



Contact: Aleatha Ezra  
Director of Park Member Development  
WORLD WATERPARK ASSOCIATION

E-mail: [aezra@waterparks.org](mailto:aezra@waterparks.org)  
Web site: [www.waterparks.org](http://www.waterparks.org)

8826 Santa Fe Drive, Suite 310  
Overland Park, KS 66212  
Phone: +1-913-599-0300

# Press Release

## *The WWA40 Virtual Show Continues Mission To Inspire, Engage, Inform & Connect Water Leisure Professionals*

**Overland Park, KS, October 20, 2020** — For the first time ever, the World Waterpark Association delivered its annual show experience virtually, which allowed the Association and its sponsors, speakers and key volunteers to safely provide the best education and networking opportunities available to waterpark and aquatics professionals working around the globe.

"We were certainly disappointed that we couldn't bring our industry together for our in-person Symposium & Trade Show—something we've done for 40 years," said Rick Root, WWA President. "However, from what we've seen so far, pivoting to a virtual show program was just what our industry needed. Attendees from 17 countries have already spent thousands of hours watching all of the outstanding educational sessions offered by our industry thought leaders, and we anticipate the interaction with our show program to continue throughout the next few months."

"I thoroughly enjoyed this year's virtual show and the best part of it is I have the opportunity to attend the sessions I missed through March 2021!" said Chase Singleton, Assistant General Manager, Wilderness at the Smokies. "It's hard to beat on-demand waterpark industry education. Great work, WWA!"

"In a year like no other, the WWA pulled out all the stops and gave us a show like no other. Each presentation was thoughtfully put together and gave unique insights into what to expect for the coming seasons," said Emily Polinsky, Executive Assistant & Digital Media Manager, Wet 'N Wild Water World. "I left the show with more than a dozen new ideas to bring to our park next year."

“Only the WWA could find a way to virtually bring us all together while still providing top notch education and networking opportunities,” said Jen Gerber, Water Technology, Inc. “We're grateful to be part of the best industry in the world with some of the most passionate leaders and teams.”

“The WWA40 Virtual Show was just what you would expect from the World Waterpark Association,” said Jessica Mahoney, Aquatic Development Group. “This year’s show provided us with a platform for sharing key learnings and experiences, bringing us all together with informative sessions and live Q&A’s that provided us all with valuable opportunities to once again connect and interact with our peers in the industry.”

Taking place over three days, the WWA40 Virtual Show program featured a well-curated mix of pre-recorded educational sessions and live, interactive sessions featuring dozens of relevant topics that matter to owners, operators, designers and developers working in parks of all shapes and sizes. Highlights of the virtual event included:

- 7 live Featured Presentations
- 8 live Ask The Experts Q&A panels
- 9 live hosted Connect & Chats sessions
- 40 pre-recorded breakout sessions featuring more than 100 thought provoking speakers
- 3 live General Session & Awards presentations

“None of us have experienced a year quite like 2020 and we need to work closely together if we’re going push through these uncharted waters,” said Aleatha Ezra, Director of Park Member Development, World Waterpark Association. “2021 will hold many unknowns for all of us, but we don’t have to go into it alone. Our live sessions this year offered attendees the chance to bounce ideas off each other and gather new ways to operate more safely so that our guests feel good about coming back out to visit our parks.”

“What an encouragement it was to have some normalcy in our year...spending a week in October with the WWA community; seeing faces and hearing familiar voices working together as a team to continue to educate, highlight achievements, provide resources and just to lift each other up,” said Marci Blevins, Owner, Splash Kingdom Waterparks.

“Thank you for continuing to be a steadfast resource and support for our community! You stayed true to your mission and continue to be the glue that holds the waterpark industry together,” said Robin Ritz, InCord.

### **Safety, HR, Operations, Marketing....All Were Covered During The Educational Program**

The WWA Show is well known for its robust educational program and this year’s virtual program delved deeper into the topics that matter most right now, including: keeping guests and employees safer, providing best-in-class guest services, hiring, training and on-boarding employees virtually and much more.

“The WWA Show never disappoints and this year was no different. The adapted virtual show provided a unique opportunity to connect live with fellow industry experts and friends, while the new format allowed us to

consume more content than ever before. It was a game changer,” said Taryn Eisenman, General Manager, SplashDown Beach Water Park.

Highlights from the educational program included the following featured presentations: “WOW! Service Excellence Revelations,” “Marketing 2020 – What In The World Happened & What’s Next In 2021?,” “What Medical Experts Can Tell Us About Waterpark Operations in 2021,” “Operations In A COVID Environment – Learning From 2020 To Succeed In 2021,” “Building & Maintaining A Positive Team Culture During Difficult Times” and “State of the Industry & Trends for 2021.” Other timely topics covered at this year’s show include: reviving work ethic in a post-COVID world, rebuilding your marketing plan for 2021, increasing seasonal staff retention rates and taking control of your social media presence.

