



Dear @@first_name@@,

To accompany your morning cup of coffee, the ACA National Office is serving up the latest paddlesports news! To find the content that matters to you most, use the guide below.

- Check out "Forward Strokes" for local and national policy updates that affect paddlers and ways that you can get involved in protecting the waterways that you love to paddle.
- There are a lot of opportunities for ACA members! Highlights including community events and an announcement for our Summer Solstice Celebration Essay & Photo Contest (with big prizes) can be found under "Making Waves".
- Find out who will be representing the United States internationally in Sprint, Para, Slalom, and Kayak Cross by reading, "Bringing Home the Gold".
- Don't miss a beat on curriculum updates, new course offerings, and Instructor of the Month announcements! Head to "Safety Talk" and stay in the loop!



A new rule went into effect on April 2, mandating life jacket wear for all paddlecraft users in Rhode Island. Similar policies are likely to take hold on other states in response to recent paddling fatalities that could have been prevented if the victim had been wearing a life jacket. The ACA Policy Advisory Board will continue to keep the paddling community updated and connected on policy issues impacting paddlesports regulation.

In the meantime, stay safe, have fun, and remind your friends how good they look in their PFD! For more information, see the full [press release](#) from RI.gov.

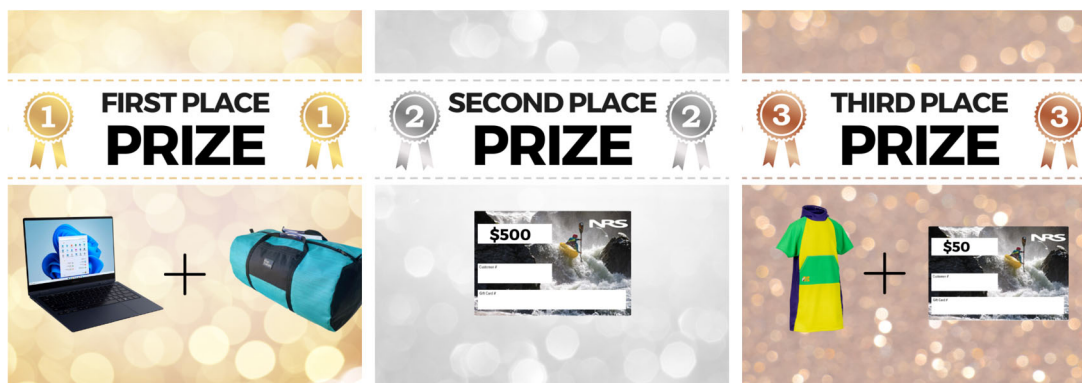


We are thrilled to announce the inaugural ACA Summer Solstice Celebration! This will incorporate both in-person community events and an Essay & Photo contest with prizes that you won't want to miss! This will be both an opportunity to connect with your community on the longest days of the year and a time to reflect on what draws us to the water.

For your chance to win the amazing prizes pictured below and to be published on the ACA Website, submit a short (max. 750 word) essay and photo about why you choose to spend the

longest days of the year on the water, paddling. We will be accepting essay & photo submissions through June 30!

For more information, head over to the [Summer Solstice Celebration](#) page on the ACA website! A special thank you to our contest sponsors, [River Station Gear](#) and [Immersion Research](#)!



Kayaking 101 Courses, State Parks, and National Safe Boating Week! On May 20, 2023, Kayaking 101 courses will be taught at 24 state parks across Tennessee and North Carolina as part of National Safe Boating Week! ACA Instructors will be teaching these classes for a discounted rate of only \$15 per student. There is even an option to rent a kayak, paddle, and life jacket for no additional cost. Be sure to tell your friends in Tennessee and North Carolina who are new to paddling or are interested in trying it for the first time about this incredible opportunity!

For a list of the parks where these events will be hosted, to sign-up, and for more details about all the hard work and collaboration that made these events possible, read the [“Kayaking 101 Courses Taught in 24 State Parks in Tennessee and North Carolina as part of National Safe Boating Week”](#) news article posted on the ACA Website!

The ACA is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 L.L.Bean Club Fostered Community (CFC) Grant program! Each of the organizations listed below have shown dedication to increasing accessibility and equitable paddling opportunities for their communities. We look forward to witnessing and sharing the success of these organizations and programs. Stay tuned for their lessons and examples that you can bring back into your community.

