

Recreation

Parks/Natural Resources

Professional Development

9:00 - 10:00 AM

Do We All Matter? Diversity & Inclusion (.1 CEU)

Nathan Fort, NRPA 30 Under 30 Recipient

Explore how impactful and purposeful DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) can move beyond surface-level inclusion by designing programs, spaces, and experiences that reflect all people while also generating productivity and profit. Learn to recognize hidden stereotypes and transform them into opportunities for connection, belonging, and community impact.

Incorporating Conservation Into Capital Projects (.1 CEU)

William Rein, Great Rivers Greenway & Josh Ward, Great Rivers Greenway

In this session, participants will learn strategies for incorporating important conservation projects into park projects and tips on how to maintain them. Natural areas of varying scales add important ecological benefits to our parks, but also increase the enjoyment of our visitors.

The Basics of Public Speaking (.1 CEU)

Tom Drabelle, City of O'Fallon

Being a good public speaker is all about practice and confidence. Improve your skills as we discuss how to craft and deliver a successful speech. Learn tips on using PowerPoint effectively, how body language, wording and movement can emphasize your message, and how to craft an entertaining and informative speech.

10:20 - 11:20 AM

Do You Really Want To Be a Director? The Good, Bad, and Ugly (.1 CEU)

Nathan Fort, NRPA 30 Under 30 Recipient & Jennifer Letourneau, City of Clarksville, TN

This session offers a candid look at the rewards, realities, and challenges of leading a park and recreation agency, through interactive discussions and leadership style exercises, how to succeed in a director's role and how to support other directors in their roles.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Parking – A Backup Plan (.1 CEU)

Michael Garret, St. Louis County & Joel Hensly, St. Louis County

Electric vehicle (EV) ownership is accelerating across the country, driven by consumer demand, environmental policy, and technological innovation. To support this shift, more parking lots are mandated to provide EV charging access. This presentation outlines current trends and what park managers need to know to meet these new infrastructure demands.

Business Writing 101 (.1 CEU)

Tom Drabelle, City of O'Fallon

Make a positive impression on your residents and customers with simple tips to improve your writing. This session will include tips on how to use written communications to spread your message and how to craft business letters, emails, or texts that are clear, concise, and easy to understand.

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM Lunch & Region Meeting

1:00 - 2:00 PM

You Are the Culture: Everyday Leadership (.1 CEU)

Kelle Snow, Thornbird Consulting

Discover how small, intentional actions shape workplace culture. This high-energy session combines interactive activities and storytelling to empower every team member—regardless of title—to lead with courage, compassion, and clarity. Walk away with practical tools to influence your environment positively, one act at a time.

2:20 - 3:20 PM

USTA Tennis Courts Grants for Resurfacing or Building (.1 CEU)

John Terpkosh, USTA Missouri Valley

Use the USTA's facility grant program (Tennis Venue Services) to resurface or build new tennis courts in your community. Grants range from \$60,000 to \$200,000, depending on qualified tennis projects. This session will explain the requirements and grant process.

Elevating the Bluff: Connecting People to Nature and History in Riverview Park (.1 CEU)

Andy Franke, Planning Design Studio

Perched above the Mississippi River, Riverview Park blends dramatic topography with historic character. This presentation discusses the park's updated master plan, focusing on how new amenities, overlook restoration, and habitat enhancements will reconnect visitors with the park's natural and historical assets and outline how thoughtful design can revitalize underutilized park spaces while protecting fragile ecosystems.

Be B.R.A.V.E.: Tackling Tough Conversations (.1 CEU)

Kelly Dunkle, Cottleville Fire Protection District

If you lead a team, your job responsibilities require having tough conversations often, but that does not mean you are always comfortable having them. Regardless of your position at home or work, we all have opportunities for courageous conversations. In this presentation, Kelly will explain the importance of these conversations and how to make them go more smoothly.

3:30 - 5:00 PM: Join us for a networking social at Goodwood Brewing & Spirits. Beverages will be provided.