

GROUND RULES & HOUSEKEEPING

Ground Rules

1. Positive feedback and constructive comments only
2. Allow one to three minutes for discussion points
3. Be respectful of ideas and recommendations

Housekeeping

1. Please mute your camera and microphone if you are not speaking
2. Use the Chat function
3. Scheduled 'til 11:45 Eastern so you can get a break before the Members Meeting and Awards

AGENDA

10:00-10:05 Amy Ellis Intros and housekeeping/ground rules

10:05-10:15 Andrea White (AW), TN Initiatives

10:15-10:25 Andrea Vaillancourt-Alder (AVA), WNY outreach program & national initiative opportunities

10:25-10:35 Robert Levin, New Mexico collaborative stewardship

10:35-11:00 AW/All Directors Share/Questionnaire

11:00-11:25 leadership council proposal and way forward

11:20-11:45 AW Next steps & close of meeting

TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Strategic Foundation

- Galvanizing issue: Regulation coming our way from Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
- Forum to Share and Come Together
- Paddle together and Break bread: JOIN FORCES!



ACA Tennessee - Presidents' Forum >
PRIVATE GROUP · 40 MEMBERS



TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Public Policy & Stewardship



Piney River Declared State Scenic River



TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Tactical Online Activities: Covid 2020

Paddling During a Pandemic Facebook Live Panel Discussions



April 1, 2020



May 7, 2020

TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Tactical Online Activities: Covid 2020



Pandemic Pursuits: 7 Online Training Sessions April - June
Special Shout Out to Scott Fisher and the Nolichucky Outdoor Learning Institute & Eric Burnett at TVCC



- Leave No Trace
- Pondering First Aid for Paddlers
- So You Want to Get Into Flatwater Paddling
- Backpacking 101
- SWR Series on Knots, Anchors & Mechanical Advantage

TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Tactical Online Activities: Covid 2020

Leadership Meeting via Zoom to Compare Notes on ACA Covid Teaching Guidance

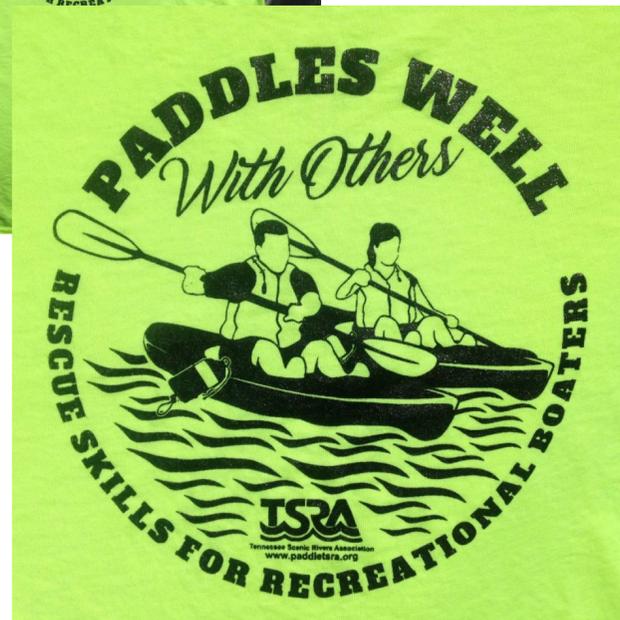
- Leaders from all 5 clubs plus Trey Knight, SEIC Chair
- Collaboration on USFS Risk Mitigation Plans
- Shared resources: Rescue Randy went on tour
- Compared notes on waivers, decreased volunteer base, masks
- Statewide leadership vow to require masks for land portion of all club events for any of the 5 clubs



TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Training Initiatives: Rescue for Rec Boaters

Start Local: 2016



Build on Success: 2019



Build the Infrastructure for Growth: 2020



2020:

- Certified 6 New ACA L2 & L3 Rescue Instructors
- Certified a New Rescue IT

TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Tactical Publicity: June 2020

WJHL | Tri-Cities News & Weather 

Paddlers from across Tennessee work to become certified rescue instructors in Erwin

Kelly Grosfield



 Johnson City Press 



NOLI, ACA team up to train certified rescue instructors in Nolichucky River

Jonathan Roberts Jun 19, 2020

So far this year, five paddlers have died in Tennessee rivers. Across the nation, paddlesports fatalities increased 30% from 2006 to 2018.

