

PADDLE

Join us as we celebrate 140 years

ACA | CANOE - KAYAK - SUP - RAFT - RESCUE

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT UPDATES

The Fall SEIC Meeting resulted in
new policies and information
Instructors & Trainers need to know

STEWARDSHIP & PUBLIC POLICY

Partnerships & Project Successes
You Can Emulate in Your
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COMPETITION CALENDAR

Dates & locations of the
year's biggest competitions



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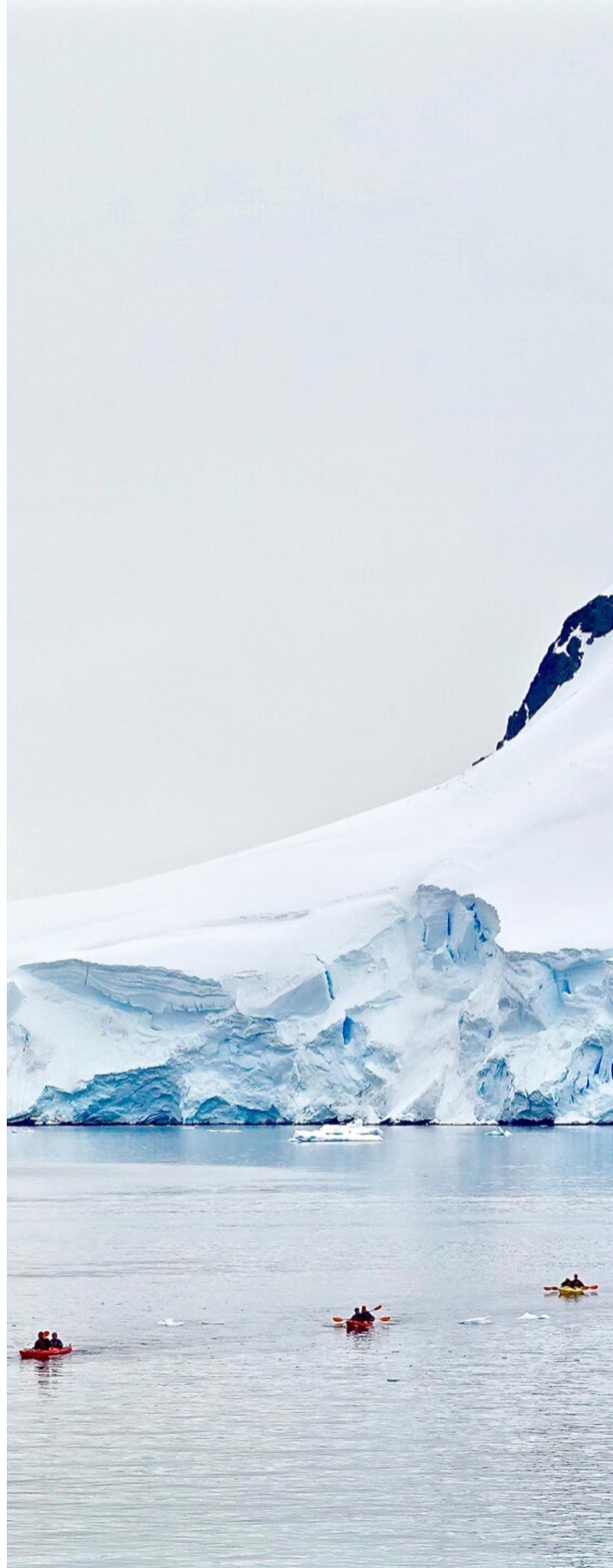
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Letter from ACA Exec. Director

*Cover & TOC photos courtesy of ACA Instructor,
Maurice Van de Maele*

who we are

Founded in 1880, the American Canoe Association (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 and recreation.

ACA National Office Staff

Interim Executive Director	Beth Spilman
Western States Outreach Director	Marcel Bieg
SEI Department Manager	Kelsey Bracewell
Membership/State Director Coordinator	Amy Ellis
Membership Coordinator	Michelle Flynn
Sprint National Coach (Development)	Dan Henderson
Compliance & Administrative Manager	Cathlyn Huitt
Sprint National Team Canoe Coach	Aaron Huston
Communications Coordinator	Aaron Mann
Public Policy Chief	Brett Mayer
Insurance Coordinator	LeighAnn Moore
Education & Grant Coordinator	Carrie Schlemmer
Slalom National Team Coach	Rafal Smolen
Sprint National Team Kayak Coach	Zsolt Szadovszki
Surf Expo Representative	T.J. Turner
Finance Manager	Emma Walther

ACA Board of Directors

Board President	Robin Pope (NC)
Board Vice President	Lili Colby (MA)
Board Secretary	Stanton Collins (GA)
At-Large Director	William Irving (NC)
At-Large Director	Samuel Fowlkes (NC)
At-Large Director	John Traendly (GA)
Independent Director	Heather Davis Miller (VT)
Independent Director	Adam Joseph (MD)
Property Management Director	Bill Micks (VA)
Safety Education & Instruction Council	Trey Knight (TN)
Competition Council	Marsh Jones (MN)
Elite Athlete Director - Sprint	Stanton Collins (GA)
Elite Athlete Director - Slalom	Scott Mann (VA)
Elite Athlete Director - Paracanoe	Nikiha Miller (GA)

ACA NATIONAL OFFICE

503 Sophia Street, Suite 100

Fredericksburg, VA 22401 USA

+1-540-907-4460 | aca@americancanoe.org

www.americancanoe.org

2020-2021 SEIC Discipline Committees

Safety Education & Instruction Council Executive Committee

Chair - Trey Knight (TN)

Vice Chair - Josh Hall (SC)

Secretary - John Traendly (GA)

Past Chair - Steve Hutton (SC)

Discipline Committee Chairs

Universal - Crystal Skahan (NH)

River Canoe - Mike Aronoff (VA)

Touring Canoe - Lynn Dominguez (MI)

River Kayak - Lydia Wing (NC)

Coastal Kayak - John Browning (WI)

Surf Kayak - Sean Morley (CA)

Surfski - Matthew Murphy (TX)

