



ADVOCATE

Vermont Recreation & Parks Association

BUILDING

Pathways to Resiliency



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VRPA Newsletter

The VRPA Advocate is published three times a year by the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome, including commentary on subjects of interest to Vermont's recreation professionals and volunteers.

Editor: Jessica Brodie

Next issue submission deadline:

December 31, 2024
 Send to: Jessica@vrpa.org or by mail to:
 VRPA, PO Box 33
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 3	VRPA Annual Meeting	Virtual
April 10 & 11	Playground Maintenance Technician Course	Burlington, VT
May 21	Aquatic Risk Management Course	Virtual
June 14	Summerama Camp Staff Training	Burlington, VT
July 20	Vermont State Track & Field Meet	St. Johnsbury Academy
July 19	Parks & Recreation Month & Professionals Day	
August 9–11	VT State Pickleball Championship Tournament	Catamount Pickleball
September 24	VT Maintenance Workshop	Rutland, VT
September 25-26	VT Conference on Recreation & Trails Symposium	Killington, VT
October 8–10	NRPA National Conference	Dallas, TX
December	RPA Quarterly Meeting	
2025		
January 13–16	Northern New England Recreation & Parks Conference	Attitash Grand Summit
February	PMT Course	
March	CPO Course & VRPA Quarterly Meeting	
April	CPSI Course	

If you have any suggestions for future trainings, workshops, or special events please let us know! Email Jessica@vrpa.org with your suggestions. We hope to see you all soon!

Mission

The mission of the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association is to provide training and resources to help Vermonters to "Create Community through People, Parks and Programs."

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VRPA PRESIDENT'S perspective



Happy New Year to all of our VRPA members!

I hope that you all had some quiet downtime as we concluded 2023, a year that was full of challenges and opportunities for us all! This message will be my final "President's Perspective" article as your VRPA President. In fact, after the recent vote at the December quarterly meeting, my position will be replaced by a new VRPA governance structure, including a replacement of the President position for an Executive Committee "Chair" position. So not only is this my final "President's Perspective," it will be the final article written under that title in our newsletter ever!

2023 was quite the year for our VRPA! After several decades of holding our conference at the Lake Morey Inn, we switched things up and held our 80th annual Conference on Recreation at the Killington Grand. Based on your feedback, we're going back to Killington for our 81st! The conference also became a trail symposium, bringing new speakers, new attendees and a new energy to the conference! The conference was a terrific success on many levels and we are optimistic about our future—we're still holding strong after 80 years and counting!

On a personal note, it was a year of professional change for me, leaving Vermont State Parks after 12 years and joining new and old colleagues with Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront as Marina Manager and Deputy Harbormaster. The Burlington Community Boathouse, where I work each day, is where my career in this profession began on May 15th, 1997. Though the Burlington Waterfront has changed a great deal from 1997 to present day (it's only gotten better and better), the mission remains the same: Provide a world class recreational experience in one of the most beautiful places in the state of Vermont. The challenges we face on the waterfront and in the City of Burlington are the same that most of you face, but perhaps on a different scale. The enthusiasm I feel for what I do has never been higher. I love my job. I love where I work. I love the people I work with. And yes, I do miss my colleagues with Vermont State Parks who, by the way, are celebrating the state park system's 100th anniversary this year! Congratulations Vermont State Parks on 100 years!

Whether you've worked in this profession for 1 month or for 50 years, I hope that 2024 is a great year for you both personally and professionally! Keep close to VRPA and take advantage of our many professional development and networking opportunities. I've gotten way more out of VRPA than I've ever put in over the last ten years, and I encourage you to get involved as we need good people like you to keep VRPA healthy and strong for the next generation of professionals! Best of luck in 2024! ■

With deep gratitude,

Rob
Rob Peterson CPRP
VRPA President

ROB PETERSON

Message

from the Executive Director



Step forward into growth

Happy Spring!

I hope you all have had a great start to 2024 and are looking forward to the spring, summer, and fall seasons!

There are so many exciting things happening at the VRPA this coming year, and I hope you take time to look through this newsletter to read through the articles highlighted in this annual newsletter. In this issue you will find highlights from a few of our past events, information on upcoming events, as well as many other interesting articles.

I read a quote recently by Abraham Maslow that resonated with me about the work that we do day to day in our profession: “In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety.” I thought about this and how it relates to us in a professional setting. So many of us feel stretched thin these days in our workloads, capacity, and time so the thought of changing something can seem daunting at times. Change can be hard, but we also need to remember that with change comes growth. We need to remember this when it comes to our departments as well as our own personal growth. It is easy to stay in the office and check more items off your to-do list when you are busy vs. get in the car and drive to a new course or workshop to try and learn something unknown to you, but I encourage you all to try to take these leaps this year. Challenge yourself to step out of your comfort zones to meet someone new, get a new certification, or try a new program or event in your community.

Take moments in the coming seasons to admire all you have accomplished as well. Visit your summer programs & events, walk through your facilities and parks, and write a list of new goals, talk to co-workers about their experiences, and be sure to connect with your community members to see what new programs or events they are hoping for in the future. The start of a new season is a great chance to take a breath and figure out the best path forward for you and your department.

The VRPA is here to support you in the ways needed – from finding new funding opportunities, advocating for your needs, and providing new trainings. Let us know what your continued challenges and needs are, and we will be sure to work hard to help you with those this year and beyond. We are excited to offer a full schedule of in-person meetings and trainings again this year, and would love to hear about any new opportunities

your staff may be interested in. If you have never volunteered on a VRPA committee, this is your year! Serving on a committee at any capacity you are able not only helps the association, but builds your network and professional experience as well. This helps your department have insights and local connections, and supports new learning opportunities for professionals around the state. Reach out anytime to learn more!

Our 81st Annual VT Conference on Recreation & Trails Symposium is taking place September 25th & 26th at the Killington Grand hotel. We are so excited to see you all again this year in Killington with our returning conference partner – the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council! We look forward to seeing you all for some great education sessions and networking opportunities and hope you will join us! We have over 28 speakers lined up, and two days of learning & networking. Don't miss the fun and the 81st celebration!

I would also like to thank all our new members that have joined VRPA, and an extra big thank you to those that have volunteered so much of their time on our various committees to help plan all these wonderful events for everyone. Thank you to all of our commercial members and vendors that joined us as new or returning members this year, to those that have sponsored and advertised with us, and to all those that have volunteered time to support our efforts. Your involvement and support is truly appreciate, thank you!

As I reflect personally on the past year and months ahead, it has been an ongoing balance like everyone else to juggle work, kids, and life in general. Everyone I talk to feels stretched thin these days, so don't feel alone if that is how you feel as well. I am so thankful for the work you do, as I get to live it with my own kids through youth sports, summer camps, state parks, and all the other ways you as professionals make fun happen! Thank you all for helping keep our communities connected and growing!

Keep up the amazing work everyone and I look forward to seeing you all soon! ■

Sincerely,
Jessica Brodie
Jessica Brodie
Executive Director



LEE BARRETT

WHAT INFLUENCED YOUR DECISION TO CHOOSE THE CAREER YOU DID?

Ultimately the thing that drew me to the recreation field and what continues to keep me interested and motivated today is connecting with people and helping create meaningful experiences.

Working in restaurants, camps, and recreation centered organizations has taught me so much about what people want and need in their lives and I'm happy to be a small part in providing that for them. Recreation fuels me personally and professionally and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

CAREER POSITIONS HELD.

For most positions in my career the word Program has started my title, usually followed with Coordinator or Manager so I've been a 'Program-Coordinator-Manager' most often.

At a recent NERF Games program, I introduced myself and said I'll be reffing the games. A kid spoke up and said I think your title should be "Director of Battle Operations".

