



Serving paddlers since 1880



First, we are beginning this edition of the ACA newsletter with a heartfelt message to all affected by hurricanes Helene and Milton from the current chair of the ACA Safety, Education, and Instruction Council, Anna Levesque. [Watch on Facebook](#) or read the transcript below.



I know that there are many ACA and SEIC members who live, work, and paddle in the affected areas, including myself, I live in Asheville, NC. The devastation here is mind blowing, as well as in Western North Carolina and East Tennessee, including the waterways that we all love to work and play on.

I consider myself very lucky to have my family and friends safe, my home safe, and I had to reschedule a few programs as I think I've seen some of you on social media have had to do so as well and I know that's not easy either, and I know that there are folks who have lost everything. There are many layers of grief, and even down to that our waterways have transformed forever, and there are many unknowns, maybe in our businesses, and in the passion that we have for paddling.

I encourage all of us to be compassionate with one another during this time to come together in community, which so many have done. I want to give a specific shout out to two of our instructor trainers in the Western North Carolina and East Tennessee area who have done amazing work. ACA River Kayak Instructor Trainer, Trey Moore, up in Erwin, TN and in the headwaters area of the Nolichucky. He's done amazing organizational and relief efforts, and they are ongoing. Also, Chris Wing down in Saluda in the Green River Cove who also has been doing amazing work right from the beginning, and who also sustained some damage and losses to his business. I really want to acknowledge Chris and Trey for being leaders in their community and stepping up.

I know there are more of you who have stepped up, who have done, and are doing amazing things and I acknowledge you as well, and I know you're out there and I see you and I would love it if you wanted to submit your stories and what you've been doing to the ACA via our social channels or e-mail. We'd love to hear what ACA members have been doing because I know you all are amazing.

For myself, volunteering has been helpful on many levels, and I also want to iterate that there is no better than. We each can contribute something unique to the recovery effort, especially when you see some of the devastation. Especially along the French Broad, there will be much work to be done as well, and we can each come in our own time and contribute our unique talents and abilities. Thank you to everyone who has donated, who has volunteered time in a way that is unique to you. Thank you.

In the vein of being compassionate with one another and coming together in community, which makes us stronger, I also want to, especially for you whitewater boaters out there, I want to encourage you all to be thoughtful with your decisions and again, with being compassionate, with one another. Remember that our decisions, our actions do have an impact and there are many rivers to paddle outside of the most affected area. In fact, those areas, the areas that are not as affected, like the Ocoee, the Nantahala, the Russell Fork, and West Virginia, they want folks to come and paddle there, and so there's plenty of places to paddle outside of the most affected areas. Again, let's have compassion and be thoughtful.

I also want to acknowledge that the ACA donated \$5000 to Hurricane Helene relief efforts through the French Broad River Academy and their Salamander fund. I am so very grateful for that, and again, thinking of all of you, thank you for everything you're doing and be well.



Achieving Lasting Conservation Victories with Outdoor Alliance

In 2002, two leaders in the paddling community, Pam Dillon (then Executive Director of the American Canoe Association) and Risa Shimoda (then Executive Director of American Whitewater) helped to found a coalition of recreation groups committed to working together to protect landscapes and outdoor experiences. This group led to a collaboration on joint priorities including the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Roadless Rule, and eventually to the formation of Outdoor Alliance — a coalition of ten activity-specific member organizations who support Outdoor Alliance's work to advance strong recreation policy and to conserve and protect America's public lands and waters.

The American Canoe Association was one of the founding members of Outdoor Alliance and continues to work together in this coalition to conserve and protect the public waters that we love to paddle.

In the last decade, the outdoor community has activated a shift in the conservation movement, where the motivation to protect land, water, and climate grows out of our connection to place. The efforts of Outdoor Alliance have resulted in land managers recognizing that outdoor recreation is one of the primary ways Americans come to know their public lands and develop a stewardship ethic.

Our collective voices have made a true difference in protecting places, passing great policy, and expanding sustainable access to the outdoors over the last ten years. With so much at stake in the coming years, from climate change to growing demand for green space, we are just getting started.



Pam Dillon (left) and Risa Shimoda (right) at the Paddlesport Trade Coalition Colab in Oklahoma City, OK this past September. Pam and Risa remain incredible influences in the paddling community and important leaders at the American Canoe Association. We are so grateful for their decades of commitment to making the world a better place to paddle and extremely fortunate to have been able to benefit from their incredible leadership.

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MAKING WAVES

Community Updates

State Director Elections

The ACA Regional Activity Council (RAC) is looking for the next generation of State Directors and supporting team members! The RAC State Directors are a group of volunteer ambassadors that work together with the ACA National Office to support the interests of local paddling communities in every state. All states are currently accepting nominations. The deadline for self-nominations is **Tuesday, October 22**.

[Learn More & Submit Your Self-Nomination](#)



2024 ICF Canoe Ocean Racing World Championships

October 4-6, the top ocean racing athletes from around the world competed in the 2024 ICF Canoe Ocean Racing World Championships in Madeira, Portugal. A special congratulations to Ana Swetish on her second-place finish in the Women's U23 category and third-place in the Women's Senior category, earning herself a World Championship medal for the second year in a row! In a windy course, Ana's extensive training and preparation was critical. Well done to all the ocean racing athletes who represented the U.S. in the 2024 World Championships!



Ana Swetish (center) was joined in Madeira by USA Ocean Racing Masters Athletes: Zach Handler, Nick Murray, Jonathan Sanborn, Greg Greene, Greg Leshner, Borys Markin, and Matt Drayer.

