

Volume 4, Issue 1 | January 2018

PADDLE

ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue

Adaptive Paddling Summit in development

ACA Expands Competition Department

The Heart of Gila

Instructor of the Month - December



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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.

NATIONAL STAFF

Wade Blackwood- Executive Director
Chris Stec- Chief Operating Officer
Marcel Bieg- Western States Outreach Director
Kandace Bowers- Financial Coordinator
Kelsey Bracewell- SEI Manager
Dave Burden- International Paddlesports Ambassador
Amy Ellis- State Director/Membership Coordinator
Mike Foreman- Conservation, Stewardship & Public Policy Director
Katie Hansen- Membership Coordinator
Kimberly Jenkins- Paddle eMagazine Editor
Brett Mayer- Public Policy Chief
LeighAnn Rakovich- Insurance Coordinator
Carrie Schlemmer- Education & Grant Coordinator
John Sims- Social Media Coordinator

Competition Department

Morgan House- High Performance & Competition Director
Rafal Smolen- Slalom National Team Coach
Chris Barlow- Sprint High Performance Manager
Zsolt Szadovszki- Sprint National Team Kayak Coach
Aaron Huston- Sprint National Team Canoe Coach
Aasim Saleh- Sprint Jr. Team Manager
Shaun Caven- Paracanoe High Performance Manager/Coach

Cover photo

Man rows down a river in Oregon.
ACA photo

Follow us on...



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

President- Peter Sloan (NC)
Vice President- *To be elected*
Treasurer- David Bell (OK)
Secretary- Anne Maleady (CO)

Board Members

**Terms expire at the annual meeting of the year listed*

At-Large Directors

- William Irving (North Carolina- 2019)
- Lili Colby (Massachusetts- 2019)
- Robin Pope (North Carolina- 2018)
- Kirk Havens (Virginia- 2018)

Independent Directors

- Jeff Rouse (Virginia- 2019)
- David Bell (Oklahoma- 2019)
- Peter Sloan (North Carolina- 2018)

Affiliated Organizations Director

- *Vacant*

Property Management Committee

- Bill Micks (Virginia- 2018)
- Safety Education & Instruction Council
- Steve Hutton (South Carolina- 2019)

Competition Council

- *To be elected*

Elite Athlete Directors

- Slalom- Scott Mann (Virginia- 2019)
- Sprint- Stanton Collins (Georgia- 2019)
- Paracanoe- Kelly Allen (Oklahoma- 2019)

Immediate Past President

- Anne Maleady (Colorado)

Liaison Members(non-voting)

- Tom Uebel- Sugar Island (New York)

Ex-Officio (non-voting)

- Wade Blackwood- ACA Executive Director (Virginia)



SAFETY, EDUCATION & INSTRUCTION COUNCIL (SEIC)

Chair- Steve Hutton (SC)
Vice Chair- Trey Knight (TN)
Secretary- C.C. Williams (SC)
Past Chair- Robin Pope (NC)

Committee Chairs

Adaptive Paddling- Joe Moore (SC)
Coastal Kayak- John Browning (MI)
Intro to Paddling- *Vacant*
Prone Kayaking- Adam Masters (NC)
Rafting- Josh Oberleas (CO)
River Canoe- Beth Wiegandt (VA)
River Kayak- Mike Arnoff (VA)
Safety & Rescue- Sam Fowlkes (NC)
Stand Up Paddleboard- Raphael Kuner (Germany)
Surf Kayak- Nigel Law (GA)
Surfski- Chris Hipgrave (NC)
Touring Canoe- Molly Gurien (OH)

Institutional Members

SEIC Chair Appointment- Josh Hall (SC)
SEIC Chair Appointment- Peter Casson (RI)

Liaison Member

BSA Liaison- Rob Kolb (TX)
USCG- Tom Dardis (DC)
USCG Auxiliary- Don Goff (MD)

STATE DIRECTORS

AL- Chris Anderson	NE- Steve Kuhl
AK- Levi Hogan	NV- Available
AZ- Available	NH- Available
AR- Tom Burroughs	NJ- Jason Parke
CA- Alexander Morris	NM- Robert Levin
CO- Theresa Zook	NY- Mike Cavanaugh
CT- Available	NC- Doug Stager
DE- Chris Beckman	ND- Available
DC- Meredith Waters	OH- Ryan Pepper
FL- Tommy Thompson	OK- Aasim Saleh
GA- Scott Fraser	OR- Available
HI- Indar Lange	PA- Steve Barber
ID- Available	PR- Omar Ramos
IL- Lenore Sobota	RI- Available
IN- Joe Rozsaheqi	SC- Jefferson Atkins
IA- Available	SD- Cory Diedrich
KS- Available	TN- Bob Snuck
KY- Nathan Depenbrock	TX- Janice Malone
LA- Ben Sandmel	UT- Available
ME- Rob Hutchison	VT- Available
MD- Chuck McMillin	VI- Available
MA- Kevin Beckwith	VA- Steve Eudy
MI- Micheal Gray	WA- Bill Corson
MN- Bridget O'Boyle	WV- Evan Young
MS- Brian Ramsey	WI- Thomas Schrader
MO- Justin Adams	WY- Helen Tozer-Wilson
MT- Available	

*For information about the State Director Program,
please contact Amy Ellis at the ACA National Office.*

Meet your

www.americancanoe.org/staff

What is your *favorite activity* in your job?



Wade Blackwood
Executive Director

Engaging with such a great group of hard-working, dedicated staffers!



LeighAnn Rakovich
Insurance Coordinator

Making our members happy by offering such affordable insurance to them!



Chris Barlow
Sprint High Performance Manager

I am excited to be a part of the process that's rebuilding a sport that has suffered from a lack of recognition and funding for too many years. Ultimately, I hope to be instrumental in helping Sprint Canoe/Kayak athletes achieve their best performances both at national and international competition.



Mike Foreman Rakovich
Conservation, Stewardship & Public Policy Director

Helping with policy and conservation issues.



Kandace Bowers
Financial Coordinator
Keeping all the balls in the air!!!



Brett Mayer
Public Policy Chief

Talking to locals about grassroots policy issues around the country. I love garnering the inside perspective and finding out more about what issues are important to members in their state and region.



Kelsey Bracewell
SEI Manager
Grant writing with the SEI Department staff.

ACA Staff



Katie Hansen
Membership Coordinator

Getting membership cards sent out! It's a longer process than people may realize, so it's satisfying when I see USPS pick them up.



Morgan House
High Performance & Competition Director

Working with the national team coaches and managers to support our athletes and programs on the most competitive level possible with the ultimate goal of bringing home Olympic Gold Medals!



Carrie Schlemmer
Education & Grant Coordinator
Yoga on staff health and fitness Thursdays!



John Sims
Social Media Coordinator
Learning more about paddlesports. It's a really exciting time at the ACA and for paddlesports in general, as the organization has been named the NGB for the Olympic slalom and sprint and Paralympic paracanoe. There's a really bright future ahead for the ACA, and for a newbie it's great to be getting up to speed on the athletes, events and trends in the paddlesports community.



Christopher Stec
Chief Operating Officer
Replying to emails!



Dave Burden
International Paddlesports Ambassador

Visiting amazing places and meeting awesome people.



Marcel Bieg
Western States Outreach Director & Grant Manager

Teaching courses in beautiful areas with wonderful people.

Continued on page 7



*Making the World a Better Place to Paddle!
Since 1880.*

Zsolt Szadovszki

Sprint National Team Kayak Coach

My favorite activity in coaching occurs when I reach the level of partnership with an athlete or athletes, and we can specifically design our path for the next goal.



Aasim Saleh

Sprint Jr. Team Manager

Ensuring that all paddlers, both athletes and coaches, enjoy a safe, fun, healthy, competitive, athlete-centered and holistically structured environment.



Amy Ellis

State Director/Membership Coordinator

Getting out to events or conferences and meeting our members in person!



Aaron Huston

Sprint National Team Canoe Coach

Coaching athletes to be the best they can be.



Kimberly Jenkins

Paddle eMagazine Editor

Laying out the magazine -- it's like a giant jigsaw puzzle.



Rafal Smolen

Slalom National Team Coach

This coaching job requires many different non-coaching responsibilities. I enjoy coaching specific slalom whitewater sessions the most.



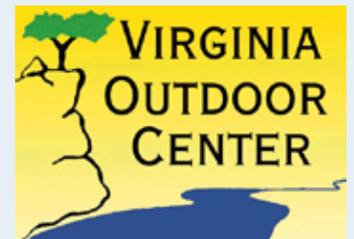
Shaun Caven

Paracanoe High Performance Manager/Coach

Coaching athletes and getting on the water and paddling.

PARTNERS

We are grateful to these organizations and companies for their significant commitment to help us achieve our mission and goals.



Partnership Opportunities

If you would like to align your business with the nation's oldest paddlesports organization, please [click here](#) for partnership opportunities with the ACA.



