



Journal of Paddlesport Education

A professional forum highlighting Safety Education & Instruction
for ACA Instructors, Clubs & Affiliates

March 2013

Welcome to the
**Journal of
Paddlesport
Education.**

NATIONAL PADDLESPORTS CONFERENCE

BEND, OR

That's right the ACA National Paddlesports Conference will be held in Bend, OR for 2013. Join us September 27-29 for education, stewardship, recreation and competition. For more information as it is available please visit www.americancanoe.org/NPC



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Paddlesports: Statistics, Standards, and Challenges

By: Christopher Stec

How many are out there?

That seems to be the question of the day in regards to the number of canoes, kayaks, rafts and stand up paddleboards (SUP) paddling on our varied waterways. There are a range of statistically significant national and regional surveys that have been trying to answer that question for years. If you delve into the statistical analysis of multiple surveys, you'll find a wealth of knowledge as well as a few discrepancies. For instance, for the same timeframe, one survey estimated that approximately 10.5 million people canoed at least once in that calendar year. Another survey put it at just under 23 million. That's a big difference, so who's right?

For detailed data analysis, consider referencing any of the yearly Outdoor Foundation's Outdoor Recreation Reports or their 2009 Special Report on Paddlesports. Or you can review the paddlesports component of the US Forest Service's National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) found on the ACA website. You can look at the outdoor recreation projections from the USFS through 2060 on their Outdoor Recreation Trends and Futures document. In addition, consider looking at state specific surveys funded by state agencies to get a non-national viewpoint of paddlesports activity in a specific state. The US Coast Guard also launched a national Recreational Boating Survey in 2011 aimed at putting together a comprehensive survey of boaters using a revised methodology that took

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PRO SCHOOL

REI OUTDOOR SCHOOL

Ready to launch into a new outdoor activity or advance in one you already enjoy? REI Outdoor School can get you on your way! They offer beginning to advanced-level classes and outings in kayaking, rock climbing, mountain biking, navigation, snowshoeing, road cycling, backpacking and more. And you don't need a lot of equipment to participate: they provide kayaks, bikes, snowshoes, GPS units and other gear. And most importantly, their professional instructors are committed to sharing their knowledge and ensuring an enjoyable experience for every participant.

Find out more at www.rei.com/outdoorschool



ACA Swiftwater Rescue Conference

The ACA provides a range of recreational opportunities and has been established as one of the premier standards of paddlesports safety and education. As part of the ACA's leadership role, we have initiated this swiftwater rescue conference to target all facets of whitewater rescue for the paddlesports community.

Save the Date
SWIFTWATER RESCUE CONFERENCE
Date: October 25-27, 2013
Location: Dillsboro, NC
Venue: Tuckaseegee River
More Information Visit:
www.americancanoe.org/SWR_Conference

Conference Partners:

ACA
Duke Energy
Whitewater RESCUE
medwest
LANDMARK LEARNING
Dillsboro River Company

Photo Courtesy of ACA Partner—Landmark Learning

Highlights

- Challenging on-water sessions for paddlers of all experience levels
- Learn from a list of who's who in swiftwater rescue
- Educational sessions for fire and rescue personnel
- High quality land and water educational sessions
- ACA Safety & Rescue Instructor Updates
- All conveniently located in Dillsboro, NC
- and much more...see it all at www.americancanoe.org/SWR_Conference

*Save the date and join fellow paddlers from across the country on the Tuckaseegee River this fall!



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SEI RESOURCES

LEVEL 3: WHITewater SUP INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP

The ACA National Office is excited to host a Level 3: Whitewater SUP Instructor Certification Course. This course will start on flat-water locally in Fredericksburg and move on to local whitewater. If you are looking to up your SUP instructor abilities to the next level this is the course for you.

Course Dates: April 7-11,

Times: 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Cost: \$385

For more info or to register click [here](#).



ACA Employment Opportunity

Education & Outreach Coordinator Position

The ACA announces an employment opportunity in the Safety, Education and Instruction Department. The Education and Outreach Coordinator position is now open until filled. The Education & Outreach Coordinator (EO) position has primary oversight of the entire educational outreach program. This includes working with other staff, individual instructors, the general public, and the appropriate committees and councils of the ACA. The EO Coordinator also assists the Safety Education & Instruction Coordinator in the day to day management of the National Paddlesports Instruction Program. The EO Coordinator must work with a high level of diligence and courtesy while enforcing a national paddlesports standard. Complete description and application process can be found at www.americancanoe.org/employment.

