



2025 TRPA Conference Education Program

TUESDAY 10/14/2025

8:00 AM-1:00PM

#1 Community Center Offsite Come prepared to move and learn. We will be visiting VO Dobbins Community Center in Kingsport, Memorial Park Community Center in Johnson City, Tetrick Community Center in Elizabethton. We will learn on the buses between locations as well as onsite. Lunch will be provided. Pre-registration and fee required). **Speaker: Convention Center A Hallway**

12:00 PM-1:00 PM

#2 Thrilling Nature Playgrounds = Positive Community Spaces (0.1 CEU) There is a trend toward nature-based play on playgrounds. We will look at the history of nature play, current research on the benefits of nature play for health and wellness and share ideas on designing playspaces that work with nature to support active play. **Speaker:** Suzanne Quinn, PhD, KOMPAN Play Institute **Grand Ballroom 1**

#3 Feeling Stuck at Work? Break Free with the Creative Process (0.1 CEU) The presentation explores creativity as a vital skill for problem-solving and personal growth. It defines creativity, addresses barriers, introduces the creative process, and encourages practical application through activities. Participants assess wellness, identify problems, brainstorm solutions, and begin incubating ideas for future innovation and implementation. **Speaker:** Natalie L. Smith, PhD., Sport and Recreation Management, East Tennessee State University **Grand Ballroom 2**

#4 Cultivating Teamwork (0.1 CEU) Speaker: Grand Ballroom 3

1:15:00 PM-3:00 PM

5 Opening Session: How Can I? Unlock Potential and Possibility (0.1 CEU) “We tried that. It won’t work. There’s no way to do that right now.” These and other excuses plague individuals, companies, and organizations. Award-Winning Entertainer and International Speaker Joe Fingerhut will bring you on an exciting and engaging journey landing on three simple words that unlock potential and possibility in people and organizations alike - HOW CAN I? This program ignites energy and potential that carries over to everyday life and work experience. These tools to help overcome adversity and apathy lead to more productive, positive people and teams that get results and support each other. **Speaker:** Joe Fingerhut **Grand Ballroom 4, 5, 7, & 8**

7:00 PM-9:00 PM

#40 Craft & Connect (0.1 CEU) Join your fellow recreational professionals and let creativity flow! Design and make your own Mosaic Coaster or a personalized Koozie. Bring your imagination & enjoy a relaxed space to connect and create! **Speaker:** Jovana Glover, Recreation Programmer, Bristol, TN Parks and Recreation Department *High Voltage*

Wednesday 10/15/2025

10:15 AM-11:15 AM

#6 Outdoor Adult Fitness Parks: Best Practices for Promoting Community Health by Increasing Physical Activity (0.1 CEU) The Outdoor Adult Fitness Parks: Best Practices for Promoting Community Health by Increasing Physical Activity guidebook, helps communities effectively advocate the benefits of outdoor fitness spaces as solutions to providing readily available, affordable, and enjoyable ways to exercise in neighborhood parks and destinations. Supportive research, unique benefits, design considerations, and case study examples are outlined to effectively plan, implement, and champion fitness initiatives that provide meaningful outcomes to support overall health and wellness. **Speaker:** Victoria Schmitt Babb, Community Resource Director, CPSI Cunningham Recreation | Play 4 ALL Campaign *Grand Ballroom 1*

#7 Connecting Communities: Greenways Across the Southeast (0.1 CEU) Greenways serve important roles like connecting our parks and other destinations, providing multi-modal transportation options, and preserving green spaces that often have ecologically sensitive benefits for conservation. Our team of designers and community leaders will share several case studies as well as lessons learned. **Speaker:** Alisha Eley, Kimley-Horn *Grand Ballroom 2*

#8 Beyond the Whistle: Next Level In-Service Ideas (0.1 CEU) This interactive session offers land-based ideas, hands on participation, and the chance to explore new training methods. Attendees can ask questions and gain insight into how facilities run effective and engaging in-service trainings for lifeguards. **Speaker:** Jessie Charlton, Assistant Manager *Grand Ballroom 3*

