

ACA Board Chair Report to SEIC

December 3, 2022

Agenda

- Background information – boating accidents and deaths
- Implications for ACA
- Solutions

Paddlecraft vs. Human Propelled Craft

- Paddlecraft include canoes, kayaks and SUPs
- Human propelled craft include paddlecraft, rowboats and inflatables
- That's an important difference
 - Canoes, kayak and SUPs are relatively unstable, low freeboard, single occupant craft
 - Rowboats are relatively stable craft, used in conditions different than paddlecraft
 - Inflatables are their own breed
 - Most people want to make their argument more powerful. Pay attention when people talk about "paddlecraft" because they sometimes mean human propelled craft

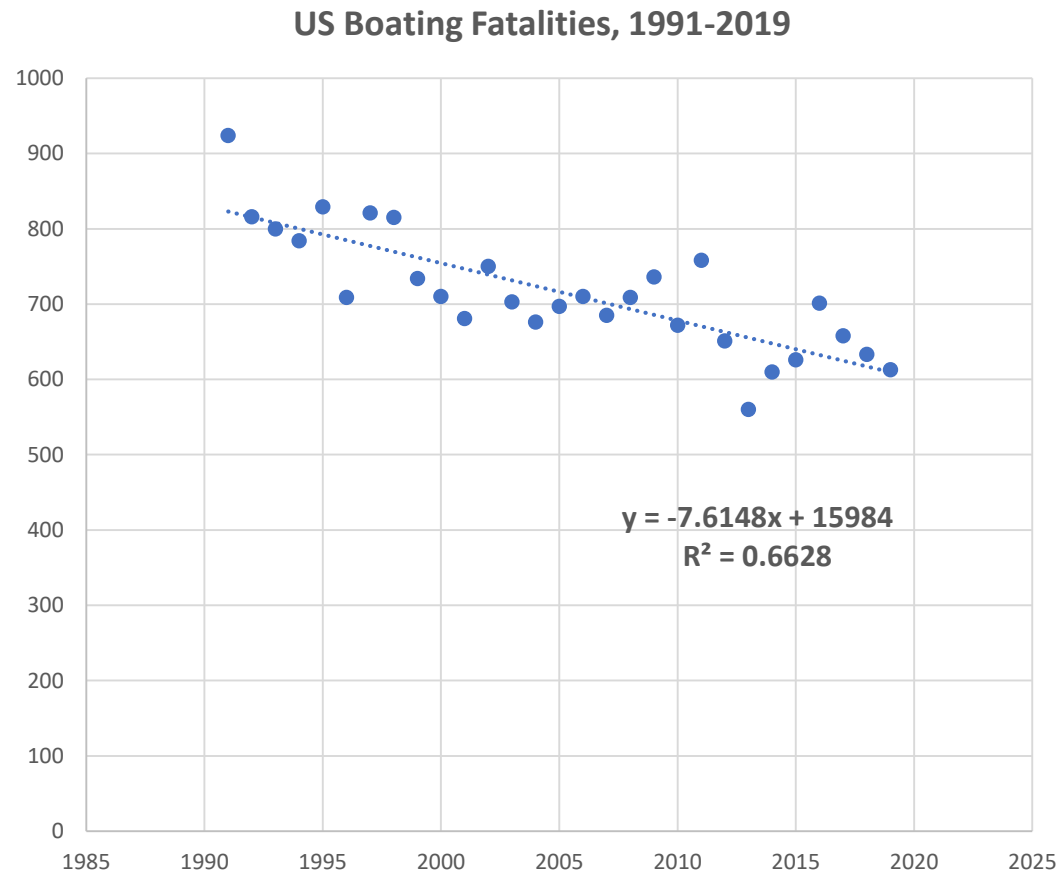
How many people paddle in the US?

- 2018: National Recreational Boating Safety Survey
 - 84.5 million boaters
 - 33 million paddlers (canoe, kayak, SUP) – 39% of total
- Outdoor Foundation
 - 2010 – 23.1 million combined canoe, kayak and SUP (true number is less)
 - 2020 – 34.4 million
- Participation in canoe, kayak and SUP is growing by at least half a million, and probably closer to a million, people each year

How many registered vessels are in the US?