I'm officially changing my title to Director of Coordinated Program Battle Operations Manager.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

When I started with Playworks Texas the program was just beginning in Houston, serving approximately one thousand students in five small charter schools. Before leaving the organization, we had expanded the program to include multiple school districts across the city as well as several other large districts, charter schools, and youth serving organizations across the state. The expansion of direct services and training opportunities in my time with Playworks is certainly something I look back on as a proud and hard-fought accomplishment.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES?

You can't please them all!

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE FROM LESSONS YOU HAVE LEARNED...

- "Don't start chasing applause and acclaim. That way lies madness." -Ron Swanson
- "The world meets nobody halfway. When you want something, you gotta take it." -Lincoln Hawk from the 1987 CLASSIC 'Over the Top.'
- Be playful, jump in and participate, make mistakes, show your true self. -Me

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS YOU VALUE MOST AS A MEMBER OF VRPA?

I love the connection and camaraderie that being a member of VRPA provides! Being able to come together for meetings, conferences, and programs is fulfilling and a great opportunity to charge my professional battery.

PERSONAL RECREATION INTERESTS.

I'm a fan of disc golf, hiking, backyard sports (bocce, badminton, croquette, corn hole), picture taking, baking, movies, TV, being on the water, traveling, and being a dog dad.

FAMILY.

My core family includes my wife Kyra and our two fur babies-Pipsqueak (chihuahua) and Jasper (chocolate lab). My parents and siblings live in Michigan (look at your left hand-palm down-and the ring fingernail is where I grew up) and Kyra's in Pennsylvania (outside of Philly where ya gotta get a hoagie at Wawa). ■

our national championships

Championships were won in the sports of tennis, pickleball, track & field, and the triathlon



VERMONT SENIOR GAMES



To vThe Vermont Senior Games Association experienced an interesting year in 2023, highlighted by local athletes enjoying great success at the National Senior Games in Pittsburgh. And while the local state games went well, the persistent rains over the last few months of the season challenged multiple events and resulted in several cancellations. Nevertheless, the VSGA is eager to launch the 2024 competitive season in May, with athletes seeking to qualify for the 2025 National Senior Games, to be staged in Des Moines, Iowa.

86 Vermont athletes also competed at the National Senior Games in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania between July 7 – 18, 2023. Since there had been a National Senior Games just last year, due to the COVID cancellation, several of our athletes who had won multiple national championships in the past (such as Flo Meiler) chose not to attend, suppressing our results somewhat. Yet Vermonters still captured nine gold medals, eleven silvers, and a dozen bronze. Our National Championships were won in the sports of tennis, pickleball, track & field, and the triathlon. Of those 86 athletes

who went to Pittsburgh, 41 of them either won top three medals, or were awarded ribbons for finishing 4th – 8th in their events. With almost 50% of Vermont athletes earning podium honors, we were quite proud of our athletes’ performances. Our competitors managed to earn podium finishes in every sport that we entered – including a medal in golf, for perhaps the first time ever, and two in basketball. In fact, two Vermonters earned podium finishes in archery, a sport that we don’t even offer as part of our program.

Pittsbrgh was a great host city, but the venues were scattered over a large area – tennis alone had five different sites – and negotiating the complex urban byways in the ‘city of bridges’ was not an easy task. Fortunately, our primary sponsor Vermont Blue Advantage once again helped us provide athletes with t-shirts and hats, which made identifying our people in crowded venues surprisingly easy.

One of the greatest highlights was VSGA webmaster and Board member Matt Guild winning the National

Championship in the 800-meter run, with many of us (and his family) in attendance. Matt had just experienced a tragic fall in the 400-meter prelims just feet from the finish line, and missed participating in the finals, so this was a nice recovery for him. He ran such a smart race, very strategic and led comfortably really the whole way, to win in 2:20:27. Matt followed that up by winning the 1500-meter title in the days to come.

The 2024 season will once again begin with the swimming competition, to be held at the Edgar May Center in Springfield. The VSGA is excited to be welcoming athletes to two new venues this summer – tennis will be held at the beautiful Proctor Tennis Courts complex at Middlebury College, and basketball is moving to the Rutland Recreation Community Center (formerly the gymnasium for the College of St. Joseph). ■

A full list of the 2024 events can be found at vermontseniorgames.org





FACILITY FEATURES

BURLINGTON ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND



On November 4th, 2023, Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront (BPRW), along with community partners Oakledge for All (OFA), celebrated the grand opening of the city's first Universally Accessible Playground. This milestone marked the culmination of over a decade of collaborative efforts, including fundraising, grant-writing, and capital allocation. The playground's design, led by the award-winning firm Groundview, was complemented by engineering support from VHB and construction oversight from EIV Technical Services and Engineers Construction Inc. The festivities included community organizations, remarks, a flash mob dance, and of course, plenty of cake. The Parks Foundation of Burlington also announced its new campaign, 'Playgrounds 4All, Playgrounds 4ever,' aimed at ensuring inclusivity and accessibility in playgrounds for years to come.

Oakledge's Universally Accessible Playground offers more than just play structures; it's a destination

within itself. With winding paths, connections to Burlington's Greenway, and increased accessible parking, the playground seamlessly integrates with its natural surroundings. The topography was carefully modified to accommodate features like the Wide Family Slide, offering visitors breathtaking views of Lake Champlain. The landscape design includes mounds for seating and stormwater management, providing habitats for plants and wildlife. The playground's inclusive design encourages visitors to engage with the play equipment or simply enjoy the serene environment. Additional features include an inclusive carousel, talk tubes, and musical instruments, with future modifications planned for enhanced accessibility.

BPRW extends its gratitude to the City of Burlington, state grants, and generous donors like Oakledge for All, whose support made this project possible. Looking ahead, BPRW aims to renovate the restrooms for improved accessibility, further enhancing the Oakledge experience. ■



NEW COLCHESTER RECREATION CENTER

Congratulations to the Town of Colchester Parks & Recreation on the groundbreaking for their new Recreation Center! The construction of the recreation center, a 29,427-square-foot multi-generational facility, responds to a community need that has been identified over the past 20 years through multiple surveys, community outreach, and engagement. This project will be paid entirely from the current and future proceeds generated from the existing 1% Local Option Tax (LOT), approved by voters in 2015 for financing of existing or future voter-approved capital projects.

This project was approved by voters on the Town Meeting Day ballot in March 2023 and is anticipated to be completed in Spring 2025. ■

For more information on the project visit [Colchester Recreation Center](#)





Kingdom Trails Grant

On behalf of the Kingdom Trails Board of Directors, the Kingdom Trail Association (KT) is delighted to announce that the 5th annual KT Mini-Grant program has awarded \$27,615 to 10 applicants around the Northeast Kingdom! KT was privileged to receive 16 applications in 2023 and \$56,605.43 in total funding requested as our program grows yearly! Kingdom Trails is grateful for all applicants who applied this year, and for the positive impact they have had as we all work together to foster the health of our shared space and community. Kingdom Trails is also grateful to the 100+ landowners whose gift of access has allowed KT to contribute to our community and offer this program.

The KT Mini-Grant Selection Committee awarded funds to applicants who participated in a competitive application process. These applications met the criteria focused on community need, impact, sustainability,

diversity and inclusion, public support, and a realistic, effective work plan and budget. The projects must highlight and advance valuable local endeavors that promote recreation, health and wellness, education and training, environmental stewardship, economic viability, heritage and culture, and the creative arts. We can't wait for you to see the impact these projects have on our local community! ■

> For more information, scan the QR code or visit with kingdomtrails.org/2023-kt-mini-grant-program-awards-10-area-projects



Questions?

