

# PRE-CONFERENCE GUIDE



84<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**MRPA Annual Conference  
& Exhibit Hall**

**OCTOBER 12-15, 2021**



**Earle Brown Heritage Center • Brooklyn Center, MN**

# MRPA Annual Conference 2021

The 84<sup>th</sup> Minnesota Recreation and Park Association Annual Conference will be held in Brooklyn Center this fall. To all of our parks and recreation colleagues, partners, and friends we are excited to finally gather together again! We, along with our conference committee, are hopeful that everyone has remained healthy since we were last together and continued to find creative ways to rebuild your community services throughout the difficult times.

This year's conference team has been hard at work exploring new and innovative ideas intended to engage the members of our profession and provide delegates, students, retirees, and associates with unique education opportunities, charismatic keynote speakers, a new exhibit hall experience, and interactive networking opportunities. More importantly, this year's conference is being designed to challenge all MRPA members to



reflect and rethink the way we provide recreational opportunities to enhance the quality of life for Minnesota residents. By providing the planned conference activities, we hope that the MRPA membership is able to reconnect with other members of the recreation profession and walk away with a personalized experience to help expand professional knowledge, networks, and relationships.

In closing, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the conference sponsors and partners, as well as to the Annual Conference Committee for helping to make the 2021 MRPA Annual Conference possible. We look forward to reconnecting with all of you this fall at the conference as we continue to reflect, rethink, and rebuild our community's recreation and leisure services.

- Aimee Peterson and John W. Stutzman  
2021 Conference Co-Chairs

## 2021 MRPA Annual Conference Committee

The Annual Conference Committee chairs and their committees have organized an excellent education opportunity for all delegates. This conference would not be possible without their time and dedication.

### Conference Co-Chairs

Aimee Peterson  
John W. Stutzman

### Program Committee

Heidi Weiler  
Meredith Lawrence  
Rachel Mikel  
Stephanie Schutta  
Sam Murphy

### Exhibit Hall Committee

Steve Anderson  
Michelle Margo  
Brooke Burk  
Lana Huberty

### Catering & Networking Events Committee

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### Virtual Support

Jacob Andersen  
Jessica Christensen Buck  
Chris Morrow  
Greg Simmons  
Seth Shanley



## MINNESOTA RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

### Our Mission:

To improve the quality of life in Minnesota by enhancing the profession of parks, open space, recreation and leisure services



**Tweet while at the conference using hashtag #mrpaconference2021**

## Thank You 2021 Sponsors!\*

**Thank you to these Annual Conference sponsors for making this event possible:**



### Sponsorship opportunities still available!

For details, Nicole Gorman [ngorman@edinamn.gov](mailto:ngorman@edinamn.gov) or Nate Rosa at [nrosa@stlouispark.org](mailto:nrosa@stlouispark.org).

\*Sponsors as of press time.

# MRPA Conference Sessions & Schedule 2021

## Schedule At-A-Glance

### Tuesday, October 12

MRPA Professional Awards Luncheon ..... 12 - 2:30 p.m.

### Wednesday, October 13

Registration Check-In..... 8:30 - 9 a.m.  
Welcome & Opening Keynote ..... 9 - 10:30 a.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 10:45 - 11:45 a.m.  
Student Luncheon ..... 12 - 1 p.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 1:15 - 2:15 p.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.  
Networking Event ..... 4 - 6 p.m.

### Thursday, October 14

Registration Check-In ..... 8:30 - 9 a.m.  
MRPA Network Meetings ..... 9 - 10 a.m.  
Exhibit Hall ..... 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Refreshment Break in the Exhibit Hall ..... 10 - 10:30 a.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.  
Lunch with Vendors ..... 12:45 - 1:45 p.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 1:45 - 2:45 p.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 3 - 4 p.m.  
Networking Event ..... 4 - 5:30 p.m.

### Friday, October 15

Registration Check-In..... 8:30 - 9 a.m.  
Closing Keynote ..... 9 - 10 a.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 10:15 - 11:15 a.m.  
Educational Sessions ..... 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Off-site Institutes ..... 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



## MRPA Welcomes You Back!

### Tuesday, October 12

12 - 2:30 p.m.

