16th Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference

connecting with parks

March 27, 2017
Atlanta Botanical Garden

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16th Annual
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9:00 – 10:20 AM  Day Hall  Welcome + Opening Plenary Session
10:40 AM – 12:00 PM  Various Locations  Morning Breakout Sessions
12:00 – 12:50 PM  Day Hall  Lunch
12:50 – 2:00 PM  Day Hall  Mid-day Plenary Session
2:20 – 3:40 PM  Various Locations  Afternoon Breakout Sessions
4:00 – 5:00 PM  Day Hall  Closing Plenary Session + Remarks
5:00 PM  Mershon Hall  Reception / Networking
Welcome to the 16th annual parks & greenspace conference

Fellow Park Advocate,

Recently, we have reached a new level of convergence between parks and a dizzying array of related issues. This is an ideal time to explore the world we live in through the lens of this year’s conference theme, Connecting with Parks.

As the City of Atlanta plans for greater density, the need for open space and connections to nature has become clear. The Atlanta City Design project, led by Commissioner Tim Keane to guide the city’s growth, recognizes the powerful role parks and our natural world can play in maintaining Atlanta’s quality of life in the face of increasing population density.

However, great parks do so much more than just connect us to the natural environment. For example, by incorporating innovative green infrastructure elements in the development of new parks, park planning and watershed management intersect to create parks that will address critical stormwater and flooding problems while also providing needed community greenspace. We’re seeing this strategy taken locally through the creation of several new parks on Atlanta’s Westside, including Lindsay Street Park, Boone Park West and Cook Park.

Furthermore, there is a growing interest in metropolitan regions across the country to create transportation systems that incorporate the connective nature of trails to get people to where they want to go. The Atlanta BeltLine and PATH trails in effect serve as linear parks, connecting our neighborhoods together and making them stronger. What’s more, as our trail network expands and becomes more interconnected, the accessibility to our parks increases, creating more opportunity for the park itself to become the destination.

Today’s conference offers sessions that touch upon these issues as well as a number of additional topics that illustrate how parks are intricately connected with so much of our urban lives: with our health, jobs, sense of place, economic growth, social equity, housing, history and more.

I encourage you to connect with parks in new ways and to broaden your understanding of the many ways in which they enrich our communities. Parks are the places where Atlantans, and all the issues we care about, come together. Today, connect with fellow park enthusiasts, our local and out-of-town speakers and all of our sponsors and partners that help to make this amazing day possible.

Thank you for being here and for all you do to connect with parks!

Michael Halicki
Executive Director, Park Pride

Parks connect communities.

Parks connect us to nature. (Blue Heron Nature Preserve, photo credit: Bill Boley)
Don’t be shy! Ask a Park Pride staff member or volunteer for assistance navigating the conference.

join the conversation

Follow @parkpride on Twitter.

Use the event hashtag: #parkpride

recycling

The Atlanta Botanical Garden uses a single-stream recycling program to sort, recycle and compost waste. For more information, contact the Atlanta Botanical Garden staff.
program | connecting with parks

8:00 – 9:00 AM  Registration + Continental Breakfast
  Location:  Breakfast and coffee served in Day Hall

9:00 – 10:20 AM  Welcome + Opening Plenary Session
  Location:  Day Hall
  Sponsor:  Cox Conserves / Cox Enterprises

Featured Speakers
  9:10 AM  Connecting with Parks in Atlanta
  Moderator:  Nancy Rigby, President, Cox Foundations
  Panel:
  Rob Brawner, Executive Director, Atlanta BeltLine Partnership
  Becky Katz, Chief Bicycle Officer, City of Atlanta
  Ed McBrayer, Executive Director, PATH Foundation
  Paul Morris, President & CEO, Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.

Join us as we open our conversation on “Connecting with Parks” with local leaders. PATH, the Atlanta BeltLine and bicycles are shaping connections to parks and to each other. Our featured speakers will share reflections on connectivity and its importance to the future of our city.

10:20 – 10:40 AM  Transition to Breakout Sessions

Sessions take place in locations throughout the Atlanta Botanical Garden and will begin promptly. Please see the map on Page 3 for reference. Park Pride staff and volunteers are available to guide you.