Lukas Ray, Community Collaboration Director, Kingdom Trail Association
802.626.0737 (office | 304.940.4885 (cell) | lukas@kingdomtrails.org | kingdomtrails.org

Prioritizing VRPA + Meetings

A Catalyst for Growth & Collaboration



Dear VRPA Community,

As we embrace the changing seasons and continue to navigate the diverse landscape of recreation and parks management in Vermont, I am compelled to share the invaluable experiences I've had at our recent VRPA quarterly meeting. These gatherings represent more than just routine events; they are pivotal moments that fortify our professional networks, foster learning, and advance our collective impact within our communities.

At our last quarterly meeting, I learned about a volunteer trail manual in Williston, discovered how the Community Sailing Center accesses rooms from Champlain College during the summer, learned about United Way's volunteer platform, and made a good connection from Vermont State Parks for our campground manager. Through these interactions, we've expanded relationships that promises to improve our services and expand our reach.

Beyond the professional insights gained, the meeting was fun! The moments shared over a delicious lunch(!) and the engaging conversations during breaks and lunchtime were more than just casual exchanges—they were opportuni-

ties to reconnect with colleagues, share experiences, and explore new ideas.

What makes these meetings truly invaluable is their role in nurturing both seasoned professionals and those new to our vibrant field. By sharing our expertise and experiences, we create a fertile ground for growth and learning, providing a welcoming environment for recent entrants into our profession and empowering our emerging leaders.

Our state association plays an active role in advocating for us statewide. VRPA acts as a beacon, championing our collective causes and ensuring our voices are heard. Moreover, the high-caliber annual conference we organize stands as a testament to the commitment to delivering top-tier educational experiences that fuel our professional development. As we collectively move forward, let's prioritize our engagement with VRPA meetings. These gatherings are not merely checkboxes on our calendars—they are opportunities for growth, collaboration, and empowerment. They are the conduits through which we fortify our bonds, exchange knowledge, and shape the future of recreation and parks management in Vermont. ■



In unity and progress,
Cindi Wight

Vermont Senior Games Association 2024 Events Schedule

COMPETITIONS OPEN TO ANYONE 50 & OLDER

National Games Qualifying Events
Non-Qualifying Events



SCAN FOR
VT. SENIOR GAMES
WEBSITE

Details/register at
www.vermontseniorgames.org

May 16	Vermont Corporate Cup 5K Walk/Run Montpelier Put together a Senior Games team
May 19	Swimming Springfield Edgar May Health & Recreation Center
June 1	Pickleball Barre Town State Championship Singles
June 2	Pickleball Barre Town Fun Doubles
June 8	10K Road Race Montpelier In Partnership with Central Vermont Runners
June 15	Track & Field and 1500M Power Walk Burlington High School and UVM
June 23	VSGA Social Event Burlington Lake Monsters vs. Worcester Bravehearts
July 21	Triathlon Lake Dunmore In Partnership with VT Sun
July 27 & 28	Tennis Middlebury College
Aug. 5	Golf Middlebury Ralph Myhre Golf Course
Aug. 24-25	Pickleball Colchester & Burlington State Championship Men, Women & Mixed Doubles
Aug. 31	5K Road Race & 5K Power Walk Northfield In Partnership with Central Vermont Runners
Sept. 15	Cycling Castleton
Sept. 27	Basketball Basketball Skills Rutland Community Rec Center
Oct. 19	Table Tennis Shelburne

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VT VIOLENCE PREVENTION

PROJECT TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

COMMUNITY THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: LEVEL 1

OVERVIEW

The Vermont Violence Prevention Project (VVPP) is an initiative coordinated by the University of Vermont Division of Safety and Compliance and made possible by funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships, opportunity number DHS-23-TTP-132-00-01. We are excited to offer Community Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management (BTAM) training. This full day, in-person training will be facilitated by Ontic, a team of industry-leading security experts with decades of experience assessing and managing threat cases. This Level 1 training will provide fundamental information to community partners on targeted violence and how prevention of these tragedies is possible. Level 1 Training will be a prerequisite for attending the Level 2 training.

WHAT IS COVERED?

This training is the 1st in a two-part series and will cover how to build and operate a community threat assessment program. In addition, the training will provide detailed instruction on specific procedures to use when investigating concerning or threatening behavior, including how to screen cases, gather information, analyze the information, make an assessment, and implement an intervention plan when needed. The training includes multiple group exercises where participants can practice using these procedures.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

This training is appropriate and relevant for various community partners, such as: colleges and universities, houses of worship, government agencies, public & private organizations, hospitals and health care facilities, law enforcement, and public safety professionals working in the state of Vermont. ■

APRIL 16, 2024

9AM-4PM | SOUTH ROYALTON, VT

REGISTRATION



During the eclipse, select [Vermont State Parks](#) will be open with parking and portable restrooms. However, regular facilities will be closed as it falls outside the usual park season. These parks include:

Bomoseen	Elmore	Lake Shaftsbury	Waterbury Center
Boulder Beach	Emerald Lake	Lake St. Catherine	
Branbury	Mt. Philo	Little River	
Crystal Lake	Grand Isle	Niquette Bay	
DAR	Knight Point	Silver Lake	

Spread the word: Safe eclipse viewing AWAY from trails

- Close trails in Vermont and redirect visitors to open and welcoming venues.
- Promote [local eclipse events](#) as alternative viewing spots.
- Use kiosk signage to communicate trail closures.
- Discuss the option of 'road closed to through traffic' with town road crews near trailheads.
- Share [Trail Finder's](#) consolidated resources urging visitors to avoid trails and find optimal viewing areas.
- Explore Green Mountain Club's website for additional eclipse resources to share.
- Access [Vermont's comprehensive eclipse website](#) for safety tips, updates, and more.
- Discover activities statewide via Vermont Public's list.
- Visit VTGC's [Solar Eclipse page](#) for additional tips and resources.

Town clerks are distributing eclipse glasses, lodging is fully booked along the eclipse path, and schools are dismissing students early to ease traffic. As the April 8 solar eclipse approaches, trail managers must guide visitors to prime viewing spots while discouraging use of trails and dirt roads during mud season.

Even if your area isn't in the eclipse path, you may still see increased outdoor activity. Help visitors find suitable locations and remind them that trails are closed.

FPR, GMC, and Trail Finder have resources to assist. Please share these with local officials, parks staff, road crews, and conservation groups. ■



vermonttgc.org/solar-eclipse-2024



Vermont State Parks celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2024. The system started when Frances Humphreys deeded 150 acres on and around Mt. Philo for use as a public recreation area. Today there are 56 parks covering 9,615 square miles, and including more than 2,200 campsites, 180 miles of trails, dozens of beaches, picnic areas and other recreational areas. More than 1 million visitors visit Vermont State Parks (VSP) annually during the summer-long operating season to enjoy majestic forests, pristine lakes, and awe-inspiring mountain views. Vermonters take refuge in their park system to reconnect with nature, enjoy family and loved ones, and to disconnect from the hectic work around them. Visitors from around the county—and world—enjoy Vermont’s parks and add to the \$3 billion Vermont tourism industry.

To help coordinate and celebrate 100 years VSP has partnered with local advertising agency HMC Advertising, based out of Richmond. The birthday celebration will start slowly during the first of the year with a campaign to create awareness of Vermont State Parks, encourage visits to Vermont State Parks and support funding to Vermont State Parks through its partner non-profit organization Vermont Parks Forever. The celebration will begin in earnest later in the summer once the parks are open and staffed and buzzing with visitors.

The campaign will focus on Vermonters as well as out-of-state visitors, specifically in the surrounding New England States with the key message that Vermont State Parks are for everyone. A general theme of the campaign will be “Sharing 100 years of your stories” through which VSP will be collecting and sharing stories of its visitors over the course of the year.