Kokatat Instructor of the Month

Chuck Conley—March

Chuck Conley lives in Virginia Beach and is involved in many aspects of paddling. Competitive paddling is his passion, and he races surf skis, kayaks and outrigger canoes. Recently Chuck was elected as President of the Mid-Atlantic Paddler's Association, the competitive paddling club in Southeast Virginia. He sells Stellar surf skis and kayaks, and he is an ACA Level 4 Coastal Kayak Instructor as well as a Level 3 Surf Kayak Instructor and Level 2 Surf Kayak Instructor Trainer. Chuck has been an eco-tour guide and guide trainer for almost twenty years. He is also the organizer for the Hampton Roads Kayak Meet-up Group. In 2011 Chuck started Team River Runner-Virginia Beach, a non-profit organization that takes wounded warriors and their family members paddling. It has become his passion and he feels it is some of the most important work he has ever

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done. TRR-VB has recently become a Paralympic Sport Club which will help it reach an even larger population of adaptive paddlers. Chuck is married to Annette, his favorite shuttle bunny, and has two great kids for paddling partners.

Learn more about past winners [here](#).



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SEI RESOURCES

ADAPTIVE PADDLING WORKSHOP

The ACA Adaptive Paddling Workshops are designed to provide instructors, outfitters, recreation program providers, and rehabilitation professionals with the information they need to integrate paddlers with disabilities into their programs. The ACA and the [Team River Runner Virginia Beach Chapter](#) have partnered to bring an Adaptive Paddling Workshop to Virginia Beach. This course will be offered at a great discount thanks to grant funding. Grant funding for this program is awarded by U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee, through funding provided by Veterans Affairs. The grants are provided to facilitate the growth of Paralympic-sport programming for disabled veterans and disabled members of the armed forces.

For more info or to register click [here](#).

SEI Department Update

SEI Audit

The 2013 ACA Instructor Audit is already underway!

This is a friendly reminder to report your courses and instructor updates if your ACA Instructor Certification is set to expire on 12/31/2013.

Visit the [Instructor, Trainer & Educator Forms](#) page on the web to submit online.

Not sure when your certification expires? Contact the SEI Department at sei@americancanoe.org

SEIC Meeting

All Instructors and Instructor Trainers are invited to attend! Come meet the ACA office staff, learn how curriculum and standard issues are addressed, help shape the future of paddlesports education in the U.S.

Date: Friday, March 15

Time: 8:30am-5:00pm

Location: Fredericksburg, VA

Venue: The Inn at the Olde Silk Mill

Please RSVP to SEI Coordinator, Kelsey Bracewell (kbracewell@americancanoe.org) as seating is limited.. Additional information can be found [here](#).

Collegiate Race Series National Championships

Registration is now open for the **2013 Collegiate Race Series National Championships**. This years race will also feature the [Bic SUP One Design Challenge](#). To learn more or register your school for this one of a kind team downriver paddlesport race visit www.americancanoe.org/CRS/National.





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SEI RESOURCES

PRO DEALS

The ACA is proud to add a new pro deal to the list of benefits for its certified instructors. Vest Pac is now one of the many companies that offer substantial discounts to ACA certified instructors.

Learn more about them and their products at www.vestpac.com. If you want to learn more about how you, as an ACA certified instructor, can take advantage of this great benefit contact the SEI department at sei@americancanoe.org.

See all the pro deals at www.americancanoe.org/prodeals.



ACA Members Only Excursions Western North Carolina SUP

Bryson City, NC – Stand Up Paddleboarding

Dates: July 8-13, 2013

Cost: \$850

Hosts: ACA Instructor Trainer Educator [Chris Stec](#) and [Black Dog Paddle](#)



ACA staff, Chris Stec will be joined by Black Dog Paddle owner Bryan Smith to lead this one of a kind stand up paddleboarding adventure. Join us as we explore the beautiful Lake Fontana and paddle classic southeast whitewater. You will learn from some of the best in the business when it comes to SUP and paddlesports education. Great fun, great food and new friends await!

On Day 1 we'll conduct a stroke and skills clinic to make sure everyone is on the same page. That evening, we'll pack our gear in drybags as we'll stand up paddleboard camp on Day 2 and 3 at the beautiful Lake Fontana. Day 4 and 5 will be spent learning the art of whitewater SUP on the Tuckaseegee River and other rivers. SUP equipment can be provided for an additional fee or you can bring your own. Pick up and drop off for flights will be at the Asheville Regional Airport. More information about cost, equipment provided or to register can be found at www.americancanoe.org/WNC_SUP



For complete information about all of the 2013 ACA Members Only Backcountry Paddling Excursions to Honduras, western North Carolina, Greece, Alaska, and Costa Rica please visit: www.americancanoe.org/excursions



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EXCURSIONS

2013

That's right, if you're an ACA member, you can join the ACA and high quality outfitters on an incredible paddling excursion in 2013. In cooperation with the host organizations, you will be able to have a unique backcountry paddling experience in one of the following amazing locations.