Prone Paddling - Robin Pope (NC)

Safety & Rescue - Sam Fowlkes (NC)

Rafting - Elisha McArthur (CO)

SUP - Anna Levesque (NC)

Intro to Paddling - TBD

Other Elected Positions

International Rep: Ge Wu (China)

International Rep: Sandra De Ugarte (Peru)

At-Large Rep: Dale Williams (GA)

At-Large Rep: Jefferson Atkins (SC)

Engaged Athlete Rep: Pia Lord (FL)

Engaged Athlete Rep: Heidi Henkel (VT)

2020-2021 State Directors

AL-Jimmie Cummings (alstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

AK-Levi Hogan (akstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

AZ-Andrew Huff (azstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

AR-Rob Moody (arstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

CA-Jamie Eubanks (castatedirector@americancanoe.net)

CO-Lynne Carpenter (costatedirector@americancanoe.net)

DE-Chris Beckman (destatedirector@americancanoe.net)

DC-Meredith Waters (dcstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

FL-Wayne Douchkoff (flstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

GA-Laura Clower (gastatedirector@americancanoe.net)

ID-Zach Mason (idstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

IL-Jennifer Hahn (ilstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

IN-Joyce Hayes (instatedirector@americancanoe.net)

IA-Jennifer Kammeyer (iastatedirector@americancanoe.net)

KS-Jay Jeffrey (ksstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

KY-Gerry James (kystatedirector@americancanoe.net)

MD-Paula Hubbard (mdstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

MA-Mike Morrison (mastatedirector@americancanoe.net)

MI-Michael Gray (mistatedirector@americancanoe.net)

MS-Kelly McGinnis (msstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

MO-Perry Whitaker (mostatedirector@americancanoe.net)

MT-Lee Beers (mtstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

NE-Jordan Messerer (nestatedirector@americancanoe.net)

NV-Jonathan Riezman (nvstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

NH-Paul Berry (nhstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

NJ-Paul Serdiuk (njstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

NM-Robert Levin (nmstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

NY-Mike Cavanaugh (nystatedirector@americancanoe.net)

NC-Doug Stager (ncstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

ND-Matthew Sherrard (ndstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

OH-Christine Cancian (ohstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

OK-Clark Miller (okstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

OR-Sam Norgaard-Stroich (orstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

PA-Joel Johnston (pastatedirector@americancanoe.net)

PR-Omar Ramos (prstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

RI-Mark Allio (ristatedirector@americancanoe.net)

SC-Jefferson Atkins (scstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

SD-Patrick Wellner (sdstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

TN-Andrea White (tnstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

TX-Bruce Bodson (txstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

VT-Jake Taylor (vtstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

VA-Sarah Beth Dinwiddie (vastatedirector@americancanoe.net)

WA-Brent Roth (wastatedirector@americancanoe.net)

WV-Meghan Roberts (wvstatedirector@americancanoe.net)

WI-Luke Martz (wistatedirector@americancanoe.net)

MEMBERSHIP



1880
to
2020

THE HISTORY LESSON YOU
SHOULD KNOW BEFORE
TWENTY TWENTY PASSES
YOU BY

Founded in 1880 by a group of 15 notable canoeists, the ACA has grown into the nation's largest and most active nonprofit paddlesports organization with ever-growing membership and over 300 clubs and affiliates across the United States and abroad. Through friendships forged in the 1870s at canoe sailing regattas, regional canoe club events, and canoe cruising and exploration of America's waterways, the ACA was established on the shores of Lake George, NY on August 3, 1880.

Nathaniel H. Bishop, a prominent 19th century canoe explorer, was known as the 'father of the ACA' along with the first Commodore, William L. Alden. The pair declared in the 1880-81 ACA Yearbook that the object of the ACA "shall be the promotion of "Canoeing." Original priorities of the association were centered around camaraderie, racing, poling, canoe sailing, and extended waterway exploration. Throughout the early 20th century, the ACA evolved from a loosely knit group to an incorporated entity whose influence began to reach across the country as well as internationally.

The instruction program was formalized in 1972 with the advent of the ACA Canoe Instruction Certification Committee, known today as the Safety Education & Instruction Council. From the 1940s through the early 1990s, the ACA placed significant resources into all aspects of paddlesport competition, from local and national races, to winning World Championships, to being the National Governing Body (NGB) for paddlesports in the United States. Publications of the organization began in the 1880s and ranged from *Forest and Stream* and *The American Canoeist*, *Canoe*, *Paddler*, *Paddle Dealer*, and currently *Paddle eMagazine*. The ACA is also proud of our partner publications with Rapid Media. For 140 years, the ACA has been the voice of paddlers across the country. Through the tireless efforts of volunteers, committee members, board members, clubs, and staff, the ACA continues to work at the grassroots, regional, and national levels to promote fun and responsible paddling experiences as well as advocacy for recreational access and stewardship of America's waterways.

Read more: www.americancanoe.org/history



Stephen Lysak and Stephen Macknowski - Gold Medal C-2 1948 Olympics.



**AMERICAN
CANOE
ASSOCIATION**
1880-1980
100th Anniversary
YEARBOOK



Want to see for yourself? Experience the ACA history books & paddle to your heart's content at Lake Sebago & Sugar Island - learn about these amazing member benefits: www.americancanoe.org/Sugar_Island and www.americancanoe.org/LakeSebago

connect
with us!



Have something to add?
submit an article for consideration at americancanoe.org/Paddle

EDUCATION

SEI UPDATES INSTRUCTORS NEED TO KNOW

In October 2019, The ACA Safety Education & Instruction Council (SEIC) and its discipline committees held their annual fall meeting alongside the ACA IT Conference in Richmond, Virginia. During the meeting, a range of motions were reviewed, voted upon, and approved by both SEIC and the ACA Board of Directors. The resulting additions, changes, or clarifications went into effect shortly thereafter and are now formally part of the ACA's educational programs.