Vermont

STATE PARKS CELEBRATES ITS 100th ANNIVERSARY

“We want to celebrate 100 years of what the state parks have always offered. A special place to explore nature and make new memories. Using shared emotions and experiences as insights, we focus on singular experiences that newcomers and returning visitors have all come to understand,” said Director Nate McKeen

In addition to the marketing campaign, many park interpretive programs will highlight aspects of the 100th anniversary at various parks around the state. A special line of 100th anniversary park merchandise will also be available through vtstateparks.com and at many park locations throughout the 2024 operating season. ■



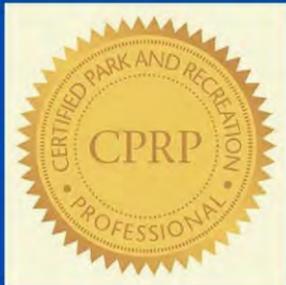


VRPA Annual Meeting

WEDNESDAY
APRIL 3RD, 2024
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM



CPRP, CPRE, & CAPARA CERTIFICATIONS



9:00 - 10:10 am:

CPRP, CPRE, & CAPARA Certifications - What are they and why should you pursue them?

After the CEU sessions, join us for a brief VRPA Budget presentation.

[Register here!](#)

VRPA Annual Meeting 2024

We are switching things up a bit in 2024! We are hosting our annual meeting virtually to allow more departments the ability to attend as travel has been challenging for our smaller departments this year.

Following the CEU session we will be presenting two options of our FY24-25 VRPA budget. We encourage all members to attend this important discussion to learn about the fiscal challenges VRPA currently faces after several years of increased costs and reduced revenues.

Annual Awards

Our Annual Awards this year will be presented at our Fall VT Conference on Recreation in conjunction with the Theresa S. Brungardt Awards. Nomination forms for all the awards will be shared separately.



MRPA Board of Directors is accepting applications for the position of

Executive Director

The Executive Director position is a part time, 20 hour per week, remote position. Pay range is \$24-\$30 per hour. This position will start in June of 2024.

For the complete job description, and application information, visit merpa.org.

ADVOCACY EDUCATION NETWORKING FUNDRAISING

ADVOCACY EDUCATION NETWORKING FUNDRAISING

2024 AAPRA/NRPA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



Are you ready to take your career to the next level? Just think what your very own mentor could do for you: cheerlead, listen, advise, and share experiences! Join us for the 2024 Mentorship Program!

MENTEES:

- Young Professionals, Students, and those seeking FT/PT employment in the field
- Be willing to commit time (typically two hours per month)

MENTORS:

- Significant experience in the field
- Be willing to commit time (typically two hours per month)

APPLICATION DEADLINE is March 8, 2024

WEBINAR If you're unsure and want to ask questions, join us for an interactive webinar on February 15, at 11:00 PST. <https://redbarncommunications.zoom.us/join/register/tZYscuCgrD4vEtHhoirtcARPJoE31vpHRGz6>

INFORMATION AND APPLICATIONS visit aapra.org/Programs/Mentorship-Program





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Mark Gallagher | **800.861.1209** | mark@nerecgroup.com
P.O. Box 1503 Westboro, MA

Learn more



2024 81ST

VT CONFERENCE ON RECREATION & TRAILS SYMPOSIUM

New sessions
Great networking

September 25-26

Save the date

Join us at the 80th VT Conference on Recreation, where parks and recreation professionals from across Vermont will gather! This year, we're excited to partner with the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council (VTGC) to host a Trails Symposium alongside our traditional conference. The addition of the Trails Symposium brings an outdoor recreation perspective to our event, enriching the experience for attendees. With over 27 educational sessions, networking opportunities, an awards luncheon, and an exhibit hall, this two-day event is a must-attend for professionals and service providers in the parks and recreation field! ■



Killington Grand Resort, Killington, VT



VERMONT
Recreation & Parks Association

81st VRPA Conference

BUILDING

Pathways to Resiliency



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR EXHIBITORS

Register early and save \$50 (prior to May 31). Space is limited to only 35 vendors!

Register Today!

We are excited to welcome attendees and exhibitors back to the [Killington Grand Hotel](#) for the 2024 VRPA Conference to celebrate the 81st Vermont Conference on Recreation!

We will be continuing our partnership with the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council (VTGC) again this year to host the Trails Symposium in tandem with our conference! The Combination of this central location and continued partnership will help maintain our historic attendance and attract new attendees to a state of the art facility. We believe that our second year in this location with this continued partnership will grow this event in 2024 and help you connect with more professionals from around the state as well as help our vendors grow your businesses in the State of Vermont.

Our Keynote speaker this year will be Kelly Brush from the Kelly Brush Foundation! We are super excited for her to join us to talk about all things recreation and how we may be able to think about things in a more accessible way. Kelly Brush was born and raised in Charlotte, VT. She attended the Green Mountain Valley School in Waitsfield for high school before enrolling at Middlebury College. During her time at Middlebury, Kelly was an accomplished ski racer and a member of the alpine ski team. In February 2006, while racing for Middlebury, Kelly fell, striking a lift tower, sustaining a spinal cord injury (SCI) and leaving her paralyzed from the chest down. Determined not to let her SCI define her, Kelly went on to graduate from Middlebury in 2008, and completed graduate school at

the MGH Institute of Health Professions in 2013, becoming a Nurse Practitioner. Kelly also started the [Kelly Brush Foundation](#) shortly after her injury to empower others with SCI to lead active and engaged lives through sport and recreation. More information on Kelly is highlighted on our [website here!](#)

Without you, we would not be able to sustain the valuable work of VRPA. Your involvement and partnership is an essential part of that reality! Our annual conference is one of the most financially important events all year for VRPA, and we are grateful for your involvement and support of our organization all year. Please accept our invitation to join us and participate in this year's conference!

Registration for exhibitors is now open! We encourage exhibitors to register early to save \$50 prior to May 31st. We also can only fit 35 vendors this year, so be sure to secure your space!

Registration for attendees will open later this Spring. We will be updating our website regularly with more updates and information so be sure to check back often.

We have an amazing conference committee team this year that is working hard to make this year's conference stand out. Some of your favorite highlights will still be featured, including dinner & breakfast with exhibitors, Fireworks by Northstar Fireworks, Evening Social, Silent Auction, and some amazing education sessions from speakers around the country.

Please renew your membership, register early, and book your room. Thank you for your continued support & involvement.

See you in September for great networking & learning at the Killington Grand Hotel! ■

Sincerely from all of us at VRPA,

*Colin Drury
Conference Exhibitor sub-committee Chair*

*Lee Barrett
Conference Committee Chair*

*Jessica Brodie
VRPA Executive Director*



VRPA 2023 Award Winners

Theresa S. Brungardt Award Winners

The Theresa S. Brungardt Award is an annual honor celebrating the legacy of Theresa S. Brungardt, a pioneering leader in Vermont's parks and recreation. Recognized as Vermont's first Director of Recreation in 1943, Brungardt's tireless efforts helped establish numerous community recreation departments. Her national recognition includes being elected the first female president of the American Recreation Society in 1952, and she was later inducted into the NRPA Hall of Fame in 1997. Each year, the award may be presented across various categories, depending on the number and quality of nominations received.

PROFESSIONAL

Full-time leader, supervisor, administrator, manager, educator, planner, researcher, designer, or consultant who has made outstanding contributions to the recreation and/or park field.
> Melissa Cate – Burlington Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront

FRIEND OF RECREATION

A layman, board member, community or state leader, public official, or volunteer who has made outstanding contributions to the recreation and/or park field.
> Bill "Downtown" Brown – Hartford, VT

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

A commercial, professional, private, governmental, or nonprofit organization or agency that has made outstanding contributions to the recreation and/or park field.
> Come Alive Outside



Melissa Cate



Bill Brown

Annual Award Winners

The VRPA Annual Awards are handed out annually to honor and celebrate the work of the parks & recreation professionals in VT.

