



CHALLENGE COURSES • CANOPY ZIPLINES • AERIAL PARKS

# PRCA 17th Annual International Conference

## Holiday Inn Tampa Westshore

700 North Westshore Blvd.  
Tampa, Florida 33609  
(813) 289-8200

**March 5-8, 2020**

**(Pre-Conference March 4-5)**

## Welcome!

The PRCA is excited to expand on the conference this year by offering an expanded Pre-Conference Certification and Training Seminars for both the beginning facilitator and experienced trainer. And, there are diverse educational and informative workshops during the main Conference with fun networking opportunities, social functions and association meetings interspersed.

Our hope is that this brochure will provide you with detailed information to help make your Conference experience engaging and fun as you meet other PRCA Members who share many of your interests, goals and concerns within the Ropes Course Industry and, more specifically, your learning objectives!

## Venue – Holiday Inn Tampa Westshore:

The conference will be hosted again at the Holiday Inn Tampa Westshore. This is a beautiful location and has much to offer. Comfortable rooms, FREE WiFi, kids under 18 stay and eat free with parents, free self and valet parking, business center, heated outdoor pool, fitness center, and much more!

The convenience of the vibrant Westshore market is right out the front door. Tampa's best shopping and entertainment district is within the complimentary transportation zone of three miles; most is within walking distance. You can enjoy either International Plaza or Westshore Plaza for all of your shopping needs. The close proximity of Tampa International Airport as well as the Tampa cruise port are also bonuses! The venue is near many gulf beaches, Lowry Park Zoo, Downtown Museums, Spring Training, Busch Gardens, Florida Aquarium, and Raymond James Stadium.

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## Conference Exhibitors, Corporate Members, and Sponsors:

The PRCA would like to also officially acknowledge and thank our sponsors for the conference. We encourage all to spend some time getting to know these industry specialists while visiting with them at their Exhibit Hall booths, checking out their websites, and supporting them with your business!

Mike Courtemanche, [www.wwewirerope.com](http://www.wwewirerope.com)

Jeremiah Calvino, [www.blendimc.com](http://www.blendimc.com)

Terri Schnell, [www.peaktrading.com](http://www.peaktrading.com)

Kenny Brodin, [www.kongusa.com](http://www.kongusa.com)



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## Pre-Conference Seminars

### Qualified Instructor Certification

The Qualified Instructor Certification program was created by the PRCA to address the growing North American and International regulatory requirements, the general desire to increase the professionalism of our industry and to give all stakeholders, in-house or vendors, the opportunity to offer quality, standardized training to their employees. This program issues certifications to industry professionals, in all areas of the industry, who have the knowledge, expertise and experience to perform quality employee training. *(Provided at the Hotel.)*

**Level 1 Low or High Ropes Facilitator (L1L/HR) Certification\***: This training is provided by *Pro Image Adventures* to meet the needs of beginning facilitators. L1L/HR does not require any prior experience or training.

\*Provided off-site at Lake Aurora Christian Camp & Retreat Center, Lake Wales FL *(Meals & lodging available at this same site.)*

## Workshop Descriptions

### From the US to China, Environmental Education & Ropes Courses at Wolf Ridge

#### Presenter: Peter Smerud

Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center has facilitated ropes course and rock climbing experiences for youth since 1975, serving more than 13,000/year in weeklong programs at a 400 bed facility in far northern MN. This session will focus on designs and learning theory that has shaped the ropes course programs, with some content on equipment and facilitation in a very cold climate, e.g. -40F. The session will end with a perspective on international developments in experiential learning as Wolf Ridge ELC has served as model and supported the development of centers in other countries such as Hungary, Argentina, and now China. Pete just returned from China, following a request of Chinese education leaders and sent by the US State Department to help increase environmental education infrastructure in the country... Learn how that country is beginning to change pace in their approaches to education.