10:40 – 12:00 PM  Morning Breakout Sessions

•  **Doubling Up**: Innovative Parks Making the Most of Public Infrastructure and the Spaces In-between
  Location:  Day Hall
  Panel:
  Connie Chung, Director, HR&A Advisors
  Robert Rogers, Partner, Rogers Partners Architects + Urban Designers
  Thomas Woltz, Principal, Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects

Public and civic infrastructure, such as highways, rail, power lines and bridges provide essential services for the healthy functioning of urban life. With public space at a premium, infrastructure can also play double-duty by creating new opportunities for previously unimagined open spaces on top, underneath and all around. This expert panel, featuring the team leading the design and planning for the "Buckhead Park over GA 400," will explore the ways in which infrastructure is enabling new types of public space and multi-layered function through examples from New York, Florida, Texas, California and here in Atlanta.
• From Space to Place: Successful Placemaking in Atlanta
  
  **Location:** Mershon Hall
  
  **Moderator:** Elena Madison, Vice President, Project for Public Spaces
  
  **Panel:**
  - Stephen Causby, Mattie Freeland Coordinator, Friends of Mattie Freeland Park
  - Wilma Sothern, Vice President of Marketing, Central Atlanta Progress
  - Suganthi Simon, Westside Program Officer, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
  
  Project for Public Spaces will inspire you with the ideas and practice of “placemaking” and the steps to bring about fundamental change in your community. This presentation highlights the collaborative process of “placemaking,” using efforts at the heart of downtown Atlanta and Atlanta’s Westside as examples, and will illustrate how the activation of great public spaces can bring life, excitement and a sense of belonging to a community.

• A Rediscovery of Our Urban Waterfronts
  
  **Location:** Georgia-Pacific Classroom
  
  **Speakers:**
  - Debra Edelson, Executive Director, Emerald Corridor Foundation
  - Betsy Eggers, Board Chair, Peachtree Creek Greenway
  - Kimberly Estep, Executive Director, South Fork Conservancy
  - Jodi Mansbach, Board Chair, Chattahoochee NOW
  
  Our region’s waterways are experiencing a renaissance as environmental groups, residents and developers see their potential to serve as natural pathways that link communities, greenspaces and regions together. Learn about the struggles and successes of several local organizations that work to transform neglected urban waterfronts into thriving natural habitats and build connections to the surrounding communities, creating vibrant gathering spaces throughout Georgia.

• Greening Critical Infrastructure
  
  **Location:** Gardenhouse Workshop
  
  **Speakers:**
  - Dr. Kari Watkins, Professor, Georgia Institute of Technology
  - Nico Boyd, Graduate Research Assistant, Georgia Institute of Technology
  - David Ederer, PhD Student, Georgia Institute of Technology
  - Diane Silva, Landscape Architect, The Trust for Public Land
  - Leselle Vincent, Research Engineer, Georgia Institute of Technology
  
  We all know that parks are great places to meet with friends and neighbors, and that a great park has a positive impact on property values. But what are we missing? This panel will present research on the less obvious impacts of parks that make them critical infrastructure in urban environments, such as the successful uses of parks as green transportation corridors and the impact greenspace has on stormwater management, jobs and public health.

Don your plaid, wrangle your friends, and put your park passion to work at Park Pride’s fall-and-plaid-themed volunteer experience! Team up to raise funds for Park Pride and transform an Atlanta park in a matter of hours. “Out-plaid” your friends, compete with other teams to win prizes, and celebrate the difference you’ve made with a picnic in the park!

**Learn more and register:**

plaidpalooza.causevox.com

November 4th, 2017
Historic 4th Ward Park
Emerging Trends in Connecting Parks and Health
Location: Turner Theater in Hardin Visitor Center
Speakers: David Barth, PhD, President, Barth Associates, LLC
Rob Brawner, Executive Director, Atlanta BeltLine Partnership
Micah Lipscomb, Landscape Architect, Perkins + Will

The health benefits of parks and greenspaces are well-documented. As new research continues to strengthen the park / health connection, emerging trends such as public / private partnerships, are beginning to blur the lines between parks and health care facilities. This session focuses on how both public and private open spaces can be planned and designed to provide therapy, health and wellness benefits based on the latest findings from both practice and research.