Instructors & Trainers - pay close attention to these items, and feel free to review the SEIC Meeting minutes for further clarification; they can be found at www.americancanoe.org/SEIC

Motion 2019-10-01A: Hard copy waivers are no longer required to be submitted by mail to the ACA National Office. Scanned copies are accepted as attachments to course reports

Motion 2019-10-01B: The SEIC Policy has been amended so that the ways an instructors can meet the Instructor Update requirement is consistent and clear, specifically removing the ability to complete an update through an unrelated endorsement course

Motion 2019-10-01C: "Sample Instructor Update Outline" was added to approved curriculum so that Instructor Trainers and Instructor Trainer Educators could use it in the absence of a discipline-specific outline to help add consistency to instructor updates.

Motion 2019-10-01D: Venue description alignment and other wording changes to all Level 2: Essentials of River Canoe documentation were made

Motion 2019-10-01E: Venue descriptions between Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking & Level 2: Essentials of River Canoeing were brought into alignment

Motion 2019-10-01F: The removal of the high brace from ACA River Kayak Fishing Endorsement was approved

Motion 2019-10-01G: The creation of a navigation sample skills course within the Coastal Kayak discipline was approved

Motion 2019-10-01H: The length of ACA Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking ICW was amended to 4 days

Motion 2019-10-01I: ACA sprayskirt best practice has been amended to include alternate sprayskirt removal options for when standard grab loop release is unavailable

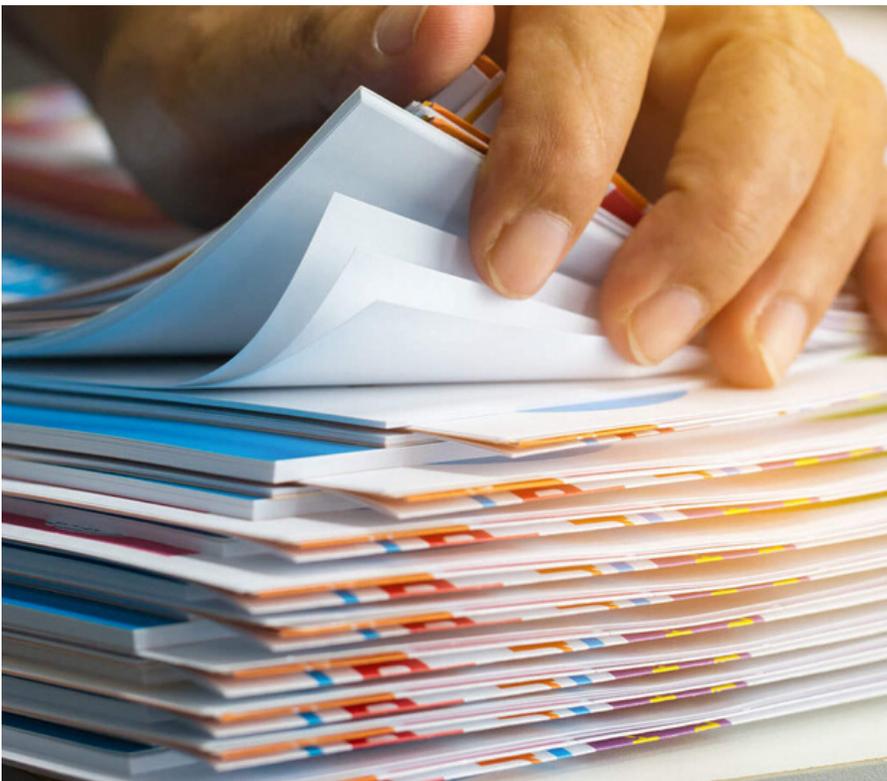
Contact the SEI Department if you have questions about how these motions affect you and your certification(s): sei@americancanoe.org

The next discipline committee meetings and holistic SEIC meeting will be hosted on February 20-21, 2020 in Fredericksburg, VA.

Connect with the SEI Department and/or the chair of your respective discipline committee for additional information. To review the new 2020 SEIC Committee Rosters, please visit: www.americancanoe.org/SEIC

Course Management System

Spring 2020 brings new course submission technologies for ACA instructors & trainers



THE BACKSTORY

Since 1972, the ACA's National Instruction Program has been hailed as the "Gold Standard" of paddlesport instruction in the U.S. and beyond. The ACA National Office and the Safety Education & Instruction Council (SEIC) develop and distribute course curricula, educational resources, and related policy to aid not only instructors & trainers, but the general paddling public, partnering organizations, and other stakeholders in the industry.

While the education and outreach efforts of the ACA and its valued volunteers continue to evolve and address industry trends, needs, and situations, the process for submitting instructional course reports and related documentation has not changed significantly for several years. Developed by several SEIC volunteers and workgroups, the ACA Course Management System (CMS) will be a blessing to instructors & trainers, enabling more accurate and efficient processing of all course documentation & resulting credentials.

The CMS is 100% digital, and will facilitate registration and pre-course services such as advertising and insurance coverage, as well as post-course reporting such as verification of membership, SEIC dues, issuance of assessment or instructor certification credentials, and readily available reporting records, evaluation/feedback forms, and status of certification maintenance requirements.

THE BENEFITS

The CMS will provide immediate access to records such as IDW/ICE evaluation forms, continuation forms, course registrations, report forms, ACA membership numbers, course reporting summaries, etc. Additionally, instructors in good standing may have an electronic certification card emailed to them immediately upon request.

THE TIMELINE

The CMS development team is on schedule with system testing and refinement for release beginning in March/April 2020. Extensive 'How To' manuals, instructions, videos, and FAQ's will be provided so that you have readily accessible tools to make the most of this technology & all your ACA instructor resources.



IMPORTANT FYI

Once the CMS is fully functional and all features available, ACA instructors & trainers will be **REQUIRED** to use the new system. Those who insist on continued use of old forms, hard copy papers, fax machine submissions, etc will be subject to a mandatory manual processing fee.

STEWARDSHIP & PUBLIC POLICY

In this issue of Paddle, we celebrate the designation of the Mallows Bay-Potomac National Marine Sanctuary, support the Public Lands Pledge Campaign in partnership with the Outdoor Alliance, and focus in on efforts in Tennessee to bring regional paddling clubs together to promote greater awareness and support policy issues that tie the paddling community together. First, a quick look back on 2019 and a look ahead with Public Policy Chief, Brett Mayer.