### MRPA Professional Awards Luncheon

The MRPA Professional Awards have traditionally been presented during the MRPA Annual General Meeting and Awards luncheon in January. This year, MRPA moved the awards luncheon to be held in conjunction with the 2021 Annual Conference to have an opportunity to celebrate in-person with our award recipients. We hope you'll join us as MRPA presents awards to the outstanding professionals being honored.

### Clifton E. French Distinguished Service Award:

Sandy Breuer, Washington County

### Dorothea Nelson Award:

Nicole Gorman, Edina

### Jack Niles Award:

Nate Rosa, St. Louis Park

### Leadership Award:

Dale McCamish, Rochester

### Horizon Award:

Chris Fleck, Eagan

JJ Williams, Washington County

### Tommy Johnson Award:

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

## Meet the Keynote Speakers

### Wednesday, October 13

### *Building a Culture of Inclusion with Your WHY*

**Neelay Bhatt, Vice President, PROS Consulting, Inc.**



Neelay Bhatt is the principal at PROS Consulting Inc. He has led 130+ strategic and master planning, sports facility development, customer service training, and marketing and branding projects. These projects have recommended facility development and infrastructure improvements totaling over \$2 billion USD and are helping shape a better vision for health and wellness, conservation and social equity in communities globally.

### Friday, October 15

### *Own Your Voice*

**Jo Saxton, author, speaker, podcast host, and leadership coach**



Jo Saxton has dedicated her career to growing leadership teams around the world and empowering women to find their purpose in their personal lives and in leadership. Born in London to parents who immigrated from Nigeria, Jo credits her family's unrelenting work ethic and the grace of God for the bold, tenacious approach she takes to sharing her wisdom on identity, influence, and living an authentic life. She is characterized by her effervescent honesty and warm approachability, leaving audiences with practical next steps in areas that are usually a bit ambiguous.

## 2021 Conference Formats

MRPA is eager to welcome back this year's conference delegates to an in-person event. We look forward to reconnecting with you after a challenging pandemic year.

We also understand some members may need another education format option as we continue to recover from the impact of COVID-19. A livestream/on-demand option will be available for this year's conference. The sessions in two classrooms will be presented via livestream/on-demand. Live stream/on-demand sessions are noted with **LS** and are subject to change.

# MRPA Conference Sessions & Schedule 2021

## Wednesday, October 13

8:30 - 9 a.m.  
**Registration**

9 - 10:30 a.m.  
**Welcome & Opening  
Keynote: Building a Culture  
of Inclusion with Your WHY**  
**Neelay Bhatt, Vice President,  
PROS Consulting, Inc.**



Every agency teaches their staff what to do and how to do their jobs. However, few focus on the meaning behind the work:

the WHY. Parks and recreation agencies over the years, and especially during the pandemic, have been truly essential to our communities' wellbeing. As our staff and the people we serve continue to get more diverse, it is important to lead with the values as you build a sustained culture of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging with your WHY.

10:45 - 11:45 a.m.

**Time to Replace a Play  
Structure? Get Your Residents  
Involved! <sup>LS</sup>**

*Jason T. West, Recreation Superintendent;  
and Kori Shingles, Recreation and Facilities  
Supervisor, City of St. Louis Park*

Earn social capital with your residents when replacing play structures. Learn the unique method St. Louis Park uses of allowing residents to choose their play structure. You will walk away with a toolkit on how to successfully execute this process. This method empowers residents to make choices to enhance their community.

**3,2,1 Network!**

*Margo Numedahl, Recreation Division  
Manager; and Jen Graham, Recreation  
Program Coordinator, City of Fridley*

Welcome to speed networking - a whirlwind session offering students and new professionals the opportunity to connect with recreation professionals from a variety of backgrounds. Be prepared to discuss your career interests quickly and efficiently, show-off portfolios, get feedback on your resume/cover letter, and ask questions.