STEWARDSHIP



Paddle *Green* Spotlight



ACA announces stewardship grant awardees (part 4)

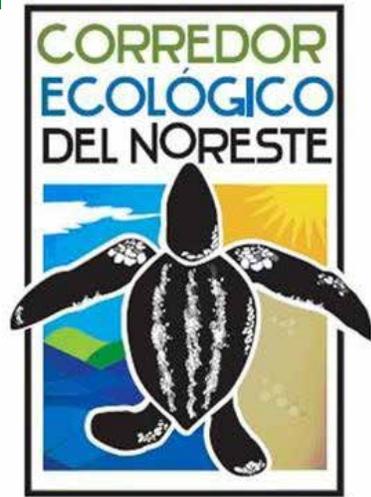
Since 2002, the ACA has partnered with L.L. Bean to sponsor the Club Fostered Stewardship (CFS) Program. This program provides funding to local and regional paddling clubs and organizations that undertake stewardship projects on waterways in their area. The purpose of the program is to encourage paddling clubs to take an active role in protecting and improving the nation's waterways.

The ACA is proud to be able to help local paddling clubs and organizations improve their waterways and make this world a better place to paddle! Through funds provided by L.L. Bean, the ACA's CFS Program has provided nearly \$150,000 to over 160 different stewardship initiatives since its inception. For more information, please visit www.americancanoe.org/LLBean_CFS_Grant.

In mid-May, the ACA announced this year's CFS Grant recipients. The recipients by state are as follows:

- Alaska: Anchorage Waterways Council
- Alabama: Cahaba Riverkeeper
- Illinois: River Action
- Indiana: Paddlers 4 Conservation
- Michigan: Boardman River Clean Sweep
- New Mexico: Kayak New Mexico
- New York: Friends of the Chemung River Watershed
- New York: SUNY Adirondak Adventure Sports
- Pennsylvania: Allegheny Aquatic Alliance
- Puerto Rico: Coalition for the Northeast Ecological Corridor
- Vermont: Vermont River Conservancy
- Texas: The Colorado River Alliance
- Washington: Spokane River Forum
- Wisconsin: Harbor District Inc.

In the July issue of *Paddle*, we began highlighting the work of the 2017 award recipients. To learn about more of the award recipients, please see the next two pages.



Coalition for the Northeast Ecological Corridor

Coalition for the Northeast Ecological Corridor is a not-for-profit organization founded in 2005 by volunteers and members of the communities of Luquillo and Fajardo, Puerto Rico.

Each year the group organizes various activities to educate and promote the conservation and protection of the nature reserve. With funds from the CFS grant program, the coalition organized a trash cleanup and wood debris removal

along the Sabana River and also to gain access to a small lagoon on the center of the nature reserve. The event took place July 22-23, 2017.

This project marked the beginning of an ongoing effort to establish and maintain paddle trails not only in Sabana River and the small lagoon, but also in other areas of the corridor, such as Aguas Prietas Lagoon, Pitahaya River, Juan Martin River and other waterways near the nature reserve.



Colorado River Alliance



COLORADO RIVER ALLIANCE

The Colorado River Alliance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Austin, Texas, is the only nonprofit dedicated solely to the conservation and protection of the Texas Colorado River. The organization has been increasing community awareness of the Colorado River's environmental and economic importance since 1994. They provide, conduct and support environmental science and outdoor education programs for youth, river cleanups, and other river-centered projects in efforts to bring awareness to the Colorado River.

The organization's largest event is the Lake Travis Cleanup. It began in 1994 as an informal gathering of divers in the Lake Travis area who turned their recreational diving ventures into a small-scale cleanup effort. Due to the popularity of the program, the LCRA and the Colorado River Alliance became involved a few years later to help facilitate boat support and proper waste disposal. The event is now managed by a partnership among the Colorado River Alliance, Keep Austin Beautiful, and Travis County. The Lake Travis Cleanup has become one of the largest such events of its kind in the world, with 1,000 divers, boaters, swimmers, and shoreline volunteers gathering on one day to remove an average of



five tons of trash from Lake Travis, the Texas Colorado River, and the surrounding parks each year. The high-profile event also focuses public attention on the importance of water, river ecosystems, and Lake Travis. It's a tremendous opportunity for public education.

The 2017 cleanup took place Sept. 17, and brought together 350 dive volunteers, 34 dive captains, and 500 shoreline volunteers who removed 3.38 tons of trash from 21 sites on the shoreline and underwater. The event drew impressive media coverage from five news outlets. Plus, a new group of paddling volunteers joined the annual tradition.

Spokane River Forum

The **Spokane River Forum** is a nonprofit organization that creates materials, events, and activities to promote regional dialogues for sustaining a healthy river system while meeting the needs of a growing population.

With funding from the CFS grant program, the group worked to develop and install a kiosk and an interpretive sign at a popular access point for the Aubrey White Water Trail. The signage is critical to providing both stewardship and safety messages for users. The stewardship messaging reminds users to “pack it in, pack it out” and provides aquifer protection and fish consumption advisory information. Safety messaging

includes life jacket requirements, river flow, proper clothing and other information.

This project ties into ongoing efforts to develop the Spokane River Water Trail. Since initiating development in 2010, the Forum and partners have developed new and restored water trail access at 7 sites and is actively developing 1 site. Combined with access work being done as part



of Avista Utilities Spokane River licensing implementation, thousands of recreational enthusiasts are rediscovering the Spokane River.

Vermont River Conservancy

Vermont River Conservancy is a statewide water-focused nonprofit land trust supported by people who believe that the protection of exceptional shore land is essential to the quality of life in Vermont. The group works to protect popular swimming holes, breathtaking gorges, magnificent waterfalls, fish-



ing and boating accesses, paddlers' trails, wildlife corridors, watersheds and so much more. They also seek to improve Vermont communities' flood resiliency by actively exploring new conservation approaches that convert flood-threatened private property to public open space for recreation and public access.

Stay up to date on ACA's stewardship initiatives

Interested in the political process? Check out some of the **local and regional policy letters** the ACA has submitted on behalf of paddlers:

www.americancanoe.org/PublicPolicy



Want to help your local waterway? Watch these videos from fellow paddlers at their **Paddle Green Events**:

www.americancanoe.org/PGEvents



How much is there? Where does it come from? Help the ACA and NOAA **'Track Trash'** and clean up your local waterway in the process! Learn how to participate:

www.americancanoe.org/TrackTrash



How do the **7 Principles of Leave No Trace** apply to river corridors? Learn more at:

www.americancanoe.org/LNT

EDUCATION



Tommy Gram, ACA Instructor of the Month for December, assists a young kayaker in the Kids Paddle Pool.

ACA offers second *Level 1-Level 2 Symposium*



The [ACA](#) and [Active Learning & Living Outdoors](#) are excited to offer the second [Level 1 & Level 2 Symposium and Instructor Updates](#). Scheduled for Sept. 15-16, 2018, in Rock Hill, South Carolina., the symposium is designed to address the specific needs of Level 1 & Level 2 Kayak, Canoe, and SUP instructors.



This is your chance to increase the quality of the clinics and assessment courses you offer by improving your personal paddling and rescue techniques, learning new teaching methods for beginner paddlers, and enhancing your ability to assess the strokes and body mechanics of your students while providing them with clear, targeted feedback on their technique.

You'll paddle and learn from Instructor Trainers and Instructor Trainer Educators who have extensive experience working with Level 1 & Level 2 students and instructors across multiple disciplines. We hope you'll join us for this unique experience!

2018 Symposium Schedule*

Saturday, September 15

8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.: Instructor Updates (On-Water)

- Level 1 – Introduction to Kayaking
- Level 1 – Introduction to SUP
- Level 1 – Introduction to Canoeing (Solo & Tandem)
- Level 2 – Essentials of River Kayaking
- Level 2 – Essentials of Kayak Touring
- Level 2 – Essentials of SUP
- Level 2 – Essentials of River Canoeing (Solo & Tandem)
- Level 2 – Essentials of Canoe Touring (Solo & Tandem)

6:30 pm – Dinner & Social (Location TBA)

Sunday September 16 – Symposium (Classroom & On-Water Session)

8:30 am – Classroom Sessions

- (Topics TBA)

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – Break for Lunch & Travel to Paddling Venue

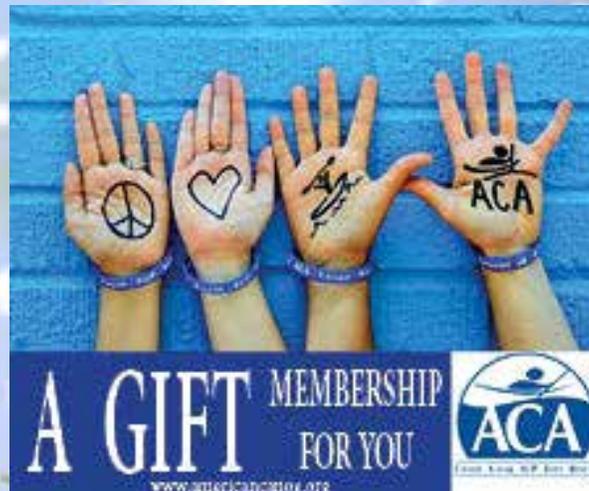
12:30 p.m. – On-Water Session

- Multi-Discipline Assessment Course Workshop
 - Topics - TBA

4:00 p.m. – Symposium Concludes

**Subject to change*

Give the Gift of an ACA Membership



Give your paddling friend or family member an ACA Gift Membership so they can support safe, enjoyable paddling and protection of America's recreational waterways.