Birds, Bees + Trees (walking tour)
Location: Departs from Hardin Visitor Center lobby (limited to first 30 participants!)
Guides: Adam Betuel, Director of Conservation, Atlanta Audubon Society
Melina Lozano Duran, Pollinator Garden Coordinator, Atlanta Botanical Garden
Brian Williams, Forest Restoration & Prairie Restoration Program Manager, Trees Atlanta

If you just want to take a moment and enjoy spring in Atlanta, join three scientists as they guide participants on a walking tour to see our urban birds, bees and trees. These guides will highlight the amazing diversity of birds found in our urban parks, stretch your concept of bees and other pollinators in urban areas, and help you to appreciate Atlanta’s urban forests.

Championing Connectivity & Relay, Atlanta’s Bike Share Program (morning + afternoon leisurely bike ride session)
Location: Departs from front of Mershon Hall (limited to first eight participants!)
Guides: Ambar Johnson, Atlanta Bike Share Champion
James Tyler, Atlanta Bike Share Champion

Guides Ambar and James, Atlanta Bike Share Champions, are part of a new initiative on Atlanta’s Westside to build a diverse base of bike share users. Participants will enjoy a leisurely ride (on Atlanta’s friendly blue bike share bikes!) through Piedmont Park while learning about how both parks and the bike share program have become essential elements of connectivity and community building. (Relay bikes and helmets provided, or if you biked to the conference, feel free to ride your own!)

12:00 – 12:50 PM
Picnic Lunch
Location: Day Hall
12:50 – 2:00 PM  Mid-Day Plenary Session

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<th>Time</th>
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Keynote Address

1:10 PM  How Parks Develop Citizenship in a Disconnected World

Speaker:  Audrey Peterman, Author, Legacy on the Land: A Black Couple Discovers Our National Inheritance and Tells Why Every American Should Care

Parks and public lands are the glue that holds our cities, and thereby country, together. How can we utilize parks and open spaces to begin a conversation about our commonalities and civic engagement? Audrey Peterman, a nationally recognized leader in the movement to make America’s parks—national, state and urban—relevant to every demographic group in our population, will inspire with her strategies and success stories of nurturing citizenship and civic pride through engagement in parks.

afternoon program continued on page 8
2:00 – 2:20 PM  Transition to Breakout Sessions

Sessions take place in locations throughout the Atlanta Botanical Garden and will begin promptly. Please see the map on Page 3 for reference. Park Pride staff and volunteers are available to guide you.

2:20 – 3:40 PM  Afternoon Breakout Sessions

• Government Powerhouse Panel on Connectivity
  Location:  Day Hall
  Moderator:  Stephanie Stuckey, Chief Resilience Officer, City of Atlanta, Office of Sustainability
  Panel:  Faye DiMassimo, Renew Atlanta Infrastructure Program General Manager, City of Atlanta, Dept. of Public Works
          Tim Keane, Commissioner, City of Atlanta, Dept. of Planning & Community Development
          Amy Phuong, Commissioner, City of Atlanta, Dept. of Parks & Recreation
          Todd Hill, Watershed Director, City of Atlanta, Dept. of Watershed Management

Over the past year, leaders within the City of Atlanta have made great strides in breaking the silos that have kept departments isolated. These inspiring government leaders share stories of success and partnership as they have leveraged resources and expertise across departments. Come learn how the multiple benefits of parks, greenspace and trails are being integrated into stormwater management, transportation and an innovative approach to city-wide planning.