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## **Marketing Your Business With Drones**

**Presenter: Steve Gustafson**

Learn about the ever-changing aspects of this emerging field of Drone piloting filming, and marketing through this interactive workshop that includes an indoor demonstration! Topics covered include current regulations and licensing (both commercial and residential) and liability considerations (damage to vehicles, buildings, etc.) and associated insurance options and fees. As a rapidly growing industry (from delivery services to search and rescue!), Drones are here to stay and now's the time to learn how you can take advantage of this growing marketing service opportunity!

## **Portable Team Building Activities**

**Presenter: Curt Rowland**

Learn new team building activities plus new twists on the old tried and true activities. Come ready to participate plus share your variation on what works for you. Lets play for an hour! Participants will learn at least one new portable team building activity and how to process it, a new way to present a tried and true teambuilding activity, and will have fun!

## **Beginnings, Endings, Strings and Things**

**Presenter: Noel Pompa**

Participants will experience using various activities, props and, equipment that teach communication, trust, and fun. Goals, processes, and how to apply to daily living/school situations will be discussed. Topics will include listening vs. hearing, looking vs. seeing, and touching vs. feeling. Workshop will be 90% interactive and 10% lecture and discussion. Participants are highly encouraged to bring a "parachute" mentality and be prepared to have F.U.N.N. (functional understanding not necessary)

## **Greetings from Ecuador!- The Need for Experiential Learning in South America.**

**Presenter: Maricio Granda**

The conference will start with a brief presentation of Ecuador, then a Little information about Cuenca, the city where I'm building the High Ropes Challenge Course, The second part will explain my experience with transformational coaching, how it changed the way I see the world now and how this type of programs can help people create a better world. Learning objectives include having a greater understanding of Transformational



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Coaching, Importance of Team Work, and certainty that everything is possible 100% of the times!

### **Check Yourself Before You Wreck Yourself - Tips and Tricks To Stay Safe On The Training and Job Site**

**Presenter: Sean Fisher**

This workshop takes an in depth look into risk mitigation of ropes work and team building environments. The goal is to improve best practices to maintain safety within self and group growth models. As an instructor and builder, Sean's focus has always been to help reduce preventative risks while maximizing program effectiveness. This presentation brings to light commonly missed practices, and provides recommendations on improving yourself as well as the groups you serve. Participants will come away with an understanding of commonly missed safety issues with best practices for ropes course industry members, easy methods to confirm well thought out activities - SORT model, and mental health tips to stay in control of your risk and self check-in practices

### **Canopy Walkways and Forests -What they can teach us; why they are saving our lives; thus why we need to save theirs!**

**Presenters: Tom Andrews, Mike Bolinger, and Brad Childs**

This workshop will present facts regarding the value of trees; that we are losing them alarmingly and that action needs to be taken to save them. However, in our present-day society with so many competing dramas at our doorstep that require \$ and time, like viscerally educating folks (especially the young who are our future who need to be given an opportunity to care). And then, information about the vulnerability of these trees. Join us to learn how these issues will affect your organization, alternative approaches for sustainable outdoor education and tourism, and what you can do to make an important difference in this area,

### **Risk Management- Law Suit filed against us... how will that affect me, how should I prepare...**

**Presenters: Pete Smerud, Gus Denzik, Mike Barker, Brad Childs**

Join us for an interactive roundtable discussion on how you can prepare yourself and your team in the event of a personal injury lawsuit that is filed against your organization. The panel is composed of experienced fellow owners and operators of adventure-programs that have first hand experience that can help others be prepared for when that fateful day occurs and can walk you through the steps, which in turn can create lessons that inform a better level of



preparedness.

### **Back to Basics - A Facilitator Top 10**

**Presenter: Peter Hatlestad**

This workshop will look at ten aspects important for a challenge course facilitator to integrate, develop and be aware of to be an effective facilitator. The goal is to foster discussion on soft skills needed to navigate the ever-changing landscape of group dynamics as they work toward common goals during a challenge course experience.

