



Welcome back to the ACA's Monthly Newsletter!

November 2022



Please support the ACA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Fund: The holidays are upon us! If paddlesports have made a difference in your life, pay it forward. We have made it easy to make a difference by contributing to the ACA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Fund. Your donation will help us sustain and expand our Leadership Exploration and Development (LEAD) programming. ACA LEAD events provide paddling and leadership training to people of color to make paddling more accessible within their communities. Want to learn more about these impactful events? Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for continued updates and read about the 2022 programs, [here](#).

The ACA is committed to removing barriers to participation and to increasing representation for people of color within paddlesports. We are counting on you, our membership, to help us continue this important work. Protect this valuable program and please donate to our DEI Program Fund!

All donations are tax deductible and can be made through our Facebook and Instagram pages linked above, or through the ACA Website, linked [here](#).



Annual Awards Recipients: 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. The awards being given in 2022 include Excellence in Instruction, Sanctioned Event of the Year, Joe Pina Volunteer of the Year, the Havens Leadership Award, and two separate Legends of Paddling. This year's award recipients are listed below, please join us in celebrating each of them and their contributions to paddlesports and the paddling community. To read more about each recipient, click on their award or name.

[Excellence in Instruction - Trey Rouss](#)

[Sanctioned Event of the Year - The Green River Takeover](#)

[The Joe Pena Volunteer of the Year - The Paddlesport Angling Workgroup & Advisory Board](#)

[Havens Leadership Award - Drew Story](#)

[Legends of Paddling - Bob & Elaine Mravetz](#)

[Legends of Paddling - Robin Pope](#)

Annual Membership Meeting: The 2022 Annual Membership Meeting took place at the end of October. If you were unable to attend this meeting and announcements of the Annual Awards recipients and the instructor contest winners, you can find a recording of this meeting on our YouTube Channel, linked [here](#). This meeting also covered some of the year's highlights, and more information on the proposed bylaws changes, a budget presentation and some major initiatives that are underway.

L.L.Bean Club Fostered Community Grant: We are excited to share about projects we supported with the 2022 L.L.Bean Club Fostered Community Grant. Funding from this grant is used to amplify diversity and inclusion efforts of existing groups and projects through education, stewardship, competition, recreation, and waterway exploration events. To read more about each of the seven organizations and their projects, and see photos of the programs and events, click [here](#).



A photo from Brooklyn Bridge Boathouse, one of the organizations that received funds from the L.L.Bean grant for their project, "Kids and Family Paddle Program and Community Outreach"

SUP to fight Gender-Based Violence: ACA member Nourhan Refaat, an Egyptian, Stand-Up Paddle (SUP) athlete uses her sport to empower women who live in countries where gender-based violence is prevalent. Growing up in Cairo, Nour saw firsthand that educational, professional, and physical activities are limited or not accessible to women. This lack of access has ignited her dedication to focus on empowerment and education for women to increase gender equality in Egypt.

"My goal is to become a positive role model for Egyptian women by bringing awareness to the issues of gender-based violence in the world and making SUP available and accessible to all as a way of redefining gender values and practices. I am currently training in San Francisco for the 2022 ISA SUP World Championships to be the first Egyptian participating in Stand-Up Paddle competition on the world's stage." - Nourhan Refaat

The San Francisco SUP community has rallied behind Nourhan to support her and her mission. She is currently training to be the first Egyptian to race at the world level.



Nourhan Refaat racing on the first day of the 2022 ISA World SUP and Paddleboard Championships in Puerto Rico

“Water is Life” Presentation: This November, we want to highlight indigenous voices. Silvermoon Mars LaRose, a member of the Narragansett Tribe, delivered a presentation to help the ACA community learn more about the cultural significance of water and the Indigenous led movement to protect water and access to it. Fresh water is a precious resource that sustains life. This resource is being threatened, and as a result, access to water is becoming increasingly more restricted. Native communities are very active in social justice and advocacy efforts to protect water. Native led movements help protect water ways from the threats of oil pipelines, pollution, overfishing, climate change, overdevelopment, and erosion. In her presentation, Silvermoon also spoke about some indigenous methods of crafting Dugout Canoes and Birchbark Canoes. She also gave us some insight into how it felt to paddle these crafts and their importance to her people. We are so grateful for Silvermoon sharing her time and experience with us. We loved seeing ACA’s members in attendance, if you were unable to attend this event, we hope to see you at the next one!



