

2026 OPRA Conference & Trade Show

February 1 - 4, 2026

Kalahari Convention Center - Sandusky, Ohio



Presented by



Educate. Advocate. Collaborate.

2026 OPRA CONFERENCE WELCOME

Welcome to the 2026 OPRA Conference & Trade Show!

We are looking forward to an amazing week here at Kalahari for our annual celebration of parks and recreation in Ohio. There is no better place for you to learn, to network, and to share the stories of life change which make parks and recreation so vital to the communities where you live and work.

Because of your strong support of OPRA, our Conference continues to set records! Our turnout will break two records this year, both for paid attendance and total people on site! Again, this year, our Trade Show is completely SOLD OUT, (with 16 more booths than last year) filled with product and service providers who can make your job easier. And again, this year, Conference Partners have stepped up in record breaking fashion, investing more than \$255,000 in our event this year.



I hope that you will take advantage of the more than 75 education sessions that will be presented by leading professionals from around the country, and the two inspiring keynote speakers who will help to equip you to lead in your community long after this week is over.

More than that, in the weeks leading up to Conference, I have been reminded again of the importance of the connections that will happen here this week. It is not an exaggeration to say that lifelong connections—lifelong friendships—have been formed because of experiences that people have had here, at the OPRA Conference. I hope this week provides time for you to renew or begin a connection which is impactful for you.

In the midst of all that is going on, I also hope you'll take time to speak with the partner companies who will be with us in the sold-out Trade Show areas on Monday and Tuesday. These companies provide outstanding products and services to our members and unprecedented support to OPRA. This Conference could not happen without their support. Please thank them by spending time with them this week.

We are here this week to serve you. If you need anything, please let me, a staff person, Board member, or Conference volunteer know. You can check in at Registration if you have specific questions.

So, on behalf of Mindy and Amanda, the OPRA Board, and our outstanding Conference Planning Team, we are grateful that you have chosen to be with us this week, and we hope that this conference experience will exceed your expectations.

Thank you again for coming, and welcome to Conference!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Woody Woodward".

Woody Woodward, Executive Director
Ohio Parks & Recreation Association

2026 OPRA CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

OPRA Board & Staff

Bryana Ross *OPRA Board Liason*
Woody Woodward *Executive Director*
Mindy McInturf *Director of Administration*
Amanda Perry *Marketing & Project Manager*

Awards

Darcy Baxter *Upper Arlington Parks and Recreation*
Erika Buri *Outdoor Sylvania Community Parks*

Education

Erin Duffee, Co-Chair *Hilliard Recreation & Parks*
Ken Stray, Co-Chair *Medina County Park District*
Chris Addison *Fairfield Parks and Recreation*
Uriah Anderson *Washington Township RecPlex*
Cara Chatfield Rohrbaugh *Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks*
Jeremy Dean *Worthington Parks and Recreation*
DeShaunta Drew *Columbus Recreation and Parks*
Catherine Eichel *Gahanna Parks and Recreation*
Kim Farrell *Anderson Park District*
Katie Girts *Whitehall Parks and Recreation*
Chelsea Heppert *Gahanna Parks and Recreation*
Rachel Hodge *Great Parks of Hamilton County*
Kari Horn *Great Parks of Hamilton County*
Michele Horst *Wooster Recreation and Community Center*
Matt Kaderly *Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks*
Danielle Marino *The 577 Foundation*
Arianna Martin *Columbus Recreation and Parks*
Mitchell Pence *Darke County Park District*
Bryana Ross
Craig Sanders *Pickaway County Park District*
Jessica Simons *Tallmadge Parks and Recreation*
Andy Wildman *Granville Recreation District*
Malik Willoughby *Columbus Recreation and Parks*

Exhibit Hall

Penny Bomba, Co-Chair *City of Akron*
Sue Daniel, Co-Chair *Erie MetroParks*
Todd Alexander *Cleveland Parks and Recreation*
Mark Hesse *Evendale Recreation*
Mike McGilbra *Penchura LLC*
Michael Osborne *Five Rivers MetroParks*
Tony Shadwick *Penchura LLC*
Travis Smith *Gahanna Parks and Recreation*
Houston Ward *Five Rivers MetroParks*
Jay Yochem *Erie MetroParks*

Networking

Kara Musser, Chair *Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District*
Marissa Angellatta *Columbus Recreation and Parks*
Tony Carpenter *Centerville-Washington Park District*
Melissa Clark *Ohio State Parks and Watercraft*
Andy Collins *Great Parks of Hamilton County*
Kristy Dickey *Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District*
Nancy Haynes *Worthington Parks and Recreation*
Angelec Hillsman *Cleveland Metroparks*
Michael Lentz *Hilliard Recreation & Parks*
Mark Malone *Erie MetroParks*
Doug Perry *Retired*
Cassie Pruyne *Marysville Parks and Recreation*
Morgan Simonski *New Albany Plain Local Joint Parks District*
Mindy Weaver *Miami County Park District*
Hiedie Whitman *Ohio State Parks and Watercraft*

Partnership

Celia Thornton, Chair *Worthington Parks and Recreation*
Robb Clifford *Darke County Park District*
Zac Guthrie *Gahanna Parks and Recreation*
Daniel Hiser *Bexley Recreation and Parks*
Amanda Morris *Hilliard Recreation & Parks*
Jeremy Peppeard *Cleveland Metroparks*
Michael Pollack *Prairie Township*
Brian Smith *New Albany Plain Local Joint Parks District*
Shelby Watkins *Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks*
Addie Weaver *Washington Township RecPlex*
Paul Williams *Five Rivers MetroParks*

Student Conference

Tim Hales, Co-Chair *Hilliard Recreation & Parks*
Christian Williams, Co-Chair *Prairie Township*
Jeff Derr *Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation*
Kerri Doddroe *City of Obetz*
Shunnye Dunlap *Gahanna Parks and Recreation*
Amanda Gehres *Reynoldsburg Parks and Recreation*
Eliese Kendrick *Upper Arlington Parks and Recreation*
Aaron Messenger *Vandalia Parks and Recreation*
Kody Rubright *Gahanna Parks and Recreation*
Kevin Smith *Bexley Recreation and Parks*
Theo Spychalski *New Albany Plain Local Joint Parks District*
Oliver Wuensch *Kent Parks and Recreation*

2026 OPRA CONFERENCE FAQS

CEUs

Continuing Education Units are offered for all sessions. Each 75-minute training session earns 0.1 CEU. If you require proof of attendance, see your room host for validation and signature.

Hotel Check-Out & Receipt

You will not need to do remote check-out to get an itemized receipt as long as an email is on file.

Remote Check-In & Bag Storage

Remote Check-In outside Baobab and Bag Storage in Acacia will be available on Sunday from 2:00pm-7:00pm, Monday 7:00am-12:00pm, and Wednesday 8:00am-3:00pm.

Coffee & Tea Station

Free coffee and tea are available in the Convention Center compliments of **Stantec, MSA Sport, a division of MSA Design, and GPD Group**.

Communication

Daily updates will be available in the following locations:

- Welcome Desk
- Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: @OPRAOhio, #OPRA2026
- Download the OPRA Events App **sponsored by Field Source** by scanning or clicking this QR Code.



Exhibit Hall

Monday, February 2 from 11:30am – 2:30pm (includes lunch)

Tuesday, February 3 from 9:45am – 12:45pm (includes lunch)

OPRA Fitness Camps

Monday Bootcamp | 6:30am – 7:15am | Ironwood Hut
Bryana Ross

There will be varying intervals and cardio moves to get the heart rate up, and don't worry, if something is too intense there are modifications for everyone and every move.

Tuesday Boxing/Circuit Dynamic Training
6:30am – 7:30am | Ironwood Hut
Clemate Franklin Youngstown Parks and Recreation
Bring water, your energy, and boxing gloves if you have them! (Otherwise they will be provided.)

OPRA Foundation Raffle

The OPRA Foundation will be holding their annual raffles during Exhibit Hall hours - be sure to get your raffle tickets to help the Foundation continue to change lives across Ohio and win some great items!

Purchase your raffle tickets through the OPRA Events App or visit the OPRA Foundation table in Zambezi. All bidding will close at midnight on Tuesday.

Wear your Badge!

Your Conference Badge serves as your admission to all Conference functions. If you lose your badge, please obtain a replacement at the Welcome Desk. Only properly identified attendees will be permitted access to events and sessions. Tickets to the Awards Celebration will be included inside the name badge holder.

Welcome Desk

Sunday	February 1	4:30pm – 7:00pm
Monday and Tuesday	February 2-3	7:30am – 4:00pm
Wednesday	February 4	7:30am – 11:00am



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2026 OPRA CONFERENCE MEALS & FOOD OPTIONS



Scan or click for all available food for purchase at Kalahari Sandusky.



Sunday Networking Event » 6:00pm

- Pepperoni Pizza
- Cheese Pizza
- Pepperoni Pizza-Gluten Free
- Cheese Pizza-Gluten Free
- Butter Popcorn
- Pretzels
- Farmers Market Vegetable Display
- Fresh Fruit Display

Monday Lunch » 11:30am

- Red Pepper Bisque with Basil Pesto Croutons
- Garden Green Salad with Ranch and Italian
- Green Beans, Carrots, and Onions
- Rosemary New Potatoes
- Roasted Pork Loin, Spiced Apple Demi Glace
- Herb Roasted Chicken, Natural Jus
- Rolls and Butter
- Apple Crumb Cake



Monday Networking Event » 8:00pm

- Ginger Vegetable Egg Rolls with Spicy Orange Garlic Sauce
- Chicken & Cheese Quesadillas
- Sourdough Tomato Bruschetta
- Assorted Deli Sliders
- Crab & Spinach Dip with Toasted Pita Chips
- Vegetable Crudites
- Build Your Own Nachos with Assorted Toppings
- Pepperoni Pizza
- Boneless Chicken Wings
- Build Your Own Sliders
- Build Your Own Mac & Cheese Bar
- Cannolis
- Fruit Tarts
- Cream Puffs
- Cheesecake Bites
- Mini Cupcakes

Tuesday Lunch » 11:00am

- Corn Tortilla Soup
- Black Bean Salad, Lettuce, Mango, Jicama, Cilantro, and Avocado Ranch
- Roasted Corn
- Mushrooms, Peppers, and Onion
- Fire Roasted Tomato Spanish Rice
- Flour Tortillas, Jalapeños, Salsa Verde, Shredded Jack Cheese, Guacamole, Sour Cream, and Tortilla Chips
- Fajita Chicken
- Slow Roasted Shredded Beef Barbacoa with Pickled Onions
- Tres Leches

Tuesday Awards Dinner » 6:30pm

*RSVP Required

- Roasted Tomato Lasagna - Sun Dried Tomato Sofrito, Eggplant, Spinach, Ricotta, Parmesan Cheese
- Alternative Entree: Chef Choice Vegan Lasagna Made with Veggies (No pasta)
- Broccolini
- Tomato Ragout
- Chef Choice Salad
- Rolls and Butter
- Chef Choice Dessert

Wednesday Lunch » 11:30am

- Scrambled Eggs
- Brioche French Toast with Warm Maple Syrup and Toasted Almonds
- Smoked Bacon
- Sausage Patties
- Hashbrown Casserole
- Fresh Cut Fruit
- Muffins
- Breakfast Breads and Fruit-Filled Danish
- Orange Juice
- Regular and Decaffeinated Coffee and Hot Teas

*Menu subject to change.