The ACA is the nation's oldest paddlesports organization. Thanks to the support of our members, we have been making the world a better place to paddle since 1880!

As an ACA member, your gift recipient will enjoy the following benefits:

- [Subaru VIP Program](#)
- [Stewardship](#) support
- [Public Policy](#) representation
- Free [Rapid Media](#) subscription
- Reduced admission to thousands of ACA sanctioned [events](#) and races each year
- [Pro Deals](#) for certified instructors
- Bimonthly [Paddle](#) eMagazine featuring local, regional, and national paddlesport issues
- [Members Only discounts](#)
- Discount on ACA [merchandise](#)
- And [more!](#)

It's easy to give an ACA Gift Membership using our safe and secure online form. Or, if you prefer, you can make your gift by mail or phone:

ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue
Attn: Membership Department / Gift Membership
503 Sophia Street, Suite 100
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
(540) 907-4460 ext 109

After purchasing your gift membership, you will receive a confirmation email with a downloadable gift announcement (PFD file) to give to the receiver.

December Instructor of the Month



Tommy Gram

Tommy Gram has over a decade of experience teaching people to have fun and be safe in the outdoors. He lives in Buena Vista, Colorado, where he works and plays outdoors as much as possible.

When asked how he keeps sharp in the off season, Gram said, “Luckily there is always a bit of water in the Arkansas River Valley that makes running slalom gates and low water runs possible to keep my paddling skills sharp. I spend a lot of time skiing in the backcountry, which translates to keeping my thinking and decision-makings skills sharp.”

In the winter, Gram is a backcountry ski guide for Buena Vista Mountain Adventures and an avalanche instructor for the American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education. He currently is an L4 Whitewater Kayak and Swiftwater Rescue Instructor Trainer, an L5 Advanced whitewater Kayaking Instructor as well as a Wilderness First Aid Instructor.

Gram is the program director and lead guide/instructor for the Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center.

He is also the owner/operator of Whitewater Attainment, where he provides instructor certification and advanced level training for kayak schools, clubs and other organizations in the western states.

“Whitewater Attainment was started in 2015, and provides Instructor



Development and Instructor Certification Workshops as well as high-end coaching and clinics throughout the western states. Over the last few years I have met some awesome people and gained some great experiences,” he added.

“The awesome thing about paddling is that there is always something to learn. I always look forward to learning more from experience and continuing to work with some of my accomplished mentors and colleges along the way,” Gram said. “I hope to plan a kayaking road trip to the northwest and British Columbia next fall.”



ACA launches new *Leadership Academy*



This summer, the ACA is rolling out a new format for the annual paddlesports conference. The event is being transitioned into an [ACA Leadership Academy](#) to target all facets of the paddlesports community.

The new format will feature educational tracks for paddling clubs, competition disciplines, the SEIC, and retail store employees, as well as whitewater and flatwater paddling opportunities.

The first ACA Leadership Academy will take place August 24-30, 2018, in conjunction with the [Paddlesports Retailer Show](#) being held in Oklahoma City.

Paddlesports Retailer is a trade show – endorsed by the Paddlesports Industry Coalition – providing the premier commercial and cultural experience for exhibitors, retailers, media and industry advocates alike. This year's event takes place Aug. 27-30 in Oklahoma City's Cox Convention Center. For more information, visit www.paddlesportsretailer.com.



ACA PRO SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT



REI Outdoor Schools

Ready to launch into a new outdoor activity or advance in one you already enjoy? REI Outdoor School can get you on your way!

REI offers beginning to advanced-level classes and outings in kayaking, rock climbing, mountain biking, navigation, snowshoeing, road cycling, backpacking and more. Professional instructors are committed to sharing their knowledge and ensuring an enjoyable experience for every participant.

And you don't need a lot of equipment to participate -- REI provides kayaks, bikes, snowshoes, GPS units and other gear.

For more information, please visit www.rei.com/learn.html.



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.

ADAPTIVE





ACA & Adaptive Expeditions to host Adaptive Paddling Summit



The [ACA](#), in partnership with [Adaptive Expeditions](#), will host the second [Adaptive Paddling Summit](#) later this year. The event will model the 2014 AP Summit with the addition of presenting results from almost four years of significant ACA Adaptive Paddling Program growth.

Highlights for 2018:

- Exciting on-water and classroom events for paddlers of all experience levels
- High quality educational sessions
- Paralympic opportunities in paracanoe
- New Adaptation Modules for:
 - Whitewater Rafting
 - Kayak Fishing
 - Surf Ski
 - Stand Up Paddleboard
 - Wave Ski
- The latest in adaptive equipment demonstrations
- New ACA Advanced Communications Endorsement, which will prepare instructors to better reach students with:
 - Vision impairments or blindness
 - Speech, language, and perception challenges
 - Hearing impairments or deafness
- “Try-It-Zone” time where participants will get hands-on with the latest adaptive paddling equipment



The 2018 Adaptive Paddling Summit will be held in Florida (date and exact location to be determined). Registration will be available online this summer. For more information, please visit www.americancanoe.org/Adaptive_Summit.

Grant funding available for APW

[Adaptive Expeditions](#) has received grant funding from the Craig H. Nielsen Foundation to help expand the ACA Adaptive Paddling Program. From around the country, five organizations actively engaged with the ACA will be selected as project beneficiaries. ACA Adaptive Paddling Workshops will be scheduled for each beneficiary organization.

Each APW will focus on paddlercraft types never before outfitted to optimize comfort, safety, inclusion,

performance, and independence for individuals with disabilities resulting from Spinal Cord Injury (SCI). One APW will be delivered for each of the following paddlesports disciplines: rafting, surf ski, sit-on-top fishing kayaks, stand up paddleboard, and wave ski (associating adaptive paddling and adaptive surfing).

The grant will cover costs of running each APW, but the five selected clubs will need to provide

APW Host responsibilities, which includes recruitment and enrollment of ACA Instructor Endorsement Candidates and paddlesport students with disabilities resulting from SCI.

Applications are being accepted online through January 31, 2018. Please visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/APW-Grant-Application-2018 to apply.



New

Instructor endorsement under development

[Adaptive Expeditions](#) and the [ACA](#) announce an opportunity to help develop a new ACA Advanced-Communications Instructor Endorsement (AC Endorsement).

On May 6-9, 2018, Adaptive Expeditions will host a Curriculum Development Summit at Seabrook Island, South Carolina. Travel expenses, single occupancy lodging, per diem, and all meals will be covered for 10-11 selected applicants.

The goal of the summit is to codify the most effective strategies for teaching and learning, risk assessment and management, and effective facilitation of on-water group dynamics for paddlesports programs that include individuals who have:

- Vision impairment or blindness
- Hearing impairment or deafness
- Speech, language, and/or perceptual impacts from Traumatic Brain Injury and/or other Acquired Brain Injury, such as stroke, brain tumor, etc.

The product of the Curriculum Development Summit will be the start of a new national level instructor credentialing that will benefit all people with these disability types.

Each of the three days will include 9 to 10 hours of session time, split equally between conference room based theory development and on-water trial and error theory testing. Selected participants will be required to produce 8-10 hours of work (research and information synthesis) prior to the summit.

This project is made possible with funding from [Disabled Sports USA](#) and [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#). For more information and to apply, please visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/ACA_AC_AP_Summit.



ACA Kayak L2 ICW + Adaptive Paddling Workshop (APW) *All Inclusive*

Do you want to become an ACA Instructor with the Adaptive Paddling Endorsement?

Don't miss out on this opportunity! Adaptive Expeditions is holding an all-inclusive six-day, five-night ACA Level 1+2 Kayak Instructor Certification Workshop packaged together with an Adaptive Paddling Workshop this spring.

The workshop is being held April 28-May 3, 2018, at the Barrier Island Environmental Education and Conference Center at Camp St. Christopher on Seabrook Island, South Carolina.

[Click here](#) for pricing, registration, lodging information and more.

EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT

Paddle Pivot



The combination of Creating Ability's Universal Base with this pivoted paddle adaptation allows one-arm control of a kayak. It also provides support to completely remove the weight of the paddle from the paddler's arms. The pivot assembly snaps on to any paddle shaft, and the paddle & pivot assembly lift out of the base for ease of entry and safety in the event of a wet exit.

Paddle not included.

**Please visit the Adaptive Paddling section
of the [ACA eStore](#) for more information
on all of the adaptive equipment available for purchase.
*Don't forget to log in for ACA member pricing!***

Upcoming Adaptive Paddling Workshops

April 28-May 3

[Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking Instructor Certification Workshop + Adaptive Paddling Workshop](#)
St. Johns Island, South Carolina

October 12-14

[ParaCanoeing World Conference](#)
Stockholm, Sweden

diff·a·bil·i·ty

A difference in ability that requires unique skills and problem solving, often accompanied by an increase in perseverance and badassery.



