



To accompany your morning cup of coffee, the ACA National Office is serving up the latest paddlesports news! To navigate our new monthly membership newsletter format and to help you find the content that matters to you most, use the guide below.

- Check out "Forward Strokes" for local and national stewardship and public policy updates from ACA Policy Director, Brett Mayer. Here you can also find opportunities to get involved in protecting the waterways that you love to paddle.
- Why is it so great to be an ACA member? Each month we will share some of these reasons under "Making Waves".
- "Going for the Gold" is the place to keep up with athletes, competition results, and upcoming events, no matter what your discipline.
- Don't miss a beat on curriculum updates, new course offerings, and Pro School shoutouts! Head to "Safety Talk" and stay in the loop!



**ACA Policy Advisory Board:** The ACA recently formed a Policy Advisory Board that consists of key board members and staff. Our recent by-law changes affect how the ACA can do policy work, and the creation of the Regions and Affiliated Clubs (RAC) Council offers a powerful tool that supports grassroots activism on state and regional levels.

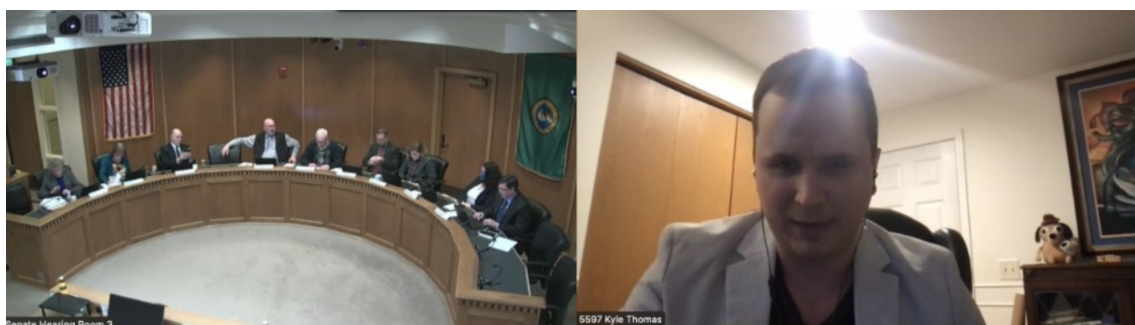
The ACA's primary focus is paddlesports regulation. Examples include laws that might pertain to mandated education requirements for paddlers, paddlecraft registration, and access issues. The Policy Advisory Board is tasked with developing key policy positions. These positions will serve as starting points for conversations in different states because each state does things a little differently.

Most importantly, the ACA needs participation from its membership. Members are key to our policy efforts. We want to empower local leaders with the tools they need to speak out as individual citizens that represent a coalition of statewide paddling stakeholders. Joining this community is one of the greatest inherent values of joining the ACA.

If you have an issue warranting the attention of the paddling community, we encourage you to contact your [State Director or Regional Representative](#) - they would love to collaborate with you!

**Washington State Mandated Education:** The Washington State legislature considered two companion bills in the House and the Senate, HB 1781 and SB 5597. These bills called for mandated paddlesports education that would have required every paddler to take a course and pay a ten-dollar fee for a card. Efforts at increased regulation can be problematic for the paddling community for a wide variety of reasons, but when it comes down to it, our key concern is legislation that is pushed upon the paddling community without the paddling community being a key part of the process to develop solutions. The bills as proposed created potential barriers to access for lower income paddling groups, took a one size fits all approach to education, did not direct portions of net revenues back to the paddling community, and did not create a way for paddlers to have input in the regulatory process.

We want to take the time to thank key volunteers in Washington State that testified in front of the House and Senate Committees, Brent Roth, Kyle Thomas, and Megan Kelly. Their leadership was vital in representing the views of a coalition of paddling stakeholders in Washington State. The local perspective is vital to navigating policy issues and finding success. Thankfully, both bills did not make it out of Committee. Moving forward, we fully expect these kinds of legislative moves to present themselves in more and more states. Through working together, we can be prepared.