**Managing Wildlife in  
Minnesota Parks**

*Jonathan Hicks, Professor, Minnesota State  
University, Mankato*

This session will include a high-energy, interactive discussion of wildlife as a recreational resource. Participants will discuss best practice management techniques, and explore strategies to live and play alongside our wild neighbors. There will be time to ask questions and discuss personal experiences and challenges with park wildlife.

**Local Sales Tax Financing  
Capital Developments <sup>LS</sup>**

*Tom Schmitz, Parks and Recreation Director,  
City of New Ulm*

Twice in 20 years, 70-percent of New Ulm voters said "Yes" to a 0.5-percent local sales tax funding major developments to recreation facilities. For both years, the sales tax was authorized by the State Legislature. Learn to use local sales tax funding for large projects. One or more other agencies may also present their success stories.

**Self-Care 101: Prioritizing  
Yourself in a Busy World**

*Shoma Hokanson, Owner, Solera Self-Care*

Today's busy world can make it challenging to focus on your well-being. Learn the benefits of self-care, managing your energy, saying no, and asking for help. Leave with tangible ideas on physical, emotional, spiritual and mental self-care. The goal is to equip you with self-care techniques to cultivate your own practice.

12 - 1 p.m.

**Young Professional/Student  
Network Mentor Networking  
Luncheon**

Today's luncheon is an opportunity for students/young professionals to be paired up with seasoned professionals to enjoy lunch together. Don't miss this great network opportunity. **Are you interested in being paired up?** Students/young professionals and seasoned professionals should both contact Meredith Lawrence via email: [MLawrence@mendotaheightsmn.gov](mailto:MLawrence@mendotaheightsmn.gov).

**Sponsored by: Minnesota Recreation  
and Park Foundation**



1:15 - 2:15 p.m.

**Rec N' Read Programs and  
Services: Programmatic  
Innovations for Our  
Communities <sup>LS</sup>**

*Brooke Burk, Associate Professor; and  
Madeline Margo, Student, Minnesota State  
University, Mankato*

Rec N' Read Programs and Services is an innovative program that embraces National Recreation and Park Association's health and equity pillars. Situated in research, parks and recreation programming needed to adapt and develop virtual camp programming and offer safe and flexible programming during the pandemic. This session shares lessons learned and best practices.

**New Innovations and  
Strategies in Park  
Maintenance**

*Nick Jacobs, Parks Maintenance, City of  
Otsego; and Adam Farwell, Parks Supervisor,  
City of Buffalo*

During this session, participants will learn about some of the new park innovations and strategies like GPS field painters, solar powered lighting, and water conservation strategies in irrigation. Resources will be provided for participants to bring innovative ideas back to their employer.

**Parks & Rec 101**

*Matt Colwell, Student, University of Wisconsin  
- La Crosse; John W. Stutzman, Recreation  
Supervisor, City of Golden Valley;  
Greg Simmons, Recreation Facilities  
Supervisor, City of Golden Valley*

*What opportunities are available for students and young professionals with a degree in recreation/leisure services?* The Young Professional and Student Network has invited experienced recreation professionals to lead and explore this question and also discuss what to expect in the early stages of a career in leisure service management. This session is designed as an interactive session for participants to casually converse and network with young professionals and other students.

# MRPA Conference Sessions & Schedule 2021

1:15 - 2:15 p.m. continued...

## Creating a Magical Guest Service Experience <sup>LS</sup>

Neelay Bhatt, Vice President,  
PROS Consulting, Inc.

When it comes to operating an agency, everyone states how important customer service is, yet most do a poor or inconsistent job servicing their customers. Come unlock the secrets behind building a culture focused on exceeding your organization's customer service. Using case studies, participants will see the impact poor customer service can have on an agency while learning how to build an organization that your customers and the community would want to associate with.

## A Higher Level of Inclusive Play

Jill Moore, Inclusive Play Specialist,  
Landscape Structures

The playground should be a place for everyone to experience laughter, friends, and fun. However, traditional design focuses on minimal physical access, not necessarily considering quality engagement for children with physical or cognitive disorders. Sensory rich play environments develop functional skills, imagination, and social opportunities that can provide a higher level of inclusion.

