



CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

Resilient Parks
Resilient Communities

2026
parks & greenspace
CONFERENCE

SUBMISSION
DEADLINE:
NOV 21, 2025

CONFERENCE DATE
MARCH 23
2026

Park Pride is accepting proposals for the **25th Annual Parks & Greenspace Conference**, to be held at the Atlanta Botanical Garden on **Monday, March 23, 2026**. This year's conference will focus on the theme "Resilient Parks, Resilient Communities." Successful proposals will explore one or more of the focus areas listed on the following page.

Conference Background

What do resilient parks have to do with resilient communities? Resilience is the ability to bounce back quickly after stressful events. We've seen a few of those lately: sudden severe storms, surprise flooding, unrelenting droughts, boiling heat that causes illness and even death. We've seen hurricanes hundreds of miles inland and in the not so distant past, we dealt with a life-altering pandemic. We're also feeling escalating economic and political uncertainty. All of these unprecedented events impact the people who turn to parks for solace, joy, wellness, and social cohesion.

With "Resilient Parks, Resilient Communities" as our guide, this conference will explore how creating resilient parks sets the stage for resilient communities. Parks offer the inherent ability to absorb stormwater and sequester carbon; they offer a cooling tree canopy to ease the heat. Parks provide places to gather, relax, and be part of our communities. This Conference will focus on innovative sessions that uplift nature-based solutions, grassroots leadership, and community participation to meet today's challenges and fortify us for the future.

Target Audience

Park Pride's annual conference attracts approximately 500 park professionals and enthusiasts.

Please consider the following audiences when developing your proposals:

- **Park Advocate/Community Member**
- **Policy Makers/Municipality Representatives**
- **Design Professionals/Planners**

Submission & Selection Process

SUBMISSIONS DUE:

Monday, November 21, 2025, by 5:00 pm

SUBMIT ONLINE:

parkpride.org/conference

Each accepted presenter will receive complimentary registration to the 2026 Conference. Submission of a proposal represents an agreement to attend and present the proposed session if it is accepted. Any changes to speakers or content requires permission from Park Pride and may require re-evaluation for acceptance.

Submissions are reviewed and selected by Park Pride staff. Submitters may be asked for clarification or to make changes to their session based on feedback from the selection process. Presentations should not have a commercial message for an organization or business or be perceived as a "sales pitch." Park Pride reserves the right to reject proposals. We evaluate proposals by the following criteria:

- **Appropriateness of the content to the conference theme and to one or more of the focus areas**
- **Contribution to the body of knowledge on parks**
- **Interest, applicability, innovation, and breadth of presentation appeal**
- **Diversity of groups/organizations represented**

For questions about the conference or your proposal submission, please contact Park Pride at **conference@parkpride.org**



Session Types	Duration	Format
Panel	60 mins including Q&A	Moderated discussion with 2 to 3 speakers max
Workshop	60 mins	Interactive Workshop or Demonstration
Outdoor Presentation	60 mins	In the Atlanta Botanical Garden grounds

Approximately 8-12 proposals will be accepted for the panel sessions, workshops, and outdoor presentations. Park Pride may request that similar or complementary proposals be combined into panels for a more diverse dialogue.

Resilient Parks, Resilient Communities

FOCUS AREAS

Panels, workshops/demonstrations, and outdoor sessions should focus on one or more of the following areas:

What would Nature do?

With nature as inspiration, designers and engineers are increasingly turning to the efficiencies of “nature-based solutions” and away from design standards that demand high levels of energy to create, transport, and maintain, then leave behind nonreusable and possibly harmful waste products. Parks play a significant role in these solutions, offering natural materials and facilities for managing stormwater and flooding, cooling urban heat islands, and even, as we learned in a recent global pandemic, maintaining social connections and individual health.

Presentations could focus on

- Nature-based design solutions within parks that are lessening storm, flooding, or heat-related stressors
- The economic benefits and challenges of nature-based solutions and strategies to ease the transition
- How increasing and protecting biodiversity can increase resilience

Governing an Urban Ecosystem

Our local governments keep our cities, towns, and counties safe, well-maintained, and functioning smoothly. Just as ecosystems rely on natural processes to maintain function—well-organized and responsive public services are essential to livable cities. Our cities, our “urban ecosystems,” are changing rapidly, with higher populations and density, housing shortages, and higher utility and service demands. How can local governments evolve to meet these changing needs?

Presentations could focus on

- Changes in park designs, materials, management, maintenance, or interdepartmental collaboration to prepare for and recover faster from stressful events
- Forward-thinking planning and partnerships to prepare parks and greenspaces for roles in city-wide resilience

Community Resilience

The third focus area is an invitation to communities, far and wide. Park Pride’s mission is to engage communities to activate the power of parks. That means listening to communities and uplifting people, parks, and greenspaces that are making a difference to neighborhood resilience—the ability, not only bounce back after stressful events, but also to stand firm and thrive whatever the “storm.” Involvement in community parks creates and supports resilient neighborhoods, by creating places where families can make investments, and where they’ll be part of a strong social network of support. One aspect of resilience that we now understand is the importance of social connections to neighborhood cohesiveness.

Presentations could focus on

- Community members on the front line, educating and building partnerships to uplift neighborhood resilience
- Hands-on workshops to inspire and increase community action, participation, and dialogue
- Park stories of resilience and fortitude