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2026 OPRA CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, February 1

4:30pm - 7:00pm	Registration Open
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Student Attendee Meeting
6:00pm - 10:00pm	Networking Event

Monday, February 2

6:30am - 7:15am	OPRA Fitness Class
7:30am - 4:00pm	Registration Open
8:30am - 9:45am	Education Sessions
10:00am - 11:30am	Keynote Speaker, Juan Bendaña
11:30am - 2:30pm	Exhibit Hall, Roundtables, Lunch
1:00pm - 2:15pm	Student Attendee Meeting
2:30pm - 3:45pm	Education Sessions
4:00pm - 5:15pm	Education Sessions
5:30pm - 8:00pm	Dinner on your Own
7:00pm - 8:00pm	Minority Networking Experience
7:00pm - 12:00am	Hut Hop Networking Event

Tuesday, February 3

6:30am - 7:30am	OPRA Fitness Class
7:30am - 4:00pm	Registration Open
8:30am - 9:45am	Education Sessions
9:00am - 9:30am	Exhibitor Roundtable
9:45am - 12:45pm	Exhibit Hall, Roundtables, Lunch
11:45am - 12:45pm	Student Attendee Meeting
1:00pm - 2:30pm	Leadership Series
2:45pm - 4:15pm	Leadership Series
4:30pm - 6:00pm	Professional Headshots
5:30pm - 6:30pm	Awards Reception Networking
6:30pm - 8:30pm	Awards Celebration Dinner
8:30pm - 12:00am	After Awards Networking

Wednesday, February 4

7:30am - 11:00am	Registration Open
8:30am - 9:45am	Education Sessions
9:45am - 10:15am	Break for Hotel Check-Out
10:15am - 11:30am	Education Sessions
11:30am - 1:00pm	Lunch and Keynote Speaker, Mitch Savoie Hill



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2026 OPRA CONFERENCE EDUCATION SESSIONS

MONDAY	Administration	Aquatics	Events	Facilities/Operations	Fiscal Administration	Fundamentals
LOCATION	Mangrove	Crown Palm Hut	Cypress	Portia/Wisteria	Guava/Tamarind	Rosewood
8:30am-9:45am	No One Cares About Your Data -Bobbi Nance	Building Vigilance, Reducing Risk, and Documenting Success -Kate Connell	Crafting Connection: Planning Meaningful Cultural Events for Community Impact -Abbey Brooks -Kayla Hesselbein	The Future is Now - GIS Tools for Park Operations -Taylor Glynn -Courtney Grumman	Maximizing Cost Recovery: Sustainable Pricing Strategies for Recreation Programs -Andrew Wildman -Shane McAviney	Be a Partnership Superhero! -Shannon Pennington -Lauren Asquith
10:00am-11:30am						
					OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Juan Bendaña Kal	
2:30pm-3:45pm	Advocacy Update -Woody Woodward	Aquatic Facility Assessments - What to Expect -Matthew Freeby -Scott Caron	1,000 Themes for Programs and Special Events -Melissa Hindman -Gina Kolp	Rust, Rot, and Revival: Winning the War on Deferred Maintenance -Tony Carpenter -Ken Carter -Chris Pion	The Money Trail: Proving and Quantifying Your Parks' Economic Impacts -Michelle Johnson -Dan Marsalek	The Struggle Is Real! -Ashlee Schmitt -Robin Gregory -Heather Beals
4:00pm-5:15pm	Levy Planning and Campaign Guidance -Rebecca Princehorn -Catherine Swartz	Being Prepared! -Jim Clark -Chuck Kunsman -Annemarie Finch	More than a Medal: The Power of Community Races -Natalie Mullin -Taylor Tobias	Bikepath Maintenance: Maintaining the Quality that Keeps Users Coming Back -Luke Meyer -Chuck Frazier	Turn Your Playground Dreams into Reality: A Guide to Fundraising & Grants -Jenny Cash	Partnerships in Acquisitions -Derek Schafer -Joe Leslie
TUESDAY						
				Leadership		
LOCATION	Indigo Bay	Guava/Tamarind	Salon A	Salon H	Mangrove	Portia/Wisteria
8:30am-9:45am	Data, Drama, and Clear Decisions -Amanda Morris -Amanda Rossbach	Leadership Toolkit: Transforming a Department -Alexandria Nichols	Leading Beyond the Plan: What to Do When the Unexpected Hits -Daniel Belts -Tim Heyl	Navigating Change with Community Organizations -Debbie McLaughlin -Kayla Sensenbaugh	Power Mapping for Parks: Building Influence, Coalitions, and Funding Support -Sarah Hippenstein-Hall	Supporting the Front Line: Leadership Practices for Stronger Teams -Sam Jenkins
LOCATION	Salon A		Indigo Bay		Salon H	
1:00pm-2:30pm	The Edge of Creativity -Kassi Kincaid		Embracing the Leadership Challenge -Nathan Eppink		Embracing Your Authentic, Awkward, Awesome Self -Bobbi Nance -Bill Tschirhart	
2:45pm-4:15pm	The Edge of Creativity -Kassi Kincaid		Embracing the Leadership Challenge -Nathan Eppink		Embracing Your Authentic, Awkward, Awesome Self -Bobbi Nance -Bill Tschirhart	
WEDNESDAY	Administration	Facilities/Operations	Fundamentals	Human Resources	Inclusion/DEI	Management
LOCATION	Mangrove	Portia/Wisteria	Guava/Tamarind	Aloeswood	Leopardwood	Indigo Bay
8:30am-9:45am	Communication Is Key! How to Communicate Effectively in Meetings and Presentations -Bill Tschirhart	Involving Your Whole Community to Build a Community Center -Debbie McLaughlin -Ed Merritt -Dave Wharton	Practical Applications of AI for Parks and Recreation Professionals -Sam Lunt -Jason Peters	Epic Fails! Top HR Errors that Every Supervisor Should Avoid -Brad Bennett	A Beginner's Guide to Adaptive & Inclusive Programming -Shane Thompson	The Generation Grove: Growing Stronger as One Team -Natalie Peacock -Isaac Smith -John Kleshinski -Roberta Gifford -Donna Schrader
10:15am-11:30am	A Year-In-Review: Parks & Recreation Legislative and Case Law Update -Ben Yoder -Sarah Sparks	Snow and Ice Removal Basics -Joe Fornaro -Bob Eakin	Community Engagement through Social Media -Kaitlin Duncan -LeAnna Lutz	Staff Mentorship in Motion: From Vision to Reality -Monica Resnik -Amanda Schilling	Parks for All: Serving Neurodiverse Populations in Parks -Meghan Doran -Allison King	Start with Why & with Growth: Feed for Real Change -Addie Weaver
11:30am-1:00pm						
				CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Mitch Savole Hill K		

Human Resources	Inclusion/DEI	Management	Natural Resources	Projects & Planning	Seniors	Urban Rec
Aloeswood	Leopardwood	Indigo Bay	Sagewood	Zebrawood	Banyan Hut	Ironwood Hut
Mentorship: A Two-Way Journey of Growth -Jen Brandt -Gina Kolp	Practical Steps to Improve Accessibility for Autistic and Sensory-Sensitive Individuals -Meredith Tekin	Do You Want to Win or Be Right? The Art of Negotiation and Persuasion -Jai Cole -Chris Matthews	Turn Stormwater Infrastructure into Recreation Destinations -Hank Thomas	Finding the Parks in Your City -Jeff Anderson	Unlikely Community Collaborations -Danielle Brogley	Teens Vote with Their Feet...and It's Always Election Season! -Jacqueline Johnson

Calahari Ballroom

Finding or Being the Right Candidate: The Art of the Interview from Both Sides of the Table -Jai Cole -Chris Matthews	Beyond Accessibility: Spaces for Every Body to Play and Recreate -Natalie Mackay -Shannon Columb	Microaggressions – A Nudge, a Conversation, and a Learning Opportunity -Lori Hoffner	Ex-Tiles: The Truth Is Under There! -Mark Dilley -Jenny Adkins	Strategic Planning: Rooted in Community, Driven by Purpose -Paul Khacherian	Evidence-Based Programming Can Be Fun While Promoting Healthy Aging! -Stephanie Fall Creek -Jodi Warnecke	Emergency Management: Preparedness, Operations, Activations, and Mitigations in Parks and Recreation -Jon Jainga
The Playbook for Seasonal Staff Success -Jacob Hensel	Inclusive Play Matters: Evidence-Based Design Best Practices for Play and Recreation Destinations -Ron Blake	Challenging Conversations Don't Have to Weigh You Down: Inspiring Communication Success -Lori Hoffner	Conservation in Unconventional Spaces -Brett Macht -Kari Horn -Joe Johnson -Nikki Goldstein	Master Planning on a Shoestring: Big Results, Small Budget -Matt McGrath -Tom James -Kyle Lukes	What's New and Old with Senior Centers -William Plessinger -Shannon Guy -Jill Collins -Annette Baxter	Racial Equity: From Redlining to Hostile Parkitecture -Jai Cole -Chris Matthews

Cypress	 <p>Schedule is subject to change. Please go to opraonline.org for the most current information.</p>	ROUNDTABLES	
Values in Action		MONDAY	LOCATION
-Colleen Light -Ryan Cooper	11:30am-12:15pm	Aquatics -Michele Horst	Cypress
-Cypress		Law Enforcement Section -Dan Weaver -Ben Altenbach	Indigo Bay
es for Great Leadership	12:30pm-1:15pm	Events -Taylor Tobias	Indigo Bay
es for Great Leadership	1:30pm-2:15pm	Seniors -Uriah Anderson	Cypress
		Park District Section Meeting -Woody Woodward	Indigo Bay
	TUESDAY		LOCATION
	9:45am-10:30am	Marketing -Adria Bergeron	Cypress
		Urban Rec -Bryana Ross	Indigo Bay
	10:45am-11:30am	Facilities/Operations -Tony Carpenter	Cypress
		Summer Camp -Cory Ollie -Gina Kolp	Indigo Bay
	11:45am-12:30pm	Sports -Andy Wildman -Aaron Tipplady	Indigo Bay

	Parks	Programming	Youth Sports
	Sagewood	Cypress	Rosewood
nal Team	Using ArcGIS FieldMaps for High-Quality Natural Area Monitoring & Invasive Plant Management -Kari Horn -Daniel Kovar -Jessica Spencer	Keeping Young Adults Involved After Aging Out of Youth Programs -Annie Brown -Ren Kuzmanovich -Nikki Van Dine	The Art of Dealing with Difficult People in Youth Sports -Chris Stevenson
End Back	Green Ribbon Initiative - Oak Openings Region -Matty Watkins	Achieving Success with Programs You Know Nothing About -Colton Patak	Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Quality Coaches in Youth Sports -Annie Brown -Ren Kuzmanovich

Calahari Ballroom



TO ROOM, SUITES & RESORT AMENITIES

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5:00pm - 6:00pm » Student Conference: Welcome & Networking » Indigo Bay

Students are encouraged to attend the first Student Attendee Meeting, where they will acclimate to Conference, learn best practices and tips for getting the most out of their experience, and participate in icebreakers and get-to-know-yous with the Student Conference Committee.



6:00pm - 10:00pm » OPRA Olympic Networking Event » Kalahari Ballroom

Presented by Playground Equipment Services and Games Sponsored by SuperGames
Also sponsored by Ares Sportswear, Baker Vehicle Systems, Brandstetter Carroll, Inc., DLZ, ForeverLawn, ms consultants, Paragon Integrated Services Group, ParkVision, Schorr Architects, Inc., and Vortex Aquatics Structures International.

Join us Sunday evening in the Kalahari Ballroom to catch up with colleagues as you enjoy some delicious appetizers. This event's non-alcoholic drink option is the Distinguished Guest Mocktail by **Ohio Liquor**. There will be plenty of games and activities as well!



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8:30am - 9:45am » Education Sessions

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Be a Partnership Superhero!

Room: **Rosewood** | Track: **Fundamentals**

Who are the experts in your region, and are you taking full advantage of their expertise? Learn how to leverage your reach in the community by forming partnerships with other local organizations including non-profits, mission-aligned businesses, educational institutions, government agencies, foundations, individual philanthropists, and more. Dozens of willing partners are out there...if you just know who, how, and what to ask!

Shannon Pennington Warren County Park District

Lauren Asquith Warren County Park District

Building Vigilance, Reducing Risk, and Documenting Success

Room: **Crown Palm Hut** | Track: **Aquatics**

Drowning happens quickly and quietly—effective scanning is the first and most important line of defense for lifeguards. This interactive session will break down the science and strategy behind proper scanning techniques, review common scanning mistakes, and explore how supervisors can effectively coach and document scanning behaviors. Participants will leave with practical tools to enhance vigilance, spot subtle signs of distress, and use documentation to support consistent auditing and accountability. The session includes real-world examples of scanning documentation, drills, and supervision strategies to immediately implement at your facility.

Kate Connell HydroApps

Crafting Connection: Planning Meaningful Cultural Events for Community Impact

Room: **Cypress** | Track: **Events**

Explore the art and strategy behind creating culturally rich events that foster community engagement, inclusivity, and lasting impact. This session will guide participants through the key elements of event planning with a cultural focus—from understanding community needs and honoring diverse traditions to building partnerships and measuring success. Attendees will leave with practical tools and creative ideas to design experiences that celebrate identity, promote unity, and spark joy within their communities

Abbey Brooks City of New Albany

Kayla Hesselbein City of New Albany

Do You Want to Win or Be Right? The Art of Negotiation and Persuasion

Room: **Indigo Bay** | Track: **Management**

You don't get what you deserve. You get what you negotiate. Developing the art of negotiation and persuasion is one of the key soft skills needed to be successful in any job. Need to get your boss on board with your idea? Persuasion. Working with a developer on a project that can impact or enhance your park? Negotiation. Want your staff to buy into your new direction? Both. People often expect to simply be able to state the facts, and they'll win. When in reality, that is rarely the case. You must rely on strong emotional intelligence to understand what pushes people's buttons, realize when you're being manipulated, identify what your opponent's strengths and weaknesses are, and make people like and trust you. These skills are key to being good at both negotiation and persuasion in all facets of your work.

Jai Cole Fairfax County Park Authority

Chris Matthews Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation

Finding the Parks in Your City

Room: **Zebrawood** | Track: **Projects & Planning**

Limited space has led many cities to find creative solutions to provide accessible and convenient parks. This trend can be seen through high-profile abandoned rail line projects like the Highline in NYC or the 606 in Chicago. But smaller municipalities are facing the same challenge. This session will look at innovative solutions for finding community open space in unexpected locations, such as pop-up parks or roof gardens. It will also study how parks can be developed for flexibility and multiple uses.

