

# THE ULTIMATE WDA CONFERENCE *Survival Guide*



## App-ly Yourself

Before you do anything, download the conference app ... it'll keep you on track for all the sessions and events, and offers added extras like the photo contest and messaging speakers and friends.



## Pack it in - what to bring

1. **An Auction item:** You'll see it all at the WDA Auction - hand-made, store-bought, no longer wanted and gently used or animal themed! Remember, all proceeds go to student programs.
2. **Conference kit:** Bring a coffee mug (or buy one at the conference) and/or a water bottle to refill to stay hydrated and help with sustainability. Also bring your laptop, tablet or favourite notebook and pen for taking notes.
3. **Dress sense:** The conference is fairly casual, but bring a light sweater or jacket as, although Athens is hot and humid in July, the Classic Center and most indoor venues will have air conditioning blasting. WDA-logoed light jackets and hoodies will be for sale at the meeting. Some folks wear agency uniforms, and local university staff may be in business casual. Monday night's picnic is at the Botanical Gardens. They have paved and natural walking trails so choose clothes and shoes accordingly. Bring insect repellent, just in case. You'll need "going out" clothes for Tuesday night's auction downtown which is followed by music. Wednesday garb depends on your chosen field trip - for kayaking you need a bathing suit, plans to keep your phone dry, sunblock and plenty of water; for Amicalola Falls, you'll need hiking clothes, sunblock and plenty of water. For Beer Trailers, kayakers and anyone else who doesn't undertake a field trip you're on your own for dinner, and going out clothes will do. Thursday's Banquet requires you to step it up with business casual/cocktail, but make it comfortable for dancing. If you have any doubts, feel free to email Sonia Hernandez at [shernz@uga.edu](mailto:shernz@uga.edu).



## Travel time

On the website you'll find an extensive [How to Get to Athens](#) (from Atlanta) section, a [hotel booking feature](#) and the usual travel information, so check it out. There's also lots on [What to Do in Athens](#) in case you have a spare minute! If you are presenting, before making travel arrangements, please check the [Program Guide](#) AND email us to confirm when you will be presenting your oral talk or poster. We want to make sure there are no surprises, and you'll be there when scheduled.



## Conference connections

WDA members are VERY open to new folks. If you don't know anyone, simply introduce yourself. The officers, conference organizers, Student Ambassadors and others will be identifiable by WDA wear, buttons and badge ribbons, so if you have a question or need anything, just ask them. Coffee breaks are great times to locate speakers for questions, meet with collaborators, view posters and find your friends. We will have some fun incentives to get folks to the posters!

**Wednesday to Friday:** Pre-conference student workshop.

**Saturday and Sunday:** Two days of workshops.

**Sunday evening:** We gather for our Welcome Reception/Icebreaker.

**Monday-Thursday 7am:** Morning Yoga. Start the day with mindfulness. Dr Kaori Sakamoto will host sessions in the Atrium of the Classic Center. All levels of experience are welcome. Please bring your own matt or hotel towel.

**Monday:** Plenary sessions together, including a morning of keynote speakers followed a "picnic" at the Botanical Gardens with dinner and hiking.

**Tuesday:** A full day dedicated to student talks for everyone, followed by a Student-Mentor Mixer at the Classic Center, and the famous WDA Auction at the 40 Watt Club.

**Wednesday:** A short day together before everyone splits off into optional field trips.

**Thursday:** We all gather in the morning but split into concurrent sessions immediately after. The evening is taken up by our WDA Banquet & Award Ceremony, and you can be sure we will be dancing the night away.

