



**CPRA**

**COLORADO  
PARKS & RECREATION  
ASSOCIATION**

**2025**

# **Aquatics Symposium & Technician Workshop**

**Wheat Ridge Recreation Center  
4005 Kipling St. Wheat Ridge, CO 80033**

**Technician Workshop – January 8<sup>th</sup>  
Symposium – January 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Registration Required**

**This year's event is made possible by:**

**Technician Workshop**



**Aquatics Symposium**



**Host**



**Thank you to our amazing sponsors!**

## Overview:

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual CPRA Aquatics Symposium and Technician Workshop promises to bring another event packed with outstanding educational sessions and a list of incredible, nationally sought-after speakers to the Region's ONLY Aquatics focused mini conference.

### Who Should Attend?

The topics presented each year will vary in content, but rest assured, it will be strictly aquatics focused! Therefore, we encourage all aquatics professionals to attend. The Symposium runs in January with hopes that agencies can send their critical seasonal leaders in addition to full time staff.

**Location:** Wheat Ridge Recreation Center – Community Rooms  
4005 Kipling St. Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

**Registration Information: Opens – October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Closes – December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
*(Late fees apply for registrations received after December 22<sup>nd</sup>, see details below)*

### Aquatics Symposium (Thursday & Friday) Registration Rates:

- CPRA Member: \$200
- Non – Member: \$250
- Late Registration - \$300 (December 26 – January 2)

*All Symposium registrations include: daily coffee/grab and go breakfast, lunch, and up to 1.0 CEUs. \*Symposium social is sponsored by Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture and will be held at the Edgewater Beer Garden. TBD on inclusions.*

### **Aquatics Technician Workshop**

Based on the successful 2024 workshop, this year's event will include another afternoon of station based, hands on education with a variety of mechanical equipment, including filters, chemical feeders, controllers, pumps and UV systems.

### Aquatics Technician Workshop (Wednesday) Registration Rate:

- Attendance Rate \$125
- Add on to the Symposium: \$100

*All Technician Workshop registrations include daily coffee/grab and go breakfast and lunch*  
*\*Technician Workshop Social is sponsored by Aquatic Chemical Solutions and will be held at New image Brewing Company – Wheat Ridge.*

## **Accommodations (no group rate available):**

There are a variety of hotels available within a 10-minute drive of the Recreation Center.

### *Holiday Inn Express & Suites Wheat Ridge – Denver West*

10101 W 48th Ave, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

[https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/wheat-ridge/denwr/hoteldetail?cm\\_mmc=GoogleMaps-\\_-EX-\\_-US-\\_-DENWR](https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/wheat-ridge/denwr/hoteldetail?cm_mmc=GoogleMaps-_-EX-_-US-_-DENWR)

### *Hilton Garden Inn Arvada Denver*

5455 Olde Wadsworth Blvd, Arvada, CO 80002

[https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/denavgi-hilton-garden-inn-arvada-denver/?SEO\\_id=GMB-AMER-GI-DENAVGI&y\\_source=1\\_OTUwNTM3Mi03MTUtbG9jYXRpb24ud2Vic2l0ZQ%3D%3D](https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/denavgi-hilton-garden-inn-arvada-denver/?SEO_id=GMB-AMER-GI-DENAVGI&y_source=1_OTUwNTM3Mi03MTUtbG9jYXRpb24ud2Vic2l0ZQ%3D%3D)

## **Need Continuing Education Units (CEUs)?**

This year's Symposium offers 1.0 CEUs (10 sessions) towards earning or renewing your CPRP, AFO or AqP certifications. Attendees interested in obtaining CEUs must check in at the registration desk the first morning of the symposium to access their CEU tracker. \*Includes session totals from Thursday & Friday only.

## **Schedule Brief**

### **Technician Workshop - Wednesday January 8<sup>th</sup> 8:00am – 3:30pm**

- Check in, coffee and a light breakfast 7:30am – 8:00am
- Conference Sessions (3) 8:00am -12:05pm
- Lunch (Provided) 12:15pm – 1:15pm –
- Station Rotations 1:15pm – 3:30pm
- Wrap Up & Questions 3:30pm – 3:40pm
- Workshop Social – 4pm New Image Brewing – Wheat Ridge

### **Aquatics Symposium - Thursday January 9<sup>th</sup> 8:00am – 4:30pm**

- Check in, coffee and a light breakfast 7:30am – 8:00am
- Conference Sessions (3) 8:00am -12.15pm
- Lunch (Provided) 12:15pm-1:15pm
- Conference Session (2) 1:15pm – 4:05pm

### **Aquatics Symposium - Friday January 10<sup>th</sup> 8:00am-4:30pm**

- Check in, coffee and a light breakfast 7:30am – 8:00am
- Conference Sessions (3) 8:00am – 12:15pm
- Lunch (Provided) 12:15p-1:15pm
- Conference Sessions (2) 1:15p-4:05pm
- Wrap up, Questions 4:05pm-4:20pm
- Attendee Social 4:30pm TBD

