



# CONFERENCE GUIDE

National Association of State Park Directors  
**2023 NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**September 12-15, 2023**  
Lake Tahoe, Nevada



AMERICA'S  
**STATE  
PARKS**



## BENEFITS OF CHOOSING OUR SYSTEM



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- Our Fees are added to the bill and can include your reservation processing charges as well. Essentially the software costs your system \$0.00.
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- Our software can allow your guests to manage their own reservations and give them contactless check-in capabilities.



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# WELCOME TO LAKE TAHOE, NEVADA

Directors and Conference Attendees,

On behalf of the National Association of State Park Directors, I am delighted to see you all in person at our 2023 annual conference. This year, America's State Parks are being hosted by Administrator Bob Mergell and the awesome Nevada State Parks team in beautiful Lake Tahoe, Nevada. Located in Stateline, Nevada, the new Tahoe Blue Events Center is our host conference facility and is an hour from the Reno-Tahoe Airport. The Nevada team and partners have put together some exciting excursions for you to choose from on Tuesday, and the conference program includes visits to Sand Harbor, Mormon Station, and Spooner Lake state parks. If you want to see more of Nevada, we hope you have had the opportunity to come early or that you are planning to stay late to explore more of what the Silver State has to offer.

This year's conference will cover relevant and timely topics, including the importance of using data to manage parks, artificial intelligence (AI), marketing strategies, accessibility, facilities of the future, and the importance of using state parks' stories. America's State Parks continues to grow and adapt as innovative technology is embraced, new information is learned from advances in data collection, energy efficient infrastructure is built, and access in the outdoors is pursued.

Since we met in Oregon last year, seven new directors have started, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and strategies for making our parks even better. And with change comes opportunities for teaching, learning, and collaborating with one another. The conference will be a time to celebrate our successes, recognize the challenges we've all experienced, share our collective lessons learned, and commit ourselves to be the best in the conservation of natural and cultural

resources while providing for the best possible quality outdoor recreation experiences in the most effective and efficient means for our park visitors.

Our annual conference remains an important opportunity for decision makers, partners, and the public to work together as America's State Parks continue to see record numbers of visitors while also being understaffed and underfunded. The overall outdoor participant base increased by 6.9% since early 2020 and the number of participants aged 55 years and older increased by more than 14% in the past four years. Senior participants aged 65 and older grew by 16.9% since 2020.

At the conference, you will find many opportunities to engage and connect with NASPD leadership, state park directors, and senior staff from across the country as well as our federal partners, associate members and affiliate nonprofit organizations, our corporate sponsors, and our ever-increasing community of industry suppliers and service providers. The support of leading corporate sponsors Aspira, Ford/Bronco Wild Fund, and STIHL is invaluable and vital to our success.

Whether it will be your first time attending, or you are a veteran of our conference, we thank you for the leadership and support you provide America's State Parks and welcome you to Nevada.

Sincerely,



Lewis R. Ledford  
Executive Director



**Lewis R. Ledford**  
*Executive Director*





# NASPD BOARD AND OFFICERS

## Staff/Officers

Lewis Ledford, Executive Director  
Lisa Sumption, OR, President  
Paul McCormack, SC, Vice-President  
Rodney Franklin, TX, Secretary-Treasurer  
Grady Spann, AR, Past President

## Regional Board of Directors

John Hallas, PA; Northeast  
Melissa Baker, VA; Southeast  
Terry Coleman, IN; North-Central  
David Kelly, MO; Central  
Nick Neylon, WY; Northwest  
Robert Mergell, NV; Southwest

## DISTINGUISHED DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

### Director of the Year

1976 Hal Dyer (NY)  
1977 Tom Ellis (NC)  
1978 Kermit McKeever (WV)  
1979 William Parr (MD)  
1980 Ben Bolen (VA)  
1981 Lynn Burris, Jr. (KS)  
1982 William Mott (CA)  
1983 Ray M. Sisk (SC)  
1984 William F. Miller (CT)  
1985 William C. Forrey (PA)  
1986 David Talbot (OR)  
1987 Ney C. Landrum (FL)  
1988 Jack Butterfield (MI)  
1989 William Walters (IN)

### Distinguished Service

1990 Richard Davies (AR)  
1991 Douglas Eiken (ND)  
1992 Edward Koenemann (VT)  
1993 Orin Lehman (NY), Dale Bree (NE)  
1994 Doyle Adams (IA)  
1995 Ron Holiday (TX)  
1996 David Weizenicker (WI)  
1997 Yvonne Ferrell (ID)  
1998 Greg Marshall (NJ)  
1999 Ken Travous (AZ), Fran Mainella (FL)  
2000 Cordie Hudkins (WV)  
2001 Laurie Mathews (CO)  
2002 Courtland Nelson (UT)  
2003 Doug Hofer (SD)  
2004 Chazz Salkin (DE)  
2005 Jerry Pagac (IN)

2006 Rick Barton (MD)  
2007 Joe Elton (VA)  
2008 Doug Prchal (ND)  
2009 Bob Meinen (ID)  
2010 Ruth Coleman (CA)  
2011 Greg Butts (AR)  
2013 Lewis Ledford (NC)  
2014 Ronald Olson (MI)  
2015 Phil Gaines (SC)  
2016 Priscilla Geigis (MA)  
2017 Don Hoch (WA)  
2018 Brent Leisure (TX)  
2019 Craig Seaver (VA)  
2020 Nita Settina (MD)  
2021 Raymond Bivens (DE)  
2022 Phil Bryce (NH)  
2023 ?

2023 National Association of State Park Directors Conference

Download *Whova* for



- Explore the professional profiles of event speakers and attendees.
- Send in-app messages and exchange contact information.
- Network and find attendees with common affiliations, educations, shared networks, and social profiles.
- Receive update notifications from organizers.
- Access the event agenda, GPS guidance, maps, and parking directions at your finger tips.

Scan me for the Whova Attendee User Guide and other helpful tips!



# WELCOME TO NEVADA

Directors and Conference Attendees,

It is my pleasure to invite you to Nevada for the 2023 National Association of State Park Directors Conference.

The NASPD conference provides a forum for America's state parks leadership to come together to inspire, collaborate, exchange perspectives, and learn from one another – and I want you to know that all are welcome here. We hope that you'll come away from this event newly energized, with a fresh tool kit of ideas on how to make our State Parks the best that they can be.

The conference this year will be held on the Nevada side of the incomparable Lake Tahoe, breathtakingly beautiful not only due to its sheer size, but also for its exceptional clarity and deep blue hues. Lake Tahoe is a four-season destination, where you can float on fresh mountain powder in the winter or crystal-clear lake waters in the summer, and spring blooms colorful alpine wildflowers that give way to blazing aspens in the fall. Straddling the California/Nevada border, the largest alpine lake in North America is home to several Nevada State Parks including the iconic Sand Harbor.



**Bob Mergell**  
*Administrator,  
Nevada State Parks*

The Nevada State Parks team invites you to hike, ride, and paddle, as well as unwind and connect with nature in one of our favorite places on earth. We look forward to showcasing a few of our parks, each with their own set of unique challenges and achievements, and hope that you'll have some time to explore Nevada on your own time, either before or after the conference. If you need suggestions, let us know – we have ideas!

I hope you'll join us in Lake Tahoe for what we expect will be an exciting and rewarding gathering. Late summer, fondly known as "the locals' summer," is a beautiful time of year in the Sierra Nevada, and I can't wait to share it with you.

Bob Mergell  
Administrator, Nevada State Parks



# AGENDA

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

10 AM – 8 PM	<b>Registration Open</b> at Event Center
10 AM – 6 PM	<b>Exhibitor Setup</b> at Event Center
3 PM – 6 PM	<b>Optional Service Project:</b> <b>Van Sickle Bi-State Park with Dinner</b> Sponsored by Aramark
5 PM – 8 PM	<b>Optional Evening Social:</b> <b>Monday Night Football</b> at Event Center



### HEADING FROM THE AIRPORT?

Airport Shuttles operate from 7:45 am to 10:30 pm, reserve your ride at the Conference website using this QR code.




## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

6 AM – 8 AM	<b>Breakfast</b> at Event Center Floor
7 AM – 4 PM	<b>Registration Open</b> at Event Center
7 AM – 4 PM	<b>Exhibitor Setup</b> at Event Center
5:30 AM – 4 PM	<b>Field Trips</b>
2 PM – 4 PM**	<b>New Director Member Meeting</b> Thunderbird Lodge
3:15 PM	<b>Load Shuttle Buses for Travel to Sand Harbor State Park</b> (if not already at Sand Harbor)
4:30 PM	<b>Sand Harbor Dinner/Welcome Reception</b> Welcome to Nevada – Brian Sandoval Bronco Wild Fund Award Recipients Dinner Service & Yard Games, Cornhole Tournament Begins, Sunset Over Tahoe
7:30 PM	<b>Load Shuttle Buses for Travel to South Lake Tahoe Events Center</b>
8 PM – 10 PM	<b>Evening Reception at Event Center</b> <b>Lawn – Bar Games</b> <b>Cornhole Tournament</b>

FIELD TRIPS	
5:30 AM – 3 PM	<b>Fly Fishing at Walker River State Recreation Area (Elbow)</b>
7:45 AM – 1:30 PM	<b>OHV Excursion (Castle Rock Trailhead)</b>
7 AM – 12 PM*	<b>Flume Trail Mountain Bike Ride</b>
8 AM – 3 PM	<b>Auto Tour of the Spooner Lake and Backcountry State Park</b>
8:45 AM – 11:30 AM*	<b>Guided Kayaking Tour at Sand Harbor State Park</b>
8:45 AM – 1 PM	<b>Guided Tour of the Historic Thunderbird Lodge (Tour #1)</b>
10:30 AM – 3 PM	<b>MS Dixie Lunch Cruise</b>
10:30 AM – 1:45 PM**	<b>Guided Tour of the Historic Thunderbird Lodge (Tour #2)</b>

\*End time indicates when the field trip concludes at Sand Harbor State Park. Shuttles from Sand Harbor State Park to the conference hotel will be running throughout the day.

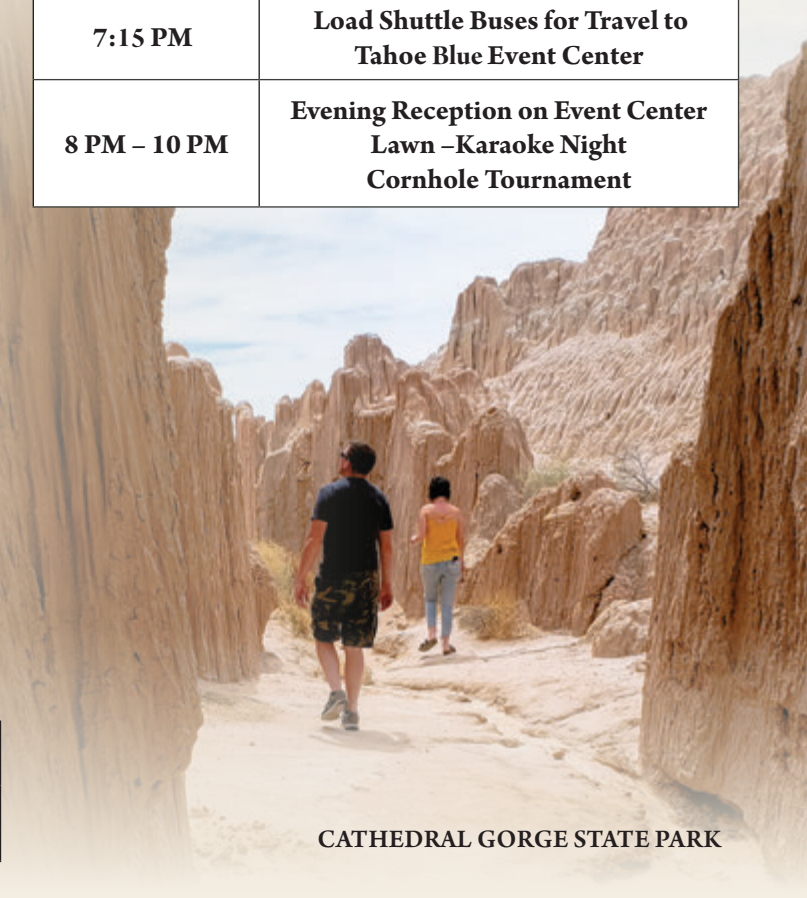
\*\*End time indicates when the field trip concludes at Thunderbird Lodge. Participants will be taken to Sand Harbor State Park from Thunderbird Lodge and should plan to remain there for the welcome reception and dinner.

# WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

<b>MORNING</b>	
6 AM – 8 AM	<b>Breakfast</b> at Event Center
6 AM – 7:30 AM	<b>Optional Morning Hike at Van Sickle Bi-State Park</b> Pre-registration is not required for this hike; to participate, simply meet in the hotel lobby at 6:00 am.
7 AM – 4 PM	<b>Silent Auction is Open</b>
7 AM – 4 PM	<b>Registration/Information is Open</b> at Event Center
8:00 AM	<b>Grand Opening and Welcome</b> <b>Lewis Ledford (NASPD Exec. Director)/</b> <b>Lisa Sumption (NASPD President)</b>
8:20 AM	<b>Welcome: Joe Lombardo,</b> <b>Nevada Governor</b>
8:45 AM	<b>Chuck Sams</b> Director of the National Park Service
9:15 AM	<b>National Recreation and Parks Association: Kristine Stratton, CEO</b>
9:35 AM	<b>Photo Contest</b> Presented by Malia French/Aspira and Game Time
9:55 AM	<b>Morning Break</b> Snack Service
10:40 AM	<b>Dr. Myron F. Floyd,</b> <b>North Carolina State University</b> U.S. State Parks in the 21st Century
11:00 AM	<b>Patrick Renvoise</b> The Science of Persuasion
11:40 AM	<b>Ice Age Fossils Presentation</b> Sponsored by Timelooper
12 PM – 1:30 PM	<b>LUNCH</b>

<b>AFTERNOON/EVENING</b>	
12 PM – 1:30 PM	<b>LUNCH</b>
1:30 PM	<b>Concurrent #1, Part 1: Directors</b> Business Meeting
1:30 PM	<b>Concurrent #2, Part 1:</b> Disruptive Innovation
2:30 PM	<b>Afternoon Break</b>
3:00 PM	<b>Concurrent #1, Part 2: Directors</b> Business Meeting
3:00PM	<b>Concurrent #2, Part 2:</b> Disruptive Innovation
4:00 PM	<b>Load Shuttle Buses for Travel to</b> <b>Mormon Station SHP</b>
5:00 PM	<b>Offsite: Explore Mormon Station</b> <b>and Dinner, Cornhole Tournament</b> Sponsored by STIHL
7:15 PM	<b>Load Shuttle Buses for Travel to</b> <b>Tahoe Blue Event Center</b>
8 PM – 10 PM	<b>Evening Reception on Event Center</b> <b>Lawn –Karaoke Night</b> <b>Cornhole Tournament</b>

<b>GUEST/FAMILY &amp; FRIENDS EXCURSION</b>	
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM	<b>Explore Historic Carson City</b>