#9 Nurturing a culture of possibility: Big ideas for all-sized agencies (0.1 CEU) Agencies of all sizes will be able to unlock a culture or possibility through imagining and implementing “big idea” type of projects. No matter what “big” means to your agency, this dynamic session allows professionals to develop a transformative mindset, equipping them to envision and execute impactful projects for their community. Explore the “secret sauce” of the culture of possibility which includes strategies to identify and seize opportunities, leverage resources effectively, and engage the community in ambitious initiatives. **Speaker:** Chris Nunes, CPRE, Chief Operating Officer, The Woodlands Township *Grand Ballroom 4, 5, 7, & 8*

11:30 AM-12:30 PM

#10 Preventive Maintenance for Bleachers and Athletic Equipment (0.10000000000000001 CEU) Benefits from performing the annual required inspections. Indoor Bleachers, Outdoor grandstands and indoor athletic equipment - how to prolong the life of these capital investments while also making sure they are ready for gameday. **Speaker:** Sam Melchior, Toadvine Enterprises *Grand Ballroom 1*

#11 Reinvesting In Lifeguard Staff On a Budget (0.1 CEU) This session explores creative, budget-friendly ways to reinvest in lifeguard staff. Attendees will learn unique strategies to overcome financial challenges while boosting team morale, engagement, and retention. **Speaker:** Ryan Fleming, Aquatics Operations Administrator, City of Kingsport **Grand Ballroom 2**

#12 From Local Knowledge to Statewide Strategy: Participating in Tennessee's Recreation Services Study (0.1 CEU) TDEC's Office of Outdoor Recreation is launching a statewide study on public park and recreation funding and operations. This session explains the study's goals and how your input as a parks professional will shape a data-driven study to inform and improve recreation services across Tennessee. **Speaker:** Kirsten Navoni, CPSI, Recreation Consultant, Office of Outdoor Recreation- TDEC **Grand Ballroom 3**

#13 PolitIQ: Navigate, Relate and Succeed (0.1 CEU) This session will equip both small and larger agency leadership with skills to build successful government relationships through fostering strong relationships with elected officials and others who influence those elected officials. This session will provide tools to navigate through various political terrains, identify strategies to relate your cause to their abilities and reach success to secure funding, enhance advocacy and increase public benefit! **Speaker:** Chris Nunes, CPRE, Chief Operating Officer, The Woodlands Township (TX) **Grand Ballroom 4, 5, 7, & 8**

12:30 PM-5:30 PM

#14 Skate Parks & Pump Tracks Offsite Come prepared to be outside and active as we will be out and about visiting and learning about Scott Adams Memorial Skate Park in Kingsport, Tannery Knobs Mountain Bike Park in Johnson City, Johnson City Skate Park in Johnson City, Rooster Front Park in Bristol. We will learn on the buses between locations as well as onsite. Lunch will be provided. Pre-registration and fee required.

Convention Center A Hallway

2:15:00 PM-3:15:00 PM

#16 Building Belonging: How Parks, Programs, and Partnerships Support Youth and Families in Foster Care (0.1 CEU) Discover how your parks department can make a big impact for local foster families by becoming Foster Friendly®. Learn how partnerships, like the one between Hendersonville Parks and Recreation and Tennessee Kids Belong, strengthen community ties, boost program participation, and uplift vulnerable children. **Speaker:** Emily Barnes, Tennessee Kids Belong, Foster Friendly Business Manager, and Tiffany Kelley, Tennessee Kids Belong, Child Welfare Director, **Grand Ballroom 2**