## **Detailed Schedule**

### **Aquatics Technician Workshop - Wednesday January 8<sup>th</sup>**

**8:00 am – 9:15am**

*Filtration Systems – Neptune Benson*

Description to Follow

**9:25 am – 10:40am**

*Your input matters, an Aquatic Technician's guide to renovations – Landmark Aquatic*

Description to Follow

**10:50 am – 11:20am**

*“My thermometer says your pool is cold!” Boiler Troubleshooting 101 – Raypak & Aquatic Chemical Solutions*

**11:30am – 12:05pm**

*Aquatic Tech Talk – Roundtable topics with Vendors*

**Catered Lunch 12:15 pm – 1:15pm**

**1:15 pm – 3:30 pm Station Rotation**

Station A: Stenner Pumps

Station B: BECS Controllers

Station C: Aqua Creek ADA Lifts

Station D: Raypak Boilers

Station E: Prominent UV Systems

Station F: Maytronics Vacuums

Station G: Spectrum Starting Blocks

**Wrap Up & Questions & Technician Social – 4:00 pm**

- Social Location: New Image Brewing Company
  - 9505 W 44<sup>th</sup> Ave, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
- Social Sponsored by: Aquatic Chemical Solutions
  - Beverages and a limited number of appetizers and pizza will be provided to attendees.

## **Detailed Schedule**

### **Aquatics Symposium - Thursday January 9<sup>th</sup>**

**8:00 am – 9:15 am**

**Technology and the future of aquatics: - Joey Rusnak**

Joey Rusnak, founder of Lifeguard Authority, an organization working towards preventing drowning and saving lives, will share his dream of a time when lifeguarded environments are free from drowning. For decades, aquatic professionals have been relentlessly working towards eliminating fatalities in our communities. Joey believes it is within our grasp to be the generation of aquatic professionals that cross this finish line. With the development of new technologies and rapid communication methods, we can experience unprecedented advancement because we have all the tools needed to succeed. As we have grown smarter with data and experience, so too has the world around us, evolving and providing fresh opportunities. This endnote explores the roles, accountability, innovation, and collaboration play in our quest to eliminate drowning from our communities. Be entertained as Joey shares his personal story and adventure as an Aquatic Professional. Be inspired as he takes you along his journey from a teenager forced into a job as a lifeguard, to being an international advocate for drowning prevention. Be ready to learn how your own story can impact the future and how as an industry we need to be intentional about building our legacy.

**9:25 am – 10:40 am**

**Equitable Aquatics: The three P's of Inclusive Aquatics – Kate Connell**

Does everyone have an equal experience in your facilities regardless of their ability level, gender, neurodiversity, or income level? Equitable aquatics is about making sure that you are making your pools accessible AND working to get all types of folks to your facilities. Part exercises, part lecture this session is designed for you to “work-in” your aquatics operations area in real time and leave with ideas to unpack later. We’ll explore the implications and implementation of the 3 P’s of Inclusive Aquatics: Personnel, Programming, and Policies and discuss outcomes and examples for each of the areas. We’ll touch on how to grade your policies and rules for inclusivity, the fundamentals of low-income and scholarship-based offerings, and how to focus on outreach to fill your pool, programs, and payroll list with individuals who represent your diverse community.

**10:50 am – 12:05 pm**

**Dangers of Shallow Water – Wess Long**

Most aquatic facility operators have pools and attractions that lifeguards and patrons perceive as safe or lower risk as the water is "shallow". This mindset presents many inherent risks, particularly to children 12 and under using the pools. In this session we will address how pools ranging 3 to 5 feet are often lifeguarded and operated the same despite the varied depths, and the dangers this presents with poor operational practices, complacency, and parental supervision.

**Catered Lunch 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm**

**1:15 pm – 2:30 pm**

**Training: It's Time to Get Outside the Box! – Joey Rusnak**

Are you and your team tired of the same old types of trainings? Is it time to shake things up a bit? Come out and learn about unique and exciting training formats and techniques that not only

work but are also fun for your teams. This session is not a round table training discussion but rather non-stop back-to-back sharing of ideas on how you can train your aquatic team members on a variety of topics. Leave this session stocked with ideas and new ways of thinking. It is time to start thinking outside the box with trainings.

**2:40 pm – 4:05 pm**

**What “De-Escalation” Training Can Look Like – Kate Connell**

“De-Escalation” has become synonymous with conflict resolution, but that’s only made it harder for us to understand the skills, behavior, and training needed for our team to handle increasingly challenging interpersonal interactions. Together, we’ll navigate conflict management best practices, restorative and non-violent alternatives to traditional de-escalation, and outline benchmarks for creating mindful agency policies and hands-on training for your team.

**Wrap up & Questions 4:10 pm**

**Detailed Schedule  
Aquatics Symposium - Friday January 10<sup>th</sup>**

**8:00 am – 9:15 am**

**Keeping campers Safe: - Joey Rusnak**

Do you have camps coming to your facility? If so this session is for you! Come to learn and discuss strategies to minimize the chance of incidents happening during camp swims at your pool or waterfront. We will explore approaches to training both your aquatic teams along with camp leaders. Learn how to successfully engage and partner with community groups in building a culture of safety for their campers. This interactive session will cover policy considerations, trainings, and best practices.

