



**ATLANTIC
RECREATION &
FACILITIES
CONFERENCE**



POWERING POSSIBILITY:

Tools for Today's Recreation and Facility Leaders.

Halifax, NS | May 20 – May 22, 2026



Table of Contents

2026 PARTNERS	1
<hr/>	
THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS	2-3
<hr/>	
CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE	4
<hr/>	
WELCOME TO HALIFAX	5-6
<hr/>	
PROGRAM	7-17
<hr/>	
EXHIBITOR SHOWCASE AND BOOTHS	18-19
<hr/>	
SPEAKER BIOS	20-26
<hr/>	

All sessions will be presented in English with live translation to French available.



2026 PARTNERS



Recreation Facility
Association
of Nova Scotia



RECREATION
NOVA SCOTIA



RecreationNL

Wellness Supporters
make 'you' time

The ARFC organizers gratefully acknowledge the support of our provincial partners:



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

PLATINUM

TOROMONT

CIMCO

GOLD

BERG
INDUSTRIAL SERVICE

ActiveXchange

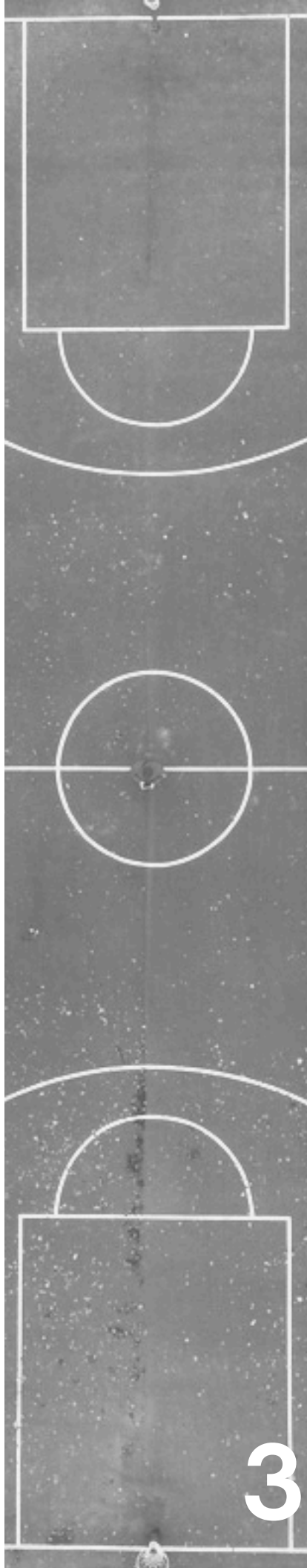
spartan
fitness
equipment



SILVER



BRONZE



Tuesday (Pre-Conference)

**07:00 PM -
09:00 PM** | Welcome Reception @ Garrison Brewery

Wednesday

08:00AM | Registration Desk Opens

**09:00 AM -
11:00 AM** | Pre-conference Panel

**11:00 AM -
12:30 PM** | Lunch Break (not provided)

**12:30 PM -
01:00 PM** | Welcoming Remarks

**01:00 PM -
02:15 PM** | Opening Keynote - *Ann Marine Flinn*

**02:15 PM -
02:30 PM** | Nutrition Break

**02:30 PM -
03:30 PM** | Concurrent Sessions

**03:30 PM -
6:00 PM** | Dinner/Break (not provided)

**06:00PM-
09:00PM** | Exhibitor Showcase

Thursday

**08:00 AM -
09:15 AM** | Networking Breakfast

**09:15 AM -
10:45 AM** | Keynote - Dr. *T.A Loeffler*

**10:45 AM -
11:00 AM** | Nutrition Break

**11:00 AM -
12:00 PM** | Concurrent sessions

**12:00 PM -
01:30 PM** | Luncheon and Break

**01:30 PM -
02:30PM** | Roundtable

**02:30 PM -
03:00PM** | Nutrition Break

**03:00PM -
05:00PM** | Facility Tours

**06:00 PM -
8:30 PM** | Dinner and Entertainment

Friday

**08:30 AM -
09:00 AM** | Breakfast

**09:30 AM -
10:30 AM** | Concurrent Sessions

**10:30 PM -
10:45 AM** | Nutrition Break

**10:45 AM -
12:00 PM** | Panel

**12:00 PM -
12:15 PM** | Closing Remarks

WELCOME TO HALIFAX

DISCOVER HALIFAX

Halifax looks forward to welcoming delegates to the Atlantic Recreation & Facilities Conference!

Here you will find a dedicated page for delegates outlining everything you'll need to know to make the most of your visit to our seacoast city.

Plan Your Visit

DISCOUNT & OFFERS

Simply show your conference accreditation at participating local businesses and save!