Jeff Anderson Upper Arlington Parks and Recreation

The Future is Now—GIS Tools for Park Operations

Room: Portia/Wisteria | Track: Facilities/Operations

Discover how Columbus Recreation & Parks transformed its park maintenance operations through the incorporation of GIS (Geographical Information System) technology. CRPD was able to battle the inconsistency in reporting and unsatisfactory data tracking by utilizing ArcGIS applications. With the need to increase efficiency through multiple team locations spread across the city, GIS provided a platform to create structured team reporting. With the ability to access property information in the field, visualize data, and consolidate information in user-friendly dashboards, the cloud-based application increased the effectiveness of communication between management and field staff. Learn more about the innovative processes created to bring Park Operations into the future.

Taylor Glynn Columbus Recreation & Parks

Courtney Grumman Columbus Recreation & Parks

Maximizing Cost Recovery: Sustainable Pricing Strategies for Recreation Programs

Room: Guava/Tamarind | Track: Fiscal Administration

Cost recovery in recreation ensures financial sustainability by balancing operational expenses with revenue from programs, memberships, and facility rentals. This presentation explores key strategies, including setting appropriate fees, categorizing services by cost recovery levels, and adjusting pricing based on usage data. Additionally, effective marketing plays a crucial role in maximizing participation and revenue through targeted outreach, digital promotions, and community partnerships. Learn how to optimize cost recovery while maintaining accessibility and quality in recreation services.

Andrew Wildman Granville Recreation District

Shane McAviney Mayfield Village Parks & Recreation

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Mentorship: A Two-Way Journey of Growth

Room: Aloeswood | Track: Human Resources

Mentorship is a reciprocal journey where both mentors and mentees flourish. Gain fresh perspectives on approach, communication, and structure to set your relationship up for success. We will vulnerably discuss the pitfalls and peaks of our mentorship journey. Leave with tools you can use in your next mentorship session. Whether you're currently in a mentorship partnership or you've been hesitant to get started, this session is for you!

Jen Brandt *Kettering Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts*

Gina Kolp *City of Powell*

No One Cares About Your Data

Room: Mangrove | Track: Administration

Do you have the right data, but still struggle to get much benefit from it? Whether you're struggling with an endless influx of survey results, the massive amount of data in your registration software, or to get others to see the value of your reports, learn how three simple questions can help you evaluate and tweak what you collect, measure, and share so that you can decrease the chances that it collects dust sitting on shelves and in your software, and instead, becomes a valuable part of your team's day-to-day.

Bobbi Nance *Recreation Results*

Practical Steps to Improve Accessibility for Autistic and Sensory-Sensitive Individuals

Room: Leopardwood | Track: Inclusion/DEI

How can you cultivate an atmosphere of inclusivity? Discover how to better understand autistic and sensory-sensitive visitors to ensure your programs and spaces are welcoming and accessible. One in six individuals has a sensory need, and one in 31 children are diagnosed with autism. This session will explore data, needs, and strategies to understand how to make a lasting impact. Cultivating an accessible and inclusive environment is essential to ensure every visitor feels welcome.

Meredith Tekin *IBCCES*

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Teens Vote with Their Feet...and It's Always Election Season!

Room: **Ironwood Hut** | Track: **Urban Rec**

When it comes to recreation programs, teens “cast their votes” by choosing where to spend their time and deciding if your program makes the ballot. This session explores practical strategies for attracting and retaining teens by building programs that feel welcoming, relevant, and fun. Learn how to market effectively and break down barriers to earn their votes. We will discuss ways to build meaningful partnerships, explore approaches to sustaining teen-focused programs even in the face of funding cuts and shifting priorities. Walk away with tools to ensure your programs stay teen-endorsed all year long

Jacqueline Johnson *Portsmouth Parks and Recreation*

Turn Stormwater Infrastructure into Recreation Destinations

Room: **Sagewood** | Track: **Natural Resources**

What if stormwater infrastructure could double as vibrant public space? Discover how a design team in Conway, Arkansas transformed a 1.7-acre downtown brownfield into a dynamic park that can capture 1.5 million gallons of stormwater. Through Low Impact Development and creative grading, civil engineers, and landscape architects reimaged detention and infiltration basins—not just to prevent flooding, but to create community. This session offers a compelling case study of function meeting beauty in park design.

Hank Thomas *SWA Group*

Unlikely Community Collaborations

Room: **Banyan Hut** | Track: **Seniors**

This dynamic session explores how senior centers are partnering with unexpected collaborators—such as universities, youth ensembles, pharmacies, and art collectives—to enrich programming, break down stereotypes, and foster purpose and connection across generations. Participants will leave inspired and equipped to foster partnerships that bring fresh perspectives, resources, and energy to their communities.

Danielle Brogley *Wood County Committee on Aging*

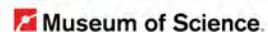


Take a peek inside.

The Science Behind PIXAR

Oct. 11, 2025 - May 25, 2026

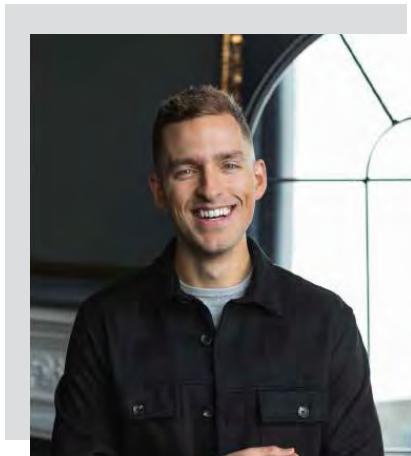
Produced by



The Science Behind Pixar was developed by the Museum of Science, Boston in collaboration with Pixar Animation Studios. © Disney/Pixar. All Rights Reserved. Used Under Authorization.

10:00am - 11:30am » Opening Keynote » Kalahari Ballroom

Presented by DWA Recreation and GameTime



Opening Keynote

Juan Bendaña

Juan Bendaña is a highly sought-after speaker, entrepreneur, and coach to top CEOs, Olympians, Grammy Award-Winning Artists, Actors, and Fortune 500 Leaders.

Even though Juan is the “confidence expert”, it hasn’t always been that way. For years, he struggled with social anxiety and low self-confidence. This led him to become obsessed with finding the answer to a simple question: How do we show up at our best? He realized there was a gap between our self image and our goals. His mission was to help others close that gap.

Ten years later, he finally figured it out. After researching over 250,000 leaders, he developed a repeatable, science-backed framework that equips leaders with the confidence mindset to lead boldly, thrive through change, and ignite extraordinary growth.

Fast forward to today, Juan works with thousands of leaders a month helping them develop the best versions of themselves by building unwavering confidence. Tools he wished he had when starting his career.



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11:30am - 2:15pm » Roundtables » Cypress & Indigo Bay

	Aquatics	Cypress	Michele Horst <i>Wooster Recreation and Community Center</i>
11:30am - 12:15pm	Law Enforcement Section	Indigo Bay	Dan Weaver <i>Miami County Park District</i> Ben Altenbach <i>Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District</i>
12:30pm - 1:15pm	Events	Indigo Bay	Taylor Tobias <i>Grandview Heights Parks and Recreation</i>
1:30pm - 2:15pm	Seniors	Cypress	Uriah Anderson <i>Washington Township RecPlex</i>
	Park District Section Meeting	Indigo Bay	Woody Woodward <i>Ohio Parks and Recreation Association</i>

11:30am - 2:30pm » Exhibit Hall & Lunch » Kilimanjaro & Zambezi

The Exhibit Halls are back, bigger and better than ever! Check out all of our exhibitors for the latest and greatest in the parks and recreation world! The OPRA Foundation will be holding their annual raffles during Exhibit Hall hours! Buffet lunch will be served at 11:30am in both exhibit halls with seating around the outside of Kilimanjaro.

1:00pm - 2:15pm » Student Conference: Job Mixer with Employers » Mangrove

The Student Committee starts with a check-in and then allows students to mingle with employers in small groups separated by regional location in the state. Interested employers will share full-time, part-time, and seasonal job opportunities with students.

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2:30pm - 3:45pm » Education Sessions

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1,000 Themes for Programs and Special Events

Room: **Cypress** | Track: **Events**

Need a fresh spark to supercharge your programming calendar? This dynamic session is your ultimate idea generator! Participants will explore an extensive variety of theme ideas—from seasonal celebrations and national observances to pop culture, wellness, diversity, and intergenerational fun. Whether you're planning for a camp, programs, senior programs, or even in the pool, you'll walk away with a ready-to-use collection of themes that inspire participation, foster creativity, and bring people together.

Melissa Hindman City of Powell

Gina Kolp City of Powell

Advocacy Update

Room: **Mangrove** | Track: **Administration**

The Ohio General Assembly has been busy this session with issues that will directly impact parks and recreation agencies. OPRA Executive Director and lobbyist Woody Woodward will update attendees on what the legislature has done so far and what to expect in 2026.

Woody Woodward Ohio Parks and Recreation Association

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Aquatic Facility Assessments—What to Expect

Room: **Crown Palm Hut** | Track: **Aquatics**

Facilities age. Some more graciously than others. In this session, we will look at the impact of age on aquatic facilities and what an assessment of your facility can tell you and what it cannot. We will review how to request and prepare for an assessment to get the best information. We'll guide you through the process of requesting and preparing for an assessment, ensuring you get the most valuable insights. And through compelling case studies, we'll uncover real-world examples where assessments have driven successful aquatic repairs, transformative renovations, and complete replacements.

Matthew Freeby *Water Technology, Inc.*

Scott Caron *Ballard King Associates*

Beyond Accessibility: Spaces for Every Body to Play and Recreate

Room: **Leopardwood** | Track: **Inclusion/DEI**

This session invites participants to reimagine how we design playgrounds and parks, shifting the focus from compliance with accessibility standards to the creation of environments that foster genuine inclusivity. Presenters will highlight their lived experience with disability, sharing stories that illustrate the transformative impact of inclusive design. Participants will leave with practical strategies to create parks and play spaces that reflect and celebrate the diversity of the communities they serve.

Natalie Mackay *Unlimited Play*

Shannon Columb *Unlimited Play*

Emergency Management: Preparedness, Operations, Activations, and Mitigations in Parks and Recreation

Room: **Ironwood Hut** | Track: **Urban Rec**

Join us to explore how Seattle Parks and Recreation supports the city's emergency operation center, focusing on two primary responsibilities: Emergency Support Functions in Public Works and Engineering and Mass Care and Sheltering. Additionally, we will discuss how we prepare parks and recreation staff for various emergencies, including power failures, evacuations, facility lockdown procedures, fires, active shooter situations, special events, and more.

Jon Jainga *City of Seattle*



Equitable is now the statewide provider of the OPRA 457 Deferred Compensation plan. Park districts can opt into this plan and offer it to employees as another retirement savings option. Through this plan we hope to close the retirement funding gap for OPRA members.

- ✓ **Retirees:** Help implement strategies to continue current lifestyle and help minimize taxes, RMDs
- ✓ **Individuals 5-10 Years from Retirement:** Create goal-oriented plan to protect nest egg
- ✓ **Social Security:** Know when to start collecting
- ✓ **Job Changes:** Understand options for old 401(k) & help understand benefits offered by new employer
- ✓ **Newly Married:** Planning for financial goals together and protecting household
- ✓ **Growing Family:** Life insurance and college planning needs
- ✓ **Pension Planning:** Understand how to maximize the benefits you are eligible to receive
- ✓ **Young Professionals:** Help enroll in work benefits



Alex Solove, Financial Advisor

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Evidence-Based Programming Can Be Fun While Promoting Healthy Aging!

Room: **Banyan Hut** | Track: **Seniors**

Presenters with decades of programming experience will share options for proven programs that are readily adaptable to many settings and populations. Some programs are tailored for older adults while others were developed for adults aged 18 and older. From Bingocize and Matter of Balance to the latest programs for HIV Self-Management and Caregiver Self-Care, there's an evidence-based model to fit almost any program situation. The results can be so rewarding and empowering for participants.

Stephanie FallCreek *FallCreek & Associates*

Jodi Warnecke *Putnam County Council on Aging*

Ex-Tiles: The Truth is Under There!

Room: **Sagewood** | Track: **Natural Resources**

Ohio has lost over 90% of its wetlands. With this substantial loss, Ohioans have experienced a degradation of water quality, increased flooding, declining wildlife populations, and associated recreational opportunities. This presentation will share information on the history of tile drainage in Ohio and discuss how to locate and decommission these artificial drainage systems in order to restore hydrology and re-establish wetlands for the benefit of the public, wildlife, and the environment.