**9:25 am – 10:40 am**

**Learning and Improving from Lifeguard Audits – Johnathan Nies**

Aquatic facilities play a critical role in safeguarding lives. This presentation equips you to leverage the power of lifeguard audits. Learn how to analyze audit data to identify areas for improvement in lifeguard training, procedures, and overall safety culture. Discover strategies to translate data into actionable plans for enhancing lifeguard performance, optimizing resource allocation, and mitigating risk. By fostering a data-driven approach to safety, you can create a safer and more efficient aquatic environment for everyone.

**10:50 am – 12:05 pm**

**Learning Lessons from Industry Incidents – Wess Long**

Despite the aquatic industry's best efforts, every year a wide range of preventable incidents are reported at facilities worldwide. There are undoubtedly unique aspects for every event, however aquatic professionals stand to learn quite a bit when analyzing contributing factors or environmental variables for these incidents. This session will focus on the learning lessons from

a variety of incidents across numerous types of facilities, incident types, training agencies, and contributing factors. Identifying details will not be included, however the high-level takeaways will be valuable for any operator.

**Catered Lunch 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm**

**1:15 pm – 2:30 pm**

**Lead DEI Trainings for Part-Time Staff – Kate Connell**

We will delve into the essentials for leading Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) 101 trainings for their lifeguard, instructor, and aquatic management teams. Through interactive discussions and practical exercises, attendees will learn effective strategies for introducing DEI principles to their teams, fostering open dialogue, and encouraging cultural awareness. By the end of the session, participants will be equipped with actionable insights and resources to lead DEI initiatives that promote a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace in aquatics setting.

**2:40 pm – 4:05 pm**

**Inspiring Superheroes – Joey Rusnak**

Joey Rusnak founder of Lifeguard Authority, poses the question; What defines a hero? Are heroes people that save lives and stop bad things from happening? We recognize military personnel, firefighters and police officers as heroes, but why not lifeguards and aquatic professionals? Participants will learn to connect themselves with their superhero within. If we can't see ourselves as heroes, how can we ever expect our communities to celebrate our lifeguards as heroes? How we talk, walk and look are all factors that affect our image to ourselves and our communities. Lifeguards are heroes and it is imperative that we, as an industry, better recognize this and start celebrating it!

**Wrap up, Questions & Social Information 4:05 pm – 4:15 pm**

**Symposium Social 4:30 pm**

- Social Location: Edgewater Beer Garden
  - 2508 Gray St, Edgewater, CO 80214
- Social Sponsored by: Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture
  - TBD on inclusions



## Speaker Bios

### Joey Rusnak, Founder of Lifeguard Authority



**Joey Rusnak**, founder of Lifeguard Authority, began his recreational career in the aquatics industry in his teen years. After completing studies in hospitality management, he quickly realized his heart was in recreation and returned to school to study Recreation and Leisure Services. Over the course of his career in aquatics, he has had the privilege to lead many teams in various recreation departments for indoor/outdoor/waterfront aquatic operations, general community programs, community development, fitness, camps, preschool, skating and sports. He stays connected and actively collaborates with recreation professionals internationally, always seeking new and innovative ways to engage communities, teams, and to prevent and eliminate drowning. Joey is committed to continual self-development and learning and can be found attending various aquatic and recreation conferences across sectors. His personal mantra is connect, collaborate, and contribute.

### Kate Connell, Hydroapps & Founder of Equitable Aquatics

Kate Connell (she/her) is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional and a passionate advocate for equity in aquatics and recreation. She has a track record of implementing inclusive programs, policies, and personnel practices in her prior role as a municipal program supervisor in Iowa City, where she resides. She is a graduate of the University of Iowa. Through her work at Equitable Aquatics, Kate has become a sought-after national speaker on diversity and leadership and has presented over 50 educational sessions at national and state level association conferences and trainings.

### Wess Long, President – Starguard ELITE

As President of StarGuard ELITE (SGE), Wess Long oversees all aspects of the company's industry leading safety training programs and advisory services that serve more than 300 clients worldwide, including many of the largest private and public organizations. Prior to SGE, Long worked in numerous capacities throughout the aquatics industry with leadership positions at various levels for many top resorts and waterparks including Atlantis the Palm Dubai, Walt Disney World and Palace Entertainment. Additionally, Long has worked with projects of every size providing support for initial concept, construction, operational development, safety consulting, staff training and regulatory compliance. Since 2014, Long has served in a leadership capacity for WWA's Safety Committee and is currently the chair of the committee. Additionally, Long speaks at industry conferences and trainings around the world and is active within numerous other industry organizations. In 2020, Long was recognized with the WWA's Kelly Ogle Memorial Safety Award and in 2021 by *Aquatic International's* Power Awards.

### Johnathan Nies, Project Director – Counsilman Hunsaker

Johnathan Nies is a Project Director with a strong background in safety, risk management, and maintenance operations. Currently leading projects for Counsilman-Hunsaker, he oversees initiatives spanning equipment procurement, Aquatic Examiner Services, pre-opening preparedness, loss control surveys, and operations consulting.