



2025 GREAT LAKES LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AGENDA

SEPTEMBER 22-24, 2025 | NIAGARA ON THE LAKE, ON

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2025

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM **ARRIVAL, HOTEL CHECK-IN AND REGISTRATION | PILLAR & POST, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ON**

We will have a table in the hotel lobby. Stop by for a warm welcome and pick up your name badge, meeting binder and a bag full of good things. A registration desk will also be set up at Landscape Ontario if you are coming right from Pearson International Airport to our facility.

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM **DEPARTURE FOR RECEPTION AT LANDSCAPE ONTARIO FACILITY**

A shuttle will be leaving from the hotel to bring everyone to the Landscape Ontario facility for our opening evening reception.

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM **OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION AT LANDSCAPE ONTARIO | 7856 FIFTH LINE SOUTH, MILTON, ON**

Join us straight from Pearson International Airport (YYZ) at Landscape Ontario for an opening night reception with food and drinks, a tour of our facility and to catch up with your Great Lakes peers!

8:30 PM - 10:00 PM **SHUTTLE BACK TO PILLAR & POST, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ON**

We head back to the hotel as a group. If you travelled directly to the Landscape Ontario facility, we will have a place for your bags on the shuttle.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM **BREAKFAST**

Fuel your leadership journey with a delicious breakfast. Even superheroes need to eat (maple syrup is good on everything), so let's kick off the day right!

8:00 AM - 9:15 AM **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND WARM-UP SESSION**

Everyone will briefly introduce themselves to the group. You'll be asked to share one thing that you (or your association) has accomplished over the past year.

9:15 AM - 10:15 AM **"THE CLIENT CONUNDRUM": SHARING APPROACHES TO DIFFICULT INTERACTIONS INDUSTRY & ASSOCIATION PERSPECTIVES**

Let's talk about difficult clients. This session is a supportive space for everyone to discuss the complexities of dealing with challenging clients (and members), both in our day-to-day industry work and within association roles. Share your stories and learn from collective wisdom. **(Moderated by: State)**



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10:15 AM - 10:30 AM **BREAK + NETWORKING**

Time to stretch your legs and network! Think of it as a mandatory coffee-fueled scramble to connect with your peers. Just try not to spill the tea on anyone important!

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM **CULTIVATING THE FUTURE: PR & MARKETING TO ATTRACT YOUTH TO LANDSCAPE HORTICULTURE**

This session will explore dynamic public relations and marketing tactics specifically designed to inspire and attract young people to rewarding careers in the landscape horticulture trades. Join us to discuss innovative strategies for workforce development and building the next generation of green industry professionals. **(Moderated by: State)**

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM **UNDERSTANDING & RESPONDING: KEY REGULATORY CHANGES**

Join a collaborative discussion to unpack the latest legislative and regulatory updates affecting pest and disease protocols, stormwater management, the use of two-stroke engines, and more in your area. Share your knowledge and learn from others. **(Moderated by: State, 6 mins per delegation)**

12:30 PM - 1:15 PM **LUNCH**

Time to refuel! It's also a great opportunity to connect with fellow peers and continue those engaging discussions. Enjoy!

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM **FUTURE FORWARD: SHARING PERSPECTIVES FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING**

A discussion and sharing of perspectives on your strategic plan. We'll delve into current strategies, explore new opportunities and collectively refine approaches to tactic development and measuring our effectiveness. **(Moderated by: State)**

2:30 PM - 4:30 PM **PILLAR & POST MONET INSPIRED GARDENS PRESENTATION & TOUR**

Hear a presentation from Haig Seferian of Seferian Design Group and Mark Polionato from Oakridge Landscape on the challenges building the beautiful Monet inspired gardens during the pandemic at the Pillar & Post Hotel. Followed by a walk through the gardens.

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM **DINNER (WINERY TO BE DETERMINED)**

We will be visiting a local Niagara winery for dinner and to experience local food and wine. A shuttle will take us to and from the winery, departing from the hotel.



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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM **BREAKFAST**

Conquer the breakfast buffet before you conquer the world. Remember, a well-fed mind is a powerful mind... and a muffin in hand is worth two in the pastry basket!

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM **EMPOWERING OUR PEOPLE: HOW ARE WE ONBOARDING & TRAINING BOARD, COMMITTEE & VOLUNTEERS, STAFF?**

Let's talk about what works (and what doesn't) when it comes to preparing our essential people in your businesses and associations. This session is an open forum for us to share our approaches, challenges, and successes in onboarding and training board members, committee members, volunteers and staff.

(Moderated by: State)

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM **BUILDING A MORE INCLUSIVE ASSOCIATION: WELCOMING ALL VOICES**

Join a vital discussion on how your association can be a welcoming community for everyone. We'll explore strategies to attract and engage marginalized groups to the workforce, with a particular focus on women, young professionals, owners, managers and mid-career individuals — ensuring all have a sense of belonging and opportunity. **(Moderated by: State)**

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM **BREAK + NETWORKING**

Final break of the conference. Time to grab that last coffee and squeeze in those essential "power-networking" moments.

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM **PILLARS OF PROGRESS: MEMBER ENGAGEMENT, STRATEGIC ALLIANCES, SHARED RESOURCES**

A discussion and sharing of perspectives on your strategic plan. We'll delve into current strategies, explore new opportunities and collectively refine approaches to tactic development and measuring our effectiveness. **(Moderated by: State)**

11:30 AM - 12:00 PM **TOPICS FOR 2026**

Let's go around the table to identify some hot topics for Great Lakes 2026. **(Moderated by: State)**