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The ACA National Office is serving up the latest paddlesports news! To find the content that matters to you most, use the guide below.

- **Forward Strokes** provides updates on the ACA's Advocacy & Public Policy efforts in addition to opportunities to protect paddling access.
- **Making Waves** brings you news on the Summer Solstice Celebration, Essay & Photo Contest, and Operation Dry Water.
- **Bringing Home the Gold** provides trivia about paddlesports in the Olympic & Paralympic games and updates from the U.S. Canoe/Kayak Sprint and Slalom National Teams as they continue their international race seasons.
- **Safety Talk** introduces you to the newest ACA Instructor of the Month and opportunities to advance your paddling education with upcoming symposiums and conferences!



The ACA created a Policy Advisory Board to expand our capacity to gain paddlesports visibility in the regulatory landscape at the local, state, and federal levels in the areas of mandatory education, life jacket wear, and how paddlers pay into the system (different government fee structures for collecting revenues from paddlers). This transpired back in February, following the passage of important bylaw changes and a strategic plan.

The ACA's [Policy Advisory Board](#) works in tandem with our Policy and Stewardship Director, Brett Mayer. In recent months, we drafted policy position narratives in each regulatory area to describe the scope of the work that we do. Our vision is to renew key partnerships and take a more proactive position to shape the regulatory landscape that impacts the paddling community. Head to [Policy Perspectives](#) to learn more about the issues affecting paddlers and the role the ACA plays in advocating for paddlers' interests.

The ACA Advocacy Toolkit is now live! Paddlers are passionate people. The ACA is excited to help channel those passions by providing a toolkit to help create well-informed paddler advocates. Let's unite to protect soggy sneakers everywhere!

Our recent efforts are just the beginning. Our hope is to provide the resources for every paddler to engage in the opportunities to make our community stronger. We want future generations to know what it means to get off the water after a full day of paddling and smile back at friends and family members who have sneakers that are just as soggy as their own.

Check out the [Advocacy Toolkit](#) for a list of resources and stay-tuned for a video tutorial that explains how you can use them to create a real and meaningful impact for the entire paddling community.

We would love to hear your feedback. [Drop our Policy and Stewardship Director, Brett, an email](#) and let us know what you think!

Sign the Outdoor Alliance petition to protect the Grand Canyon! Despite being one of the most iconic and beloved landscapes in the west, and home to spectacular outdoor recreation opportunities, the wider Grand Canyon region has been under threat from mining for decades.

For years, lawmakers, particularly Rep. Grijalva (D-AZ), and a coalition of 12 tribal nations, have been working to try to protect the wider Grand Canyon landscape. Now there is an opportunity for the Biden administration to designate a National Monument. In addition to the many cultural, recreational, and economic benefits to protecting this unique land, the proposed monument would honor the Tribes' connections to the Grand Canyon and protect the landscape by making the temporary mining ban permanent.

"It is critical that the administration hears support from the public for protecting the Grand Canyon. You can help protect this world-renowned landscape by signing the petition to designate the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument," Tania Lown-Hecht, Vice President of Communications & Strategy at Outdoor Alliance.



Sign the Outdoor Alliance petition today to designate the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument to protect this special place for paddlers tomorrow!

Photo credit: Jessie Cermelj

[Learn More & Sign the Petition](#)

MAKING WAVES
Community Updates

That's a wrap on the ACA's inaugural Summer Solstice Celebration! We hope you were able to get out and celebrate by paddling during the longest days of the year! 35 public events were hosted by ACA Members, Instructors, and Paddle America Clubs in 22 states, 3 countries, and a U.S. territory! Thank you very much to everyone who participated by hosting an event or getting out on the water to paddle. [View more photos](#) from the Summer Solstice Celebration events on the ACA website!



Amazing photo by Christopher Chan from the Hoboken Cove Community Boathouse Summer Solstice Celebration. Who can recognize the city reflecting the sunset in the background? The answer can be found at the bottom of the newsletter!

One day left to submit your content to the ACA Summer Solstice Essay & Photo Contest! Don't miss out on your chance to reflect on what paddling means to you.

[Submit your content](#) by the end of the day on **June 30** for your chance to win rad prizes and to have your work published on the ACA website! A big thank you to [River Station Gear](#) and [Immersion Research](#) for supporting this contest.

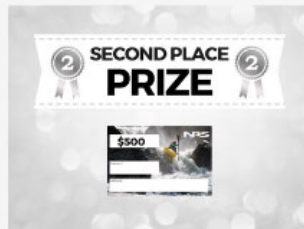
ESSAY & PHOTO CONTEST

Prompt: "Today is the longest day of the year and I am paddling because..."