 **Tennessean.** 

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NEWS

Kayakers are dying on Tennessee's easiest rivers. This group hopes to change that.

[Brinley Hineman](#) Nashville Tennessean

Published 5:00 a.m. CT Jul. 1, 2020



TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Tactical Publicity: September 2020

Johnson City Press

NOLI, Team River Runner team up to train vets for whitewater rescue

Jonathan Roberts Sep 23, 2020



WJHL.COM
Veterans find health and healing through water sports in Erwin, TN



THELEAFCHRONICLE.COM
Free swift water rescue classes offer brotherhood, sisterhood for military veter...



Classes offer veterans a bonding experience

Jennifer Babich
Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE



Scott Fisher is an Army veteran and former 101st Airborne infantryman who believes in the healing power of nature, and knows the wounds military service can inflict. So the white river kayaking instructor of 15 years and owner and founder of Nolichucky Outdoor Learning Institute, a northeast Tennessee company providing outdoor education, has teamed up with the national nonprofit organization Team River Runner to offer free swift water rescue classes for veterans. It's an effort that matches the mission of Team River Runner, which is dedicated to helping veterans heal through paddle sports. "They really do a nice job of giving veterans a healthy outdoor outlet to come together and learn new skills, and get on the water in a supportive environment," Fisher said. But for Fisher, it's also a personal passion. "What's great about white water kayaking, especially for ex-military people is it's in a way a surrogate for the camaraderie and the physicality of what we did in the military," he explained. "It's healthy. It's outdoors, and we're surrounded by people who look out for each other. I think a lot of veterans miss that brotherhood or sisterhood when they get out, knowing someone has their back," Fisher said. "In white water, you very much get that. It's an individual sport, but framed within a team approach. I think a lot of veterans gravitate to that ethos." So the last weekend of September, they held their first class in Erwin, Tenn., geared toward veterans and military-connected people. It was a chance for veterans to learn white water rescue skills while connecting with nature and each other. Fisher said the skills they teach are essential. "With white water, we can manage and mitigate risk, but we can't remove risk, so this type of training - this swift water rescue training - is so they can be safe on the water, and they can also help other people be safe on the water," said Fisher. He said they focused on technical skills like rope throwing and wading out into currents, as well as contact rescues involving going into the water after a victim. It was an experience participants Clayton Sheehan and Elizabeth Dennis, both with Austin Peay State University, said was very valuable. "It was a great course ... tons of information ... great location, great people," said Dennis, a former military spouse.

Veterans and other participants learn swift water rescue skills as part of a free class offered by Team River Runner and Scott Fisher of Nolichucky Outdoor Learning Institute. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

"We learned so many skills, and it was very exciting." Dennis said while she's not a veteran herself, as a part of the military community ... she understands the benefits white river paddling sports can offer veterans. "For being in the military community a long time ... you're coming from all over, and you have this shared experience of the military. I love that Team River Runner creates another community for people to get out and adventure more. They're very open to including not only veterans, but their families, in the experience as well," said Dennis. Sheehan said the experience has him hooked. "It was pretty awesome. I'm hooked now," Sheehan said, who said they hope to offer white river paddling courses to other people in the community, including veterans, in the future. Fisher said the therapeutic benefits of river sports for veterans is clear. "When you white water kayak, you're not only surrounded by all this natural beauty that you can often only access by a boat, but you're lost in the moment. Everything else fades into the background. "So if people are dealing with something, they can forget about that for a while and focus on what's right in front of them; find a real sense of personal accomplishment in getting down a section of white water. There's also surrounded by other like-minded people, with that camaraderie and support system," Fisher said. He noted that swift water rescue training, in particular, has similarities with military training. "Swift water rescue is in line with the way veterans are used to being trained, and the way they think because it's technical. It's a training progression that will be familiar to veterans because that's the way we 'crawl, walk, run' in the military. We go through a very deliberate training progression, and we follow a similar progression in the swift water rescue training. Veterans naturally do well in this type of structured training," Fisher said. Fisher's teaching another class this week for veterans in southwest Tennessee, near Cleveland. He anticipates the course becoming an annual effort. "We know there's a need. Anybody that spends time around swift water, whether recreationally or professionally, they need this training. It's just that important. Swift water is powerful, it's relentless, and it's easy to underestimate," he said. He added beyond the free classes in conjunction with Team River Runner, his company also offers discounted classes for veterans. But he said they won't turn away any veteran, even if they can't afford to pay. To Fisher, it's about building bonds and offering hope and healing for those who've served. "White river kayaking is a great surrogate for the military," he concluded. For information, go to www.teamriverrunner.org. Nolichucky Outdoor Learning Institute can be reached at www.nolichucky.com. Reach Jennifer Babich at 931-245-0742 or by email at jbabich@gannett.com.



