

**Thursday, October
22**

**Breakout Sessions
25–28**

8:30–10:00a

Session #25

Ballroom 413ABC

**Expanding the
Experience:
Integrating Natural
and Cultural
Heritage through
Junior Ranger
Programs**

Organizer: Joy
James, Appalachian
State University

This research
examines NPS Junior
Ranger programs as
an underutilized tool
for advancing
integrated natural and
cultural heritage
conservation through
youth engagement.
Analysis of Junior
Ranger booklets

shows they often rely on fragmented, question-based learning that separates ecological knowledge from cultural meaning. This study identifies experiential, place-based design strategies that connect landscapes, histories, and personal experiences. By emphasizing exploration, observation, and storytelling, these approaches strengthen cognitive and emotional connections to place. This work contributes to interpretation and conservation by positioning youth programs as a key pathway for breaking down silos, fostering holistic stewardship, and supporting more

integrated, inclusive conservation outcomes. During the session, participants will work with real Junior Ranger Booklet activity examples and create prototype modifications or interpretive twists that more intentionally connect natural and cultural heritage. In small groups, attendees will reimagine existing formats, test redesigned versions through quick peer walk-throughs, and reflect on how these interpretive shifts deepen youth meaning-making and stewardship.

Session #26

Room 400A

Contributed Papers

Responding to Climate Change

Dave Reynolds, Chair

- Rachel Layko et al. / Forecasted development and climate change increase flood risk to Mid-Atlantic battlefield parks
- Peizhe Li et al. / Gamification for climate adaptation planning of cultural resources and landscapes
- Ann Gallagher / Climate, Management, and Collaboration: Applied Leadership in Extreme Conditions
- Katie Peek / Assessing the Vulnerability of

National Park
Service
Infrastructure to
Coastal Hazards

Session #27

Room 406, The Stone
Room

**Rooted: An Ecology
of Gullah Geechee
Memory Along the
Coast**

Presenters: Ariel
Kimberley, Executive
Director, Park
Institute of America;
Karen Kasmauski,
Board Member, Park
Institute of America

“Rooted” is a
multimedia
storytelling project
supported by a 2024
National Park
Foundation
Storytelling grant.
Through a short film
and interactive virtual
exhibit launching in

June, the project centers Gullah Geechee voices and explores themes of home and land, language and voice, environment, community and resistance, and art and craft. These stories illuminate the deep interconnections between cultural heritage and coastal ecosystems, while confronting ongoing challenges including climate change, land loss, and systemic inequities. This panel will share the project's development, partnerships, and outcomes, and consider how storytelling can advance more just, integrated approaches to conserving living

cultural landscapes. It would be helpful if participants brought an electronic device, with a preference for devices with larger screens (laptops, iPads, etc.).

Session #28

Room 404

Publishing for Beginners

Chair: Craig Shafer,
US National Park
Service (retired);

Respondent: Dave
Harmon, GWS

Executive Director &
Co-editor of the open-
access journal *Parks
Stewardship Forum*

Trying to publish an article in a professional venue can be a frustrating experience for first-timers. You may not have an experienced

coauthor to help you along. This topic is often not taught in graduate schools, but is learned the hard way. Many questions arise. What type of paper to write for a journal: original research, review, case study, or essay? Which journal to submit to? Dealing with journal gatekeepers, reviewers, and editors? What are the publication alternatives to journals? How to publish a scientific paper will not be addressed, but a few tips will be offered. Come prepared to ask questions.

Refreshment Break •
10:00–10:30a

Breakout Sessions 29–32

10:30a–12:00p

Session #29

Ballroom 413ABC

Project Worthy: An Interactive Exploration of Redlining and Preservation

Chair: Ariel

Kimberley, Executive
Director, Park
Institute of America

Project Worthy examines how historic redlining continues to shape which places are deemed “worthy of preservation.” Using GIS analysis across more than one hundred U.S. cities, the project reveals that National Historic Districts are

systematically underrepresented in formerly redlined neighborhoods. This work highlights how cultural heritage designation, investment, and storytelling remain uneven—and why integrating cultural and natural resource stewardship is essential to more holistic, place-based conservation. This interactive workshop will guide participants through the data, invite them to interpret patterns in their own regions, and codevelop strategies to address disparities in preservation practice. Together, we will identify pathways to more equitable, integrated conservation outcomes.