FACILITY OF MERIT AWARDS:

The Facility of Merit Award is presented annually to an agency or organization that has renovated or developed a recreation amenity.
> Myers Memorial Pool – City of Winooski Community Services
> Sherman Manning Aquatic Facility – Town of Hartford Parks & Recreation

UNsung HERO AWARD

This award recognizes professionals who have demonstrated consistent or outstanding service in their community and whose commitment has been in furthering the field of parks, recreation, and/or cultural and community services through excellence, service, and execution of their talents and skills.
> Zoe Richards – Burlington Wildways

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD

The Young Professional Award is presented annually to someone working in the field of parks and recreation within Vermont who is a current member of VRPA.
> Isaac Bashaw – St. Albans Recreation Department

2024 Annual Awards and Theresa S. Brungardt Awards

The VRPA will be honoring professionals and organization across the state this fall at our 81st Annual VT Conference on Recreation & Trails Symposium.

The Awards ceremony will take place during lunch on Thursday, September 26th.

Nominations are now being accepted for the following awards to be handed out in person at the conference this September. Please consider taking time to nominate a fellow professional, yourself, or partnering organization that is deserving of one of these awards.

Nominations are due by August 16, 2024

Theresa S. Brungardt Award Categories

- > [Friend of Recreation](#)
- > [Community Organization](#)
- > [Professional](#)

VRPA Annual Award Categories

- > [Facility of Merit](#)
- > [Unsung Hero](#)
- > [Young Professional](#)



Winooski Pool



Zoe Richards



Hartford Pool



Isaac Bashaw

Day use area and boat rental shed at Waterbury Center State Park under high water.

2023 FLOODING

plymouth 12

“The Plymouth 12” spent a day and overnight in their cars under the leadership of Park Managers Chris Brader and Tiffany Soukup as flood waters rushed through Camp Plymouth.”

after the last camper left to preserve infrastructure. A mandated evacuation of Jamaica State Park due to high water behind Ball Mountain Dam which looms above the village and the Park was executed flawlessly in roughly 1 hour as both staff and campers packed up and departed the park and traveled the available route to Fort Dummer where sites and staff stood waiting for their arrival. Similarly, while park staff used every means necessary to re-route water to protect the campground and roadways at Emerald Lake State Park, they directed campers to higher ground at Woodford State Park. The coordination by Regional field staff of seamless moves in the evening when flooding threatened most of Southern Vermont will be legendary.

TOUGH

The group that came to be known as “The Plymouth 12” spent a day and overnight in their cars on the nearest high ground under the leadership of Park Managers Chris Brader and Tiffany Soukup on high ground as flood waters rushed through Camp Plymouth and cut them off completely from all resources or rescue. In a memorable show of confidence in that care and leadership, every visitor at Camp Plymouth opted out of rescue the next morning in favor of waiting for vehicle passage to be restored later.

Regional Maintenance staff out of Killington hand-carried a generator over steep washed-out roads to reestablish drinking water supplies for stranded campers at Coolidge State Park. Resilient

Repairs were executed immediately by a mobilized and committed maintenance staff. Waterlines were re-buried in Groton, roads re-opened, water and sewage systems checked, and all but a few areas and facilities were re-opened for visitors shortly after the rains stopped falling. Even a heavily damaged road to the iconic Owl’s head overlook was designed, bid, contracted, and reconstructed for foliage season. Committed

Plymouth visitors have rebooked. Local townspeople either phoned in tips or dropped off wayward rental boats, campers and day visitors returned and despite losing one of the most

popular day-use areas for the season and another seeing a significant period of closure as the Waterbury reservoir slowly returned to its normal level, visitation to Vermont State Parks

‘STAYED STRONG.

Unfortunately, we know this will happen again, the individual acts will be celebrated, and the systemic factors such as training, procedures, and organizational support for the staff in the field will be evaluated and incorporated into our preparations for the next event. Facilities will be adjusted, hardened, moved, or designed for ease of repair and cleanup as we look to account for a changing climate for the staff we hire and for the visitors that want to use their parks.

CAMP PLYMOUTH

This past July Vermont State Parks, like much of Vermont, were tested by intense rain and flooding. This challenged both the visitors and staff in the 55-park system which has not seen such widespread impacts from natural disasters since 2011 and certainly hasn’t seen such an event that impacted so many parks in the heart of the season in historic memory. This event has reinforced facts that are too seldom shared.

Our Vermont State Park visitors and staff are.

RESOURCEFUL

The approaching event meant an exodus of visitors as they sought to avoid the storm, flexibility in cancellation and rebooking allowed visitors to reduce the impact of the storm. For those who stayed, park staff monitored, assisted, and in some cases saved visitors from the impact of the weather. Camping loops were evacuated as a preventative measure during the storm as staff recognized the growing risk within each specific park. In an example of executing creative actions in one park, maintenance staff used a park tractor to dig water bars across park roads



Electrical contractors restoring service cottages at Campo Plymouth State Park.



Camp Plymouth State Park Manager Chris Brader and rescue crew assisted stranded staff and visitors after the flood.



Footbridge at Stillwater State Park under raging flood waters.

“... THE INDIVIDUAL ACTS WILL BE CELEBRATED ...”

'23 FLOODING CON'T



BARRE

*Stephanie L. Quaranta, C.P.R.P.
City of Barre, Vermont*

Summer in Vermont is one of the busiest times for recreation professionals. Throughout late winter and into the spring we are busy lining up summer camps and specialty programs, reinstalling tennis nets, preparing our waterfronts, sprucing up our picnic shelters, recruiting staff and more. Over the past year or two we have faced some challenging comebacks from COVID but this past summer was expected to be one of our best ones to date. As recreation professionals we were all ready to do our part to get our communities back out to socialize, enjoy the outdoors and our programs.

As summer approached Barre City everything was on target and ready to go in anticipation of a fun filled summer. The outdoor areas were ready, the swimming pool received a fresh coat of paint and camp registrations were ongoing.

The swimming pool staff was hired and season passes were indicating a promising summer.

School was out a little later this year so most programs with the exception of the swimming pool were set to begin after the July 4 holiday. Registrations were strong, the pool off to a strong start and the tennis and pickleball courts were in use. The playgrounds were filled with children and families, enjoying the outdoors and just having fun.

July was off to a sunny start but as days passed the rain began to fall. We were beginning to wonder if it would ever stop. Ironically, the City of Barre appeared to be in the path of some of the heaviest anticipated rainfall. The City of Barre sustained severe flooding with the aftermath of hurricane Irene in 2011. Since that time structural components were put in place to help contain debris at one

section of the City with plans and teams established in the event of a future flood or disaster. The July weather reports began to come in predicting the amount of rain that had already fallen and the anticipated amount would likely exceed that of Irene. Irene came in and left, unlike the consecutive rain with this storm which had already well saturated the grounds.

In the early morning hours of July 11 the Winooski river began to overflow its banks. The Main Street business district and a large what we are now calling a triangle of streets in our North end were underwater. Roadways were lifted up and bridges impassible. There was a landslide on our beltline to the hospital that trapped three cars. There were cars floating down the river and in the end around 40 landslides. The EMS activated their emergency response teams and soon our Civic Center's Auditorium, high on a hill, would be the evacuation headquarters. The American Red Cross trailers were opened up and the entire Auditorium was now an active evacuation shelter. Our public safety building and dispatch areas flooded as was a portion of City Hall. The Police and Fire relocated their vehicles and personnel to the Civic Center.

Trying to navigate travel even to the shelter was challenging for those in need. If you lived in Barre City you could not make it to Montpelier nor could you go from Montpelier to Barre City. The entire downtown was not accessible as were many of the roads in, out or within the City. The interstate was closed at one point and cars were forced to park with the majority spending the night in their cars.

