

PADDLE

A Bimonthly Publication from ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue
Volume 1, Issue 1, March 2015



**Instructors of the
Month / Feb & Mar**

**Evaluating On-Water
Adaptive Equipment**

**Stream to Sea
Initiative Updates**

**USACK & ACA
Partnership**

ACA Mission Statement

Founded in 1880, the ACA is a national nonprofit organization serving the broader paddling public by providing education related to all aspects of paddling; stewardship support to help protect paddling environments; and sanctioning of programs and events to promote paddlesport competition, exploration and recreation.



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Association of Outdoor Recreation & Education
International Whitewater Hall of Fame
Whitewater Symposium
Leave No Trace
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators
Western States Boating Administrators Association
Polynesian Voyaging Society

Follow us on...



ACA Staff

Wade Blackwood
Executive Director

“Hand paddling probably in the womb, so I’ll say 5 months before I was born. With a paddle, 3-5 years old, grew up on a lake...”



Christopher Stec
Chief Operating Officer

“In high school on the bayou’s of south Louisiana. Think hanging a hammock above your canoe between two cypress trees.”



Kelsey Bracewell
SEI Coordinator

“In 2006 in Western North Carolina.”



Zane Havens
Stewardship Coordinator

“In 1993 on the Kalamazoo River in Albion, MI.”



Candy Patten
Insurance Coordinator

“In Huntington Beach, CA, with my kids in 2005.”



Amy Ellis
State Director/Membership Coordinator

“With my Girl Scout troop on a pond in Kentucky, where I grew up.”

**Where and when
did you first learn
to paddle?**



Cireena Katto
Office Manager

“4 yrs ago, I took a beginners Kayaking course with a couple of instructors from the office & fell in love with paddling.”



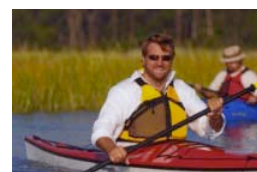
T.J. Turner
Paddlesports Training Grant Coordinator

“In 2010 at Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission’s staff training on the Eastern portion of Folly Beach.”



Dave Burden
International Paddlesports Ambassador

“I was shipwrecked on a Norwegian Fourth of July cruise, and my only chance of survival was to modify a cabin door as it floated by and use several large spatulas that I fashioned into oars to paddle to the safety of the German coast.”



Catharine Lloyd
Communications Coordinator

“When I was 10 years old, at summer camp in Ontario with my fellow canucks.”



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STEWARDSHIP





Is Biodegradable Better?

by Zane Havens, ACA Stewardship Coordinator

In the midst of the battle against marine debris pollution, more and more “bio-plastic” products are being created with claims of being “biodegradable” or “compostable”, targeting the environmentally conscious consumer who would be otherwise hesitant to purchase plastic products. These are more than just buzz words; they are descriptions carefully chosen by producers of plastics that reveal very specific properties of the product. However, it can be confusing to the green shopper interested in making environmentally responsible purchases. What is the difference between degradable, biodegradable, and compostable? If a plastic degrades into fine pieces, will it still hurt marine environments? If something is compostable, can I just toss it into a lake?

To begin shedding light on the world of degradable plastics, we should initially define what degradable means. In this instance, being degradable simply means that it breaks down. Essentially, all plastics can degrade over time; anyone who has taken a canoe down the Rappahannock River during the peak of its dry season knows that the bottom of their canoe will “degrade” over the rocks they are trying to avoid, leaving evidence in the form of colorful streaks. It

should be noted that some plastics do degrade much faster than the bottom of your boat. Additives to certain plastics will make them susceptible to degradation under specific conditions, such as exposure to water or oxygen. However, the take-home here is that degradable plastic means plastic that breaks into smaller pieces.

So, what does biodegradable mean? The answer to that question lies in the prefix “bio”, meaning life. If something is biodegradable, it degrades like all degradable plastics, but can actually degrade via metabolic processes of micro-organisms. Why is this so important? When the micro-organisms break down biodegradable plastics, they actually break the plastics down on a molecular level, creating organic molecules that can be returned to our earth’s carbon cycle, such as carbon dioxide. Non-biodegradable plastics might be able to break into really tiny pieces, but unlike biodegradable plastics, they will still be plastic, albeit very small plastics.

This brings us to compostable. When a plastic is compostable, it means that it biodegrades a specific percentage within a specific time frame, under specific conditions.

These specifications are determined by a standard developed by testing products in a controlled laboratory experiment. For a material to be compostable, it has to meet 3 criteria:

1. The material has to reach 60% biodegradation within 180 days
2. The size of the biodegraded product must be under a maximum threshold
3. The biodegraded product must contain less than certain specified limits of heavy metals and other contaminants.

However, this criteria refers to aerobic biodegradation under laboratory composting conditions. Not in a swamp. Not at the bottom of the Marianas Trench. Not on Jupiter. This doesn't mean the bio-plastic can't biodegrade under those previous wacky conditions; it just hasn't been tested.

Long story short, compostable is biodegradable, as defined by standards.

Now that we have cracked that mystery, some of the other questions about degradable plastics are a little easier to tackle. Let's begin with finely degraded plastic (microplastics). If a plastic breaks down so fine that you can no longer see it with the human eye, can it negatively affect an ecosystem?

The answer to this question is a very complex "yes" that would be best explored fully in another article at a future time. Without delving too deep into the complications of microplastics, we should remember that microplastics are still plastics, and when ingested by organisms, they carry some of the problems that are associated with larger plastic pieces (displacing nutrients, clogging digestive systems, etc.) as well as a slew of problems raised by the phenomenon of bioaccumulation (chemicals reaching higher concentrations as they are consumed up the food chain). Summary: it can cause big problems. No matter how small the plastic pollution is, it is still pollution.

Let's say a plastic product makes the claim that it is compostable. Great news! Does this mean that we can just throw this miracle bio-plastic into the crystal-clear waters of Lake Champlain when we are finished using it? Or bury it under the muddy banks of the Missouri River?

Absolutely not! Recall that compostable means that it biodegrades to a certain point in a certain amount of time under certain conditions. Just because your compostable plastic fork was able to break into carbon dioxide and plant feeding mush in a controlled laboratory experiment does not mean that it will do

the same when tossed carelessly amongst nature. While some bio-plastics might be designed to biodegrade when exposed to the elements, it is important to research and make note of what claims are being made about the biodegradation process before littering bio-plastics. Bio-plastics that do not decompose properly can still cause issues in an ecosystem. A simple mantra to adhere to: When in doubt, pack it out!