In 2019, the ACA focused communication on six key national issues: Continuing efforts in the fight to protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness from hardrock mining, supporting a historic public lands package that was passed into law in late February, ensuring access to paddling environments, protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil and gas leasing, speaking up to maintain an expanded definition of waters of the United States to ensure we have access to clean water, joining our partners through the Outdoor Alliance to voice concern and advocate for climate solutions, and supporting a public lands pledge to advocate for policy solutions that protect and promote paddling access on public lands.

Looking forward, there is no shortage of paddling related policy issues that should garner our attention. Our membership in the ACA reflects the same diverse electorate as our country. We hope to communicate about policy issues most relevant to paddlers - those issues that relate to protecting and enhancing paddling resources.

Sometimes it is easy to see the connection between a specific issue and how it relates to protection of paddling resources, like access issues or new fee structures for commercial outfitters. Other issues can be more difficult, like how climate change or resource development might directly or indirectly affect paddling opportunities. Articulating policy positions that relate to the broad diversity of our membership can, at times, be challenging but the ACA will continue to work within our membership, and to partner and support organizations whose efforts protect public lands, enhance clean water, support the maintenance of the overall health and diversity of ecosystems everywhere, and bolster outdoor recreation economies at local, regional, and national levels. We feel that these are the policy and stewardship efforts that need attention within the paddling community.

By ACA Public Policy Chief, Brett Mayer



In 2020, the ACA hopes to strengthen grassroots policy efforts through our State Director program. In my tenure as Public Policy Chief, my experiences working hand in hand with State Directors as a conduit of communication between individual members and paddling issues that matter on a local and state level, have been the most empowering. We will work to gather and communicate stories from State Directors and other dedicated members to further collaborate and provide a roadmap for others to follow.

Policy and Stewardship accounts for one-third of the ACA's mission, but there is currently no full time staff member within the department. We think it is important for members to know this because we rely on the grassroots efforts of individual members to make the policy work we do possible. This is a great opportunity for members to make a difference and to communicate about paddling issues that matter most to our collective paddling future.

Our shared passion offers something unique, a union between person, craft, and water, that delivers us on otherworldly adventures while moving atop a fluid medium. It is about the shared journey and the stories we collect. This is what knits us together. Paddlers understand the value of friendships forged, stories told, and the importance of living life with flow. My inspiration comes from our collective paddle strokes, and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming year to celebrate, steward, and protect the places we care about most.

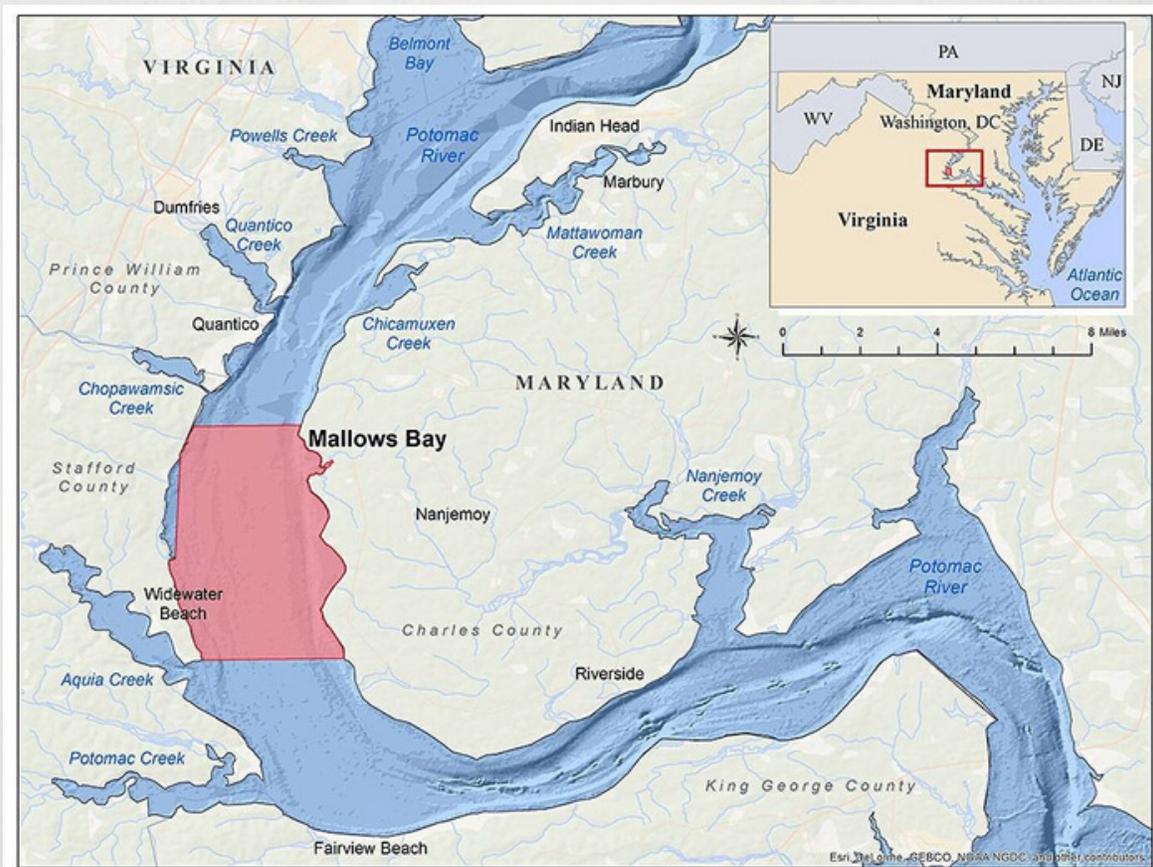
Enjoy this issue of Paddle, and I hope to see you on the water. ~ACA Public Policy Chief, Brett Mayer

ACA Celebrates the Designation of Mallow's Bay-Potomac National Marine Sanctuary

The new Mallow's Bay Marine Sanctuary was officially designated this past July and celebrations were held in eastern Maryland on the shores of the Potomac this past fall. Mallow's Bay is home to the northern hemisphere's largest ghost fleet, a collection of over 100 wooden World War I steamships.

