



AMERICA'S  
**STATE  
PARKS.**  
WESTERN CONFERENCE

4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**Alyeska Resort**

1000 Arlberg Ave Girdwood, AK 99587

Hosted by:  
**Alaska Division of Parks  
and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR)**



### **Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>**

8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Pre-conference activities
12:00 noon	Vendor set up begins Columbia Ballroom & Foyer
4:00 pm	Check-in & Registration begin Columbia Ballroom Foyer
4:00 pm- 5:30 pm	Director's Meeting Kahiltna Room
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Vendor Reception open, Drinks & Light Appetizers Kahiltna Room Dinner on own

---

### **Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**

7: 00 am – 8:30 am	Conference Registration & Breakfast Buffet provided Columbia Room Foyer
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Presentation: <b>Welcome</b> by DNR Leadership, NASPD Leadership, Matt Wedeking & Ian Thomas <i>DPOR</i>
9:00 am - 9:45 am	Keynote Speaker Presentation: <b>Philanthropy in Parks: Meaningful Connections &amp; Powerful Partnerships</b> Presented by: Jen Cureton <i>Canadian Parks Council</i>
9:45 am - 10:15 am	Break- vendor meet & greet - Sponsor intro

10:15 am - 11:00 am	<p>Presentation: <b>Unique Partnership Opportunities in Alaskan Land Management: Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) / Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)</b></p> <p>Presented by <b>Jim Walker</b> <i>Manager of the Public Access Assertion and Defense Section, Alaska</i></p>
11:00am - 12:00pm	<p>Panel: <b>The Power of Partnerships to Accomplish Objectives</b></p> <p>Hosted by <b>Jen Cureton</b> <i>Canadian Parks Council</i></p> <p>An overview and benefit of a variety of unique partnerships with state park partners: <b>Judy Caminer</b> <i>Chugach Park Fund</i>; <b>Ryan Thomas</b> <i>Greatland Trust</i>; <b>Alan Carpenter</b> <i>Hawaii DNR, Div. of Parks</i>. <b>Rebecca Lovgren</b> <i>Aspira</i></p>
12:00pm - 1:00 pm	<p>Lunch provided, Columbia Room Foyer- Sponsored by Tyler Tech</p> <p>Grab extra layers for the rest of the day, and head to the bus</p>
1:15 pm	<p>Motorcoaches depart to Eklutna Lake, Chugach State Park</p>
2:30 pm	<p>Arrive at Eklutna Lake</p> <p><b>Pete Panarese</b> <i>former Chugach State Park Superintendent</i>.</p> <p><b>Matt Worden</b> <i>Lifetime Adventure Concessions</i></p>
4:15 pm	<p>Motorcoaches depart for Williwaw Social (downtown Anchorage)</p>
5:00 pm	<p>Dinner at Williwaw Social, meet DPOR Staff</p> <p>Presentation by Sponsor- <b>BRANDT</b></p> <p>Presentation: <b>Save it for the Shore Campaign</b></p> <p>Presented by <b>Kosette Seibert</b> <i>Alaska Boating Safety</i></p>
7:00 pm	<p>Motorcoaches depart Williwaw for Alyeska Resort</p>
7:45 pm	<p>Motorcoaches make a pitstop at Bird Point pullout for sightseeing</p>

## Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

7: 00 am – 8:30 am	<p>Breakfast buffet provided</p> <p>Columbia Room Foyer</p>
8:00 am - 9:15 am	<p>Panel: <b>The Staircase of Stewardship: Growing the Next Generation of Park Stewards</b></p> <p>Hosted by: <b>Ky Harkey</b> <i>The Visitor Experience</i></p> <p>Panelists: <b>Sarah Webber</b> <i>Arizona State Parks</i>; <b>Chris Padgett</b> <i>Tennessee State Parks</i>; <b>Meredith Gutierrez</b> <i>Anchorage Park Foundation -YEP Program</i>; <b>Shawna Popovici</b> <i>DPOR</i>; <b>Claire Leclair</b> <i>Chugach Park Fund</i></p>
9:15 am - 9:30 am	<p>Vendor break</p>