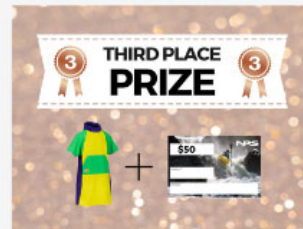
Theme: Unity - We are a unique and eclectic group of people unified by our love of paddling. We want to know what makes paddling special to you and why it is so important to protect the waters that we love to paddle.



- New 2022 Samsung Galaxy Book Pro 360
- River Station Gear "Eterna" Mesh Gear Duffle Bag



- \$500 NRS Gift Card



- Immersion Research Change Robe
- \$50 NRS Gift Card

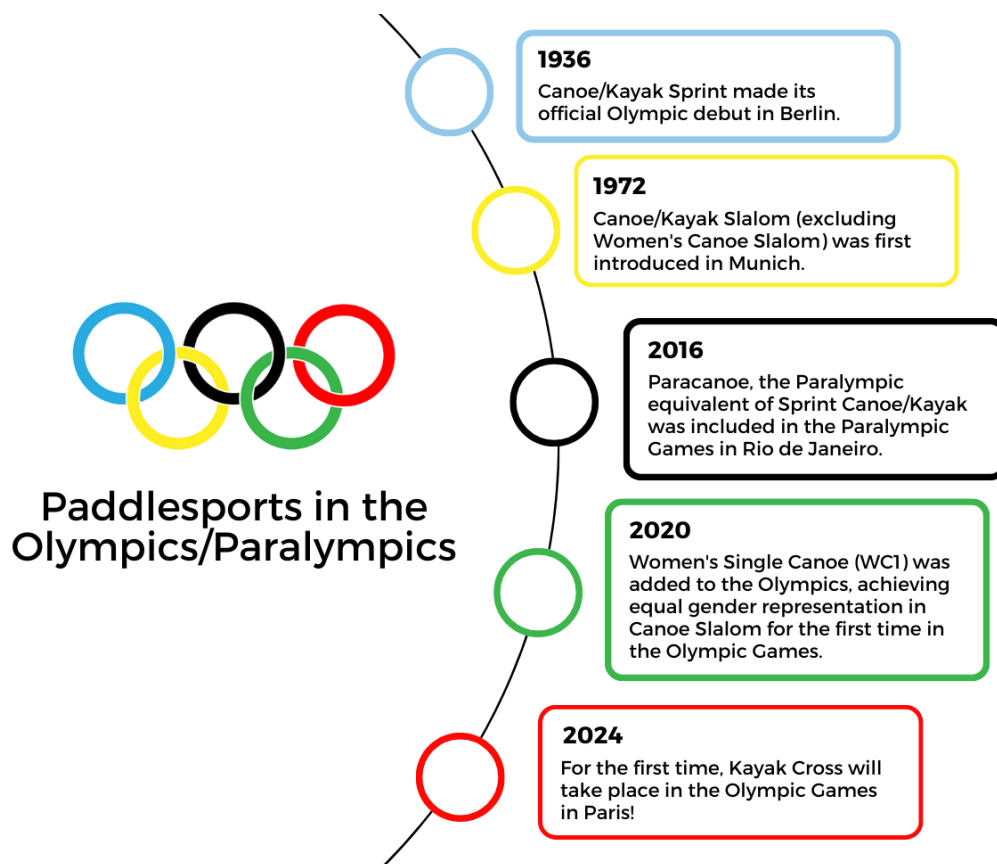
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JUNE 30, 2023

Operation Dry Water weekend will take place July 1-3. The year-round campaign raises awareness about the dangers of boating under the influence (BUI) and reminds boaters that impaired boating by both the operator and passengers is dangerous and can cause serious injury and fatalities. Tens of millions of people paddle each year. Although the vast majority enjoy their time on the water, a few suffer accidents and injuries. The ACA is committed to reducing the number of paddler injuries and fatalities. Alcohol consumption was the leading accident contributing factor in 13.1% (179 out of 1361) of canoe, kayak, and SUP fatalities between 2010 and 2019. Abstaining from alcohol while on the water is an important part of safe boating. The ACA fully supports efforts by our partners in [Operation Dry Water](#) to prevent boating under the influence.

