



WLC 2025 – Sub-Tracks Description

AS01.02 – How to manage the growing increase in mass tourism in the future

Chair: Rob Hemmes. Netherlands

How can we overcome the challenge of mass tourism, what tools can we use for this purpose and how can we learn from initiatives that have been developed in the world.

What is the right balance between residents of a city or a tourist destination and tourists visiting that destination? How can we possibly represent this in models and are there already models for this?

An additional effect of mass tourism is the loss of local culture and commercialization of local customs and habits.

In addition, it is often an unsustainable economic model and is often driven solely by greed and financial gain.

AS01.03 – Social Impact of Tourism

Chair: Jeroen Klijs, Netherlands

This special track explores the social impacts of tourism on both tourist and the residents of destinations, focusing on the ways to enhance the quality of life (and wellbeing) for both groups.

While tourism brings economic benefits and cultural exchange, it can also create social, economic, and ecological pressures that directly affect local communities. This session will address potential negative impacts of tourism, such as crowding, increased cost of living, changes in social fabric, and environmental degradation, alongside the benefits of tourism for residents, visitors and businesses. The session will emphasize innovative approaches to measure these impacts, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a holistic view of tourism's effects.

Moreover, we will explore how different types of interventions can alleviate negative impacts and/or strengthen the positive impacts and foster more sustainable tourism. Think, for example, about interventions to spread tourism over time and space, communication strategies, innovative usage of IT, and legal and financial measures. Discussions will focus on actionable strategies that promote mutual benefits, aiming to achieve a harmonious relationship between tourists, host communities and all other stakeholders involved.

This track invites researchers and practitioners to present studies, frameworks, and case studies that showcase successful or unsuccessful measurement methods as well as interventions, allowing for a discussion on the best ways to measure and manage tourism and contribute to quality of life.





AS03.02 – The Perfect Recipe for Reimagining Professional Internship Programs Pre/During/Post Pandemic

Chair: Lori Irwin & Tim Otteman, USA

A hands-on, how-to-do workshop in how to cultivate a professional, university-driven internship program connecting the home university, the student and the site organization as a launching point for young professionals into the event and recreation industry. Using the perspectives from a university with a unique 30 week/40 hour per week internship program who has been internationally accredited since 1982 and is an International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA) Gold Pinnacle Award winner as Best Event Management Bachelor's Degree for the last six consecutive years, this workshop will discuss and debate "tried and true" methods of internship management over the last 50+ years. Attendees will initially receive a detailed overview of the established internship procedures and protocols and access to all documents used including Letters of Agreement, evaluation forms, progress report checklists and final paper rubrics. Presenters will discuss and engage attendees with changes to the internship program from pre-pandemic in the late 2010s to major modifications during COVID-19 to the "middle ground" of the internship realities of today. This interactive presentation will discuss a wide range of "helpful hints" regarding internship searches; the site selection process; industry and academic expectations; face-to-face, hybrid and remote delivery methods and mentorship/advising from the home university and the industry venue. This is the perfect session for educators and current/potential internships sites.

AS03.03 – Best Teaching Practices in Leisure and Recreation

Chair: Steven Henle & Shawn Wilkinson, Canada

The cornerstone of the track is to share best ideas for teaching theories, concepts and applied learning (experiential learning) in relation to leisure and recreation. By sharing our best ideas we can improve our own teaching toolbox and encourage deeper learning for our students. A strong pedagogical foundation is a building block for improvements in research and professional careers, and we need to be collegial in our best ideas to promote best teaching practice.

AS03.04 – Positive Education in Tourism and Leisure Studies

Chairs: Moji Shahvali, Netherlands & Sebastian Filep, Australia

Positive Education combines traditional education principles with research-based positive psychology interventions aimed at increasing students' resilience, happiness, and wellbeing. In the curriculums, building on the character strengths of individual students, educators equip students with tools that help them intellectually grow and succeed, but also to flourish as a person.

Examples of tools include gratitude practices during lectures, act-of-kindness activities on campus, meditation breaks, learning in the outdoors, journaling, bonding activities, appreciate inquiry during interactions, and designing for physically and mentally challenging and engaging experiences.

Beyond school, positive education can also influence how graduates design and implement ideas in the job market for the wellbeing of their clients and communities. This session aims to bring educators, researchers, policy advisors, and managers in the fields of tourism and leisure who are interested in or practice any form of positive education.