*Kyle Thomas testifying via zoom in front of the Washington State Legislature to express key concerns with Senate Bill 5597 as it was drafted.*

**Tennessee Trotlines:** On the other side of the country, the Tennessee State Legislature is considering a bill on trotline fishing. These lines are set by fishermen and can stretch from bank to bank creating life threatening hazards for paddlers. Over a year ago, during an ACA course, a member was snagged on a line, and the line was cut. The incident involved law enforcement and was eventually elevated to a proposed change to the law in Tennessee. The current law allows lines to be set bank to bank. The new law requires lines be set parallel to the bank and creates legal grounds for cutting a line if there is a real hazard for paddlers.

Andrea White (RAC Chair), Hunter Branstetter (board member), and Mark Moses (ACA Member) will testify in Committee this week, another great example of the importance of creating strong grassroots collaboration to make progress at the local and regional levels.

In addition, Tennessee whitewater paddlers worked hard to position legislation declaring North Chickamauga Creek a National State Scenic River. We are supportive and appreciative of their efforts, and proud to offer our support.

**Action Alert:** "Right now, some House members are looking to repeal the Waters of the U.S. rule (WOTUS), which protects clean water for all Americans. This rule, which was just recently finalized, protects the public's right to clean water, not only to recreate in, but also to drink and produce goods. It is not in need of repeal. Paddlers, boaters, and swimmers in particular know that even intermittent streams all flow downstream into the rivers that provide clean water for everyone. Congress frequently needs a reminder from the public about the importance of clean water." - Outdoor Alliance

It is extremely important that we take this time to contact our representatives and tell them that we are opposed to this attack on our country's waters. Our partners at Outdoor Alliance and American Whitewater have made it simple to make your voice heard and contact your representatives with this [easy action form](#).



*Protect our waters from having their already limited protections further stripped and reach out to your representatives today!*



**ExpertVoice:** ACA Members are eligible to receive deep discounts on outdoor products through ExpertVoice! Amongst the many other wonderful discounts, you can save hundreds of dollars on Kokopelli Packrafts, or get an Aqua-Bound paddle for 50% off! Go to ExpertVoice to fill out the [ACA Application](#) and then search for your favorite brands!



# ExpertVoice

**Thinking it is time to upgrade your old gear or itching try out a new craft?**

- Discounts are not limited to paddling, but include anything you could want to enjoy time outside!
- For the next 12 weeks, ExpertVoice will be featuring one brand a week and offering deep discounts on a handful of their most popular products!




Up to 50% off Aqua-Bound




30% off Kokopelli




Up to 30% off Red Paddle Co.

**Need more reasons to join?**

ACA Members have access to hundreds of industry discounts through our partners at ExpertVoice!



**www.expertvoice.com**

**ACA Members deserve the best and ExpertVoice can help you afford it!**

**Insurance Clarification:** We are concerned about the misinformation circulating regarding ACA's insurance offerings. We want to be very clear that:

- Races, events, and instructional courses held on Class IV whitewater are still covered by our current policy
- We do offer insurance coverage for open water coastal events including our Level 5: Advanced Open Water Coastal Kayaking instructional venues

Please read [the full statement](#) from ACA Executive Director, Beth Spillman for more information.

**Amazon Canoe Challenge:** We are excited to share that ACA Members can participate in this once in lifetime adventure for \$250 off the team price! "The Amazon Canoe Challenge is a unique opportunity for adventure-seekers to experience the beauty of the Amazon while also giving back to the communities who call it home," said Carlos Heine, Race Director of the Amazon Canoe Challenge.

More information on the Amazon Canoe Challenge and on how you can create a positive impact through your participation is available on the ACA website in the featured news article, ["2023 Amazon Canoe Challenge – Incredible Opportunity and Special Offer for ACA Members!"](#).





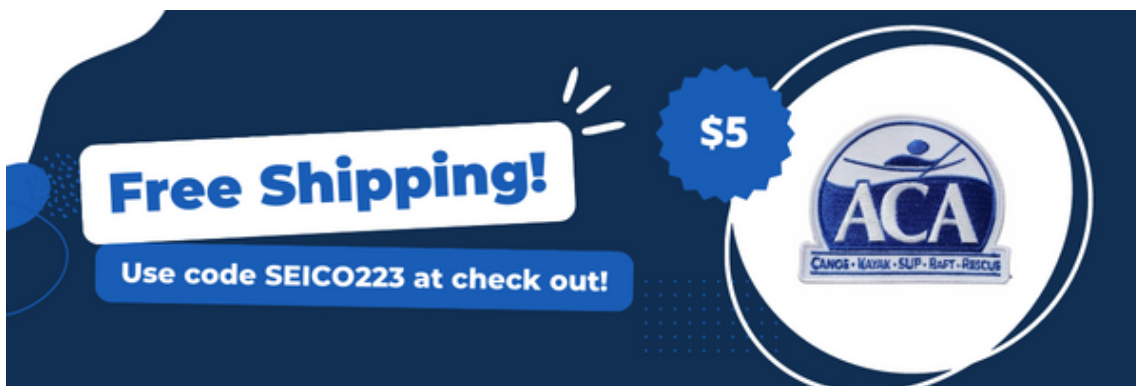
Register today for the [Amazon Canoe Challenge](#)!