“The #WWA40 virtual show was impressive! The education tracks were aligned with pandemic information & recovery. I appreciate the show material can be reviewed until March!” said Tamara Lawson, Sales Manager, Soaring Eagle Waterpark and Hotel. “It also was reassuring to see everyone in the Connect & Chat sessions. I met some new contacts and look forward to virtual chats on our own!”

This year’s Best Speaker award went to:

- Shaun McKeogh, Attractions Academy

### **WWA Board Presents Industry Awards & the 2020 Hall of Fame Inductees**

Providing recognition of industry leaders, innovators and pioneers is something that the WWA’s Board of Directors remains strongly committed to, with award ceremonies taking place during three daily General Sessions on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Each year the Board recognizes member contributions in a variety of areas significant to the industry’s success such as: dedication to guest and employee safety; excellence in leadership; innovation and creativity in designing new themes and attractions.

“Ours is an industry that doesn’t stand still even during the most challenging times,” said Damien Latham, Chair of the WWA’s Board of Directors. “We continue to see our fellow colleagues innovate and lead the way to the next ‘est,’ whether that’s biggest or fastest or safest. It’s because of this that we feel we must stay focused on acknowledging the best and brightest leaders working in our industry through our annual Board Awards program.”

### **WWA Hall of Fame:**

The WWA inducted two individuals into the WWA Hall of Fame, which honors the water leisure industry’s most important and visionary pioneers and innovators. This year’s honorees were:

- Jim Basala, Deep River Waterpark
- Jim Dunn, Aquatic Development Group

While both inductees were celebrated during the daily General Session on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, they also will be honored in person during the 2021 WWA Show in San Antonio, Texas.

### **Board of Directors' Awards:**

The WWA Board of Directors recognized the exceptional accomplishments of 35 recipients in 2020 including:

- **Al Turner Memorial Commitment to Excellence Award:** George Deines, Counsilman-Hunsaker, Richardson, Texas, U.S.A.
- **Executive Board Award:** Kari (Tjader) Manev, Liftopia, Inc., Orlando, Florida, U.S.A.
- **Kelly Ogle Memorial Safety Award:** Wess Long, StarGuard ELITE, Orlando, Florida, U.S.A.
- **Leading Edge Award:** Adventure Bay, Xiangyang, China and China Creative Entertainment Co., Ltd, Shenzhen, China and WhiteWater, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada for "Turbo Shuttle"; Europa Park / Rulantica GmbH & Co Mack KG, Rust, Germany and API WATER FUN GmbH, Fulda, Germany, AQUARENA GmbH, Jettingen, Germany, aquila wasseraufbereitungstechnik gmbh, Wertheim, Germany, MACKNEXT / Mack Solutions, Rust, Germany, Murphys Waves Ltd, Glasgow, Scotland-UK, PGAV Destinations, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. and ProSlide Technology Inc, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada for their work on Rulantica; Grupo Vidanta, Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico and Murphys Waves Ltd, Glasgow, Scotland-UK, Riverflow Pumps by Current Systems Inc., Ventura, California, U.S.A., Water Technology, Inc., Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, U.S.A. and WhiteWater, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada for their work on Jungala Aqua Experience; Park of Poland, Wręcza, Poland and Murphys Waves Ltd, Glasgow, Scotland-UK and Polin Waterparks, Kocaeli, Turkey for their work on Suntago Water World; Pirates Bay Waterpark, Baytown, Texas, U.S.A. and NINJACROSS™ Systems, Overland Park, Kansas, U.S.A. and Progressive Commercial Aquatics, Inc., Houston, Texas, U.S.A. for "NINJACROSS™"; Royal Caribbean International, Miami, Florida, U.S.A. and Martin Aquatic Design & Engineering, Orlando, Florida, U.S.A. and WhiteWater, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada for their work on the "Perfect Storm Slide Complex"; Wilderness Resorts and Waterparks, Sevierville, Tennessee, U.S.A. and Architectural Design Consultants, Inc., Lake Delton, Wisconsin, U.S.A., Aquatic Development Group, Cohoes, New York, U.S.A., ProSlide Technology Inc, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Rain Drop Products LLC, Ashland, Ohio, U.S.A., USA, Inc., Downers Grove, Illinois, U.S.A. and Water Odyssey™ by Fountain People, Inc., San Marcos, Texas, U.S.A. for their work on Soaky Mountain Waterpark

### **Wave Review Awards:**

Recipients of WWA's popular Wave Review marketing competition were recognized during the General Session on October 8, 2020. Winners' work demonstrated what it took to remain creative, compassionate and committed to marketing materials that spoke to people in meaningful ways.

"In such a challenging year, we were so glad that we could continue the tradition of our annual Wave Review Awards," said Ezra. "We weren't sure what to expect in terms of entries but we were delighted by both the quantity and quality of work we received this year. It was clear how much outstanding work our waterpark marketers put into their outreach efforts this year."

Multi-category winners were: SoundWaves at Gaylord Opryland Resort, Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.; Adventure Park Geelong, Wallington, Victoria, Australia; and Typhoon Texas Waterpark, Katy, Texas, U.S.A.; among others.