Visit the [Adaptive Event Calendar](#) to stay up-to-date on APWs happening near you!





Alabama ACA photo

NEWS NEAR YOU

Documenting the *Heart of the Gila*

Compiled by Robert Levin

Occasionally, we hear stories of how our children take up the passions of their parents and continue these throughout their lives. Rarely do we hear the stories where parents take the torch of their children. This is one of those stories where tragedy creates a movement and movement creates initiative.

Michael Sebastian Mahl, Ella Jaz Kirk, and Ella Sala Myers lost their lives on May 23, 2014, while conducting aerial research on the Signal Peak Fire in the Gila National Forest, New Mexico. All three had just completed their sophomore year at Aldo Leopold Charter School in Silver City, New Mexico, and were part of a YCC Ecological Monitoring Team.

Much of their work centered on monitoring the upper watersheds of the Gila River as it changed and responded to recent fires and floods. They knew the river well; it is where they lived, and where they learned. All three were gifted teachers and traveled to elementary classrooms teaching younger students about ecology, conservation and watershed health.



Michael Sebastian Mahl, Ella Jaz Kirk, and Ella Sala Myers lost their lives on May 23, 2014, while conducting aerial research on the Signal Peak Fire in the Gila National Forest, New Mexico.



Much of the teens' work centered on monitoring the upper watersheds of the Gila River as it changed and responded to recent fires and floods.

These remarkable teens touched everyone around them in life, leaving a legacy of environmental activism and stewardship that continues to ripple through their community. Ella, Ella, and Michael knew protecting New Mexico's last wild river benefits all of us, including the many species of rare wildlife that thrive along the Gila.

The Gila River is one of the longest rivers in the West, originating above 10,000 feet in the Mogollon Mountains of the Gila Wilderness and from the headwaters of the Black Range in the equally wild Aldo Leopold Wilderness to the east. Originally flowing 500 miles to its confluence with the Colorado River near the Mexico border, the Gila is now drained dry half-way through its journey due to large irrigation and municipal diversions in Arizona.

But New Mexico's Gila River, one of the last free-flowing river stretches in the western U.S., is under threat from [proposals for development](#)

and diversion. If the water project proposed by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission is built, an average of 14,000 acre-feet of water per year, double New Mexico's current withdrawals, could be siphoned from the Gila watershed. A project of that magnitude would severely impact the Gila's unique ecology and threaten sensitive species that depend on the natural flood cycles of the river.



Therese Dowart with the Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico worked with the ACA to secure a donation toward the documentary project.

nick, parent of Ella Jaz and director of the Ella Jaz Watershed Project, and Todd Schulke, co-founder of the Center for Biological Diversity,

ter withdrawals authorized by the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA). Our ultimate goal is long-term protection, using legislative approaches such as the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or the Wilderness Act. Heart of the Gila will help us build a groundswell of support to protect the Gila River forever.

In August 2017, Therese Dorwart on behalf of the Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico, inquired about a possible donation and sponsorship from the ACA for this important project. A proposal was submitted with assistance from Mike Foreman, Brett Mayer and Chris Stec. Not only did the ACA make a sponsorship donation but additionally offered print space for the continued efforts of this important conservation project.

Following the teens' deaths, their parents took up their cause to educate the public about the importance of protecting the Gila. From this, a moving documentary is in the works.

“This film project is a tribute to our children’s love of nature. We expect Heart of the Gila to convey all the reasons to protect those things we hold most precious: our children, our wild places, and our future.”

– Patrice Mutchnick (Ella Kirk’s mom)

Heart of the Gila is a film project by David Garcia, an Albuquerque filmmaker, in collaboration with the parents of Ella, Ella, and Michael, along with Patrice Mutch-

advising on all things river-protection related. The goal of the film is to educate the public about the critical importance of the Gila River and the need to protect the river from threats such as the large wa-

For more information on the Heart of the Gila <http://heartofthegila.org/>

Donate

Funds are being raised for the film project that portrays the living Gila River while telling the stories of Ella Kirk, Michael Mahl, and Ella Myers through the allegorical lens of the river they loved. Your contribution to the project will help the filmmakers take the journey down the full length of the river, capturing her canyons, rapids, wildlife and forests on film. For more information, please visit <http://heartofthegila.org>.

State by State



The Alabama Cup Races are the state's premier slalom whitewater event.

Alabama

The Alabama Cup Races, Alabama's premier slalom whitewater event, has been around since the early 1990s. Hopefully everyone has been training, as these races are held in late winter and early spring. If you don't have an Alabama Cup, created by hand by one of our longtime racers, this is your year. Race in both events, place in your class at both, and get a full year of bragging rights.

The Alabama Cup Races have hosted array of paddling greats, including Eric Jackson, Rich Weiss, Davey Hearn and Phillip Foti. In 1994, the Mulberry Fork Canoe & Kayak Races hosted the qualifying races for the U.S. Olympics. In 2014 the Mulberry Races were designated as a qualifier for the junior Nationals. Many young racers get their start here, and we love to see them go on to compete at the national and international levels.

- Locust Fork Invitational - Feb. 3-4
- Mulberry Fork Canoe and Kayak Races - March 3-4

We look forward to seeing our paddling family come together to celebrate their love for the sport. Visit Alabamacupraces.com.

Chris Anderson, AlStateDirector@americancanoe.net

Florida

Access to Florida's extensive paddling trails and camping was greatly impacted by the 2017 hurricane season. Numerous county and state parks were closed and several are still under repair. At this writing, many of the Everglades camping sites along the Florida Saltwater Circumnavigation Trail have been closed. If you are planning a visit to the area, be sure to confirm your

reservation and the status of the park and camping.

Paddlers launching in remote locations may encounter downed trees and pinning hazards along inland streams and creeks. Officials and a collaboration of volunteers and nonprofit agencies have worked diligently to remove hazards and restore full access.

The ACA team has organized and facilitated cleanups on dozens of waterways throughout the state to remove debris and will continue to work with volunteers as well as local, county, and state agencies in restoring our popular paddling locations. [Click here](#) to see a list of ongoing efforts to update the list of impacted trails and camping spots.

Lee County Parks & Recreation has announced the schedule for the 2017-2018 Calusa Blueway Speaker Series, a December through



Peg Phillips wading to her favorite put-in.

March annual series that showcases aspects of Lee County's 190-mile marked trail for canoeists, kayakers and stand-up paddleboarders. The speakers offer a diverse portfolio of expertise including history, wildlife, paddling technique, fishing and camping. This is the fourth year of the series.

Dan Carns kicked off the series Dec. 5 with a talk about kayak fishing. Carns is a professional kayak fishing guide with years of experience fishing the waters of the Calusa Blueway.

"Dan's fishing programs are our most requested talk. So we thought it would be a great idea to have him start the speaker series this season," says Calusa Blueway Coordinator Mike Hammond. "His programs are always informative, fun and interactive."

The series is held at the Lee County Wa-Ke Hatchee Recreation Center in Fort Myers. Presentations are

scheduled 6:30-8 p.m. on Jan. 9, Feb. 6 and March 6. Call (239) 533-7275 for more information.

- Jan. 9 – Author Warren Richey will share adventures from his book "Without a Paddle, Racing Twelve Hundred Miles Around Florida by Sea Kayak" as well as information about the WaterTribe's legendary Ultimate Florida Challenge.
- Feb. 6 – Parke Lewis, avid paddler, American Canoe Association instructor and volunteer at the Mound House, will speak on Southwest Florida's indigenous Calusa people and the Mound House, an active archaeological dig site and museum on Fort Myers Beach.
- March 6 – Tommy Thompson, Florida ACA State Director and Level 4 Coastal Kayak instructor, will discuss paddling in Cuba.

Tommy Thompson, FLStateDirector@americancanoe.net

Louisiana

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has completed clearing over 100 trees that were cut down by hunters to block a navigable section of the [Spring Bayou Wildlife Management Area](#) near Marksville.

Popular with paddlers, this stretch of water in east-central Louisiana connects Cocodrie Bayou to Lake Valerie, in a part of the Spring Bayou Wildlife Management known as the "bean fields." The hunters presumably felled the trees to keep other hunters out of the area.

The hunters faced a fine of up to \$10,000 and up to 10 years in jail. A state judge gave them suspended sentences of two years and ordered them to pay \$20,000 in civil restitution, \$400 in court costs and \$250 for the criminal court fund.

Wildlife and fisheries personnel had to float a marsh excavator to remove the trees, which ranged 10-30 inches in diameter and up to 50 feet tall and included cypress, oak and willow. For additional information about the case, read this [news article](#). More information about the paddle trails is available on [Facebook](#).

In other news, a series of informative kiosks will be placed at all the trailheads along Bayou Teche beginning this year. Each town will also be the subject of an individual panel devoted to that town's history and its unique cultural narrative. The kiosks will be designed by the veteran byway planner David L. Dalquist. For additional information, visit www.techeproject.org.