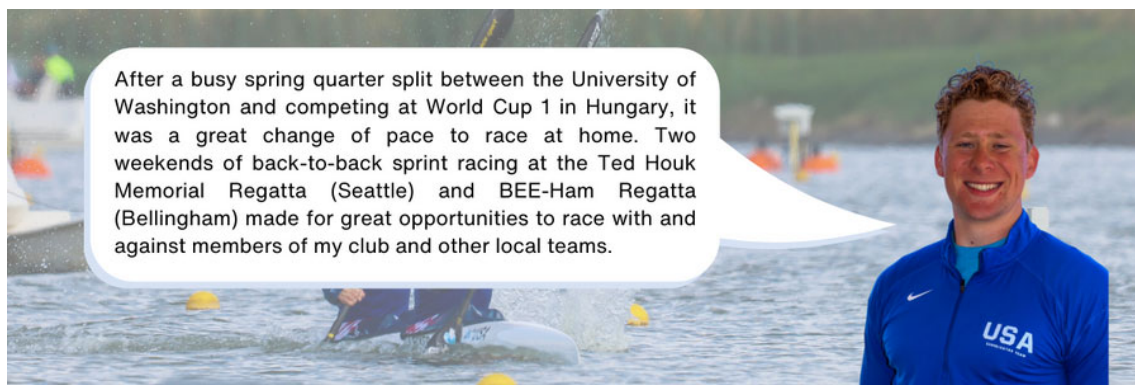
BRINGING HOME THE GOLD

Competition Highlights

Olympic and Paralympic Day took place on June 23. We could not be more proud of the Canoe/Kayak athletes who have represented the United States at the Olympic and Paralympic Games over the years. It is so wonderful to see our amazing sport grow in global prevalence and popularity!



U.S. Men's Senior Sprint Kayak National Team Member, Jonas Ecker, brings you the latest updates on how the race season is going.



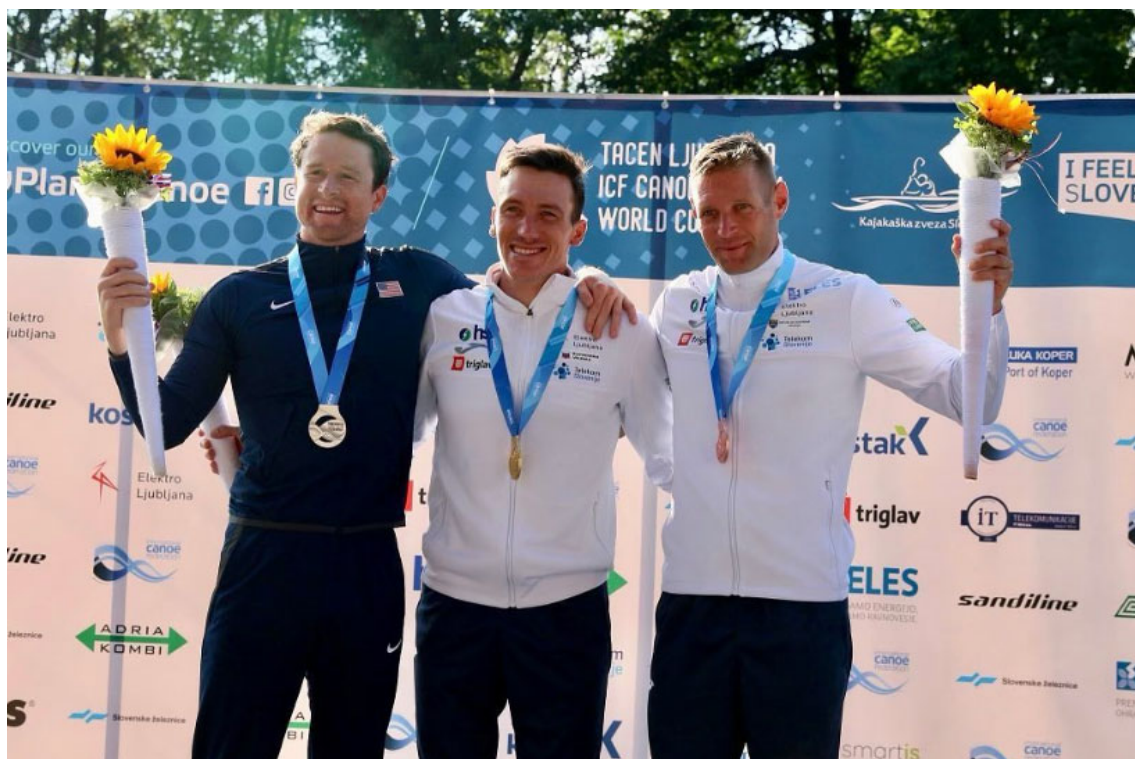
Athlete: Jonas Ecker / Photo Credit: Schonna Lind-Schenk

More from Jonas: "After spending so much of each season training in Seattle and racing internationally I always love to be back with my home club. I was lucky enough to hop in a couple team boats with my fellow club mates and go for a spin down the course. Now that the summer has been jump started by these local events, it's time to dive deep into training before heading off to U.S. Nationals, World Championships, and World Cup 3 (Olympic Test Event) later this summer!"

