2026 ESI Conference Agenda

Lessons Learned; Turning Obstacles into Opportunities

McKimmon Center
1101 Gorman Street, Raleigh, NC

DAY ONE: Thursday, October 29, 2026

8:30 - 9:30	**Registration and Morning Reception**	
9:30 - 9:40	Welcome	Katrina Harris, NCDEQ DEACS
9:40 – 10:15	Sustainability at the Biltmore	Elias Winkenwerder, The Biltmore Estate
10:15 - 10:45	Vetting Vendors for Waste Disposal	Robin Staszak, ABB, Inc.
10:45 - 11:00	**Break, Exhibits and Networking**	
11:00 - 11:30	Career Reflections on Lessons Learned	David Auge, Grifols Therapeutics LLC
11:30 - 12:00	Driving Environmental Accountability Without Direct Authority	Myrna Pacheco Ponce de Leon, Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations
12:00 - 12:15	Resource and Energy Efficiency Updates	Sarah Robison, NCDEQ DEACS
12:15 - 1:15	**Lunch**	
1:15 - 1:35	Wastewater Best Management Practices	Brennon Clemmons & Mike Alexander, Two Rivers Utilities
1:35 - 2:00	ISO 14001:2026 Updates	Tanya Rose, NCDEQ DEACS
2:00 - 2:45	Breakout Discussions	
2:45 - 3:15	**Break, Exhibits and Networking**	
3:15 – 3:45	Tools to Manage Environmental Data	Scott Fister & Naveed Rehman, Thomas Built Buses Justin Woodall, Grifols Therapeutics LLC
3:45 - 4:10	Industrial Decarbonization	Joel Porter & Alyssa Crousson, State Energy Office
4:10 - 4:30	Safe Battery Recovery	Matt James, NCDEQ DEACS
4:30	Closing	Katrina Harris, NCDEQ DEACS
5:00 - 7:00	After Hours Networking	The Raleigh Beer Garden

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DAY TWO: Friday, October 30, 2026

8:30 - 9:00	**Registration and Morning Reception**	
9:00 - 9:05	Welcome Back	Katrina Harris, NCDEQ DEACS
9:05 - 10:30	DEQ Regulatory Program Panel	Sushma Masemore, Deputy Secretary for Environment Michael Abraczinskas, Director Division of Air Quality Julie Grzyb, Deputy Director Division of Water Resources Michael Scott, Director Division of Waste Management Stephanie Suter, Deputy Director Division of Water Infrastructure Toby Vinson, Director Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resources
10:30 - 11:00	**Break, Exhibits and Networking**	
11:00 - 11:45	Pollution Prevention Projects	Kerri Hartung, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
11:45 - 12:00	ESI's 25th Anniversary	Kate MacLeod, NCDEQ DEACS
12:00 - 1:15	**Lunch**	
1:15 - 2:15	Member Recognition and Awards	John Nicholson, NCDEQ Chief Deputy Secretary
2:15 - 2:30	Wrap Up & Door Prizes	Katrina Harris, NCDEQ DEACS

The Environmental Stewardship Initiative's annual conference is hosted by NCDEQ's Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS).