



## Welcome back to the ACA's Monthly Newsletter!

September 2022



**2022 ACA Annual Membership Meeting:** The ACA Board of Directors has confirmed the date of the Annual Membership Meeting for Sunday, October 30, 2022! This meeting will announce the 2022 ACA National Awards recipients, as well as discuss the ACA's strategic planning process, bylaw revisions, and the Board of Directors' nominees amongst other topics. The Annual Membership Meeting will begin at 2:00pm Eastern and conclude no later than 6:00pm Eastern. Additional details to come!

**Last call to join the next generation of ACA State Directors:** This Friday, September 30 is the final call to join your State Team. The ACA State Director Program is a group of volunteer ambassadors that work together with the ACA National Office to support paddlers in every state. As one of our amazing Instructors, Laura Zulliger, wisely said, "If you are reading this, you are the ACA – this is your organization, make it one that best serves you and your community." To join in the fun, follow [this link](#) to submit your ACA State Team Member Nomination form. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us at [bmayer@americancanoe.org](mailto:bmayer@americancanoe.org).

**2022 ACA National Awards:** Each year, the ACA presents a series of prestigious national awards to individuals and organizations who have illustrated exemplary leadership, service, and dedication to various aspects of paddlesports.

We are accepting nominations for the following award categories:

- Excellence in Instruction
- Sanctioned Event of the Year
- Green Paddle for Waterway Conservation
- Joe Pina Volunteer of the Year
- The J. Henry Rushton Award (for Organizational Excellence)
- Legends of Paddling Award
- Havens Leadership Award

Nominations for the 2022 ACA National Awards are due by Monday, October 24 and can be submitted [here](#).

**Updates from the First and Second LEAD Initiative Events:** This month we hosted our first and second Leadership Exploration and Development Initiative (LEAD) events, made possible through generous funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation! This initiative is designed to train, educate, and develop people of color, and to help participants transform their local communities and provide representation in paddlesports.

The first of our LEAD programs concluded earlier this month at ACA Camp at Lake Sebago in New York and was a huge success thanks to the students and leaders from Hudson River Riders and Yonkers Paddling and Rowing Club! We'd also like to give a special shout out to Chev Dixon, Phil Giller, and Instructor Trainer Ashley Brown for facilitating a high-quality workshop which empowered new and enthusiastic ACA kayaking instructors!

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum hosted our second LEAD event of the month, providing a beautiful venue for participants to paddle and connect. Our partners at REI donated staff time, equipment, and support to help make this event a success. Shout out to ACA DEI Coordinator Lily Otu and ITE Jeremy Oyen for facilitating a great learning environment for everyone involved.

We are excited to host two more LEAD events across the country this fall alongside REI in Los Angeles, California and Iowa Rivers Revival in Des Moines, Iowa. To check out photos and updates from these events, be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!



*Group photo from the ACA's first LEAD Initiative event that took place at Camp Sebago in New York.*

*Photo by: Gil Hidalgo*

**Whitewater Paddling Helmet Ratings:** A new study from the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab tested and rated twenty-four whitewater paddling helmets based on their ability to reduce linear and rotational acceleration of the head from a range of whitewater and paddlesport head impacts. Helmets were ranked upon a STAR evaluation system; those with more stars are better at preventing concussions than helmets with less stars. To ACA's knowledge, this independent study was the first effort of its kind. The results of the study provide paddlers with another resource to consider when choosing which helmet is best for them.

The inclusion of whitewater paddling helmets in scientific studies such as this one conducted by Virginia Tech is a testament to the increased representation of paddling in outdoor adventure sports. Since their 2011 study of varsity football helmets, the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab has conducted impact tests on a range of helmets for different sports including skiing, biking, and hockey. These independent studies are especially valuable because they do not receive funding or influence from helmet manufacturers.

To read more, please follow [this link](#) to the full article.





**Instructor of the Month:** Congratulations, Patrick Higgins, September's ACA Instructor of the Month! Patrick is currently a Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking Instructor Trainer, a Level 3: Packrafting Instructor Trainer, a Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Instructor Trainer, a Level 5: Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor, and a Level 4 Whitewater Stand Up Paddleboard Instructor! There isn't a body of water or type of boat that Patrick won't paddle, and since moving to Alaska, he has become especially passionate about teaching packrafting classes. To read more about how Patrick first got hooked on paddling, and about his work to improve the safety of paddlers in his community as packrafting in Alaska continues to grow in popularity, click [here](#).

If you know a truly awesome ACA instructor, follow [this link](#) to nominate them as future Instructor of the Month. Not only can your favorite instructor be featured in our newsletter and on the website, but they will receive a limited-edition ACA Instructor of the Month hat!



*ACA Instructor of the Month, Patrick Higgins*

**2022 Recreational Paddlers Instructor Contest – August Leaderboard:** The ACA Board of Directors, Safety Education & Instruction Department, and the ACA State Directors are proud to announce the current leaders of the [2022 Instructor Contest](#) (As of August 31, 2022). Please click [here](#) to see the contest's current standings.