CATHEDRAL GORGE STATE PARK



# THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

MORNING	
6 AM – 8 AM	<b>Breakfast</b> at Event Center
6 AM – 7:30 AM	<b>Optional Morning Hike at Van Sickle Bi-State Park</b> Pre-registration is not required for this hike; to participate, simply meet in the hotel lobby at 6:00 am.
7 AM – 1 PM	<b>Silent Auction is Open</b>
7 AM – 4 PM	<b>Registration/Information is Open</b> at Event Center
8:00 AM	<b>Park Talks, Part 1</b>
8:35 AM	<b>Dr. Matthew Saponaro</b> Artificial Intelligence for Connected Health Systems
9:05 AM	<b>Dr. Courtney Schultz</b> Accessibility and Inclusion in Nature
9:35 AM	<b>Morning Break</b> Snack Service
10:15 AM	<b>KOA COO Darin Uselman</b> Campgrounds of the Future
10:45 AM	<b>Dr. Yu-Fai Leung</b> Sustainable Visitor Management
11:05 AM	<b>Speaker, Bronco Wild Fund</b>
11:15 AM	<b>Park Talks, Part 2</b> Then Service Awards

AFTERNOON/EVENING	
12:00 PM	<b>LUNCH</b>
1:00 PM	<b>Silent Auction Closes</b>
1:30 PM – 5:30 PM	<b>Exhibitor Breakdown</b>
1:30 PM	<b>Concurrent #1: Directors</b> Business Meeting
1:30 PM	<b>Concurrent #1:</b> Park Staff Session – Collaboration Across States
2:30 PM – 3 PM	<b>Afternoon Break</b>
3:00 PM	<b>Concurrent #2: Directors</b> Business Meeting
3:00 PM	<b>Concurrent #2:</b> Park Staff Session – Collaboration Across States
3:45 PM	<b>Free Time</b>
5 PM – 8 PM	<b>Banquet &amp; Award Ceremony at Hotel</b> Dress: Semi-Formal
8 PM – 10 PM	<b>Evening Reception on Event Center Lawn</b> <b>Cornhole Tournament</b>



## ALL ABOARD!

All bus loading and unloading will be at the Tahoe Blue Event Center front entrance. Please arrive at least 10 minutes before departure time!

OLD LAS VEGAS MORMON  
FORT STATE HISTORIC PARK



# FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

6 AM – 8 AM	<b>Breakfast</b> at Event Center, plus To-Go Boxes
7 AM – 4 PM	<b>Registration/Info Desk is Open</b> at Event Center
8:30 AM – 9 AM	<b>Travel to Spooner Lake</b>
9 AM – 1 PM	<b>Optional Field Trip: Spooner Lake</b> <b>Explore and Lunch</b> Lunch Provided
1 PM – 1:15 PM	<b>Load Shuttle Buses at Spooner Lake State Park for Travel to South Lake Tahoe Events Center</b>
–OR–	
1 PM – 1:15 PM	<b>Load Shuttle Buses at Spooner Lake State Park for Travel to Reno-Tahoe Airport</b> (Must be reserved in advance using QR code to the right)
1 PM – 2 PM	<b>Travel to Hotel or Airport</b>



## HEADING TO THE AIRPORT?

Airport Shuttles operate from 3:15 am to 8:00 pm, reserve your ride using this QR code.





# THE PLACES YOU'LL GO...

The Nevada State Parks system is comprised of 27 park units, consisting of state parks, recreation areas, historic parks, and historic sites. Conference activities will be held at four of these parks: Sand Harbor, Mormon Station, Spooner Lake & Backcountry, and Van Sickle.

## Sand Harbor State Park

Sand Harbor State Park is home to some of the most iconic and quintessential views of Lake Tahoe – just google “Lake Tahoe,” and you’ll see image after image of the granite boulders and Caribbean-blue water that makes Sand Harbor State Park and Lake Tahoe in general, so instantly recognizable. While Sand Harbor has been a unit of the Nevada State Parks system since 1958, it has seen a multitude of uses over the years, first being utilized as a seasonal camp site by the Washoe people, who are the original inhabitants of the Lake Tahoe Basin, and the Great Basin valleys to the east. In the late 1800s, Sand Harbor served as a base of operations for the Sierra Nevada Wood and Lumber Company, with steamships hauling logs into the harbor so they could be sent by rail to the company sawmill in Incline Village. In the 1930s and ‘40s, then-owner George Whittell Jr. planned to construct a casino at the site. After Whittell’s plans fell by the wayside, the State of Nevada negotiated with him to secure the land for a state park. A decade later, judicial action forced Whittell to sell 5,300 acres which became the foundation of Sand Harbor State Park. Today, this day-use park is the most visited unit of the Nevada State Park system.

In 2019, the Tahoe East Shore Trail sometimes referred to as “America’s most beautiful bikeway” was completed, connecting Sand Harbor proper to other park sites such

as Hidden Beach and Memorial Point, as well as the community of Incline Village. This three-mile path offers stunning views of the lake and opportunities to access more secluded shoreline areas.

Don’t miss the conference welcome reception and dinner at Sand Harbor State Park on Tuesday evening!

## PARK FACTS

<b>2022 Visitation</b>	<b>1,059,055</b> (up 2% from 2021)
<b>Permanent Staffing</b>	7 (including a Park Supervisor, Park Rangers, Maintenance Specialists, an Administrative Assistant, and a Retail Storekeeper)
<b>Additional Amenities</b>	The park is home to the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, kayak & SUP rental concessionaire, and a food service concessionaire







## Mormon Station State Historic Park

Nestled on the western edge of Nevada’s Carson Valley, Mormon Station State Historic Park was established as a Nevada State Park in 1957. This 3.6-acre historic site interprets the location of a significant trading post that served gold seekers traveling to California. Located on the Carson Route of the California Trail, the station was first established in 1850 by a small group of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, better known as “Mormons.” Travelers passing through began referring to the nameless outpost as “Mormon Station,” and the name stuck. In 1851, a man named John Reese turned Mormon Station into a permanent, year-round trading post and four years later the settlement’s name was changed to “Genoa.”

Admittedly, Mormon Station today probably isn’t what most folks picture when they hear the phrase “state park” - this landscaped park features lush green lawns and sits in the middle of the historic town of Genoa. This setting makes the park a favorite venue for large public and private events, including most notably the Genoa Candy Dance Arts & Crafts Faire, which brings over 40,000 people to this quiet town of 1,300 residents.

Join us at this scenic and unique park for dinner on Wednesday evening!



PARK FACTS	
<b>2022 Visitation</b>	<b>73,883</b> (up 10% from 2021)
<b>Permanent Staffing</b>	<b>1</b> (Park Interpreter)
In 2022, the park offered 54 interpretive programs attended by a total of 1,642 people.	







## Spoooner Lake & Backcountry State Park

Spoooner Lake & Backcountry State Park spans over 12,000 acres and features nearly 50 miles of hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails and routes. The park’s namesake, Spooner Lake, is a short trek from the park’s visitor center, while the park’s backcountry is also home to lush meadows, dense aspen groves, alpine peaks with stunning vistas, and reservoirs with excellent trout fishing. The backcountry is closed to motor vehicles, allowing it to retain a feel more characteristic of wilderness areas.

In addition to being a recreational playground and ecological resource, the backcountry is the site of the historic Virginia Gold Hill Water System. Developed in 1873, this ingenious system provided desperately needed water to Virginia City and surrounding silver-mining boomtowns through an intricate system of reservoirs, wooden box flumes, pipelines, and an almost 4,000-foot-long tunnel. Several historic sites related to this engineering feat are scattered throughout the backcountry today.

On Tuesday, Nevada State Parks’ staff will lead a four-wheel drive auto tour of the Spooner Backcountry, allowing participants the unique opportunity to explore this expansive area by vehicle. On Friday, an optional post-conference field trip will occur at Spooner Lake & Backcountry State Park.

PARK FACTS	
<b>2022 Visitation</b>	<b>74,582</b> (up 13% from 2021)
<b>Permanent Staffing</b>	<b>1</b> (Park Supervisor)
The park features 12 trails, totaling 47.3 miles.	