COME EARLY, STAY LATE

Outside Halifax, rewards visitors with the worlds highest tides on the bay of fundy, vinward tours in annapolis valley, scenic drives along the iconic cabot trail and world-class golf on dramatic costal courses

THINGS TO DO

From lively waterfront dining to historical sites and coastal adventures, halifax offers something for everyone

DINING IN HALIFAX

Halifax's culinary scene is celebrated for its fresh seafood plus a wide variety of international cuisine & farm-table dining on the waterfront

HALIFAX NIGHTLIFE

Halifax's nightlife pulse runs strong year-round - from lively pubs & chic cocktail bars to scenic harbour cruises under the night sky

Program



TUESDAY (PRE-CONFERENCE)



PRE-CONFERENCE SOCIAL AT GARRISON BREWING

Our pre-conference social gives attendees a relaxed, informal space to network, break the ice, and connect before the conference begins. From sharing ideas to unwinding after travel, it sets the tone for a dynamic and engaging conference experience.

MAY
19

7:00PM-
9:00PM

Sponsored by [Quantum Recreation](#)

WEDNESDAY

PRE-CONFERENCE BONUS SESSION: RECREATION, FACILITIES AND THE NOVA SCOTIA BUILT ENVIRONMENT ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

MAY
20

9:00AM-
11:00AM

Maddi Adams, Seamus McGreal

Making recreation spaces accessible is essential to ensuring inclusive, healthy and connected communities. Accessible design allows people of all abilities to participate fully. While recreation and the outdoors can offer joy, healing and connection, many places and spaces were and continue to be designed in ways that exclude some people. This session provides an overview of Nova Scotia's Built Environment Accessibility Standard and what it means in practice for recreation and facilities professionals. Participants will learn how the Standard applies to existing and new recreation spaces, compliance timelines, and the practical implications for planning, maintenance, and infrastructure upgrades. The presentation will identify opportunities to improve accessibility whether through regulations or guidelines and best practice.

CONFERENCE OPENING: WELCOMING REMARKS

MAY
20

12:30PM-
1:00PM

OPENING KEYNOTE

THE ART OF THE CHAMPION MINDSET: EMPOWERING RECREATION LEADERS TO UNLOCK POTENTIAL AND LEAD WITH CONFIDENCE

MAY
20

1:00PM-
2:15PM

Ann-Marie Flinn

Join Ann-Marie Flinn, Atlantic Canada's first female military SCUBA diver and a world-ranked physique competitor, for The Art of a Champion Mindset. Through compelling personal stories of resilience, discover actionable strategies to overcome perfectionism, shift from "Yes But" to "Yes And," embrace course correction, and foster psychological safety. Recreation leaders gain tools to move from Victim/Rescue to Create/Support thinking, energizing teams and communities. Walk away equipped to lead with authentic confidence and transform challenges into opportunities for growth and collaboration.

Sponsored by [ActiveXchange](#)

About the Speaker

Ann-Marie Flinn is a leadership coach, keynote speaker, and mindset expert with 35+ years of experience guiding leaders through resilience and reinvention. Atlantic Canada's first female military SCUBA diver and a world-ranked physique competitor, she brings contagious energy and down-to-earth wisdom to recreation professionals. Through her Champion Mindset programs, Ann-Marie helps leaders silence perfectionism, foster psychological safety, and unlock authentic confidence—whether navigating facilities, teams, or community impact. She empowers recreation leaders to thrive in high-pressure roles with a champion mindset.



NUTRITION BREAK

MAY
20

Sponsored by Orange Crow Leadership

2:15PM-
2:30 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

DESIGNING FOR BELONGING: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE IN RECREATION

MAY
20

Jackie Oncescu, Moni Loewen & Rachel Bedingfield

An interactive panel on fostering belonging through relational design, featuring insights from practitioners using the four pillars of belonging and exploring strategies to embed communities of practice in recreation systems.

2:30PM-
3:30 PM

Sponsored by Brokerlink

POWERING POSSIBILITY: THE RECREATION LEADER'S A.I. PLAYBOOK

Toby Nnwabuogor

AI is moving from clever prompts to agentic workflows that plan, act, and check. This keynote distills what's real now and how to lead it with confidence. We'll work through various micro-workflows, pair each with lightweight governance guardrails (privacy/redaction, transparency, human review, records), and policies to give leaders a pilot plan for rural and urban contexts.

RENOVATE, REPURPOSE, OR REBUILD: POWERING FUTURE-READY RECREATION FACILITIES

Alexandra (Ali) Kenyon

Recreation is changing and our facilities are aging. Amidst inflation, shrinking budgets, and demographic shifts, our approach to planning and management of recreation facilities must change too. This session offers recreation facility leaders a roadmap to navigate the complexity of renovation, repurpose, or replacement projects, grounded in early, intentional planning. Drawing on hcma architecture + design's guide, *Process: How to create community buildings with impact*, we'll explore how feasibility studies, needs assessments, and shared vision-setting can address evolving recreation needs, operational realities, and long-term costs. The session also considers how community facilities can strengthen climate resilience and reduce GHG emissions, helping leaders shape future-proof solutions that respond to both today's priorities and tomorrow's potential.