World War I ended before the steamships ever saw battle, and with changing technology, the wooden steamships were no longer of value to the U.S. Navy. Hence the ships were sent to Mallow's Bay to be salvaged, essentially set adrift to decay over decades. This wreckage transformed into a remarkably unique ecosystem: an artificial reef formed from the remains that is now a haven for wildlife and paddlers alike.

Mallow's Bay is most accessible via the Maryland side of the Potomac, and is just a short forty minute drive southward from Washington D.C. The ACA communicated about and supported the designation of the sanctuary from the outset of the process in 2014. Mallow's Bay is an excellent example of a variety of organizations working together to achieve success. The designation of Mallow's Bay expands paddling opportunities in this region, supports the local economy of Charles County, Maryland, and helps provide protection to a unique resource that is a part of our nation's history.





PUBLIC LANDS PLEDGE

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

The ACA is proud to support the Public Lands Pledge, a movement organized by the Outdoor Alliance (OA) and its partner organizations. The ACA was a founding member of the Outdoor Alliance: the only organization in the United States that unites the voices of outdoor enthusiasts to conserve public lands and ensures those lands are managed in ways that protect the human powered experience. OA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit coalition of national advocacy organizations that also includes groups such as American Whitewater, Access Fund, International Mountain Biking Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, the Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, the Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation.

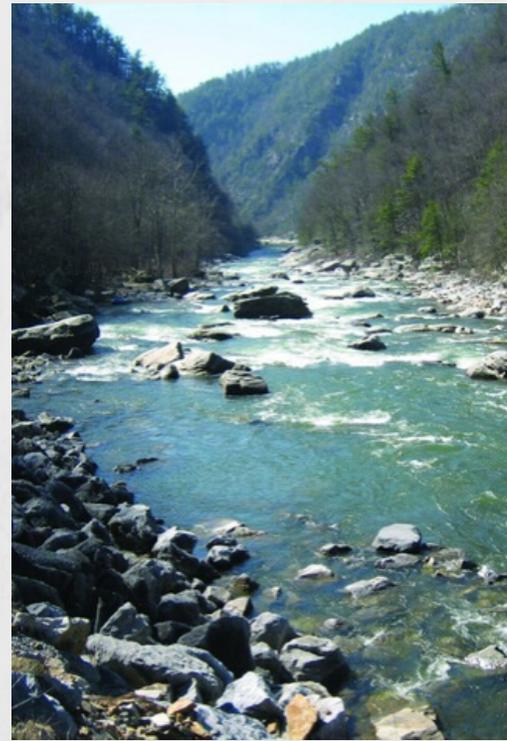
In the eyes of a paddler, the recent Public Lands Pledge can be best understood as a proactive effort to garner support for the protection of our most treasured paddling resources. Almost half of all paddling opportunities in the United States happen on public lands, and the protection of these places ensures paddlers maintain access in perpetuity. You can represent the paddling community, and help the Outdoor Alliance collect 10,000 signatures and stories about why public lands matter by joining alongside other outdoor adventurers in the #publiclandspledge. These stories will be shared with decision makers in 2020 to continue building bipartisan support for public lands protections. Make your voice heard by signing the pledge at:

www.outdooralliance.org/public-lands-pledge

#publiclandspledge

Join thousands of others who believe we can do better for public lands and waters

Historic Summit: Protect and Enjoy Paddling Resources in Tennessee



In mid-October, the ACA held a historic summit on the banks of the Nolichucky River. All five major paddling clubs in the state met for the first time to discuss key policy issues pertaining to paddlers. Andrea White, ACA Tennessee State Director, has been working hard to communicate on newly proposed commercial outfitting fees. Andrea's tireless and vocal outreach resulted in strong communication and an eventual historic summit that brought the entire paddling community together from across the state of Tennessee. These efforts offer a valuable example how paddlers can coordinate through local, state, regional, and national channels to articulate policy positions relatable and important to paddlers in not only their own communities, but everywhere. Lessons learned and processes developed and honed in this situation can prove to be valuable later for paddlers facing similar issues in different states and regions. The key benchmark of the historic summit is the five largest paddling clubs in Tennessee meeting for the first time to better align on key policy issues that affect paddlers in the state of Tennessee: the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, the Bluff City Canoe Club, the Chota Canoe Club, the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association, and the Tennessee Valley Canoe Club.

The group discussed three key issues: paddling in the Tennessee State Park system, proposed rulemaking and outfitter fees from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), and a campaign designating the Nolichucky River as a Wild and Scenic River. The meeting resulted in an official letter updating ACA members in TN, an official letter to TN legislators supporting the Nolichucky Wild and Scenic designation, and an opportunity for TN members to take action and voice their personal support.

COMPETITION



Competition Calendar

April 3-5, 2020

Pan Am Championships - Slalom
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

April 26-30, 2020

Wildwater World Championships
Nantahala River, NC, USA

May 3-4 & 6-8, 2020

Wildwater World Cups 1, 2, 3, & 4
Albright, WV, USA

May 7-10, 2020

Pan Am Championships - Sprint
Curitiba, Brazil

May 8-10, 2020

Sprint World Cup #1
Racice, Czech Republic

May 21-24, 2020

Paracanoe World Championships
Sprint World Cup #2
Duisburg, Germany

June 5-7, 2020

Slalom World Cup #1
Ivrea, Italy

June 12-14, 2020

Slalom World Cup #2
Pau, France

July 7-12, 2020

Slalom Jr/U23 World Championships
Ljubljana-Tacen, Slovenia

July 17-19, 2020

Sprint Jr/U23 World Championships

Brandenburg, Germany

July 26-31, 2020

2020 Olympic Games - Slalom

Tokyo, Japan

August 3-8, 2020

2020 Olympic Games - Sprint

Tokyo, Japan

August 21-23, 2020

Slalom World Cup #3

Liptovsky-Mikulas, Slovakia

August 27-30, 2020

Canoe Marathon World Championships

Baerum, Norway

September 3-5, 2020

2020 Paralympic Games - Paracanoe

Tokyo, Japan

September 5-6, 2020

Ocean Racing World Championships

Viana de Costello, Portugal

September 8-13, 2020

Canoe Polo World Championships

Rome, Italy

September 18-20, 2020

Slalom World Cup #4

Prague, Czech Republic

September 24-27, 2020

Slalom World Cup Finals

Markkleeberg, Germany

In addition to these international events, ACA is proud to support training camps, National Team Trials, and USA National Championship events. For more, check out: www.americancanoe.org/events



RECREATION



TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

ACA Instructor, Maurice Van de Maele shares his story of evolution & exploration in some of the world's most remote paddling destinations





Hello Fellow Paddlers!