If you are interested in learning more about bio-plastics, visit www.green-plastics.net

To find out more about the ACA's Stream to Sea Initiative and what we are doing to curb marine debris pollution, please visit www.americancanoe.org/StreamtoSea





Green Paddler of the Month



by ACA Staff

For those who know the joys of paddling or love being in or around water corridors, nothing is more important than the stewardship of our waterways. The unique connection between paddlers and the natural world is what drives the ACA's stewardship program.

Michelle and Jayson Huston are ACA members who frequently paddle the Potomac River near their home in West Virginia and use their Paddle Green Bags to pick up any trash they encounter along the way. Here's what Michelle had to say about the photo of her husband above:

"Some of the last accessible water on the upper Potomac (Taylor's Landing) turned out to be an area

"Really impressed with the ACA Paddle Green Bags...neither one even popped a stitch!"

that's going to take a lot more clean-up effort to make a dent in. With our fish/safety gear, we ran out of room in the boat hauling this load back up river for pack out, sadly. Really impressed with the ACA Paddle Green Bags, though; each weighted a good 60-70lbs and took both of us to lift. We were afraid they'd rip, but neither one even popped a stitch!"

An estimated 6.14 million tons of debris enter marine environments each year. And 80% of this debris is land-based trash that enters oceans via freshwater rivers and streams. As paddlers, we can make a difference! Join the ACA *Stream to Sea Initiative* today and help stop marine debris at its source.

At the ACA, we believe recreation and stewardship are not mutually exclusive. The next time you go paddling, take a Paddle Green Bag on your excursion and see how much you can improve your waterway by removing marine debris!

Visit www.americancanoe.org/StreamtoSea to get involved.



Plastic Tides

by Zane Havens, ACA Stewardship Coordinator

At the ACA, we love to paddle; this is no secret. We also love the waterways that we paddle on. What do we dislike? Marine debris. The plastics that line our riverbanks and coastlines, choke the critters that share our waterways, and generally cause a myriad of environmental problems really grind our gears. This is why, after hearing about the organization Plastic Tides, we were inclined to reach out and support their work. This group not only shares our extreme distaste for ocean plastics, but is spreading the message while using Stand-Up Paddleboards!

Plastic Tides was first conceptualized in the Fall of 2012 in a National Geographic Young Explorers Grant workshop at Cornell University. Founders Gordon Middleton, Christian Shaw, and Celine Jennison united under the banner of combining adventure and exploration with conservation; two years later, the first expedition, a 10 day journey on Stand-Up Paddleboards around the island of Bermuda, was launched. During the expedition, Plastic Tides collected water samples (to be analyzed for micro-plastic pollution) and posted live to social media, documenting the adventure and raising awareness of the issues of marine debris pollution.

The ACA Stewardship Department was offered the opportunity to talk with Christian Shaw, Plastic Tides Team Leader, about marine debris pollution, Plastic Tides adventures, and waterway

stewardship.

Why do you use SUPs? What characteristics of SUPs are advantageous for this kind of work?

We are trying to show people that you can effectively conduct research from paddle craft. It isn't necessary to have a multi-million dollar research vessel. The maneuverability and fitness open up lots of areas, and its cost effective making it easier to expand citizen science initiatives. SUP's in particular work really well because of the platform they create, our catamaran SUP's create an even wider, taller and more stable platform.

When you visit these different locations (Erie Canal, Bermuda, etc.), what kind of reaction do you generally receive from the locals?

We have always had a really generous reception from locals. The hospitality in Bermuda was beyond words. On the Erie Canal we were camping the whole time so the only people we really connected with were the lockmasters, but they were all really supportive and helpful. In the words of Terry Snow, Lockmaster at Brewerton "The lock guys are good guys".

If you were to choose one action or lifestyle change that the common person could do to help curb marine debris pollution, what would



that be?

The easiest most straightforward one is to ditch plastic water bottles all together, and encourage those around you to do the same. Avoiding any single use plastic is really important.

Where do you get your funding for these excursions? What are your plans for future funding?

For the Bermuda expedition we launched a successful Kickstarter campaign. Beyond that we've received support with gear and supplies from our sponsors and been self-funded. We are in a process of apply for grants and obtaining 501c3 fiscal sponsorship so we can make donations tax-deductible. We are open to any new funding opportunities that might come our way.

What can paddlers do to help battle marine debris pollution?

I encourage paddlers to team up with initiatives like Stream to Sea and Plastic Tides to take action and raise awareness about the issue. It could be as simple as putting a Plastic Tides sticker on your paddle to remind you to bring your own re-usable bag to the store after your session, or warning a fellow paddler about the dangers of single use water bottles. It doesn't have to stop there though. People can get involved more actively in many ways, such as collecting trash with their Paddle-Green bag or turning their weekend paddling getaway into a Plastic Tides ambassador expedition.

What has been the most memorable moment of your expeditions? Has there been anything that has absolutely blown you away, or any moment in time that encompasses what you are trying to accomplish with Plastic Tides?

There are so many memorable moments during an expedition, but there is one that really sticks out from our Erie Canal trip right after we left Little Falls, NY on the last day. We trawled just downstream from the town (and their waste-water treatment plant), and when we got the sample in a jar and had a look we spotted a little blue speck. We were certain it must be a micro-bead, and we were right. It's astonishing how they are right there in front of our eyes if we look closely.

Plastic Tides currently has its sights set on many more potential adventures, including the Northwest Passage, Mississippi River, St. Lawrence River, Patagonia, and the Amazon. To follow the organization and see what they have accomplished so far, please visit www.plasticides.org.

To learn more about the ACA's Stream to Sea Initiative and find out what you can do to help, please visit www.americancanoe.org/StreamtoSea



The ACA is committed to making the world a better place to paddle. As our planet faces increasing environmental issues due to development, and misuse of natural resources. The ACA is promoting positive environmental stewardship within the paddling community. This has become one of our top priorities. Your support is vital to create healthy paddling environments and a cleaner planet for everyone by addressing one of the greatest threats to our waters: marine debris.

Of the estimated 6.14 million tons of debris that enter marine environments each year, 80% of it is land based trash that enters from freshwater rivers and streams. Who better to help prevent the accumulation of marine debris than paddlers?

The ACA has been implementing an on-going *Stream to Sea Initiative* that will equip users with the knowledge and tools necessary to clean navigable waterways and paddling environments while recreating. We invite you to get involved today! Visit www.americancanoe.org/StreamtoSea to learn more.



Club Fostered Stewardship Grant

We are thrilled to announce that the ACA will be offering the L.L. Bean Club Fostered Stewardship (CFS) Grants for the 13th year in a row!

The CFS Grant Program provides funding to local and regional paddling clubs and organizations that undertake stewardship projects on waterways in their area. The purpose of the program is to encourage paddling clubs to take an active role in protecting and improving the nation's waterways.

CFS grants are available for projects that utilize volunteers in efforts to protect, maintain or restore recreational waterways, to provide for or improve public access, or to enhance safe navigation. Eligible projects include: cleaning up waterways, clearing in-stream safety hazards, maintaining access areas, erecting signs and controlling erosion, establishing and maintaining paddle trails, acquiring threatened access points, and providing sanitary facilities.

Visit www.americancanoe.org/CFS_Info to learn more.

EDUCATION



SUP: Leashes & Lifejackets

www.americancanoe.org/SUP_PSA



New Stand Up Paddleboarding Video Covers Leashes & Lifejackets: When to Wear, When Not to Wear

The ACA's new public service announcement (PSA), SUP: Leashes & Lifejackets, makes it clear to stand up paddlers what types of leashes and lifejackets are appropriate for different water venues. This five minute video is intended to educate all those new to stand up paddleboarding (SUP), as well as those who have experience with the sport but are unaware of leash and lifejacket best practices. Some of the rules and recommendations regarding these pieces of equipment may surprise you.

Visit www.americancanoe.org/SUP_PSA to watch it now.

This video was produced with funding from the National Safe Boating Council under a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.



February Instructor of the Month - Mike Zeppegno

by ACA Staff

"I love the work and seeing the progression of our students. Experiencing their enjoyment and confidence on the water is very rewarding. Marna Powell, one of my earlier instructors, taught me the concept of 'pay it forward' which encompasses the idea of passing on what we have learned to other paddlers. As an active member of the PAC, Explore North Coast Kayak Club (ENC), I have been presented with many great opportunities to instruct and share my paddling passion. Through the joint marketing efforts of ENC and local university, Humbolt State, our community will have a new entry point for an introduction to local paddle sports. I am hopeful that these efforts will also result in increased membership for the ENC paddle club, and greater support for paddling in my region." - Mike





March Instructor of the Month - C.C. Williams

We are proud to partner with Kokatat for the ACA Instructor of the Month Program. If you know an exceptional instructor who deserves recognition, please [click here](#) to submit a nomination today.

Charles “C.C.” Williams, a native of Fort Mill, South Carolina is passionate about teaching and learning through the outdoors. A paddler and ACA instructor since 2005, he has spent the past three years teaching and guiding students of all levels as they discover the waterways of South Carolina. He is currently an Active Learning & Living (A.L.L.) Outdoors coordinator for the City of Rock Hill Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department, Level 4: Swiftwater Rescue Instructor, Level 3: River Kayak Instructor, and Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructor Trainer Candidate.

ACA: What drew you to become an ACA Instructor?

CW: I started paddling when I was a student at Frost-

burg State University (FSU) and the Adventuresports Institute (ASI) at Garrett College in western Maryland. I was fortunate to begin my paddling career in an area with a rich river culture and tons of great whitewater. I also had two professors and ACA instructors that mentored me along the way, Dr. Robert Kauffman (FSU) and Terry Peterson (ASI). I became an ACA instructor because I enjoy kayaking and love the personal connections made between the put-in and the take-out. I continue to renew and broaden my ACA instructor certifications because they help me to provide the best possible learning experience for my students to develop new skills and overcome challenges.

ACA: Do you have any memorable trips, events, or stories that stand out as your ‘favorite paddling moment?’

CW: Any day paddling with my family is a great day on the water! My most recent “favorite paddling

moment” was my 18-month-old son’s first river trip this past July. My wife, brother, and I took him out for his first rafting trip on the Catawba River here in Rock Hill! It was a great day for a river trip; we had amazing weather, a perfect water level, and most of all he really enjoyed it! It was certainly the best float-trip I have ever been on!

ACA: Have you participated in any particularly meaningful paddling programs, outreach events, education-

al sessions, or projects?

CW: Being part of a municipal recreation program gives me the opportunity to work with some of my students over the course of a few years. It’s really an honor and privilege to introduce someone to kayaking and then work with them over time as they develop into a solid paddler and trip leader or ACA instructor.



Kōkatat[®]



2015 Swiftwater Rescue Conference

Date: Oct 9-11, 2015

Location: Western North Carolina

Venue: Tuckaseegee River

Registration: Available Online - June 2015

Only 80 spaces available!

For more info visit:

www.americancanoe.org/SWR_Conference



ACA PRO SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT



[Coastal Kayak SUP & Sail](#) has been teaching paddlesports for 19 years. They have an ideal teaching location on the Delaware Coast only minutes from Ocean City, Maryland, with conditions from flat, calm and protected bay waters to rough surf, current and everything in between.

Let the professional staff of over 9 ACA certified instructors show you how much fun paddling can be while you learn at your own pace. Coastal Kayak offers everything from beginner classes and kids camps to Instructor Certification Workshops in both kayaking and stand up paddling.

Coastal Kayak staff are experts in the coastal region with over 30 years of paddling the area's waters, which are convenient to Baltimore, DC & Philadelphia. They are one of the few schools authorized by permit to operate at Assateague Island National Seashore! Coastal Kayak also offers all types of kayak rentals including sit-on-tops, recreational and touring kayaks, as well as many different types of paddle boards available to rent right off their bayside beach. In addition Coastal Kayak has been running guided eco-tours since 1997.

ACA Pro Schools are some of the best organizations across the country to find top quality ACA certified instruction. Plus, current ACA members receive discounts on certain Pro School instructional programs.

Please visit www.americancanoe.org/ProSchools to find a Pro School near you.



SEIC Notes

Motions from the February 20th Safety Education & Instruction Council Meeting:

1. Motion to update SEIC Policy Manual Chapter 3.B.2.c with the italicized words:

c) Have taught *and properly reported* at least two skills courses at their desired level of IT certification within the past four years.

2. Motion to Revise the current 1 to 5 instructor to student ratio to 1 to 12 on all Safety + Rescue courses (L-2, 3, 4, 5).

3. Motion to adopt the L2: Essentials of Sit On Top River Kayaking Instructor Criteria as presented by Committee.

4. Motion to revise the Instructor Trainer Application process to include an initial registration form and the completion of an online course.

5. Motion to approve Level 3: Surf SUP, Whitewater SUP & Level 4: Advanced Whitewater SUP prerequisites

- a. Level 3: Surf SUP Course Prerequisites: Level 2: Essentials of SUP instructor in good standing and successful completion of L3: Surf SUP skills assessment or equivalent skills.
- b. Level 3: Whitewater SUP Course Prerequisites: Level 2: Essentials of SUP instructor in good standing and successful completion of L3: Whitewater SUP skills assessment or equivalent skills.
- c. Level 4: Advanced Whitewater SUP Course

Prerequisites: Level 2: Essentials of SUP instructor in good standing and successful completion of L3: Whitewater SUP skills assessment or equivalent skills.