Sponsored by PBR Sustainability & Resilience Solutions

AQUATIC LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS

Mike Melenchuk, Janet Campbell

Lifeguard training to Instructor Trainers, aquatics offers a long pathway for participants to explore. This session will start with a review of the potential program pathways in aquatics and finish with a practical strategies for leadership retention and engagement. With many opportunities for sharing, the Lifesaving Society will guide the discussion to explore new trends and industry best practices.

EXHIBITOR SHOWCASE

Halifax Train Station - 1161 Hollis St Halifax

Whether you're looking for inspiration for facility upgrades, discovering new recreation opportunities, or connecting with industry-leading suppliers, there's something for everyone at our showcase. **See more details on pages 17 and 18.**

Sponsored by **BERG Industrial Service**

MAY
20

6:00PM-
9:00 PM



THURSDAY

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Start the day with great conversation and meaningful connections. Join fellow attendees for a casual breakfast designed to spark discussion, share ideas, and build relationships to carry throughout the conference.

Sponsored by **Zero-C**

MAY
21

8:00AM-
9:15AM

KEYNOTE

FINDING OUR GROOVE: MOVING, PLAYING, AND THRIVING IN THE WORK WE LOVE

Dr. T.A Loeffler

Recreation professionals are experts at creating opportunities for play, physical activity, and connection—but too often, our own recreation and wellness needs are left on the sidelines. This upbeat keynote invites participants to reflect and reconnect with recreation as a source of personal vitality, not just professional output. Drawing on TA's lived experience, research, and engaging stories from her expeditions, this presentation explores how movement, rest, and time outdoors can sustain those who lead and serve others. Participants will leave inspired to take small, intentional steps to support their own well-being—so recreation continues to be something that fuels, restores, and moves them forward.

MAY
21

9:15AM-
10:45AM

About the Speaker

Dr. TA Loeffler brings 35 years of expertise in leading people through significant life-changing experiences to every facet of her work. TA's work and adventures have taken her to 54 different countries and all seven continents. TA has completed 6 and 4/5 of "The Seven Summits," the highest peak on all seven continents. In 2020, TA was named to the "90 Greatest Canadian Explorers" List by Canadian Geographic. As a Professor of Outdoor Recreation at Memorial University of Newfoundland, TA has developed a reputation for excellence in experiential education because her students are more likely to be outside chasing icebergs than sitting in a classroom. TA inspires hope, possibility, and vision in those whose lives she touches. Over the past 20 years, TA has shared her message of "Big Dreams, Big Goals" with well over 250,000 people in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. TA believes that we all long for a balanced, engaged, and creative life that challenges us to be the best we can possibly be. She models this belief in her life on a daily basis and combines her broad range of skills to inspire all to create the life they truly want.

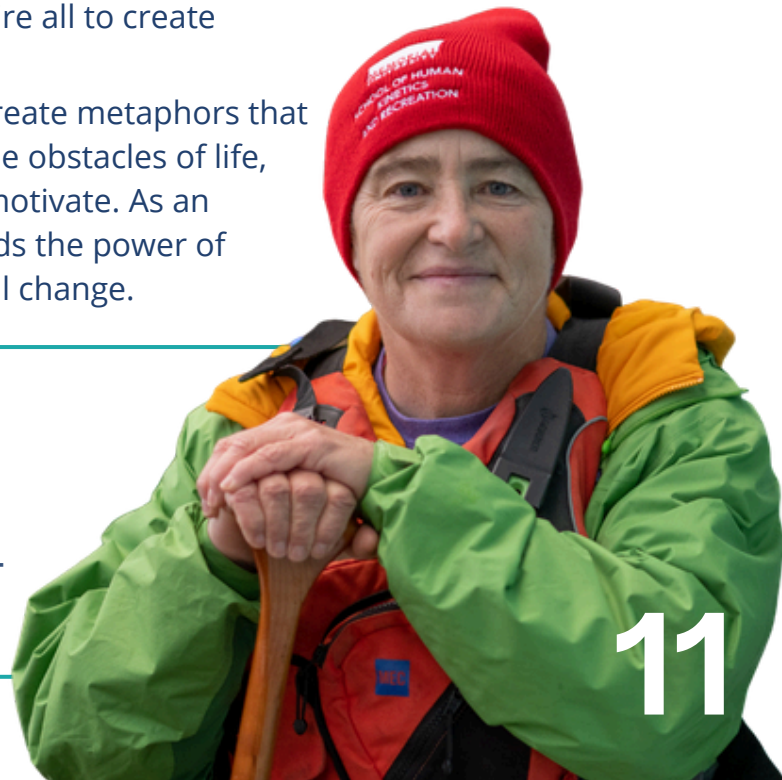
Using her vast collection of outdoor adventures to create metaphors that provide new ways to see and transform the inevitable obstacles of life, TA's multimedia presentations inform, inspire, and motivate. As an award-winning educator and speaker, TA understands the power of metaphor to initiate and sustain life and professional change.