Ben Sandmel, LaStateDirector@americancanoe.net

(Continued on page 31)



Paddlers on Louisiana's Spring Bayou.



Kayak instruction in Michigan

Michigan

Most states have seen a rise in paddler fatalities as kayaks have become more available from big-box retailers. Michigan has been setting new records in that department and not in a good way.

Unfortunately, most of these fatalities are easily avoidable. People simply don't know how much they don't know. The largest group of paddlers out there are the most underserved, instructionally speaking.

Instruction is arguably one of our biggest missions as part of the ACA, so it is up to us to be paddle safety evangelists and help that unknown become a known. Let's face it, in two to three hours, you can teach people 90% more than 90% of the people with a plastic boat sticking out of the back of their pick-up know. So, how do we do that?

- Sell safety. We don't have to make it sexy, we just have to ask people how much their life is worth. Many of us remember the dad-ys before wearing seatbelts was mandatory. We all got used to wearing them after a while, and now it's normal.

We can make wearing life jackets the same way. For us as instructors, it's just what you do. Part of instruction shouldn't be just "wear a life jacket and fit it properly," but wear it for you and the ones you love. Teach 'em why. We had close to 100 paddling fa-

talities this last year in the Great Lakes...only two were wearing life jackets.

- Reach parents through their children. I'm working hard in Michigan to professionalize youth paddlesports providers at camps, YMCAs and youth recreation programs by encouraging active skills training programs and getting their waterfront staff trained as instructors. By getting kids started out right, we may be encouraging "trickle up" education. It's easy to sell parents on the idea of keeping their children safe, but kids can help return the favor as well.
- If you are an ACA instructor, I challenge you to do more than volunteer once or twice a year at kayak symposiums. Offer skills trainings through youth organizations and the Y, upgrade your local meet-up group, clubs or scout groups. Let's make learning skills part of the fun and the culture. You don't have to do it for free, but let's keep it accessible and encourage that entry level to learn to save lives...maybe their own.

Michael Gray, MiStateDirector@americancanoe.net

Missouri

The Missouri ACA chapter hosted a Winter Paddling Clinic and First Day Float December 31, 2017-January 1, 2018. The clinic was held at Echo Bluff State Park and the float was on the Current River. This event was free and open to the public.

Justin Adams, MoStateDirector@americancanoe.net

New Mexico

The Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico has a very colorful history. Started in the 1950s by enterprising scientists, engineers, technicians and support personnel of The National Labs, the group was looking for diversions from their rather secretive work. The AWC, along with an Adventure Boy Scout troop also from Los Alamos, pioneered many of the western river runs (in surplus life rafts) that are now commonplace for river runners today.

The AWC began the spring "Mother's Day Races" on the Rio Grande near Pilar. Perhaps the oldest whitewater event west of the Mississippi, it gave the name to the area of the Rio Grande where the event is held as the renowned "Race Course."



Scott Carpenter and Russ Cooper of the Adobe Whitewater Club

Branching out, the AWC through the current leadership, now embraces not only whitewater but other styles of paddling as well to become an all-inclusive group. Many members are involved in adaptive paddling as ACA instructors with the adaptive endorsement, scouting with ACA-certified canoe and kayak instructors, safety boating at water-sports events as well as stewardship and policy of the boating community.

Through the years, the AWC has morphed and changed with the

landscape and has made every attempt to adapt to the changes. It's challenging to infuse the club with young leadership that will ensure the viability of the club into the future.

Russ Cooper, a scientist and enterprising whitewater kayaker, is the current AWC president and has worked to expand the club's direction while dealing with a very hectic professional and personal life. Cooper also volunteers for a professional mentoring program.

Scott Carpenter, a field service engineer, serves as vice president. Carpenter is very active in the Boy Scouts, Kayak New Mexico's adaptive program and stewardship activities, but he still finds the time for his favorite pastimes of river running and home brew craftsmanship!

For more information on the AWC, please visit www.adobe-whitewater.org/.

Robert Levin, NmStateDirector@americancanoe.net

New York

Safety, Stewardship and Access have been priorities for the New York Executive Board.

Safety – The ACA – New York board has worked on enhancing safety awareness in a couple of high-profile paddling areas. In the Buffalo area, three “rescue roadshows” were held at Gallagher Beach in conjunction with the safer boating council. Volunteers participated in rescues and engaged with park visitors. ACA volunteers also helped out at various paddling events last summer:



A popular paddling event in New York is the annual Paddles Up!

- In July, [Paddle – Bike – Run](#) was held on the Buffalo River. This event was created and designed by race director and avid cyclist, paddler and athlete, Justin W. Dahl. He designed this event specifically to enjoy the newly renovated Buffalo waterfront and to raise awareness of what the beautiful city of Buffalo has to offer.
- Also in July, the annual Paddles Up! was held on Grand Island as part of the Waterkeeper Alliance's seventh annual Splash series of events, presented by Toyota. This is the first year that Paddles Up! was included in the series.
- The WOW (Wear it On Water) Paddle Fest was held in August in partnership with NYS Parks & Recreation. The event featured rescues demo and free resources in addition to safety basics for paddling.

The Buffalo River area is very congested with commercial traffic, sport fishing boaters and recreational paddlers all trying to maneuver in a very tight waterway. Three

meetings were held with the canal side management team to address safety challenges with kayak rental vendors. As a result, wear it banners were prominently displayed during the season.

In New York Harbor, ACA State Board members participated in a Coast Guard sponsored panel on paddlecraft safety. The meeting was held in response to an incident in 2016 where conflict between a ferry boat and a kayak tour group resulted in 10 kayakers being rescued; five were injured, one seriously.

ACA – New York members have also been promoting the hang tag program and follow-up suggests many new members to the ACA.

Access - One of our board members has been supporting an effort to turn a known hazard on the Susquehanna River – the low head Rockbottom dam – into an economic and recreational resource, a whitewater park. Future plans might include converting the confluence of the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers into a play feature, and install-

(Continued on page 33)

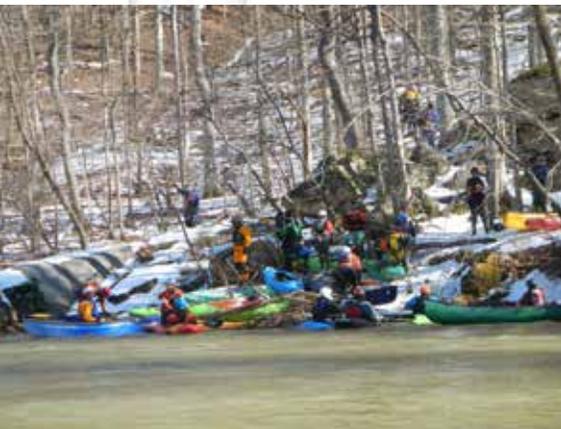
ing an inflatable dam just upstream of the confluence on the Chenango to create a flatwater stretch for crew and others enjoying calm water paddling, similar to the Charles River, Boston.

Stewardship - Jeff and Laura Liebel, Canoeing ITs from western New York, received the ACA's Green Paddle Award for Waterway Conservation on behalf of the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, a community-based nonprofit with a mission to protect water quality and connect people to water within the watershed through eco-tours, paddling events and instruction. Nearly half of the 25 staff in their program are ACA instructors. In addition, New York's ACA Executive Council was awarded the ACA's 2017 Outstanding State Director Award.

Mike Cavanaugh, NyStateDirector@americancanoe.net

North Carolina

With the new year, the ACA – North Carolina has some big plans and events coming up. The first event ACA NC will be attending will be Carolina Canoe Club's (a Paddle America Club) annual [Mighty](#)



The Carolina Canoe Club is hosting the annual [Mighty Mayo River Trip](#) Jan. 20.

[Mayo River Trip](#) scheduled for Jan. 20. The MMRT is a fun event that includes paddling, stewardship and giving back to the community.

Organized by Carolina Canoe Club member Joe Berry, the participants will collect canned goods to donate to Lot2540, a salvage and recycling ministry, to help stock the local food bank. After paddling, participants will conduct a river cleanup on the Mayo River, to remove any trash that accumulates on the river banks near the take out. This area is a local party/hang out spot in need of a good cleaning.

Other things the ACA NC looks to be doing in 2018 is the implementation of the ACA member of the Quarter and attending events throughout the year, such as Carolina Canoe Club's Week Of Rivers and other events. Here's to a Happy 2018!

Doug Stager, NcStateDirector@americancanoe.net

Ohio

The [2018 Cuyahoga Falls Kayak Race](#) is scheduled for Saturday, April 21, on an awesome class 4/5 whitewater section near Akron. The course is only about a half mile long but includes several nice drops that will challenge any experienced kayaker. This is the third year for the race and it is growing quickly. It drew participants from 15 states last year, so mark your calendars now to participate or just come watch. This course has excellent viewing for almost its entire length, thanks to Riverfront Park and the Sheraton Hotel. It's easy to make an entire day trip as there are a number of paddling and



The 2018 Cuyahoga Falls Kayak Race will be held April 21 near Akron, Ohio.

hiking options in the area as well as numerous restaurants within walking distance of the race. Come join what's quickly becoming a kayaker's celebration.

