



Paddlesports Angler

Instructor Endorsement Criteria

Overview: Fundamentally, we expect that participants have the angling experience, paddling skills, technical knowledge, rescue ability, teaching ability, group management, and interpersonal skills commensurate with this endorsement criteria prior to presenting themselves for evaluation as an ACA Paddlesports Angler Endorsement candidate.

The Paddlesports Angler Endorsement is available to ACA Level 1 (or higher) Instructors, Trainers, and Educators within the disciplines of river kayaking, coastal kayaking, and stand up paddleboarding (SUP). Upon successful completion of this course, instructors will have the ability to deliver the appropriate Angling Skills Courses and the Flatwater Safety and Rescue for Anglers course within their respective craft.

Course Prerequisites: Be a current certified ACA Level 1: River Kayak, Coastal Kayak, or SUP Instructor (or higher) in good standing.

Instructor Trainer: This endorsement course may be offered by Level 1 or higher ACA Instructor Trainers or Instructor Trainer Educators holding the Paddlesports Angler Endorsement OR by an ACA Level 1 (or higher) Instructor Trainer (IT) or Instructor Trainer Educator (ITE) who co-teaches alongside a current ACA Instructor actively holding the Paddlesports Angler Endorsement.

Course Duration: 1 day (8 hours)

Course Location / Venue: Within the course venue corresponding to the instructor's current level of certification.

Class Ratio: 5 Instructor Candidates : 1 Instructor Trainer; with an additional instructor, the ratio can be 10:2.

General Requirements for all Instructor Endorsement Candidates:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be a full ACA member
- Upon successful completion, register with the Safety Education and Instruction Council
- All participants must acknowledge personal compliance with and demonstrate general knowledge of the purpose and significance of the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- Demonstrate general knowledge of [ACA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) policy and initiatives](#).
- Have and maintain first aid and age appropriate CPR
- Demonstrate a general knowledge of paddlesports and the ACA
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately perform and teach all of the following material, unassisted, in the appropriate venue

Endorsement Maintenance Requirements:

- Teach at least one Paddlesports Angling course that meets ACA standards within the



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four-year certification period and properly report the courses using the ACA Course Management System (CMS)

- Maintain ACA membership and SEIC registration annually
- Maintain appropriate CPR and first aid certification for the duration of endorsement

Paddlesports Angler Endorsement Requirements:

The following is a list of the criteria used to evaluate Endorsement Candidates. The content covered, and sequence of evaluation should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

- 1) Demonstrate a knowledge of ACA Paperwork:
 - How to register and report a course (with and without insurance)
 - An understanding of the ACA Waiver and Release of Liability
- 2) Demonstrate knowledge and ability to efficiently/effectively plan and implement appropriate instructional sessions and assessments for a different learning styles and ability levels, to include:
 - Differentiation of instruction based on the individual learner (student centered)
 - Use of an appropriate skills progression when teaching complex skill sets
 - Selection of appropriate teaching venue based on ability and desired outcomes
 - Focus on core principals rather than specific technique
 - Provides appropriate, specific, and meaningful feedback
- 3) Demonstrate the following:
 - Positive interpersonal skills
 - Appropriate group management skills (including leadership and judgment)
 - Ability to choose an appropriate venue /class site
- 4) Demonstrate a clear understanding and the ability to teach the various unique fishing-specific considerations, including but not limited to:
 1. **Paddling Gear**
 - a. Choosing a paddlecraft
 - b. Choosing and sizing a fishing life jacket
 - c. Choosing a paddle paddlesports fishing
 - d. Propulsion: what is different if you have a motor/pedals?
 - e. Outfitting an angler's paddlecraft for safety
 2. **Fishing Gear**
 - a. Fishing styles and their advantages/disadvantages (bait casting, spinning, fly)
 - Identify reel types: conventional and spinning
 - Identify rod types: conventional or spinning to match reel



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- b. Rod types/lengths and advantages/disadvantages
- c. 5 main types of bait:
 - Live or fresh dead
 - Hard lures
 - Bladed lures
 - Soft plastic lures
 - Artificial flies
- d. Types of fishing line and their advantages and disadvantages:
 - Monofilament
 - Braided line
 - Fluorocarbon
 - Fly lines (floating/intermediate/sinking)
- e. Miscellaneous tools