#17 MyChattConnect: A Digital Bridge for Community Engagement and Service Access (0.1 CEU) The MyChattConnect app was designed to enhance how residents of Chattanooga access city services, report community issues, and stay informed about local programs. This session will highlight the benefits of the app for parks and recreation departments, including streamlining facility reservations, increasing community engagement, and improving service responsiveness. **Speaker:** Chris Brown, AFO, Director of Community Centers, City of Chattanooga **Grand Ballroom 3**

#18 Take Control of Your Online Presence to Boost Community Participation and Engagement (0.1 CEU)

Creating and managing a digital presence is essential, but it can also be a black hole that consumes valuable resources. Learn how to utilize both free and paid tools from Google, Facebook, and Instagram. Learn the difference between having a social media presence and having an advertising presence on social media. Explore the things you “must do” and the things you “should NOT do” to extract value from the digital world that surrounds us. **Speaker:** Jared Moore, President & Co-Founder, Athletify, Inc. **Grand Ballroom 4, 5, 7, & 8**

2:15 PM-4:30 PM

#15 Irrigation Troubleshooting (0.2 CEU) Learn how to troubleshoot irrigation clocks, irrigation valves, and irrigation decoders by using tools such as volt meter, milliamp clamps, and more. **Speaker:** Todd Dovel-Field Service Technician-Smith Turf & Irrigation and Andy Clarkson-Territory Manger Smith Turf & Irrigation **Grand Ballroom 1**

3:30 PM-4:30 PM

#19 Esports and Parks and Recreation (0.1 CEU) Come learn about all of the opportunities that come to your community through having an esports program. Friendships, CTE, community, and so much more. **Speaker:** Kevin Mast, Program Coordinator, Johnson City Parks and Rec, **Grand Ballroom 2**

#20 Don't Lose Your Marbles: Mental Health in the Workplace (0.1 CEU) Work can be stressful, but your mental health shouldn't take a backseat! "Don't Lose Your Marbles: Mental Health in the Workplace" is a fun, engaging, and practical workshop designed to help employees recognize workplace stress, build resilience, and develop strategies for maintaining mental well-being. **Speaker:** Kristy Manresa, LMSW, Onsite Mental Health Counselor **Grand Ballroom 3**

#21 Eight Attributes Every Leader Needs (0.1 CEU) The most effective and impactful leaders bring out the best in others, but typically “best” doesn't appear until there's trust. In this session, we'll cover eight essential attributes for building trust through leading by example. Focusing on these attributes is proven to strengthen trust, produce positive results, and improve the relationships with those you lead, which hopefully infuses some joy back into what we too often deem as the burden of leadership. **Speaker:** Dr. James Moore, CEO & Co-Founder, Athletify, Inc. **Grand Ballroom 4, 5, 7, & 8**

Thursday 10/16/2025

8:30 AM-9:30 AM

#22 Putting the "Bee" in Bristol - Education with Pollinators in Steele Creek Park (0.1 CEU) The AAM-accredited Nature Center at Steele Creek Park utilizes a honeybee apiary, native pollinator hotels, an indoor observation hive, and offsite educator resources. **Speaker:** Jeremy B. Stout, Nature Center Manager, Bristol Parks & Recreation **Grand Ballroom 1**

#23 Esports and STEM Across Generations (0.1 CEU) Create intergenerational programming through esports. Giving grandparents the tools and knowledge to talk to their family about interests they have. **Speaker:** Kevin Mast, **Grand Ballroom 2**

#24 Breaching the Ivory Tower: Working with higher education on projects and experiences that prepare future professionals (0.1 CEU) This session will include case studies and discussion about projects and experiential learning opportunities that unite the profession with higher education, and provide meaningful community and student engagement. **Speaker:** Andrew W. Bailey, Ph.D., UC Foundation Professor of Health and Human Performance, University of TN, Chattanooga **Grand Ballroom 3**