- Island of Rotan, Honduras
- Western North Carolina
- Island of Poros, Greece
- Resurrection Bay, AK
- Costa Rica

For complete information on the 2013 Members Only Excursions visit www.americancanoe.org/excursions



Upcoming Outreach Events

This section of the Journal of Paddlesport Education will bring to you outreach events that include conferences, festivals, symposiums and more. Check out these great events that may be in your area and consider attending. For more events check out the [ACA Paddlesports Event Calendar!](#)

Canoecopia—Madison, Wi

Canoecopia is one of the largest paddlesport expositions in the world. At this annual event attendees will find education & inspiration; exposure to guides, outfitters & schools; charitable giving; and access to great gear at great prices. Be sure to stop by the ACA presentations and booth in the exhibit hall to learn more about how the ACA can help you enhance your paddlesports experience. Join us March 8—10 and to learn more visit www.canoecopia.com



International Boating & Water Safety Summit—San Antonio, TX

The International Boating & Water Safety Summit is the premier event for training, awareness, meeting and networking for anyone involved in boating and water safety. General sessions cover a broad spectrum of national and international concerns with a focus on The Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Program and implementation opportunities. Breakout sessions allow the individual to attend classes geared toward their profession including Education, Risk Management, Law Enforcement, Communication and Outreach. Make sure to see the ACA staff presentations or stop by the booth in the exhibit hall.



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IMPORTANT DATES

Upcoming Important Dates to add to your Calendar!

March 15: SEIC Meeting
(Fredericksburg, VA)

March 30-31: [Collegiate Race Series National Championship](#)
(Dillsboro, NC)

September 27-29
[National Paddlesports Conference](#) (Bend, OR)

October 5-6
[ACA Europe Paddlesports Conference](#)
(Zurich, Switzerland)

October 18-20
[ACA South America Paddlesports Conference](#)
(Vina del Mar, Chile)

October 25-27
[Swiftwater Rescue Conference](#) (Dillsboro, NC)

Tuck Fest—Charlotte, NC

The first annual Tuck Fest is a three-day outdoor festival at the U.S. National Whitewater Center (USNWC) taking place April 19-21 and will features live music, games and races on their 400-acre facility. With seven live bands and over 20 activities and races throughout the weekend, the festival aims to draw families, individuals and adventure enthusiasts of all ages to celebrate the active outdoor lifestyle. Paddlesports races featured during the weekend include: giant kayak slalom, flatwater SUP, whitewater SUP, whitewater rafting, whitewater kayaking and kids slalom exhibition. Learn more at www.usnwc.org/tuck-fest.



East Coast Paddlesport & Outdoor Festival—Charleston, SC

Join fellow paddlers at James Island County Park to immerse yourself in a full weekend of the history, technique, hands-on experience, and fun of paddlesports and outdoor adventure! The East Coast Paddlesports & Outdoor Festival includes lectures, on-water classes, and demonstrations directed to the novice and the experienced paddler. The heart of the festival is four classrooms



Where Fun Comes Naturally!

that run simultaneously throughout the three-day event. Refine your skills in a master class presented by many of the leading experts in the paddling world. East Coast Paddlesports & Outdoor Festival remains one of the premier paddlesports events on the Atlantic Coast, but will also be expanding to feature other recreation-related activities like mountain biking, archery, skateboarding, climbing, and disc golf. The [Gibbon Slackline Team](#) will also be on-hand with awe-inspiring slack line demos. For more information visit www.ccprc.com.



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SHARE YOUR PHOTOS



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The American Canoe Association is proud to count Subaru of America among its corporate sponsors.

[Subaru is the official vehicle of the ACA.](#)

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



Now that's a member benefit!

In addition to providing discounts to ACA members, Subaru is partnering with *your* ACA to support the ACA's stewardship and conservation programs. When an ACA member purchases a vehicle through the VIP Partners Program, Subaru makes a contribution to support ACA's stewardship work, providing the organization with much-needed resources for protecting our nation's waterways.

To learn more about the VIP Program visit:

www.americancanoe.org/VIP



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Submit articles to
[www.americancanoe.org/
JPE/submission](http://www.americancanoe.org/JPE/submission)



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into account some of the lessons learned from the discrepancies of the aforementioned surveys. Time will tell how those numbers stack up to the other national surveys that are out there.



The take home message, at least for a non-statistician, is that regardless of the survey, or surveys, you go by, there are likely quite a bit more folks actually out on the water in some type of paddlecraft than most people expect. So, whether it's 10 million people canoeing annually or 20 million, either number is truly large enough to imply that a percentage of those people, at a minimum, probably need some amount of education to keep them upright, out of a main channel, away from a river strainer, or floating the right way during a tidal shift. Different educational approaches, that meet some degree

of proficiency, are necessary to reach this diverse population of paddlers growing yearly out there on the water.

