



SEPT 30-OCT 1, 2026
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Please submit your session proposal by 11:59 pm on May 15, 2026. Late submissions will be considered if space allows. [Upload proposals here.](#)

BACKGROUND

The Michigan Outdoor Summit is a space intended to elevate the crucial conversation about the importance of the outdoors — for the economy, health, stewardship and so much more. In other words, think of it like a base camp for the outdoors — we’ve got a big tent, so everyone should fit just fine.

The Summit is held at Timber Ridge RV + Rec Resort in Traverse City. Timber is a unique gathering space that provides a casual atmosphere for presenters and attendees. Breakout sessions will be conducted outdoors and sheltered by large tents. **Preference will be given to proposals that don’t solely rely on PowerPoint visuals but rather focus more on conversations.**

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Conservation + Stewardship - How public, private, nonprofit, and tribal partners can work together to protect natural resources, improve public access, and help communities understand the connections between a healthy environment, recreation, and a thriving economy.

Education + Workforce Training - How to provide outdoor learning and career pathways for all ages, while empowering underrepresented and rural communities to take on leadership roles.

Economic Development - Growing sustainable outdoor economies, removing barriers for entrepreneurs, and ensuring underrepresented and rural communities can fully participate and benefit from this sector.

Public Health + Wellness - How increased access to nature can improve individual and community wellbeing, and how partnerships with health stakeholders can amplify those benefits.

Opportunity + Experience - Making outdoor activities safe, inclusive, and accessible near where people live, work, and play, while breaking down barriers that keep people from connecting with nature.

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

Sessions are designed to engage a diverse audience, including land and resource managers, business owners and entrepreneurs, outdoor recreation advocates, and tourism professionals.

To ensure a dynamic and inclusive experience:

- > Sessions shouldn't rely on visuals but be more conversational, offering practical insights for a range of attendees.
- > Content should align with the crucial conversations, focusing on new ideas, lessons learned, and real-world challenges and solutions.

PRESENTER EXPECTATIONS

- > The Michigan Outdoor Summit is an in-person event. All presenters are expected to be on-site at Timber Ridge RV + Rec Resort in Traverse City, MI.
- > Presenters receive a discounted flat rate (\$50) on their Summit ticket, a stoke-worthy thank you gift, and lots of high-fives and fist bumps.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals will be reviewed by the Summit organizing committee and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- > Relevance to the crucial conversations,
- > Originality and overall quality of the proposed session,
- > Inclusion of multiple perspectives, and
- > Applicability across regions.

The committee will consider a wide range of proposals, including those that may be similar in topic or format. Final selections will aim to ensure a balanced representation of themes, audiences, and geographic relevance.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

If your proposal is selected, you will be notified by June 15. For any questions about the submission process, please contact us at outdoorsummit@heartofthelakes.org.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES – [Upload Here](#)

Each proposal should include the following information:

- > **Presenter Contact** - Include the name, title, organization, and a brief biography (up to 100 words each) for each presenter. Full biography's will be requested if selected.
- > **Proposed Session Title** (10 words or fewer)
- > **Crucial Conversation** - Choose which conversation best fits your session - see descriptions above.
 - Conservation + Stewardship
 - Education + Workforce Training
 - Economic Development
 - Public Health + Wellness
 - Opportunity + Experience
- > **Session Format** - Conversational or visual? Will you require equipment to visually tell your story?
- > **Session Length** – Share the preferred length of your session (there will be additional time for questions and networking built into the agenda).
 - One hour increments
- > **Session Description** (up to 250 words) - Inspire us. Tell us what you want to share, and why someone would want to listen.
- > **Target Audience** - Indicate who will benefit most from attending your session (e.g. nonprofit leaders, land managers, small business owners, entrepreneurs, job-seekers)
- > **Key Takeaways** - If participants walk away from your session, remembering one thing – what is it? Any underlying tone/message/theme?
- > **Past Participation** - Did any of the proposed presenters also attend or present at past Michigan Outdoor Summits?