6. Motion to approve minimum time requirements for L3-4 SUP certification workshops:

- a. L3 Surf SUP Instructor certification course durations: IDW (8 hours – 1day) / ICE (8 hours – 1 day)
- b. L3 WW SUP Instructor certification course durations: IDW (8 hours – 1day) / ICE (8 hours – 1 day)
- c. L4 Adv WW SUP Instructor certification course durations: IDW (16 hours – 2 day) / ICE (8 hours – 1 day)

7. Motion to update the SEIC Policy Manual Chapter 2.D.1. (and all subsequent sections for ITs and ITE) with the underlined words: Certification is valid through December 31 of the fourth full year following certification. To maintain certification, Instructors must complete the following within each four-year certification period.

- a. Maintain annual ACA membership and SEIC registration. If ACA membership and/or SEIC dues lapsed at any point during the certification period, back dues must be paid in order to renew/maintain certification.



INSTRUCTOR TRAINER CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY:



CHARLESTON, SC • OCTOBER 23-25, 2015

www.americancanoe.org

The First Event Exclusively For ACA ITs & ITEs!

The ACA provides a range of recreational opportunities and has been established as one of the premier standards of paddlesports safety and education. As part of the ACA's leadership role in the paddlesports community, we have initiated this Instructor Trainer Conference to provide a resource for currently certified Instructor Trainers, and those aspiring to become ACA Instructor Trainers and Instructor Trainer Educators.

Date: October 23-25, 2015

Location: Charleston, SC

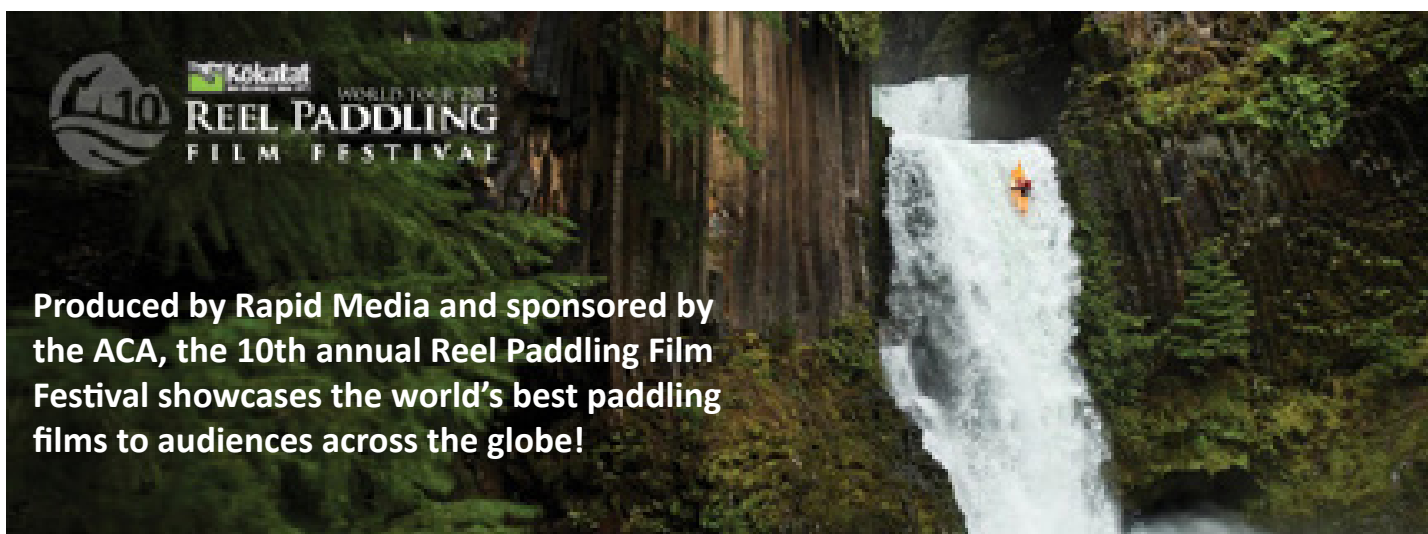
Facility: James Island County Park & the Holiday Inn Riverview

Hosts: the great outdoor staff at Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission

Registration: (available online - summer of 2015)

Website: www.americancanoe.org/ITConference

Save the date & stay tuned!



Renowned International Film Festival Screening in ACA's Home State!

The ACA presents the 10th Annual Reel Paddling Film Festival at the Byrd Theatre (2908 West Cary Street, Richmond, VA) on Saturday, March 21, 2015 at 2:00 pm (doors open at 1:30 pm).

The Reel Paddling Film Festival is an international film tour presenting the world's best whitewater, sea kayaking, canoeing, SUP and kayak fishing action and paddling lifestyle films of the year on screens in 100-plus cities across the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Europe and Australia.

With 23 inspiring paddling films short-listed for the World Tour, including the ten festival category winners, audiences can expect to see stand-up paddle surfing, hairy whitewater action, sea kayakers exploring remote coastlines, headwaters canoe expeditions, international river travel films, motivating environmental documentaries, grueling kayak fishing battles and hilarious short films capturing the lighter side of paddling life.

Tickets cost \$10. All ticket sales will benefit the ACA's on-going Stream to Sea Initiative to help keep the waters you love clean and accessible.

Visit www.americancanoe.org/RPFFACA for tickets. Hurry, space is limited!

ADAPTIVE



Evaluating Adaptive Outfitting for Paddlesports



by Joe Moore, ACA Adaptive Paddling Instructor Trainer

Specialized equipment and homemade solutions fill the world of adaptive paddlesports. Typically they are designed to restore function limited by physical disabilities. Each individual with a disability is unique, and each requires unique adaptive outfitting. Adaptive paddling instructors specialize in matching the needs of each paddler to appropriately outfitted equipment. Each time a new (or newly modified) piece of gear is offered as an adaptive paddling solution, we must critically evaluate for both safety and effectiveness.

By no means is this article intended to exhaust the considerations for safe and effective adaptive outfitting, rather, it is intended to provide a solid framework to help answer a few fundamental questions. What questions should we ask ourselves before embracing new technologies or solutions? What baseline for equipment safety should we adopt? How should we define adaptive outfitting effectiveness?