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

## Let's Talk TikTok <sup>LS</sup>

Kelly Maher, Recreation Supervisor; and  
Shane Wampler, Recreation Supervisor,  
City of Omaha

This session will give participants an understanding of what TikTok is, how youth are using it, and how organizations can use it to reach a younger demographic. Presenters will share the City of Omaha's experience creating their TikTok account and will guide participants through the process of creating content.

## Breaking the Silence – Let's Talk About Race

Kori Shingles, Recreation and Facilities  
Supervisor; and Jason T. West, Recreation  
Superintendent, City of St. Louis Park

Come see how and why to start having uncomfortable conversations about race. Kori and Jason will discuss ways to peel back some of the layers of racial issues. It's time to break the silence and start having the uncomfortable conversations.

## Community Initiatives for Parks and Recreation

Michael Hecker, Parks and Recreation  
Director; and Cal Portner, City Administrator,  
City of Elk River

This session will describe how a network of government officials and community leaders can effectively work together on a plan to reinvest in aging recreation facilities and significant outdoor park amenities. Strategies and tools will be presented and discussed how to build community driven referendums and unique funding opportunities.

## Trends for a Post Pandemic 2020s <sup>LS</sup>

Neelay Bhatt, Vice President, PROS  
Consulting, Inc.

As agencies in Minnesota plan for the next decade, this session will help predict trends and plan for future shifts in an increasingly unpredictable post-pandemic time. Neelay will share insights for how to build an agency culture and mindset that can innovate and thrive in a changing landscape as parks and recreation agencies look to changes to their communities, policies, park and facility designs, financial sustainability, marketing and communications, partnerships, program delivery and innovation in general.

## Aquatic Amenities Including NinjaCross

Tom Schmitz, Parks and Recreation Director,  
City of New Ulm

This session includes information on aquatic amenities, some less common, including the first NinjaCross in the Upper-Midwest. Climbing walls, Zip 'N, keylog roll, splash pads, children's play features and more will be discussed, along with innovative programming ideas.



## Treat Yo' Self Day Networking Event

Wednesday, October 13  
4 - 6 p.m.

Location: Northern Stacks Events  
38 Northern Stacks Drive  
Fridley, MN 55421

Treat Yo' Self Day, made famous by the NBC sitcom *Parks and Recreation*, is a phenomenon observed annually on October 13. The day encourages you to 'Go for it and Treat Yo' Self!'

Webber Recreational Design presents the Treat Yo' Self Day, MRPA's network social at Northern Stacks Events. Northern Stacks Events is a newly opened event venue conveniently located just north of Minneapolis adjacent to Forgotten Star Brewery in Fridley. Mark your calendars and join fellow park and recreation colleagues to socialize and share in the fun:

- TREAT YO' SELF – Webber Recreational Design who will provide up to 100 free \$5 coupons for food or beverages at the event
- Reconnecting with MRPA members – Treat Yo' Self!
- Yard games – Treat Yo' Self!
- Food trucks – Treat Yo' Self!
- Cash bar available

**Sponsored by:**  
**Webber Recreational Design**



# MRPA Conference Sessions & Schedule 2021

## Thursday, October 14

**NEW!** This day begins with new features and formats for the conference. The MRPA networks will host meetings so all attendees have an opportunity to participate. Exhibit hall hours have also been expanded from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to allow attendees more flexibility to connect with vendors.

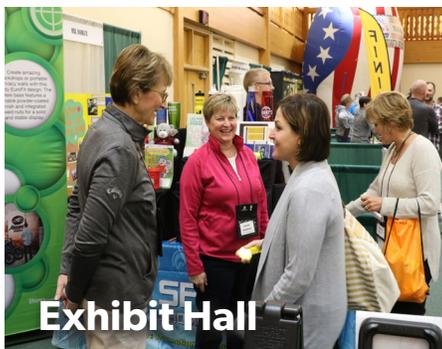
8:30 - 9 a.m.

### Registration

9 - 10 a.m.

### MRPA Network Meetings

This is an opportunity for all members to participate in MRPA's network meetings.