As the rain began to slow down a few areas were cleared up, enough to allow travel for needed supplies. After weaving through many different streets on Wednesday morning I was finally able to reach the Auditorium. Every Department Head would be assigned a major role with the flood and mine was to head up volunteer efforts, maintain a data base and serve as coordinator at the Civic Center with the groups coming in for the multi-agency resource center. The Red Cross, Salvation Army and several groups from out of state who volunteer to help clean up with floods were soon on site. Food, water, tools and all kinds of resources were soon arriving. The B.O.R. arena was now converted to a shelter for animals with those who had been displaced and were in the shelter next door at the AUD. We were so fortunate to have a large enough complex to house those who were displaced as well as a shelter for the animals and a building in between to support the major operations of emergency personnel and operations. I would represent the City, meeting each morning discussing the coordination of all the groups as we updated each other on plan for the day, progress, needs, etc.

On the recreation side we would now have to cancel the scheduled camps and it was best to close the pool for the week. Our resources to maintain the pool as well as safe and acceptable travel to the pool led us to close for the safety of

all. We would lose a week of the pool as well as scheduled swim lessons. All of our play areas received debris or were saturated to where they would not be usable. A portion of the transportation (bike path) on the south end was uplifted with major damage.

As the waters receded, the damage was now clear as ever. One of our newly renovated ballparks lost the entire outfield fencing and the field was covered with a heavy amount of mud and debris. One of our neighborhood playgrounds was fortunate to have the fence in tact but woven through it was a mass of branches, twigs, mud and a lot of debris that had raged down the river. The entire playground was covered with heavy mud and debris. Basketball and other activities scheduled for the Auditorium would now be cancelled for weeks due to the Civic Center now serving as the evacuation center and later set up as a FEMA site. As we enter November FEMA is still on site meeting with those who were affected by the flood.

After a week of closure we were excited to open the pool back up. It was a warm and sunny day and we decided the community needed some fun and a change of pace so we offered a day of swimming free of charge. We also scheduled FEMA, the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Health Department and Capstone to set up informational tables to help anyone needing flood assistance. Through their generous support Ben & Jerry's was on hand to provide everyone with ice cream. It was nice to offer the community a fun event where for a few hours they could forget about all the challenges. The kids especially struggled through the flood and needed an outlet. Free pool passes were distributed to those youngsters, especially who lived in the North end of the City, one of the hardest hit areas.

It has been a few months since the flood and we continue to work on our neighborhood playgrounds. We are grateful for a dedication of time, labor and equipment that was provided by the Governor's office for a few of our parks. Governor Scott and his team were on hand to help clear debris, rake, add new mulch, etc.

The flood recovery work continues, as does my role meeting 2-3 times a week as I am on the Long Term Flood Recovery Team (LTFR). We are making progress in the City thanks to hundreds of volunteers who came from the City and well beyond to help us recover.

'23 FLOODING CON'T



**"EVER UPWARD,
EXCELSIOR!"**



BARRE PARKS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

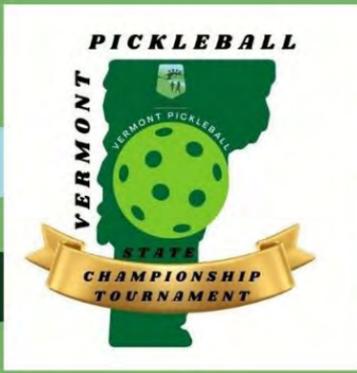
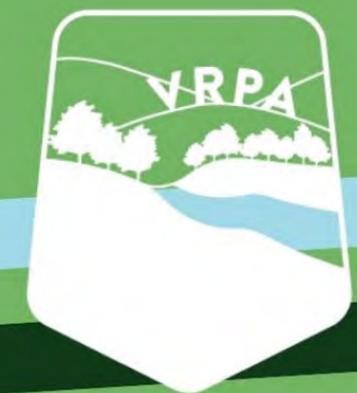
*Johnny Crossley, Recreation Director
City of Barre, Vermont*

Though many in our area experienced hardship as a result of the flooding we were relatively fortunate with our Recreational facilities. League play on our fields was completely disrupted following the flooding. Less games played, less revenue from our "facility reservations." Our fields never quite recovered. It was a game of "keep up" for the maintenance crew when our fields were playable. It quickly became evident that there was a field shortage in the area. I fielded several calls in my office from the public, after July, asking about the condition of our fields.

Town of Barre: The Town of Barre Recreation Department experienced minor impacts to our Recreational Facilities following the July floods. Our main Recreation Area complex at 46 Websterville Road shouldered the burden of saturated playing fields for the remainder of Summer into Autumn. Several leagues were forced to cancel games due to standing water on the field. Varsity Fall Sports had to seek alternative field use for several practices and games in the month of September. Fortunately, none of our fields experienced "wash out" or damage from the highly saturated ground. We as a Department are quickly seeing how climate change COULD affect our main Rec Area. The current drainage system cannot handle a wet summer. It was last updated in the late 80s/early 90s. Due to excess water this Summer our Seasonal Maintenance Crew had to clear the drainage system with a pump on several occasions. Each occasion was marked by pools of water, or "duck ponds" as we began calling them, appearing in low land areas or near drainage. Solution moving forward: Rain Gardens, tree planting, and future considerations to update drainage system.

An embankment along our South Barre Bike Path, which connects South Barre with Barre City, completely washed out taking with it a 12-20-foot-long section of the bike path down below into the Stevens Branch of the Winooski River. An outside engineer was brought in to assess this path and several other FEMA related projects. The path is closed for the foreseeable future. The path is awaiting FEMA funding to proceed. Timetable uncertain.

Our Town Forest experienced significant trail erosion on one section of trail departing from the 44 Brook Street parking area. Corridor Manager Millstone Trails Association was quick to respond. Lajeunesse Construction were contracted by MTA to make trail repairs, with approval from Town Recreation Director. Trail repairs were finalized and opened to the public by Mid-September. In addition, a Town Forest service road, which accesses an active pump station in the Forest, experienced significant wash out preventing vehicle access. Department of Public Works responded within days of the July flood. Service road fully repaired. Cost unknown - separate department information. ■



2024

VERMONT
Recreation & Parks Association
www.vrpa.org

VT State Pickleball Championship Tournament

August 9-11th

Catamount Pickleball

South Burlington, VT



Pettinelli & Associates, INC.

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Phone: 802-862-3002

Discount Ticket Sales

Are back in 2024!

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SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND



VERMONT
Recreation & Parks Association

Six Flags Great Escape



- **Good Any Day Ticket ONLINE \$37.00 + tax (\$37.65) Rebate: \$3.00** Valid at The Great Escape for 1 visit any operating day during the 2024 season.
- **Mega Meal Deal ONLINE \$19.99 + tax (\$21.39)** Voucher Valid for a meal, snack, and fountain beverage
- **Parking ONLINE \$30.00 + tax (\$32.10)**
- **General Parking Drink Bottle ONLINE \$14.99 + tax (\$16.04)** Drink bottle includes unlimited fountain beverages during the date of redemption and discount refills all season long



Six Flags New England



- **Admission only ticket - \$40.99 (36.99)**
- **Mega Meal Deal (one meal, snack, and drink) - \$21.39 (19.99)**
- **Parking Pass - \$38 (\$38)**





VERMONT
Recreation & Parks Association

2024 VT

Maintenance Workshop

**TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 24**
Rutland Community Center



REGISTRATION

SUMMERAMA CAMP STAFF TRAINING

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2024
8:45AM - 1PM

Robert Miller Community Center
Burlington, VT

For over 40 years, the Vermont Recreation & Parks Association has hosted Summerama, a camp-specific training program for new and seasoned staff. The purpose of this workshop is to supplement in-house counselor orientations with a robust schedule of hands-on education sessions led by regional camp professionals. Summerama is the first step toward training your counselors, initiating a strong team bond for the summer and developing resilient staff. ■

MORE INFO

2023

VERMONT

STATE OF RECREATION SURVEY

REPORT COMING SOON!