Safety

Safety tops all other priorities. One component of safety is commonly referred to as “releaseability.” Releaseability includes avoiding entrapment within the boat as well as quick and simple detachment from other devices. A paddler must be able to quickly and easily detach from paddle adaptations and all other equipment except the lifejacket in order to get out from under a capsized boat and turn from face down to face up in the water.

For example, individuals with loss of muscle control or grip strength can realize huge benefit from devices that aid paddle shaft grip. Stories of duct taping hands to the paddle shaft, gloves with industrial hook and loop (e.g., Velcro) sewn onto the palms, large rubber bands, and other creative solutions abound. These methods to accommodate for lost grip strength or muscle control often fail the basic safety test for releaseability. If the paddler cannot remove himself or herself from the paddle with a few simple, unassisted motions, then the risks are too great.

Individuals lacking sensation in lower extremities have a higher risk of boat entrapment: they might not feel that a foot or leg is compressed or snagged behind another object, such as a foot peg or loose bulkhead. Similarly, lower limb prosthetic devices can become unknowingly entrapped below the deck of a kayak. Safe adaptive outfitting must remove all existing and avoid creating new entrapment hazards. Adaptive paddling instructors should help new paddlers recognize the hazards, understand that the risks are manageable, and to help find and fabricate safe and functional solutions.

Skin protection presents another significant safety consideration for many adaptive paddlers. Breakdown of the skin and the tissues below the skin (pressure sores) can have significant consequences. Unfortunately, these injuries are frequently not revealed for days or weeks after the cause.

Wet environments accelerate skin breakdown. Loss of circulation, loss of sensation and atrophy often accompany physical disabilities, especially disabilities resulting from spinal cord injuries. All of these factors conspire to dramatically increase the possibility of dangerous skin damage for many adaptive paddlers. Therefore, adaptive outfitting must adequately protect against the heightened risk of dangerous skin damage: sharp or abrasive areas must not be exposed to skin; cushioning must adequately compensate for the atrophy and resulting pro-nouncement of bony structure; outfitting must be designed to shed and not absorb water; and outfitting must stay in place during rescues (must not slip out of place during boat exit and reentry).

Rescues (i.e., wet-exit and reentry of the paddlecraft) in particular can cause skin related injuries, especially if the outfitting does not stay in place. The adaptive paddling instructor should help the paddler understand what forces are involved in wet-exit and reentry and help insure that the outfitting will stay in place during the process. The failure of skin protection outfitting to stay in place during rescue efforts might be the single most common cause of injury in adaptive paddling.



Effectiveness

Adaptive outfitting that meets basic safety criteria must also be evaluated for effectiveness. Effectiveness can be measured by how well outfitting aids ideal body position and enables the most effective and efficient motion through the full range of strokes and maneuvers. Perfect fit and body motion is by definition an unattainable ideal, but one goal of adaptive outfitting is to equalize as much as possible the opportunity to achieve ideal fit and motion.

Outfitting often creates new or alters existing points of contact between the paddler and the craft. What makes adaptive outfitting different is that these points of contact are frequently outside the range contemplated by boat designers. For example, most lower extremity amputees cannot push against a kayak's forward bulkhead or footrest with hip, knee and ankle flexion and extension. However, outfitting that pro-

vides a releaseable anchor-point for the residual limb can help mimic the fit and enable similar motion and forces contemplated by the boat designers.

Initial and long-term comfort must be included within the concept of optimal body position within the boat, and therefore must be included as an essential measure of adaptive outfitting effectiveness. Creating points of contact between the paddler and the boat that are outside the range contemplated by the boat designers, involves placing pressure on parts of the body in new and largely unexplored ways, and the affect on paddler comfort can be challenging to overcome. The role of comfort in creating new paddlers cannot be overstated.

For example, consider the following questions: As the lower extremity amputee's residual limb extends to the new releasable anchor point built under the deck of the kayak, how will the pressure affect nerves in the paddler's residual limb? Can we avoid underarm chafing from outfitting designed to create lateral support for paddlers lacking torso strength and stability? What long-term consequences of hand / grip adaptations on the Carpel Tunnel should someone expect? Answers to the questions above will differ for each paddler. The role of the adaptive paddling instructor is to pose the questions and help the paddler discover safe and effective solutions.

Effectiveness can also be measured by how well outfitting maximizes the independence safely available to the paddler. For example, if a paddler cannot successfully reenter a paddlecraft from deep water (with or without the assistance of others), then the paddling venues safely open to that person are greatly limited. Paddlers and especially instructors should never enter an environment where rescue strategies not understood and practiced. Adaptive outfitting that unnecessarily limits the range of available rescue possibilities unnecessarily limits the venues safely open to that paddler.

Entering and exiting the paddlecraft, packing provisions and equipment, launching into the water, and all other aspects of paddling should afford as much in-

dependence as possible. Effective adaptive outfitting enables maximum independence in all of these skills, but never at the sacrifice of safety.

Effectiveness of adaptive outfitting must be defined not only by how well it enables someone to paddle with the same performance potential, but also how well it helps someone feel like they fit within a community. One goal of adaptive paddling programs should be seamless integration of individuals with disabilities into everyday programming (contrasted with programming designed specifically for adaptive paddlers). Adaptive outfitting that sticks out like a sore thumb draws attention to the disability and is unlikely to promote a sense of inclusion with other paddlers. Whenever obvious / standout adaptive outfitting is unavoidable for safety, performance, or comfort, every effort should be made to make it look “cool” (i.e., “cool” as defined by the paddler).

Conclusion

A set of basic adaptive paddling principles emerges from the discussion above. Unfortunately, these principles are easier to articulate than to apply. A straightforward, simple application of these principles does not exist. Concepts of releasability, independence, optimal body position, effective and efficient body motion, are defined subjectively and along a

spectrum, like shades of grey. Ends of the spectrum are simple for most to recognize. However, the ends of the spectrum rarely present themselves.

Compounding the challenge of applying these principles, performance and safety often appear in conflict with each other. For example, paddlers and instructors are often tempted to sacrifice a little bit of releasability (e.g., two or three unassisted motions to release a device rather than just one motion) for gains in efficiency. Plain and simple, performance can be enhanced with adaptations that present a less safe option for paddlers with insufficient training. Only experience gained through conservative practice informs judgment about how far the scales can be tilted one way or the other.

Adaptive paddling presents a unique opportunity for many individuals with physical disabilities to move around as gracefully and with the same performance potential as their peers. The role of adaptive paddling instructors is to facilitate, coach and otherwise enable the paddler’s personal goals. The chief method we can employ is to be excellent listeners and help create safe, effective and fun conditions for learning and enjoyment.