NUTRITION BREAK

Sponsored by
Pinnacle Aquatic
Group Inc.

MAY
20

10:45AM-
11:00 AM



11



CONCURRENT SESSIONS

THE 2025 POSITION STATEMENT ON ACTIVE OUTDOOR PLAY

Hilary Caldwell

Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play, with a focus on risky play and incorporating some aspects of the toolkit.

Sponsored by [ACI Architecture](#)

MAY
21

11:00AM-
12:00 PM

SCIENCE BEHIND THE ICE FOR SPORTS

Greg Taylor

Jet Ice is a global leader in ice sports industry, committed to transforming ice-making practices while minimizing long-term environmental impact. Jet Ice is redefining rink sustainability. From eco-friendly paint disposal to in-ice graphics and advanced heat and water management systems, the company explores every aspect of the industry. By collaborating with experts and researchers, Jet Ice develops cutting-edge strategies that will shape the future of ice sports. Through innovation and a steadfast commitment to sustainability, Jet Ice is setting new standards for ice facility management—ensuring that future generations of athletes and enthusiasts can enjoy premium-quality ice with a reduced environmental footprint. Jet Ice is happy to work with major sporting bodies around the globe to create the highest quality ice sheets for sport including the 2026 Olympic Winter Games for Curling, Speed skating, Figure Skating and Hockey.

CREATING HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT FEILDS: WINNING PRACTICES & THE TOOLS & RESOURCES BEHIND THEM

Joe Breedon

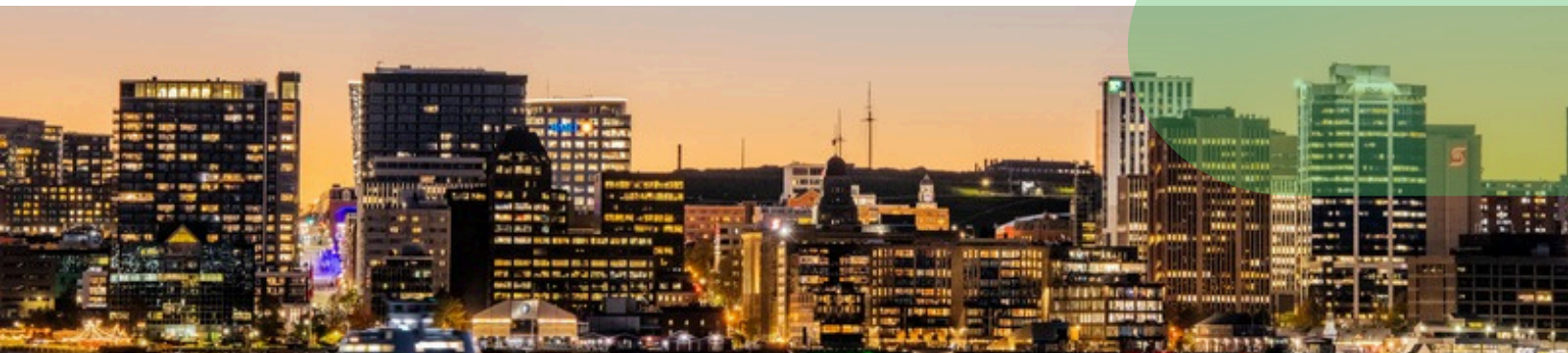
Great sports fields don't happen by accident—they're built with the right practices, the right tools, and the right people. This session dives into five essential sports field maintenance practices every professional should know, along with the tools and resources that help keep fields safe, playable, and high-performing. You'll hear practical insights from industry experts, explore real-world solutions you can put to work right away, and learn about resources available to support you and your team. What should be in your toolbox? From daily maintenance decisions to long-term planning, this presentation is designed to help today's sports field professionals work smarter, lead with confidence, and stay ahead of their game. Come ready to learn, connect with others who do what you do, and walk away with fresh ideas, expert knowledge, and tools you can actually use.

Sponsored by [Athletica Sports Systems](#)

BEHIND THE SCENES OF SAFE EVENTS: THE ROLE OF SPECIAL EVENTS REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Christa Norman, Justin Crickard

This session will offer an in-depth overview of the formation, structure, and operational functions of a Municipal Special Events Regulatory Committee. These committees are primarily responsible for overseeing and regulating outdoor events of various types and scales within a municipality. From large-scale festivals and film productions to road races and community gatherings, such events can have significant logistical, safety, and community impacts. The Special Events Regulatory Committee serves as a collaborative body that reviews event proposals and provides guidance, feedback, and recommendations to organizers to help ensure that events are safe, well-coordinated, and aligned with municipal policies and community interests.