25 Mastering the Art of Persuasion—From Team Huddle to Town Hall (0.1 CEU) In today's dynamic landscape, effectively communicating the value of parks and recreation to teammates and politicians is paramount. This session equips professionals with essential skills to craft powerful arguments, understand diverse perspectives, and foster meaningful community and team engagement. Through practical examples tailored to the parks and recreation field, you'll learn to articulate benefits, analyze persuasive techniques, develop communication strategies, navigate challenging conversations, and inspire action in your team and the community. Amplify your voice and become a more persuasive leader on your teams and advocate for the vital role of parks and recreation in enhancing quality of life. **Speaker:** James Moore **Grand Ballroom 4, 5, 7, & 8**

9:45 AM-10:45 AM

#26 Weathering the Storm: A Roundtable on Disaster Response and Recovery in the Wake of Hurricane Helene (0.1 CEU) A candid roundtable with three Parks & Rec departments hit hard by Hurricane Helene. Learn how they responded, supported their communities, rebuilt, and what they'd do differently. Real lessons in resilience, leadership, and emergency preparedness from those who lived it. **Grand Ballroom 1**

#27 You Can Make It and You Can Take It! (0.1 CEU) Using easy to find craft supplies, you will learn to make "something from next to nothing" and take away a fun project you created! **Speaker:** Joyce Teal, CPRP, City of Chattanooga **Grand Ballroom 2**

#28 Game On! Community Engagement the Play Knoxville Way! (0.1 CEU) New to master plans & engagement? So were we! Learn about our quest to engage and connect with people of all ages through a fun, playful, and strategic community engagement effort to shape the future of Knoxville's parks and recreation programs. Come ready to discuss how engagement can feel more like play than process. **Speaker:** Aaron Browning, Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation, City of Knoxville **Grand Ballroom 3**

#29 Are You Prepared for Litigation? (0.1 CEU) The litigation process is an intimidating one, both for "professional" staff and for lifeguards. Understanding the process and how common records will be used in the course of litigation will help you better prepare yourself, your staff and your employer for the inevitable lawsuit following a catastrophic injury or death. **Speaker:** Shawn P. DeRosa, J.D., AqP, Attorney, Risk Management and Aquatic Specialist **Grand Ballroom 4, 5, 7, & 8**

10:00:00 AM-4:30:00 PM

#30 Nature Center Offsite Come prepared to be outside and active as we will be out and about visiting and learning about Bays Mountain Park in Kingsport, Steele Creek Park Nature Center in Bristol. We will learn on

the buses between locations as well as onsite. Lunch will be provided. Pre-registration required and fee required. **Convention Center A Hallway**

11:00 AM-12:00 PM

#31 Blueways TN - A Strategy for Recreational River Corridors (0.1 CEU) Rivers have shaped us in Tennessee. They're a core part of our culture and our history. They function as recreational river corridors to provide unique interaction for local residents and visitors alike. The TN Blueways Strategic Plan looks at defining specific features and experiences found on a blueway. This includes using the lens of recreation and exercise, adventure, natural wonder and ecology, scenic value and education. Six strategic steps and a Blueway Toolkit are identified to implement a specific strategy to create and manage a blueway plan that connects to local communities and frames up funding and implementation opportunities. **Speaker:** Kevin Guenther, PLA Vice President of Planning and Urban Design, RaganSmith (A Pape Dawson Company) **Grand Ballroom 1**

#32 Braves Country Baseball (0.1 CEU) Learn about a new initiative from the Atlanta Braves to help "Grow the Game" of baseball. Your league or All-Star Team can compete in tournaments beyond your local recreation league. **Speaker:** Chad Parker, Braves Country Baseball **Grand Ballroom 2**

#33 Getting Your Ducks In A Row (0.1 CEU) "This session will provide a high-level overview of the CAPRA accreditation process, which evaluates an agency's overall quality in operations management and service delivery." **Speaker:** Tiffany McCollins, Community Center Operations Sr. Administrator, Memphis Parks **Grand Ballroom 3**