**Regions and Affiliate Clubs (RAC) Council Election Results:** Please welcome and congratulate our new State Directors and Regional Representatives who will be representing the ACA membership at the local level!

The RAC aims to increase the effectiveness of the ACA at the grassroots level by:

- Facilitating communication between paddlers and the ACA National Office
- Fostering community responsibility in protecting and preserving paddling environments
- Assisting others with acquiring the necessary skills to safely enjoy local waterways
- Promoting paddlesport competition at the local and state level

To see who is representing your State and Region, please go to the [Regions and Affiliate Clubs \(RAC\) Council](#) page on our website!



Head to the [ACA e-store](#) and get your patch today!

## BRINGING HOME THE GOLD

Competition Highlights

**Penrith Open:** U.S.A Slalom Team had a great weekend racing at the 2023 Penrith Open world ranking race in Australia! Team member Josh Joseph won the men's Kayak Cross, dominating the field in his first international kayak cross competition! Kyler Long also had an outstanding performance finishing fourth overall for men's Kayak Cross. Evy Leibfarth placed third overall and earned a bronze medal in the women's Kayak Cross competition! But that isn't Evy's only medal from the weekend. She also placed 2nd in WC1 class and 5th in WK1 class! Strong work to everyone who competed last weekend!



*Evy Leibfarth competing at the Penrith Open.*

*Image Credit: JGR Images*

**Sprint Team Selection Criteria:** Information about Sprint National Team Selection for the World Cups, the World Championships, and the 2024 Olympic National Team is available on the [Sprint Page](#) of the ACA Website. Big shout-out to Steve Kelly for all the work he put in to get these procedures updated and available to the public!

**Celebrating the Life of Roland Muhlen:** In collaboration with many sprint canoe paddlers from the late 1900s and early 2000s Jim Ross wrote a thoughtful passage of remembrance, celebrating the life of Roland Muhlen titled ["Roland Memories"](#). For those who didn't have the honor of knowing or racing with Roland, he raced flatwater canoe doubles at the 1972 and 1976 Olympics with Andreas Weigand. Roland was still competing into the 2000s, and won 26 national titles at various stages, including the 2006 C-2 masters mixed event with his wife, Linda. Please join us in taking a moment out of your day to celebrate the life and long paddling career of Roland Muhlen!





**Hudson River Riders - Dispatches:** Take a break with Outside Online's joyful and inspirational [video feature](#) about ACA Instructor, Chev Dixon, and his work with the Hudson River Riders Program.

"Chev Dixon's grit, determination, and passion for the sport of kayaking are creating positive change and providing access for a diverse group of young people traditionally underserved in the outdoors community... Finally, a report highlighting "the power of the outdoors" and the impact nature can provide - even in a city like New York." - Outside Online



*Watch Chev Dixon's well deserved and highly engaging video feature on Outside Online!*

**Pro School Feature:** Who else is ready for paddling season and warm weather? The forecast in Pucón, Chile is 70 degrees and sunny. One of our wonderful Pro Schools, Escuela de Kayak has an upcoming coming Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring Trip Leader at Lago Caburgua, Pucón, March 29-31. Follow [Escuela de Kayak](#) on Instagram for regular updates on top-notch instructional opportunities in South America!



## Save the Date!

### 2023 Swiftwater Rescue Conference

Sept. 29 - Oct. 1  
The Summit Bechtel Reserve  
Glen Jean, West Virginia  
Registration coming soon!

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

Have some news to share? [Send us your content for consideration!](#)

Sincerely,

Kaycee Maas, Communications Coordinator

ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue

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