



@@first_name@@,

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** tips and opportunities to be an effective paddler-advocate.
- **Making Waves** brings you announcements on the contest winners from the Summer Solstice Essay & Photo Contest, the ACA's brand new gear store, and information about our free online paddling course, now available completely in Spanish!
- **Bringing Home the Gold** features U.S. Sprint Canoe Athlete, Andreea Ghizila, who provides us with an update from the ICF Junior/U23 Sprint Canoe World Championships, discount tickets for the ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships to be held at the Lee Valley White Water Centre, and highlights from the Canoe Slalom Age-Group Nationals that kicked off Montgomery Whitewater's Opening Weekend!
- **Safety Talk** introduces you to our newest Instructor of the Month and reminds members to register for the approaching ACA Swiftwater Rescue Conference!



Advocacy tip of the month: How to communicate with your lawmakers and be an effective advocate for the places that you love to paddle:

1. Know how to get in touch. Congress has a website that allows you to input your zip code and [find out your congressional district and your member](#). There is also a [Directory of Representatives](#) where you can find your representative's website and contact information! You can contact your representative via email, phone, physical, letters, or social media.
2. Now that you know who represents you and how to contact them, introduce yourself! Let them know why you are writing or calling. Due to the volume of messages lawmakers receive, it is best to be short and sweet. **"My name is @@first_name@@, and I am calling to express my (support/opposition) for Bill (number)".** The U.S. Senate also has a resource that can show you [how to find bill numbers](#).
3. Make it personal! Tell them why the bill, policy, or issue at hand matters to you, and remind them why it matters to their district. **"I've lived in your district for 10 years. I'm an avid paddler and these watersheds are a huge part of why I settled here. Protecting this area permanently will have a major impact on me and my quality of life as a resident of your district."** This is also a great way to make the greatest impact when signing on to a FastAction form written by an advocacy professional like our friends at Outdoor Alliance.
4. Ask for their support directly. If they've done anything that deserves a pat on the back, make sure to show them your support. **"You've been a great advocate for paddlers. I trust that you will do everything in your power to support the effort to permanently protect clean water."**

Let's practice! Tell Congress not to mess with clean water protections with a personalized message. You can do this by reaching out to your representative personally, calling them out on social media, or using [Outdoor Alliance's FastAction Form](#).

Love how it feels advocate for the things that matter to you? Keep that good feeling going and add your voice to the [Outdoor Alliance Petition to Protect the Grand Canyon!](#)



We are so excited to be able to share with you the winners of the Summer Solstice Essay & Photo Contest!

Congratulations to **Kim Karbon** for her winning essay & photo! In addition to the incredible photo she submitted, Kim's essay is nothing short of a celebration of what makes paddling so special: her friends. When reading her essay, we couldn't help but smile and reflect on our own paddling communities. We too have a "Josh" who is a skillful outdoors-person and a wonderful teacher; a "Kerry" who brings both the snacks and the stoke; a "Liz" who inspires us to be better stewards and the best version of ourselves; a "John" who's creativity is makes everything better; and last but not least, a "Kim" who never fails make us laugh and even manages to catch the special moments on camera so we can smile back at them later!

Jackson Bichsel was awarded second place for his essay titled, "A Question Answered with Love". This essay is an incredibly thoughtful, relatable, and emotional expression of why he paddles and races. Jackson's writing makes you feel like you are on the water with him, feeling what he feels. When we finished reading his essay we couldn't decide if we should rush out the door, grabbing our boats and paddles, or go right back to the top of his essay and read it again!

Martin Welch earned third place for his wonderful essay on his experience finding a place to call home within the whitewater community in Cañon City, Colorado, and sharing the wonders of paddling with his son, Ashton. After experiencing a recent tragedy in his family, Martin expertly describes how some memories of his family on the river now elicit both joy and despair, and how the water can be especially impactful as a place of peace and healing. Martin's essay is one that really stuck with us, the emotions it evoked lingering long after we read the last sentence.

[Read the Winning Essays](#)



Kim Carbon's submission to the Summer Solstice Essay & Photo Contest included not only a triumphant reflection on why she paddles, but a truly stunning photo as well (see above)!

The ACA got a brand-new store! Repping ACA gear shows the world that you are a part of a network of paddlesports leaders who defend the waters we paddle through stewardship & public policy initiatives; protect paddlers with high-quality paddlesports education & instruction; and provide opportunities for competition and inclusive community events.

We are excited to be able to support the USA Canoe/Kayak Team, USA Freestyle, USA Wildwater our LEAD Initiative events with proceeds from this store when you purchase items with the corresponding logo!