## Exhibit Hall

Thursday, October 14

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Exhibit hall hours have been expanded so attendees have additional time before, between, and after sessions – and during lunch – to connect with the vendors who support our profession.

- Visit with more than 70 exhibitors
- Gain new ideas related to the newest technology, products, services, equipment and programs
- Hors d'oeuvres, refreshments, and prizes

Please take time to visit the exhibit hall vendors as their contributions are integral to the conference's success.

Sponsored  
by WSB  
& Associates,  
Inc.



10 - 10:30 a.m.

### Refreshment Break in the Exhibit Hall

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

### Personal Branding 101 <sup>LS</sup>

Anthony Iracki, Speaker, Author, Podcaster, Let's Talk Parks

The phrase, "personal brand" is another way of saying "reputation." It is one thing professionals at every stage of their career should be keenly aware of. A strong personal brand can open doors for you, lead others to you, and allow for new opportunities.

### Future of Park & Recreation Programming: Esports

Chelsea Swiggum, Recreation Coordinator, City of Inver Grove Heights Parks and Recreation; Joey Schugel, Recreation & Leisure Services Director, City of Saint Peter; and Matt Wiitala, Recreation Coordinator City of Shoreview

What is esports? How do I start a program in my city? Esports is one of the fastest growing trends within the parks and recreation field. Learn about the benefits of esports for our youth and the different platforms used for gamers to play in a safe and fun setting.

### Connecting Health Providers to Our Park <sup>LS</sup>

Ben Boldt, Recreation Supervisor, Rochester Parks & Recreation; and Sara Holger, Lead Interpretive Naturalist, Whitewater State Park - MN DNR

Outdoor experiences can have powerful impacts on our health and well-being. In southeast Minnesota, a collaboration of local health experts, park administrators and community organizations are working to engage health care providers with the Park Rx effort and encourage them to connect patients to the outdoors.

### Directors' Forum

**NOTE: Double Session Time**  
10:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Gather with fellow directors from across the state to discuss topics impacting your work as agency leaders. Directors will come together to discuss pandemic recovery strategies and the latest trends.

Sponsored by: HGKI



11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

### The Must Have Leadership Skills for Parks and Recreation Professionals

Hillary Roemersberger, Director of Recreation Services, Apex Park and Recreation District; and John W. Stutzman, Recreation Supervisor, City of Golden Valley

Leadership remains one of the most discussed concepts across all sectors. We all desire to be better leaders yet sometimes fail to recognize that it's a continuous process of development. Attendees will learn how to shine as a leader in your organization and the community you serve.

Sponsored by: Women in Leisure Services



WOMEN IN LEISURE SERVICES  
ZETA CHAPTER

### Equipping Volunteer Coaches for Success

Alan Merrick, Professional Soccer Player and Coach; and Brad Carlson, Youth and High School Coach, MOTI Sports, Inc.

It's a new season. Registration is done. You have put together your teams. What's the next step? Finding coaches! We will take a look at "3 Dimensional Coaching" championed by the U.S. Tennis Association and others to help you prepare yourself and your volunteer coaches.

### Age-Friendly States & Communities <sup>LS</sup>

Kelly Mertes, Recreation Supervisor, Brooklyn Park Recreation & Parks; Liz Faust, Senior/55 Forward Program Specialist; Elise Ruiz, AARP

Minnesota has nine communities in the AARP Age-Friendly network (two counties, seven cities). The State of Minnesota is in the process to join the network and make active aging a priority in our state. In an age-friendly community, policies, services, and structures related to the physical and social environment are essential. Discover how these areas can be implemented in your community.

12:45 to 1:45 p.m.

### Lunch with Vendors in Exhibit Hall

# MRPA Conference Sessions & Schedule 2021

1:45 - 2:45 p.m.

## Race and Equity Lens - What Does This Mean and How Do You Use It? <sup>LS</sup>

*Kori Shingles, Recreation and Facilities Supervisor; and Jason T. West, Recreation Superintendent, City of St. Louis Park*

What does a race and equity lens mean and how do you use it? Let the dynamic duo give you some useful tools on how to put a race and equity lens on your department. You will learn techniques that you will be able to immediately put into place.