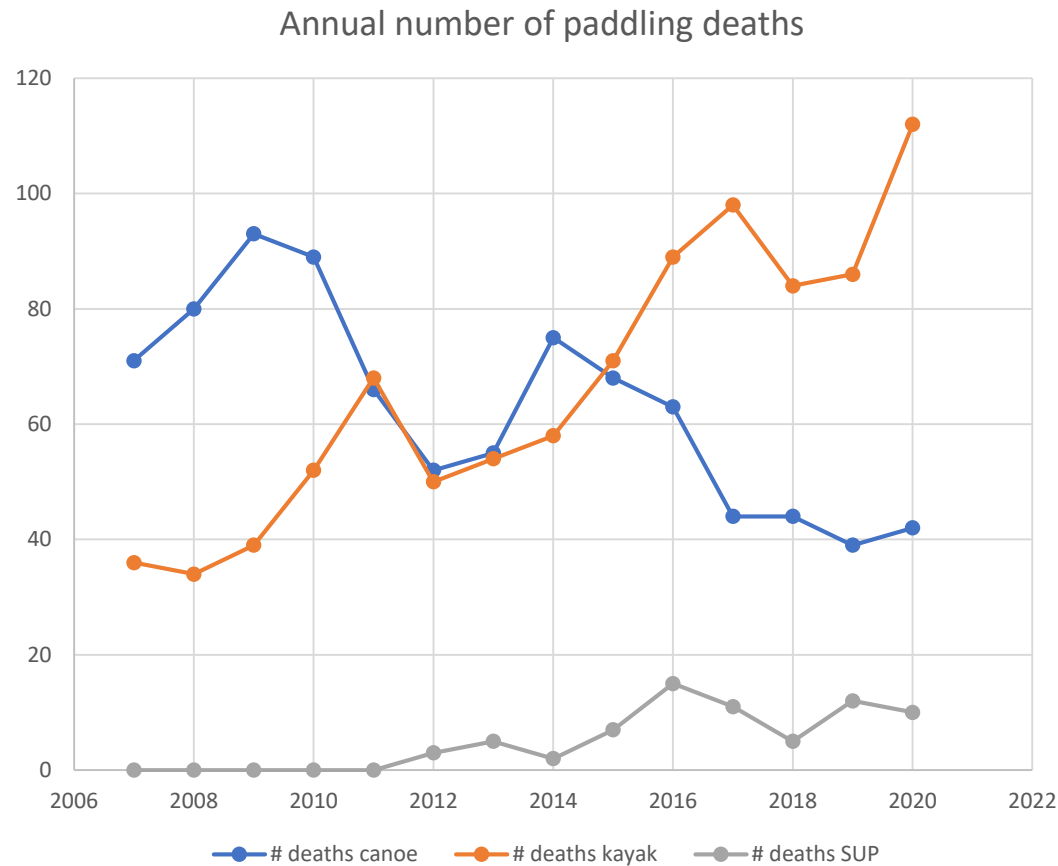
- 2000
 - Registered: 12,782,143
 - Registered, motorized: 11,648,769
- 2019
 - Registered: 11,878,542
 - Registered, motorized: 11,052,684
- Typically, 3+ people associated with a registered vessel
- Trend of decreasing participation up to 2019
- 2020 showed growth in all outdoor activities, but headed back to baseline in 2021

Annual US Boating Deaths



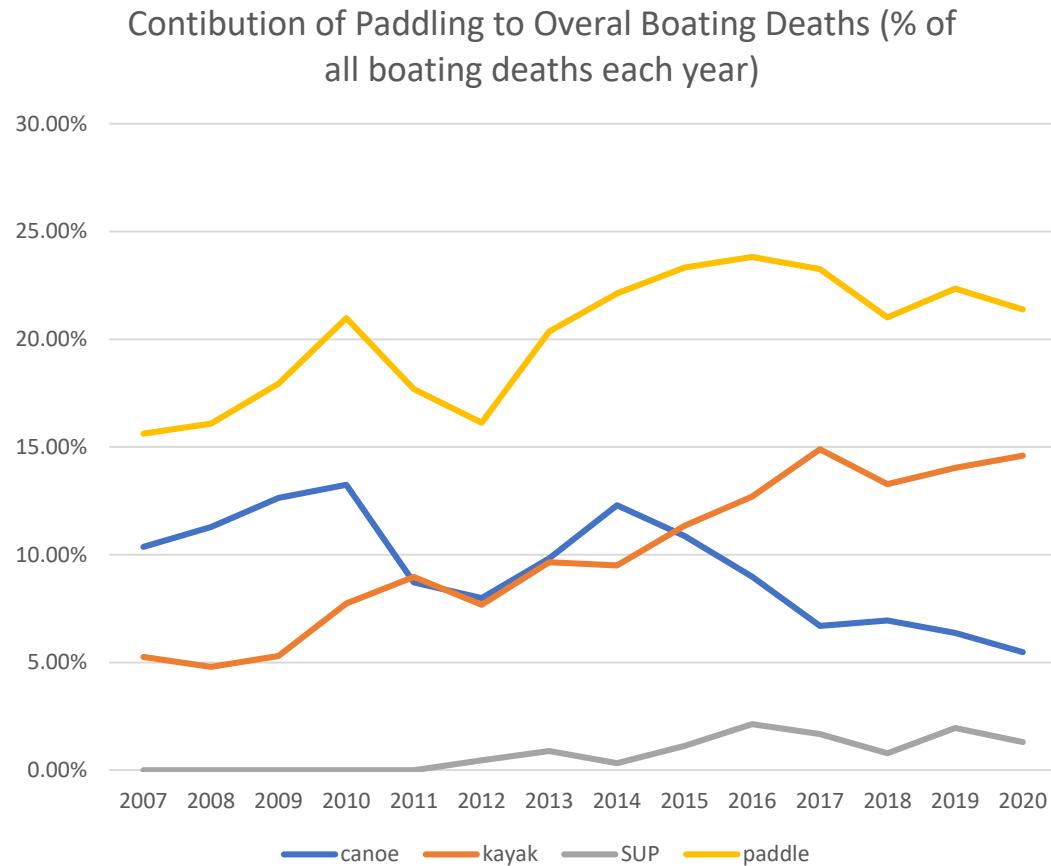
- Steady decline in boating fatalities from 1991 to present