United Way campaign starts

United Way is kicking off its annual campaign to help people in need in Unicoi County. The campaign is a partnership between United Way and the community. It's a time to give back and make a difference. The campaign will run from October 1st to December 31st. For more information, visit www.unicoi.org.



Groups join forces to teach vets. Veterans are being trained in swift water rescue techniques. The training is being held at the Nolichucky Outdoor Learning Institute in Erwin, TN. The training is being held for free. For more information, visit www.teamriverrunner.org.

Early voting begins. Cast your ballot at the Unicoi County Election Commission. The election is on October 20th. For more information, visit www.unicoi.org.

TENNESSEE INITIATIVES

Tactical Stewardship: Diversity 2020

Great Smoky Mountains National Park : A vandal hung a dead black bear over a park entrance sign, along with a chilling handwritten message on a piece of cardboard that read: "From here to the lake black lives don't matter" ([Greenwire](#), Sept. 22).

The organizations signed on to this letter stand in solidarity with the staff, family, community, businesses, and visitors of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We were deeply saddened to learn of the recent racist act of intimidation that occurred when a black bear skin with head attached was draped over the entrance sign to Foothills Parkway accompanied by a hateful sign that read, "From here to the Lake, Black lives don't matter."¹ We oppose and condemn this repugnant act. We stand with those affected by this act, including Black staff, their families, local communities, and visitors.

Adventures Accessed, LLC
American Canoe Association, Tennessee Chapter
American Conservation Experience
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Appalachian Voices
Asheville GreenWorks
Blue Ridge Audubon
Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine
Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation
Bryant Research, LLC
Carolina Jews for Justice/West
Carolina Mountain Club
Chota Canoe Club
Conservation Council for Hawaii
Defenders of Wildlife, Southeast Program
Discover Life in America
Dogwood Alliance
Don Barger-Retired NPCA Southeast Regional Director
Forest Keepers
Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Friends of the Smokies
Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce
Gatlinburg Convention and Visitors Bureau
Gatlinburg Convention Center
Great Smoky Mountains Association
Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont
Harpeh Conservancy
Knoxville Area Urban League
Knoxville Branch of the Tennessee Chapter, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Commission
MountainTrue
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation, Eastern Division
North Carolina Wildlife Federation
Public Lands Alliance
Rotary Club of Gatlinburg
Sierra Club, North Carolina Chapter
Sierra Club, Tennessee Chapter
Smoky Mountains Hiking Club
Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards
Southern Environmental Law Center
Swain County Tourism Development Authority
Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning
Tennessee Conservation Voters
Tennessee Environmental Council
Tennessee Ornithological Society
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club
Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church
Tennessee Wildlife Federation
The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
The Wilderness Society
Wildlands Network

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Tactical Stewardship: Diversity 2020

E&E NEWS

NATIONAL PARKS

Park chief leads on race. Could he be next to lead NPS?

Rob Hotakainen, E&E News reporter • Published: Friday, October 9, 2020



Cassius Cash, superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, leads a group of hikers through the park. He believes the National Park Service needs to increase its efforts to become more diverse. National Park Service

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SURVEY

- 18 responses out of 45 State Directors plus other statewide offices
- Hours of volunteer time range from 4 hours per month to 15 hours per week
 - multiplies out to 48 – 780 hours each per year
 - For the 16 respondents alone = 3,996 hours volunteer time

Marketing/PR/Media	5
Government Relations	5
Writing/Editing	9
Researching	7
Fundraising/Development	4
Event Planning	8
ACA Instructor	14
Accounting/Finance	2
Social Media Management	6
Health Professional/Covid Procedures	1
Technology/Web/Software/Apps	3
Environmental Expertise	3
Other:	
Networking, Strategic Partnerships, Stewardship/coalitions, Conservation/LNT, Legislative/legal support for paddlers	