**2022 ICF Junior and U23 Canoe Sprint World Championships:** Please join us in congratulating all the athletes who raced in Szeged, Hungary from August 31 to September 4 for the 2022 ICF Junior and U23 Canoe Sprint World Championships. As the racing concluded on Sunday, September 4, thirty different countries shared medals and our own Aaron Small and Jonas Ecker celebrated as U-23 Bronze Medalists for the K2 Men 500m event. More news from the event and results can be found on the ICF website linked [here](#).

**2022 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup:** The Senior ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup took place from September 2-4 in La Seu, Spain. To see the results and read more about this competitive weekend of racing, please click [here](#). Nice work to all athletes participating in this event!





*USA Canoe Slalom National Team Member, Kaelin Friedenson at the 2022 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup in La Seu, Spain.*

*Photo by: Nathaniel Francis - NF Films*

**2022 ICF Stand Up Paddling (SUP) World Championships:** September 7-11, Gdynia, Poland hosted the 2022 ICF SUP World Championships. Connor Baxter took home two world titles this weekend for the Men's SUP Sprint Open and the Men's Technical events. April Zilg, the ACA's first Instructor of the Month, won gold in the Women's SUP Sprint Open on her birthday, September 8! Well done to all athletes who competed! To read the headlines and to see the results from this event, click [here](#).

**2022 Olympic Hopes Regatta:** Bratislava, Slovakia hosted the Olympic Hopes Regatta, a premier international event for athletes U15, U16, and U17. The Olympic Hopes Regatta was held September 8-11 and serves as a step towards Junior Worlds and beyond for young Sprint Canoe and Kayak athletes. Congratulations to all athletes who attended! Please follow [this link](#) to see the results from this long weekend of racing.

**ICF Canoe Freestyle World Cup:** October 3-9, Columbus, Georgia will be hosting two ICF Canoe Freestyle World Cups on the Chattahoochee River and its two-mile long whitewater park! The same venue will also host the ICF Canoe Freestyle World Championships next year on October 9-14, 2023. To view the schedule and spectator information for the fast-approaching ICF Canoe Freestyle World Cup, please click [here](#).



**The STREAM Act:** The EPA has identified acid mine drainage from abandoned coal mines as the number one water quality problem in Appalachia. Acid mine drainage from abandoned coal mines is the most severe and pervasive water pollution problem threatening western Maryland, West Virginia, and northern, central, and western Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania alone, 1.4 million people live within one mile of an abandoned mine site and drainage from abandoned coal mines. This poses a significant threat to water quality in the Susquehanna River Watershed which is the largest watershed in the United States that drains into the Atlantic Ocean, and the largest east of the Mississippi. The Susquehanna drainage basin is over 27,500 square miles and flows through New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

The ACA has signed on in support of the STREAM Act, that would allow states and tribes to determine how they will use abandoned mine funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to treat acid mine drainage from mines. To learn more about the harmful effects of acid mine drainage, click [here](#).



*The above image shows acid mine drainage from an abandoned coal mine, the number one water quality problem in Appalachia.*

**ACA Lifetime Member Feature – Gregory Pasternack:** Gregory joined ACA as a teenager in the 1980s and is a former ACA instructor who has gone on to devote much of his life to rivers. After earning BA, MS and PhD degrees in various types of geoscience and water resources engineering, Gregory transitioned to a career as a professor at the University of California at Davis. In his career, he has written over 125 scientific journal articles presenting fundamental discoveries about how rivers and wetlands work, led the design of several novel river "rehabilitation" projects in California, and developed frameworks for how to do science-based river rehabilitation. As a professor, he has cascading impacts throughout the river management community.

Crediting his early training and experience as a whitewater kayaker, Gregory has been able to conduct unconventional studies into mountain rivers and waterfalls that nobody else has ever attempted. He has mapped remote mountain river reaches and then used the detailed maps in advanced numerical modeling and vector math to produce novel maps of whitewater hazard at one-meter resolution. This is a fundamental overhaul of the classic river danger scale of I-VI that really shows what discharges and locations are what level of hazard. It does this hazard by hazard using a decision tree that he invented to address several individual hazards.



"I have tried to do my part to be a force for good, especially for river stewardship. And of course, I do still get to head onto the river from time to time. Currently, I am helping a graduate student map cottonwood seedling on the lower Yuba River, which requires us to "suffer" through paddling the beautiful river." Way to go, Gregory! Thank you for all of the time and effort that you have dedicated to the protection of California's rivers and streams.



*Gregory Pasternack and his students on the lower Yuba River, working on a project to map cottonwood seedlings.*

Thank you for reading our monthly newsletter! You can find the latest stories and updates from the ACA at <https://americancanoe.org/>.

Have some news to share? Please click here to submit content for consideration.

Sincerely,

ACA National Office Staff

ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft -  
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