Session #30

Room400A

We Need to Tell a Better Story: Reframing Global Issues Through a Local Lens

Presenter: Elizabeth Metraux, Director of Content Strategy for the UN Foundation Better World Campaign

As skepticism toward global cooperation grows, the challenge is not only one of policy, but of language. For years, advocates have led with global impact—conservation wins, international partnerships and big-picture outcomes. That framing is increasingly missing the mark with

domestic audiences. This conversation argues for a shift: translating global issues into what they mean closer to home, with a clearer focus on tangible value and economic return—from supply chain stability and disaster response to public health and environmental protection. Drawing on real-world campaign examples and message testing, we explore what resonates, what falls flat, and how reframing global work in local, meaningful terms can help build durable public support for international engagement to protect our shared spaces.

Session #31

Room 406, The Stone Room

Contributed Papers

Conservation Areas Managed by Colleges and Universities

Lauren Wenzel, Chair

- David White & Elizabeth Baldwin / Developing a Spatial Database for Signage Inventory and Management in a University Forest
- Ann Gallagher / Academic Conservation Lands: Connecting People, Place, and Stewardship
- Elizabeth Baldwin / Academic Forests in the US: building a database of understanding

Session #32

Room 404

Contributed Papers

Building Mutual Support

Lydia Kiewra, Chair

- Zoey Crossley et al. / Scaled Place Attachment Across Campus Greenspaces
- Niki Nicholas & Matt Hudson / Building Backyard Buy-In: Working to Ensure that Gateway Community Members are Park Advocates
- Shelby Marocco et al. / People among Plants: Assessments of welcomeness and belonging at a

- Mid-Michigan
Botanical Garden
- David Huff / Trail
Magic: The
Cultural
Infrastructure That
Sustains Public
Lands
-

Lunch Break
Poster Tear-Down
12:00–1:30p

**The GWS Student
Summit: Plenary
Session**
1:30–3:00p
Ballroom 413ABC
**The GWS 2026
Student Summit:
Setting an Agenda
to Meet the Moment
(OPEN TO ALL
REGISTRANTS)**
Facilitators: Cait
Henry, Professor,
Lake Superior State
University; Seth T.

Kannarr, PhD
Graduate, University
of Tennessee

We find ourselves at an extraordinary moment in conservation in the US ... one that is reverberating around the world. In this turbulent socio-political climate, the generation of conservation leaders who will soon emerge — our fledgling champions of place-based conservation — will be challenged like never before. In this, the final plenary session of the GWS ParkForum 2026 workshop, a few of our many incredible students within GWS will discuss their research and their visions for Meeting the Moment. Through

a facilitated, open-mic discussion, these student summiteers will respond to a three-round prompt that will set the stage for the collaborative problem-solving that will begin to take shape in the Working Session later this afternoon. Students will respond to three questions: 1. What is the most pressing issue for you? 2. What solutions to that issue — and to other pressing problems — interest you most? 3. What components of the workshop have been most helpful to you in Meeting the Moment? Through this discussion, students will set the agenda for the Student Summit Working Session to follow in live time.

The session is open to all registrants. For those non-students who are attending as observers, following the Refreshment Break you are invited to come to an informal Sharing Circle discussion on Meeting the Moment Through Refoundation — part of which will involve reflecting on the student summiteers's priorities as just revealed during this Plenary.