### **Exploratory Climbing in Labrador**

**Presenter: Mike Barker**

Enjoy watching this exciting slide show detailing the first exploratory climbing expedition to the English Mountains of Labrador! Unique landscapes, seeing the rift of Pangea which broke apart 175 million years ago, and understanding some of the hardships of exploratory climbing are some of the highlights. It's a unique chance to see an area that no one else has set eyes upon prior to this trip.

### **Debriefing Low Ropes Activities**

**Presenter: Curt Rowland**

Participants will learn how to “Front-Load” this experience to anticipate their group's thoughts and responses while connecting the experience to a Metaphor that helps participants remember this experience. This would be an expansion on the “What?”, “So What?” and the “Now What?” as classic debriefing tools. Learning outcomes include simple and practical ways to debrief activities from a Ropes Course experience, how to make or collect Items you already have to solidify metaphors for better memory of the learning experience, and how to choose a theme for the entire Challenge Course so as to bring the entire experience together.

### **Using the ANSI/PRCA training standards**

**Presenter: Gus Denzik**

This workshop will look at the standards and develop training modules. How do you take the standards and create classes that are functional, powerful and right for your facility. Discussion will also include what is involved in the qualified instructors course. Attendees will gain a greater understanding and comfort with the ANSI/PRCA standards, be able to evaluate a standard and begin to formulate a lesson plan for teaching the skill to future ropes course professionals



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and be able to set a plan for developing their skills to be confident to take the Qualified Instructor course.

## **The Future – All Inclusive Courses**

### **Presenter: Mike Barker**

“I was never even able to go on a swing!” While some adaptive efforts have been made on courses over the years; these tend to be restricted to some low elements and possibly one or two high challenge courses. This workshop will discuss recent and current futuristic efforts to expand our industry into the all-inclusive world where persons of all mental and physical abilities can experience our high challenge ropes courses and zip lines!

Attendees will learn to differentiate between adaptive challenges and all-inclusive challenges, learn to realize that with proper engineering persons with or without physical and/or mental disabilities can come to share the exhilaration of accomplishing challenges at height or the joy of almost “flying” on a zip line, and understand some of the issues (wheelchairs, motorized wheelchairs, ventilator usage, etc.) facing the development of these all-inclusive courses.

## **TreeUmph! Aerial Adventure Course Tour**

### **Presenter: Tom Andrews**

A local favorite in the Tampa region, TreeUmph! is an Aerial Adventure Park just about an hour drive from the conference. Meet & Greet with the owners, tour the facilities, climb and zip through the course (for FREE) and participate in a Q&A session with a course manager. Operations, staff training, and maintenance are areas of workshop focus. Space is limited and sign up will be done at the registration desk. (NOTE: transportation not provided; car-pooling encouraged)

TreeUmph!, took a 14-acre piece of land that is approximately the size of 10 football fields and filled it with some of the most daring, innovative adventure games you'll find anywhere outside your own imagination. Suspended logs? Check. Wobbly footbridges? You bet. Zip lines? Absolutely! By the time you're done taking on these challenges, an incredible transformation of mind and body will have taken place. Let's do this!

TreeUmph!, 21805 E SR 70, Bradenton, FL 34202 [www.TreeUMPH.com](http://www.TreeUMPH.com)



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## **University of Southern Florida Ropes Course Tour**

### ***Presenter: Ankur Aggarwal***

Please join us on this last session of the conference to tour the nearby USF Challenge Ropes Course complex and learn about how the university works with the community and inter-agency collaboration to provide experiential learning services to their diverse student population and community groups.

## **Service Crew**

The Service Crew Program is where volunteers and students can work up to 15 hours on conference related support efforts and earn a free conference registration! This is a great way to save money, support your association, attend some great workshops, defining your skills for a current or future employment. Help at the registrations table, assist with workshop set up and introductions, help with other conference related logistics, assist the vendors, etc. What a great way to get involved!