• Realizing the Transformational Impact of Urban Trails: An Atlanta BeltLine Case Study
  Location:  Mershon Hall
  Moderator:  Candace Damon, Vice Chairman, HR&A Advisors
  Panel:  James Alexander, Housing Policy and Development Director, Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.
          Jerald Mitchell, Director of Economic Development, Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.
          Stan Wall, Partner, HR&A Advisors

It’s well known that trails provide places for recreation, alternative modes of transportation and access to nature. In addition, for the last decade, policy makers have focused on the economic value trails create, principally by augmenting tourism and boosting surrounding real estate value. Increasing attention to equity has illuminated a key role that parks and trails can play in enabling balanced economic development and creating new spaces for affordable housing. This panel, featuring national experts in open space development and affordable housing, will highlight the Atlanta BeltLine as a case study of how trails can foster equitable economic growth. Panelists will discuss equity as the new measure of success for urban open spaces.
• Socially Speaking: The Well-Being Benefits of Parks

Location: Georgia-Pacific Classroom

Speakers: Na’Taki Osborne Jelks, Board Chair, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance
          Viniece Jennings, PhD, Research Scientist, USDA Forest Service
          Audrey Peterman, Author and President & Co-Founder of Earthwise Productions

A powerful link exists between greenspace and physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. All people deserve equal access to these benefits. This session will explore the health benefits of parks and how they can be maximized through thoughtful park programming and advocacy efforts. The panel, composed of local and nationally recognized speakers, will also discuss strategies to increase minority and underserved community access to greenspace.

• Concept to Construct: Overcoming the Challenges of Park and Trail Development

Location: Gardenhouse Workshop

Moderator: Andrew Lindsay, President, Astra Group, Inc.

Panel: Allen Eison, Vice President of Operations, Astra Group, Inc.
       Marcie Moore, Manager of Greenways Program, Gwinnett County Government
       Pete Pelligrini, Project Manager, PATH Foundation
       Lauren Standish, Associate, HGOR

A panel of industry experts will share lessons learned and best practices for the four critical phases of trail and park development—vision, concept, construction and maintenance. The panelists will examine the differences between urban and suburban projects and how context affects logistical, regulatory and budgetary considerations.

• Three Parks and Their Places within History

Location: Turner Theater in Hardin Visitor Center

Moderator: Neale Nickels, Director of Preservation, Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation

Panel: CJ Jackson, Executive Director, Conservancy at Historic Washington Park
       Nancy Love, Chair, Friends of Frazier-Rowe Park
       David Moore, Executive Director, Historic Oakland Foundation

Parks have taken many forms throughout history—pastoral places for restorative promenades, places of remembrance and memorial, and places for active play and family gatherings. This talk will look at the roles that local parks have played to bridge social, economic and racial divides. Panelists will also discuss how expectations of parks have changed over time and highlight the roles that parks continue to play today as connectors within communities.
• Learning to Connect – Parks are classrooms! (walking tour)
  Location: Departs from Hardin Visitor Center lobby (limited to first 30 participants!)
  Guides: Eli Dickerson, Ecologist, Fernbank Museum of Natural History
  Bob Sargent, Mentor Advisory Board, Race 4 Birds Foundation
  Adam Roades, Interpretive Graphic Designer, Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation

Parks introduce students to the natural world and provide places to connect to nature. Join three seasoned environmental educators as they demonstrate a range of park programming that highlights the richness of urban ecosystems. This walking tour will give you a chance to experience the latest ideas in environmental education and see if it might be right for your park!

• Championing Connectivity & Relay, Atlanta’s Bike Share Program (morning + afternoon leisurely bike ride session)
  Location: Departs from front of Mershon Hall (limited to first eight participants!)
  Guides: Ambar Johnson, Atlanta Bike Share Champion
  James Tyler, Atlanta Bike Share Champion

Guides Ambar and James, Atlanta Bike Share Champions, are part of a new initiative on Atlanta’s Westside to build a diverse base of bike share users. Participants will enjoy a leisurely ride (on Atlanta’s friendly blue bike share bikes!) through Piedmont Park while learning about how both parks and the bike share program have become essential elements of connectivity and community building. (Relay bikes and helmets provided, or if you biked to the conference, feel free to ride your own!)

3:40 – 4:00 PM  Transition to Closing Plenary Session
The closing session will begin promptly in Day Hall. Please see the map on page 3 for reference.