Mark Dilley *MAD Scientist Associates, LLC*

Jenny Adkins *MAD Scientist Associates, LLC*



Finding or Being the Right Candidate: The Art of the Interview from Both Sides of the Table

Room: **Aloeswood** | Track: **Human Resources**

The interview table can be stressful whether you're the applicant or the interviewer. How do you position yourself to be the top candidate? How do you find that needle in a haystack? What types of questions tend to elevate candidates and what answers set you apart from the crowd? Interviews are an art regardless of which side of the table you're on and our tips are valuable to both. Hear from two seasoned park professionals on how to prepare for the big day, how to nail the interview, and some pitfalls you can avoid to lead you to success whether you're sending or receiving an offer letter.

Jai Cole *Fairfax County Park Authority*

Chris Matthews *Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation*

Microaggressions—A Nudge, a Conversation, and a Learning Opportunity

Room: **Indigo Bay** | Track: **Management**

Microaggressions—the subtle, intentional, or unintentional interactions that communicate some sort of bias. Participants will explore examples of microaggressions and how to recognize possible biases that contribute to them. We'll gain information to reduce microaggressions. Finally, we'll understand that it's about learning how to be empathetic to people.

Lori Hoffner *Supporting CommUnity, Inc.*

The Money Trail: Proving and Quantifying Your Parks' Economic Impacts

Room: **Guava/Tamarind** | Track: **Fiscal Administration**

Understanding the economic impact of parks is critical for justifying funding, guiding policy, and demonstrating community value. This session highlights how anonymized credit card and cell phone data provide powerful insights into recreation spending, visitation patterns, and local economic benefits. Learn how to turn real-world visitor and transaction data into compelling evidence that supports the essential role parks play in regional economies and community well-being. Quantifying impact has never been more important—or more possible.

Michelle Johnson *SmithGroup*

Dan Marsalek *Outdoor Sylvania Community Parks*



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Rust, Rot, and Revival: Winning the War on Deferred Maintenance

Room: **Portia/Wisteria** | Track: **Facilities/Operations**

Cataloguing deferred maintenance in a park is like playing detective in a mystery where the culprit is time—and maybe squirrels. You'll inspect sagging benches, rebellious sprinklers, and swings that scream "retirement." Snap photos, jot notes, and log it all in a system smarter than your clipboard. It's less glamorous than planting flowers, but it's how you catch that cracked sidewalk before it catches a jogger.

Tony Carpenter Centerville-Washington Park District

Ken Carter Centerville-Washington Park District

Chris Pion Five Rivers MetroParks

Strategic Planning: Rooted in Community, Driven by Purpose

Room: **Zebrawood** | Track: **Projects & Planning**

A strategic plan shouldn't sit on a shelf—it should shape daily decisions and long-term direction. This session will explore practical approaches for leading your parks and recreation agency through inclusive planning efforts that engage staff, boards, stakeholders, and the community. Learn how to develop a mission-driven plan grounded in community voices, organizational clarity, and actionable priorities.

Paul Khacherian NPC Strategy, LLC

The Struggle Is Real!

Room: **Rosewood** | Track: **Fundamentals**

Did you bring solutions today or just complaints? In an era where real-time access, transparency, and rapid response are the public's expectations, organizations are facing increasing pressure to deliver consistent, high-quality service while keeping the public happy—easy right? Well in these days everyone has an opinion and they want to be heard. Through humor and fun, we will discuss some of the trials and tribulations our agency has faced and how we have adapted (to most) while keeping our sanity...maybe!

Ashlee Schmitt Greene County Parks & Trails

Robin Gregory Greene County Parks & Trails

Heather Beals Greene County Parks & Trails

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4:00pm - 5:15pm » Education Sessions

Presented by Equitable Advisors

Being Prepared!

Room: **Crown Palm Hut** | Track: **Aquatics**

Always being ready is key for aquatics professionals. Risk prevention, staying vigilant, and developing and enforcing rules all help prevent incidents and accidents. But what happens when things go wrong? Who's in charge? What's your plan? Where is your support? When will help arrive? How will you deal with the aftermath? These are the questions that three aquatics professionals with over 100 years of combined experience will help you answer.

Jim Clark *Cleveland Parks and Recreation*

Chuck Kunsman *Northeast Ohio Aquatic Consulting & Training, LLC*

Annemarie Finch *Mayfield Village Parks & Recreation*

Bikepath Maintenance: Maintaining the Quality that Keeps Users Coming Back

Room: **Portia/Wisteria** | Track: **Facilities/Operations**

This educational session will discuss trail system maintenance from the start of paving a new bike trail to the annual maintenance of the trail. Presenters will talk about the treatments for trail systems to extend the pavement's lifecycle. Together we will share successes and lessons learned over more than 20 years of maintaining paved trails.

Luke Meyer *Asphalt Systems Ohio*

Chuck Frazier *Retired*

Challenging Conversations Don't Have to Weigh You Down: Inspiring Communication Success

Room: **Indigo Bay** | Track: **Management**

In every workplace, challenging conversations are inevitable. In this session, you'll learn five powerful communication strategies to confidently resolve conflicts. Mastering these techniques will help you foster a collaborative environment, improve staff motivation and retention, and transform difficult conversations into opportunities for growth and success. Join us and thrive!

Lori Hoffner *Supporting CommUnity, Inc.*

Conservation in Unconventional Spaces

Room: **Sagewood** | Track: **Natural Resources**

Learn about Great Parks of Hamilton County's adaptive reuse of an over 100-year-old barn and how the project team created a unique bat habitat integrated into the design. This case study highlights how the team designed and constructed a new bat habitat by providing environmental separation to the areas occupied by people. Learn about planning and construction during migration to have the renovated habitat ready for the bats' return during the summer of 2025.

Brett Macht *emersion DESIGN*

Kari Horn *Great Parks of Hamilton County*

Joe Johnson *University of Cincinnati*

Nikki Goldstein *emersion DESIGN*

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Inclusive Play Matters: Evidence-Based Design Best Practices for Play and Recreation Destinations

Room: **Leopardwood** | Track: **Inclusion/DEI**

Thoughtfully break down physical and social barriers to create a welcoming atmosphere and ensure parks intentionally support the developmental benefits of inclusive, intergenerational play! Research findings and new data offer unique insights to demonstrate the positive impact of designing outdoor destinations to address the diverse needs of the whole child, the whole environment, and the whole community!

Ron Blake *GameTime*

Levy Planning and Campaign Guidance

Room: **Mangrove** | Track: **Administration**

Participants will learn common levy options and legislative changes impacting levy decisions. Rebecca and Catherine will provide practical examples of permissible and impermissible campaign activities and communications.

Rebecca Princehorn *Bricker Graydon Wyatt LLP*

Catherine Swartz *Bricker Graydon Wyatt LLP*

Master Planning on a Shoestring: Big Results, Small Budget

Room: **Zebrawood** | Track: **Projects & Planning**

Master plans are critical for guiding ongoing improvements, but a successful plan doesn't have to drain your budget. From boat ramps to trails, plazas, and other amenities, a clear, realistic plan can unlock funding that fits your community's needs. This session shows how to build a practical vision and priority list on a lean budget and tight timeline—with real-life case studies, proven success stories, and a focus on local connections and placemaking to strengthen your community.

Matt McGrath *Environmental Design Group*

Tom James *Environmental Design Group*

Kyle Lukes *Environmental Design Group*



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More than a Medal: The Power of Community Races

Room: **Cypress** | Track: **Events**

Have you ever hosted a youth triathlon? A community race? Maybe you're unsure of where to start! The benefits of uniting your community and promoting healthy living for all ages are invaluable, regardless of the event type—whether it's a 5K, 10K, triathlon, or fun run. Join us to explore the intricacies of hosting community youth triathlons and their positive influence on communities.

Natalie Mullin Bexley Recreation and Parks

Taylor Tobias Grandview Heights Parks & Recreation

Partnerships in Acquisitions

Room: **Rosewood** | Track: **Fundamentals**

Locating land for expansion of parks, trails, and greenways can be a challenge, although it is the first step in acquiring land. There are many complexities to property acquisition, and this session will assist you in understanding those complexities, how to work through them, and the role land trusts have played in acquiring property for parks. We'll provide examples of Ohio projects from the initial identification of the project and contact with the landowner, through acquisition and restoration on behalf of park districts, municipalities, ODNR, and regional stormwater management districts.

Derek Schafer West Creek Conservancy

Joe Leslie West Creek Conservancy

The Playbook for Seasonal Staff Success

Room: **Aloeswood** | Track: **Human Resources**

Seasonal staff can make or break your summer. With just a short window to train and prepare them, it's crucial to set staff up for success from day one. In this session, we'll dive into the playbook of proven strategies to train seasonal parks and recreation staff efficiently and effectively—equipping them to handle challenges, deliver excellent service, and leave a lasting impact in a short amount of time.

Jacob Hensel Centerville-Washington Park District

Racial Equity: From Redlining to Hostile Parkitecture

Room: **Ironwood Hut** | Track: **Urban Rec**

While wealth is a major driver in outcomes, race is the stronger predictor. When studies control for income, racial disparities remain key factors in health, education, employment, and incarceration. Racial equity strategies are currently a major focus of parks departments in large, diverse, urban cities all across the Country—do you have one? Data is important. You want to be able to use it to ensure you are equitably distributing resources, but where else should you be looking to ensure racial equity? Often parks departments build hostile parkitecture that's not welcoming for the intended use or user. Do you have park design elements that unwittingly keep your diverse patrons out? Two park professionals from different urban systems will talk about some of the barriers to equity you may not see, and what strategies you can take to ensure that the predominant race and income of an area does not predict the quality and/or quantity of its parks, and that parks in diverse, low-income areas best reflect the community needs in that area.

Jai Cole Fairfax County Park Authority

Chris Matthews Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation



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Turn Your Playground Dreams into Reality: A Guide to Fundraising & Grants

Room: **Guava/Tamarind** | Track: **Fiscal Administration**

Building a new playground is more than just equipment—it's about creating a space where kids, families, and communities come together to grow, move, and connect. But before the first slide is installed or a single swing takes flight, many departments face the same challenge: funding. We know fundraising can feel overwhelming. This session is designed to give you the tools to create a clear plan for success and expert insights to bring your playground dreams to reality.

Jenny Cash *Midstates Recreation*

What's New and Old with Senior Centers

Room: **Banyan Hut** | Track: **Seniors**

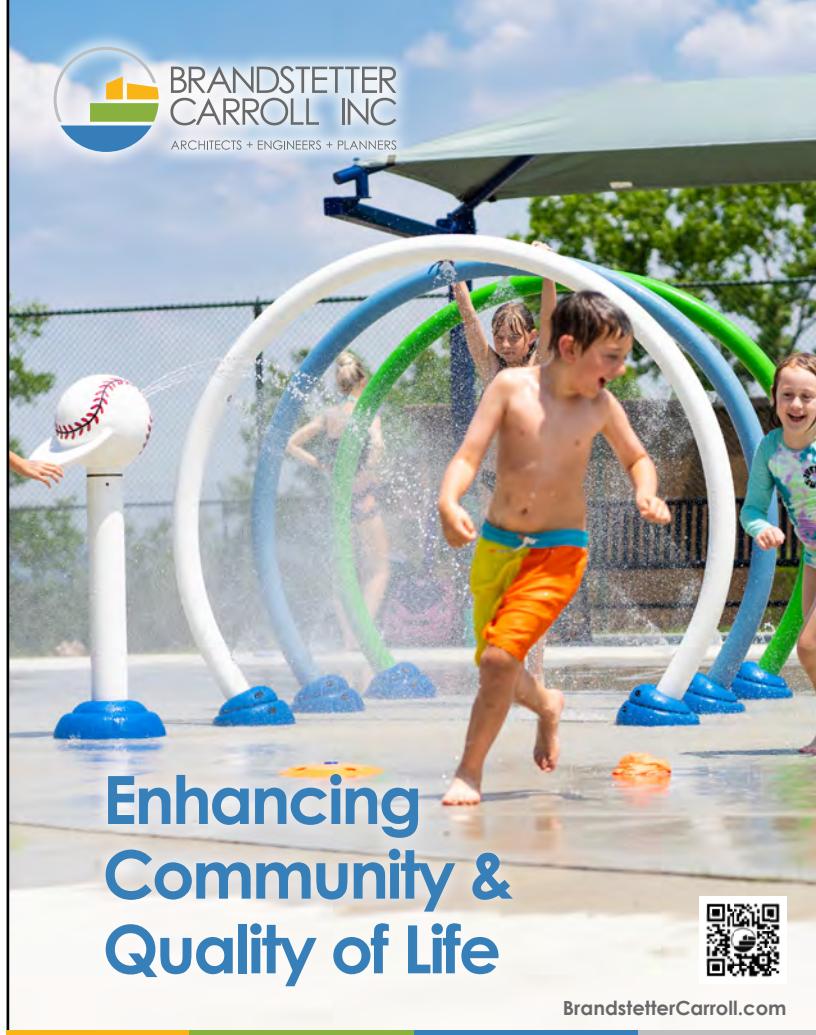
Ohio has seen a recent trend of new Senior Center facility development within parks and recreation. Listen to our panel discuss being involved with Senior Centers moving to new facilities. One moved in 2020, one in Spring 2025, one in Fall 2025, and one early this year. They will discuss what worked, what could have gone better, and what to look for with the latest trends in senior programming and operations.