Refreshment Break •
3:00–3:30p

**The GWS 2026
Student Summit:
Working Session**

3:30–6:00p

Ballroom 413ABC

Facilitators: Seth T.
Kannarr, PhD

Graduate, University
of Tennessee; Cait
Henry, Professor,
Lake Superior State
University

Summiteers will
continue their
collaboration as they
begin the initial
stages of planning a
thought piece on
Meeting the Moment
that will be published
in the UC Berkeley
/GWS open-access
journal, Parks
Stewardship Forum
(<https://escholarship.org/uc/psf>). Pursuing
the most pressing
issue(s) as identified
in the preceding
Plenary, students will

have a facilitated discussion on how to take their experience at ParkForum and use it as the launching pad for further cross-university student networking and gaining collaborative publishing experience. Our agenda:

- 3:30–3:45: Welcome and Expectations
- 3:45–4:30: Facilitated discussion on student experience at ParkForum and beyond
- 4:30-6:00: Break into smaller groups based on interest and bandwidth; food/refreshments provided

Meeting the Moment Through Refoundation: A Conversation on the Future of Place- Based Conservation in America

3:30–4:30p

Room 406, The Stone
Room Facilitators:

Dave Harmon,

Executive Director

George Wright

Society; Fred Herling,

President, George

Wright Society

Those workshop
participants not
involved in the
Student Summit are
invited to come and
join an informal,
collegial discussion
on the future of the
parks,
protected/conserved
areas, cultural sites,
and other forms of

place-based conservation in the US and beyond. Come share your ideas on where place-based conservation needs to go! We'll start off with a short introduction to Refoundation, the term GWS uses to denote a thorough reconsideration of our systems for protecting natural areas and cultural sites (for more, see Session #21), before opening the circle to your sharings — and reflecting on what we heard from the student Summiteers in the preceding Plenary.

Poster Session

October 19–22

Poster Session

Hallway (see map)

- Set-up: Monday, October 19, 10:00a—1:30p
- Tear-down: Thursday, October 22, 12:00—1:30p

Posters available for continuous viewing between Set-up and Tear-Down

Posters in Alphabetical Order by Lead Author

- Dylan Crysler et al. / Metropark delights today and tomorrow: Recreation and conservation draws in Southeast Michigan
- Julia Daniell / From Dispatch to Data: Predictive Modeling &

Trends in Search & Rescue in Grand Canyon National Park

- Mikael Deliyski et al. / Appreciating Values: Climate's Impact on Visitor Use Perception in Huron-Clinton Metroparks
- Gary Davis & Dorothy A. Davis / The Photographer's Frame: Visual Stories of Protected Area Stewardship
- Sweta Dixit et al. / Comparing the Drivers of Public Tolerance for Red Wolves and Florida Panthers
- George Wright Society / The Stewardship Archive
- George Wright Society / The

RISE Declarations Project

- Isabel Haake / Understanding Barriers and Facilitators to Appalachian Trail Thru Hiker Food Storage Behavior
- David Huff / Photography as Stewardship: George Masa and the Cultural Infrastructure of Conservation
- Joy James / Youth as Stewards: Junior Ranger Engagement as a Pathway to Integrated Conservation Outcomes
- Madison Janes / Public Park, Private Investment: Economic Value Through

Partnership at Lakeshore Park

- Vishal Kennedy /
Assessing the
Representation of
U.S. Terrestrial
Ecosystems in
Protected Areas
- Carly Knudson et
al. / Feasibility of
Viewshed
Analysis as a
Visitor Use
Management Tool
Along the Blue
Ridge Parkway
- Abigail Lourdraj et
al. /
Understanding Mt.
LeConte Trail
System Visitation
in the Great
Smoky Mountains
National Park
- Annabelle Mayes
et al. / How Do
People Define
Antarctic
Wilderness?
- Cordelia Norris /
Coloring Wonder:

Enlivening
Environmental
Education
Through Art,
Community, and
an Optional Pint

- Hassan Salem et al. /
Understanding Visitor Characteristics and Visitation Patterns at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore: A Case Study of Crystal River
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FIELD TRIPS

Monday, October 19
& Friday, October 23

Posted October 2:

Both trips are now full

Monday, October 19

• 8:45a–Noon •

Knoxville's Urban
Wilderness (\$10)

Friday, October 23 •
9:00a–5:00p • Great
Smoky Mountains
National Park (\$25)