My name is Maurice Van de Maele, I am a Chilean paddler from Puerto Williams, the southernmost town on this beautiful planet, located in the vicinity of the legendary Cape Horn, Chile. Given my location, I am likely the southernmost ACA Kayak Instructor you can find! I need to remark that I feel truly honored and humble to have the opportunity to share a little bit of my kayaking story, and how the ACA has played a role in my life's work.

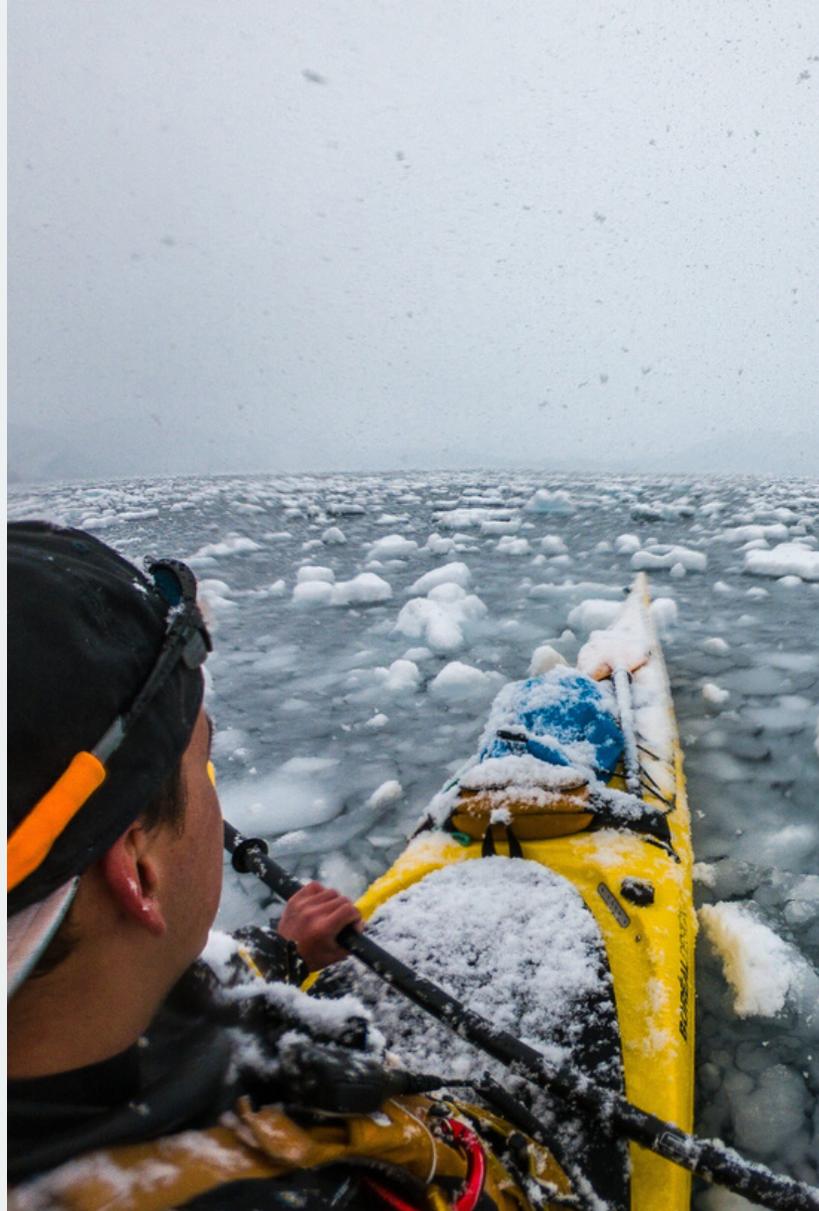
Believe it or not, I started to lead nature tours at the tender age of 8 years old when a little cruise ship going to Cape Horn started to visit our town every two weeks. I had the idea that it would be nice for visitors to learn how to skip stones, chop wood & make a fire on rainy days, climb trees, find insects under the rocks, and other activities. I may not have been an expert on some of these scientific topics but at least the visitors were entertained and happy. They gave me one or two dollars as a tip that I used all to buy groceries in the local store. As I am writing right now, so many memories of my youth start to pop up in my head! But my point is that this early beginning as a local guide helped me to develop a kind of "customer service voice" inside my brain and to always aim for high quality and enjoyable nature experiences.

"I am so proud and happy to be the kayak instructor and activity guide on board the first and most modern hybrid battery powered expedition ship in the world; I lead kayak excursions in both the Arctic and the Antarctic"



It is quite challenging and hard work to be responsible for the safety of our paddling guests. Every little detail in these environments is very important. From delivering high quality mandatory safety kayak briefings, assessing the venue on the Bridge together with the Captain, Safety Officer and Expedition Leader before every kayak excursion, to checking that the waterproof zipper of our guests' dry suits are properly closed...fellow instructors and guides know how comprehensive these kinds of trips can become! I can tell you that after 25 years of pushing myself through life, I look back and I would never thought I would end up as an Expedition Activity Guide in the Polar regions (Arctic & Antarctica) and as a certified ACA Kayak Instructor paddling in these wonderful, extreme places. Even with the addition of these many adventures, I always reflect upon my youth and the paths that have led me here.

My mom still insists on giving me paddling advice even though she has never been in a kayak before! And I still spend my tips in the local store. My life truly has become a grand adventure, and I eagerly await more exploration! Have great paddling adventures mi amigos, and let's keep making the world a better place to paddle!