Ryan Pepper, OHStateDirector@americancanoe.net

South Carolina

In October, ACA – South Carolina, in partnership with U.S. Coast Guard Station Charleston and Air Station Savannah, completed the biannual Risk Management and Incident Management Program.

The programs are designed to introduce composite risk management and develop incident management



ACA – South Carolina conducts partnership training with U.S. Coast Guard Station Charleston and Air Station Savannah.

skills focused on leadership, resource management and hailing external assistance. The objective of the program is to create risk-informed paddlesports leaders that can apply these skills in a train the trainer program to bring these skills back to their clubs and programs.

This is the third year of conducting this partnered training. To date, the program has trained 79 instructors and trip leaders from the U.S. and the United Kingdom. The next program is scheduled for April 19, 2018. More information will be shared through the ACA.

The S.C. State Director and Stewardship Director presented at the annual S.C. Nature-Based Tourism Association and S.C. Paddlesports Industry Association joint conference. They discussed the ACA and the resources it has for businesses in the state.

Charleston County Parks hosted an L3 Coastal SUP Instructor Certification Workshop as a pre-conference event for the National Paddlesports Conference in October. This was the first one of these conducted with the new L3 Coastal curriculum. Joshua Hall was the ITE for the course.

The new Howard Bridgman River Access at Bacons Bridge is open



A ribbon-cutting ceremony officially opens the new access on South Carolina's Howard Bridgman River.

to the public. This provides a new access point for the Ashley River in Dorchester County.

Jefferson Atkins, ScStateDirector@americancanoe.net

Wisconsin

All but the boldest Wisconsin boaters have headed into hibernation. For those who cannot travel to warmer climes or lack appropriate cold weather gear for boating in what water there is, coastal or whitewater, various groups are hosting pool sessions in major cities. For Milwaukee and Green Bay, www.bsbs.org has pool sessions. For Wausau, reach out via Facebook to Wausau Whitewater.

Thomas Schrader, WiStateDirector@americancanoe.net

Pool sessions help Wisconsin's paddlers stay on the water through the winter.



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MEMBERSHIP



USCG photo

ACA OUTFITTER, LIVERY & GUIDE SPOTLIGHT

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Cross Currents Sea Kayaking provides high quality sea kayaking instruction to intermediate and advanced paddlers. Based in Baltimore, Maryland, their rigorous courses are conducted throughout the Chesapeake Bay and along the Atlantic coast. They also routinely conduct ACA instructor development programs, run multi-day training trips, and organize expeditions.

Find an ACA outfitter
near you
using the convenient
[search tool](#) on our website!

Coming up in 2018:

The Unconscious Competence Series returns this summer! After a one-year hiatus, this award-winning approach to long-term paddler development returns. This year's series will run over a three-month period (May to August) and involve approximately 15 days of progressive training sessions. After nailing down the basics on flat water we will move toward more advanced skills and their application in rougher environments, including open ocean, surf and current. The goal is to move current ACA Level 2-type paddlers to the point of competence at the ACA L3 and BCU 3* level.

For more information, please visit www.crosscurrentsseakayaking.com.

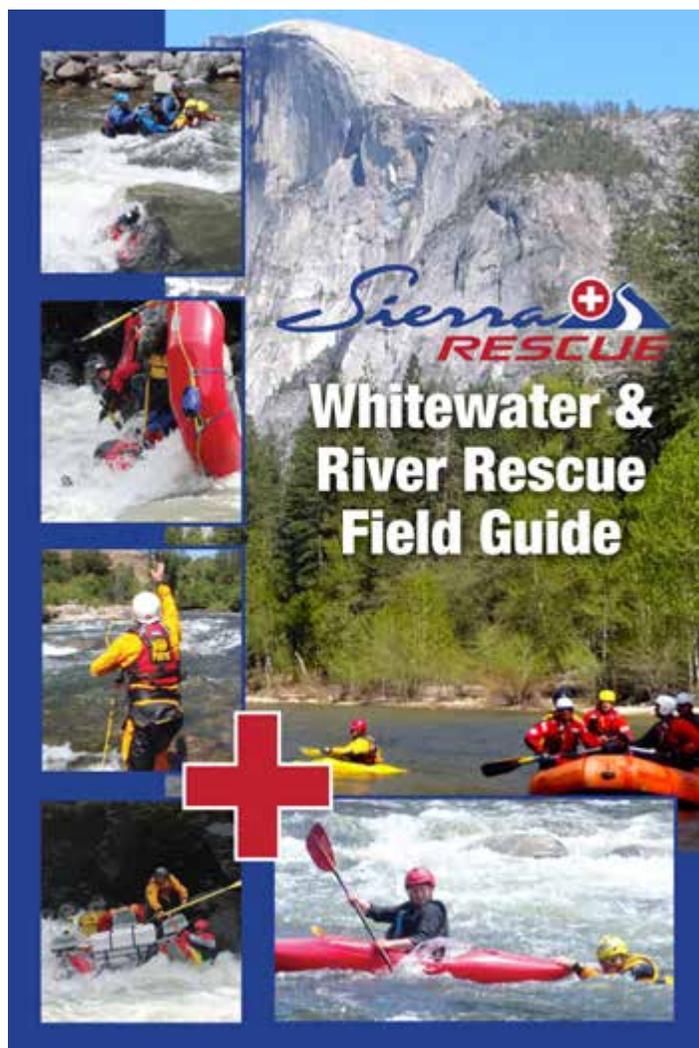
ACA MEMBER BENEFIT

New whitewater & river rescue field guide now available

It's always good to be prepared in case something goes wrong. The Sierra Rescue International's whitewater rescue field guide has been designed to provide the tools to pre-plan, evaluate, move down river and execute rescues in a safe, efficient and well thought-out manner.

This whitewater rescue field guide is the result of over 40 years in the field as a professional river guide and 25 years as a professional rescue instructor, and networking with an abundance of river professionals from around the world. The Sierra Rescue International's advisory committee alone has a combined experience of over 250 years.

This 4.5-ounce waterproof field guide contains 117 pages packed with information including pre-planning, safe down river travel, risk assessment models, swiftwater rescue techniques and strategies, rope rescue, first aid and rescue kit lists, plus information on pack rafting, canoes, traveling with kids, and so much more! This field guide also includes a review of rescue options, and simple strategies for choosing the safest, simplest and quickest option for rescue.



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Member Photo *of the* Month



ACA SUP Instructor Trainer Matt Hite in Florida with dinner

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Please send photos (along with a brief description) to ACA Paddle
eMagazine Editor Kimberly Jenkins at kjenkins@americancanoe.org
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CANOE & KAYAK

COMPETITION



123rf photo

USA Kayak Polo

Women's National Team brings home gold!

The USA Women's National Team represented USA Kayak Polo at the 2017 Pan American Canoe Polo Championships in Buenos Aires, Argentina, over November 16th-19th. The biennial Pan American Canoe Polo competition is the continental cup championship for Canoe Polo, and includes federations from both North and South America.

Canoe/kayak polo is a team sport requiring strength, coordination, agility and knowledge of tactics. The game is played 5 on 5, with each team permitted up to 8 people, and with two 10-minute halves. Each player paddles individually in a highly maneuverable kayak and is allowed to pass, dribble or throw the ball, using their hands or a paddle.

During the competition, the US Women's team finished 1st in a round robin after a win against Canada 5:2, a draw against Argentina 5:5, and a win against French Guiana 9:1. Playing against the well-prepared Argentinian team was the most challenging game for the US; Supported by numerous spectators, family and friends, the young Argentinian team played with their hearts and fought hard. On the last day of the

competition, the US Women's team played well and won their semi-final convincingly. The U.S. Women were hoping to have a rematch against Argentina in the final, but Canada secured their spot with a 1:0 semi-final win over Argentina. Under the guidance of their experienced coach, whose previous role was coach for the U21 German Men's National Team, the US Women changed their tactics to a more aggressive "press" style of play and were able to dominate the final game against Canada with a score of 5:0.

By winning the Pan American Canoe Polo Championships, the USA Women's National Team qualified to participate in the 2018 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships, to be held in Welland, Canada.

Coach: Holger Dietrich (Berlin, Germany)

#1: Sveta Platanova (San Francisco, CA) - Captain

#2: Olly Gotel (New York, NY)

#4: Heather Fenske (San Diego, CA)

#5: Emily Pozzi (Austin, TX)

#7: Stephanie Schnorr (Austin, TX)

#11: Lydia Thein (Boston, MA)



ACA expands Competition Department

With the ACA's new status as the National Governing Body (NGB)* in the United States for the Olympic sports of Slalom and Sprint and the Paralympic sport of Paracanoe, the organization has expanded its [Competition Department](#). This department manages all aspects of the ACA's Competition Program, which includes Olympic, Paralympic and non-Olympic disciplines. This department also works with the ACA Insurance Department in regard to sanctioning over 200 races per year. In addition, this department is tasked with growing the ACA's involvement with all forms of paddlesport racing, including, but not limited to, stand up paddleboards, dragon boats, outrigger canoes and family friendly local competitions.