36 DIFFERENT AGENCIES FROM ACROSS THE STATE REPRESENTED!

PROVIDES INSIGHT INTO HOW VERMONT'S RECREATION PROVIDERS MANAGE...

- PARKS
- TRAILS
- FACILITIES
- STAFF
- VOLUNTEERS
- PARTNERSHIPS
- PROGRAMS
- FINANCIALS
- GRANTS
- AND MORE!

EXAMINES CHANGES AND ASPIRATIONS FOR VERMONT'S RECREATION PROVIDERS – HOW HAVE WE GROWN, AND HOW WILL WE ADAPT?

VISIT VRPA.ORG TO LEARN MORE!





VRPA

JULY 20, 2024

ST. JOHNSBURY ACADEMY STATE TRACK & FIELD MEET



EVENT DETAILS

The VRPA in conjunction with St. Johnsbury Academy are excited to offer our in-person State Track & Field Meet again this coming summer! Stay tuned for more details and the registration packet!

AGES 7-14

Please complete [this commitment form](#) by June 14th, 2024. ■

- ✓ 100, 200, 400, 800
- ✓ Meter Dash
- ✓ 4x100 Meter Relay
- ✓ Long Jump
- ✓ Discuss & Shotput
- ✓ Hurdles
- ✓ Softball Throw

[Complete the commitment form today!](#)

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802-952-0030

vrpa.org

RECAP



80th Annual

VT CONFERENCE ON RECREATION & TRAILS SYMPOSIUM

growing stronger together

By Jessica Brodie

The 80th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation was held on September 26th-27th, 2023 at a new location for the first time in over a decade at the Killington Grand Hotel & Resort. The conference also featured a new partner, the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council, to offer a Trails Symposium track in conjunction with the annual conference on recreation. The 80th celebration was a huge success and we saw more attendees than we have since before Covid, which was a huge milestone for this event. We were thrilled to see again 141 attendees and 36 Exhibitors! The new location featured a more accessible floor plan, newer technology, and access to many recreational opportunities just out the door. Lake Morey Resort was always very kind to us, but a spike in food and beverage costs statewide prompted us to spend time seeking price quotes in the late fall of 2022 to compare pricing around the state. We found Killington to be more suitable for the needs of our conference this year to incorporate trails sessions and demos and feel it was a great success moving to the new venue. All of the staff at Killington were so accommodating to our conference

needs, and we are very thankful for their ongoing support. We were also very fortunate this year to still attract talented speakers from all over the country, including the states of N. Carolina, Utah, Tennessee, California, Massachusetts, and several other states. Attendees also came from all over Vermont, including many small communities and rural towns. Perhaps one of the highlights of the conference was keynote speaker Mirna Valerio ("The Mirnavator", an accomplished author, influencer, and runner. Mirna gave a compelling, heartfelt, and inspirational keynote about how Parks & Recreation is for every body! The exhibit hall at Killington was alive with action as well! Thank you to all the attendees for supporting our sponsors and exhibitors by visiting and engaging with them in the Vendor Hall. All of our exhibitors provided products to sample, information for guests, and great company. They also participated in several drawings of our raffle during the exhibit hall times, an interactive BINGO game, and our live entertainment later in the night as well. Thank you to all those that donate raffle



VERMONT
Recreation & Parks Association



items!

During the Wednesday evening exhibit hall we were able to enjoy an open bar sponsored by Northstar Fireworks, who also provided a spectacular fireworks display over Killington Mountain after dinner. Thank you so much to each of our exhibitors that took the time to join us again this year for our conference. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Do you know of a vendor who should be at our conference who wasn't? Please contact the 2024 Conference Chair with your ideas! For entertainment after the fireworks display this year, we had a super fun and competitive Trivia game sponsored by MyRec.com. There have been rumors of some teams already discussing their strategies for revenge at this year's conference because of how much fun they had.

To honor Theresa S. Brungardt this year we were able to hold our traditional Brungardt Awards Ceremony during Thursday's luncheon. Three awards were handed out for: "Friend Award", "Organization Award", & "Professional Award". Check out the descriptions of the winners in the newsletter on the awards pages for the winners details!

For our annual "Vermont's Finest Silent Auction" this year, we were able to offer it again through the online site "32 Auctions." This worked out so well last year that we opted to keep all bidding online again this year so that those unable to attend the conference in person would still be able to participate. It also made final payments and accounting much easier for our Silent Auction committee who put in so much time and energy to deliver a truly fantastic Silent Auction again this year.

We were able to raise over \$6,000 in proceeds from over \$8,000 in auction donations. Thanks to the fine work of conference committee member and auction organizer Joanne Putzier of Burlington, as well committee members Betsy Terry, Sherry Winnie, & Maggie Leugers the auction was a smashing success. Thank you again to all of our amazing donors that contributed items to the Silent Auction!

The Vermont Conference on Recreation is an event that continues to grow, evolve and change, meeting the needs of contemporary recreation professionals while honoring and respecting the conference's origins, history and roots. Planning is well underway for the 2024 conference and we look forward to seeing all of you there again this fall!

If you'd like to participate in the planning process or help at the conference itself, the planning committee can always use more volunteers. Contact Jessica Brodie, VRPA Executive Director at Jessica@vrpa.org if you are interested. Until September, have a great summer!

Sincerely,

2024 Conference Committee Members
& Jessica Brodie, VRPA Executive Director

2023 Exhibitors & Sponsors

Thank you very much to our conference exhibitors and sponsors. Please be sure to include them on your bid lists when you are purchasing services, supplies and equipment. We couldn't do half of what we do without their ongoing support.

- Ankored
- Athara Adventures
- Atlantic Golf and Turf
- Ben Shaffer Recreation Inc.
- Clivus New England, Inc.
- Cousineau Forest Products
- Durgin and Crowell Lumber Company
- Franklin Paint Company, Inc.
- Game Time Park & Playground Equipment/MRC
- Grassland Equipment & Irrigation
- Innova Champion Discs/ Disc Golf Vermont
- Kevin Smith Sports
- Kingdom Trails
- Kompan
- M.E. O'Brien & Sons, Inc.
- Mitchell Tees & Signs
- Musco Sports Lighting
- MyRec.com Recreation Software
- New England Outdoor Structures
- New England Park Association
- New England Recreation Group
- Northern Forest Center
- Northstar Fireworks
- Pettinelli & Associates
- Pioneer Athletics
- Productivity Vermont
- Read Custom Soils
- SLR Consulting
- SOLitude Lake Management
- Sport Court Northeast
- Turf Robotics / SWOZI
- UltiPlay Parks & Playgrounds, Inc
- USTA New England
- Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports
- VERMONT DISPLAY INC
- Vermont Systems
- Weston & Sampson

NRPA ANNUAL CONFERENCES

New Conference locations just announced for 2026, 2027, & 2028!



2026

In 2026, we're bringing the NRPA Annual Conference to Philadelphia, PA. On September 29 – October 1, 2026 Philly will see its second NRPA Annual Conference. Long overdue from our last conference in Philly in 1970. We can't wait to gather in this impressive city. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation protects over 10,200 acres of public land and waterways, and manages hundreds of recreation, environmental, and cultural centers. It's always an inspiring time at the largest gathering of the park and recreation community in the country, but this one is going to be special!

Pictured we have NRPA folks, Lauren Morisato, Bret Gaither, Ruth Wheeler, Autumn Saxton-Ross, and Kevin Roth, as well as Tim Herd, CEO Pennsylvania Recreation

and Park Society; Nikki Tourscher, Director, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society; Patrick Morgan, First Deputy Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation; Ken Lehr, President of the Board of PRPS; and Sudha Suryadevara, with the [Philadelphia Visitors Center Corporation](#), [Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society \(PRPS\)](#) Philadelphia Visitor Center Corporation.