3. Fishing techniques from a paddlecraft:

- a. Anchoring
- b. Structure vs. cover
- c. Shallow vs. deep water
- d. Moving water vs. still water
- e. Windy vs. calm
- f. Clear water vs. stained water
- g. Act of fishing:
 - Casting
 - Setting the hook
 - Fighting the fish
 - Landing the fish

4. Paddlecraft rigging:

- a. Tackle management
- b. Rod holders
- c. Paddle holders
- d. Electronics/power management

5. Paddling with fishing gear:

- a. Securing and storing of gear (balance load top/bottom, bow/stern, port/starboard)
- b. Getting in and out of the paddlecraft with gear
- c. Launching with gear
- d. Accessing gear while maintaining angler balance
- e. Standing vs. sitting (advantages and disadvantages)
- f. Wading with gear, including wearing waders



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6. Fishing ethics and etiquette:

- a. License requirements and why they are important
- b. Fish regulations
- c. Aquatic Nuisance Species and Clean, Drain, Dry
- d. Handling fish (catch and release, keeping fish)
- e. Launching and landing paddlecraft (boat ramps, shore line, docks, etc)
- f. On the water fishing etiquette:
 - Proper spacing while fishing in proximity to other waterway users
 - Interactions with bank/shore/wading fisherman
 - Interactions with boat fisherman
 - Interactions with other paddlers
 - Respecting private property and land owner's rights

7. Safety and rescue for fishing:

- a. Rescue philosophy for anglers: address the need to prioritize rescue of people and boats over rescuing fishing gear
- b. Lake/open water hazards: boat traffic, cold water, wind, managing a paddle and fishing rod in waves, tackle management in waves, etc.
- c. River/moving water hazards: managing a paddle and fishing rod in current, tackle management in current, etc.
- d. Approaching strainers/lay downs as an angler
- e. Describe recommended guidelines for the use of tethers and leashes
- f. Discuss entanglement hazards
- g. Anchor and anchor line safety
- h. Cast a fishing rod safely (fly line management)
- i. Retrieve a fishing line
- j. Managing snags
- k. Knowing when to cut the line to save your life
- l. Land a fish and use of a boat net
- m. Managing toxicity concerns with handling lead weights
- n. First Aid response to cuts from line
- o. Awareness of higher-risk fishing disciplines such as trolling and targeting large species

- 5) Successfully complete the craft-specific module that corresponds to current discipline of instructor certification (river kayak, coastal kayak, or SUP).
- 6) Demonstrate leadership, group management skills, experience and judgment necessary to be a safe, effective paddlesports angling instructor.



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River Kayaking Fishing Module: This module is appropriate for currently ACA certified instructors within the discipline of river kayak. Instructors earning this endorsement must demonstrate their ability to explain, model, and teach the following:

1. River trip planning:
 - a. Understanding weather, wind, and wave considerations for anglers/fish
 - b. Understanding river flow (average vs. low vs. high) for anglers/fish
 - c. How to find and read/interpret river gauges related to fishing (e.g. river is rising vs. river is falling) for anglers/fish

2. Locating fish in the river:
 - a. Eddy lines
 - b. Current seams
 - c. Manmade structures vs. natural structures
 - d. Cover/strainers/lay downs
 - e. Current
 - f. Rule of Thirds: drop offs vs. pools vs. main channels

3. Maneuvers:
 - a. Launch/landing kayak while loaded with gear
 - b. Move the kayak forward, turn it, move sideways, stop it, and reverse it, when kayak is loaded with fishing gear
 - c. Access fishing tackle and other fishing gear and equipment
 - d. Set anchor properly