AS04.02 – Co-Designing Research and Education for Accessible Leisure Experiences

Chair: Marco van Leeuwen, Netherlands

Participation in leisure activities can be very beneficial: through it, we can explore interests and passions, it can help us adopt a healthy lifestyle, show us how to develop skills, it can open our minds, facilitate in the meeting of cultures... and often it is simply fun. However, for leisure to have these benefits, the ability to participate is key – and that ability is not always obvious for everyone. A physical or mental disability, a lack of money, unavailability of leisure facilities in the neighborhood, a lack of knowledge or opportunity to access the right kinds of networks, or active prevention from participating – there are many reasons why leisure activities might not be accessible to people. To remedy this unfairness, we believe that it should be an explicit goal of leisure professionals to ensure the accessibility of events, activities, venues and facilities. That way, everyone can share in the wealth represented by leisure and tourism. In our session, we will bring together scientific experts and experience experts to share insights and co-design solutions for the accessibility and inclusivity of leisure practices and facilities for people with disabilities, and how to ensure that our students – the next generation of leisure professionals – can keep this top-of-mind. Subtopics include: -Outcomes of the CeLTH-funded project ‘Development of a measurement tool for studying inclusiveness of experiences’ -Input from our community of students and experience experts working to make Breda the most accessible city in Europe in 2030.

AA06.02 – Active Leisure Strategies, both national or local (municipal level) leisure sport/active leisure strategies

Chair: Gyöngyvér Lacza, Hungary

Active Leisure Strategies, both national or local (municipal level) leisure sport/active leisure strategies could be a session interesting for policy makers, academics and practitioners. National/local active leisure strategies might cover many relevant topics such as sport and recreation, active transport, active settings and well-being, inclusion and sustainability through leisure.

AS07.02 – The Impact of Community-Driven Initiatives on Local Territories through Regenerative Tourism

Chair:

This session aims to demonstrate how community-focused initiatives that boost local self-esteem significantly impact the surrounding territories. We will discuss the role of Instituto Apupaba, a Brazil-based NGO dedicated to territorial development through regenerative tourism. Apupaba’s mission centers on fostering sustainable and inclusive growth, with notable examples such as projects within Rio de Janeiro’s favelas, the “Tree of Life” initiative in Mendes, and socio-cultural impact tours designed for underserved regions across Brazil. These projects showcase the potential of regenerative tourism to revitalize communities and offer new opportunities for regions often overlooked by traditional tourism.





AS08.02 – Leisure Activities on Mental and Cognitive Health among Older People-Ageing and Wellbeing

Chair: Varalakshmi Manchana, India

Productive leisure time, activities to engage social and cognitive functions positively impact mental health in aging population. Regular engagement of activities (physical, cognitive and social) that are satisfying to self to enable self-appreciation and satisfaction has been claimed to be beneficial for the cognitive reserve and delays cognitive declines in older people. in the elderly. Studies have shown the positive impact of engaging in leisure activities with physical, cognitive and mental health domains, which is essential for healthy aging. Previous research carried from the Western countries support the findings, however the data is limited from countries like India, which contribute to the major proportion of the steeply growing aging population in the world. Evidence suggests that active engagement in leisure activities enable older adults to maintain cognitive, physical, and mental health. Future research is recommended to understand the causal relationship between engagement in leisure activities and indicators of healthy aging.

AS11.02 – Global Perspectives on Sport Tourism

Chairs: Brendon Knott & Marié Young, South Africa

This track will explore the past, present, and future trends and needs of sport tourism within a global context. The track welcomes theoretical, practical and case study contributions that particularly highlight innovation and sustainability within sport tourism activities, events, destinations, as well as the human dynamics and inclusivity of this sector.

AS12.02 – Leisure in Digital Age

Chair: Elvan Deniz Yumuk, Turkey

In the age of AI and all the technological progress, individuals especially the youth have become more and more sedentary. Video games, online games, game apps on everybody's phones make it easier to carry on a sedentary life style. The needs of hierarchy is now decomposed since the first need of many individuals is wifi connection. What is called fear of missing out have become an important issue and many people cannot live without their phones. Some individuals even participate in leisure activities so that they can share the photos and videos on their social media accounts. To turn the tables, leisure can be digitalized and used in the favor of healthy behavior. Therefore, the good examples of technology use in recreational activities can be the subjects of this track.