4:00 – 5:00 PM  Closing Plenary Session + Remarks
  Location: Day Hall
  Sponsor: The Home Depot Foundation

  4:00 PM  Announcement of 2018 Conference Theme

  Keynote Address
  4:10 PM  People Habitat: Eight Ways to Think About Greener, Healthier Cities
  Speaker: Kaid Benfield, Author, People Habitat: 25 Ways to Think about Greener, Healthier Cities

Healthy parks require a healthy context—cities that are strong, environmentally sensitive and attractive. But what are the key ingredients of a green and healthy “people habitat”? Walkability helps, as does thoughtful use of nature inside cities. Respect for community history and character is important, too. Ultimately, it comes down to creating and nurturing places that we can love.

5:00 PM  Reception
  Location: Mershon Hall
  Sponsor: Ed Castro Landscape
keynote speakers

Kaid Benfield is one of the nation’s foremost authorities on how to make cities, towns, and neighborhoods work better for both people and the environment. Author of People Habitat: 25 Ways to Think about Greener, Healthier Cities, he serves as senior counsel for environmental strategies at PlaceMakers LLC, a city planning consultancy. Mr. Benfield is also a founder and board member of Smart Growth America, a nationwide coalition working on revitalizing cities, building better neighborhoods and stopping the spread of suburban sprawl.

Audrey Peterman, President of Earthwise Productions, is a national leader in the movement to make America’s public lands relevant to everybody, believing they are the glue that holds our country together. She co-authored Legacy on the Land: A Black Couple Discovers Our National Inheritance and Tells Why Every American Should Care. Ms. Peterman passionately speaks across the country about ways that organizations and public land management agencies can become more inclusive of diverse populations. She has served on the board of the National Parks Conservation Association and Greening Youth Foundation, and is a founding member of the Atlanta-based nonprofit Keeping It Wild.

featured speakers

Rob Brawner is the Executive Director for the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership, leading its broad-based, collaborative focus on ensuring the promise of stronger communities and equitable benefit to the 45 Atlanta BeltLine neighborhoods and beyond. His responsibilities include the development and implementation of the Partnership’s strategic plan, capital and operational fundraising, and stewardship of the private and philanthropic funds that support the construction of the project.

Becky Katz is the City of Atlanta’s first Chief Bicycle Officer, working with the public and across city and state departments to make Atlanta safer, easier and better by bike. Previously Park Pride’s Park Visioning and Grants Manager, she has intimate knowledge of the intersection of parks and bicycling to create and strengthen community connections.

In 1991, Ed McBrayer helped found the PATH Foundation, a nonprofit organization with a mission of connecting the Atlanta region with a network of trails in response to the city’s need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities during the Olympics. PATH has built over 250 miles of trails in the region, inspiring numerous jurisdictions nationwide to form public-private partnerships for the purpose of trail construction.

Paul Morris is President & CEO of Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., where he leads one of the largest redevelopment initiatives in the United States. This $4.8 billion program provides parks, trails and transit linking mixed-use development and affordable housing to achieve sustainable revitalization of 45 in-town neighborhoods. Mr. Morris’ career has spanned 25 U.S. states, including serving as Deputy Secretary for North Carolina’s Department of Transportation.

As President of Cox Foundations, Nancy Rigby oversees the grants and management of six Cox family-related foundations. The James M. Cox Foundation concentrates its community support in several priority areas, including: conservation and environment; early childhood education; empowering families and individuals for success; and health. The Foundation is a funder of both PATH and the Atlanta BeltLine. Ms. Rigby has been an advisor to the PATH Foundation and the Atlanta BeltLine pre-dating her time at the Foundation.
Great parks exist through the efforts of leaders who, for the greener good of our city, nurture and strengthen the bond between parks and communities. Park Pride's Inspiration Awards honor these leaders:

**Rochelle Callender**
Rochelle Callender has a lifelong interest in parks. Growing up in Minnesota, where lakes and parks set the standard for quality of life, she wanted to bring those positive experiences to the children, seniors and families of her community through Flat Shoals Park. So when she met her county commissioner at a community clean-up, she began to advocate. Her persistence and unwillingness to take “no” for an answer led to a great partnership with DeKalb County leadership and neighbors. Through Rochelle’s commitment, tenacity and proactive leadership, Flat Shoals Park has grown and developed into a great community asset!