4. Safety and rescue considerations for river fishing:
 - a. On-water hazards: boat traffic, wind, cold water, handling paddle and fishing rod in waves, tackle management in waves, etc
 - b. River/moving water hazards: handling paddle and fishing rod in current, tackle management in current, strainers, anchoring risks
 - c. Approaching strainers/lay downs as an angler
 - d. Rescue philosophy for anglers
 - e. Demonstrate self-rescue with gear and tackle
 - f. Discuss the risks associated with the particular propensity of anglers to paddle in cold seasons, in the dark, and alone
 - g. Demonstrate and explain appropriate use of tethers and leashes and discuss entanglement hazards
 - h. Demonstrate setting anchor and anchor line safety
 - i. Use/wearing of waders: safety and rescue concerns when wearing waders, emphasizing the neutral buoyancy factors
 - j. Demonstrate neutral buoyancy in waders in still water



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Coastal Kayak Fishing Module: This module is appropriate for currently ACA certified instructors within the discipline of coastal kayak. Instructors earning this endorsement must demonstrate their ability to explain, model, and teach the following:

1. Coastal trip planning for fishing:
 - a. Nautical charts, tide charts, and topography for fishing
 - b. Weather, wind, waves, and surf reports for fishing
 - c. Fishing in familiar waters
 - d. Fishing in unfamiliar waters

2. Locating Fish
 - a. Surf
 - b. Marshes/bays
 - c. Estuaries
 - d. Tidal creeks and pools

3. Maneuvers:
 - a. Launch/landing kayak while loaded with gear
 - b. Move the kayak forward, turn it, move sideways, stop it, and reverse it, when kayak is loaded with fishing gear
 - c. Access fishing tackle and other fishing gear and equipment
 - d. Set anchor properly

4. Safety and rescue considerations for coastal fishing:
 - a. On-water hazards: boat traffic, wind, cold water, handling paddle and fishing rod in waves, tackle management in waves, etc
 - b. River/moving water hazards: handling paddle and fishing rod in current, tackle management in current, strainers, anchoring risks
 - c. Approaching strainers/lay downs/jetties/docks as an angler
 - d. Rescue philosophy for anglers
 - e. Demonstrate self-rescue with gear and tackle
 - f. Discuss the risks associated with the particular propensity of anglers to paddle in cold seasons, in the dark, and alone
 - g. Demonstrate and explain appropriate use of tethers and leashes and discuss entanglement hazards
 - h. Demonstrate setting anchor and anchor line safety
 - i. Use/wearing of waders: safety and rescue concerns when wearing waders, emphasizing the neutral buoyancy factors
 - j. Demonstrate neutral buoyancy in waders in still water



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Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Fishing Module: This module is appropriate for currently ACA certified instructors within the discipline of SUP. Instructors earning this endorsement must demonstrate their ability to explain, model, and teach the following:

1. Trip planning for SUP fishing:
 - a. Nautical charts, tide charts, river gauges, and topography for fishing
 - b. Weather, wind, waves, and surf reports for fishing
 - c. Fishing in familiar waters
 - d. Fishing in unfamiliar waters
2. Identify methods of rigging equipment on a SUP:
 - a. Identify tackle management methods
 - b. Identify rod holder types and placement
 - c. Identify paddle holder types and placement
 - d. Identify electronics and power management placement and concerns
3. Maneuvers:
 - a. Loading and launching/landing the SUP while loaded with gear
 - b. Move the SUP forward, turn it, move sideways, stop it, and reverse it, when SUP is loaded with fishing gear
 - c. Access fishing tackle and other fishing gear and equipment
 - d. Set anchor properly
4. Safety and rescue considerations for SUP fishing:
 - k. On-water hazards: boat traffic, wind, cold water, handling paddle and fishing rod in waves, tackle management in waves, etc
 - l. River/moving water hazards: handling paddle and fishing rod in current, tackle management in current, strainers, anchoring risks
 - m. Approaching strainers/lay downs/jetties/docks as an angler
 - n. Rescue philosophy for anglers
 - o. Demonstrate self-rescue with gear and tackle
 - p. Discuss the risks associated with the particular propensity of anglers to paddle in cold seasons, in the dark, and alone
 - q. Demonstrate and explain appropriate use of tethers and leashes and discuss entanglement hazards
 - r. Demonstrate setting anchor and anchor line safety
 - s. Use/wearing of waders: safety and rescue concerns when wearing waders, emphasizing the neutral buoyancy factors
 - t. Demonstrate neutral buoyancy in waders in still water