## Van Sickle Bi-State Park

As its name implies, Van Sickle Bi-State Park includes land in Nevada and California. The park represents a long-shared vision between land management agencies in Nevada and California. The Van Sickle family donated 542 acres to the State of Nevada in 1989 for the creation of a new park, prompting the California Department of Parks and Recreation to envision acquiring an adjacent 156-acre parcel on the California side to formally develop a bi-state park. In 2001, the California Tahoe Conservancy purchased the land, bringing this vision of a park spanning the California-Nevada state line to fruition.

The park’s trails boast spectacular views of Lake Tahoe and the surrounding peaks. Located just a short walk from the Stateline casino corridor, Van Sickle is one of the most accessible parks in the Tahoe Basin. Nevada State Parks is currently developing a visitor center for the site, and long-term development plans call for the addition of a campground as well.

In addition to a service project on Monday evening focusing on trail improvements, guided sunrise hikes will depart from the hotel lobby to Van Sickle on Wednesday and Thursday morning.

PARK FACTS	
<b>2022 Visitation</b>	<b>127,848</b> (up 19% from 2021)
<b>Permanent Staffing</b>	<b>1</b> (Park Supervisor)
The park encompasses 558 acres in Nevada, 142 acres in California (managed by the California Tahoe Conservancy)	



# SPEAKERS



## **DOUG BECK** Director of Grants & Community Recreation, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

Doug manages three programs directly related to increasing and/or improving the conservation and outdoor recreation landscape in Maine: The Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Recreational Trails Program

and the Maine Conservation Corps.

Doug has past experience as the Physical Activity Coordinator at the Maine Center for Disease Control, as the recreation superintendent for the City of Auburn, and was the first executive director for the Maine Recreation and Parks Association for which he continues to serve as board parliamentarian.

He earned a B.S. in Recreation & Parks from The Pennsylvania State University with a focus on environmental interpretation.



## **BRONCO WILD FUND**

Ford Motor Company established the Bronco Wild Fund in 2020 to fulfill its promise to help off-road enthusiasts enjoy the wilderness responsibly

through preservation, education and access programs funded by a portion of the proceeds from every Bronco sold.

Bronco Wild Fund works with a series of strategic alliances with nonprofits, including America's State Parks, selected for their preservation efforts of America's outdoors and their encouragement of responsible stewardship through improved access and education.



## **J.R. COLLIER** Deputy Director of Operations, Oregon State Parks and Recreation

J.R. has worked for OPRD for over 20 years, starting in 2000 as a temporary seasonal employee. Growing up in a forestry family, J.R. has always had a close connection to working outdoors. This early exposure, coupled with a bachelor's degree in Geology

& Geography/Land Use Planning, has proven invaluable in his career.

J.R. has a strong commitment to staff development and has spent time on the board of the agency's Managers Academy and chair of OPRD's Enforcement Academy, as well as a trainer in a variety of fields such as interpretation, tactical communication/enforcement, equipment operation and sawyer certification.



## **JEN CURETON** President and CEO, Canadian Parks Council

Jen has more than 25 years of leadership experience in the private, nonprofit, and public sectors. Her areas of expertise are strategic business and marketing planning, revenue development, partnership development, and philanthropy.

Most recently, before joining the Canadian Parks Council as President and CEO, Jen worked with Ontario Parks as a member of the senior management team, leading a team of marketers, educators, and relationship builders as they encouraged responsible visitation and support of the beautiful parks in the province.



# SPEAKERS



## **MALIA FRENCH FLOYD**

**Director of Client Marketing, Aspira**

Malia partners with state and provincial parks, as well as conservation agencies, to support their overall program goals. She currently manages the NASPD annual photo contest and bimonthly VISTAS newsletter. Prior to joining Aspira, Malia spent

13 years in the advertising industry leading national accounts for agencies in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas. Outside of work you'll find her exploring the trails with her dog, volunteering with Friends of Twin Lakes, and learning how to sail the challenging lakes in the Colorado Rocky Mountains.



## **LEWIS LEDFORD**

**Executive Director, National Association of State Park Directors**

Lewis serves as the Executive Director of the National Association of State Park Directors whose membership represents America's State Parks which encompass 9,817 park areas comprising more than 20 million acres with attendance

exceeding 867 million visitors annually. Also, he is in his seventh year as the school director for the State Park Leadership School through N.C. State University. Lewis assumed these roles after a 35+ year career with the North Carolina state park system, including 11 years as the state parks and recreation director.



## **DR. MYRON F. FLOYD**

**Dean, College of Natural Resources, North Carolina State University**

Prior to joining NC State in 2005, Dr. Floyd held faculty appointments at various universities. His scholarship focuses on the human dimensions of natural resource management with specific interest in the role of race and ethnicity in the recreational

use of parks and protected areas. Dr. Floyd's research has been supported by grants from state and federal agencies. He holds a B.S. in recreation and park administration, a M.S. in parks, recreation and tourism management from Clemson University, and a Ph.D. in recreation and resources development with a specialization in natural resource sociology from Texas A&M University.



## **DR. YU-FAI LEUNG**

**Professor and Director of NCSU Graduate Program**

Dr. Yu-Fai Leung is Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at North Carolina State University. His work aims to advance the science and practice of sustainable visitor management in parks,

protected and conserved areas, and other wild and natural spaces from local to global scales.

He has developed and refined indicators and measurement protocols for visitor use and impact monitoring programs in the U.S. and abroad. He has also worked with agencies in building capacity and evaluating management effectiveness. Since 2006, he has been directing the Annual Information Exchange project, an annual nationwide survey of state park operations, for NASPD.

# SPEAKERS



**JOE LOMBARDO**  
Governor of Nevada

After serving the nation in the United States Army and the Nevada National Guard, Joe Lombardo rose through the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department ranks over 26 years. He was elected as Sheriff of Clark County in 2014 and re-elected in 2018. Governor Lombardo was elected as the 31st Governor

of Nevada in November 2022 and sworn into office in January 2023. As Governor, Lombardo focuses on diversifying and revitalizing Nevada's economy, restoring law and order in communities across the state, and bringing excellence, school choice, and accountability to Nevada's education system.



**JODY MABERRY**  
Podcast Professional

Jody Maberry is a former Park Ranger with Washington State Parks. As a ranger, he was on the Ranger Safety Team and an instructor for the International Police Mountain Bike Association. Since leaving parks, Jody began using a Park Ranger's gift for storytelling to help people and businesses find the

right words and stories to clarify their message. He works for executives from Disney, Morgan James Publishing, and other spectacular brands. As the host of The Park Leaders Show, Jody begins conversations about how we can continue serving the public and protecting our resources as better leaders in parks.



**BOB MERGELL**  
Administrator, Nevada  
Division of State Parks

Bob Mergell has served as the Administrator for Nevada State Parks for four years. Bob has spent the last 28 years working for Nevada State Parks through various positions as a Park Ranger, Park Supervisor, Regional Manager and Deputy Administrator before accepting his current position.

Bob graduated from Northern Arizona University with a B.S. in Forestry, served in the United State Marine Corps, and worked seasonally at Glacier National Park prior to going to work for Nevada State Parks.



**PATRICK RENVOISE**  
Chief Neuromarketing  
Officer, SalesBrain

An award-winning author, international speaker, Trainer and C-level coach, Patrick pioneered the field of Neuromarketing.

In the book "The Persuasion Code" Patrick published NeuroMap® the first scientific model of Persuasion. Based on the dual brain model

discovered by Daniel Kahneman – 2002 Economy Nobel Prize and author of "Thinking, Fast and Slow" – NeuroMap® reveals the key role of the Primal Brain in all human decisions.

Over the last two decades, by teaching how to reach the Primal Brain of their customers, Patrick has been helping over 2,000 companies GROW. These include many Fortune 500 companies.



# SPEAKERS



## **CHARLES "CHUCK" SAMS III**

### **National Park Service Director**

Director of the National Park Service since 2021, Sams has worked in tribal and state government, and in the nonprofit natural resource and conservation management field, with an emphasis on the responsibility of strong stewardship for land

preservation for this and future generations.

