



2026 Outdoor Recreation Summit - Call for Session Proposals

Submission Deadline

Please submit your session proposal via [Google Form](#) by 11:59 pm on **Friday, June 1, 2026**. If you have questions, please contact outdoorrec.summit@maryland.gov.

Background

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources Office of Outdoor Recreation will host the [3rd Annual Outdoor Recreation Summit](#) on **September 29-October 1, 2026**, in **Ocean City, Maryland**. The Summit will convene 200+ recreationists, land managers, tourism professionals, business owners, entrepreneurs, and advocates for three days of connection, learning, exploration, and action.

The goals of the Summit are to:

1. Promote the benefits of recreation for stewardship, community-building, health, and the economy.
2. Highlight the unique recreational experiences across Maryland, with a focus on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Atlantic Seashore, and Coastal Bays, where this year's Summit will be held.
3. Strengthen Maryland's outdoor recreation community, sparking collaboration and knowledge sharing to amplify the benefits of recreation and expand access to the outdoors.

Session Tracks

- **Recreation with Purpose: Stewardship and Sustainability** - *This track explores how outdoor recreation can support conservation and sustainability. Sessions may cover best practices for building, using, and managing outdoor spaces, as well as sustainable recreation models and community engagement strategies that inspire environmental stewardship.*
- **Outdoors for All: Health, Access, and Community** - *This track focuses on the social and health benefits of outdoor recreation. Topics may include equitable access to nature, inclusive infrastructure and programming, mental and physical health outcomes, and community-building through shared outdoor experiences.*
- **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

- A. Traditional Presentation (30 or 60 minutes)** - *An informative session with clear learning objectives. May include slides, a panel format, hands-on learning, or outdoor elements where appropriate. There will be an option to lead part or all of a session outdoors - outdoor sessions are strongly encouraged!*
- B. Lightning Presentation (5 minutes)** - *A quick, impactful presentation that sparks ideas, shares innovations, or highlights success.*

- C. Outdoor Excursion (1-3 hours)** - *A skill-building field trip experience that highlights an outdoor recreation activity or site on the Eastern Shore. Excursions may run during breakout sessions or as optional outings. Previous examples of excursions include a sunrise bird-watching hike, a guided kayak paddle, rock climbing instruction, and group bike rides.*
- D. Facilitated Networking or Working Session (30-90 minutes)** - *An informal, purpose-driven workshop designed to foster peer-to-peer exchange around a specific theme, geography, affinity/interest group, or goal. This could include facilitated networking (indoors or outdoors), affinity group meet-ups, or co-working time to draft plans or focus on group initiatives. These sessions could run during breakout sessions or as optional outings before or after the Summit.*

Presentation Guidelines

The Summit attracts a diverse audience, including land and resource managers, outdoor recreation advocates and enthusiasts, business owners, entrepreneurs, 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 and goals, focusing on new ideas, lessons learned, and real-world challenges and solutions.

Presenter Expectations

- The Summit is fully in-person; all presenters must attend on site.
- Presenters will receive complimentary registration for the day of their presentation, with an option to register for additional days at a discounted rate.

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

Each proposal should include the following information:

- **Primary Contact** - Name and contact details for the session lead.
- **Session Title** (10 words or fewer)
- **Session Format** - Select your proposed format - see descriptions above.
 - Traditional Presentation
 - Lightning Session
 - Outdoor Excursion
 - Facilitated Networking or Working Session
- **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 Description and Details** - Describe your session and provide details such as A/V and equipment needs, location (indoor or outdoor), learning outcomes, and target audience.
- **Additional Presenters** - If applicable, please include the name, affiliated organization, and email address for each additional presenter.

- **Past Participation** - Did any of the proposed presenters present at the 2024 or 2025 Summits?
- **Presenter Agreement** - Please confirm that all presenters agree to:
 - Attend and present in person.
 - 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, DNR's Flickr, and/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 tracks and goals,
- Originality and overall quality of the proposed session,
- Inclusion of multiple perspectives, and
- Applicability across audiences and regions.

The committee aims to curate a balanced mix of topics, audiences, and geographic representation. Sessions with overlapping themes may be combined or adjusted.

Submission Details

If your proposal is selected, you will be notified by **July 1, 2026**. For any questions about the submission process, please contact us at outdoorrec.summit@maryland.gov.