

MORNING SESSIONS

Select a session for 10:20 am – 11:20 am

Sessions locations are **color-coded to match the map** on the front of this program.

DAY HALL

Building Climate Resilient ATL

Atlanta's Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Resilience is developing Climate Resilient ATL, the city's first community-led, data-driven Climate Resilience Action Plan. Hear more about how resilient parks support resilient communities when building healthy, connected, and climate-resilient neighborhoods.

Speakers

Chandra Farley,
Mayor's Office of
Sustainability and
Resilience, City of
Atlanta
J. Olu Baiyewu,
City of Atlanta
LaToria Whitehead,
LS Whitehead Group

GARDENHOUSE, GALLERY CLASSROOM

From Metrics to Meaning: Using Community Engagement to Shape Purposeful Park Design

Landscape architects and a community engagement expert explore how humanizing data fosters connection and shapes beloved parks. Drawing on work in across the U.S., speakers will share how building trust, elevating voices, and advancing equity result in culturally relevant, better-loved parks.

Speakers

Mandi Fung,
DAVID RUBIN Land
Collective
Candy Isabel,
Khamai Strategies
Brian Staresnick,
DAVID RUBIN Land
Collective

GARDENHOUSE, ORCHID ROOM

Unlocking Park Power: Using the Landscape Performance Series to Measure What Matters

Landscape Performance Series (LPS) is a national initiative helping practitioners measure and communicate the environmental, social, and economic benefits of built landscapes. Learn how the LPS case studies, metrics, and evaluation tools can be applied to projects.

Speakers

Adam Williamson,
TSW Design
Peyton Peterson,
TSW Design
Samantha Rosado,
Parks & Recreation,
City of Douglasville, GA

GARDENHOUSE WORKSHOP (LOWER LEVEL)

Ecological Resilience in Atlanta

Hear from local experts on Atlanta's urban ecosystems—why they matter locally and statewide, how wildlife relies on our natural areas and what they show us about resilience, and ways to better manage natural spaces.

Speakers

Lisa Kruse,
Georgia Department
of Natural Resources
Michel Kohl,
University of Georgia
Taryn Heidel,
Parks & Recreation,
City of Atlanta

GEORGIA-PACIFIC CLASSROOM

How to Increase Biodiversity, Resilience and Sustainability

Explore how nature-based solutions can boost biodiversity, resilience, and sustainability as urban ecosystems face increasing stress. Experts Jacob Lange, Will Medlin, and William Park will share how thoughtful design, ecological health, and community-activated parks can deliver mutually beneficial public greenspaces.

Speakers

Jacob Lange, RLA, Starr
Whitehouse Landscape
Architecture & Planning
Will Medlin, Woodard
& Curran Environmental
Services
Jim Newbury, Environment
Sandy Springs
William Park, Recreation
& Parks, City of Sandy
Springs

MERESHON CLASSROOM (LOWER LEVEL)

Resilience in the Hot Zone: Community Storytelling and Data Mapping with UrbanHeatATL

Community-driven data and storytelling reveal extreme heat's impacts on health and resilience. Participants explore UrbanHeatATL maps and lived experiences to develop solutions that position parks as vital climate infrastructure. Learn how heat data and narratives can advance cooler, healthier neighborhoods.

Speakers

Dr. Na'Taki Osborne
Jelks, Spelman College
and West Atlanta
Watershed Alliance
Destinee Whitaker and
Quanda Spencer, West
Atlanta Watershed
Alliance
Ashley Boone,
Georgia Institute of
Technology

OUTDOOR SESSION (HARDIN VISITOR CENTER)

Tree Risk Assessment Tree Walk

In this interactive session, learn five strategies for low-stress tree management. Discover why most tree issues don't require removal, and how retention preserves history and benefits future generations.

Speakers

Seth Hawkins,
Georgia Forestry
Commission
Edward Morrow,
ISA Certified Arborist

OUTDOOR SESSION (OUTDOOR KITCHEN)

Connecting Heartbeats: Fostering Community and Ecological Resilience across Metro Atlanta Greenspaces

Parks are spaces of gathering, refuge, and flourishing—but they can also reflect histories of exclusion and ongoing inequity. In groups led by park stewards, participants will learn to advocate for and cultivate healthier and more just waterways, forests, and urban greenspaces.