Sams is a veteran of the U.S. Navy where he served as an intelligence specialist. He holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Concordia University and a Master of Legal Studies in Indigenous Peoples Law from the University of Oklahoma School of Law.



## **DR. MATTHEW SAPONARO**

### **Founder, A.I. Whoo**

Dr. Matthew Saponaro received his Ph.D. in Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) for connected health systems. His research aims to improve machine learning techniques to assess and improve physical activity and other health-related behaviors. While founding A.I. Whoo, he has

conducted Health Impact Assessments for organizations engaged in park and trail revitalization/improvement efforts. These assessments measure accessibility to parks and trails by evaluating walkability to other environmental influences to create comprehensive profiles of infrastructure and dynamics as they relate to health behaviors and health outcomes.



## **BRIAN SANDOVAL**

### **President of the University of Nevada, Reno**

Brian Sandoval has served as the 17th President of the University of Nevada, Reno, since his appointment in 2020.

Prior to his appointment, Sandoval served two terms as the 29th Governor of the State of Nevada from 2011–2019, his leadership helping

lift Nevada from a historic recession to a time of record-setting prosperity and growth.

Previously, Sandoval was appointed United States District Judge for the District of Nevada. He also was elected Nevada's Attorney General, was the youngest chairman in the history of the Nevada Gaming Commission, and served two terms as an assemblyman in the Nevada State Legislature.



## **ROBERT SAUNDERS**

### **Tax and Business Lawyer**

Saunders counsels primarily tax-exempt organizations, charitable and noncharitable, on a multitude of federal and state tax controversy matters, estate planning, and tax-exempt financing.

Bob serves as general counsel for exempt organizations and advises on tax and governance issues. He is also a skilled advisor regarding regulatory compliance regarding charitable solicitation laws and regulatory review of assets transfers by nonprofit organizations.

Bob also represents exempt organizations in federal and state tax audits, and has significant experience as bond counsel, underwriter's counsel, company counsel and authority counsel in tax-exempt financings.

# SPEAKERS



## **DR. COURTNEY SCHULTZ**

**Executive Director, Health & Technology Partners**

Health & Technology Partners is a social science research consultancy dedicated to improving well-being through cooperative partnerships with communities and natural resources. Dr. Schultz has led research

projects for local, state, and federal agencies in improving visitor experience by focusing on engaging underserved communities and in identifying public health goals supported by conservation, parks, and outdoor recreation. Dr. Schultz has developed an expertise in innovative research methods and data collection through the design and execution of applied research and evaluation focused on examining outdoor recreation as a positive health benefit for people and communities.



## **DANIEL STUDENT**

**Senior Consultant, Potrero Group**

Daniel leads strategic planning, organizational development and new program innovation processes. He has been a cultural, environmental, and social sector leader for over 15 years and brings a unique cross section of creative and business strategy to his work.

He has also led board search, board development, and executive search for a number of organizations. Notably, Daniel led Potrero Group's engagement through the Resources Legacy Fund to provide program management to the development of California Natural Resource Agency's 30x30 strategy. He received his MBA at U.C. Davis Graduate School of Management.

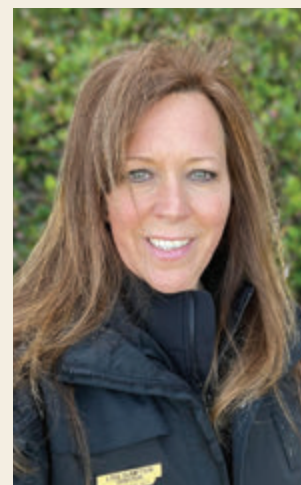


## **KRISTINE STRATTON**

**President and Chief Executive Officer, National Recreation and Park Association**

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) works to ensure that all people have access to the health, social and environmental benefits of parks and recreation. NRPA

advances this vision by investing in and championing the work of park and recreation professionals as a catalyst for positive change in service of equity, climate readiness, and overall health and well-being. Her passion is working at the intersection of people and the environment, and she holds a Master of Arts degree in environmental policy and urban planning from Tufts University and a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Boston University.



## **LISA SUMPTION**

**Director, Oregon Parks and Recreation**

Lisa Sumption has been serving as the Director of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department since 2014, concurrently holding the position of Oregon's State Historic Preservation Officer. With a tenure of over 23 years in public service, Sumption stands as one of the longest-

serving agency directors on the Governor's Enterprise Leadership team. Sumption also serves as the President of the National Association of State Park Directors, recently completed a term as an instructor at the National State Park Leadership School and was most recently appointed to serve on the National Parks System Advisory Board by Secretary Haaland.



# SPEAKERS



**DARIN USELMAN**  
**Chief Operations Officer,**  
**KOA**

Uselman joined KOA in 2017 to lead franchise operations. Over the past five years, KOA's franchise business has thrived under Uselman's leadership with high franchise attraction and retention rates, an expansion of services and the development of KOA's franchise value model.

Prior to his time at KOA, Uselman amassed impressive operations experience at GE Capital as a strategic program manager and a collateral initiatives leader. Additionally, he is a PGA golf professional and spent several years in golf operations for a major homebuilder on the East Coast.



**MADELINE WADE**  
**Partner and Founder of**  
**Brumidi Group**

Madeline advises corporations, nonprofits, industry trade associations, and thought leaders on outdoor recreation and sustainability regulations, policy, and global trends. Through work with clients in this space, Madeline routinely leads coalitions in the outdoor

space that are focused on advancing natural climate solutions, seeking funding for conservation programs, and reforming laws to protect public lands and access to outdoor recreation.

Clients leverage Madeline's broad expertise to lead their coalition campaigns, develop their comprehensive messaging, and advance meaningful change throughout the policy ecosystem. Her client successes have resulted in major policy reforms across many sectors.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Full bios for all of the speakers are available online on the conference website and on the WHOVA app! Thank you to all of our 2023 speakers, guests and attendees.



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# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE PARK DIRECTORS DIRECTORY

## ALABAMA

### Greg Lein, Director

*Alabama State Parks Division*

64 N. Union St., Room 538  
Montgomery, AL 36130  
greg.lein@dcnr.alabama.gov  
www.alapark.com

## ALASKA

### Ricky Gease, Director

*Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation*

550 W. 7th Ave., Ste. 1380  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
ricky.gease@alaska.gov  
www.dnr.alaska.gov

## ARIZONA

### Bob Broscheid, Executive Director

*Arizona State Parks & Trails*

23751 N. 23rd Ave., Ste. 190  
Phoenix, AZ 85085  
rbroscheid@azstateparks.gov  
www.azstateparks.com

## ARKANSAS

### Shea Lewis, Director

*Arkansas State Parks*

One Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
shea.lewis@arkansas.gov  
www.arkansasstateparks.com

## CALIFORNIA

### Armando Quintero, Director

*Department of Parks & Recreation*

1416 Ninth St., Room 1405  
PO Box 94296  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
armando.quintero@parks.ca.gov  
www.parks.ca.gov

## COLORADO

### Jeff Davis, Director

*Division of Parks & Wildlife*

1313 Sherman St., 6th Floor  
Denver, CO 80203  
jeffrey.davis@state.co.us  
cpw.state.co.us

## CONNECTICUT

### Tom Tyler, Director

*DEEP, State Parks and Public Outreach*

79 Elm St., 6th Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106  
tom.tyler@ct.gov  
www.ct.gov

## DELAWARE

### Raymond Bivens, Director

*Division of Parks & Recreation*

89 Kings Highway  
Dover, DE 19901  
raymond.bivens@delaware.gov  
www.destateparks.com

## FLORIDA

### Chuck Hatcher, Director

*Florida State Parks*

3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 500  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
chuck.hatcher@FloridaDEP.gov  
www.floridastateparks.org