**Friday:** Again there will be concurrent sessions before adjourning at midday.





**Lactating?** No worries ... a Lactation Room will be readily available at the Classic Center.



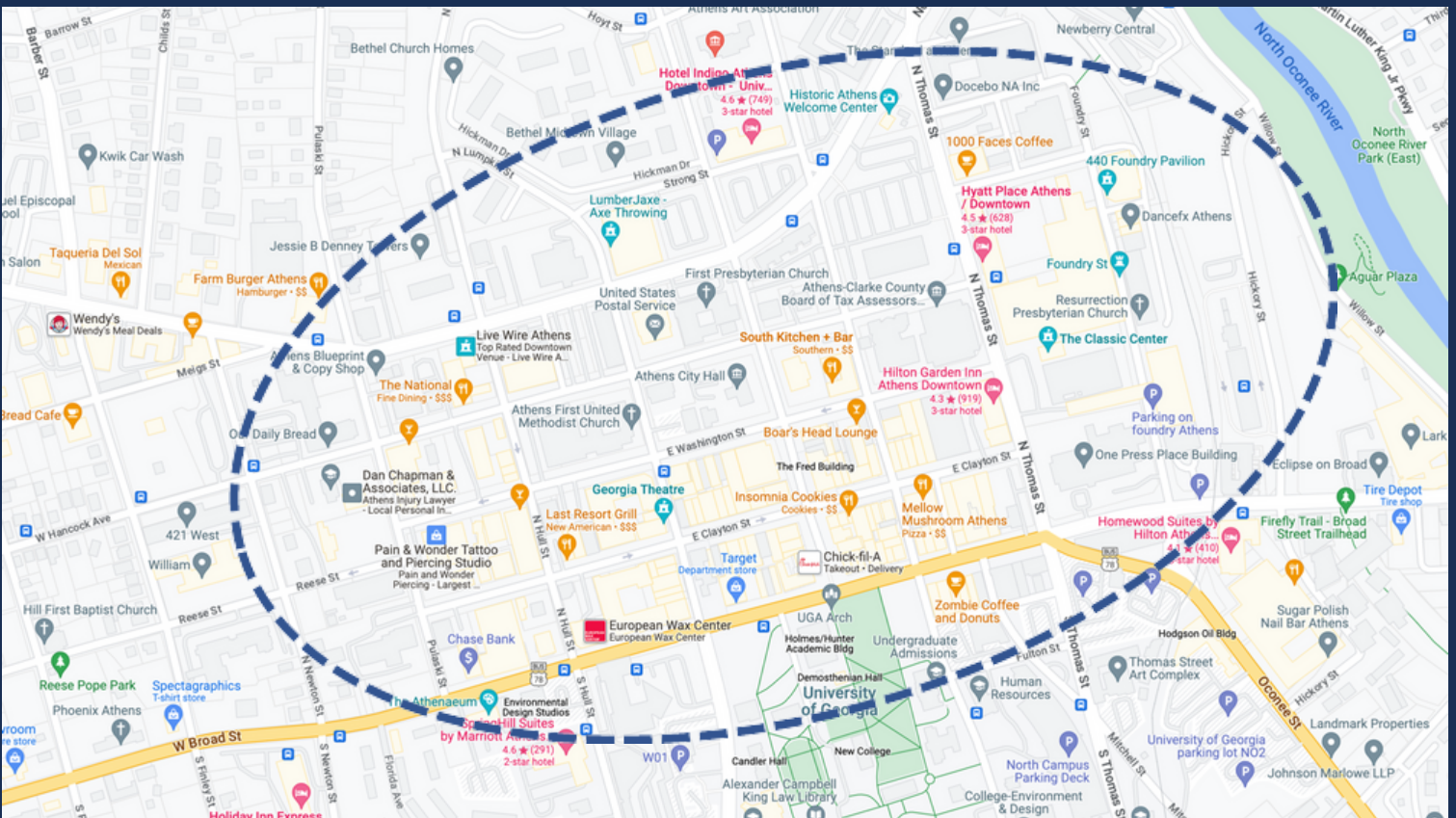
**Quiet Room** - a quiet space is available at the Hyatt Hotel for prayer, meditation or peaceful reflection.



## Street smart

If you are not familiar with Athens, the area outlined on the map below is an area that is typically bustling with activity during the day and evening, as it has a concentration of shops, bars, restaurants, etc. Outside this area, we recommend you exercise good city judgement when traversing on foot, especially after dark. Walking in groups is always a good idea.

Beyond Downtown, another area with ambience and restaurants is the Five Points neighborhood (not pictured below; corner of Lumpkin St and Milledge Ave), which is very safe.



## Key Contacts



If you find yourself in difficulty or need local assistance, you can text any of the following:

- +1 (706) 2963909 - overall concerns and program questions
- +1 (806) 2076824 - concerns re the scientific program Michael Yabsley
- +1 (706) 255-4841 - concerns re field trips Nikki Castleberry
- +1 (706) 308-6558 - questions re workshops Chris Cleveland
- +1 (805) 857 5809 - WDA Exec Manager Peri Wolff

**For life-threatening emergencies call 911 immediately**

## Other top tips



- **Attend as many sessions** and presentations as you can - really get the most out of the experience.
- **Ask questions** - this is the perfect time to expand your knowledge with some of the most knowledgeable wildlife professionals in the world.
- **Bring your business cards** - this is the ideal opportunity to make professional connections, but it's also a chance to make new friends and update old ones on where you're at.
- **Eat well** - don't live on snacks and coffee. Make sure you enjoy the great food on offer during the conference and around Athens.
- **Get plenty of rest** - while it is tempting to spend every hour with friends and colleagues, many of whom you may not have seen since last year, remember this is a marathon not a sprint and you need to make it to Friday.
- **Connect with people not computers** - spend time away from your phone or device and get to know your colleagues.
- **Take plenty of breaks** - You'll be fresher and absorb more information if you give your brain some breathing space.

**HAVE FUN!!!!**