parks & Rec World Brett Ketterman <i>Suite B</i>		Career Development Bootcamp: How to Stand Out Jay Tryon & Shane Mize <i>Mangrove</i>
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Encouraging Team Creativity for Aquatics Gabriel Castillo <i>Wisteria</i>	Swim Lesson Strategies for a Lifetime of Water Competency & Confidence Courtney Kline & Cory MacKline <i>Portia</i>	Winning Over Your Elected Officials: Building Relationships for Parks and Recreation Success Tom Venniro <i>Suite A</i>	Backing Your Passion with Proof Bobbi Nance <i>Aralia</i>	If You Collaborate, You Can Celebrate! How to Implement a Joint Project Between Your Agency and Local School District Blake Theisen, Matt Schuenke & Jeff Mahoney <i>Suite H</i>	Managing a Summer Camp: How to Plan, Manage, & Grow Tyler Stahl, Lynette Vynanek & Katie Roth <i>Suite B</i>	Sponsorship Basics from A-Z Stacey Fontechia <i>Suite G</i>	I Play Too Michael Clark & Jason Bookheimer <i>Mangrove</i>	
12:00 pm - 1:15 pm	Networking Lunch - <i>Kilimanjaro Ballroom 3/4/5/6</i>								
1:15 pm - 2:15 pm	Dealing with Media Criticism Gabriel Castillo <i>Wisteria</i>	Learning to Lead with Language Wes King <i>Portia</i>	Am I an Effective Park and Rec Professional? Tom Venniro <i>Suite A</i>	Diving Into Your Data Without Drowning Bobbi Nance <i>Aralia</i>	Parks Design Awards <i>Suite H</i>	Rethinking Lawns Lauren Umek <i>Tamarind</i>	Leading with Empathy: Building a Culture of Trust, Safety, and Purpose Michael Clark & Jason Bookheimer <i>Suite B</i>	Marketing (Taylor's Version) Deanna Angelini Johann, Cassidy Reinhard & Skylar Greenberg <i>Suite G</i>	Those Darn Kids Nowadays: Surviving Generational Diversity Todd Kuckkahn <i>Mangrove</i>
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	The Secret Ingredient: How to Develop Staff Ownership Elaena Noffsinger <i>Wisteria</i>	Automation Controls and The Future Jessie Krueger <i>Portia</i>	Live from the Dells: Recless in Session Tom Venniro, Jay Tryon & Shane Mize <i>Suite A</i>		Driving Success Through Volunteer Collaboration Anna Reinhardtson <i>Tamarind</i>	Small Staff, Big Strategy Dustin Kleefisch <i>Suite B</i>	Teens: Too Old for Camp, Too Young for Staff Joe Lilly, Abby Meachum & Abby Sacks <i>Suite G</i>	Beyond Awareness: Mitigating Implicit Bias and Confronting Microaggressions in Parks and Recreation Zach Zuchowicz <i>Mangrove</i>	
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	WPRA Foundation Basket Raffle & Social Hour - <i>Kilimanjaro Ballroom 3/4/5/6</i>								
6:00 PM	Awards Banquet - <i>Kilimanjaro Ballroom 3/4/5/6</i>								
To follow	Post Awards Banquet Social: Brew Pub (at the Kalahari Resort)								

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6									
9:30 am - 10:30 am	Aquatic Code Discussion Mary Ellen Bruesch <i>Portia</i>	Connecting and Leading an Engaged Team Deb Kneser <i>Marula/Aralia</i>	Creating Pawstive Spaces - Planning, Designing, Building, and Maintaining Successful Dog Parks Kevin Wiesmann, Lael Pascuel & Nick Spence <i>Tamarind</i>			Experience by Design Annie Frisoli <i>Kilimanjaro Ballroom 3/4/5/6</i>			Parks and Pronouns: LGBTQ+ Inclusively Zach Zuchowicz <i>Mangrove</i>
10:45 am - 11:45 am	Endnote: The Leadership Adventure: Blazing Trails, Building Legacies - Annie Frisoli - <i>Kilimanjaro Ballroom 3/4/5/6</i>								