William Plessinger *Westerville Parks & Recreation*

Shannon Guy *Upper Arlington Parks and Recreation*

Jill Collins *Hilliard Recreation & Parks*

Annette Baxter *Gahanna Parks & Recreation*



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7:00pm - 8:00pm » Minority Networking Experience » Cypress

We're on a mission to create a thriving network of leaders within OPRA that represent any minority but also those who support minority advancement in the recreation and parks field! If you're a professional in parks and recreation looking to connect with others who share your passion and vision, this is your chance to join a dynamic, inclusive, and supportive community.

Scan to join the Minority Leaders Interest List »



7:00pm - 12:00am » Hut Hop Networking Event » Jaamati Huts, Indigo Bay, & Baobab

Presented by Midstates Recreation, TinyMobileRobots, Bluegrass Recreation Sales and Installation, The Davey Tree Expert Company, Design2Wellness, and Snider Recreation, Inc.!

Enjoy a relaxing evening with colleagues visiting Baobab, Indigo Bay, and Kalahari's Jaamati Huts where OPRA partners will offer food, drinks, games, and other surprises! This event's non-alcoholic drink option is the Bahama Mama by **Ohio Liquor** and soda pop by **V3 Companies**.

8:30am - 9:45am » Education Sessions

Presented by Coaching Skills Academy

Data, Drama, and Clear Decisions

Room: **Indigo Bay** | Track: **Leadership**

You've gathered the data...now what? If your spreadsheets are starting to feel overwhelming, this session will help bring clarity to the chaos. We'll walk through how to interpret key marketing metrics and turn data into actionable strategies that support your recreation programs. Discover how to use insights to guide smarter decisions, build stronger stories, and showcase your impact to stakeholders. Your parks and recreation efforts deserve to be seen—and this session will help make sure they are.

Amanda Morris *Hilliard Recreation & Parks*

Amanda Rossbach *Hilliard Recreation & Parks*



Leadership Toolkit: Transforming a Department

Room: **Guava/Tamarind** | Track: **Leadership**

Transforming a department means trading smooth scripts for a live-wire circuit board. This toolkit breaks down the essentials so you can tame the complexity, bring your team along, and keep the climb exhilarating.

Alexandria Nichols *Cleveland Parks and Recreation*

Leading Beyond the Plan: What to Do When the Unexpected Hits

Room: **Salon A** | Track: **Leadership**

In today's fast-moving public sector environment, crisis isn't a question of if—it's when.

What do you do when five key leaders walk out the door, your fiscal foundation shakes, your board leadership shifts, and morale sinks all at once? This session dives deep into what it really takes to lead through unplanned disruption, using real-world lessons from the Cincinnati Recreation Commission. Daniel and Tim will walk participants through a candid case study of how CRC navigated a perfect storm of staff exits, fiscal uncertainty, shifting board dynamics, and growing community expectations—without losing sight of mission or momentum.

Daniel Betts *Cincinnati Recreation Commission*

Tim Heyl *Cincinnati Recreation Commission*



Navigating Change with Community Organizations

Room: **Salon H** | Track: **Leadership**

Implementing change in your agency can be complex but beneficial. It becomes more complicated when it involves community organizations like advisory boards, civic groups, etc. This session will cover recent examples of how these organizations were involved, determining their new role and structure, and in some cases, their dissolution, all while maintaining positive relationships with the group and community.

Debbie McLaughlin *Upper Arlington Parks and Recreation*

Kayla Sensenbaugh *Vandalia Parks & Recreation*

Power Mapping for Parks: Building Influence, Coalitions, and Funding

Support

Room: **Mangrove** | Track: **Leadership**

Park leaders must articulate their value not only to visitors, but to funders, civic leaders, and community influencers. This interactive presentation teaches the political and relational tool of power mapping—used in planning and public policy—to identify decision makers, potential allies, and community voices that shape budgets and public will. Participants will learn a practical framework they can take home and apply to capital projects, trail development, water access, environmental concerns, or river activation projects.

Sarah Hippenstein Hall *Miami Conservancy District*

Supporting the Front Line: Leadership Practices for Stronger Teams

Room: **Portia/Wisteria** | Track: **Leadership**

Front-line staff are the heart of our parks and recreation services. From maintaining welcoming spaces to delivering meaningful programs, these team members keep our communities running. Yet their needs are often overlooked, which can lead to burnout, turnover, and low morale. This session will explore how leaders at all levels can build strong, inclusive teams by fostering psychological safety, trust, and belonging. Attendees will learn practical strategies to support staff well-being, recognize and address burnout early, and create a culture where all voices are valued. Real-life examples and simple tools will be shared to help leaders strengthen connections across teams and improve overall service delivery. Whether you supervise full-time staff, seasonal employees, or volunteers, you'll leave with actionable steps to help your team thrive.

Sam Jenkins *Empowering Communities*

Values in Action

Room: **Cypress** | Track: **Leadership**

Discover how one department transformed its leadership and culture by embedding core values into everyday management. Learn practical strategies to use values as a framework for setting expectations, evaluating staff, and guiding team decisions. This session explores how living your values can build consistency, accountability, and trust across all levels of your organization. Whether you're developing your own value set or refining how you use them, you'll leave with actionable insights to strengthen your leadership impact.

Colleen Light *Worthington Parks and Recreation*

Ryan Cooper *Worthington Parks and Recreation*

9:00am - 9:30am » Exhibitor Roundtable » Aisle by Booth 414

Meet up to discuss suggestions, comments, concerns, and how we can improve the Exhibit Hall experience!

9:45am - 12:30pm » Roundtables » Cypress & Indigo Bay

9:45am - 10:30am	Marketing	Cypress	Adria Bergeron <i>Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District</i>
	Urban Rec	Indigo Bay	Bryana Ross <i>Columbus Recreation and Parks</i>
10:45am - 11:30am	Facilities/Operations	Cypress	Tony Carpenter <i>MetroParks of Butler County</i>
	Summer Camp	Indigo Bay	Cory Ollie <i>Columbus Metropolitan Library</i> Gina Kolp <i>City of Powell</i>
11:45am - 12:30pm	Sports	Indigo Bay	Andy Wildman <i>Granville Recreation District</i> Aaron Tiplady <i>Sharonville Parks and Recreation</i>

9:45am - 12:45pm » Exhibit Hall & Lunch » Kilimanjaro & Zambezi

Stop by the Exhibit Halls one last time to say thank you to your favorite exhibitors and enjoy a delicious lunch served at 11:00am. Don't forget to check out the OPRA Foundation Raffles!

11:45am - 12:45pm » Student Conference: Committee Q & A » Mangrove

The Student Committee leads an open discussion of industry topics and encourages student interaction. Students also have the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions before the end of the Student Conference experience.

1:00pm - 2:30pm & 2:45pm - 4:15pm » Leadership Series

Presented by Penchura



The Leadership Series offers each session twice, so you can attend two of four fantastic sessions.



Kassi Kincaid The Edge of Creativity

Location: **Salon A**

Feeling burnt out, uninspired, or stepping into a new leadership role in parks and recreation?

Creativity is a vital skill that often goes

untapped. In this session, you'll uncover your creative

potential and learn how to apply it to enhance programming, engage your community, and drive innovation in your organization. Walk away with actionable strategies to inspire fresh ideas and make a lasting impact in parks and recreation.

Kassi Kincaid is a speaker, trainer, and author dedicated to helping leaders and teams harness creativity to drive innovation and engagement. As the visionary behind Book Days, an international children's literacy initiative, Kassi has witnessed firsthand how creative thinking transforms ideas into global impact. Her journey from launching a literacy movement to inspiring professionals of all backgrounds has shaped her mission to equip organizations with practical creativity frameworks that spark innovation, boost employee engagement, and drive meaningful change. Kassi believes that creativity is the key to solving complex challenges and unlocking new opportunities. Through her interactive workshops and keynotes,



Nathan Eppink Embracing the Leadership Challenge | Location **Indigo Bay**

New leaders often face challenges early on—sometimes from within the organization. During this session, Nate will describe challenges he's faced in the hot seat and ways to set expectations. Attendees will examine leadership styles, answer scenario-based questions, and consider ways to improve as leaders.

Nathan Eppink has dedicated his career to making lives better through parks and recreation for nearly 25 years. He joined Medina County Park District (MCPD) and became its director in 2018 following time with Cleveland Metroparks, Geauga Park District, and Summit Metro Parks. Nate describes his role as director of MCPD as the best job in Northeast Ohio. Since 2019, MCPD has grown by more than 1,800 acres, opened several new parks and preserves, and secured more than \$15 million in grants for land acquisition, restoration, and construction. Nate has bachelor's and master's degrees in communication from Cleveland State University, is a two-term former board member of Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, is an ex-officio trustee of Friends of Medina County Parks, and a member of the Ohio Public Works Commission's District 9 Natural Resources Assistance Council. He lives on a hobby farm in Sharon Township, Medina County, with his wife and three children.



Bobbi Nance & Bill Tschirhart

Embracing Your Authentic, Awkward, Awesome Self | Location: **Salon H**

Do you ever feel like leadership advice expects you to fit into a mold that just isn't you? What if the quirks you've been trying to hide and the weaknesses you've been told to fix are actually the qualities that set you apart? Through shared stories and lessons learned, Bobbi and Bill will show you practical strategies to succeed without sacrificing what makes you, you, and how embracing your authentic self leads to better results, stronger relationships, and greater satisfaction.

Bobbi Nance is an expert at helping bring real change to real life. Whether she's helping park and recreation teams find value in their data, evaluate their offerings, or set a new strategy, Bobbi has a knack for making it fun, relatable, and actually doable. She's regularly described as both "passionate and practical," and brings that unique mix of energy and expertise to all of her work, giving people the tools to improve along with the confidence to move. Bobbi is a frequent presenter at schools and conferences across North America including past appearances at NRPA, Athletic Business, American Camping Association, Oglebay's Revenue School, and NRPA's Directors School.

Bill Tschirhart combines a business approach with public service helping organizations achieve their goals. He has worked in both the municipal and park district setting, a career spanning more than 27 years. Bill has presented at numerous state and national conferences, schools, and institutes on topics such as cost recovery, pricing, financial management, marketing, alternative revenue, and leadership. Bill is the Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts for the City of Kettering.



Tiffany Wood & Erin Duffee Empowered Roles for Great Leadership

Location: Cypress

Join us for a dynamic, research-backed session exploring how empowered roles, communication tools, and the Enneagram drive self-awareness, team insight, and exceptional leadership. Grounded in data and current leadership research, this session offers practical, actionable strategies to elevate how you lead. You'll leave with a clear understanding of leadership dynamics and a toolkit of immediately usable resources to foster trust, clarity, and collaboration with your team. Empower yourself—and your people—for lasting impact.

Tiffany Wood is the founder of Spark Impact Consulting. She is certified to serve individuals and teams through the Integrative Enneagram Institute (IEQ9). Additionally, she continues to bolster her collective coaching and consulting acumen through additional training and work in the fields of education, enrollment management, marketing, leadership, coaching, project management, and communications. Tiffany has also received training with additional tools including Strengths Finder, Energy Level Leadership, OKRs, and more. She most recently served as the Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at Point University. Tiffany is currently serving as a Board member for A Suitcase and a Dream, Analytic Vizion Foundation, and Heatherwood Christian School. Tiffany graduated from The Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) with a bachelor's degree in Global Economics and Spanish with additional studies and concentrations in Psychology and Counseling and a master's degree in International Affairs and Economic Development.

Erin Duffee has been in the parks and recreation field since 2004 serving in the central Ohio area for the City of Hilliard, City of Dublin, and the City of Grove City. Prior to working in the parks and recreation field, Erin began her career working for the Student Conservation Association, a national nonprofit association, building trails in state parks and teaching environmental education to high school students. Erin found her calling for the parks and recreation field while serving in her first public service position with the City of Grove City where she motivated and led professionals in the before school, after school, and summer childcare setting for 9 years. She transitioned her career to the City of Dublin to oversee summer day camps, preschool, and youth programming, and within two years was promoted to provide oversight for the adult, older adults, nature education, and adaptive programming teams for 6 additional years. Erin transitioned to the City of Hilliard in June, 2020 and is currently serving as Deputy Director.



4:30pm - 6:00pm » Professional Headshots » Executive Center

Stop in the for a free professional headshot. Images will be emailed to you after Conference.

5:30pm - 6:30pm » Awards Reception Networking » South Foyer

Presented by Ohio Liquor

Celebrate the award winners with old and new colleagues.

6:30pm - 8:30pm » Awards Celebration Dinner » Kalahari Ballroom

Presented by DWA Recreation and GameTime

Celebrate the life-changing work of Ohio Parks and Recreation professionals with a showcase of Award-winning programs, events, projects, and the people behind them all in the Kalahari Ballroom.