## GEORGIA

### Jeff Cown, Director

*State Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites*

2600 Hwy. 155 SW, Ste. C  
Stockbridge, GA 30281  
jeff.cown@dnr.ga.gov  
www.gastateparks.org

## HAWAII

### Curt Cottrell, Administrator

*Division of State Parks*

1151 Punchbowl St., Room 310  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
curt.a.cottrell@hawaii.gov  
www.hawaiistateparks.org

## IDAHO

### Susan E. Buxton, Director

*Department of Parks & Recreation*

5657 Warm Springs Ave.  
Boise, ID 83716  
susan.buxton@idpr.idaho.gov  
www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov

## ILLINOIS

### Paula Martel, Director

*DNR, Office of Land Management*

One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL 62702  
paula.martel@illinois.gov  
www.dnr.illinois.gov

## INDIANA

### Terry Coleman, Director

*Division of State Parks*

402 W. Washington St., Ste. W298  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
tcoleman@dnr.in.gov  
www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/

## IOWA

### Sherry Arntzen, Parks, Forests & Preserves Bureau Chief

*Iowa State Parks – Department of  
Natural Resources*

502 E. 9th St.  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
sherry.arntzen@dnr.iowa.gov  
www.iowadnr.com/parks

# DIRECTORY

## KANSAS

### **Linda Lanterman, Director**

*Division of State Parks*

512 SE 25th Ave.  
Pratt, KS 67124  
linda.lanterman@ks.gov  
ksoutdoors.com/State-Parks

## KENTUCKY

### **Russ Meyer, Commissioner**

*Kentucky State Parks*

500 Mero Street, 5th Floor  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
russ.meyer@ky.gov  
parks.ky.gov

## LOUISIANA

### **Brandon Burris, Asst. Secretary**

*Office of State Parks*

PO Box 44426  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804  
bburris@crt.la.gov  
www.lastateparks.com

## MAINE

### **Andy Cutko, Director**

*Bureau of Parks and Lands*

22 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333  
andy.cutko@maine.gov  
www.state.me.us/doc/parks

## MARYLAND

### **Angela Crenshaw, Acting Superintendent**

*Maryland Park Service*

580 Taylor Ave.  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
angela.crenshaw@maryland.gov  
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands

## MASSACHUSETTS

### **Priscilla Geigis, Dep. Comm. Conservation & Resource Stewardship**

*Department of Conservation  
and Recreation*

251 Causeway St., 9th Floor  
Boston, MA 02114  
priscilla.geigis@mass.gov  
www.mass.gov/dcr/forparks

## MICHIGAN

### **Ronald Olson, Chief**

*Parks & Recreation Division*

525 W. Allegan St.  
Lansing, MI 48909-7757  
olsonr@michigan.gov  
www.michigan.gov/dnr

## MINNESOTA

### **Ann Pierce, Director**

*Division of Parks & Trails*

500 Lafayette Rd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
ann.pierce@state.mn.us  
www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\_parks

## MISSISSIPPI

### **Andre Hollis, Director**

*Mississippi State Parks*

PO Box 451  
Jackson, MS 39205  
Andre.hollis@wfp.ms.gov  
www.mdwfp.com

## MISSOURI

### **David Kelly, Director**

*Division of State Parks*

PO Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
david.kelly@dnr.mo.gov  
www.mostateparks.com

## MONTANA

### **Hope Stockwell, Parks & Outdoor Rec. Division Administrator**

*Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks*

PO Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620  
hstockwell@mt.gov  
www.fwp.mt.gov/stateparks

## NEBRASKA

### **Jeff Fields, Administrator**

*Parks Division, Game & Parks*

*Commission*

2200 N. 33rd St.  
Lincoln, NE 68503  
jeff.fields@nebraska.gov  
www.outdoornebraska.ne.gov/parks

## NEVADA

### **Robert Mergell, Administrator**

*Nevada Division of State Parks*

901 S. Stewart St., Ste. 5005  
Carson City, NV 89701  
rmergell@parks.nv.gov  
parks.nv.gov

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### **Brian Wilson, Director**

*NH DNCR, Division of Parks  
& Recreation*

172 Pembroke Rd.  
Concord, NH 03302  
brian.j.wilson@dnrc.nh.gov  
www.nhstateparks.org

## NEW JERSEY

### **John Cecil, Asst. Commissioner**

*State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites*

PO Box 420  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
john.cecil@dep.nj.gov  
www.njparksandforests.org

## NEW MEXICO

### **Toby Velásquez, Director**

*State Park Division*

1220 S. Saint Francis Dr.  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
toby.velasquez@state.nm.us  
www.emnrd.state.nm.us/prd

## NEW YORK

### **Erik Kulleseid, Commissioner**

*Office of Parks, Recreation,  
& Historic Preservation*

625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12207  
erik.kulleseid@parks.ny.gov  
nysparks.com

## NORTH CAROLINA

### **Brian Strong, Director**

*Division of Parks & Recreation*

1615 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699  
brian.strong@ncparks.gov  
www.ncparks.gov



# DIRECTORY

## NORTH DAKOTA

### **Cody Schulz, Director**

*ND Parks and Recreation Department*

604 E Boulevard Ave Dept. 750  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
cjschulz@nd.gov  
www.parkrec.nd.gov

## OHIO

### **Glen Cobb, Chief**

*Ohio State Parks and Watercraft*

2045 Morse Rd., Bldg. C-3  
Columbus, OH 43229  
glen.cobb@dnr.state.oh.us  
www.parks.ohiodnr.gov

## OKLAHOMA

### **Sterling Zearley, Director**

*Oklahoma State Parks, Tourism  
& Recreation Dept.*

123 Roberts S. Kerr, Suite 900  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
sterling.zearley@travelok.com  
www.travelok.com

## OREGON

### **Lisa Sumption, Director**

*OR Parks & Recreation Department*

725 Summer Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
lisa.sumption@opr.d.oregon.gov  
stateparks.oregon.gov

## PENNSYLVANIA

### **John Hallas, Director**

*Bureau of State Parks*

PO Box 8551  
Harrisburg, PA 17105  
jhallas@state.pa.us  
www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks

## RHODE ISLAND

### **Frank Floor, Administrator**

*Division of Parks & Recreation*

1100 Tower Hill Rd.  
N. Kingstown, RI 02852  
frank.floor@dem.ri.gov  
www.riparks.com

## SOUTH CAROLINA

### **Paul McCormack, Director**

*State Park Service*

1205 Pendleton St., Ste. 251  
Columbia, SC 29201  
pmccormack@scprt.com  
www.southcarolinaparks.com

## SOUTH DAKOTA

### **Jeff VanMeeteren, Director**

*Division of Parks & Recreation*

523 E. Capitol, Foss Bldg.  
Pierre, SD 57501  
jeff.vanmeeteren@state.sd.us  
gfp.sd.gov/state-parks/

## TENNESSEE

### **Greer Tidwell Jr., Deputy Commissioner**

*Tennessee Department Environment  
& Conservation*

William R. Snodgrass TN Tower  
312 Rosa L. Parks Ave., 2nd Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243  
greer.tidwell@tn.gov  
www.tnstateparks.com

## TEXAS

### **Rodney Franklin, Director**

*Texas State Parks*

4200 Smith School Rd.  
Austin, TX 78744  
rodney.franklin@tpwd.texas.gov  
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest

## UTAH

### **Jeff Rasmussen, Director**

*Division of State Parks & Recreation*

1594 W. North Temple, Ste. 116,  
PO Box 146001  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114  
jeffrasmussen@utah.gov  
stateparks.utah.gov

## VERMONT

### **Nate McKeen, Director**

*Division of State Parks*

1 National Life Dr., Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05620  
nate.mckeen@vermont.gov  
www.vtstateparks.com

## VIRGINIA

### **Melissa Baker, Director**

*Division of State Parks*

600 E. Main St., 16th Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219  
melissa.baker@dcr.virginia.gov  
www.dcr.virginia.gov/state\_parks