## **Socials and Networking**

### **Evening Social and Networking Gatherings**

All are invited to attend the Social Gatherings as a mixer for all to enjoy in the Exhibit Hall! Come decompress from the days workshops and enjoy networking with other PRCA Members and develop rewarding social connection! Check the daily schedule for each hosted event provided FREE for all conference attendees to participate and enjoy.

**Thursday:** Popcorn Machine with gourmet toppings, Iced Tea and Lemonade. – Hosted by the **PRCA**.

**Friday Lunch:** Sandwiches and salads “light Lunch”. Hosted by **Kong USA, Blend Travel, and Peak Trading Company!**

**Friday Dinner:** Variety of Pizza and soda options. – Hosted by **Adventure Mas’**

**Saturday Evening Tamp Bay Boat Tour!** Enjoy a fun evening on the water as we ride through the exclusive waterfront area with view of the skyline of Tampa at sunset!! Hosted by **Pro Image Adventures**

***A special thank you to each of our Social Sponsors/Hosts!!***

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## PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

### PRCA Annual Members Meeting

As mandated by the PRCA By-laws, an annual Membership Meeting is to be held with active membership of the association. This is a closed meeting of active and direct members only. Sit in's or proxy votes are not permitted. An update of Board and association activities for the past year will be presented and future initiatives. This year also includes election of one new Board member.

### PRCA Annual Board Meeting

As mandated by the PRCA By-laws, an annual Board of Directors Meeting is to be held, open to active membership of the association. Active members have speaking privileges and may pose questions to the Board. Non-members are welcome to attend yet will not be recognized for questions or comments. It traditionally includes election of Board officers and Committee Chairs.

## SILENT AUCTION

The Silent Auction! Here is your chance to get some deals on new, top of the line gear and accessories all while supporting the PRCA's student scholarships! Sterling ropes, Kong gear, Robertson Harnesses, and CMI Zip Line Trollies are just some of the big ticket items that may up for auction! Be sure to check it out and place your bids!

**Thank you Gear Donation Providers who contributed to our Silent Auction!**



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## Workshop Presenters:

**Tom Andrews**, is the principal behind Pro Image Adventures; aka Pro Image & Associates, LLC, since 1986. He has been an adjunct professor at Taylor University, and an instructor at MIT and Wabash College. He and his staff have designed, built, and inspected more than 1000 challenge courses, and offer legendary facilitator certification training programs all around the country.

He has presented more than 25 workshops at regional, national and international professional associations such as PRCA, ACCT, CCL, ACA, AEE and others since 1980. His firm is a PRCA Accredited Vendor and he is a current member of the PRCA Board of Directors.

**Mike Barker**, is the Executive Director and COO of Corporate Challenge, Inc. , dba Adventure Más East & West, and current President of the PRCA Board of Directors. Mike has been involved in the industry since 1975; building, training inspecting, and facilitating. Mike served as the principal editor of the current ANSI/PRCA American National Safety Standards. Due to a previous law enforcement career Mike has served as an expert witness in numerous industry accident cases, and has assisted law enforcement and OSHA in investigating fall related accidents. Mike Barker has been involved in the industry for over 40 years, facilitating, designing, building, inspecting courses and training staff. He has served on the PRCA BOD as an at large member, vice-president and president. Mike is currently heavily involved in the design of all-inclusive courses to open our experiences to everyone.

**Mike Bollinger** is a ropes course professional working for the city of Jefferson City, MO as a recreation leader, and has been involved in the industry since 1995.

### **Brad Childs**

Brad is the founding President/CEO of The Wilderness Institute, Inc., a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization he established in 1984, having served as the organization's chief wilderness guide, lead facilitator and Rope Course builder. He holds numerous certifications and credentials in outdoor leadership, wilderness skills, emergency response and outdoor safety instruction from



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organizations such as the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, California Fire Academy, US National Park Service, Rainier Mountaineering, American Whitewater, American Red Cross, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and several others.