SPECIAL FEATURES



Operation Deep Blue is an annual long-distance sea kayak expedition conducted to increase awareness of law enforcement officers, other first responders and military service members who died in the line of duty as well as to raise funds for related charities and surviving family members. Over an eight day period, the Operation Deep Blue team paddles more than 215 miles from Fort Mott State Park in Pennsville, NJ to Washington, DC - arriving for the start of National Police Week. In addition to honoring all officers, first responders and military service members who died in the line of duty, each Operation Deep Blue team member selects an individual, who made the ultimate sacrifice, to honor throughout the expedition.

During the expedition, the team's skills, physical endurance, mental toughness and commitment to honoring our fallen heroes are tested as they paddle as many as 10 hours each day in a variety of challenging and rapidly changing conditions. Learn more at www.operationdeepblue.org

Paddle for Heroes is an annual kayak & stand up paddleboard race with the goal of raising funds for collegiate scholarships for first responders and their families, military personnel wishing to attend the the Warfighters Advance™ Post-combat Reintegration Program, and the Rotary Club of Leonardtown's charitable endeavors.



**Paddle
FOR HEROES**



The race will be held on June 13th on Breton Bay in Leonardtown, MD. For more information, please visit www.paddleforheroes.org

US National Kayak Polo Pan American Continental Cup 2019 Report

By Stephanie Schnorr



The 2019 Kayak Polo Pan American Continental Cup Championship has concluded; the event was hosted from Nov 21-24 in the town of São Miguel Arcanjo in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. These championships bring together teams from North and South America to compete for the continental title, and a chance to qualify for the World Championships in the following year. This time, the men's division was highly competitive since all four federations – Canada, USA, Argentina, and Brazil – were vying for the first place title and the automatic qualification that it would bring for the World Championships in Rome in 2020. In the women's division, only USA had pre-qualified due to their ranking at the 2018 World Championships, which meant that to secure their spot, they only needed to participate, leaving Canada, Argentina, and Brazil as the primary competitors for a World's qualification. Teams from French Guyane also attended the tournament, but since they are part of the French federation, their ranking is ghosted from the final results submitted for the World's entry.

The USA men's and women's teams consisted of both veteran and newer players, and these athletes were tested in their ability to form a unified team on the pitch. For the women, since it was not necessary to win or even rank at the competition, seven players came together, four of them new or developing players, and self-coached over the three days of games in order to practice strategies and gain valuable international experience to help with World's 2020 preparation. Team members hailed from all over the US (with one even flying directly from the UK) and included Natasja Brenninkmeijer (#1), Olly Gotel (#2), Carson Chruscicki (#3), Heather Fenske (#4), Myrna Lewis (#5), Stephanie Schnorr (#7), and Tarika Pin Thienapirak (#8). The USA men similarly came from all corners of the country and boasted a fierce roster of eight, led by Coach Mark Poindexter, including Filipe Silva (#1), Sebastian Palluk (#2), Gerard Ruiz Babot (#3), Gavin Hu (#4), Nick Porter (#5), Peter Hargreaves (#6), Ahmed Sami (#7), and Sasha Izmailov (#9).

The teams all arrived on the 20th and 21st to São Paulo and were shuttled by the host delegation to the tournament destination at São Miguel Arcanjo. There, the USA and Canada teams were accommodated in the charming Pousada Villa da Matta hotel, in walking distance to the tournament venue. Following a day of rest and an International Canoe Federation (ICF) referee course delivered by the USA's Ezio Ambrosetti with help from Curly and Lynn Barker (both ICF officials from Great Britain), the competition began in earnest on Friday November 22, starting at 9:00 AM and ending at sundown, after 15 exciting games played on the main pitch.

Teams were treated to a variety of local perks such as fresh fruits, prime seating, physiotherapy, delicious Brazilian buffet, and of course, a city full of cheering spectators. By the end of the first day, the USA women finished with two losses, first to Argentina women and then to French Guyane women, but ended strong with a 14-0 win against Brazil women. The USA ladies worked on their strategy, maneuvering players through a few positions and using two different offensive plays, and built their confidence with calm and careful play. Their goal was to ensure that everyone understood their player role and could run the primary offensive play. The USA defense proved strong, and it was mainly from counterattacks that the ladies conceded goals. The USA men played two games in the first day, drawing first in a hotly contested match against Canada, but ending with a solid win against Argentina. On the second day, the USA women ended their first round with a confident first game, though ultimately a loss, against a strong veteran Canadian women's team, who had gone undefeated in the first day. This put USA women into fourth place, and positioned them to compete in a grueling every-other-game gauntlet to obtain a chance to play in the final on Sunday. Their work began in the afternoon against the fifth place Brazilian women, securing a 10-0 win. Next was a rematch against the Argentinian women, this time with a 4-2 win that allowed advancement to the semi-finals match against French Guyane. The game against French Guyane women was a close back and forth match in which USA managed to stem the counterattacks and put up a strong defense, but ultimately their offense did not lock-in enough times to boost the score one more point just before end game, and French Guyane took the win at 4-3. Still, the USA women walked away proud of their accomplishment, which saw massive improvement over the course of just 24 hours, and all team members contributed to the scores throughout the day.



Day two for USA men began with a morning game against their remaining group stage rival, Brazil, resulting in a tense close game, but ultimately a loss of 1-3. This launched them into a similar gauntlet-style afternoon with rank-based match-ups to attempt the climb from third place into the finals. The first of these games was against Argentina, and team USA pulled off a decisive win, showing consistency in their match-up against the impassioned Argentinian men. After one game off, the next game saw a semi-final match-up between USA and Canada, who had just lost to the first-place ranked Brazilian men earlier in the afternoon. This time, USA men came out with a resounding consecutive win, putting them in the finals in the next day. Both USA teams were suddenly sighting a podium place finish.



