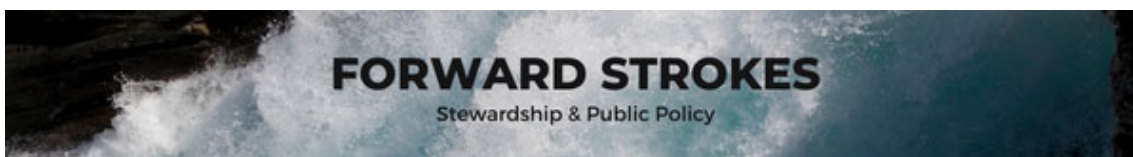




@@first\_name@@,

Happy Holidays from the ACA! To find the content that matters to you most, use the guide below.

- **Forward Strokes** gives you the opportunity to learn more about antiquated mining laws and to write a letter to your lawmakers in support of needed mining reforms.
- **Making Waves** announces the recipients of the prestigious ACA National Awards, and a reminder of a perfect, last-minute holiday gift idea.
- **Bringing Home the Gold** shares exciting results from the 2023 Ocean Racing World Championships and the official dates and locations of the Slalom and Sprint Olympic Team Trials!
- **Safety Talk** is full of exciting announcements including the final Instructor of the Month of the year, the results of the Level 1 & 2 Instructor Contest, and an inside look of the ACA Kayak Fishing Endorsement.



### Outdoor Alliance "Mining Reform Efforts Heat Up"

Outdoor Alliance has been working hard to reform antiquated mining laws. The Mining Law of 1872 continues to govern mining across most of the U.S., giving mining a pass to the front of the line and often causing direct conflicts with outdoor recreation and conservation priorities. Potential mines currently threaten some of our most-loved outdoor recreation destinations, including the Grand Canyon and the South Fork of the Salmon River.

Some legislation, including the Mining Regulatory Clarity Act, would give away more land to mining companies and allow them to lock out other users and dump mining waste on adjacent public lands, even when they have found no evidence of valuable miners. However, lawmakers are considering legislation that would update antiquated mining laws. The Clean Energy Minerals Reform Act would modernize our mining laws, ensuring that as we transition toward renewable energy, we continue to protect public lands and waters, sacred Indigenous lands, and local communities.

Outdoor Alliance has made it easy to send a message to your lawmakers in support of these needed mining reforms. Personalizing your letter, especially the first few sentences, makes it even more effective.

[Read More and Contact Your Lawmakers](#)



## ACA Gift Memberships

This holiday season, give the gift of paddling, community, and a year's worth of discounts. In short, give the gift of an ACA membership!

While supporting the ACA's policy & stewardship efforts, community initiatives, and education & instruction programs, a gift membership unlocks:

- deep discounts on over 650 outdoor brands through ExpertVoice
- monthly updates on the latest paddlesports news
- advocacy assistance for local paddling issues

Even better, when you give a membership before the start of the new year, you get a gift in return! We will send you and the gift membership recipient a limited-edition ACA snow globe sticker!



[Gift a Membership](#)

## 2023 National Awards

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.

Please join us in congratulating each of the award recipients! At the ACA Annual Meeting, we announced the recipients of this year's awards:

- Excellence in Instruction – Jake Vitak
- Sanctioned Event of the Year – Swiftwater Rescue Conference
- Green Paddle for Waterway Conservation – Hispanics for our Environment
- Joe Pina Volunteer of the Year – Gil Hidalgo
- J. Henry Rushton for Organizational Excellence – Yonkers Paddling and Rowing Club
- Havens Leadership Award – Alyson Mrozinski



- Outstanding State Director – William Holman
- Legends of Paddling - Ron Dingle

[Read More](#)



### 2023 ICF Ocean Racing World Championships

We are so proud of our USA Ocean Racing Team for their stellar racing at the 2023 ICF Canoe Ocean Racing World Championships in Perth, Australia! A big congratulations to all the athletes who competed and a special shout out to Michele Eray and Ana Swetish for their podium finishes!

- 🥇 Masters (40-44): Michele Eray
- 🥈 U23: Ana Swetish



*Photo courtesy of the Ocean Racing Committee.*

[Read More](#)

### 2024 Slalom Olympic Team Trials

We are thrilled to announce that the 2024 Slalom Olympic Team Trials will be hosted over two separate weekends in Montgomery, Alabama and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma! The first weekend of racing will take place April 13-14 at Montgomery Whitewater, the newly built, world-class outdoor venue in Montgomery, Alabama! The second weekend of racing will be hosted by RIVERSPORT in Oklahoma, April 26-28.

The results from these two weekends of racing will determine who will fill the Olympic quota spots qualified during the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships and the upcoming 2024 COPAC Canoe Slalom Pan American Championships & Olympic Qualifier in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in March. The Olympic Team, who will be competing at the Paris Olympics this summer will be announced upon the conclusion of racing in Oklahoma City on April 28!

### **2024 Sprint Olympic Team Trials**

The 2024 Sprint Olympic Team Trials will take place in Lake Natoma, March 22-23 in Folsom, California. We are very excited to partner with the Sacramento State Aquatic Center to host this event.

At this event, the best sprint canoe and kayak athletes in the U.S. will compete for the opportunity to fill the Olympic quota spots qualified during the 2023 Sprint Canoe World Championships and the upcoming 2024 ICF Canoe Sprint America's Olympic Qualifier and Pan American Championships to take place in Sarasota, Florida this coming April 23-25. At the conclusion of this weekend of racing, we will name the 2024 Olympic Team who will go on to compete in the 2024 Paris Olympics in August!



### **Instructor of the Month - Sami Hawkins**

Congratulations to our final Instructor of the Month for 2023, Sami Hawkins! As both a River Kayak Instructor Trainer and a Swiftwater Rescue Instructor, Sami brings joy and safety to every river she paddles. At the root of all paddlesports instruction is helping students find excitement and achievement through moments on the water. One would be hard pressed to find an instructor who does this better than Sami!

Thank you, Sami, for spreading so much happiness on the river. The ACA appreciates you and all you do to take care of the river and the people who love to play on it.



*Instructor of the Month, Sami Hawkins*

[Read More](#)

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

### **Level 1 & 2 Instructor Contest Results**

To grow our community of paddlers, the Regional Activity Council (RAC) hosted a competition for instructors in all ACA disciplines who teach Level 1 and Level 2 courses. The goal of this initiative was to encourage our instructors to safely welcome new and prospective paddlers to the community by teaching a few more Level 1 & 2 courses this season. 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 the final winners of the Level 1 & 2 Instructor Contest! The winners of this contest were announced during the ACA's Annual Meeting and the results can be viewed on the ACA website!

[Read More](#)

### **ACA Kayak Fishing Endorsement Featured on "The Little Stuff"**

Kayak Angler Jeff Little, of YouTube's popular channel, "The Little Stuff" produced a great video from his experience participating in an ACA Instructor Certification Workshop and Kayak Fishing Endorsement. Watch the episode for an look inside of the Kayak Fishing Endorsement as some of the best kayak anglers in the business pursue ACA instructor certifications. We are so excited to see how this curriculum continues to grow and expand to help keep anglers safe and smiling on the water!



Watch the Episode

Thank you for reading the final monthly newsletter of 2023! If you made it this far, please consider donating to the ACA. We work hard on behalf of paddlers and we are eternally grateful for the support of our members.

Help us make 2024 the ACA's best year yet and [donate today](#).

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 Paddlesports

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