ROUNDTABLE PLENARY ROUNDTABLE SESSION ON ARENAS, AQUATICS, EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

This session will feature three separate roundtable discussions for the following large topics: Arenas, Aquatics, Events and Programming. Bring your questions for your Atlantic peers. This is an opportunity to discuss trends, challenges, and successes. Share your experiences, knowledge, and resources to strength the recreation sector across the Atlantic provinces. There will be a moderator for each session to help keep the conversation on track but delegates will choose and lead the discussion to address the topics that are in the forefront of the field!

MAY
21

1:30PM-
2:30 PM

Sponsored by Myrtha Pools

NUTRITION BREAK

MAY
20

2:30PM-
3:00PM

Sponsored by Water & Ice

FACILITY TOURS

Explore a selection of behind-the-scenes facility tours and gain firsthand insight into innovative operations and best practices.

21
MAY

3:00PM-
5:00PM

OPTIONS:

HALIFAX WATERFRONT

The Halifax Waterfront represents one of Canada's leading examples of waterfront revitalization and outdoor recreation development in an urban setting. This guided walking tour will explore recently renovated sections of the waterfront, highlighting the integration of active transportation, public spaces, recreation amenities, and year-round programming along the harbour. The tour will provide valuable insight for municipal professionals working to incorporate recreation, tourism, and placemaking into their own waterfront and shoreline developments. Conveniently located within walking distance of the Westin, this tour offers a close-up look at how outdoor recreation infrastructure can support vibrant, accessible public spaces.

HALIFAX COMMONS POOL & OVAL

Located on the Halifax Commons, the Halifax Common Pool and the Emera Oval are flagship outdoor recreation facilities showcasing year-round, multi-use design in an urban setting. The new outdoor pool, opened in 2023 supports a range of aquatic programming, while the Emera Oval transforms across seasons offering free equipment loans incl. bikes, scooters, skateboards, as well as a range of skates.

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY - DALPLEX, OULTON-STANISH CENTRE AND ADJACENT WICKWIRE FIELD

Located on Dalhousie University's campus, Dalplex and the adjoining Oulton-Stanish Centre represent a major hub for multi-use recreation, varsity athletics, and community programming in Halifax. The tour will highlight the recently opened Oulton-Stanish Centre, along with Dalplex's aquatic and fitness, and the surrounding outdoor athletic fields that support a wide range of sport and recreation activity. This site offers an opportunity to explore integrated campus-community recreation design, modern facility development, and high-use operational environments. Tour will be led by Chris Keough, Associate Director, Facilities & Operations, Dalhousie University.

Sponsored by Sportball Atlantic

ONSITE COMEDY SOCIAL

Unwind with a night of laughs. Enjoy top-notch stand-up comedy, relax with fellow attendees, and cap off the day with great humor and even better company.

MAY
21

6:00PM-
8:30PM

Sponsored by Cimco Refrigeration

MAY
21

8:30PM

GAMES NIGHT

SPONSORED BY RC
STRATEGIESER HALIFAX

After the comedian wraps up, keep the energy going and head over to Game Night!

The room will be set up with a mix of games of chance and skill, giving everyone a chance to jump in and compete. As you play, you'll earn tickets that can be used to bid on prizes in our end-of-night auction. Bring your game face ~ there will be cornhole, mini putt, Archery and much more!

FRIDAY

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

INNOVATING THROUGH EVIDENCE: EMERGING RESEARCH IN RECREATION

Dr. Mary Sweatman

Researchers from across the Atlantic provinces will share research snapshots on innovative and applied research that examine the intersections between recreation and community issues. These lightning presentations will highlight evidence-informed approaches that strengthen planning, programming, and decision-making. The session will conclude with a moderated discussion that brings practitioners and researchers into conversation about implications for practice.

MAY
22

9:30AM-
10:30AM

ACTIVATING PLACES & SPACES: MEASURING WHAT MATTERS WITH DATA THAT MOVES

Chris Patterson

Discover how to breathe new life into parks and public spaces and measure the impact like never before! In this dynamic session, we'll dive into how cutting-edge data and technology can turn traditionally unmeasurable activations into powerful, quantifiable successes. By blending traditional data with new sources like census, movement, and infrastructure data, you'll see firsthand how data intelligence transforms community projects. Learn to understand who's engaging with your spaces, capture insights on behaviors, and prove your return on investment. Let's get more people, more active, more often, and know the difference you're making!

SWAP THE RULE, NOT THE PERSON: DESIGNING RECREATION SPACES WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS (EDIB)

Andrew Paris

Recreation and facility leaders make daily decisions about policies, programs, and access, often with the best intentions. But sometimes the rules we inherit unintentionally ask people to change who they are in order to participate. This session explores a simple shift: what if we swapped the rule instead of the person? Through real-world recreation scenarios and interactive discussion, participants will examine how belonging is shaped by everyday operational choices. The focus is practical, not theoretical, offering tools leaders can use immediately to rethink policies, redesign programs, and create spaces where more people can participate fully without compromise. Because the goal isn't just access...It's belonging.