You can also congratulate yourself, your partner, or your friend on their new or existing instructor/instructor trainer certification with exclusive ACA Instructor and ACA Instructor Trainer apparel!

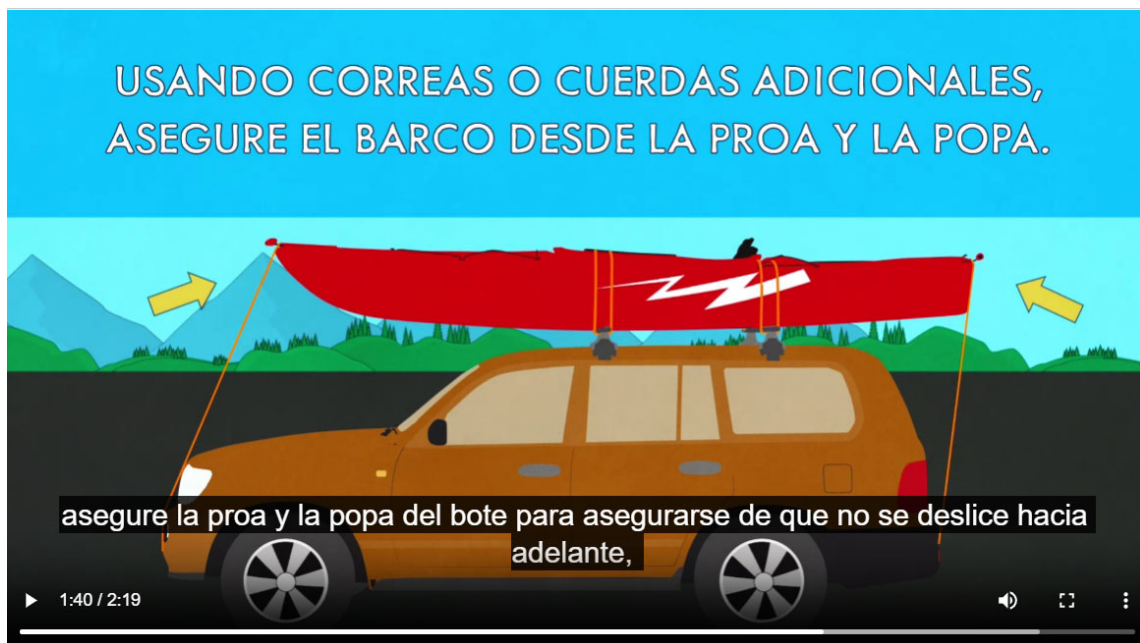


The graphic features a dark blue background with white and red geometric shapes. On the left, a white box contains the text "The Official ACA Store" in bold, followed by "IS NOW OPEN!" in bold. Below this, a numbered list shows the shopping process: 1 Choose your favorite item, 2 Select a logo, and 3 Check out!. To the right, four product images are displayed: a white water bottle with the ACA logo, a purple long-sleeved shirt with the ACA logo, a red t-shirt with the ACA logo, and a grey backpack with the LEAD logo.

[Shop ACA](#)

Free paddling online course now available in Spanish! Tell your Spanish-speaking friends about this fantastic opportunity! They can access this course from a phone, tablet, or computer and learn about:

- Shopping for paddling equipment
- Securing a boat to your vehicle
- Trip planning
- Filing a float plan
- On-water group management
- Waterway hazard identification
- Challenging weather
- Temperature regulation & self care
- Rescue priorities & protocols
- And more!



Iniciar el Curso



Sprint Canoe athlete Andreea Ghizila brings us an update from the 2023 ICF Junior/U23 Sprint Canoe World Championships that took place in beautiful, Auronzo di Cadore, Italy.

Have you ever paddled in the mountains? The Jr/U23 U.S. National Team got this unique experience for the first time this summer in the Dolomites of Italy. The racecourse, located on Lago di Santa Caterina in Auronzo di Cadore, is famous for its views, but no pictures could have prepared any of us for that first paddle on the crystal blue water surrounded by rocky peaks. It certainly took my breath away... though maybe some of that was the altitude!

Luckily, most of the team was able to attend a training camp for two and a half weeks before the competition started. Arriving early allowed them to get comfortable with the wind and current on the lake and really get into the mindset to race. It also gave them the chance to explore the town, climb some mountains, find the best pizza and gelato, and bond over ice baths.

The opening ceremony happened to be on the 4th of July, so we all felt a little bit extra patriotic as we walked through the town with our flag and matching tracksuits. All the locals came out onto the main street to watch the procession of countries. Some of them even joined in as different countries sang their songs or chants! Racers and spectators alike were getting very excited for racing to start.