Annual Paddling Deaths



- Canoe – blue
- Kayak – red
 - Increase in kayaking deaths slightly greater than the decrease in canoe deaths
- SUP - grey

Annual Paddling Deaths



- All paddlecraft – yellow
- Canoe – red
- Kayak – blue
- SUP – grey
- General trend that paddling deaths are steadily increasing, although arguably steady the past 5+ years

Vessels Involved in Boating Deaths (2010-2019)

- Total deaths: 6482
- Open motorboat (#1): 3051 (47.1%)
 - 67.8% due to drowning
- Kayak (#2): 706 (10.9%)
 - 83.4% due to drowning
- Canoe (#3): 595 (9.2%)
 - 90.4% due to drowning
- Mandatory education is widespread for motorized vessels – there's a huge powerboat education industry, nearly all classroom or online
- Most deaths occur when the vessel operator has no boating education

Causes and Contributing Factors for Boating Accidents

- Most reported paddling accidents are fatal
- Most common accident types are falling overboard and capsizing
- Most common contributing factors are hazardous waters and inexperience
- In contrast, powerboat accidents are non-fatal collisions that occur due to improper lookout and inattention
- For powerboats, the most common fatal accidents are falling overboard and capsizing

Implications for ACA and the Paddling Community

- Paddling fatalities are slowly increasing, at a time when paddling participation is growing and other types of boating participation are steady or decreasing
- There's a huge powerboat education industry and lobby
- Powerboating accidents aren't paddling accidents – powerboat education won't solve paddling accidents

Implications for ACA and the Paddling Community

- Paddling services paid for, in part, by the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund – a “user pay, user benefit” program
- Paddlers generally do not pay into the trust fund, and don’t have a mechanism to do so
- Data from Virginia shows considerable costs associated with paddler rescue
- Cost, increasing participation (leading to resource use and multi-user conflict), and increasing fatalities all put a target on paddlers

Implications for ACA and the Paddling Community

- Potential for:
 - Mandatory life jacket wear
 - Mandatory education
 - Hull registration
 - Waterway access fees
 - State paddling licenses
 - Excise tax on paddling equipment, going to the Trust Fund
- All of these are being discussed at the State and Federal level
- One or more almost certainly will happen – it's a matter of when, not if

Moving Forward

- 30+ million US paddlers
- 15,000 worldwide ACA members
- ACA's membership is a rounding error in the number of total US paddlers – we need allies
- It's easy to think “us” vs. “them”. We need to think “WE” are paddlers, and “WE” are waterway users. The more of “US” there are, the better we can ensure WE have access and the more likely WE are engaged in discussions that impact OUR future

Moving Forward – Current Partnerships

- USCG Auxiliary – 25,000ish people focused on boating safety
 - AUXPAD program – Auxiliary personnel certified through ACA program
 - Current leadership team are all ACA instructors
 - I was recently promoted to Deputy Director for Recreational Boating Safety Outreach, because I'm an instructor
 - Senior leadership strongly supports program
 - Goal to provide education to the public and to non-paddling Auxiliary members

Moving Forward – Current Partnerships

- Sea Scouts – young men and women, age 14-21
 - MOU with ACA
 - Strong desire to increase paddling opportunities
 - Recently updated training requirements, allowing advancement to their highest rank (Quartermaster) only using paddlecraft
- Boy Scouts
 - Kayaking and canoeing are popular merit badges
 - ACA instructors wrote kayaking, canoeing and whitewater merit badges
- Scouts have a strong need for, and interest in, ACA training

Moving Forward – New Opportunities

- State Directors and Regional Activity Council
 - Opportunity to create regional partnerships and relationships
 - Opportunity to connect instructors with groups you might not have worked with – including Auxiliary members and Scouts
 - Opportunity to sponsor regional paddling schools and other regional events
- What can you do?
 - Reach out to groups like Scouts and the Auxiliary; respond if they reach out to you
 - Get to know your local Fish and Wildlife officers, and your State Boating Law Administrator
 - Build relationships, and let others know when issues arise that need help or support

Take Homes

- Paddling is growing – and so are paddling accidents and deaths
- Paddling is not powerboating – we need to be at the table to ensure paddling education is appropriate education
- Regulation of some kind is in widespread discussion – we need to be at the table to ensure it's appropriate and effective
- Please strive to build relationships and create allies