



CERF 2025

28th Biennial Conference

9–13 November 2025 / Richmond, VA

Get the Most out of CERF 2025

Before the Conference

1. LOOK AT THE SCHEDULE AND HAVE A PLAN.

Use the program and conference mobile app to help you make your plan: What is it that you most want to get out of the conference? Which sessions? Which posters? Which exhibits?

2. REACH OUT IN ADVANCE.

Do you really want to meet with someone? Consider reaching out ahead of the conference to meet up during a break or poster session. Or, do some research to learn more about them. Look for photos on their institutional websites so you know who to look for in the crowd. Learn about their current research interests and when they might be presenting.

3. PRACTICE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH.

An elevator pitch is a short (less than 1 minute) introduction to who you are and what you do. Take some time ahead of the conference and practice a few sentences for different audiences (e.g., potential advisor/ employer, someone who is not in your field).

4. MAKE YOURSELF FINDABLE.

You will want people to have an easy way to get in touch with you after the conference! Consider getting business cards (printed or virtual). Do you have a website or professional social media account? Consider putting QR code links on your talk or poster. Similarly, consider putting QR code links to any of your papers that you cite in your presentation!

During the Conference

5. MEET PEOPLE.

In addition to learning about science and management, the other great benefit of this conference is meeting new colleagues and renewing relationships.

- **Be present.** If you are open and engaging, it will be more likely that someone will approach you and start a conversation. Smiling, making eye contact, and staying off your phone are good ways to signal that you want to engage with others.
- **Don't be afraid to approach others.** Conferences are filled with people hoping to meet others with similar interests and you can simply walk up to someone, introduce yourself, and ask about the other person and their work. One easy way to talk to people is to visit the poster area. Talk to the poster authors, ask questions, share experiences.
- **Look for people at the conference with a “CERF Ambassador” button.** These Ambassadors have agreed to serve as conference liaisons.
- **Get out of your comfort zone.** Try to avoid spending the entire conference with your fellow participants from your own institution (or region, or country) at the conference - you can talk to them at home! Branch out and meet new friends and make new professional contacts!

- **If you have business cards (paper or digital), use them.** Put some cards in your pocket and some at the back of your name tag holder so that you can easily whip one out when it is needed. If you get business cards, take a moment after you part to write down a few words about your conversation. That way weeks or months later you'll be able to remember who was who rather than having a stack of business cards with mysterious names on them.

6. ATTEND ORAL AND POSTER SESSIONS.

In addition to learning the science at sessions, observe speakers and learn how to give strong presentations. Think about what makes one presentation better than another. Don't be shy about questioning the speakers about points you're interested in or would like clarified.

7. DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TALK ABOUT?

- Share experiences, tell stories, and connect. Remember, there is more to people than what they study.
- Discover the kind of career options available and what it takes to be successful in a particular career/track/field/institution.
- Explore and or get advice on what other graduate programs/research institutions/agencies are like.
- Ask for feedback on your research or ideas for your future.
- Plant a seed for future collaboration or invite others to come visit your institution (to give talks) or eventually get invited yourself.
- Learn how to become more involved with CERF.

5. ATTEND EVENTS (RESPONSIBLY).

CERF Conferences can be great fun, but don't forget that someday you may be applying for a job with the person on the barstool next to you. Have fun, but leave a good impression. A lot of time is set aside in the conference program for socializing and networking. **ATTEND THESE EVENTS.** There are Welcoming and Farewell Receptions, poster sessions, and events specifically for student and early career participants. These gatherings give attendees a chance to meet new colleagues, catch up with old friends, and discuss coastal research and management.

After the Conference

6. FOLLOW UP.

After the conference, follow up with people that you met. Email them to let them know you enjoyed meeting them and perhaps reference something you talked about.

Are these tips helpful? If so, pass them on to your friends who were not able to attend the orientation.

If questions regarding the conference come up after the Orientation Meeting, ask at the registration desk, post the question on the CERF Twitter page (@CERFscience) Or just stop a fellow CERFer or CERF Ambassador and see if they might be able to help!