He is a past National Park Ranger and County Sheriff Mountain Rescue SAR Team member, an Interpretive Naturalist and Survival Instructor, Whitewater River Guide, Rock Climbing and Rope Course Instructor Trainer, USA Olympic and Field Archery Instructor Trainer, Colorado Hunter Education Instructor, and Red Cross Wilderness First Aid Instructor.

He has completed his MS Thesis from CSUN, studying the effects of outdoor challenge programs on youth at risk. Brad now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico on a beautiful 160 acre Wilderness Preserve (and is the Executive Director of Santa Fe Tree House Camp) where he enjoys year-round outdoor activities with his life partner, Ciana Grove. They are both committed to helping others to reconnect with nature and living healthy, joyful, balanced and purposeful lives. He is a member of PRCA Board of Directors, Treasurer, and 2020 Conference Chair.

**Gus Denzik**, is a ropes course professional and has been involved in the industry since 1985. He was the owner of ACCT vendor member ERi until he and his wife decided to slow down and raise their 3 sons (all have become US Marines) at Butler Springs Christian Camp. He has continued to build/train/inspect/facilitate challenge courses. Gus continues to serve at camp but he has also been an active part of the ropes course industry. He currently is serving as a board member for the PRCA.

### **Sean Fisher**

A lifelong skier, Peter is certified as an alpine ski patroller and wilderness first responder. He's been a member of the Lake County Search and Rescue squad since 1994, serving as its captain from 1997-2001.

Sean is a lifetime industry member as a course director, builder and coach whose primary focus is creating programs that help everyone grow safely. Sean is proficient at working on various styles of courses, training military officers and



camp staff, and building and inspecting in all environments. Throughout his time in the industry, Sean's gained expertise in site operations and planning for all arenas.

**Steve Gustafson**, is the principle owner of EBL Zip Lines and over 35 years experience. He is co-founder of the PRCA, and current Board Member (Vice President) of the PRCA and past Board of Trustees Member with the Wilderness Education Association (WEA). His firm is an Accredited Vendor delivering Zip Line and Aerial Adventure Park services, all while investing and owner their own corporate zip line tour locations. He also serves as Producer of the Reality TV show Zip Away, and Executive Producer for the shows musical scores and soundtracks.

### **Mauricio Granda**

Ecuadorian entrepreneur dedicated to transformational coaching now developing the first High Ropes Challenge Course in Ecuador to help people change their limitant beliefs and create a successful life.

**Peter Hatlestad**, has been involved in the challenge course industry for over 30 years getting his start in wilderness programming. Peter received his MS ED in Recreation from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. He is currently the Snake Road Adventure Center Program Director at Covenant Harbor Bible Camp in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin where he has been leading challenge course and outdoor education programs for 23 years. Peter also has been a PRCA Certified Qualified Instructor for two years and a current PRCA Board Member.

### **Noel Pompa**

Noel Pompa has 28 years of experience in the mental health field. He has been a ropes facilitator for 15 years, working with organizations such as schools, hospitals, camps, corporate groups, sports organizations and universities. Noel has traveled to Bulgaria, Canada, Mexico, Spain, Italy and Russia to teach and give workshops on a variety of subjects, including team-building, stress management, staff development and conflict resolution. Adventure Más sponsored his trip to Bulgaria and Russia as part of its EdAdventure Russia program. Noel is an active member with AEE, TERA and TAPHERD. He is an avid outdoor sports enthusiast who can often be found scuba diving or rock climbing.



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**Curt Rowland**, has been in church camping all his career. He has a Master of Theology from Bethany Seminary and has been an ordained minister since 1989. He has served 14 years as a Camp Director at Camp Eder and 17 years as a program director at the YMCA of the Ozarks and at Camp Alexander Mack. He has served multiple times on the steering committee for the Outdoor Ministry Association for the Church of the Brethren. Recently retired from camp, he now owns his own handyman business and works part time with a challenge course vendor. 35 Years Leading Christian Camps, Rope Courses. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Biology/Bridgewater College and Master's degree in Theology/Bethany Theological Seminary 1984.