BUILDING RESILIENT AQUATIC CENTERS: ENERGY-EFFICIENT STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

Francie Gall

Operating an aquatic centre today means balancing guest experience, costs, and sustainability. Strategic upgrades—like UV disinfection, Regenerative Media Filters, and Variable Frequency Drives—can cut energy use, improve water quality, and deliver long-term savings. With communities setting ambitious carbon reduction goals, aquatic facilities have an opportunity to lead by example. This presentation will show how investing in modern, energy-efficient technologies reduces your footprint, lowers chemical use, and builds a future-ready facility that champions both operational excellence and environmental responsibility.

NUTRITION BREAK

Sponsored by Jet Ice

MAY
20

10:30AM-
10:45PM

THE CHANGING ROLE OF RECREATION WHEN EMERGENCIES OCCUR

Nancy Dubois

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association will moderate this panel of municipal representatives who have been actively involved in a variety of roles during different types of emergencies relevant to the maritime context. Learn from their experiences and explore collaborative approaches to these growing challenges. Content will build on a series of related focus groups held across the country by CPRA in 2025.

MAY
22

10:45AM-
12:00 PM

Sponsored by Spartan Fitness Equipment

CONFERENCE CLOSING REMARKS

MAY
22

12:00PM-
12:15PM



Exhibitor Showcase

Sponsored by BERG Industrial Service

Our Exhibitor Showcase offers attendees the perfect opportunity to explore the latest products, services, and innovations in the recreation and facilities industry. From cutting-edge equipment to sustainable solutions, exhibitors from across the region will showcase their offerings, providing valuable insights and networking opportunities. Whether you're looking for inspiration for facility upgrades, discovering new recreation opportunities, or connecting with industry-leading suppliers, there's something for everyone at our showcase.

Date/Time:

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

6:00PM - 9:00PM

Location:

[Halifax Train Station](#)

Appetizers and refreshments to be served on-site.

Exhibitor Showcase: Booths



- Myrtha Pools
- Playworld
- Waterwaze
- Zero Limit'
- PlayPower Canada
- Poolside by CGT
- Les Installations Sportives Agora Inc.
- NS Department of Labour Skills and Immigration
- Canadian Ramp Company
- Covermaster Inc.
- Cobequid Consulting
- ABC Recreation
- Tessier Récréo-Parc
- Commercial Aquatic Supplies
- Athletica Sport Systems Inc.
- Fireworks FX
- Toromont | CIMCO
- BERG
- Sportball Atlantic
- Zero-C
- Acapulco Pools
- Quantum Recreation
- Pinnacle Aquatics

- Pointage Pro
- Water & Ice
- SpaceAge Synthetics Ltd.
- Musco Sports Lighting
- Playfinder
- Tech Ice
- I.B. Storey Inc.
- Canada Basketball
- NS Department of Emergency Management
- Spartan Fitness
- Active Xchange
- Cooper Lighting Solutions
- REC Staff
- Centaur Products Inc.
- Matrix Fitness Canada
- Jet Ice
- Univerus Software Canada Incorporated
- Sprung Structures
- Aquatic Design & Engineering, division of DEI Consulting Engineers Inc
- Creative Sports Solutions
- Orange Crow Leadership

SPEAKER BIOS



MADDI ADAMS

ACTING DIRECTOR, ACCESSIBILITY ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

Maddi Adams is the Acting Director of Programs and Services at the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate where they manage compliance under the Accessibility Act and awareness and capacity building. Maddi spent the last several years leading the development of the Built Environment Accessibility Standard. Maddi has worked for the provincial government for more than 14 years in a variety of roles with a passion for equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.



SEAMUS MCGREAL

ACCESSIBILITY DIRECTORATE, NS JUSTICE

Seamus McGreal is a professional urban planner and Program Lead for the Built Environment Program with the Accessibility Directorate of NS Justice. Seamus previously worked as a Project Manager with the Campus Planning directorate for the Parliamentary Precinct in Ottawa where he incorporated Accessibility into development projects on Parliament Hill. He was also a Senior Planner with the Halifax Regional Municipality's Planning and Development department for over a decade leading a range of initiatives including the development and implementation of development plans, heritage conservation districts, commemoration projects and financial incentive programs.



JACKIE ONCESCU

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Dr. Jackie Oncescu is an Associate Professor, researcher, creative thinker and change-maker in recreation and community development. A committed social justice advocate, she bridges theory and practice to help communities, governments, and organizations reimagine and redesign recreation and leisure experiences. Her work spans diverse projects, yet her central focus is on uncovering and dismantling exclusionary mechanisms within sport, recreation, and leisure. Drawing on principles of relational welfare, human-centred and system design, and participatory research methods, Jackie embraces equitable research-design strategies to co-create dignified access and foster belonging.

MONI LOEWEN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RECREATION
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN (ROC) EASTMAN,
INC.