Speakers

Iris Chen
Domi Valentine
Park Stewards
Danielle Bunch
Darryl Haddock
Jonah McDonald
Tasha Messer
Gwendolyn Stegall
Maya Teague

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AFTERNOON SESSIONS

Select a session for 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm

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DAY HALL

Collective Ground: Co-Creating Resilient Public Spaces

Parks thrive when shaped by community voices. This session highlights how designers, academics, land managers, and local stewards collaborate with residents to create equitable public spaces. Learn community-driven approaches that align civic, economic, and environmental goals for lasting impact.

Speakers

Revonda Cosby,
Arabia Mountain
Heritage Area Alliance
Kofi Boone,
North Carolina State
University
Jennie Lynn Rudder,
Gresham Smith
Carley Rickles, Martin
Rickles Studio (MRS)

GARDENHOUSE, GALLERY CLASSROOM

State of the Climate: Climate Change 101

Building resilient communities starts with understanding our changing world. Learn about the science of climate change—how long we've known about it, what the science says has already happened, what could happen next, and what we can do about it.

Speakers

Mark Papier,
Certified Consulting
Meteorologist

GARDENHOUSE, ORCHID ROOM

Mapping Water, Mapping Risk: Can Parks Build Flood-Resilient Communities?

Moderated by Hannah Palmer, this panel explores how buried creeks, flood history, and resident experiences can shape stronger greenspaces. Learn how parks can manage stormwater, reduce heat, build resilience, and strengthen civic life as climate impacts intensify.

Speakers

Hannah Palmer,
Author
Genia Billingsley,
Canopy ATL
Daniel Krasner,
Data Urbanist
Mariann Martin,
Canopy ATL

GARDENHOUSE WORKSHOP (LOWER LEVEL)

Collaborating with Youth Corps to Advance Park Resilience

The Student Conservation Association's Atlanta Urban Green Program has created a space for Black women to build skills and explore conservation careers: the African American Women Crew. Crews complete projects—from habitat restoration to trail work—that strengthen the resilience of Atlanta's parks, communities, and 30 emerging environmental leaders.

Speakers

Jonathan Johnson,
Student Conservation
Association
Anamarie Ngala-Bey,
West Atlanta
Watershed Alliance
Tierney Mountain
and Matt Gray,
Youth Members,
Student Conservation
Association

GEORGIA-PACIFIC CLASSROOM

Art as Infrastructure: Resilience Through Tactical Urbanism in Atlanta Parks

How can art-driven tactical urbanism build community resilience in public parks? Art In The Paint revitalizes recreation spaces through artistic resurfacing, youth co-design, partnerships, and activations—reducing blight, fostering stewardship, and strengthening trust. Discover how to activate parks for belonging and public health.

Speakers

Arelious Cooper, Jr.,
Art In The Paint
Aaron L. Weiner, PLA,
PMP, National Park
Service
Shelton Hawkins,
Project Backboard
Victor Emerson,
Anheuser-Busch

MERESHON CLASSROOM (LOWER LEVEL)

Growing Urban Forests - Beyond 2025: Jurisdiction, Capacity, and Landscape Performance

Urban forestry today is about more than canopy counts—it's about how well trees deliver real benefits. Hear from leaders from Atlanta (large city), Madison (mid-sized), and Brownfield (small) about how governance, scale, funding, and local priorities shape urban forestry strategies.

Speakers

Tiffany Giacobazzi,
Parks & Recreation,
City of Atlanta
Ian Brown,
City of Madison, WI
Hunter Lohse,
City of Brownsville, TX
Gaylan Williams,
Parks & Recreation,
City of Atlanta

OUTDOOR SESSION (OUTDOOR KITCHEN)

Growing and Cooking Healthy Food in Parks

Edible landscapes transform parks into interactive, nourishing spaces. Parks become hands-on classrooms and community hubs—boosting biodiversity, improving soil health, strengthening social bonds, and inspiring pride and stewardship.

Speakers

Terri Carter,
University of Georgia
Extension
Charlie Monroe,
Cobb County

OUTDOOR SESSION (LONGLEAF ROOFTOP)

Nurturing Nature in Neighborhoods: Design Strategies for Cultivating Community Resilience

This interactive session highlights design strategies that support outdoor learning, inspired by CoOL Schoolyard Challenges and Georgia Outdoor Learning Demonstration Grants. Learn how innovative designs contribute to community resilience by empowering learners as environmental stewards.

Speakers

Karan Wood,
Environmental
Education Alliance
Aubrey Sabba,
Starr Whitehouse
Landscape Architecture
& Planning
Janelle Wright,
West Atlanta Watershed
Alliance

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Landscape Forms -
Sohum Naik