**Jesse Grossman**
Jesse Grossman believes in the power of volunteering, not just to make a difference in a place, but also to bring people together. In 2013, he founded Community Bucket, a platform that combines volunteering and meeting new friends all while making our city a better place to live. Recognizing that great parks are vital components of thriving communities, Jesse has brought over a thousand enthusiastic volunteers into parks to complete needed park projects and built a passionate cohort of volunteers and young leaders who understand the value of parks in our lives.

**Nancy Jones**
Without Nancy Jones, there would be no Blue Heron Nature Preserve. This kindergarten teacher created the Preserve in the early 2000s after negotiating a seven-acre conservation easement from a developer in her North Buckhead neighborhood. She has since expanded the Preserve to over 31 permanently protected acres, making it the largest nature preserve in North Atlanta. Nancy retired in 2016, but her legacy and the great work of Blue Heron Nature Preserve will continue.

**Barbara Marin**
Known by children as “Mrs. Butterfly,” Barbara Marin is a powerful force for change in her neighborhood! In 2010, realizing that her community lacked a public space for neighbors to get to know each other, she became the champion of an idea to convert an abandoned lot into a park and formed a Friends of the Park group to make Springbrook Park a reality. Barbara would not be deterred by the daunting process of planning a park from scratch; she identified neighbors who volunteered to facilitate community meetings and produced park master plans through consensus. And in 2015, Springbrook Park opened to much fanfare!

**Mother Mamie Moore**
Mother Mamie Moore represents the very best of leadership in greenspace and community advocacy on Atlanta’s Westside. As the primary advocate for Lindsay Street Park, Mother Moore is tireless in her efforts to be a good steward of this first park in English Avenue. Beyond being the primary "eyes on the park" at Lindsay Street Park and leader of the Friends group, Mother Moore is an important voice in ongoing park planning efforts on the Westside, including Boone Park West and Cook Park. She is a vocal advocate when it comes to neighborhood involvement in park planning and consistently shows up at public meetings to ensure that community is heard and informed every step of the way.
HR&A Advisors is an economic and real estate consulting firm at the leading edge of a movement to design, operate, program and fund the development of new and revitalized urban open spaces. We have more than three decades of experience contributing to the planning and development of parks, plazas, streetscapes, and other urban spaces. We view these spaces as both public amenities and catalysts of economic development. Our work helps communities develop these civic assets by making strategic connections among parks, other civic assets, and private business. We quantify the value of those connections using robust, data-driven analysis, and demonstrate how that new value can be used to fund open space revitalization, programming, and maintenance.

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Join Us to Discuss...

**Planning for Resilient Parks:** As we create new parks, how are we planning with a resilience lens? How are we optimizing our existing network of parks, greenspaces and trails to withstand and recover from disruptive events as well as more gradual changes (e.g. flooding events versus increased use associated with growth)? How can urban parks be designed to address the stresses of a changing climate? How do we ensure a funding stream for parks that withstands economic downturns and supports a city's increasing need for great parks as it grows?

**Parks and Community Resilience:** How can we strengthen parks' role in creating resilient communities? What role do parks play in shaping and enhancing a neighborhood's identity? How do well-activated and maintained parks deter crime and increase neighborhood cohesion? As our city and region grows, how do we plan for welcoming parks as part of inclusive communities?

**Parks and the Resilience of the Built Environment:** How can we maximize parks' impact on reducing the urban heat island effect? In what ways can parks, greenspaces and trails help to alleviate the stresses of increased urban density? How can parks create resilient cities by reducing the effects of flooding and drought through rain gardens, bioswales and other green infrastructure? What role do parks play in creating sustainable cities?

**Parks and Ecological Resilience:** How can parks support ecological networks that are stressed or compromised? How can pollinator gardens and animal habitats in parks enhance the natural world around us? How can we maximize the role trails play not just as transportation corridors for walking, biking and transit, but also as natural corridors that support the ecology of our city?

Visit [www.parkpride.org/conference](http://www.parkpride.org/conference) to tell us your interests and ideas, and to suggest session topics!

*Sponsorship opportunities are available.*

Contact Jane Zoellick for more information. Jane@parkpride.org or 404-546-6855.
thank you

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Learn more at: www.coxconserves.com