Moni Loewen (she/her) is a transformative leader and compassionate changemaker, known for her ability to bridge strategy and empathy across both the private and nonprofit sectors. Passionate about fostering meaningful partnerships, she's dedicated to shaping opportunities that help children and families thrive. Known for her creative, community and human-centered approach, Moni has designed and facilitated impactful learning experiences ranging from intimate family sessions to large-scale conference workshops—all in collaboration with the inspiring ROC (Recreation Opportunities for Children) team. Her work reflects a deep commitment to nurturing inclusive spaces where growth and belonging flourish.

RACHEL BEDINGFIELD

PRINCIPAL, R.E. BEDINGFIELD CONSULTING



Rachel Bedingfield is an accomplished municipal leader with more than 17 years of experience advancing community wellbeing through local government, parks, and recreation. She has served in senior municipal leadership roles, overseeing operations, leading organizational change, and strengthening governance and service delivery systems. As Director of Parks and Recreation for nearly a decade, Rachel led capital infrastructure and accessibility initiatives, and built cross-sector partnerships addressing health equity, homelessness, community safety, and social determinants of wellbeing. Her award-winning work has informed municipal policy, supported council decision-making, and advanced equitable, inclusive service delivery. Through her consulting practice, Rachel now supports governments and public organizations to design resilient, human-centred systems that align municipal services with community needs and foster equity, dignity, and belonging.





MIKE MELENCHUK

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LIFESAVING SOCIETY, NOVA SCOTIA BRANCH

Michael Melenchuk loves to swim with his family. During the summer, you will see him with his wife and two boys swimming at Nova Scotia beaches as often as possible. Michael Melenchuk is passionate about the Lifesaving Society. In 2008, he joined the Board of Directors of the Lifesaving Society in Nova Scotia. Always involved, he volunteered to represent Nova Scotia at the National level, participated in various committees at the Nova Scotia branch, and served as the Nova Scotia President from 2012 to 2016. His involvement in sport grew from regional competitions like the Nova Scotia Surf League to the international Rescue competitions in Australia, Germany, and Egypt. More recently, he has begun researching Lifeguarding and Lifesaving, with papers on lifeguard hiring and judgment presented at the last three World Conferences on Drowning Prevention. He brings years of small-business experience and a Master of Business Administration to his role as Executive Director, and he looks forward to contributing to the long-term success of Lifesaving in Nova Scotia.



JANET CAMPBELL

AQUATIC PROGRAM SPECIALIST, LIFESAVING SOCIETY, NOVA SCOTIA BRANCH

Born in Victoria, BC, Janet began her aquatics career at just 16 years old as a swim instructor and lifeguard. Over the next 30 years—and across four provinces—she pursued every aquatic leadership pathway she was eligible for and passionate about. Her career has included roles ranging from frontline lifeguard and instructor to Team Lead, Aquatic Coordinator, and Aquatic Manager, all while raising four children. Janet has built a reputation for fostering strong staff morale and creating engaging, supportive environments that help retain and empower aquatic teams, even through challenging periods such as COVID. With more than a decade of experience in inclusive aquatic programming, she is deeply committed to ensuring that aquatic spaces are welcoming and accessible for all. Helping others develop confident, connected, and valued teams is central to her work. Now, as the Aquatic Program Specialist for the Lifesaving Society Nova Scotia, Janet is excited to share the knowledge she has gained throughout her career—while continuing to learn, grow, and evolve alongside others in the ever-changing aquatic workplace.



TOBY NWABUOGOR

LEAD AI EDUCATOR AND SAFETY CONSULTANT,
CIVICPLAY.AI

Toby Nwabuogor, a certified Artificial Intelligence Governance Professional (AIGP), is a Co-Founder of CivicPlay.ai where he serves as Lead AI Educator. Toby is also the author of *AI for Recreation Professionals: How to Unlock the Most Powerful Tool You're Not Using*. As a speaker, consultant, and educator, Toby ultimately helps leaders in recreation and community services confidently learn to safely utilize AI. His workshops focus on practical use-cases and responsible governance, making complex time-saving tech accessible for busy teams. Toby champions AI Literacy and Safe Adoption across Canada, drawing inspiration from his global experience for a human-centered approach to utilizing technology.



JOE BREEDON

EXECUTIVE MANAGER, CANADIAN SPORTS FIELD

Joe Breedon is the Outdoor Recreation Facility Coordinator for the City of Barrie, Ontario. Joe has received many recognitions throughout his career. Sports Turf Canada (now the Canadian Sports Fields Association) named him Sports Turf Manager of the Year in 2018, and Turf & Rec recognized him in its Top 10 Under 40 in 2020. Pioneer Athletics awarded him the "Field of Excellence" award for his work at the Barrie Community Sports Complex, and the Barrie Baycats named the grounds crew, including Joe, as the "MVP" for the 2008 season. Joe is known for his friendship, professionalism and commitment to sports fields; others often seek his recommendations and insights. Joe strongly supports education and holds the designation of "Certified Sports Field Manager" through the Sports Field Management Association in the US, one of only a few Canadians to achieve it. Joe is always willing to give back to the sports field industry. He has served on the Board of Directors for Sports Turf Canada / Canadian Sports Fields for several years, sharing his experience and expertise at various presentations across the country.