For more information on statistics please visit www.americancanoe.org/paddlesports_statistics.

Are there best practices or standards for paddlesports?

Although there are a few other entities that have certification programs, the ACA has been the leader in multiple facets of paddlesport education since our instruction program was created in 1972. Currently there are just over 7,300 ACA certified Instructors teaching in the US and in twenty-three other countries worldwide. The comprehensive ACA course curricula and instructor criteria have become widely accepted as the best practices used by professionals and volunteers alike. The ACA curricula covers the paddlesports disciplines of canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddleboarding, rafting and river rescue and the venues range from calm flatwater to the extremes of whitewater and the open ocean.



In addition to the ACA National Paddlesports Instruction Program, there are two other significant bodies of work that outline a different set of standards for paddlesports. In conjunction with NASBLA, ACA volunteers and professional staff contributed to the Paddlesports Education Standards that were approved by NASBLA in 2008. These standards apply to the criteria that a classroom based paddlesports course should adhere to. In addition, a contingent of ACA trainers and staffers are currently providing expertise to a US Coast Guard grant project that is in the initial phases of developing on-water standards for paddlesport instruction. These two documents, along with the



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ACA's common sense Best Practices document will provide educators, retailers, outfitters and trip leaders with a solid framework to educate all facets of the paddling public. The ultimate goal of these initiatives is to reduce the possibility of the swimming kayaker in the photo from becoming a fatality statistic.

What is one of the top challenges facing paddlesports today?

In 2012, there were at least four confirmed deaths on stand up paddleboards (SUPs) across the country. As participation continues to increase and individuals continue to push their personal skill sets in regards to the increasing difficulty of different water venues, a greater number of mishaps, either minor or tragic, will likely begin to occur.

But why SUPs? Two reasons. Compared to a canoe or a whitewater kayak, an individual can relatively quickly become successful paddling a SUP. Since there is less of a barrier to entry than with other paddlecraft it's frankly easier to simply stand up and go paddling. Plus, if (I mean when!) you fall off, the self-rescue is significantly simpler.

The other reason hinges around the on-going debate about leashes and lifejackets, or leashes vs. lifejackets? One of the current challenges facing paddlesports and boardsports is how to provide the appropriate safety information to people so that they can make an informed decision. Meaning, when and what type of lifejacket should one wear, and when and what type of leash to wear. Although some feel there are straightforward answers, in reality it is slightly more complicated. For example, we all know that wearing a lifejacket increases one's chances of surviving in a water venue. This has been documented and validated time and again. However, wearing a lifejacket on an SUP in a surf



zone can actually be hazardous to your health. Imagine falling off the board while surfing and then having the board or sharp fins hitting you in the impact zone. This is not a pleasant experience and the potential for injury is actually increased if you are floating near the surface with the assistance of a lifejacket. It's generally better to stay underwater momentarily so you can create separation from your board and its fins before resurfacing. Another example on the complexity of the issue revolves around the different types of leashes. If you wear a leash designed for ocean surf in a moving water river environment, there is an extreme entrapment hazard. If you wear a coiled leash in the ocean surf environment, there is the increased potential for blunt trauma injuries. To compound the



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issue, as participation increases, the likelihood of mishaps will logically increase as well. As a result, the education vs. regulation question will continue to raise its head at the local, state and federal levels.

Consequently, it falls under all of our responsibilities to work towards a variety of ways to educate those who SUP so that they can make informed, safe decisions to enjoy their time out on the water. Learn more about the SUP conversation, visit www.americancanoe.org/sup-survey. Contact the ACA's Safety Education & Instruction Department to have your voice heard and help guide the ACA in how to best represent those who stand tall with a single blade while paddling in the surf, on coastal waterways, in whitewater or on flatwater.

Having read all of the above snapshots about statistics, standards and challenges, take a moment to see if you can find all four mistakes in the kayak photo (*besides the fact that he's out of his boat!*). In addition, all four mistakes could have easily been avoided provided the individual was given just a little bit of education either at the point of sale, by the trip leader during the put-in talk (pre-trip safety briefing), or by his friends on the way to the river. A little education can truly go a long way. If you can't find all four, or are unsure of how to address them at a put-in talk, consider taking an on-course from your local ACA certified Instructor.



are un-
water

Paddle safe – paddle often,

Christopher Stec

Chief Operating Officer

ACA | Canoe – Kayak – SUP – Raft – Rescue

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www.americancanoe.org

When not in the ACA office or attending meetings, he can be found spending time on the water with his family, whether it's kayak fishing, whitewater canoeing on a section of the local Rappahannock River or surfing SUPs in the ocean.



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