Upcoming Adaptive Paddling Workshops

At the core of the ACA Adaptive Program, Adaptive Paddling Workshops (APWs) involve hands-on learning in both a classroom and in calm, protected waters. These workshops are designed to provide instructors, outfitters, recreation program providers, and rehabilitation professionals with the information they need to integrate paddlers with disabilities into programs. Check out these upcoming APWs:

4/14/15 [Charleston, South Carolina](#)

6/5/15 [Farmington, New Mexico](#)

9/17/15 [Big Bay, Michigan](#)



State Director News



Find Out What's Happening Near You

A sampling of news delivered directly from various ACA State Directors around the country

ALABAMA

ACA provided support for the Alabama Cup Races in February & March, supplied Paddle Green bags for a Cahaba River clean-up, and continues to lend support to the Black Warrior River Keeper in their fight against a proposed coal mine on the Mulberry River across from Birmingham's drinking water intake.

Visit blackwarriorriver.org for more info.

LOUISIANA

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell has designated Louisiana's Bayou Teche Paddle Trail as the 17th trail of the National Water Trails System.

Visit www.techeproject.org for more info.

NEW MEXICO

ACA lends support to the fight to defend the Gila River from proposed diversion project.

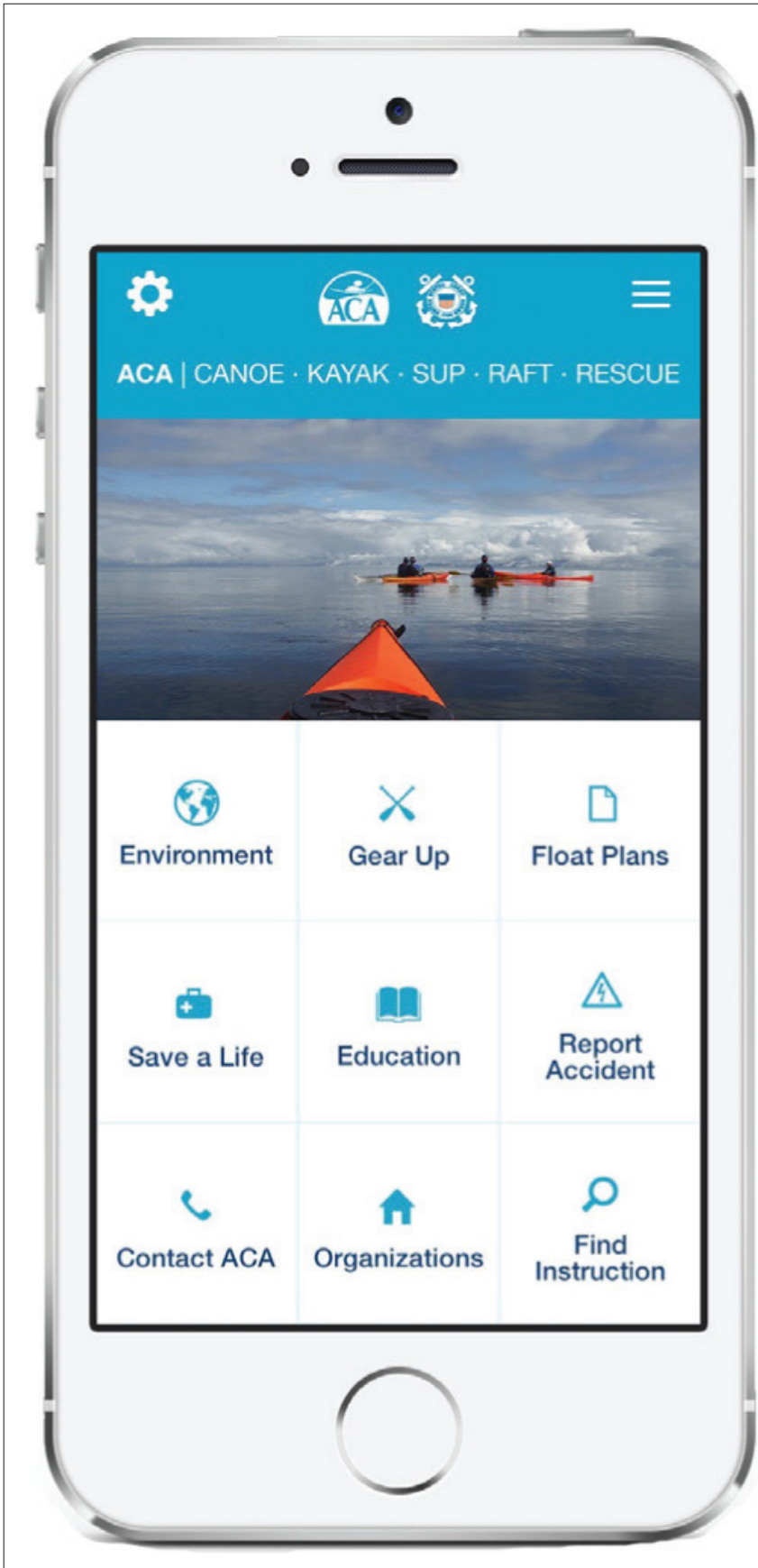
NEW YORK

The ACA State Council is exploring opening a new chapter of an ACA Paddle America Club in the Northern NY/Adirondack region. In Metro NYC, we are in the early stages of planning a paddling symposium. Keep an eye out for more information on opportunities for ACA paddlers throughout New York State!

WYOMING

Wyoming's State Director continues to actively recruit members for the state's Executive Council. If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact Mark Hamlin at: WyStateDirector@americancanoe.net