Sprint Canoe and Kayak Clubs from around the country will be competing at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota, Florida for the 2023 ACA Sprint Canoe National Championships! Racing will begin Tuesday, August 1 and go through Friday, August 4. We anticipate hundreds of paddlers racing in Bantam, Junior, Senior, and Masters age groups, in sprint and para events.

Later in August, Jonas and his teammates will be heading to Duisburg, Germany for the [2023 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships](#) and then to Paris, France for the [2023 ICF Canoe Sprint World Cup](#), giving the athletes the opportunity to race at the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic venue!

The U.S. Canoe Slalom National Team had an incredible performance at the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup 3 in Ljubljana-Tanen, Slovenia. Zack "Bug" Lokken earned his first World Cup medal, placing second in the MC1 event! Both Evy Leibfarth and Ria Sribar qualified for the WK1 final! It was wonderful to see these two strong women representing the United States in the Senior final and we are so proud of Evy's sixth place and Ria's ninth place finishes! Well done to all athletes who competed at the World Cup 3, we will be rooting for you in the ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup 4 in La Seu d'Urgell, Spain August 31 - September 3!



Zach "Bug" Lokken (left) on the podium at the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup 3 in Ljubljana-Tanen, Slovenia with his silver medal around his neck! Luka Bozic (middle) from Slovenia won the gold medal and Benjamin Savsek (right), also from Slovenia earned a bronze medal.

Photo Credit: Nina Jelenc



This June we are excited to honor Lizzy Gardner as ACA's Instructor of the Month! Lizzy played a huge role in making the first year of ACA Leadership, Exploration, and Development (LEAD) Initiative a success and the ACA is excited to be working with her again this year. She has also worked with Anna Levesque this year and last year to plan and facilitate [Paddlesports Leadership Academy](#) programs developed by Gerry Seavo James. The most recent of which just took place, June 22-25! Lizzy is a wonderful instructor and human and we are so proud to have her as part of the ACA community!

"I've always enjoyed teaching and helping people gain skills and confidence. A huge part of being successful in this is creating an environment where people feel seen and safe, and that opens doors for people to get outside of their comfort zone to try, fail, learn and grow. Those programs have demonstrated for me that paddling is so much more than just paddling. It can be a space for personal and community development, a chance to provide opportunities to those who have historically been excluded from paddlesport, and I can be a conduit for that." - Lizzy Gardner

For more, read [Lizzy's complete IOM feature!](#) If you know a truly awesome ACA instructor, [nominate them as future Instructor of the Month!](#)



Instructor of the Month, Lizzy Gardner, sharing the joy of canoeing!

The Great Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium (GLSKS) will be taking place on July 12-16 in Grand Marais, Michigan, the eastern gateway to the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. The goal at GLSKS is to develop independent paddlers. They achieve this through low student-to-coach ratios and by utilizing a variety of coaching styles. Immersed in the beauty and dynamic water of our environment, we discover and learn together. Whether you are completely new to sea kayaking, want to refine your core skills, or are an aspiring coach, GLSKS can help you become the paddler you want to be. This year is already sold out but you can learn more about this years symposium at the [event website!](#) [Registration is open for GLSKS 2024](#), come to Grand Marais to see what makes this community and this place so special.

[Register today for the ACA Swiftwater Rescue Conference!](#) This year's event will be held at The Summit Bechtel Reserve in Glen Jean, WV, from September 29th to October 1st. Presenters will include Charlie Walbridge, Sam Fowikes, Mike Mather, Julie Munger, Tom Burroughs, Robin Pope, and a host of other amazing safety and rescue professionals. Attendees will have a chance to learn and practice the latest advances in swiftwater rescue, while refreshing core knowledge. ACA Instructor updates will also be available.

Each conference registration includes:

- 4 half-day on-water sessions
- Shuttle from the meeting site to and from river sites
- 2 evening on-land sessions
- Opportunities to meet with nationally and internationally recognized swiftwater rescue experts
- 3 lunches, 2 breakfasts, and 2 dinners

Cost:

- \$425 for ACA members
- \$465 for non-ACA members; non-member registration includes a one-year ACA membership

More details including information on lodging and the Wilderness Life Support for Medical Providers Track, can be found on the [ACA Swiftwater Rescue Conference news article](#).

Thank you for reading our monthly newsletter! You can find the latest stories and updates on the [ACA Website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#)!

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

Sincerely,

Kaycee Maas, Communications Coordinator

ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue

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