> [Click here](#) to learn more about Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

> [Click here](#) to learn more info on upcoming locations

2027

We'll be taking the largest gathering in the country of park and recreation professionals to Salt Lake City in 2027!

On September 28th, 2027, thousands from the park and recreation community will meet up in Utah, a true hub for outdoor recreation. We were there just 14 years ago but the city has since seen significant hospitality growth, making it equally exciting to returning and new guests.

> [Click here](#) to learn more about Salt Lake City Parks & Recreation

2028

For the first time ever we are taking the NRPA Annual Conference to Columbus, OH!

We were so impressed with Columbus and are quite excited to lace up our shoes and walk the Scioto Mile with you all. Mark your calendars for September 26th to 28th, 2028. You won't want to miss this one! The unique shops, Districts, restaurants, convention center and convenient hotel package will provide a wonderful destination for the conference and all our participants.

> [Click here](#) to learn more about Columbus City & Parks Department

OVERVIEW

2024

October 8-10
Georgia World Congress Center (Atlanta, Georgia)
> Registration opens May 13, 2024

2025

September 16-18
Orange County Convention Center (Orlando, Florida)

2026

September 29 - October 1
Philadelphia Convention Center (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

2027

September 28-30
Salt Palace Convention Center (Salt Lake City, Utah)

2028

September 26-28
Greater Columbus Convention Center (Columbus, Ohio)



JULY IS PARKS & RECREATION MONTH!

[LEARN MORE](#)



Brett Leonard, Executive Committee Member of the VT Recreation and Parks Association, attended the State House in March for the passing of the Resolution designating Friday, July 19th as Parks & Recreation Professionals Day for another year.





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www.nrpa.org/CPRP

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- New Year's Eve
- Winter Carnivals
- Tree Lightings
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- Class Reunions
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- Homecomings
- Ski Races
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Burlington Bay, Independence Day Celebration




AQUATIC SAFETY
Research Group



With
Tom Griffiths



&
Rachel Griffiths

AQUATIC RISK MANAGEMENT Training

May 21st, 2024

12:00 - 3:00 pm

Virtual via Zoom

\$150 per participant

10 minimum - 40 max.

Course Details

- ✓ Shallow water blackout
- ✓ Real aquatic court cases
- ✓ Body Blindness
- ✓ 0.3 CEU's
- ✓ Certificate
- ✓ Group Swimming Policies

\$150 per person

More Information

REGISTER ONLINE

www.vrpa.org



This training is designed for Directors, Supervisors, and Managers. All seasonal and aquatic staff are welcome.



VERMONT
Recreation & Parks Association

SAVE THE DATE!



WHEN?
JANUARY
13TH-16TH 2025

WHERE?
ATTITASH GRAND
SUMMIT

75TH
ANNIVERSARY!



MORE INFO

Tennis is always open for everyone.

All through May, join in on the celebration and get out and play!

MAY IS NATIONAL TENNIS MONTH

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- Our Certified Playground Chips are free of hazardous substances and meet the ASTM F2075 standard for engineered wood fiber.
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NERTF

27th Annual
New England Regional Turfgrass Conference & Show

Show & Conference Pass Includes

- Admission to Trade Show • Educational Sessions
- Show Reception • Informative Presentations
- Lunch on Thursday • Morning Refreshments

Over 300 Turf Related Booths Await You...

For the 27th Year come and meet professionals on the cutting edge of turf management. See the latest in equipment, products and supplies. Join fellow lawn, golf, sports, landscape, municipal, cemetery and other turf industry professionals!

Trade Show Hours
 Wed., March 6 • 9am-5pm with *Live Auction & Reception*
 Thurs., March 7 • 9am-1pm

Educational Session Hours
 Tues. March 5 • 8am-5pm *Pre-Conference Seminars*
 Wed., March 6 • 8am-11am & 1pm-3:30pm
Golf, Sports Turf, Equipment Techs. Winter Injury (11am)
 Thurs., March 7 • 8-11am & 1pm-3:30pm
Golf, Sports Turf, Equipment Techs and Lawn Care/Landscape

Certification Credits
 Pesticide Applicators Recertification
 Credits offered for all NE States, NY and NY

Pre-Conference Seminars
 Tues., March 5 • 8am-5pm
 Call (401) 841-5490
 Visit website for details

Sports Turf Seminar
 Thurs., March 7 • 8:00am-10am
Understanding the Design and Construction Process for Turf Managers

NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL TURFGRASS FOUNDATION
 ESTABLISHED 1996

March 5-7, 2024
 Providence, RI

Watch your mail for your registration form or visit us online at www.NERTF.org
 Or call (401)841-5490



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KELSY MAXIE, Frisco, Colorado



Events and Classes



Campgrounds



Sports and Leagues



Mobile Solutions



Facilities and Equipment



Payment Processing



Shops and Concessions



Advanced Reporting



October 8-10, 2024
Atlanta Georgia
Georgia World Congress Center

Registration Opens May 13, 2024

MORE INFO



At Landscape Structures, we believe playstructures should complement their surroundings. But more than that, they should complement childhood. Every aesthetic choice is also backed by evidence to challenge, excite and energize kids of all abilities. Because play is an important part of shaping better adults. And that's what really matters. **Learn more by contacting your local playground consultant, O'Brien & Sons, Inc. at 508.359.4200.**

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Application

May 1, 2024 - April 30, 2025

APPLICATION & ANNUAL RENEWAL

Membership renewals are due May 1, 2024 - [Click here to renew online!](#)

- Align yourself with 400+ professionals & volunteers who operate with a shared mission, vision, and values.
- Access tools and resources to position recreation and parks as essential community services.
- Develop strategies to advance and thrive within your profession and as an agency/organization.
- Build your skills and your professional network too.
- Shape our profession today and tomorrow.

As a VRPA member, you will receive:

- Recreation Check-in: Weekly info & happenings, via email.
- The Advocate: Annual digital VRPA newsletter
- VRPA Membership Directory: Annual digital directory of member contact info.
- Discounted Fees: Conferences, workshops & event registration fees & advertising rates.
- Professional Assistance: In person & online.
- VRPA website: ccess the VRPA website at vrpa.org.

NAME _____ TITLE _____

ORGANIZATION _____

STREET ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

OFFICE PHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

CLASSIFICATION (See next page for classification descriptions)

Classification	No. of Persons	Membership Fee
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency (check one)		
<input type="radio"/> 3-5 staff	_____	\$340
<input type="radio"/> 6-8 staff	_____	\$590
<input type="radio"/> 9-11 staff	_____	\$760
<input type="radio"/> 12-19 staff	_____	\$1,010
<input type="radio"/> 20+ or more staff	_____	\$1,575
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Professional	1	\$105
<input type="checkbox"/> Board/Commission*	_____	\$150
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial (check one)**		
<input type="radio"/> 1 staff only	1	\$240
<input type="radio"/> 2-5 staff	2-5	\$360
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organization (1-4 staff)	1-4	\$175
<input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree (check one)	1	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Honorary Life	1	Complimentary

* (Includes ALL board/commission members) ** (inc. link from VRPA website)

Check enclosed Payment being mailed **Total amount due \$** _____

New memberships received in the months of Nov, Dec and Jan are half price. New memberships received in the last three months of our fiscal year (Feb, March and April) are full price and include the following year membership also.

MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

Would you like to become more involved with VRPA? Listed below are the various VRPA committees. Please check if you are interested and someone will contact you. Thank you for your interest!

- Membership
- Newsletter
- Performance Showcase
- Summerama
- Executive Committee
- Track & Field
- Awards
- Maintenance Workshop
- State Conference
- Northern NE Conference
- Other ways you'd like to help: _____

Is there a VRPA member who influenced your decision to join? If yes, who? _____

Are you a member of NRPA? No Yes

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