34 Conflict Resolution – What is your style? (0.1 CEU) Conflict is a normal part of our everyday life. Many people fear conflict, but conflict itself is not a problem - it is what we do with it that counts. Angry patrons, fighting children, and employee disagreements are just a few examples of how leisure service professionals must deal with conflict. This session will offer proven strategies for reducing conflict in the recreational setting. **Speaker:** Shawn P. DeRosa, J.D., AqP, Attorney, Risk Management and Aquatic Specialist **Grand Ballroom 4, 5, 7, & 8**

2:00:00 PM-3:00:00 PM

#35 Trail Smarts: Maximizing Maintenance for a Safer and More Rewarding Outdoor Experience (0.1 CEU) Learn creative strategies and tools to enhance trail maintenance and improve outdoor trail experiences. This presentation covers practical tips, smart planning, and collaborative techniques to keep trails in top condition for all users **Speaker:** Josh Collins, City of Johnson City Parks and Recreation, Trail Operations Manager **Grand Ballroom 1**

#36 Partnerships with Parks & Recs and municipalities for Large Event Planning (0.1 CEU) Local Parks and Rec asked if I would share event planning experience as it relates to working alongside them or whatever topic desired related to event planning. **Speaker:** Emily Thompson, Director of Fun Fest & Special Events for Visit Kingsport **Grand Ballroom 2**

#37 Co-existing with Snakes for Outdoor Occupations (0.1 CEU) Snakes are an amazingly important part of the ecosystem. Many people happily coexist with snakes in their outdoor professions. Get factual data on snakebite in Tennessee for proper perspective, straight forward snake identification and what to do in the event of a rare mishap. **Speaker:** Connie Deegan, Park Naturalist, City of Johnson City **Grand Ballroom 3**

3:15 PM-4:15 PM

#38 Designing Inclusive Outdoor Spaces (0.1 CEU) Every person deserves the opportunity to experience the joy, development and social benefits of being outdoors in their community. This presentation highlights the importance of Universal Design in creating outdoor spaces that cater to all ages and abilities, ensuring that everyone has access to meaningful and engaging experiences. Our discussion takes us beyond basic accessibility to create environments where children can interact, explore, and grow together, building a stronger sense of community while they play. **Speaker:** Sarah Lisiecki, BCI Burke **Grand Ballroom 1**

#39 Special Event Planning 101 vs 2.0 (0.1 CEU) Learn the basics of how to put on any special event of any size, learn tips and tricks for making your next event successful and memorable. **Speaker:** Maureen Davis, Community Specialist, City of Chattanooga; **Grand Ballroom 2**

7:30:00 PM-9:00:00 PM

#41 Drones (0.1 CEU) Colorful lights in the sky – Low/No Noise, No cleanup afterward. Join us as we learn what it takes to host a Drone Show at your location. After we walk over and see the setup site including the drones, we will walk back to the stands and enjoy the show. **Speaker:** Matt Reep, Pyrotechnico **Hunter Wright Stadium**

Friday 10/17/2025

9:00 AM-12:00 PM

#42 Hands-On Trail Building Offsite Come prepared to get your hands dirty while outside and active as we will be out participating in a trail build as we learn at Keefauver Farm Park. We will learn on the buses between locations as well as onsite. Fee included in registration. The historic, pastoral 55-acre Keefauver farm was obtained by the city for use as a new recreation area with a number of possible uses. Johnson City has begun the process of developing a master plan and trails here. **Convention Center A Hallway**

#43 Bristol Motor Speedway Offsite Do you have a need for speed? Learn about the Bristol Motor Speedway from their economic impact on the community to all the charities and activities they support. We will learn on the buses between locations as well as onsite. Fee included in registration. Bristol Motor Speedway is a 0.533-mile oval short track. The track has held a variety of events since its opening in 1961, including NASCAR races, NCAA FBS college football games, sprint car races, and this summer the MLB Speedway Classic. The speedway has a capacity of 146,000 as of 2021. **Convention Center A Hallway**