Instructor Trainer Educator Conference: November 11-13, the ACA’s Instructor Trainer Educators (ITEs) came together for a conference in Denver, Colorado to identify and tackle some of the barriers to delivering consistent, and excellent instruction in paddlesports.

During this 3-day workshop, our ITE’s practiced vulnerability, courage, self-awareness, and freedom within the framework. Guided by two wonderful facilitators, Erika and April, the

thoughtful reflection by our very experienced and knowledgeable ITE's, was transformed into a path for valuable change, growth, and sustainability within paddlesports instruction.

A special shout-out to the leadership team who organized this event, Trey Rouss, Anna Levesque, Dale Williams, and Laura Zulliger! The ACA is really excited to see how the learning and collaboration that came out of this conference impacts paddlers around the world! Thank you all for your willingness to do the hard work for the benefit of paddlers everywhere.



ITE Conference attendees in Denver, Colorado

Instructor of the Month: Please join us in celebrating Mike Wang, ACA Instructor of the Month for November 2022! Mike has been an ACA instructor for 8 years, primarily teaching SUP. As the owner operator of Mike's Paddle, he has taught hundreds of students how to paddle, some of whom are now certified instructors. As an Instructor Trainer for the ACA, Mike trains instructors for Level 1, 2, 3 Surf and Coastal SUP. Though he mostly teaches at his shop, Mike's Paddle in Alameda, California, he often travels to Northern and Southern California for instructor trainings on rivers, bays, and on the Pacific Ocean. Mike and his local paddling friends also created the first SUP club (under ACA Paddle America Club) called Ohana Paddle Club.

What motivates Mike as an instructor for ACA is the Ohana spirit in the paddling community; taking care of each other on the water, having fun, and being safe. "Regardless of the technical aspect of paddling, what makes it worth it are the people that I have met, taught and paddled with together. Our community is strong and thriving. I have made life-long friends through paddling and am still stoked that I get to make a living from my

passion.” Yes, Mike! We, at the ACA, couldn’t agree more. To read mikes whole Instructor of the Month profile, please 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!



Instructor of the Month, Mike Wang swapping out the SUP for a kayak!

2022 Recreational Instructor Contest Winners: The ACA Board of Directors, Safety Education & Instruction Department, and the ACA State Directors are proud to announce the final winners of the [2022 Recreational Paddlers Instructor Contest](#). The contest was initiated to inspire and encourage ACA instructors to conduct courses and introduce more new paddlers to safe and enjoyable paddling! This was a chance for instructors to engage with their local paddling community, find or create a source of new course students, and earn some prizes along the way! Congratulations to all instructors who received a prize and thank you to all our instructors for their dedication and commitment to excellence in instruction!

The Award Winners of each contest category can be found on the ACA website, link [here](#).



World Waveski Surfing Titles: This year, Ventura, California hosted the World Waveski Surfing Titles, hosted by the United States Waveski Association. This event took place November 7-13. Just north of Los Angeles, the world’s best waveski surfers came together

for an exciting competition that combines the paddle power of a sit-on-top kayak with the maneuverability and performance of a surfboard. Chris Oberle of the United States became the Open Adaptive World Title. Also from the U.S. is Jeff Munson, who was honored with the Best Wipeout! Well done to all athletes who competed in the 2022 World Waveski Surfing Titles! If you would like to see more results and read more about this event, check out the United States Waveski Association Facebook Page, linked [here](#).

Stewardship & Public Policy

The world's largest dam removal project in history has been approved: At the start of the new year, work will begin to remove four dams along the Klamath River, setting free the well-loved, and well-paddled whitewater river on the West Coast. For paddlers, this means 250 continuous miles of boating. Ending at the Pacific Ocean, this will become one of the longer multi-day river trips in the United States. All four dams are scheduled to be removed by the end of 2024, and then will begin the long-term restoration work.

Scott Harding of American Whitewater writes, “The dams have blocked salmon from the upper half of the Klamath’s vast watershed for over 100 years and have impacted water quality on over 200 miles of river, all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Removal of the dams is essential to restoring the river’s health, improving its ailing fishery, and addressing the injustices that the dams have caused the people of multiple Tribes that depend upon a healthy river and its fisheries for their sustenance and cultural identity.” Thank you, to the Native American Tribes, conservation groups, commercial fishing groups, water users, community members, and PacifiCorp for the twenty-six years of advocacy and research that have laid the foundation for this historic success!



Photo from American Whitewater, [“Federal Regulators Approve Removal of Four Klamath River Dams!”](#)

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

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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