## WASHINGTON

### **Diana Dupuis, Director**

*State Parks & Recreation Commission*

PO Box 42650, 1111 Israel Road SW  
Olympia, WA 98504-2650  
diana.dupuis@parks.wa.gov  
www.parks.wa.gov

## WEST VIRGINIA

### **Brad Reed, Chief**

*WVDNR Parks & Recreation Section*

324 4th Ave.  
South Charleston, WV 25303  
brad.r.reed@wv.gov  
www.wvstateparks.com

## WISCONSIN

### **Steve Schmelzer, Director**

*Bureau of Parks & Recreation*

P.O. Box 7921, 101 S. Webster St., PR/6  
Madison, WI 53707  
steven.schmelzer@wisconsin.gov  
www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks

## WYOMING

### **Nick Neylon, Deputy Director**

*Division of State Parks, Historic Sites  
& Trails*

2301 Central Ave.,  
Barrett Bldg., 4th Floor  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
nick.neylon@wyo.gov  
wyoparks.state.wy.us

## NASPD

### **Lewis Ledford, Executive Director**

*Natl. Association of State Park Directors*

PO Box 24114  
Winston-Salem, NC 27114  
lewis@stateparks.org  
stateparks.org

# ASSOCIATES

## CANADA

### **Jen Cureton, President & CEO Canadian Parks Council**

300 Water Street  
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 3C7 CANADA  
jen.cureton@parks-parcs.ca  
www.parks-parcs.ca

## CANADA

### **Robert Lemmon, Chair, Canadian Parks Council**

*New Brunswick Director, Parks  
Programming & Planning, Dept,  
Tourism Heritage and Culture*  
P.O. Box 6000  
Fredrickton, NB, CANADA  
robert.lemmon@gnb.ca  
www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/  
departments/thc/ParksandAttractions

## NASORLO

### **Nate Halubka, Executive Director**

*Natl. Assoc. of State Outdoor Recreation  
Liaison Officers*  
65 Glenn Road, Suite 363  
Garner, NC 27529  
nate.halubka@nasorlo.org  
www.nasorlo.org

## NASORLO

### **Douglas S. Beck, NASORLO President, Outdoor Recreation Supervisor**

*Maine DACF, Bureau of Parks & Lands*  
54 Independence Drive, SHS 124  
Augusta, ME 04333-0124  
doug.beck@maine.gov  
www.nasorlo.org

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### **Charles “Chuck” Sams, Director**

1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
charles\_sams@nps.gov  
mildred\_jimenez@nps.gov  
www.nps.gov

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### **Lauren Imgrund, Associate Director**

*Partnerships and Civic Engagement*  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
lauren\_imgrund@nps.gov

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### **Joel Lynch, Chief**

*State & Local Assistance Programs*  
1849 “C” Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
joel\_lynch@nps.gov  
www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/

## U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

### **Jeff Krause, Chief of Natural Resources**

*Natural Resources Management,  
HQUSACE, CECWCO, 3F63*  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20314  
jeff.krause@usace.army.mil  
www.usace.army.mil/missions/  
civil-works/recreation/

## US FOREST SERVICE

### **Gordon Blum, Deputy Regional Forester**

*Recreation, Heritage &  
Volunteer Resources*  
626 East Westconsin Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
gordon.blum@usda.gov  
www.fs.fed.us

## BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

### **Chris Beardsley, Director of Policy & Programs**

*Bureau of Reclamation*  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225  
cbeardsley@usbr.gov  
www.usbr.gov

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# AFFILIATES

## AMERICAN HIKING ASSOCIATION

**Kathryn Van Waes, President**

*American Hiking Society*

1422 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
kvanwaes@americanhiking.org  
americanhiking.org

## ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION

**Dan Lambe, Chief Executive**

*Arbor Day Foundation*

211 N. 12th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
dlambe@arborday.org  
www.arborday.org

## ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION

**Mary Sweeney, Program Manager**

*Arbor Day Foundation*

211 N. 12th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
msweeney@arborday.org  
www.arborday.org

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

**Tracey Stone-Manning, Director**

1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
www.blm.gov

## TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

**Rebecca Hayden, Director**

*TVA Natural Resources*

106 Tri-Cities Business Park Drive  
Gray, TN 37615-3497  
rlhayden@tva.gov  
www.tva.gov

## BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

**Roger C. Mosby, Chief Scout Executive**

*Boy Scouts of America*

1325 W. Walnut Hill Lane  
Irving, TX 75038  
myscouting@scouting.org  
www.scouting.org

## GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA

**Bonnie Barczykowski, CEO**

*Girl Scouts of the USA*

420 5th Avenue  
New York, NY 10018  
bbarczykowski@girlscouts.org  
www.girlscouts.org

## GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA

**Amada Daly Sr., Director of Outdoor & Older Girl Experience**

420 5th Avenue  
New York, NY 10018  
adaly@girlscouts.org  
www.girlscouts.org

## LEAVE NO TRACE

**Dana Watts, Executive Director**

*Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics*

PO Box 997  
Boulder, CO 80306  
dana@lnt.org  
lnt.org

## NATL. ASSOC. OF RV PARKS & CAMPGROUNDS

**Jeff Sims Sr., Director State Relations & Advocacy**

*Membership & Public Affairs*

9085 E. Mineral Circle, Ste. 200  
Centennial, CO 80112  
jeff.sims@arvc.org  
www.arvc.org

## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

**Sara Espinoza, President**

4301 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 160  
Washington, DC 20008  
sespinoza@neefusa.org  
www.neefusa.org