AS12.03 – What if we did nothing? The future work and free time in the age of AI

Chair: Joseph Pavelka, Canada

Artificial intelligence (AI) job disruption is here and poised to dramatically increase in the coming decade. There is considerable industry and media attention on widespread job loss but very little on what that means. The job (work) has been the backbone of societal and personal organization and understanding of what it means to be an adult human. Wide spread job redundancy - up to 50% of the working population would result in unprecedented changes to how we live. The transition to a post-work society may be the greatest challenge. History tells us we have a poor track record in dealing with wide spread free time. So, what are the consequences of such a scenario? What is the role of leisure as we understand it? What role would a universal basic income play? What would the role of formal education be ... if not for a job? And so on. I believe this is an excellent workshop topic. The session organizer, Dr. Joe Pavelka is currently completing a book of the same time and is also happy to make this into a presentation or keynote session if your committee sees fit.

AS12.04 – Leisure Futures: Automated Foresight Meets Design Futures

Chair: Marco Bevolo, Netherlands

To pursue the methodological ambition behind this Track, two research pillars of different epistemological nature were assimilated into a novel hybrid approach: automated foresight, enabled by the latest generation of Gen-AI, and Design Futures, emerging from industry practice based on Design Research. These two research practices were synthesized to enable a participatory mapping of signals into trends, as is common in Design Futures.

The authors take an agnostic position, envisioning the track to include papers and presentations including: 1) automated foresight analysis of all potential facets of this complex field; 2) integrative hybrid methods and approaches, both from industry and from the professional fields; and 3) Design Research professionals who engage the cultural discourses speculating on the futures. In this track, the organizers invite contributions from professionals in the foresight, futures research, and strategy-related fields as well as leisure professionals who wish to engage with foresight methods. The organizers wish to keep a neutral position among industry, academia, and thought leadership. It is, however, a requirement of this track to submit papers and presentations based on methodological proficiency, with a preference for original approaches and repeatable processes, whereby the Leisure Futures universe might be inspired to evolve in the future.





AS12.05 – Emerging paradigms and methods for leisure and tourism

Chair: Carla Fraga & João Freitas, Brazil & Lucilia Cardoso, Portugal

The field of study of leisure and tourism has broadened in the face of the transformative challenges of sustainability in the 21st century, with a focus on the search for unique and authentic experiences that connect individuals in a deep and responsible way to destinations and their communities. The Social Sciences have been intersected by emerging paradigms, ranging from the proposal of the so-called 'mobile turn' to alliances with less obvious areas, such as neurosciences - highlighting behavioural and cognitive perspectives - and computing, thus merging human and artificial intelligence. This thematic track seeks to debate theories and practices of leisure and tourism, immersed in the continuities and discontinuities that can exist between the real, the virtual, and the imagined. It serves as a space for researchers, scholars, market decision-makers and other stakeholders to question how to understand what truly moves - and what remains static - in leisure and tourism experiences. The themes include, but are not limited to: (1) Sensory and emotional experiences in leisure and tourism, analysing how environmental, technological and social elements influence tourists' perceptions; (2) The use of neuroscientific methods (Electroencephalogram - EEG, Eyetracking - ET, Galvanic Skin Response - GSR, among others) combined with self-reported; (3) The challenges of extended reality, including virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR); (4) The techniques, methods and methodologies that make it possible to document, monitor and understand the various dimensions of the modalities encompassed by the so-called New Mobilities Paradigm.

AS12.06 – VR or MultiMedia: Virtual Tourism & Emotions

Chair: Keri Schwab, USA

VR and multimedia videos offer virtual tourism experiences with the potential to positively impact mental health, but the optimal platform remains uncertain. This study explores factors influencing the effectiveness of tourism videos, focusing on VR and multimedia comparisons. Sixty-four participants watched two formats of videos (i.e., VR and multimedia) featuring San Luis Obispo, USA, and Tokyo, Japan. These two destinations were selected to evaluate the influence of familiarity on virtual experiences. Afterward, participants took part in 20-minute interviews to discuss their experiences and attitudes toward each format. Qualitative analysis by two coders identified key themes: interactivity, immersion, authenticity, presence, perceived value, enjoyment, and mindfulness. In comparing VR and multimedia videos, many participants enjoyed the control and engagement that VR offered, describing the experience as personal and immersive. However, some also reported frustration or distraction from constant movement. Both video formats effectively showcased destination authenticity, enhanced by cultural elements. Regarding perceived value, both VR and multimedia videos facilitated learning and sparked interest in travel by showcasing unique experiences. Participants reported feelings of excitement and relaxation after viewing, with the SLO video having a stronger mindfulness effect due to its familiarity. This research highlights potential improvements for VR and multimedia videos. First, rapid pacing and limited details occasionally confused viewers, particularly in the multimedia video, where participants lacked control. Second, VR tourism may be a more suitable option for participants familiar with the destination, as unfamiliarity sometimes led to disorientation. Finally, including cultural and people scenes is essential for both formats.





