



2026 Massachusetts Recreation and Parks Conference Session Schedule

Tuesday, March 24th	Time	Room: 2	Room: 3	Room: 4	Room: 5
Director's Forum	12:15-2:30pm	<i>Director's Forum: Planning for the Future with Neelay Bhatt</i>			
Session 1	1:15- 2:15pm	Welcome to the 2026 Conference! Your next great session is waiting, let's get started!	Michael Mancini Beyond the Splash: Designing Spray Grounds for Longevity, Safety, and Community Impact	Garrett Warfield Data to Make the Best of a Year in the Life of Running a Park & Rec Agency	Julia Firavich & Hunter Moffatt Synthetic Turf in 2025: Systems, Standards, and Sustainable Solutions
Session 2	2:30 - 3:30pm		Matthew Frye A Positive Youth Development Approach to Serving Participants with Disabilities	Dave Brown Training Staff to Intentionally Develop Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills in Youth	Emmy Richards & Keith Cox People, Parks, and Possibility: From Big Ideas to Real Impact in Small Towns
General Session	3:45-5:00pm	<i>Moving from Best Practices to Next Practices with Neelay Bhatt</i>			
Wednesday, March 25th	Time	Room: 2	Room: 3	Room: 4	Room: 5
Session 3	9:30-10:30am	Ashley McClain & Kerry Haynes Building Inclusive Recreation through Community Partnerships	Dave Brown Coaching with Care: Supporting Staff Who Struggle with Feedback	Neelay Bhatt Panel Discussion: Talking Next Practice with the Next Practitioners	Kyle Rowan & Todd Brown Game-Ready Year-Round: Maintaining Athletic Facilities
Session 4	10:45-11:45am	Rachel Hayward & Jonathan Spiller Relationships are Key to our Well-Being: Building Friendships Between People with and Without Disabilities Through Recreation	Jeff Achee Advocacy in Action: Empowering Legislative Efforts in New Professionals	Tim Davis Budget Basics: Financial Literacy for New Recreation Professionals	Jen Filer Healing Ourselves, Healing Our Parks: How Conservation Building Connections and Purpose
Lunch	12:00-1:15pm	Lunch			
Session 5	1:30-2:30pm	Jon "Kaz" Kazanjian, Nick Campion & Christine Dean Programming 101: How to Build Successful Recreation Programs from A-Z	Dave Brown The Really Scary Stuff: Self-harm and Suicidal Ideation at Camp	Sharon Locke, Kevin Bailey, Hannah Corrigan, Amanda Wong & Kizen Semprum Cannonballs, Creativity, and Community: Aquatic Events That Make a Splash	Emmy Richards & Keith Cox Challenges, Creativity, and Change: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities in Small Towns
Session 6	2:45 - 3:45pm	Denise Leckenby Adaptive and Inclusive Aquatics Programming: From Lessons to Competitive Rec Teams	Adam Lapointe Funding Fun: Sponsorships for Municipal Recreation	Chad Norton You Can Teach an Old Dog New Tricks: How ChatGPT is Changing the Way We Communicate and Work	Panel Discussion Breaking Into the Field: A Parks & Recreation Panel for Students & New Professionals <small>MRPA New Professionals Committee</small>
Thursday, March 26th	Time	Room: 2	Room: 3	Room: 4	Room: 5
Session 7	9:30-10:30am	Enjoy the final day of the MRPA Conference!	Jeff Achee Unplug Texas: Building a Statewide Parks Movements from the Ground Up	Andrea Egmont & Tarah Luciano Recreation as Prevention: How to Help Others See the Connection	Suzanne Quinn Designing Playgrounds for Neuro - Inclusion
Session 8	10:45-11:45am		Molly Keays Show up and Show Off: Making Your Agency's Story Stand Out	Channon Ames DiCiurcio & Jon Campbell Don't Get Lost! Discover the Benefits of Orienteering	Tarah Luciano Spaces of Pride: Building Affirming Communities for All
Lunch	12:00-1:30pm	Lunch with Annual Meeting			