Members of the U.S. Junior and U23 Sprint Canoe National Team at the opening ceremony in Auronzo di Cadore, Italy for the 2023 ICF Junior/U23 Sprint Canoe World Championships

Photo Credit: Ayako Albrecht

A 5-day event is tough for everybody. Our coaches were running around tirelessly, making sure that everybody got on the water when they were supposed to and were supported after their race no matter their result. Some athletes had a packed first few days, while others did not race until the third day. Though we each had to focus on our own events, everybody was helping each other so we could all go out for each race feeling happy and confident.

This hardworking team brought historic results this year. The junior women's canoeists made the C1 200, 500, and 1000m A finals, and the U23 women made the C1 200 and 1000m A finals as well! U23 men's kayak had outstanding performances in the B finals, placing 10th overall in K2 500m, 11th in K2 1000, and 14th in the K4 500m. U23 women's kayakers placed 12th overall in K1 200m and teamed up in the Mixed K2 500 to place 14th overall!

All categories got to send out a few brave souls to attempt 2 new and exciting events at these world championships: the mixed relay and the 5k. Both events involved multiple intense portages (running on land while carrying your boat) and multiple laps with a shocking amount of boat wake and wind. Despite the chaos, our racers had great fun in these events and demonstrated a lot of skill in tough conditions.



U23 C2 Women, proud of their effort in a close semifinal

Photo Credit: Ayako Albrecht

This was a bittersweet U23 World Championships for me, as I will be aging out next year. It's the biggest event that the ICF puts on. It's an amazing mix of people of varying experience levels and talents. Some of the athletes there had already gone to the Olympics! Others will go to the Olympics, but maybe not for another 9 or 13 years. It's such an inspiring event, and it has been a great way for us to bridge the daunting gap between the junior and senior levels. I raced at this regatta twice as a junior and three times as U23, and I have some of my fondest memories and best lessons from this event. Though I will miss it, I am more excited than ever for the future of our sport across all ages, and I will be eagerly watching the team race next year.

Most of the team will be reunited at the National Championships in Sarasota, Florida, where the youngest athletes on the junior team will be competing for a spot on the Olympic Hopes Regatta team and the oldest will be preparing for the Senior World Championships. See you there! And stay hydrated!

Thank you, Andreea, for sharing this with us and good luck to you and your teammates in the upcoming ACA Sprint Canoe National Championships taking place at Nathan Benderson Park, August 1-4!

Tickets on sale now for the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. This event is taking place at the iconic Lee Valley White Water Centre this September in London, England. As an international fan, you can get an extra 10% off of tickets until July 31!

Use the link below and the code ICF to apply the discount!

Purchase Discounted Tickets for the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships

2023 ACA Canoe Slalom Age-Group Nationals kicked off Montgomery Whitewater's Opening Weekend! This new whitewater park in Montgomery, Alabama is home to both a 1,600-foot Olympic-standard Competition Channel, and a 2,200-foot Creek Channel that provides a more approachable experience for new and experienced paddlers alike. Athletes from around the world had at great time racing at this stellar new venue and it was great to see the local Montgomery community come out to show their support for all the athletes competing!



Montgomery Whitewater's slalom course is approved by athlete, Bert Hinkley!

Photo Credit: Jed Hinkley



Congratulations, Amanda Lasley, ACA's Instructor of the month for July 2023! Amanda and the ACA share a desire to help anyone, and everyone experience the joy of paddling, regardless of craft or waterway. She has been an ACA instructor since 2014 and teaches at multiple North Carolina State Parks, primarily educating the park's rangers and staff.

"For me, being on the water is the closest thing I've found to the meaning of life. I have always loved to teach, but what really motivates me is knowing that I'm providing North Carolina State Park rangers with an exciting way to engage future park visitors and allow them to experience some of our best public resources by being on the water, learning, and having fun!"

If you know a truly awesome ACA instructor, [nominate them as future Instructor of the Month!](#)



ACA's most recent Instructor of the Month, Amanda Lasley, on the job!

**REGISTER TODAY FOR THE ACA
SWIFTWATER RESCUE
CONFERENCE!**

**Summit Bechtel Reserve, Glen
Jean, West Virginia**

**\$425 for ACA members
\$465 for non-ACA members**

- Learn
- Practice
- Network



[More Information & Registration](#)

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? We encourage you to submit your content for consideration using this [Content Submission Form](#).

Sincerely,

Kaycee Maas, Communications Coordinator

ACA | Canoe - Kayak - SUP - Raft - Rescue

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