- [Diversify Whitewater](#)
- [Hudson River Riders](#)
- [La Raza Explorers](#)
- [Pride Day on the River](#)
- [Team River Runner](#)



The Senior, U23, and Junior National Teams for Canoe Slalom and Kayak Cross have been selected after three impressive days of racing at the USA Canoe Slalom National Team Selections at RIVERSPORT, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma! This announcement comes to you as a

culmination of thousands of hours of hard work and dedication by athletes, coaches, volunteers, and supporters. These athletes will be representing the United States in international competitions throughout the 2023 race season. Please join us in congratulating these athletes on their remarkable accomplishments in paddling! Read the [2023 USA Canoe/Kayak Slalom and Kayak Cross National Team Announcement](#) to see who is on the team!

Kayak Cross will be one of the most exciting additions to the Paris 2024 Olympics. "Because this sport is so new, our athletes have had to learn new training tactics and equipment. While most of our US National Kayak Cross Team also compete in traditional canoe slalom, it means a lot to race in this new event as well. I'm excited to see our new National Kayak Cross Team, which includes two former Junior World Kayak Cross Champions, hit the 2023 international circuit." - Lee Leibfarth, Coach

If you haven't seen paddlers compete in a Kayak Cross event, or aren't quite sure what it is, check out some of the footage from last year's [ICF Canoe/Kayak Slalom World Cup](#) in Prague!



Image Credit: Bryan Pearson / Athlete: Laura Plata

Congratulations to all the athletes who have been selected for the USA Sprint Canoe & Kayak Teams to race in International competitions in 2023! These paddlers have been chosen to represent the many athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and supporters in our sport and the United States of America. We know that they will make us proud both on and off the water.

"As Head Kayak coach I am honored and thrilled with the development and improvements made by our dedicated, world class athlete pool. Last year we developed a new positive supportive culture among our national teams at all levels and this is continuing to inspire brave commitment to excellence from a growing number of athletes. The increased numbers and great caliber of those athletes who didn't quite make these teams this year shows we are working together to build a solid pyramid towards world class performances and the Olympic Games. Join USA Canoe and

Kayak athletes on this inspirational journey towards a full team in Los Angeles 2028 and all the challenges along the way.” - Shelley Oates-Wilding

See who will be representing the United States internationally in the [World Cups](#), [Senior/U23/Junior World Championships](#), and [Pan Am Teams Announcement!](#)



Image Credit: Schonna Lind-Schenk / Athlete: Jack Wallace

The North American Whitewater Open Canoe Slalom Championship is returning to Wausau Whitewater Park this June!

Racers and spectators have long praised the park and course in Wausau, Wisconsin as one of the best venues for OC Nationals, with a course that elite racers will find challenging while remaining accessible for entry level racers. Viewing and access points along the entire length of the course, for paddlers and spectators, as well as a paved walking path that parallels the course from top to bottom.

[Sign-up](#) to be a competitor or join as a spectator! You won't want to miss this event!



Instructor of the Month: This April, we hope you will join us in celebrating Andee Dow, our newest Instructor of the Month!

For the last few years Andee has been regularly teaching Women's Only Swiftwater Rescue Courses to help open a space that can be intimidating and difficult to break into. "It's been a long road of hard work and confidence building for me to be where I am. I am still working on some things, but whitewater always helps me become better, as a person and a paddler. I just hope to inspire others to build the confidence they need to grow and journey to new places."

Andee definitely inspires us at the ACA! It takes a lot of work to break down barriers and create lasting cultural change. Thank you, Andee, for your role in building a network of capable and supportive paddlers in your community!

For more, read [Andee's complete IOM Feature!](#)



New Level 4: Whitewater Packrafting curriculum has been published by the Packrafting Committee and the ACA SEIC Board! The [curriculum documentation](#) is available on the ACA website.

To efficiently and realistically roll out the new Level 4: Whitewater Packrafting course curriculum and instructor criteria, the ACA Packrafting Committee has outlined [the steps to allow currently certified ACA Level 3: River Packrafting Instructors and Instructor Trainers to upgrade](#).

New ACA Kayak Polo Instructional curriculum is now available thanks to the hard work of the River Kayaking and Coastal Kayaking Committees and the ACA SEIC Board! Please check out the [curriculum documentation](#) on the ACA website.