AS14.01 – Critical Event Studies SIG: Exploring the Social Transformative Power and Resilience of Festivals and Leisure Events

Chairs: Willem Coetzee, Australia & Alba Colombo, Spain & Trudie Walters, New Zealand.

Festivals and leisure events (F&LEs) have become integral to cultural engagement and social interaction. These events are celebrated for their ability to bring communities together, yet they also face criticism regarding social and environmental impacts, such as the privatization of public spaces, ecological degradation and disruptions to local communities. Despite these challenges, F&LEs have shown remarkable potential in enhancing social cohesion and fostering a sense of community through shared experiences and collective knowledge exchange. Different crises have underscored the vital role of F&LEs in supporting and sustaining communities, highlighting their ability to adapt and innovate. The resilience demonstrated also points to its capacity for mobilizing creative energy and collective activism for the greater good. This session will delve into these dual natures of F&LEs as sources of significant social value while addressing their associated challenges. We welcome papers that address the following topics: How F&LEs contribute to social cohesion and community solidarity; The challenges posed by F&LEs, especially social concerns; Effective strategies for managing/mitigating the negative social impacts; The role of F&LEs in driving social change and promoting sustainable community development; Insights into resilience gained from the sector's response to global crises beyond the pandemic; Longitudinal studies of the enduring nature of the benefits of F&LEs for individuals and communities; Development (and testing) of models or frameworks to enhance event organizers' ability to deliver sustained benefits through F&LEs; The role of the media in representing F&LEs for/in marginalized communities.

AS19.02 – Leisure for nature and biodiversity: the symbiosis of theory and practice

Chair: Bert Smit, Netherlands

This session invites contributions on Leisure, nature and biodiversity, focusing on the role of leisure in nature conservation and regeneration locally and globally. This track seeks to explore the transformative power of nature on individuals and the transformational power of leisure and the leisure industry in conserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity. We welcome contributions that critically report or reflect on the (potential) symbiosis of leisure and nature, including ethnographic, (participatory) action research and co-design research projects that advance theory and/ or practice. As symbiosis isn't always mutually beneficial: we encourage contributions that do not only report on success but also on failure from a practice or academic point of view.

AS19.03 – Exploring the Restorative Dynamics of Nature

Chair: Keri Schwab, USA

This track invites presentations that explore the restorative effects of natural or built environments on mental, physical, and emotional health. To bridge research to practice, this track emphasizes practical application of the psychological and physiological benefits that come from engaging with natural spaces. Research topics can examine how time in nature, whether direct experiences, therapeutic interventions, or urban and architectural designs that incorporate greenery, can impact overall well-being.





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Much previous literature has examined how time in nature or with nature-like settings can impact stress, mood, and cognitive functioning (Berman et al., 2008; Hartig et al., 2014; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Presentations are welcome from a range of fields such as psychology, public health, neuroscience, urban planning, and environmental studies. Topics may include the impact of natural settings on recovery from mental fatigue, emotional resilience, and improved focus and attention, and of relationships or family dynamics.

Sessions may also address practical applications, such as integrating green spaces into cities and designing workplace or educational environments that foster wellness through nature exposure. This can include recent, traditional practices such as windows, lighting, or indoor plants, as well as nature-based therapies like ecotherapy, forest bathing and nature play in early childhood development (Li, 2010).

Through practical application of theory-based findings, this track aims to foster discussions on how to improve access to nature both indoors and out, and in public and private spaces, for the betterment of the societies, communities, families, and individuals. Nature should play an increasingly important role in urban design, healthcare policy, and community planning. The track will offer a space for practitioners and researchers to share insights on nature's healing capacity, and foster conversations and collaborations for innovative solutions.



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