



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>**

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 Harding Room
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Vendor Reception open, Drinks & Light Appetizers Columbia Ballroom 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	Presentation: <b>Unique Partnership Opportunities in Alaskan Land Management: Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) / Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)</b> Presented by Jim Walker <i>Public Access Assertion and Defense Section, Alaska</i>

- 11:00am - 12:00pm Panel: **The Power of Partnerships to Accomplish Objectives**  
Hosted by **Jen Cureton** *Canadian Parks Council*
- An overview and benefit of a variety of unique partnerships with state park partners: **Judy Caminer** *Chugach Park Fund*; **Ryan Thomas** *Greatland Trust*; **Alan Carpenter** *Hawaii DNR; Div. of Parks*. **Rebecca Lovgren** *Aspira*
- 12:00pm - 1:00 pm Lunch provided, Columbia Room Foyer- Sponsored by **Tyler Tech**  
Grab extra layers for the rest of the day, and head to the bus
- 1:15 pm Motorcoaches depart to Eklutna Lake, Chugach State Park
- 2:30 pm Arrive at Eklutna Lake  
**Pete Panarese** *former Chugach State Park Superintendent*  
**Matt Worden** *Lifetime Adventure Concessions*
- 4:15 pm Motorcoaches depart for Williwaw Social (downtown Anchorage)
- 5:00 pm Dinner at Williwaw Social, meet DPOR Staff  
Presentation by Sponsor - **BRANDT**  
Presentation: **Save it for the Shore Campaign**  
Presented by **Kosette Seibert** *Alaska Office of Boating Safety*
- 7:00 pm Motorcoaches depart Williwaw for Alyeska Resort
- 7:45 pm Motorcoaches make a pitstop at Bird Point pullout for sightseeing

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

- 7: 00 am – 8:30 am Breakfast buffet provided  
Columbia Room Foyer
- 8:00 am - 9:15 am Panel: **The Staircase of Stewardship: Growing the Next Generation of Park Stewards**  
Hosted by: **Ky Harkey** *The Visitor Experience*
- Panelists: **Sarah Webber** *Arizona State Parks*; **Chris Padgett** *Tennessee State Parks*; **Meredith Gutierrez** *Anchorage Park Foundation -YEP Program*; **Shawna Popovici** *DPOR*; **Claire Leclair** *Chugach Park Fund*
- 9:15 am - 9:30 am Vendor break
- 9:30 am - 10:30 am Panel: **Maximizing Revenue for our Parks: Creative Strategies**  
Hosted by: **Ian Thomas** *DPOR*
- Lessons Learned in Alaska, Generating Revenue with Reservation partners, Managing an effective Permitting team
- Panelists: **Matt Wedeking** *DPOR*; **KJ Shah** *Kaizen*; **Nikki Potter** *DPOR*

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>Matt Wedeking</b> <i>DPOR</i> Panelists: <b>Rys Miranda</b> <i>DPOR</i> ; <b>Sarah Meitl</b> , <i>DPOR</i> ; <b>Danette Berkovitz</b> , <i>DPOR</i>
12:30 pm	Depart for Wildlife Center (south of Girdwood)
1:00 pm	Lunch at Wildlife Center Sponsor Lunch Presentation: <b>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 Drop Options</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 <b>Girdwood Brewing Company</b> Food Trucks: Pizza Box and Mammoth Cheese Steaks
8:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Shuttles to Alyeska Resort

---

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

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</b> <i>DPOR</i>
8:15 am – 8:20 am	Pre-Activity: <b>Mentimeter</b> : rating your current systems
8:20 am – 9:45 am	Segment <b>Mapping Outdoor Recreation on Public Lands</b> Presentations by <b>Chris Marsh &amp; Ciji Clark</b> <i>ESRI</i> Mapping Park boundaries. Asset management tool with WA State Park facilities widget case study. Potential to use AI and drones in mapping park boundaries.  Presentation by <b>Gary Greenberg</b> <i>Alaska Map Company</i> & <b>Ricky Gease</b> <i>DPOR</i> Heat Maps: At the crossroads of Supply and Demand Data Mapping

9:45 am – 10:00 am	Break
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Segment <b>Visitor Use Statistics for Public Lands</b> Presentation by <b>Sam Stivers</b> <i>LWCF</i> National toolbox resources and related partnership agreements
11:00 am – 11:50 am	<b>Interactive Activity</b>
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch provided, Columbia Ballroom Foyer Sponsor Lunch Presentation: <b>Camis, Inc</b> Lunch presentation: <b>Why Preserving the Places we Play Matter</b> Presented by <b>Dr. Katie Ringsmuth</b> <i>DPOR</i> Lunch Presentation: <b>Data Alignment, Getting it Right</b> Presented by <b>Patrick Hogan</b> <i>Southwick and Associates</i>
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Concurrent Session: <b>State Park Law Enforcement / Compliance</b> Harding Room
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Segment <b>Measurable Benefits of Outdoor Recreation</b> Presentation by <b>Patrick Hogan</b> <i>Southwick and Associates</i> Use Days and how to extrapolate economic benefits from these data  Presentation by <b>Sam Stivers</b> <i>LWCF</i> Socioeconomic/health benefits, SORP agreement, case studies from multiple states
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	<b>Interactive Activity</b>
3:00 pm – 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm – 3:55 pm	Segment <b>Our Story: Communicating Compelling Stories</b> to our funders, users, administrators, staff, volunteers, advocates, detractors, and ourselves.  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  Presentation by <b>Lorraine Henry</b> <i>Alaska DNR</i> Communication successes: making concepts reality  Presentation by <b>Paul McCormack</b> <i>NASPD</i> Upcoming National Conference; How to continue this conversation in the fall.
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 Kahiltna Court
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Evening Dinner sponsored by <b>Aspira</b> 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](http://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**