



2025 Outdoor Recreation Summit - Call for Session Proposals

Submission Deadline

Please submit your session proposal via [Google Form](#) by 11:59 pm on **Monday, July 7, 2025**. If you have issues or questions with the submission process, please contact outdoorrec.summit@maryland.gov

Background

Together with partners, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Office of Outdoor Recreation will host the [2nd Annual Outdoor Recreation Summit](#) on October 28 - 30, 2025, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Baltimore City, Maryland. The event will bring together +200 recreationists, leaders, entrepreneurs, and advocates for three days of connection, learning, and action. Attendees will explore opportunities to strengthen Maryland's outdoor economy, expand access to nature, and enhance stewardship through recreation.

Session Tracks

- 1. Recreation with Purpose: Stewardship and Sustainability** - *This track highlights how outdoor recreation can support conservation and sustainability. Sessions will cover best practices for building, using, and managing outdoor spaces responsibly, along with community engagement strategies that inspire environmental stewardship among recreators.*
- 2. Outdoors for All: Health, Access, and Community** - *This track focuses on the social and health benefits of outdoor recreation. Sessions will address strategies to expand equitable access to nature, promote physical and mental health, and foster community connection through outdoor programming and infrastructure.*
- 3. The Business of Outdoor Recreation** - *Trails, waterways, and forests aren't just places to explore - they're economic drivers. This track examines how outdoor recreation attracts tourism, fuels job creation, supports local businesses, and creates pathways for entrepreneurship.*

Session Formats

- **Traditional Presentation** - *An informative session with clear learning objectives. These presentations may include slides and visuals, and may include one presenter or a panel of presenters on a similar topic.*
- **Hands-On Workshop** - *A skill-building or participatory session that actively involves participants in learning by doing. Weather permitting, these sessions may be offered outdoors if preferred.*
- **Facilitated Networking or Working Session** - *An informal, purpose-driven session designed to foster peer-to-peer exchange around a specific theme, geography, or goal. This could include facilitated networking, small group discussions, or co-working time to draft plans or focus on group initiatives.*
- **Lightning Presentation** - *A quick (~5 minutes), impactful presentation that sparks ideas, shares innovations, or highlights success.*

Presentation Guidelines

Sessions are designed to engage a diverse audience, including business owners and entrepreneurs, land and resource managers, outdoor recreation advocates, and tourism professionals.

To ensure a dynamic and inclusive experience:

- We recommend no more than three presenters per 60-minute session.
- Sessions should be active and interactive, offering practical insights for a range of attendees.
- Content should align with the summit tracks, focusing on new ideas, lessons learned, and real-world challenges and solutions.

Presenter Expectations

- The Outdoor Recreation Summit is an in-person event. All presenters are expected to be on-site at the Royal Sonesta in Baltimore City, MD.
- Presenters will receive complimentary registration for the day of their presentation, with an option to register for the additional two days of the Summit at a discounted rate.

Submission Guidelines - [Link to Google Form](#)

Each proposal should include the following information:

- **Primary Contact** - Provide the name and contact details for the session lead. This person will serve as the main point of contact if your proposal is selected and will be responsible for communicating all session information and details with session presenters.
- **Session Title** (10 words or fewer)
- **Session Track** - Choose the track that best fits your session - see descriptions above.
 - Recreation with Purpose: Stewardship and Sustainability
 - Outdoors for All: Health, Access, and Community
 - The Business of Outdoor Recreation
- **Session Format** - Select your proposed format - see descriptions above.
 - Traditional Presentation
 - Hands-on Workshop
 - Facilitated Networking or Working Session
 - Lightning Presentation
- **Session Length** - Select the preferred length of your session (there will be additional time for questions and networking built into the agenda)
 - 5 minutes (lightning session)
 - 60 minutes
 - 90 minutes
- **Session Summary** (up to 100 words) - Provide a clear and concise description of your session. If selected, this summary will be posted to the summit website and app.
- **Target Audience** - Indicate who will benefit most from attending your session (e.g. nonprofit leaders, land managers, small business owners, entrepreneurs, job-seekers)
- **Audio-Visual/Electronic Needs** - Provide a summary of needs for the session, including AV equipment, projector, remote controls, and internet access.
- **Outdoor Option** - Would you be interested in offering your session outdoors? (Note: No A/V is available outdoors)

- **Continuing Education Units (CEUs)** - Could your session meet requirements for professional continuing education credits? If yes, please provide more information.
- **Presenter Information** - Include the name, title, organization, and a brief biography (up to 100 words each) for each presenter. Biographies should be written in the third person, in full sentences, and highlight relevant work experience or accomplishments.
- **Past Participation** - Did any of the proposed presenters also present at the 2024 Summit?
- **Presenter Agreement** - Please confirm that all presenters agree to:
 - Attend and present in person at the [Royal Sonesta](#) in Baltimore City
 - Provide any requested updates or materials by the stated deadlines
- **Media Release** - Confirm that all presenters consent to:
 - Being photographed or filmed during the event
 - Having photos, videos, and session materials (slides, handouts, etc) shared on the summit website or in follow-up communications

Selection Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed by the summit committee and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the summit track,
- Originality and overall quality of the proposed session,
- Inclusion of multiple perspectives, and
- Applicability across regions.

The committee will consider a wide range of proposals, including those that may be similar in topic or format. Final selections will aim to ensure a balanced representation of themes, audiences, and geographic relevance.

Submission Details

If your proposal is selected, you will be notified by **August 1**. For any questions about the submission process, please contact us at outdoorrec.summit@maryland.gov.