9:30 am - 10:30 am	Panel: <b>Maximizing Revenue for our Parks: Creative Strategies</b> Hosted by: <b>Ian Thomas DPOR</b>  Hiring, Recruiting and Maintaining staff, Generating Revenue with Reservation partners, Managing an effective Permitting team  Panelists: <b>Matt Wedeking DPOR; KJ Shah Kaizen; Nikki Potter DPOR</b>
10:30 am - 11:00 am	Break
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Panel: <b>Partnering with the Federal Government to Accomplish Objectives</b> Hosted by: <b>Ian Thomas DPOR</b>  Panelists: <b>Rys Miranda DPOR; Sarah Meitl, DPOR; Danette Berkovitz, DPOR</b>
12:30 pm	Depart for Wildlife Center (south of Girdwood)
1:00 pm	Lunch at Wildlife Center Lunch Presentation: <b>Sponsor, Kaizen</b> Lunch Presentation: <b>Alaska Regional Highlights,</b> Each Regional Park Superintendent will highlight their region for 10 min.
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Walk around Wildlife Center (will be timed with bear feeding schedule)
4:30 pm	Motorcoaches depart for Girdwood with a stop at Portage area <b>Two Motorcoach Drops</b> <i>Make your way to Girdwood Brewing from either</i> Day Lodge (1/2 mile from Girdwood Brewing) or Alyeska Resort (shuttle or drive to Girdwood Brewing)
6:00 pm	Dinner on own at Girdwood Brewing Company Food Trucks: Pizza Box and Mammoth Cheese Steaks
8:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Shuttles to Alyeska Resort

## **Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>**

## **Energizing the Story of Outdoor Recreation**

7: 00 am – 8:30 am	Breakfast buffet provided Columbia Room Foyer
8:00 am – 8:15 am	<b>Expectations &amp; Desired Outcomes for the Day</b> presented by <b>Ricky Gease DPOR</b>
8:15 am – 8:20 am	Pre-Activity: <b>Mentimeter:</b> rating your current systems

8:20 am – 9:30 am	<p>Segment <b>Supply: Outdoor Recreation on Public Lands</b></p> <p>Presentations by <b>Chris Marsh &amp; Ciji Clark</b> <i>ESRI</i> Mapping park boundaries. Asset management tool with WA state parks facilities widget case study. Potential to use AI and drones in mapping park boundaries.</p> <p>Presentation by <b>Gary Greenberg</b> <i>Alaska Map Company</i> Legacy trails need to be “trued up” and an update on that work. Alaska case study.</p>
9:30 am – 10:15 am	<b>Interactive Activity</b>
10:15 am – 10:45 am	Break
10:45 am – 11:50 am	<p>Segment <b>Demand: Visitor Use on Public Lands</b></p> <p>Presentation by <b>Sam Stivers</b> <i>LWCF</i> National toolbox resources and related partnership agreements</p> <p>Presentation by <b>Gary Greenberg</b> <i>Alaska Map Company</i> &amp; <b>Ricky Gease</b> <i>DPOR</i> Heatmap showing intensity of use</p>
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm	<p>Lunch provided, Columbia Ballroom Foyer</p> <p>Lunch Presentation: <b>Sponsor, CAMIS</b></p> <p>Lunch presentation: <b>Why Preserving the Places we Play Matter</b> Presented by <b>Dr. Katie Ringsmuth</b> <i>DPOR</i></p> <p>Lunch Presentation: <b>Data Alignment, Getting it Right</b> Presented by <b>Patrick Hogan</b> <i>Southwick and Associates</i></p>
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Concurrent Session: <b>State Park Law Enforcement / Compliance</b>
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	<p>Segment <b>Benefits: Measurable Benefits of Outdoor Recreation</b></p> <p>Presentation by <b>Patrick Hogan</b> <i>Southwick and Associates</i> Use Days and how to extrapolate economic benefits from these data</p> <p>Presentation by <b>Sam Stivers</b> <i>LWCF</i> Socioeconomic/health benefits, SORP agreement, case studies from multiple states</p>
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	<b>Interactive Activity</b>
3:00 pm – 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm – 3:55 pm	<p>Segment <b>Our Story: Communicating Compelling Stories</b> to our funders, users, administrators, staff, volunteers, advocates, detractors, and ourselves.</p> <p>Presentation by <b>Jen Cureton</b> <i>Canadian Parks Council</i> How to move emotion into action; communication driving successful fundraising; the importance of celebration and recognition</p> <p>Presentation by <b>Nick Neylon</b> <i>Wyoming State Parks</i> Communication successes: making concepts reality</p> <p>Presentation by <b>Paul McCormack</b> <i>NASPD</i> Upcoming National Conference; How to continue this conversation in the fall.</p>

3:55 pm – 4:00 pm	Post Activity Mentimeter How can you see your park utilizing what we learned today? Don Forgione - NASPD Webinar Series
4:00 pm – 5:00pm	Break
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Closing Reception, Hospitality Hour Columbia Room
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Evening Dinner Passing the Net to Wyoming
7:00 pm – 10:00 pm	Evening Entertainment Live Music with <b>The Bunny Swan Band</b>
10:00 pm	Last Call

---

## **Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>**

Safe Travels whether you're homeward bound or exploring Alaska!

---

## **Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Tours available out of Seward, Alaska**

**Registration through Saltwater Safari Company**  
saltwatersafari.com

Full day guided Halibut fishing trip available

**Registration through Major Marine Tours**

<https://majormarine.com/americas-state-parks-western-conference/>

Full day guided sightseeing tours of Kenai Fjords National Park or Resurrection Bay available

Use discount code: **ASPWC26**