

GMPT Engaging Latinas in State Parks Forum AI Summary – February 19, 2026

This article was created by AI summarizing key points discussed. AI makes mistakes, so for full details and context, please refer to the video of the full meeting.

Quick recap

Luisana Mendez, founder and executive director of Huellas Latinas, presented on her organization's work connecting Latino families in Minnesota to outdoor activities and nature experiences. Established five years ago, Huellas Latinas promotes outdoor engagement through family hikes, camping trips, and water activities, serving over 1,400 participants since 2021. Luisana highlighted the importance of cultural understanding and language accessibility in making parks welcoming to Latino communities, sharing success stories of participants who have built confidence in outdoor activities despite initial challenges. The organization partners with over 35 local and national organizations to provide equipment and training, emphasizing authentic relationships and community building through consistent programming.

Summary

Latino Families Connect with Nature

Luisana Mendez, founder and executive director of Huellas Latinas, presented an overview of her organization's mission to connect Latino families in Minnesota with outdoor activities and nature. She highlighted the organization's growth from a personal challenge to a formal non-profit, serving over 1,400 people since 2021 through various programs like hiking, camping, and water activities. Luisana emphasized the importance of cultural understanding, listening to community needs, and providing inclusive, accessible programming. She also discussed the need for more training and support for new leaders in outdoor activities and suggested using technology like QR codes for multilingual information.

Community Engagement Social Media Strategy

Mary Jo talked about a meeting she had with Luisana to discuss community engagement strategies, focusing on how to effectively communicate with residents about park activities. Luisana emphasized that social media is a crucial channel for reaching people, particularly

in smaller communities where traditional websites may not be frequently checked. The conversation ended with Mary expressing appreciation for Luisana's insights, which will be shared on their website.