## Working Your Way into a Department Lead Role

*Meredith Lawrence, Recreation Program Coordinator, City of Mendota Heights; Cindy Walsh, Director, City of St. Louis Park; Ann Kattreh, Director, City of Bloomington; Matthew Johnson, Assistant Director, Roseville Parks and Recreation; and Boe Carlson, Superintendent, Three Rivers Park District*

Ever wonder what it takes to be in a leadership role within a prominent Minnesota park and recreation agency? Learn from some of Minnesota's finest recreation leaders on how they got to where they are today and what you can do to set yourself apart from others in the hiring process for leadership positions. Better understand the skills necessary to succeed within the field, and the triumphs and challenges of leading departments within the state.

## Adaptive Swim Toolbox of Strategies <sup>LS</sup>

*Cindy Freeman and Ailene Tisser, Owners, Swim Angelfish*

Are you looking to expand your toolbox of strategies for inclusion, diversity and adaptive swim programs? Learn about the free resources that are immediately available for your aquatic facility and instructor training. Coaches, parents, swim instructors and lifeguards will learn strategies for improved safety and adaptive swim programs.

3 - 4 p.m.

## Promoting LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Awareness in Recreation Programming & Facilities <sup>LS</sup>

*Hillary Roemersberger, Director of Recreation Services, Apex Park and Recreation District*

Learn basic inclusionary practices that you can implement in your programs and facilities as well as discover partnership opportunities with local LGBTQ+ organizations and outreach groups. Learn more about Apex Pride Night and how you can implement an LGBTQ+ program in your facility.

## Putting a Racial Equity Lens on Programs, Policies, and Practices in Parks and Recreation

*Jody Yungers, Director, Brooklyn Park Recreation and Park; Pam McBride, Youth Services Manager and Lead REDI Team Member, Brooklyn Park Recreation and Park; Catrice O'Neil, City REDI Team Lead, City of Brooklyn Park; and Ivan Lui, REDI Consultant Lead, Brooklyn Park Alliance for Youth*

Learn Brooklyn Park's practical approach to applying a racial equity lens to current programs, practices, and processes. The City's Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) team will share the racial equity lens toolkit developed, and how the tool helped identify and address unintended inequities, specifically for communities of color. The discussion will also include both challenges and missteps made in the process.

## Universal Recreation Supervisor Appreciation Day (URSAD): Is Your Organization Celebrating? <sup>LS</sup>

*Jess Koch, Recreation Supervisor, Plymouth Parks and Recreation*

Seven years ago, Plymouth Parks and Recreation began recognizing a day just for recreation supervisors. What started as an office prank has turned into an annual event the whole team looks forward to. When staff know they can have fun in the office, the result is often more creativity and better teamwork.



## Thursday, October 14

4 - 5:30 p.m.

## Thursday Networking Event

*On-site following the Exhibit Hall*

Musco Lighting invites all park and recreation professionals, exhibitors, vendors, speakers, and students to stick around and reconnect after the exhibit hall. The formal exhibit hall may have ended; however, the conversations and professional relationships at the MRPA network social will continue. Appetizers, refreshments, and a cash bar will be provided. Stick around for more fun!

**Sponsored by:**  
**Musco Sports Lighting**



# MRPA Conference Sessions & Schedule 2021

## Friday, October 15

8:30 - 9 a.m.

### Registration

9 - 10 a.m.

### Closing Keynote: Own Your Voice

Jo Saxton



We've experienced seismic shifts over the past 18 months that have revealed the best and the worst of the world

around us. Our world and way of life profoundly changed. We all carry stories, we carry scars ... but we also carry on! We need people who will take the hard won wisdom from this era, who will lean into their community and together reimagine and rebuild the landscape. It's time. Are you ready to rise?

10:15 - 11:15 a.m.

