Be a BEACON

2027 mParks Conference & Trade Show
Schedule at a Glance

Tuesday, February 2

12:30 - 2:30 pm | Career-Focused Learning + Skill Development Education
Start your conference with two hours of focused learning! Choose from sessions aligned with the mParks Professional Development & Career Pathway to build practical skills and advance your career.

2:30 – 3:00 pm | Lit from Within: An All Fired Up Reading Experience
Guided reading, engaging discussions in CommUnity, and an exclusive opportunity to connect with opening keynote speaker Anthony McLean during a VIP book discussion at the 2027 mParks Conference.

3:00 - 3:45 pm | Welcome Reception
Reconnect with colleagues, make new connections, and kick off conference week with a hosted bar, light snacks, and great conversation.

4:00 - 6:00 pm | Opening Session + Student Showcase
Let's Be a Beacon! Celebrate outstanding projects with the mParks Design Awards, hear from association leadership, and discover fresh perspectives as the NEW Student Showcase takes center stage.

6:00 - 8:00 pm | Dinner on Own
Gather your team, reconnect with colleagues, or make new friends over dinner at Grand Traverse Resort & Spa or a local Traverse City favorite.

8:00 - 11:00 pm | Light up your Region!
Celebrate Michigan's seven Leadership Regions with regional food and drink tastings, friendly competition, and complimentary gaming at The Den. Plus, support future professionals at the Student Trivia Fundraiser!

Student Trivia: 8:30–9:30 PM | Additional ticket required.

Wednesday, February 3

6:00 - 8:00 am | Mindful Movement

Start your day your way! Recharge with yoga, a refreshing walk, a swim, or other wellness activities throughout the resort.

8:30 - 9:30 am | Education Breakout Sessions (0.1 CEUs)

9:45 - 11:30 am | Shine Where You Are: Leadership Region Networking + Education
Connect with professionals from your Leadership Region through engaging roundtables, regional discussions, and targeted education focused on the opportunities and challenges closest to home.

11:30 - 12:00 pm | Connect + Reflect Break
Your time, your way! Catch up with colleagues, grab coffee, get moving, or take a moment to recharge.

12:00 - 1:30 pm | Delegate Lunch
Celebrate excellence in Michigan parks and recreation as we recognize Programming and Park Resources Award winners and honor this year's Commitment to Excellence recipient.

1:45 - 2:45 pm | Education Breakout Sessions (0.1 CEUs)

3:00 - 4:00 pm | Education Breakout Sessions (0.1 CEUs)

4:00 - 6:00 pm | Trade Show Grand Opening + mParks Foundation Silent Auction
Explore innovative products, connect with industry partners, and enjoy complimentary refreshments. Don't forget to browse the mParks Foundation Silent Auction and bid to support the profession!

6:00 - 8:00 pm | Dinner on Own
Keep the conversations going! Enjoy dinner with colleagues at the resort or explore the dining scene throughout Traverse City.

8:00 - 11:00 pm | Social + Networking
Get ready to light up the night! Join fellow attendees for an evening of fun, connection, and memorable experiences. More details coming soon!

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Thursday, February 4

6:00 - 8:00 am | Mindful Movement
Recharge your light! Enjoy morning movement, wellness activities, or a little time for yourself before another inspiring conference day.

8:30 - 9:30 am | Bright Start: Trade Show Hour + mParks Foundation Silent Auction
Recharge your light! Enjoy morning movement, wellness activities, or a little time for yourself before another inspiring conference day.

9:45 - 10:45 am | Education Breakout Sessions (0.1 CEUs)

10:45 - 11:15 am | Connect + Reflect Break
Take 30 minutes to connect, reflect, recharge, or simply enjoy a little breathing room between sessions.

11:15 am - 12:15 pm | Education Breakout Sessions (0.1 CEUs)

12:15 - 2:00 pm | Trade Show Lunch + mParks Foundation Silent Auction
Grab a boxed lunch, explore the Trade Show, and connect with industry partners. Place your final Silent Auction bids before bidding closes at 1:30 PM!

2:15 - 3:15 pm | Education Breakout Sessions (0.1 CEUs)

3:30 - 4:30 pm | Education Breakout Sessions (0.1 CEUs)

5:30 - 9:00 pm | Annual Awards Reception + Banquet
Shine a light on excellence! Celebrate the individuals, agencies, and advocates making a lasting impact on Michigan parks and recreation.

Reception begins at 5:30 PM | Dinner and awards begin at 6:30 PM.

9:00 - 11:00 pm | Afterglow + Connect 4 Tournament
Keep the celebration going! Unwind with music, drinks, and colleagues while cheering on competitors in the 26th Annual Connect 4 Tournament, hosted by Region 2: Southern.

Friday, February 5

8:30 - 11:00 am | Delegate Breakfast + Closing Keynote
Close out conference week with breakfast, the Marketing Awards, and an inspiring keynote. Leave energized, connected, and ready to Be a Beacon in your community!