### **Peter Smerud Bio**

Peter Smerud is the Wolf Ridge Executive Director and has served in this position since 2011. Previous roles at Wolf Ridge include assistant director, director of operations, director of adventure education, special programs coordinator and naturalist. His tenure at Wolf Ridge began in 1987 at a time when the new site had no buildings or curriculum. Today, Peter directs a staff of 60-75 people who enrich the lives of 15,000 students and summer campers annually.

Experienced in all aspects of residential center operations – education, strategic planning, fund-raising and facilities maintenance – Peter consults with other environmental education organizations in the United States and abroad. He presents at state and national conferences, conducts seminars and is a member of several professional organizations including the North American Association for Environmental Education and the Minnesota Science Teachers Association. Peter is a founding member of the Professional Ropes Course Association.

He received a bachelor's degree from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, majoring in German with concentrations in chemistry and biology. Peter also pursued graduate studies in natural resource management at North Dakota State University and outdoor recreation at the University of Utah. In addition, he graduated from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in Lander, Wyoming.



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## PRCA Membership

### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Receive a licensed electronic PDF copy of the ANSI 1.0-.3-2014 ANSI designated American National Safety Standards for Challenge Courses (which covers challenge courses, aerial adventure parks, canopy tours and zip line tours/courses) (electronic version; Adobe PDF and agree to abide by the PRCA LICENSE AGREEMENT)
- Discounts to PRCA sponsored events & conferences
- Be eligible to participate in the PRCA Master Policy for general liability coverage
- Reviewed Vendors may participate in the PRCA Commercial General Liability coverage program
- Online video resources of select past conference workshops, and throw back training video segments on harness fitting, rope coiling, construction practices, etc.
- Receive copies of the PRCA Newsletter: "The Connection"
- Access to the Members Only area for more downloads
- Receive industry alerts and notifications from manufacturers
- Contribute to a sharing community
- Network with other professionals in the industry
- Eligible to participate on working committees
- Eligible to serve on the Board of Directors

Individual Membership	\$85 / annually w/1 – one year end user license
Organizational Members	\$250 / annually w/4 - one year end user license
Accredited Vendors	\$500 / annually w/5 - one year end user license
Corporate Sponsors	\$750 / annually and website / conference
Purchase ANSI Standards Only	\$125 with one year end user license

### About the PRCA:

Founded in 2003, the Professional Ropes Course Association (PRCA) became the first industry association to achieve the ANSI Accredited Standards Developer status in 2005. On March 3, 2014, ANSI designated the **ANSI/PRCA 1.0-.3 2014 as the sole ANSI American National SAFETY Standard (ANS) for Challenge Courses, Ziplines, and Aerial Adventure Parks.** This standard covers both participants and

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employees. Accordingly, the ANSI Essential Requirements outline that no other conflicting or duplicating ANS should be allowed.

The mission of the PRCA is to develop end-user applicable standards, documents, and to define, document and outline the construction/operational practices for the Challenge Ropes Course, Zipline, and Aerial Adventure Parks industry. The documents of the PRCA may be used for education regarding course evaluations, insurance criteria, in-house training, inspections, installations, operations, and professional development to name a few.

Further, in the designated American National Safety Standard ANSI 1.0-.3-2014, other industry standards have been reviewed and applicable portions have been adopted specifically for the use of the ropes challenge course industry; e.g. CEN standards, AS/NZ Standards, previous PRCA and ACCT standards, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Cordage Institute (CI). These standards are for educational use, construction resource for properly trained professionals, and to provide a venue for collaboration among challenge course practitioners.

The PRCA is an industry association where the membership has direct voting rights on association matters, void of the dominance by vendor control or exclusion. It is a non-profit association comprised of a board of directors, peer reviewed vendors, organizational members, and individual members. Within the ropes challenge course industry, there has been a need for a standards document that was reflective of a democratic process. This was the purpose behind becoming an ANSI Accredited Standards Developer.