### Increasing Equity in Aquatics - Free Community Water Safety Lessons <sup>LS</sup>

Madeline Rosewood, Aquatics Coordinator, City of Inver Grove Heights Parks and Recreation

The session will include a brief background of historic inequities in swimming and aquatics, and lead into bridging the gap and increasing inclusion through free water safety programming for ages 6 months to adult. Attendees will discuss how to support and prepare for the program, including structure, swimsuit drive, marketing, and swim instructor resources.

### Getting to Zero Energy

Cindy Walsh, Operations & Recreation Director, City of St. Louis Park

Do you have questions about what zero energy is and how it can be achieved? During this session we will review a variety of sustainable rating systems and share key terms and data required to achieve zero energy using a nature center in St. Louis Park as a case study.

### Equitable Access to Outdoor Recreation

Candace Amberg, Senior Landscape Architect, WSB & Associates, Inc.; and Jennifer Fink, Director, City of New Brighton

Join us to learn how planning policies can result in unbalanced distribution of parks and quality outdoor recreation in relation to the populations being served. Insights will be provided to identify underserved populations including methods to improve and prioritize access to outdoor recreation for current and future populations.

### Boosting Morale During A Tough Time: Happy Employees Equal Happy Customers <sup>LS</sup>

Annie Olson, Director of Customer Service; and Iris Pahlberg Peterson, Customer Service Supervisor, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

After what feels like the longest year of our lives, we are tired – and yet, here comes the sun! Despite the challenges of the past year, a silver lining is the resilience and creativity of our staff. This session capitalizes on strategies to keep morale high using tools we already have.

### Artificial Turf Field: Trends, Designs, and Safety

Andy Brandel, Senior Vice President, ISG; and Amy Satterfield, Division Manager, IEA

A panel of experts will dissect fact from fiction as it relates to an artificial turf field. Attendees will learn considerations for site selection, planning, and design, and hear the latest on health and safety testing.

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

### MRPF New Initiative Grant - RETHINK Your Programming Opportunities!

Lisa Abernathy, MRPF Board of Trustees, Minnesota Recreation and Park Foundation and Grant Recipients

RETHINK your programming by creating an innovative program or event for our community through a New Initiative Grant! Take away a program idea from recent grant recipients and REFLECT on how it could work in your community. Come learn about this great opportunity it offers to Foundation members.

### Work Life Satisfaction in Parks and Recreation <sup>LS</sup>

Matthew Johnson, Assistant Director, City of Roseville

As recreational professionals, we work hard to create opportunities for others to recreate and focus on their own physical and emotional health. Although sometimes we often fail to practice what we preach. This session will discuss strategies for achieving "work-life balance" as individuals and why that is beneficial to your organization.

### Get Your Great Idea Implemented

Michael Biedenstein, Division Manager - Park Program Services, St. Louis County Parks; and Anthony Iracki, Recreation Supervisor, Whitefish Bay School District Recreation

You see a problem, you have a proposed solution, and yet you aren't able to get the right buy-in or approval to have the idea implemented. Presenters will share contrasting strategies to get your idea across the finish line - both in your work organization and for your professional association.

### Equity in Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan <sup>LS</sup>

Tracey Kinney, Senior Planner; and Darcie Vandegrift, Principal Researcher, Metropolitan Council

The Regional Parks System's 10-parks implementing agencies and the Metropolitan Council are partners working to increase equitable use of the system. A new equity analysis requirement for regional park and trail master plans creates space to describe the demographics, history, engagement, and accountability regarding prioritized underserved groups.

### Turning the Bus – Moving from Softball to Inclusive Play

John Elholm, Director, City of Crystal; and Robert Slipka, Senior Landscape Architect, WSB & Associates, Inc.

Softball was king in Crystal for 50+ years, but with the sport's decline, Crystal's main softball fields were replaced with an inclusive play area, interactive fountain, and other welcoming facilities. This change in vision happened through a four-year process of park system master planning, site design, and construction.