8:30pm - 12:00am » After Awards Networking » Kilimanjaro & Nile

Presented by A&S Party Rental

After dinner, let the networking continue in the Kilimanjaro Rec Room with DJ, dance floor, and plenty of games or hang out in the low-key Nile Club Room with cards and cornhole. This event's non-alcoholic drink option is the Apple Cider Mule Mocktail by **Ohio Liquor**.

8:30am - 9:45am » Education Sessions

The Art of Dealing with Difficult People in Youth Sports

Room: **Rosewood** | Track: **Youth Sports**

People can be challenging—especially in youth sports. Navigating the coach-athlete-parent triangle is essential to creating a positive experience. In this engaging session, attendees will learn how to effectively communicate expectations, manage crucial conversations, and develop skills for handling difficult situations.

Chris Stevenson *The Empower Group*

A Beginner's Guide to Adaptive & Inclusive Programming

Room: **Leopardwood** | Track: **Inclusion/DEI**

In this session, we will discuss subjects such as programming, sensory-friendly events, program promotion, and the importance of having adaptive equipment and an accessible facility. Shane will also touch on inclusive terminology, pairing, navigating behaviors, overcoming bias, and tips for working with individuals with a disability.

Shane Thompson *Westerville Parks & Recreation*

Communication is Key! How to Communicate Effectively in Meetings and Presentations

Room: **Mangrove** | Track: **Administration**

Clear communication builds trust, saves time, and drives results. In this interactive session, learn practical strategies to communicate more effectively in meetings and presentations. We'll cover message clarity, audience awareness, confident delivery, and engagement techniques so you can lead with impact, whether you're speaking to your team, stakeholders, or the public. Leave with tools you can apply immediately to make your communication more clear, confident, and compelling.

Bill Tschirhart *Kettering Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts*

Epic Fails! Top HR Errors that Every Supervisor Should Avoid

Room: **Aloeswood** | Track: **Human Resources**

Ensure that you are utilizing good HR practices and procedures is critical to avoiding liability for employment decisions. This session will go through some of the top HR/employment law errors to avoid and provide tips on management best practices for handling employee discipline, leave abuse, and workplace accommodations.

Brad Bennett *Bricker Graydon Wyatt LLP*

The Generational Grove: Growing Stronger as One Team

Room: **Indigo Bay** | Track: **Management**

Today's parks and recreation teams include five generations—from Traditionalists to Gen Z (with Generation Alpha on the way!)—and that includes staff and volunteers alike. This engaging panel discussion features voices from every generation currently in the workforce, offering real-world insight on bridging age-related gaps. Discover practical ways to foster respect, improve communication, and build stronger, more inclusive teams. Leave with tools to turn generational diversity into a true team asset, no matter your role.

Natalie Peacock *Medina County Park District*

Isaac Smith *Medina County Park District*

John Kleshinski *Medina County Park District*

Roberta Gifford *Medina County Park District*

Donna Schrader *Medina County Park District*

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Involving Your Whole Community to Build a Community Center

Room: Portia/Wisteria | Track: Facilities/Operations

Discover how three central Ohio communities—Upper Arlington, Hilliard, and New Albany—successfully built community centers by engaging residents, schools, businesses, and stakeholders. In this session, hear from each city's Parks and Recreation Director as they share their unique paths to funding, public buy-in, and project completion. Learn valuable strategies for uniting diverse voices, securing support, and delivering facilities like The Bob Crane Community Center, The Well, and New Albany's Fieldhouse and Community Center that reflect true community collaboration. Time is built in for a panel Q & A at the end of the session to ask questions of other team members from each community.

Debbie McLaughlin *Upper Arlington Parks and Recreation*

Ed Merritt *Hilliard Recreation & Parks*

Dave Wharton *New Albany Plain Local Joint Parks District*

Keeping Young Adults Involved After Aging Out of Youth Programs

Room: Cypress | Track: Programming

Youth sports and recreation programs play a vital role in the development of young people, providing physical activity, social interaction, and opportunities for teamwork. However, many young individuals struggle to find ways to stay involved once they age out of organized youth programs. In this session, you will learn effective strategies to retain engagement among youth who have transitioned into adulthood.

Annie Brown *Columbus Recreation & Parks*

Ren Kuzmanovich *Columbus Recreation & Parks*

Nikki Van Dine *Columbus Recreation & Parks*

Practical Applications of AI for Parks and Recreation Professionals

Room: Guava/Tamarind | Track: Fundamentals

Delve into real-world AI-use cases tailored for parks and recreation. After a quick refresher on AI basics, we'll examine how AI can transform HR processes, marketing campaigns, data analytics, program development, and more. Gain hands-on insights and strategies to implement AI effectively, ensuring your department stays ahead in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Sam Lunt *GovTech Innovators, Inc.*

Jason Peters *VC3*

Using ArcGIS FieldMaps for High-Quality Natural Area Monitoring & Invasive Plant Management

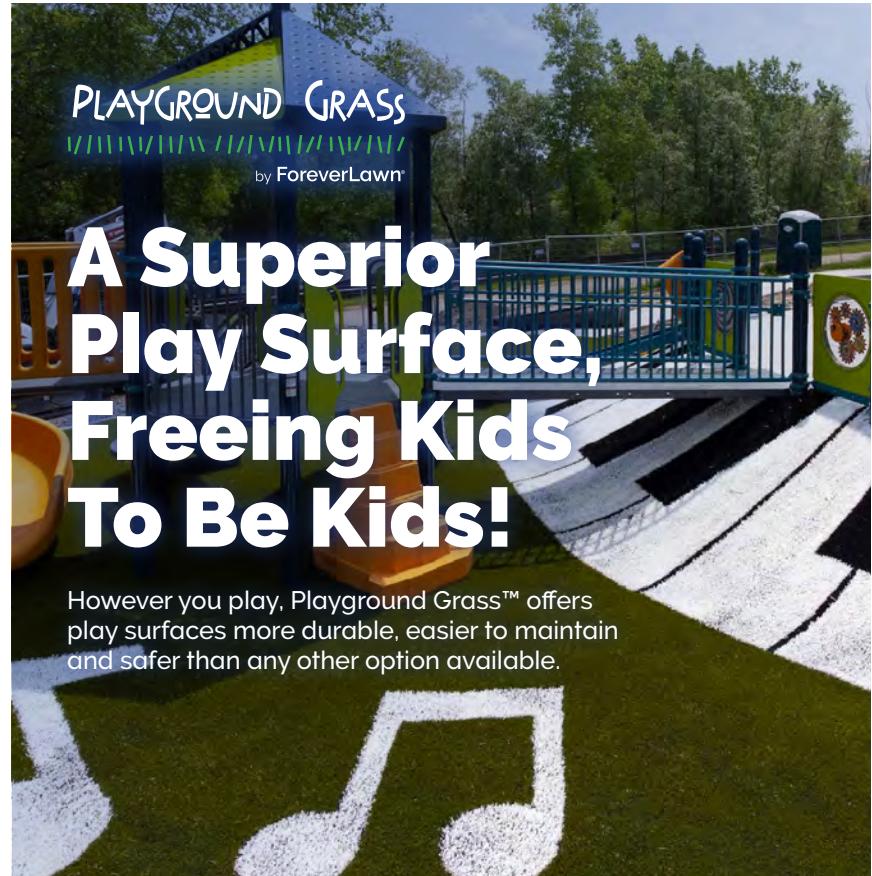
Room: Sagewood | Track: Parks

Invasive plant management in natural areas requires thoughtful prioritization because threats are numerous and resources are limited. Come learn about how we developed a rapid data collection protocol and used GIS on mobile devices to sample in high quality natural areas. The protocol was designed to be used by staff who were not necessarily specialists in monitoring natural resources, so training resources were provided. We were able to identify areas of relative high and low quality and produce maps showing their distribution across the gridded areas. These maps are being used to plan management, including invasive plant treatment, and are shared with the park staff carrying out the work.

Kari Horn *Great Parks of Hamilton County*

Daniel Kovar *Great Parks of Hamilton County*

Jessica Spencer *Great Parks of Hamilton County*



10:15am - 11:30am » Education Sessions

Achieving Success with Programs You Know Nothing About

Room: **Cypress** | Track: **Programming**

In parks and recreation, professionals are often assigned to oversee programs they have little to no experience in. Whether it's aquatics, gymnastics, special events, or another unfamiliar area, stepping into the unknown can be overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Join a professional whose department faced this challenge head-on: learn how they adapted, built expertise, leveraged staff knowledge, and thrived in their roles. This session will provide strategies for embracing new assignments with confidence.

Colton Patak *Mason Parks and Recreation*

Community Engagement through Social Media

Room: **Guava/Tamarind** | Track: **Fundamentals**

Community engagement through social media involves using digital platforms to connect with audiences, foster meaningful interactions, and build relationships. It includes creating engaging content, responding to comments, encouraging discussions, and leveraging user-generated content. Effective engagement increases brand awareness, strengthens community trust, and enhances communication.

Kaitlin Duncan *City of Obetz*

LeAnna Lutz *City of Obetz*

Green Ribbon Initiative - Oak Openings Region

Room: **Sagewood** | Track: **Parks**

The Green Ribbon Initiative is a shared vision of public and private organizations, landowners, and individuals working to preserve, enhance, and restore critical natural areas in the Oak Openings region of Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan. We engage community members through our quarterly newsletter, volunteer programs, landowner registry, site visits, and more. Learn about all we do to keep our Oak Openings "ribbon" green!

Matty Watkins *Green Ribbon Initiative and The Nature Conservancy*

Parks for All: Serving Neurodiverse Populations in Parks

Room: **Leopardwood** | Track: **Inclusion/DEI**

"These kids are different!" And that's a good thing! Join Meghan Doran and Allison King for a dynamic session on making parks and recreation more inclusive for neurodiverse youth and their families. Learn inclusive language, easy program modifications, and why inclusive design is smart and sustainable. Whether you're a recreation leader, naturalist, educator, parent, or advocate—this is your chance to reimagine spaces and programs through a more thoughtful, community-driven lens. Let's create places where everyone belongs!

Meghan Doran *Summit Metro Parks*

Allison King *Dublin City Schools*

Snow and Ice Removal Basics

Room: **Portia/Wisteria** | Track: **Facilities/Operations**

In this session, we will cover basic maintenance procedures for snow and ice removal on trails, paths, sidewalks, and parking lots. Snow removal is more than a maintenance task—it's a commitment to public safety, accessibility, and community resilience. By adopting proactive strategies like liquids and sustainable practices, we can keep our shared spaces safe and welcoming throughout the winter season. We'll also share information about American Public Works Association and what it has to offer to our members.

Joe Fornaro *City of Kirtland*

Bob Eakin *Summit Metro Parks*

Staff Mentorship in Motion: From Vision to Reality

Room: **Aloeswood** | Track: **Human Resources**

Looking for new ways to grow and engage your park staff? Join this session to hear how one group of passionate employees designed, pitched, and launched a staff mentoring program. We will cover the research and design process through implementation of the program.

Monica Resnik *Great Parks of Hamilton County*

Amanda Schilling *Great Parks of Hamilton County*

Start with Why & End with Growth: Feedback for Real Change

Room: **Indigo Bay** | Track: **Management**

Feedback is a powerful tool—but only when rooted in purpose and delivered with clarity. Using *Start with Why* by Simon Sinek as a guide, this session explores how to give constructive feedback that builds trust and how to receive it with professionalism. Learn how individuals respond differently, discover simple and actionable strategies, and walk away equipped to create a department culture where feedback empowers growth, strengthens communication, and fuels meaningful progress.

Addie Weaver *Washington Township RecPlex*

Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Quality Coaches in Youth Sports

Room: **Rosewood** | Track: **Youth Sports**

Quality coaching is pivotal to the success of youth sports programs, impacting not only athletic performance but also the personal development of young athletes. Unfortunately, many programs face challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled coaches who can inspire, educate, and lead. This proposal outlines a session designed to equip parks and recreation professionals with effective strategies for attracting and maintaining high-quality coaches within youth sports programs.

Annie Brown *Columbus Recreation & Parks*

Ren Kuzmanovich *Columbus Recreation & Parks*

A Year-In-Review: Parks & Recreation Legislative and Case Law Update

Room: **Mangrove** | Track: **Administration**

This session will focus on Ohio-specific parks and recreation-related administrative, legislative, and case law updates that have occurred over the last year. Participants will gain a greater understanding and insight into the current and ever-changing administrative, legislative, and judicial landscape affecting the Ohio parks and recreation industry.

Ben Yoder *Bricker Graydon Wyatt LLP*

Sarah Sparks *Bricker Graydon Wyatt LLP*

11:30am - 1:00pm » Closing Keynote & Lunch » Kalahari Ballroom

Presented by Playground Equipment Services



Closing Keynote Mitch Savoie Hill

Mitch Savoie Hill is a first-generation Cuban American CEO, TEDx Speaker, published author, and Corporate Trainer with over 30 years of hospitality and leadership experience. Some of the organizations she has served include the Miami Heat, Society for Human Resources Management, Meeting Professionals International, and the National Association of Women in Construction.