Paddle Ready

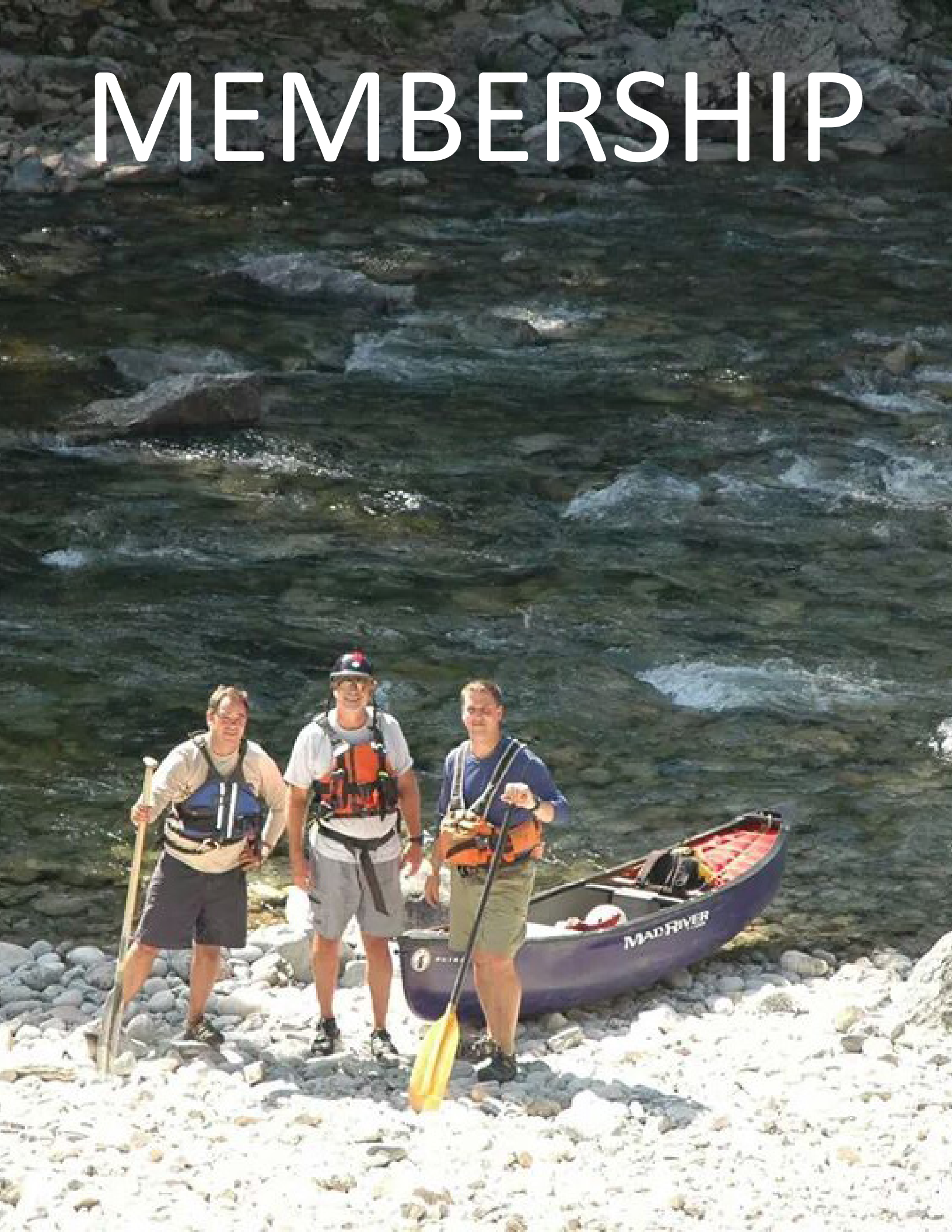
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MEMBERSHIP



ACA Member Benefit

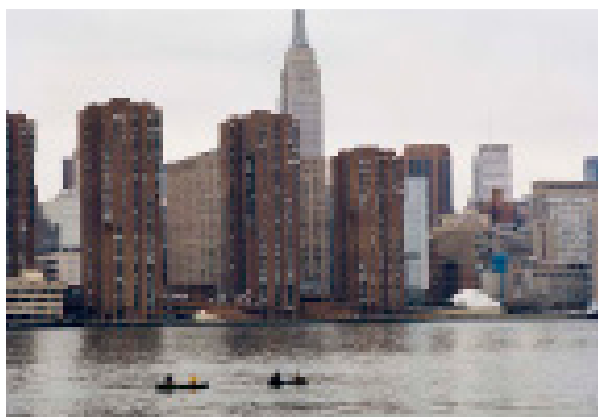
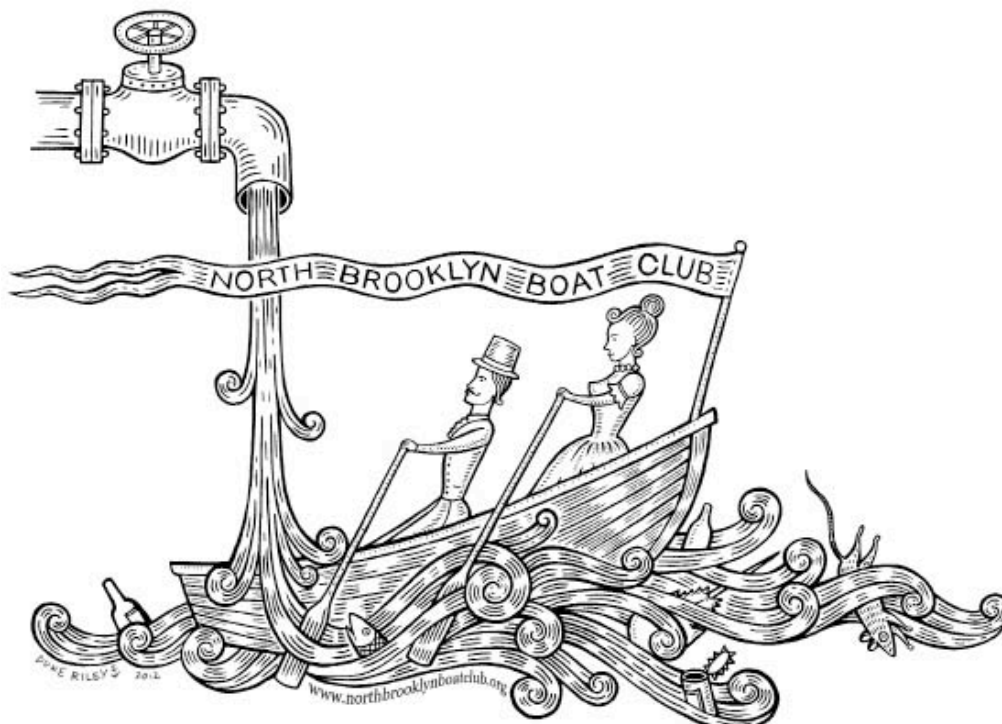


Subaru VIP Program!

As part of Subaru's support for the association, ACA members are eligible to participate in the Subaru VIP Partners Program. VIP Partners participants can save up to \$3,300* off the manufacturer's suggested retail price (depending on model and equipment selected) on the purchase or lease of any new Subaru from participating dealers. This discount is available to all eligible ACA members. No haggling is required. Now that's a member benefit!

Visit www.americancanoe.org/Subaru for more details.

Paddling Club Spotlight



The **North Brooklyn Boat Club** is a non-profit community organization, focused on outdoor education and environmental advocacy. Located on the shores of Newtown Creek (a federal Superfund site) and only a few hundred yards from the East River (some of the strongest currents on the Eastern seaboard) it takes this mission quite seriously.

Membership in the all volunteer run organization is only \$40/yr and provides access to all the equipment, as well as ACA trip leaders and instructors who have received specialized training on the NYC estuary.