The final day of competition on Sunday started with the women's game for third place, again against Argentinian women, who had bested the Brazilian women in the last game of the previous day. Morning games are always tricky, and a proper warm-up makes or breaks a team. USA women showed confidence on defense, but had missteps in the offensive plays, with dropped passes that resulted in counter-attacks. The game remained close and ended with a tie. This put the match into overtime golden goal. Argentina won the ball on the sprint, but it wasn't long before USA regained possession, and after a pressured bid down to the other end of the pitch, the ball was again turned over to the opponent, but then a blocked pass under the Argentina goal allowed team USA to swipe the ball, make a clutch pass and shot, and a win for third place!

The last game of the day was the senior men's final between USA and Brazil. Both teams had everything to win – first place and a World's qualification. Brazil men proved to be a more physical team, able to dominate with strength, but the USA men were strategic and had sharp shooters. The match was a good one, and the score remained tight throughout the 20 minutes of play in which, like the USA women, the teams tied at the end of the second half. The game went into golden goal overtime, which seemed to again frustrate both teams as the ball shot precariously from end to end, at one point going one on one with the USA goalie, but a critical block prevented the game-ending goal. Team USA took possession once more, launched the ball down the pitch, but Brazil was pressing five-out, and the ball jumped between teams as exhaustion and frayed nerves became a factor. Suddenly, a loose ball was won by USA, and the pass landed with two breaking USA players near the Brazil goal. Once the sole Brazilian defender committed to the main USA threat holding the ball, a quick pass went true into the hands of the second USA player and the shot went in, ending the match to a stunned Brazilian crowd who watched the few screaming USA fans jump for joy. The USA men had won the game, ranking first in the Pan-American Championship, and bagging their first Worlds qualification in nearly fifteen years. The awards ceremony was a tearful event as both USA men and women celebrated their momentous accomplishment, united finally in their trajectory, on the road to Rome Kayak Polo World Championships 2020.





ICF Wildwater Canoe China Open

Story & Photos courtesy of ACA International Member, Instructor Trainer, and Athlete Ge Wu

Panzhuhua is a prefecture-level city located in the far south of Sichuan province in China. The Jinsha (Golden Sand) River flows through the heart of the city. In December 2019, the ICF Wildwater Canoeing China Open took place in Panzhuhua; over 150 athletes from 17 countries participated in this competition. In the Pro division, the lineup was quite competitive: among the favorites was Hannah Brown, previous two-time world champion in wildwater racing and world cup winner in sprint kayaking.

This was my second year competing in this race; same as last year, I was competing in the Open division. Unlike athletes in the Pro division where they used proper, expensive wildwater racing boats, the Open division allowed athletes to use plastic boats no longer than 3.5 meters (11.5 ft).

Day 1 of the competition was the 500 meter sprint. In the morning, I raced in the 4-person raft sprint. Each raft was required to have at least one female paddler, so two guys from the Open kayak division and I teamed up with a local mango saleslady; she had never ever paddled any craft before! We took her on a practice run the day before the race, we showed her how to hold the paddle and paddle forward. We were up against some strong teams including a few rafts comprised of professional slalom canoeists. To our surprise, we finished 4th in the rafting race. In the afternoon, I raced in the 500 meter kayak sprint where I finished second, only 1.61 seconds behind the gold medalist.

On day 2, the classic race had a distance of 16km. It was a test of stamina, fitness, and the ability to choose the fastest line. I paddled as hard as I could, and finished in second place. I was happy that I was able to finish all the races and gave my best. This race was a very enjoyable experience which mixed both professionals and amateur paddlers in a way which was fun, a learning experience, and a source of camaraderie and pride for all involved!



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Buddy also manages the ACA's Outfitter, Livery, and Guides (OLG) liability insurance program. If you would like to discuss either the OLG or Accident Insurance programs, program reach out to Buddy co-founder, Jay Paul: jpaul@iambuddy.com

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Dear ACA Members,



Photo by Sarah Ruhlen

It's been a quite an adventure since I assumed the role of Interim Executive Director in late May of this year, but I have loved seeing the power of ACA in action, meeting many of you, and hearing about the way ACA impacts your life and community. One of the themes I've heard, from you our valued members, is the desire for more communication from the National Office about what is happening at the ACA. With great pride, I would like to take this opportunity to share some of our many collective accomplishments from this year. In our quest to make the world a better place to paddle, we recognize the efforts of all our staff, volunteers, and members worldwide:

- Our education department is poised to flourish next year with the inclusion of new SEIC committee members who continually review and refine ACA curriculum and course content to ensure that ACA trainings and credentials are relevant and valuable to all users. This year, the ACA's Universal Paddling program introduced brand new programming to allow paddlesports to be more inclusive for those with sensory issues such as vision or hearing impairments. ACA's educational programs have continued to grow internationally; hundreds of members from other countries have pursued skills assessment and instructor certification this year.
- We continue to avidly support stewardship and waterway access efforts throughout the United States by strengthening partnerships with like-minded organizations like Outdoor Alliance. We are proud to have once again had the opportunity to offer the LL Bean-sponsored Club Fostered Stewardship program, which provides grant funding to grassroots clubs and organizations that invest thousands of volunteer hours to improve their paddling communities.
- We have enjoyed one of our most vibrant national and international competitive paddling seasons ever in both our flatwater Sprint and whitewater Slalom disciplines. USA teams travelled to training facilities and races all over the world including Peru, Slovakia, Spain, and Hungary. ACA athletes earned 4 quota spots in the 2020 Olympics, and are excited to represent the USA in Tokyo next year.
- The ACA has grown its insurance program to offer new, affordable products and services to our members, which enable paddlers of all kinds to offer safe and enjoyable programs and events nationwide.



- This past October we hosted the Instructor Trainer Conference in Richmond, Virginia which allowed for continuing education and collaboration among some of our most iconic and impactful educators and trainers. We also had the opportunity to present our annual awards to some absolutely phenomenal members and organizations who truly embody the ACA's mission.

We look forward to a remarkably eventful 2020: it will bring our 140th birthday, the 2020 Olympics & Paralympics, new members of our board of directors & SEIC committees, nationwide educational projects, and strategic partnerships. None of these victories would have been possible without the time, talents, and treasures of our members. THANK YOU for all that you do to support ACA!

BETH SPILMAN
ACA Interim Executive Director