As the CEO and founder of SavHill Consulting LLC, she delivers inclusive leadership coaching, corporate training, and keynote speeches to help audiences learn how to engage diverse clients and teams to achieve optimum productivity and success.

Working in high-stress, fast-paced environments in unique markets, she developed best practices for dealing with different personalities and inspiring cooperation among teams.

Mitch attended New York University's renowned Tisch School of the Arts, where she mastered the skill of public presentation. She also received a certificate in "Ethical and Inclusive Leadership" from the University of South Florida.

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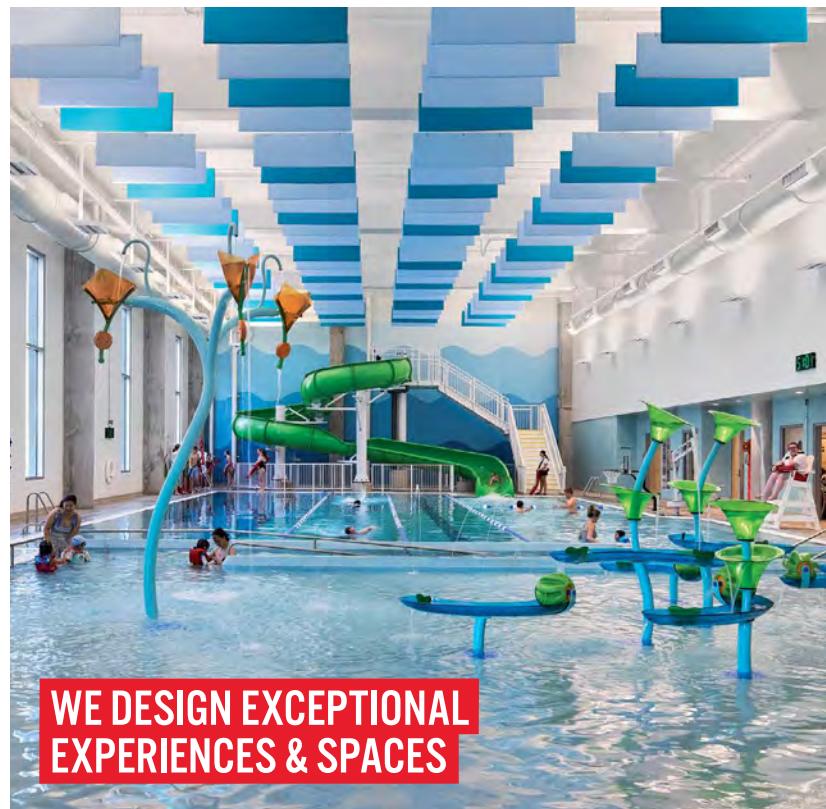
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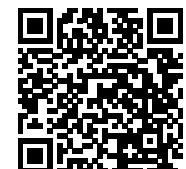
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(419) 668-8167

dvaughan@nciprecast.com | www.nciprecast.com

NCI manufactures prefabricated, modular restrooms, buildings, dugouts, and concession stands.

Nutron OSM | Location: 915

Brian Butchko, VP Sales

31269 Lorain Road, North Olmsted, OH 44070

(440) 777-6660

brian@nutronusa.com | www.nutronosm.com

High quality outdoor signs and markers for way-finding, directional, educational, and information requirements.

O.E. Meyer Co | Location: 716

Jason Wierzba, CO2 Operations Manager

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O.P. Aquatics | Location: 405

Eric Stoyanoff, Territory Manager
22350 Royalton Rd., Strongsville, OH 44149
(440) 238-2800
estoyanoff@opaquatics.com
<https://emSCO.heritagepoolplus.com>
Commercial distributor of swimming pool and spa chemicals, equipment, and supplies to make your water sparkle!

ODNR - Division of Wildlife | Location: 402

Sarah Schott, Wildlife Communications Specialist
952 Lima Ave, Findlay, OH 45840
(614) 519-2986
sarah.schott@dnr.ohio.gov | www.wildlife.gov
The Ohio Division of Wildlife provides educational materials, professional development, and supplemental curriculum to formal and informal educators in Ohio.

OSU Environment and Natural Resources Alumni Society | Location: T-8

Mark Giese, ENRAS President
210 Kottman Hall, 2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210
(614) 493-1984
enras@osu.edu | <https://senr.osu.edu/alumni>
OSU ENRAS is comprised of school graduates and promotes the following: advancing the professions in the field of natural resources, augmenting educational and career development, and promoting growth and development of SENR.

Ohio Association of Senior Centers | Location: T-11

Kim Corey, Coordinator
3757 Indianola Ave., Columbus, OH 43214
(800) 796-6272
krc@pacainc.com | www.ohioasc.org
The purpose of OASC is to support and enhance the ability of Ohio's senior center network to effectively serve older adults.

Ohio Beaver Strategies | Location: 940

Steve Ecrement, Owner
4114 Channel Road, Carrollton, OH 44615
(337) 396-3428
steve@ohiobeaverstrategies.com
www.ohiobeaverstrategies.com
Wildlife professionals using ethical management strategies to resolve beaver/human conflicts. We use well-established flow devices for successful, long-term, cost effective human management methods to protect infrastructure, property, and habitat.

Ohio Department of Commerce | Location: 214

Gregg Dodd, Director of Brand & Marketing Strategy
6606 Tussing Road, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068
gregg.dodd@com.ohio.gov | <https://com.ohio.gov>
The Ohio Department of Commerce is Ohio's chief regulatory agency, focused on promoting prosperity and protecting what matters most to Ohioans. We ensure businesses follow the laws that help them create jobs and keep Ohioans safe.

Ohio Geese Control | Location: 702

Jeff Hower, Owner
3250 Nelson Park Dr., Rocky River, OH 44116
(877) 914-3373
jeff@ohiogeesecontrol.com
www.ohiogeesecontrol.com
We humanely and effectively manage migratory bird populations, including geese and gulls delivering dramatic and timely results.

Ohio Liquor (OHLQ) | Partner | Location: 210

Brian Hoyt, Director, Corporate Social Responsibility
41 S High St., Suite 1500, Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 625-6329
hoyt@jobsohio.com | www.ohlq.com
Ohio Liquor (OHLQ) is a unique public/private partnership that ensures the safe and fair distribution of high-proof liquor across our state and directs profits from the sale of liquor to fund economic development in Ohio.

Ohio Penal Industries | Location: T-14

Zach Taubenheim, Program Administrator
2210 Old Springfield Rd., London, OH 43140
(614) 813-2910
zachary.taubenheim@drc.ohio.gov
<http://opi.ohio.gov>
We offer over 4,000 products that are made inside the prisons.

Ohio Public Works Commission | Location: T-1

Will Gaberle, Program Representative
77 S. High Street, Suite 1846, Columbus, OH 43215
william.gaberle@pwc.ohio.gov
<https://publicworks.ohio.gov/home>
We are a state commission that administers the Clean Ohio Conservation Greenspace Program.

Ohio State Parks & Watercraft | Location: 320
Lindsay Deering
Information & Education Administrator
2045 Morse Rd. Building A, Columbus, OH 43229
(614) 265-6561
ohiostateparks@odnr.ohio.gov | **ohiostateparks.org**
Ohio State Parks & Watercraft is the #1 state park system in the nation. We are dedicated to exceptional outdoor recreation and boating opportunities in Ohio.

Ohio University | Location: T-5
Joe Crowley, Assistant Professor of Instruction
110 E. Union Street; Patton Hall, Athens, OH 45701
(617) 688-1816
crowlej1@ohio.edu | <https://www.ohio.edu/education/recreation-sport-pedagogy-consumer-sciences>
Undergraduate and graduate education in parks, recreation, hospitality, and tourism

OHM Advisors | Location: 520
Matt Hils, Principal
6001 Euclid Avenue, Suite 130, Cleveland, OH 44103
(216) 346-2637
matt.hils@ohm-advisors.com
www.ohm-advisors.com
OHM is an award winning, multidisciplinary firm with planning, urban design, landscape architecture, architecture, engineering, surveying, and construction engineering services.

Omega II Fence Systems | Location: 908
Melanie Lanier, Representative
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(505) 453-5315
melanie@trepheна.com | www.omegatwo.com
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Outdoorlink | Location: 929
Dave Ramirez, National Parks & Rec Specialist
3058 Leeman Ferry Rd SW, Huntsville, AL 35801
(256) 885-9768
dave@outdoorlinkinc.com
<https://outdoorlink.com/parks-recreation>
Outdoorlink's hassle-free remote control solutions automate park lighting, security, and signage, cutting expenses while ensuring neighbor-friendly illumination and helping to create a safer environment.

Pace, Inc. | Location: 818, 820, 822, & 824
Katie Gorham, Marketing
739 S. Mill St., Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 738-0631
katieg@pacelink.com | www.pacelink.com
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Pannier Graphics | Location: 602

Emily Almyer, Sales & Marketing Manager

345 Oak Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044

(724) 265-4900

marketing@panniergraphics.com | www.panniergraphics.com

Pannier Graphics is the leading manufacturer of outdoor signs, panels, exhibit bases, and frames used in a full range of applications.

Paragon Integrated Services Group | Partner

Location: 107 & 109

Dan Mount, Environmental Sales Manager

200 Enterprise Dr., Newcomerstown, OH 43832

(740) 818-5052

dmount@paragonisg.com | www.paragonisg.com

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ParkVision | Partner | Location: 953 & 955

Eric Jones, Senior Sales Representative

418 W Hackley Ave., Muskegon, MI 49444

(231) 798-7300

eric@parkvisionplay.com | www.parkvisionplay.com

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PED | Location: 911, 913, 918, & 920

Terri Butler, Marketing Manager

69250 Burke Dr., Richmond, MI 48062

tbutler@powereqp.com | www.powereqp.com

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Penchura, LLC | Partner | Location: 724 & 825

Jennifer VanDokkumburg, Marketing Manager

889 S. Old US 23, Brighton, MI 84114

(810) 229-6245

jenniferk@penchura.com | www.penchura.com

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PermaTrak | Location: 905

Jason Philbin, President

8050 Corporate Center Dr, Suite 100 J

Charlotte, NC 28226

(980) 229-3036

jphilbin@permatrak.com

<https://www.permatrak.com>

Precast concrete boardwalks

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Kaitlin King, Marketing Manager

629 North High Street, Suite 500

Columbus, OH 43215

(614) 280-4000

solutions@pizzuti.com | www.pizzuti.com

Pizzuti Solutions combines public sector expertise with private sector experience to guide the success of public projects.

Play & Park Structures | Location: 601

Kevin Hindes, Recreation Consultant

10 Old Clairton Road, Suite 12A PMB#120

Pittsburgh, PA 15236

(412) 485-1660

kevin.hindes@playandpark.com

www.playandpark.com

Manufacturer of playground equipment offering turn key project solutions.

Playground Equipment Services | Partner

Location: 618, 620, 622, 624, 719, 721, 723, & 725

Lisa Helmers, Office Manager

3460 Oakmeadow Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45239

(513) 923-2333

lisa@playgroundequipmentservices.com

www.playgroundequipmentservices.com

Playground Equipment Services (PES) is a complete, turnkey (in-house) commercial playground and athletic field turf firm providing design, sales, site development, installation, and maintenance services.

Prevention Action Alliance | Location: 311

Alyce Jennings, Resource Development Manager

6171 Huntley Rd., Suite G, Columbus, OH 43229

(614) 540-9985 x12

ajennings@preventionactionalliance.org

<https://preventionactionalliance.org>

Prevention Action Alliance is a nonprofit that helps prevent substance misuse and promote mental health and wellness. We provide resources and technical assistance to individuals, families, and communities to help educate, empower, and advocate.

2026 OPRA CONFERENCE EXHIBITOR DIRECTORY

Pro Track and Tennis | Location: 309

Tanya Franck, Regional Account Manager

608 13th Ave., Council Bluffs, IA 51501

(402) 312-5555

tanya@protrackandtennis.com

www.protrackandtennis.com

We are a full-service running track and athletic court surfacing contractor.

PumpTrax USA | Partner | Location: 409

Jason Schiefelbein, Sales

17820 Woodbury Ave., Cleveland, OH 44135

(614) 302-3725

jason@pumptraxusa.com | www.pumptraxusa.com

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Rain Drop Products, LLC | Location: 100

Mark Williams, President/CEO

2121 Cottage Street, Ashland, OH 44847

(419) 207-1229

info@rain-drop.com | www.rain-drop.com

Manufacturer of water play interactive, inclusive play features, slides, and controls.

RCP Shelters, Inc. | Location: 950

Carl McCaughey

2100 SE Rays Way, Stuart, FL 34994

(772) 288-3600

info@rcpshelters.com | www.rcpshelters.com

RCP Shelters founded in 1957 continues today as a 3rd generation, family-owned business and is the industry's most diverse shelter manufacturer of pre-engineered shelters supplying products in laminated wood and tube steel in all 50 states.