In addition to kayak and canoe programming, the club also offers: citizen science projects and water testing, a book club, nautical knitting, paddle carving, traditional boat building, traditional camp skills, and more.

Named NYC's Best Boat Club by the Village Voice, its unique programming and vibrant membership has also helped it become the fast growing club in the city.

You can find them on your favorite social media platform, or learn more and become a member at www.northbrooklynboatclub.org

COMPETITION



Mark Your Calendars!

Don't miss these upcoming races...

3/21-22/15

[MISSOURI WHITEWATER CHAMPIONSHIPS](#)

Event consists of slalom, downriver, and boatercross canoe & kayak races for all ages and skill levels on class II-III whitewater on the beautiful St. Francis River. Slalom & Boatercross races held at Millstream Gardens.

3/28/15

[LOCUST FORK CLASSIC](#)

The Alabama Cup Racing Series is made up by the Locust Fork Invitational, Mulberry Fork Canoe and Kayak Races and Locust Fork Whitewater Classic races. Courses consist of about 25 gates, set on a class II/III rapids approximately one hundred yards long.

4/18/15

[Beast Kayak/Canoe/SUP Race](#)

The Beast is a kayak race dedicated to attracting high performing paddle sport athletes. This flat water race boasts challenging distances designed to capture attention of the paddle community. Stoneville Bike Club is committed to making this a premier Southeastern US race event. A highlight in the expanding World of Paddle Sports... We invite you to bring your best and be The Beast.

4/25-26/15

[French Broad Classique](#)

The French Broad Classique has paddling events for competitors of every experience level and craft: canoes, kayaks and stand-up paddleboards. Competitors can come for one or both days and are welcome to switch to different boats or different classes. We hope you can join us!

Game Changing Partnership



Member, U.S. Olympic Committee

The ACA and USACK Board of Directors have just announced a joint partnership. ACA Executive Director Wade Blackwood has been named Chief Executive Officer of USACK and will lead both organizations.

**For complete information on this partnership, please visit
www.americancanoe.org/USACK**



ACA National Championship Races



CANOE POLING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

June 5-6, 2015

Canoe poling competitions consist of both wildwater and slalom events with classes for beginners, intermediates, and experts. Fundamental instruction is generally provided for beginners prior to each race.



CANOE SAILING CRUISING CLASS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

September 5-6, 2015

The purpose of the Canoe Sailing Committee is: to encourage, sanction and sponsor amateur competition in canoe sailing at local, regional, national, and international levels.



WHITewater OPEN CANOE DOWNRIVER COMPETITION

July 22-26, 2015

The purpose of the Whitewater Open Canoe Downriver Committee (WWOCD) is: to encourage, sanction and sponsor amateur competition in "whitewater open canoe" at local, regional, national, and international levels. The WWOCD National Championships will take place in Old Town, ME, on the Penobscot River.



OPEN CANOE SLALOM CHAMPIONSHIPS

July 22-24, 2015

The purpose of the Open Canoe Slalom Committee is: to encourage, sanction and sponsor amateur competition in "whitewater open canoe" slalom at local, regional, national, and international levels. The Nationals & North American Championships will take place in Barry's Bay, Ontario.



FREESTYLE CANOEING INTERPRETIVE CHAMPIONSHIPS

September 5, 2015

FreeStyle Canoeing is the "art and science" of quiet water paddling. It emphasizes smooth, efficient flatwater paddling and precision boat control. FreeStyle can be applied to all canoeing situations. Many FreeStylers paddle to music making an expressible, interpretive art form.

INSURANCE

A high-angle photograph of a kayaker navigating a turbulent white-water rapids. The kayaker is wearing a yellow and black wetsuit, a green helmet, and a black life vest. They are in an orange kayak, using a black and yellow paddle. The water is churning with white foam, and the background shows dark rocks and some fallen leaves.

How Can ACA Insurance Benefit Me?

One of the many benefits of being affiliated with the ACA is our ability to provide liability insurance for on-water events. Obtaining insurance for on-water activities can be difficult and expensive. That's why the ACA provides this valuable service to the paddling community. The ACA's program provides excellent coverage from a highly-rated insurance company. It can be used for paddling in most classes of water, and is available at affordable rates that are competitive with, if not better, than any other event sanctioning organization. Submitting an application is easy, and the ACA staff is ready to assist you in filling your insurance needs.

Liability Insurance

The ACA's Liability Insurance Program protects paddling clubs, affiliate organizations, ACA members and ACA-certified instructors against liability claims brought by paddlers (or their family members) who have been injured and are seeking compensation for their injuries. This insurance will pay the costs of defending against an allegation of liability, including lawyer fees, and will also pay damages, up to the policy limit. Your event/course must be properly pre-registered in order to qualify for the ACA's Liability Insurance Program.

For more information, please visit www.americancanoe.org/Insurance



INTERNATIONAL





Save the Date

2015 ACA Europe Paddlesports Symposium

OCT 2-4, 2015

London, England

www.americancanoe.org/EuropeConference



- Do you know who's who in the ACA Europe Division? Visit www.americancanoe.org/EuropeDivision to learn about the ACA's leadership in Europe.
- Looking for an International ACA Instructor or Instructor Trainer? [Click here](#) for a full list!



The ACA, with funding from the U.S. Coast Guard, partnered with Anzovin Studio to create **two new animated videos** with the goal of educating and empowering paddlers to take responsibility for their safety on the water.

Visit www.americancanoe.org/AnimatedVideos to watch these funny, award-winning videos.

...& please share them with your family and friends!

Paddling History



*Ladies Tilting at Sugar Island 1906
New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, NY*

Chivalry is Alive

Nothing like getting all dressed up for Canoe Jousting, or Tilting, on a sunny Saturday afternoon! The above photo was taken at Sugar Island in 1906. Think this looks like fun? Canoe Jousting is still alive and well as a sport, just do a simple google search if you don't believe us! (Also, life jackets have come a long way since 1906, so be sure to wear yours.)

Each issue, we'll bring you an interesting paddling photo from the ACA archives.

We hope you enjoy the little glimpses of paddling past.

To learn more about ACA history and the early days of paddlesports, visit

www.americancanoe.org/History

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Remember Fun? The all-new 2015 Outback® brings it all back. Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive with X-MODE™ has the capability to take you almost anywhere. At 33 mpg*, it's the most fuel-efficient midsize crossover in America*. It's what your adventurous side has been waiting for. **Love. It's what makes a Subaru, a Subaru.**

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Subaru is a proud partner of the American Canoe Association.
Learn more at subaru.com/partners.

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