To carry out these duties, the ACA has hired several new employees. Please welcome the following individuals to the ACA Staff in the Competition Department:



Morgan House

Morgan House has a passion for all things outdoors and spending time with his family. He joined the ACA as director of High Performance & Competition Nov. 20, 2017.

During his kayak racing career, House participated at more than 20 world-class venues in roughly a dozen countries. He was on the U.S. National Sprint Team from 2003 to 2012, winning 50 national titles and spending five years living and training at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California.

He later spent two years working as a coach at the Lanier Canoe Kayak Club. Following his time at the Lanier Canoe Kayak Club, he served as Venue Manager of the Lake Lanier Olympic Park for three years.

Morgan has a bachelor's degree in marketing and public relations from Ashford University and a master's certificate in project management from the University of North Georgia.



Rafal Smolen

Rafal Smolen has joined the ACA as the Slalom National Team Coach. Previously, he worked with the U.S. Slalom National Team for over 18 years. He has coached professionally for Poland, Chile, Canada and at the Nantahala Racing Club. Prior to that, he was member of the Polish National Slalom Team for years and served as an Olympic alternate in 1992 and 1996.

Smolen was the U.S. Olympic Team Assistant Coach in Sydney 2000, and the U.S. Team Coach in London 2012 and Rio 2016. He holds a master's degree in physical education and sports science.

*For more information about the ACA's NGB status, please see the [November 2017 issue of Paddle](#).



Chris Barlow

Chris Barlow has hired on as the Sprint High Performance Manager. As a U.S. Olympian, he competed in Sprint Kayak in 1992 in the 1000m K4. He continues to race today in surf ski races and Sprint National Championships. However, his true passion is coaching athletes.

Barlow founded the San Diego Canoe Kayak Team and has served as head coach since the team's inception in 1996. He also has national and international coaching experience as the men's coach at the 2009 and 2011 Junior World Championships in Moscow and Brandenburg, respectively. Barlow was named head coach of the USA Junior National Team for the 2010 Pan American Championships in Mexico City. He has been a director with the Sprint Coaches Association since its formation in 2007. He is also a certified Sprint Coach with the International Canoe Federation.



Zsolt Szadovszki

Originally from Hungary, Zsolt Szadovszki has been involved with the sport of Sprint for three decades. He now serves as the Sprint National Team Coach for the ACA.

For 13 years, Szadovszki was a professional athlete on the Hungarian National Sprint Team. In 1998, he raced in the Flat-water Kayak Racing World Championship in Szeged, Hungary, and won two silver medals in the K4 – four-man kayak.

In 2000, he and his kayak partner were in the double kayak (K2 500m) at the Hungarian Qualification race for the Sydney Olympics. This division was very strong and only one boat could qualify. The team that defeated Szadovszki and his partner (by less than a half a second) went on to the Sydney Olympic games, winning gold.

Since moving to the United States, Szadovszki, who is based out of Hawaii and California, has dedicated himself to the art of coaching paddlesports. When not coaching, he can be found skiing, biking, running, hiking, playing soccer and practicing yoga.



Aaron Huston

A graduate of both Yale University and Evergreen State College, Aaron Huston has been hired by the ACA as the Spring National Team Canoe Coach. He also serves as the high performance coach for the Gig Harbor Canoe and Kayak Racing Team. He coaches both kayak and canoe, with an emphasis on canoe. In 2017, he was one of the Team USA coaches for the Olympic Hopes Regatta team that performed extremely well in the Czech Republic.

(Continued on page 45)

In addition to coaching sprint canoe and kayak, he is head coach of the Narrows Swim Club and Team Highlander Weightlifting. When not coaching, Huston is a nurse practitioner in trauma surgery and critical care.



Aasim Saleh

Aasim Saleh has become the ACA's Sprint Jr. Team Manager. He serves as head coach and director of RIVERSPORT Paddlesports for the Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation. A native of Seattle, he previously served as the head coach and team leader for Team USA at the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 Olympic Hopes Regattas, where athletes posted outstanding results including several medal-winning performances.

Saleh has proudly served on the Sprint Coaches Association for the last decade, most recently as the committee chairperson. He believes in a philosophy of inclusiveness toward all paddlers, both athletes and coaches, in a safe, fun, healthy, competitive, athlete centered and holistically structured environment.

Saleh is also an avid canoe fisherman who enjoys packing his Land Cruiser, copilot Dash, river dog Robinson, some number of canoes, kayaks and enough equipment to otherwise survive the apocalypse for his next road trip or weekend camping adventure.



Shaun Caven

Shaun Caven is now ACA's Paracanoe High Performance Manager/Coach. His drive is "to coach and help athletes win medals."

Caven served as the Scottish National Coach from 1997 to 2001. He then coached the British Junior Team from 2001 to 2005, before accepting a position coaching the British Senior Team. During this time, he worked with and coached athletes at every level, from Junior National Champions to Olympic Medalists.

Caven completed his NLP Sport Practitioner as part of UK Sport's commitment to developing elite coaches in 2005 while he was head coach of the British Canoe Union. During his tenure as British National Coach, GB canoeing won its first gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

From 2009 to 2016, Caven was the director and head coach of the Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation. He worked to develop a canoe/kayak program that will take athletes – whether they are new to the sport or seasoned veterans – to the next level.

Since arriving in the U.S., Caven has coached at national camps to prepare athletes for international competition. He was selected to coach at the 2012 London Olympics and the 2009-13 World Championships. In addition, he was the U.S. Coach at the 2016 Paralympics.

Introducing the Athlete Advisory Council

By Emily Wright, Athlete Advisory Council

I'd like to formally introduce myself: I'm Emily Wright, elected by the athletes of USA Canoe/Kayak in early 2017 to be the Athlete Advisory Council representative for our sport. I am a sprint kayaker who has been involved in the sport since 2004. I'm based in Richmond, Virginia, and I work closely with our alternate AAC representative, Brandon Holiday, who is a para sprint kayaker based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Athlete Advisory Council (abbreviated AAC—not to be confused with ACA) is comprised of one athlete representative from each Olympic sport and most Paralympic sports. The official mission of the council is to “communicate the interests and protect the rights of athletes, in cooperative support of the U.S. Olympic Committee [USOC] achieving its mission.” In layman's terms, we serve as a communication line between active National Team athletes and the USOC, and we advise the USOC board members on the needs and wants of our elite athletes.

As your AAC representatives, Brandon and I can do things such as: help athletes get set up with the proper communication channels in the event they have a question or a grievance; communicate athlete input to the USOC; and gather helpful suggestions from other National Governing Bodies (NGBs) on how other sports are handling situations. We also ensure there is athlete representation on selection committees

and various councils and working groups within the ACA. If you're an elite athlete who needs help with something, chances are we can find the right person for you.

As athletes in a small sport, it can be tempting to resist engagement with the organizational and structural side of the sport. After all, serving on a board or committee takes time, and most of us already juggle training, travel, working and/ or education, and fundraising for ourselves. I get it. But Olympic and Paralympic

canoe/kayak will stay small if you stay quiet. Get involved. Vote. Ask questions. Make your voice heard by speaking with your coaches, managers, high performance directors, and athlete representatives (myself and Brandon). Your new NGB—the ACA—is only as strong as the athletes that are committed to improving it.

You can reach me, Emily Wright, at emily.mary.wright@gmail.com and Brandon Holiday at bholiday0140@comcast.net.



Hoedown mixes fun and talent in Pacific

By Hamp All, ACA Instructor

The first day of the 2017 Hobuck Hoedown Paddle Surf Festival began in true Pacific Northwest style, with rain, wind, and chunky surf, but featured plenty of tight competition in all categories to keep chilled WKC members and guests attentive from within the shelter of their raingear. This year's event was held Sept. 30-Oct. 1.

With our Canadian friends smiling as they trotted from heat to heat in their bare feet, the rest of the mere mortals on the beach huddled in the lee of the judges stand staying fully entertained and at least a little warmed by the impressive paddle surfing on the water.

Fortunately, the fall conditions abated in time for the Saturday night catered dinner and raffle. It was, as always, an opportunity to socialize, make new friends and relive highlights of the day. The raffle was also

an opportunity for contestants and spectators to raise additional funding for Makah kids programs and the Makah Cultural and Research Center (MCRC) through a raffle of awesome paddling gear generously donated by sponsors. The raffle was preceded by an engaging talk by MCRC Director Janine Ledford on Makah culture, museum activities and potential uses for donated funds donated.

Sunday dawned with perfect conditions for finals – beefy 4' surf with clean shoulders and enough power to make advanced maneuvers possible in both long and short kayaks as well as SUPs.

One of the highlights of the weekend occurred in the first heat of the day Sunday, which featured a new event designed to promote hilarity and chaos both on and off the water, as teams of five paddled and

attempted to surf large SUPsquatch paddleboards in a truly fun heat that resulted in at least one wave being successfully surfed amid multiple ejections, crashes and swims for all participants.