CHRISTA NORMAN

SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR - TOURISM, CULTURE, AND BUSINESS GROWTH, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

Christa Norman is a Special Projects Coordinator with the City of St. John's, with over 14 years of experience supporting municipal initiatives that bring fun and vibrancy to the City. She plays a key role in managing the Special Events Regulatory Committee, planning civic events, and administering community grants. Outside the office, she's equally busy wrangling two ridiculous French Bulldogs, an unruly 17-year-old son, and a loving husband.



JUSTIN CRICKARD

MANAGER, ENTERPRISE RISK AND INSURANCE, CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

Justin Crickard is a seasoned professional in risk management and insurance, currently serving as the Manager of Enterprise Risk and Insurance for the City of St. John's. He also contributes as an instructor for the Insurance Institute of Canada, teaching courses on Risk Management Principles and Risk Assessment and Treatment.



DR. MARY SWEATMAN

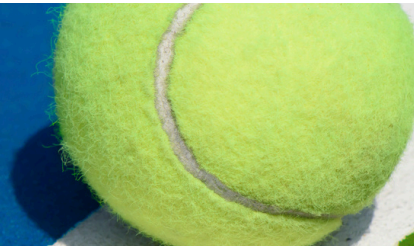
ACADIA UNIVERSITY & RECREATION NOVA SCOTIA

Mary Sweatman (she/her) is an Associate Professor in Community Development at Acadia University in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia). She is a community-engagement scholar-practitioner. Her current research focus is in intersectoral partnerships focused on rural housing and climate change, include the role of recreation. Mary is the faculty director of Acadia's Inclusive Post-Secondary Education initiative, called. Axxess Acadia is a Post-Secondary education pathway for students with self-identified developmental disabilities who cannot access Post-Secondary through standard admission processes.



CHRIS PATTERSON
CPO & GM, NORTH AMERICA, ACTIVEEXCHANGE

Chris is a dynamic leader at the intersection of data, technology and sports. As Chief Product Officer at ActiveXchange, he leverages 15+ years of expertise to help organizations harness data for healthier, more active communities. With Engineering and MBA degrees from Queen's University, Chris brings innovation and impact across enterprise, government and entrepreneurial sectors. A lifelong athlete and professional coach, he's passionate about advancing recreation and shaping the future of active living worldwide.



ANDREW PARIS
SPORT AND RECREATION LEAD, GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA

Andrew Paris is a Sport and Recreation Lead with Nova Scotia's Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, where he supports province-wide efforts to build more inclusive and accessible sport and recreation systems. With over 15 years of experience across coaching, leadership, and community development, Andrew is known for translating equity and belonging into practical tools leaders can use in real spaces. He has worked nationally and provincially with sport and recreation organizations to strengthen policy, culture, and participation, and is the founder of the Black Rock Initiative, which expands access to curling for Black, Indigenous, racialized, and newcomer youth while helping facilities create more welcoming community environments. A lifelong curler and former high performance coach, Andrew brings a systems lens shaped by lived experience — balancing strategy with empathy, and policy with people. Andrew lives in Truro, Nova Scotia, and is originally from Summerside, Prince Edward Island. His work is grounded in a simple belief: systems works best when everyone feels they belong.



FRANCINE GALL
PRESIDENT & OWNER, ACAPULCO POOLS

Francine, President and Owner of Acapulco Pools since 2016, has over a decade of executive leadership in aquatic construction. A WBE Canada-certified entrepreneur and Quantum Shift alumna, she combines governance, financial oversight, and community engagement with a commitment to innovation, diversity, and guiding Acapulco Pools into the future.



NANCY DUBOIS
CONSULTANT TO THE CANADIAN PARKS AND
RECREATION ASSOCIATION (CPRA)

Nancy is the Project Lead for the Renewal of the Framework for Recreation and Parks in Canada on behalf of CPRA and the Framework Leadership Team. Previous to this, she was part of the team that developed the 2024 Framework Update, which was preceded by a Contextual Analysis of the Framework. As part of the Framework renewal process, Nancy conducted many focus groups across the country to better understand the impact of emergency situations on those working in recreation and parks.

Nancy has worked in the physical activity and recreation sector for over 40 years in many roles – front line leader, Executive Director of a YWCA, Director of a cardiovascular disease prevention/health promotion research initiative, a volunteer on many national Boards and committees, and as a consultant in private practice. The focus of her consulting work is working with public, and social profit organizations across Canada primarily in the areas of planning and evaluation. Nancy has been very fortunate to have worked in many countries around the world, and to have received the Queen Elizabeth the Second Diamond Jubilee Medal for her leadership across Canada in the physical activity sector. Nancy hails from a small village in rural southwestern Ontario where she and her husband of 44 years enjoy spending time with their two young grandsons.