(The full list of Wave Review winners is available in a separate attachment.)

### **WWA Sponsors Step Up To Make The Virtual Show Possible**

"We couldn't have pivoted to our WWA40 Virtual Show experience without the generous support from our 2020 sponsors. The 67 companies that stepped up to provide their financial support understood that while we all wanted our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary show to be held in person, what we really needed was a platform that allowed all of us to come together to share time together virtually," said Latham. "Our sponsors gave us that opportunity to build a great virtual show program."

The 2020 WWA Sponsors included:

- Diamond Sponsor – ProSlide Technology Inc.
- Platinum Sponsors – Aquatic Development Group (ADG), Polin Waterparks, Water Technology, Inc. and WhiteWater
- Gold Sponsors – Daldorado, LLC, Global Management Amusement Professionals, HDC Products and Water Odyssey by Fountain People
- Silver Sponsors – Aqua Revival LLC, Aquatic Design Group, Architectural Design Consultants Inc., Ballast Technologies, Inc., BECS Technology, Inc., CenterEdge Software, Chemtrol, Div. of Santa Barbara Control Systems, Counsilman-Hunsaker, Foothill Communications, LLC, WWA Insurance by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Launch Logic, Inc., Life Floor, Liftopia, Lincoln Aquatics, Martin Aquatic Design & Engineering, McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance, Neptune-Benson, Evoqua, OpenAire Inc., Pulsar Systems, Ramaker & Associates, Inc., Safemark - Best Lockers, SplashTacular, The Lifeguard Store, TUFF Coat Rubberized Non-Skid Coatings, Van Stone Conveyor, Inc., Vortex Aquatic Structures Int'l., Water Safety Products Inc., Waterplay Solutions Corp. and Zaiss & Company

- Bronze Sponsors – 1RISK Risk Management Data Solutions, Aquify Systems Corp., Avalanche Aquatics, Axiall, A Westlake Company, Commercial Energy Specialists, Eagle Products Inc., Fluidra, InCord Play, InDepth Engineering Solutions, International Amusement & Leisure Defense Association (IALDA), Jeff Ellis & Associates Inc., LaMotte Company, Leverage Analytics, Murphys Waves Ltd., Nets Unlimited Inc., NinjaCross™ Systems, Omnico Group, Pentair Commercial Aquatics, PlayFountain, Resort Cabanas, Shade Creations by Waterloo, Smarte Carte/Smarte Locke, SR Scales by SR Instruments, Tiburon Lockers, WDD We Do Digital and WET Engineering Inc.

### **The WWA40 Virtual Show Program Is Still Available To Purchase**

For those water leisure professionals who missed the WWA40 Virtual Show experience in October, nearly all of the educational content has been recorded and archived and is still available to purchase through March 1, 2021. Access to the show archives may be purchased for \$249 for park and supplier members or \$424 for non-members.

“We encourage anyone who missed the virtual show to consider purchasing access to the extensive archives. The more than 50 hours of learning that you’ll be able to partake in is well worth the small investment. Plus, you have the luxury of listening to each session more than once. It’s a tremendous value to you and your team,” said Ezra.

Visit [WWAShow.org](http://WWAShow.org) to learn more about this registration option.

### **The WWA Show Will Visit The Original “Lazy River” in 2021!**

The World Waterpark Association’s 41st Annual Symposium & Trade Show, set for October 19-22, 2021, will return to San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A. to deliver the best education, trade show shopping and networking available to waterpark professionals anywhere.

“It’s been more than a decade since the WWA Show has been hosted in San Antonio,” said Root. “Since that time, Texas has continued to welcome the opening of many new waterparks, aquatic centers, waterpark resorts and spray parks—making this state the perfect place to bring our industry back together for in-person learning, shopping and networking.”

The show will be headquartered at Grand Hyatt San Antonio, an upscale hotel situated beside the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, where attendees will find the WWA’s jam packed trade show floor and more than 40 breakout sessions, workshops and round tables. Located just a 9-minute walk from the famous Alamo Mission and 10 minutes on foot from the lively San Antonio River Walk, the 2021 WWA Show promises to be one to remember!

Visit [WWAShow.org](http://WWAShow.org) for more details about the 2021 show.

### **About the convention**

WWA's Annual Symposium & Trade Show is the world's largest gathering of water leisure professionals and development experts. It offers the most comprehensive waterpark education program available offering in-depth, targeted sessions and workshops for every specialty segment of the industry, along with the world's largest showcase of waterpark-specific designers, engineers and suppliers. It is the only show focused exclusively on the water leisure industry.

*The WWA is the world's premier water-leisure trade Association serving park and supplier members representing more than 50 countries.*

*For more information about the WWA40 Virtual Show, contact Aleatha Ezra, Director of Park Member Development, at +1-913-599-0300 or [aezra@waterparks.org](mailto:aezra@waterparks.org).*