## NATIONAL PARK TRUST

**Grace Lee, Executive Director**

401 East Jefferson Street, Suite 207  
Rockville, MD 20850  
grace@parktrust.org  
www.parktrust.org

## RV INDUSTRY

**ASSOCIATION (RVIA)**

**Chris Bornemann, Director of Government Affairs**

1899 Preston White Drive  
Reston, VA 20191  
cbornemann@riva.org  
rvia.org

## SOCIETY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PROFESSIONALS

**Rachel Franchina, Interim Executive Director**

*Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals*

PO Box 3004  
Evergreen, CO 80437  
rachel.franchina@recpro.org  
recpro.org

SOUTH FORK STATE RECREATION AREA

# EXHIBITORS

**AccessParks**  
accessparks.com

**Action Trackchair**  
actiontrackchair.com

**American Park Network**  
apnmedia.com

**American Ramp Company**  
americanrampcompany.com

**Aramark**  
aramark.com

**AriensCo**  
ariensco.com

**Aspira**  
aspiraconnect.com

**Booz Allen Hamilton**  
boozallen.com

**Brandt Information Services**  
brandtinfo.com

**Bronco Wild Fund**  
ford.com/bronco-wild-fund

**Camis**  
camis.com

**Cartegraph Asset Management**  
cartegraph.com

**Cedar Forest Products**  
cedarforestproducts.com

**Champlin Tire Recycling**  
champlintirerecycling.com

**ChicoBag & To-Go Ware**  
chicobag.com

**CHM Government Services**  
chmgov.com

**City Apparel + Merch**  
cityapparel.net

**Clemson University**  
clemson.edu

**Concept 360 Apparel**  
c360apparel.com

**CyArk**  
cyark.org

**Design Workshop**  
designworkshop.com

**Entertainment Marketing Group**  
emgpromotions.com

**ESRI**  
esri.com

**ExplorUS**  
goexplorus.com

**Flowbird Group**  
flowbird.group

**FYREBX**  
fyrbx.com

**GameTime**  
gametime.com

**Green Flush Restrooms**  
greenflushrestrooms.com

**GRIT**  
gogrit.us

**Guest Services**  
guestservices.com

**IMC Outdoor Living**  
imcoutdoorliving.com

**Inntopia**  
corp.inntopia.com

**Itinio**  
itinio.com

**Kay Park & Recreation**  
kaypark.com

**L.W. Bristol**  
hikingmedallion.com

**Landway**  
landway.com

**Liberty Tire Recycling**  
libertytire.com

**Lodging Kit Company**  
lodgingkit.com

**Megasys Hospitality Solutions**  
megasysshms.com

**Monarc**  
monarcbrand.com

**North Carolina State University**  
ncsu.edu

**Pacific Netting Products**  
pacificnettingproducts.com

**Pointe Strategies**  
pointestrategies.com

**Polaris**  
polaris.edu

**Potrero Group**  
potrerogroup.com

**PROS Consulting**  
prosconsulting.com

**Public Restroom Company**  
publicrestroomcompany.com

**Quality Machine & Manufacturing**  
qualitymandm.com

**Ranger Ready Repellents**  
rangerready.com

**Regency Hotel Management**  
regency-mgmt.com

**RMS North America**  
americas.rmscloud.com

**Romtec Inc.**  
romtec.com

**RV Industry Association**  
rvia.org

**Sani-Star**  
sanistardump.com

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tylertech.com

**U.S. Hotel & Resort, Inc.**  
ramkotacompanies.com

**VenTek International**  
ventek-intl.com

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vista-rec.com

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# ABOUT NEVADA STATE PARKS

BERLIN-ICHTHYOSAUR STATE PARK

Nevada State Parks has provided outdoor opportunities for generations of citizens – citizens of Nevada, the country, and the world. Much of what we do today is informed by the history and experiences of Parks employees before us.

Nevada did not have any state parks until the 1920s. In a process similar to many other states, Nevada's leaders realized that the growing conservation movement, in combination with the automobile and an expanding national road system, were changing how Americans engaged the outdoors. In 1923, Governor James Scrugham proposed the first "State Recreational Grounds and Game Refuges." By 1925 some 15 areas were so designated. These were not officially "state parks." Our modern system would only come into being through the inspiration of a unique program: the Civilian Conservation Corps. The "CCC" was developed to provide employment for young men during the Great Depression. Workers were deployed throughout the country to improve public lands, forests, and parks. This labor force was critical to developing public recreation areas in Nevada and elsewhere. The help came with certain requirements. However, if the CCC developed a park, the state would need to create an entity to manage it all. Thus, on March 26, 1935, the legislature created a State Parks Commission and designated four areas as official "state parks": Beaver Dam, Cathedral Gorge, Kershaw-Ryan, and Valley of Fire.

In the 1950s, the parks commission gave way to a dedicated director and full-time ranger. In the 1960s, the core mission of the park system shifted from conservation to recreation, in response to rapidly increasing visitation. From 155,887 visitors in 1960 (the first recording), Nevada parks saw over one million visitors in 1971 – and over two million by 1976. To facilitate this activity, the 1970s, '80s, and '90s saw a shift from acquisition to

management. The first user fees were collected in 1969. Law enforcement authority was extended to rangers in 1971. The first group use areas were established at Fort Churchill and Valley of Fire, and campgrounds were steadily developed throughout the system. Interpretive programs were expanded, and the first Master Plans were developed.

Throughout this time, Parks staff met their challenges: severe budget cuts in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2008; great floods in 1984 (Kershaw-Ryan), 1997 (Dayton, Fort Churchill), 1998 (Valley of Fire); and other environmental events of all kinds – winds (Berlin, 1998), fires (Washoe Lake, 1999), and drought (2011–2017) to name a few.

At the same time, our predecessors created and/or recognized great opportunities: in-house management of two major grant programs (Land and Water Conservation Fund since 1965; Recreational Trails Program since 1993); our first website (1999); full hookup campgrounds (2007); the Passport Program (2014); and a steady expansion of employee housing throughout the system.

Today, Nevada State Parks maintains 27 units (including our newest: Ice Age Fossils and Walker River). Visitation is higher than ever and dynamic new employees are joining our team to learn and contribute with our long-term staff. Together, we maintain an awareness of our own history. We as an agency have been through a lot and the clues are everywhere: from our infrastructure and interpretive signs to dusty files with the records of past ideas and solutions. Like any good organization, State Parks succeeds through its people and their ability to communicate. By understanding our history, we are also, in a way, communicating with our predecessors to make great experiences for our visitors today.



# MEETING & AREA MAP

WALKER RIVER STATE RECREATION AREA

Lake Tahoe Stateline & Heavenly Village Property and Eatery Map



## Visit lake tahoe

Stateline & Heavenly Village Meeting Space & Eatery Map

### MEETINGS PROPERTIES

- Harrah's Hotel & Casino
- Harvey's Hotel & Casino
- Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
- Bally's Resort & Casino
- Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel
- Basecamp Hotel Lake Tahoe
- The Lodge at Edgewood Tahoe
- The Landing Tahoe Resort & Spa
- The Loft Tahoe
- Forest Suites
- Hotel Becket
- Marriott's Grand Residence Club
- Coachman Hotel

### RESTAURANTS

- 1 Aces High Saloon & Smokehouse
- 2 Azul Latin Kitchen
- 3 The Beach House
- 4 Base Camp Pizza Co.
- 5 Blue Dog Gourmet Pizza
- 6 California Burger Company
- 7 Driftwood Cafe
- 8 FIRE+ICE
- 9 Gunbarrel Tavern & Eatery
- 10 Kalani's
- 11 Lake Tahoe AleworX
- 12 Lucky Beaver Bar & Burger
- 13 McP's Taphouse Grill
- 14 Raley's Supermarket
- 15 South of North Brewing Co.
- 16 Stateline Brewery & Restaurant
- 17 Taste of Europe
- 18 Ten Crows BBQ



SPOONER LAKE & BACKCOUNTRY STATE PARK



# CONFERENCE LOCATION HISTORY

LAKE TAHOE, NV



1962	Illinois Beach State Park, IL	1983	Coeur d'Alene, ID	2005	Blaine, WA
1963	Washington, DC	1984	Biloxi, MS	2006	Wichita, KS
1964	Morristown, NJ	1985	Kalispell, MT / Banff, Alberta CAN	2007	Williamsburg, VA
1965	Muskoka, Ontario, CAN	1986	Hershey, PA	2008	Boise, ID
1966	Kentucky Dam State Park, KY	1987	Sacramento, CA	2009	Stone Mountain, GA
1967	Aspen Institute, CO	1988	Lake Barkley State Park, KY	2010	Santa Fe, NM
1968	Hot Springs, AR	1989	Anchorage, AK	2011	Custer State Park, SD
1969	Crawford, NH	1990	Burlington, VT	2012	Lexington, KY
1970	Myrtle Beach, SC	1991	Portland, OR	2013	Dubuque, IA
1971	Des Moines, IA	1992	Bismarck, ND	2014	Omaha, NE
1972	Honolulu, HI	1993	Niagara Falls, NY & CAN	2015	Greenville, SC
1973	Cacapon State Park, WV	1994	Austin, TX	2016	French Lick, IN
1974	Lake of the Ozarks, MO	1995	Milwaukee, WI	2017	Missoula, MT
1975	Lake Texoma State Park, TX	1996	Asheville, NC	2018	Sedona, AZ
1976	Newport, RI	1997	Maumee Bay State Park, OH	2019	Rogers, AR
1977	Grand Canyon National Park, AZ	1998	Boston, MA	2020	VIRTUAL
1978	Duck Key, FL	1999	Grand Teton National Park, WY	2021	Champion, PA
1979	Lafayette, LA	2000	Oklahoma City, OK	2022	Sunriver, OR
1980	Salt Lake City, UT	2001	Montgomery Bell State Park, TN	2023	Lake Tahoe, NV
1981	Annapolis, MD	2002	Asilomar State Park, CA	2024	Gulf Shores, AL
1982	Gulf Shores State Park, AL	2003	Boyerne Highlands, MI	2025	Pipestem, WV
		2004	St. Louis, MO		



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