Realeyes Program | Location: T-10

Britt Dahlstrom, Program Director

250 E. Wilson Bridge Road, Suite 240

Worthington, OH 43085

(614) 781-0708

bdahlstrom@ooa.org | www.ooa.org/realeyes

Realeyes provides free eye health and safety programs for PreK to High School students in Ohio.

Rec Technologies | Location: 957

Rachel Williams, Co-Founder

2261 Market Street, Suite 22268

San Francisco, CA 94114

rachel@rec.us | https://www.rec.us/partner

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RecDesk Software | Location: 707

Tim Bracken, Sales Account Executive

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sales@recdesk.com | www.recdesk.com

RecDesk is #1 in ease of use for recreation management software. If you're in pursuit of happiness with your software; if you're looking for an exceptional company, solution, and complete experience, then RecDesk is a great place to start.

Redi Rock | Location: 706

Bryan Martin, Operations Manager

2121 Tracy Road, Northwood, OH 43619

(419) 662-9000

bmartin@turnerconcreteproducts.com

www.redi-rock.com

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Renewed Outdoors, LLC | Partner | Location: 217

Chloe Roberts, Business & Customer Development

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(419) 874-5537

sales@renewedoutdoors.com

www.renewedoutdoors.com

Renewed Outdoors is a manufacturer and supplier of mulch, topsoil, compost, landscaping supplies, and erosion control materials.

Rock The House Entertainment | Partner

Location: 800

Jeremy Guffin, Project Manager

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info@rthgroup.com | www.rthgroup.com

Full service audio visual production and entertainment company servicing both regional and national clients.

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Romtec, Inc. | Location: 306

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risales@romtec.com | www.romtec.com

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Rozzi's Famous Fireworks | Location: 718

Joe Rozzi, Manager

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(513) 683-0620

joe@rozzifireworks.com | www.rozzifireworks.com

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Ruscilli Construction Co., LLC | Location: 903

Kyle Sellers, VP Sales & Marketing

5815 Wall Street, Dublin, OH 43017

(614) 876-9484

ksellers@ruscilli.com | www.ruscilli.com

Construction management, general contracting, and design build

Rusty Oak Nursery | Location: 619

Kirk Cekada, Grower

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(216) 832-0866

kirk@rusty oak.com | www.rusty oak.com

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SCG Fields | Location: 937

Phil Rickaby, Business Development Manager

10303 Brecksville Rd., Brecksville, OH 44141

(330) 440-5775

philrickaby@scgfields.com | www.scgfields.com

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Schorr Architects, Inc. | Partner | Location: 608

Larry Rancour, VP, Senior Project Manager

230 Bradenton Ave., Dublin, OH 43017

(614) 798-2096

lrancour@schorrarchitects.com

www.schorrarchitects.com

99% of all work is for public entities. Over 85% of projects are for repeat clients. We are proud to be actively involved with projects that directly benefit area communities.

Snider Recreation | Partner | Location: 114 & 215

James Snider, President

10139 Royalton Road #K, North Royalton, OH 44133

(440) 877-9151

info@cvsnider.com | www.cvsnider.com

Ohio-based Snider Recreation designs and installs playgrounds, surfacing, shelters, and site furnishings across OH, IN, MI, and PA. Since the 1980s, we've promoted inclusive play and supported grants that help kids of all abilities PLAY!

SoL Harris/Day Architecture | Location: 946

Melinda Scalfaro, Partner

6677 Frank Ave NW, North Canton, OH 44720

(330) 493-3722

mscalfaro@solharrisday.com | www.solharrisday.com

We are a 30 person architecture and design firm specializing in recreational design and planning with a focus on sustainability.

SOLitude Lake Management | Location: 819

Dylan Caison, Marketing and Events Coordinator

1253 Jensen Dr., Suite 103, Virginia Beach, VA 23451

(757) 695-1097

info@solitude.com

<https://www.solitudelakemanagement.com>

SOLitude is a nationwide environmental firm with local offices throughout the country and partners with commercial, residential, and municipal clients.

Sourcewell | Location: 104

Ryan Bunker, Principal Account Executive

202 12th Street NE, Staples, MN 56479

(216) 484-5633

ryan.bunker@sourcwell-mn.gov

www.sourcwell-mn.gov

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Southwest Greens of Ohio | Location: T-16

Griffin McKinzie, Regional Sales Manager

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sales@swgmidwest.com | www.swgohio.com

Premier synthetic turf surfacing for playgrounds, lawns, golf greens, bocce, etc.

SportMaster | Location: 805

Jeff Gearheart, Director

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Sportsman Software | Location: 906

Corin Robinson, Sales Director

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sales@peakinfo.com | www.sportsmancloud.com

Sportsman is an all-in-one activity and facility management software, built for parks and recreation departments and serving municipalities since 1993.

Stantec | Partner | Location: 308

Joel Thrash, Principal/Practice Lead

10200 Alliance Road, Suite 300, Blue Ash, OH 45242

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joel.thrash@stantec.com | www.stantec.com

Full-service ecological consulting, wetland and stream restoration services, water resource management, cultural resource management, and award winning native plant nursery.

Stream + Wetlands Foundation | Location: T-6

Kellie Griffin

Director of Marketing and Administration

123 South Broad St., Suite 238, Lancaster, OH 43130

(740) 654-4016

kgriffin@streamandwetlands.org

www.streamandwetlands.org

A non-profit and provider of compensatory mitigation for aquatic resources authorized through state and federal regulatory programs.

SuperGames | Partner | Location: 514 & 615

Zach Wells, Director of Sales & Marketing

6580 Huntley Rd., Columbus, OH 43229

(614) 846-8946

zwells@supergames.org | www.supergames.org

We bring people together to share fun, positive experiences. With a focus on special events, SuperGames offers the best activities, staffing, and service in the industry! Our skilled event planning team will ensure your event goes smoothly.

Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council (SOPEC)

Location: T-12

Luke Sulfridge, Executive Director

PO Box 825, Athens, OH 45701

(740) 597-7955

support@sopec-oh.gov | www.sopec-oh.gov

SOPEC is a council of governments that functions as a shared energy office dedicated to providing innovative and sustainable energy solutions in Ohio.

Technique Roofing Systems LLC | Location: 927

Mark Gottron, Sales

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mark@techniqueroofing.com

www.techniqueroofing.com

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Terrabilt, Inc. | Location: 401

Chris O'Hara, Design Director

532 N. State Rd., Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510

(914) 341-1500

info@terrabilt.com | www.terrabilt.com

Terrabilt builds high-quality, long-lasting sign and kiosk products for parks, trails, and preserves—with sustainable materials and green manufacturing. We design signage, maps, and exhibits.

Terracon Consultants, Inc. | Location: 942

Mike Serdinak, Marketing Lead

12460 Plaza Drive, Parma, OH 44130

(216) 303-7343

mike.serdinak@terracon.com | www.terracon.com

Terracon is a 100% employee-owned consulting engineering firm founded in 1965, with over 180 locations and more than 7,000 employees across the United States.

2026 OPRA CONFERENCE EXHIBITOR DIRECTORY

TerraTread | Location: 708

Bryan Martin, Business Development

2121 Tracy Road, Northwood, OH 43619

(419) 662-9000

bmartin@terrataread.com | www.terrataread.com

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TinyMobileRobots | Partner | Location: 515

Nick Graham, Territory Manager

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Kennesaw, GA 30152

(380) 800-9826

ng@tinymobilerobots.com

www.tinymobilerobots.com

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Triad Architects/Triad Facility Solutions

Location: 917

Brent Foley, Partner

172 E State St., Suite 600, Columbus, OH 43215

(614) 314-8463

bfoley@wearetriad.com | www.wearetriad.com

Architecture/interior design/facility management/construction

U.S. Bridge | Location: 943

Dennis Gonano, Ohio Technical Sales

201 Wheeling Avenue; PO Box 757

Cambridge, OH 43725

(740) 421-9373

dgonano@usbridge.com | www.usbridge.com

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United Rentals | Partner

Location: 506, 508, 510, 607, 609, & 611

Jessica Berns, District Sales Manager

997 Wenso Road, Bedford, OH 44146

(330) 958-0301

jberns@ur.com | www.unitedrentals.com

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V3 Companies | Partner | Location: 806

Todd Long

Transportation & Construction Group Leader

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Vermont Systems | Location: 421

Dave Wirtz, Director of Sales

12 Market Place, Essex Junction, VT 05452

sales@vermontsystems.com

www.vermontsystems.com

Vermont Systems is the leading provider of recreation management software and services.

Vie Ability Office Supplies | Location: T-4

Kelley Young, Major Account Manager

1022 Kenner Street, Cincinnati, OH 45214

(513) 295-6086

kelley.young@cincyblind.org

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Vortex Aquatic Structures | Partner | Location: 516

Ryan Eccles, Sales Executive

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reccles@vortex-intl.com | www.vortex-intl.com

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Water Odyssey | Location: 310

Anna Cox, Inside Sales

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www.waterodyssey.com

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Water Technology, Inc. | Location: 701

Matt Freeby, Architect

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(920) 887-7375

events@watertechnologyinc.com

www.watertechnology.com

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we-ef lighting | Location: 939

Kimberly Tosadori

Inside Sales and Purchasing Manager

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we-ef produces high-end outdoor lighting.

West Creek Conservancy | Location: T-13

Derek Schafer, Executive Director

7381 Camelot Drive; PO Box 347113

Parma, OH 44134

(440) 915-2940

dschafer@westcreek.org | www.westcreek.org

West Creek Conservancy is a regional resource for conservation, preservation, and restoration projects. West Creek assists partners with real estate acquisitions from initial contact through to closing, including funding and grant writing.

The Wilds | Location: T-2

Mary Beth Sills

Community Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator

14000 International Rd, Cumberland, OH 43732

(740) 638-5030

msills@thewilds.org | www.thewilds.org

For the past three decades, The Wilds has become a global force in the conservation of threatened and endangered animal species as well as protecting local ecology.

Williams Architects | Location: 317

Karen Lellios, Director of Marketing

1201 Dublin Road, Columbus, OH 43215

(614) 705-1531

ktellios@williams-architects.com

www.williams-architects.com

Architects/planners specializing in the design of recreational and aquatic facilities.

Williams Creek Management | Location: 934

Chris Kaeff

4620 S. County Road 600 E., Plainfield, IN 46168

(859) 446-6511

ckaeff@williamscreekmgt.com

www.williamscreekmgt.com

Williams Creek Management is a team of dedicated, multi-disciplinary construction professionals and scientists delivering superior contracting expertise and resource management solutions in order to solve real-world problems.

Willoughby Stainless Fountains - WSF | Location: 207

Joe Wede, Director of Sales

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Wilson Bohannan Lock Company | Location: 804

Aaron Rassell, VP Sales & Marketing

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Parks and Recreation Means Quality of Life

Ohio is fortunate to have some of the finest parks and recreation facilities in the country.

Parks and recreation:

- improves **quality of life**
- improves **health and wellness**
- contributes to **education and environmental sustainability**
- drives **economic development**

A potential November ballot issue threatens all of that.

Proponents of an issue to eliminate all property taxes in Ohio talk a good game. But they know that their effort would *decimate* our state—ending services that Ohio residents expect and value.

The truth is, most Ohio parks and recreation agencies receive property tax funding and many, including popular Metroparks districts around the state, receive most of their funding from property taxes—*every penny of which has been approved by voters*.

An elimination of property taxes with no replacement funding source—as the proponents of this dangerous amendment have proposed—*would close parks, eliminate services, and negatively and directly impact the quality of life for millions of Ohioans*.



Ohioans know when something's worth supporting.

That's why they approve property taxes—especially when the impact is clear, and the services provided are ones they depend on.

It's why more than 90% of park levies in Ohio were approved last year and over 80% in the last decade.

We need to continue to honor the wishes of Ohio voters.

We need to protect parks and recreation in Ohio.

DECLINE to sign to place the property tax issue on the November ballot.



SAVE THE DATE

2027 OPRA Conference & Trade Show

February 7-10

Kalahari Convention Center



Would you like to be part of the 2027 OPRA Conference Committee?

Join us on **Friday, March 6, 2026** for an information session regarding different areas to serve on Committee at the **Upper Arlington Bob Crane Community Center**!

10:00am – 11:30am Full Conference Committee Meeting & Orientation

This will include a wrap-up of the 2026 Conference & Trade Show and information on the areas in which you can serve on the 2027 Committee.

12:00pm Education & Partnership Meetings

If you decide to serve on the Partnership or Education portion of Conference Committee, we will break for lunch and then at noon, each will have their first official meeting for 2027 planning.

This meeting is required in order to serve on the 2027 Committee. (No exceptions.) Please RSVP to Amanda Perry by **Wednesday, March 4, 2026** if you are planning to attend this meeting at amanda@opraonline.org.