



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **World Aquatic Health™ Conference Broadens its Reach**

*Environmental Health Key in Charleston, and WAHCity Events Take Conference on the Road*

**Colorado Springs, COLORADO, November 8, 2018**—The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual [World Aquatic Health™ Conference](#) (WAHC) saw its largest attendance ever this year, attracting nearly 600 aquatic professionals from all over the world to Charleston, South Carolina, and to six WAHCity locations in the U.S. and Canada. Organized by the National Swimming Pool Foundation® (NSPF), this diverse gathering provides an opportunity for environmental health officials, facility managers, pool designers, academics, service professionals, and other industry leaders to collaborate across disciplines, promoting the health benefits of aquatic activity and working to safeguard public health.

For the first time ever, those unable to attend the main conference in Charleston were able to enjoy WAHCity events. Around 200 attendees posted up at one of six WAHCity locations for a lecture track broadcast directly from the main event in Charleston. With the help of NSPF's partners and sponsors—like the WAHCity: Niagara Falls host Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA)—these broadcasts allowed the conference to greatly expand its reach and extend a vital conversation. WAHCity events were located at Great Wolf Lodge resorts, all of which provided attendees behind-the-scenes tours of their aquatic facilities.

Attendees in Charleston also enjoyed an Insider's Tour. A mainstay of the conference, the Insider's Tour gives aquatics professionals a chance to learn about select aquatic facilities and initiatives in the host city. The highlight of this year's tour was a presentation from the Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission on their portable pool initiative, which brings both swimming instruction and the pool itself to communities in need.

Offering eight tracks related to public and environmental health, air and water quality, recreational water illnesses, new technology, and facility management, this year's WAHC presented a wealth of research, as well as an immediate opportunity for participants to engage in discussions with leading professionals. Session topics included interlock safety, national water safety plans, legal issues in aquatics, preventing sexual harassment and predators and facility management and design, and learn to swim initiatives.





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Dr. James Amburgey, a water filtration researcher at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, was a breakaway hit throughout the conference, bringing humor, candor, and urgency to the broader discussion of water filtration and water quality. Dynamic GENESIS faculty Feras Irikat also proved popular presenting WAHC's new Design & Engineering track. A color psychologist, Irikat's sessions on color theory and the art of innovation highlighted the diverse industry concerns that have come to typify the audience that gathers for the WAHC. Kerstin Hewitt, an Environmental Health Specialist in California, clarified just how energizing that diverse audience can be: "I always come back with such renewed enthusiasm for the work we and others do in conjunction with recreational water facilities."



Attendees from the Environmental Health (EH) sector have a growing presence at the WAHC, making up around 17% of all registrants. This year's EH Symposium, the WAHC's annual meeting of EH officials from all over the U.S., was a great success. According to NSPF's Government Affairs Specialist, Susan Wichmann, "By far the most valuable aspects of the Symposium were the networking and learning how different jurisdictions handle similar issues. Given the rise in EH official attendance in the last few years, the value of the Symposium is clear—some have even asked to extend the length of the meeting!"

Emily Tipping, whose annual State of the Industry report for *Recreation Management* was a frequently cited source this year, had this to say about her experience in Charleston: "The best events give you an opportunity to expand your knowledge as well as your network of peers. In both respects, the WAHC exceeded my expectations. The biggest difficulty I had was choosing which sessions to attend, because there were just so many great topics. And the depth and breadth of information covered in the sessions I did attend was outstanding. Whether you're new to aquatics or know the ropes well, I have no doubt you'll learn something new and enjoy meeting new peers in the industry at WAHC."

The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual WAHC will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia, October 16–18, 2019. Early registration begins in April 2019. Interested presenters and attendees can learn more at [thewahc.org](http://thewahc.org).

**About the World Aquatic Health™ Conference**

This leading global aquatic research forum is tailored to inform all individuals and groups associated with aquatics: aquatic facilities and water parks, the pool and spa industry, service providers, consultants, parks & recreation representatives, manufacturers, academia, associations, builders,



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[Watch the video.](#)

**About National Swimming Pool Foundation®**

We believe everything we do helps people live happier and healthier lives. Whether it's encouraging more aquatic activity, making pools safer, or keeping pools open, we believe we can make a difference. Founded in 1965 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit and located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, NSPF proceeds go to fund education, research, and to help create swimmers. The NSPF family includes Genesis and the California Pool & Spa Association. Visit [nspf.org](http://nspf.org) or call 719-540-9119 to learn more about the NSPF family of products, programs, and services.

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