In other, more formal categories, the two-day competition included inspired “long” boat surfing by first through third place Sea Kayak finishers Jaime Sharp, Jim Grossman and Costain Leonard. While surviving an incredible drop that earned him the newly acclaimed “Beat Down” trophy, Jamie worked the surf to wow the crowd in this highly competitive and skillful class.

In the always hyper-competitive Men's High Performance (HP) class, masterful performances were seen by Jim Grossman, Chris Bensch, Hamp All and Steve Jones, whose maneuvers and skills helped set the tone for the weekend.

Women's HP, in one of the most competitive events we have seen in the NW recently, was won impressively by Jameson Riser but also showcased strong surfing by Barb Gronseth and newcomer Kelly Watson.

In arguably the most dynamic in any paddle surf contest, the Waveski event, a beautiful performance by local wave ski builder and artist Ken Debondt took the victory despite exceptional surfing by Jamie Sharp and 15-year-old Buey Grossman.



Northwest

In Whitewater/Plastic, Jim Grossman and Buey Grossman carried the day while favorite Costain Leonard finished a strong third, all tumbling, spinning and tricking their way in spectacular style down the waves.

In Master's HP (minimum age 40), Jim Grossman, Chris Bensch and Alaskan Randy Keller battled it out to 1, 2, 3 respectively and demonstrated all the style and performance that comes from years of experience in the lineup.

International Class (3-meter design rule) featured the smooth, carving and controlled down the line surfing these boats are known for with similarly competitive and strong performances resulting in a finish order of Chris Bensch, Hamp All and David Briggs.

In SUP, dynamic, stylish and strong performances by every competitor resulted in a finish order of John Sindelar, Kevin Long and Ayu Othman.

Impressively, in Skookum class (designed as a non-competitive, lower cost "fun" class for newer surf paddlers) showcased the largest field to date, featuring incredibly strong paddle surfing by multiple entrants and finished closely with Canadians Logan Peloso and 18-year-old Finn Steiner narrowly edging out Jon Almquist and Jason Learned.



Finally, in a highly competitive final, Jim Grossman continued to showcase his exceptional surfing skills in "Battle of the Wave" event (designed to showcase the strongest paddler at the festival and open to any paddler in or on any craft), with a strong session that resulted in his winning the class in another close final with Hamp All and Ken DeBondt.

The event has left many happy memories both on and off the water and resulted in many new or renewed friendships and a greater sense of community among Pacific Northwest surf paddlers. The Hoedown also made great progress toward the goal of giving back to the Makah community and Makah kids as part of an effort to show appreciation for the special place we are lucky enough to be able to surf.

Many thanks to our incredible sponsors (the American Canoe Association, Astral, Chapul, Immersion Research, Kayak Academy, Ken

DeBondt Custom Surfcraft, Kokatat, MSR, Northwater, NRS, Olympic Outdoor Center, Paddler's Supply, Seals, Snapdragon, Sweet Protection, Thule, Washington Kayak Club and Werner Paddles) for their generous support and most sincere thanks to the many, many volunteers, judges and committee members that make this event a success.

For additional results, more pictures and further information check out www.hobuckhoedown.com.

Until next year – see you in the lineup! Mark your calendars for the 2018 Hoebuck Hoedown: Oct. 6-7! Join us for our annual paddle surf competition at beautiful Hobuck Beach, on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. All levels welcome. All profits go to Makah Tribal youth.

Ready, Set, Mark Your Calendars!

Don't miss these upcoming races...
(Click race name for more info)

January 26-28	<u>Dragon Boat National Team Trials</u> Ikaika, Hawaii
March 22	<u>Santa Cruz Paddlefest</u> Santa Cruz, California
March 31	<u>51st Annual Moshannon</u> Grassflat, Pennsylvania
April 6-8	<u>ACA Slalom National Team Trials</u> Charlotte, North Carolina
April 12-15	<u>Youth Olympic Games World Canoe Sprint Qualification</u> Barcelona, Spain
May 17	<u>ICF Paracanoe World Cup 1</u> Szeged, Hungary
May 31	<u>ICF Wildwater Canoeing World Championships</u> Muota/Muotathal, Switzerland
June 2	<u>38th Annual Great Rappahannock Whitewater Canoe Race</u> Fredericksburg, Virginia



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INTERNATIONAL



Europe Paddlesports Symposium addresses key issues

Organized by Sebastian Stetter (Lake Constance Canoes) and John Wiederstein (LaCanoa), this year's Europe Paddlesports Symposium was held October 28-30 at Lake Constance in Switzerland. Stakeholders from Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, the UK, and Italy participated. Activities were well organized and everyone had the opportunity to share and appreciate the instructors' approach and styles in a friendly and comfortable atmosphere. Weather cooperated as well.

This year was the third since the group's speakers were elected in 2014, and it was time to discuss elections again. The official structure for the European division of the ACA appoints the board members as "speakers."

The attending members unanimously decided that the current team is confirmed for an extra year of activity in order to address a few key issues. The team will be renewed at the 2018 ACA division Europe in Belgium. As Franziska Pokorny asked to leave her position, the participating members chose John Wiederstein as a new member of the team and Germany country representative.

Four major issues were identified as urgent to be addressed:

1. European Website

The group proposes transferring the domain to the ACA US who will appoint a European administrator and content supervisor. The issue is also urgent due to the fact that we currently

do not have the rights to update the site, which makes the website vulnerable to hacking.

Heinz Goetze and Sebastian Stetter are in charge of working with Gerhard to have authorize the domain transfer to the ACA. This process will begin upon the ACA's acceptance of the proposed solution.

2. EPP

Discussion continued on the importance of establishing recognition for the ACA curricula in Europe, or at least some form of cooperation between major European association / federation in the paddlesports and the ACA. This needs to be addressed by the U.S., if there is interest.

The issue is very important because our ACA curriculum is possibly the best around, our instructor trainers and instructors are brilliant and have a fantastic reputation, but we all need a little something to extend our reach. To do that, the relationship between ACA and the division Europe should be strengthened.

3. Relationship with the U.S.

This strictly connects to the general ACA division Europe needs and to the US expectations. It's an old story: the only members we have in Europe are IT's and instructors. Possibly because we cannot offer anything touchable to non-instructors members. The benefit we as IT's and





Beautiful Lake Constance served as a welcoming backdrop for the 2017 Europe Paddlesports Symposium.

instructors have is the extremely high standards of curricula and the quality of ACA IT's and instructors that any of us has the chance to contact for his own personal development or in events like symposia or meetings.

Insurance, Paypal account and other issues will be addressed in the following months.

Carlo Picchio will be in charge of keeping contact with the U.S.

4. Next ACA Europe Symposium

We thank Kris Van Autenboer for offering to host the 2018 ACA division Europe in Belgium

October 26-28, 2018. This year we will develop a list of locations that could be host the future symposia beginning with 2019. Any of the country representatives are invited to explore possibilities and present ideas.

In addition to the European Division's meetings, a wide range of educational sessions were offered both in the classroom and on the water. The symposium provided opportunities for paddlesports continued education, instructor updates for canoe, kayak, SUP, and rescue skills, as well as numerous opportunities for networking, meeting professionals, and making new friends.

Hey colleagues,

Since you are part of the ACA Divison Europe, I would like to inform you about the upcoming **ACA Instructor Academy**. Following the development of the new [ACA Leadership Academy](#), which will take place in August 2018 in the U.S., Chris Stec, Dave Burden and I developed a concept that is easier to organize and could potentially solve challenges we see outside of ACA motherland with regards to update opportunities, community building, language barriers, etc.

Purpose:

Provide an easy-access platform for ACA Instructors to get updated and upgraded as well as receive further training. In addition, the academy could be a great place to remove continuations. A side effect, which should not be underestimated, is networking and community-building.

Terms:

The participants pay their own way. The IT/ITE and the presenters are paid by the organizers. It would be up to them to set their rates and terms with the person in charge. The event should be affordable and offer a good value to the participants. This is not about making money; it's about education and community-building.

The kickoff event will take place at Schluchsee September 7-9, 2018. Following the first event, we will re-evaluate the concept, improve it and see how we can go forward with it.

Important:

There will be no meetings and discussions about the ACA. The event will focus on paddling. Also, this event will NOT replace the existing Europe Paddlesports Symposium. Instead, it will be an additional event with a different focus!

We will provide more details soon . Your feedback is appreciated.

Thanks,



Raphael "Raff" Kuner
ACA Instructor Trainer Educator
SUP - Seakayak - Canoe - Rescue
ACA SUP Discipline Committee Chair
NRS Brand Ambassador

Paddling History

In 1980, the ACA celebrated its 100th anniversary of representing paddlers of all skill levels, in all craft, and in all watery venues.

This significant milestone was acknowledged by President Jimmy Carter and was memorialized by the organization in a comprehensive yearbook.

For more information, please visit www.americancanoe.org/100th_Anniversary.



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YEARBOOK



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*To learn more about ACA history and the early days of paddlesports,
please visit www.americancanoe.org/History.*

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