SURVEY: INITIATIVES IN EACH STATE

- OK: Annually offer “Essentials of River Paddling” class for new paddlers
- MA: Ocean Guardian initiative to promote environmental awareness and keep MA/New England beautiful
- MD: Advocating for paddler access to public waterways when local land owners are blocking access
- MO: Winter Paddling Clinic/First Day Float Dec 31-Jan 1
- IN: Creation of Indiana Paddle Association, youth leadership training, BSA training
- CA: Heroes of Paddling Awards, CA Safe Boating Day engagement, Paddle Green events
- PR: established a program using Green Bags for trash cleanup and then making art with collected trash
- RI: water trails, partnering with environmental groups, grant development
- NE: instructing Nebraska Game and Parks employees, partnering with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

SURVEY: SAFETY HOTSPOTS & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- **THEMES:**

- Areas with casual paddlers/outfitters/tubers with little safety training
- Environmental awareness/Leave No Trace ethics for new users
- Need access to more ITs
- User group dynamics between paddlers, fishing and boating

SURVEY: SAFETY HOTSPOTS & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- OK: Work with staff at Broken Bow Spillway on whitewater management policy development
Offer Quick Start classes in Tulsa and Oklahoma City
Market ACA at Oklahoma City Whitewater park
- VT: Train staff at paddlesports outfitters/rental liveries
Offer summer training at Lake Champlain and Waterbury Reservoir
- MA: Offer training for seasonal visitors at Cape Cod, North Shore and Central Mass
- MD: Training for rec paddlers on Chesapeake Bay
Training for kayak anglers
- MO: Meramac River needs awareness campaign for life jackets
“Safe Paddling on Big Rivers” for the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers
“Intro to Whitewater” on the St. Francis River
- RI: Paddling safety in Narragansett Bay
Coast interaction among user groups: paddling, fishing, boating

SURVEY: SAFETY HOTSPOTS & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- NM: Basic safety for casual paddlers at the Rio Grande Race Course and Lower Taos Box
Teaching river stewardship to new users
- TN: Address safety concerns on Caney Fork River with outfitters and other class I and class II rivers
with many outfitters but little training
- NE: Safety training and environmental awareness at Niobrara Wild and Scenic River and Elkhorn
and Platte Rivers
- NY: Lake Erie, Buffalo River, Outer Harbor Buffalo, NY
- CA: Need more ITs to meet the demand in Southern California
- MT: Would like to bring in ITs from different disciplines

SURVEY: DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- VT: Partnering with Vermont Adaptive to reach out to those with physical or cognitive disabilities
- MA: Non-profit events to bring in paddlers typically excluded for the cost of gear and training
- MD: Working to develop strong female paddlers and instructor base who are now maturing into leaders in the paddling community
- FL: Monthly paddling trips with Lighthouse for the Blind
- MO: Paddling with POC on the Mississippi and tying in to the regional history
- IN: Clubs trying to do a better job to attract and communicate all inclusive policies
- RI: Raising awareness about outdoor sports and DEI in urban communities
- NE: Offering classes to Ponce Tribe of Nebraska and Latino population in Lincoln and Omaha
- NY: Paddling opportunities and free training for physically disabled paddlers

STATE DIRECTOR PROGRAM PROPOSAL

- **Form a Leadership Council**

- Elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer (elected by the State Directors)
- Lead national and multi-state initiatives that we support and staff amongst ourselves
- Do fundraising and development specifically for our initiatives
- Support each other to grow training initiatives and awareness campaigns

OTHER IDEAS FOR THE STATE DIRECTOR PROGRAM

- Formalize roles and expectations of State Directors
- Standard marketing materials/toolkit to promote ACA trainings, raise awareness about ACA and recruit ACA members
- Regional partnerships with summer camps, youth organizations, non-PAC clubs
- Standard messaging of paddling/ACA impact per state: # ACA members, safety statistics, dollars spent on paddlesports, etc.
- State Directors trade training: we have a director willing to trade Wilderness First Aid and Leave No Trace training for paddling and rescue training
- River Stewardship initiatives
- Support each other to grow training initiatives and awareness campaigns
- Collaboration among regional clubs to amplify impact in the region

ACA STATE DIRECTORS SESSION

Thank you for your participation in todays session. Please let us know how we did and what we can do to improve.

We look forward to hearing from and working with all of you!

Contacts

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Andrea Vaillancourt-Alder, NY State Education Director, seabird.ava@gmail.com, 716.392.2708