

DAY ONE – MARCH 12, 2026

8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

Registration and Check In (Breakfast Provided)

check in, get name badge, eat some breakfast

8:45 AM - 9:00 AM

Welcome

FRPA Staff & Host Site Representative

Quick welcome from FRPA and the hosts – will also go through any housekeeping announcements. BROWARD COUNTY – feel free to invite a dignitary to do the welcome.

Learning Objectives:

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Park Maintenance 101

Rodney Watkins, Park Manager Associate, Broward Co Parks and Recreation

Practical strategies for maintaining sports fields, improving efficiency in park maintenance, and managing native and invasive vegetation.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand basic sports field maintenance.
2. Explore a proactive approach to overall park maintenance.
3. Touch on the importance of native vegetation.

Why & How to Prune Trees for Longevity and Safety

Michael Orfanedes, Ph.D., Commercial Horticulture Agent IV & ISA-certified Arborist, UF/IFAS Broward County Extension

Building resilient tree canopy is one tool to combat climate change. Gain a fresh perspective on why, how and when trees in public spaces should be pruned to improve their safety and longevity. Learn how to improve the wind tolerance of tree canopy in a warmer and potentially stormier world.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand why and when trees need to be pruned to improve their health and longevity.
2. Understand how trees should be pruned to provide needed clearance and improved wind tolerance.
3. Understand how to write an objectives-based pruning specification when soliciting contracts.

10:10 AM - 12:20 PM

Broward Parks Tour

Jeffrey Crowley, AFO, Senior Parks Manager, Broward Co Parks and Recreation

Join us for a tour from Anne Kolb Nature Center to the new Mooring Field Facility (Loggerhead Park & Mooring Field) and then for a quick walk across the street to Hollywood North Beach Park. Along the way we will discuss features and operational points.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify key design features and amenities that support public access and environmental stewardship at waterfront park facilities.
2. Understand operational considerations for managing mooring fields and adjacent coastal park spaces.
3. Explore best practices for maintaining, programming, and activating waterfront parks for diverse user groups.

10:10 AM - 11:10 AM

Florida Grades & Standards: A Tool to Assist in Selecting Quality Trees

Giuseppe Di Giacinto, Educational Training Specialist, UF/IFAS Broward County Extension

Quality nursery stock is a key factor in establishment, longevity and safety of trees in both private and public spaces. The Florida Grades and Standards is an excellent tool to use in identifying defects and selecting quality trees. This presentation will teach you key concepts to kick start a quality tree planting program.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand why quality nursery stock is such an important component of a tree planting program.
2. Learn to identify common defects associated with trees grown in nurseries.
3. Learn how to use the Florida Grades and Standards as a tool to help ensure quality when selecting and purchasing trees for installation.

11:20 AM - 12:20 AM

Youth Sports Complex Review

Adam Schackmann, Recreation Supervisor, Pompano Beach Parks and Recreation

Join us for a case study where we will look at the design and construction of Pompano Beach's Youth Sports Complex. Explore what works and what doesn't work, as well as the could've and would've. Learn from their experiences and take note for future projects.

Learning Objectives:

1. Examine key design and construction elements of the Youth Sports Complex.
2. Identify lessons learned from real-world project successes and challenges.
3. Apply takeaways to improve planning and development of future recreation facilities.

12:20 PM - 1:00 PM

Lunch (Provided)

1:10 PM - 2:10 PM

The Inclusive Nature of Rope Playgrounds

Alyssa Young, Specification & Strategic Partnership Manager, Berliner Seilfabrik Play Equipment & Danny Flesher, COO Playmore, Playmore Recreational Products + Services

This session explores how rope-based play equipment can be a powerful tool for creating inclusive playgrounds in parks and recreation settings. Participants will learn how the unique qualities of rope, including its flexibility, transparency, and open-ended form, support diverse play experiences that go beyond compliance standards. By integrating rope structures thoughtfully, park professionals can promote exploration, sensory engagement, and social interaction for children of all abilities.

Learning Objectives:

1. Examine how the ADA has influenced playground design and where opportunities remain to expand inclusivity beyond minimum compliance.
2. Analyze the role of inclusivity in playground design, with a focus on how rope equipment can create flexible, multi-sensory spaces for diverse users.
3. Identify the developmental and social benefits of rope play structures and how these can be maximized through intentional design choices.

Truly Tropical Trees for Zone 11 – Treasures of the Caribbean

Donna Corbelli Castro, Educational Training Specialist and Certified Arborist, UF/IFAS Broward County Extension

This presentation showcases trees native to Florida and the Caribbean. South Florida is a part of the Caribbean basin, and shares many of the challenging characteristics of the other areas of the Caribbean islands. This makes these trees uniquely suited to South Florida. A total of eighteen species will be featured with an emphasis on those most appropriate for urban environments.

Learning Objectives:

1. Name and recognize eighteen truly tropical tree species adapted to urban South Florida conditions.
2. Understand why these underutilized species can be best choices for public spaces.
3. Discuss best trees appropriate for urban environments in South Florida.

2:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Travel to Offsite Tour

2:45 PM - 3:45 PM

We Wanted Turf, We Got Surf... Drainaggedon

CJ Dragone, Park Foreman, Plantation Parks and Recreation

Join us for a hands-on walkthrough of a soccer complex that opened too soon—and how staff-led solutions turned design missteps into long-term wins. From drainage disasters to uneven turf, this class dives into the real-world challenges faced by parks teams and the creative fixes they engineered without outsourcing.

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss field grading and drainage corrections that restored playability.
2. Recognize turf and irrigation upgrades for safer, more sustainable surfaces.
3. Identify staff-powered renovations that saved time, money, and headaches.

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM

Smooth Transitions

Kenneth “Brad” Hoyt, Senior Park Foreman, Plantation Parks and Recreation

Don’t let a neglected lip ruin your field’s performance. This class covers the tools, timing, and techniques for maintaining the infield/outfield transition zone—ensuring smooth play, consistent ball action, and safer conditions for athletes.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe how lips form, what they affect, and when to intervene.
2. Observe Equipment setup, operation, and lip management techniques.
3. Recognize when to deploy, how to prep, and post-op checks.

4:45 PM - 5:15 PM

Travel back to Anne Kolb

DAY TWO – MARCH 13, 2026

8:00 AM - 8:45 AM

Registration and Check In (Breakfast Provided)

check in, get name badge, eat some breakfast

8:45 AM - 9:00 AM

Welcome Back

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

The Power of CSOs in Parks

Michelle M. Schmitz, Executive Director, Friends of Birch State Park & Jessica Cabral, Park Manager, Hugh Taylor Birch State Park

Learn how the Friends of Birch State Park revitalized a beloved community treasure through fundraising, volunteer programs, and partnerships. This session explores how a Citizen Support Organization can bring new life, resources, and engagement to your own park.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how the Friends of Birch State Park leveraged fundraising, volunteer engagement, and partnerships to revitalize park programs and facilities.
2. Identify key steps to establishing or strengthening a Citizen Support Organization to support your park's mission.
3. Apply proven strategies from Friends of Birch to build community involvement and sustain long-term park improvements.

Right Tree Right Place: Strategic Species Selection for Sustainable Parks

Kim Pearson, Parks Manager, Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation

This session moves beyond aesthetics, offering a practical framework for making informed species selection choices that align with environmental realities, maintenance budgets, and park functionality goals. Participants will explore how to assess site-specific conditions such as soil quality, available space (above and below ground), sun exposure, and proximity to infrastructure. We will cover the importance of biodiversity and how to choose trees that require minimal long-term maintenance in high-traffic public areas. This workshop is essential for parks managers, landscape architects, and urban foresters

tasked with designing healthy, functional, and sustainable park environments.

Learning Objectives:

1. Conduct comprehensive site assessments: Evaluate key site conditions (soil types, drainage, infrastructure conflicts, spatial limitations) to determine suitability for specific tree species.
2. Apply the "Right Tree, Right Place" principle: Select species that are physiologically matched to the site's environmental conditions, minimizing future maintenance costs and infrastructure damage.
3. Align species selection with park function: Select trees that fulfill specific functional goals, such as providing dense shade for gathering areas, offering seasonal interest, or managing stormwater runoff.

10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

Branching Out: Basic Tree Trimming Skills for Parks People

Kim Pearson, Parks Manager, Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation

This class will cover the why, when, and how of essential tree care at a manageable scale, with focus on low-risk examples such as dead branches in accessible areas, ensuring clear sightlines along paths and signs. Attendees will learn how to identify basic tree anatomy, use appropriate hand tools safely and effectively, and make simple, correct cuts that prioritize the tree's health and the public's safety, making the park enjoyable for all.

Learning Objectives:

1. Prioritize basic trimming objectives within a park setting.
2. Focus primarily on pedestrian safety, site functionality, and tree health maintenance.
3. Talk through tree cuts and the importance of doing properly.

11:20 AM - 12:20 PM

Wahoo Bay - A Marine Park

Katie Hendrickson, M.S.M.Sci, Executive Director, Wahoo Bay & Shipwreck Park

Learning Objectives:

TBA

Cultivating Community: Initiatives that benefit the Environment

Anthony Thomas, Superintendent of Recreation & Facility Services, Plantation Parks and Recreation & Luz Veronica Reyes, Supervisor of P&R Grants, Plantation Parks and Recreation

Discover how one thriving community garden sparked a movement toward environmental stewardship, innovative funding, and interdepartmental collaboration. This award-winning initiative inspired new green programs citywide. Learn how to cultivate eco-consciousness in your own community—even with limited resources—while protecting natural spaces and creating inclusive, sustainable programs that truly make a difference.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the necessities of their community for ecological and environmental ideas using the NRPA Assessment Tool 2.0.
2. Discuss strategies for cross-departmental collaboration to achieve sustainability goals.
3. Summarize the key steps for proposing and implementing environmental initiatives with limited funding.

12:20:00 PM -

Wrap Up and Goodbyes

Distribute certificates of completion and snack bags.