# MRPA Conference Sessions & Schedule 2021

## Off-site Institutes

Friday, October 15

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Attendees will drive themselves to one of the sites where the community host will lead the session.**



Photo: HGA

### Building for a Sustainable Future: Net Zero Energy Building Design

**Westwood Hills Nature Center**  
8300 West Franklin Avenue, St. Louis Park

Jason T. West, Recreation Superintendent; and Mark Oestreich, Nature Center Manager, City of St. Louis Park

Come learn the process of planning and constructing one of the first zero-energy commercial buildings in Minnesota. Find out why the Westwood Hills Nature Center's Interpretive Center building is unique with all the latest sustainable design features that were implemented to help achieve zero energy certification.

Sponsored by: HGA

HGA



### Fields of the Future: How Successful Partnerships Benefit the Community

**Fernbrook Fields**  
14401 99th Avenue North, Maple Grove

Maple Grove Parks and Recreation

Come tour and learn how the City of Maple Grove Parks and Recreation staff worked with local Youth Athletic Associations and Independent School District 279 to build Fernbrook Fields Athletic Complex.

During the tour you will learn about the unique user partnership agreements, the state of the art design and technology used, along with an overview of the day to day operations and maintenance of the new facility.

Fernbrook Fields opened in the fall of 2019. This new multi-use athletic facility serves as a practice facility for Maple Grove sports associations and schools, and as a regional tournament venue for soccer, football, and lacrosse. The 19-acre Fernbrook Complex consists of four full-size artificial turf fields with cool play technology (keeps the turf 20 degrees cooler), large picnic pavilion, concessions building with restrooms, food truck plaza, playground, and a 300' by 50' warm-up area.

Sponsored by: Stantec



# MRPA Conference Registration Form 2021

Early Bird Deadline: August 25, 2021 • Register online at [mnrpa.org](http://mnrpa.org)

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Special Accommodations (ADA, Vegetarian, Gluten-Free) \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method:  Check Enclosed  
MRPA Preferred Method  Check Requested  Paid Online with VISA or MASTERCARD

DELEGATES	MRPA MEMBER		NON-MEMBER		TOTAL
	Until Aug. 25	After Aug. 25	Until Aug. 25	After Aug. 25	
MRPA Professional Awards Luncheon (Tue)	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55	
Conference Package (Wed – Fri)	\$370	\$420	\$520	\$570	
Daily – Wednesday only	\$200	\$250	\$250	\$300	
Daily – Thursday only	\$200	\$250	\$250	\$300	
Daily – Friday only	\$99	\$149	\$149	\$199	
Continuing Education Units (CEU)	\$10	\$10	\$20	\$20	
<b>VIRTUAL/RECORDED OPTION</b>					
Livestream/OnDemand Package <small>Sessions noted with (LS)</small>	\$200	\$250	\$250	\$300	
<b>RETIRES &amp; STUDENTS</b>		<b>WITH MEAL</b>		<b>WITHOUT MEAL</b>	
Volunteer Package (Wed – Fri)	\$145	\$170	Free	Free	
Non-Volunteer Package (Wed – Fri)	\$245	\$270	\$40	\$60	
Non-Volunteer Daily Rate	\$75	\$85	\$25	\$30	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday					
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday					
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>					
<b>OFF-SITE INSTITUTES (OPTIONAL)</b>					
Friday, October 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fernbrook Fields, Maple Grove			
Friday, October 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Westwood Hills Nature Center, St. Louis Park			

## Conference Food and Beverage

Please note any food allergies. We have tried to incorporate healthy eating throughout the menu selections.

Meals included for each day:

- Wednesday – lunch
- Thursday – lunch, exhibit hall hors d'oeuvres
- Friday – continental breakfast

## Cancellation Policy

Cancellations accepted through September 15 minus a \$50 handling fee. No refunds will be given after this date. Alternate attendees are permitted. Registration fees are used toward educational sessions and meals.

## Hotel Accommodations

Embassy Suites by Hilton  
6300 Earle Brown Drive  
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

Hotel and conference venue are connected via enclosed walkway.

Room rate: \$135/night plus tax

For reservations: MRPA has a reserved room block available. Call 763.560.2700 by September 12, 2021 to make your hotel reservation – ask for the MRPA rate.

## Please submit payment to:

MRPA, 200 Charles Street NE, Fridley, MN 55432  
Fax: 763.571.5204