2024 U.S. Slalom & Kayak Cross National Championships

October 5-6, canoe slalom and kayak cross athletes from across the country competed in the 2024 U.S. Slalom & Kayak Cross National Championships at the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC. Fortunately, Charlotte was not hit hard by Hurricane Helene and the athletes were able to compete as scheduled. Throughout this great weekend of racing, athletes, parents, volunteers, and coaches collected donations to take to the parts of the state most heavily impacted by the storm.

We are grateful to have such a thoughtful community who stepped up to support the locals in need. We are also grateful to the support of the U.S. Performance Center for their warm welcome of the slalom community. “Bringing the ACA to Charlotte for this championship is a testament to the strength of our partnership, and we’re excited to support these athletes as they strive for excellence,” said Ike Belk, Co-Owner of USPC. “Hosting such events and providing world-class performance testing further solidifies Charlotte’s standing in the sports tourism sector.”

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2024 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships

October 15-20, the Men’s U.S. Canoe Polo National Team flew to Deqing, China to compete in the 2024 World Championships. Unfortunately, 6 out of 8 of the athletes on this stellar team came down with a bout of what they expected was water or food poisoning and were unable to compete in the final match, resulting in a forfeit. After a full week of competition, the team ended in 20th place and will head home after a fun journey.



2024 USA Canoe Polo National Team in Deqing, China for the 2024 ICF Canoe Polo World Championships!

From left to right: Omar Hafez, Zak Aroui, Marcos Fourquet, Shawn Chen, Ian Song, Yousef Arab, Ge Wu, Adam Hugo, Mark Poindexter (coach)

Canoe Sprint National Team Member Testing at the U.S. Performance Center

This month, members of the U.S. Canoe Sprint National Team traveled to Charlotte, NC to visit the U.S. Performance Center (USPC) for athlete testing. This is a fantastic opportunity for competitive paddlers in the U.S. to fine-tune their training leading up to the LA28 Games.

The athletes will receive a dedicated training regimen specific to their sport, needs, and body composition with continual testing to measure their performance and develop metrics. We are very excited about this partnership with the USPC and their science-based approach to create innovative and highly specialized training and development programs to improve athletic performance on all levels.

2024 ICF SUP World Championships

Registration for the 2024 ICF SUP World Championships closes November 1! There will be something for every SUP paddler at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota, FL this November 19-24. Junior, Senior, and Master level athletes will compete in Sprint, Technical, and Long-Distance events. The competition will also be open to kids ages 8-14. A less competitive Inflatable/Hardboard Recreation 5K & Obstacle Challenge will be open to anyone! There are still open spots available to improve your stroke and get competition ready in a SUP Clinic with Seychelle, world class athlete and the founder of SUP School.

[Learn More and Register](#)



Instructor of the Month: Karen Locke

This October, we are celebrating Karen Locke as ACA Instructor of the Month! Karen has been teaching swiftwater rescue courses for the past 6 years. Recently, with the help of her amazing mentors, she earned her Swiftwater Rescue Instructor Trainer certification as well. Last month, Karen also became certified as a Whitewater Rafting Paddle and Oar Instructor.

After years of professional guiding and teaching on rivers all over the world, Karen settled down in Moab where she is the proud owner of [Confluence Rescue](#), a low-cost and scholarship-based rescue company. She strongly believes that life-saving rescue courses should not be cost prohibitive and has scholarship funds available for all Confluence Rescue courses.

The ACA applauds Karen's commitment to fostering creative opportunities that allow anyone to fall in love with paddling. All ACA members and instructors know how it feels to find community, challenge, pride, and joy through paddlesports. The best of us knows how it feels to share that experience with someone else. Congratulations Karen on a well-earned ACA Instructor of the Month award!



Instructor of the Month, Karen Locke on the oars!

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

Surf Kayak Revival

Last month, the ACA Surf Kayak Committee hosted the first Surf Kayak Revival event, a Level 2-3: Surf Kayak Instructor Certification Workshop on the Central Oregon coast. Through the River House Outdoor Center in Eugene, Oregon, Surf Kayak Instructor Trainer Candidate, Marcel Bieg, met with nine Surf Kayak Instructor Candidates with paddling passion and high hopes to bring high quality instruction to their surf communities.

In addition to developing new skills and enjoying the great waves and weather, the attendees of the Surf Kayak Revival were able to put the new ACA Level 2 and 3 Surf Kayak curriculum revisions to the test. The diverse experience and perspectives of the participants provided invaluable feedback to the Surf Kayak committee who will continue to fine-tune the presentation and content of the curriculum. This successful program also sparked interest in additional Surf Kayak training opportunities on the East Coast and in the Midwest.

Surf Kayaking is a unique and beautiful niche within the paddling community, and the ACA is very excited about the continued development of this sport. Congratulations to the new ACA Surf Kayak Instructors and Instructor Trainers. Thank you to River House Outdoor Center, the ACA Surf Kayak Committee, Anthea Raymond, Roger Schumann, and Marcel Bieg for their dedication and leadership of this event. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers for your time and energy!



Beautiful weather for the ACA Surf Kayak Revival on the Oregon coast.

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Rafting Rendezvous

Whitewater rafting professionals flocked to ACE Adventure Resort this October 12-14 for the first ACA Rafting Rendezvous. These three days were packed with clinics, instructor updates, guide certifications, and workshops from leading industry professionals. Between fun and educational trips down the Gauley, participants attended presentations from whitewater legends including Elisha McArthur, Jeff Cogle, Marcel Bieg, Jess Lewis, Byron Beers, Brent Roth, Kevin Tyrell, Tom Burroughs, Charlie Walbridge, and more! A big thank you and well done to the ACA Rafting Discipline Committee and our event host, ACE Adventure Resort, for pulling off an incredible, first ACA Rafting Rendezvous. We also would like to thank the amazing event sponsors: Whitewater Designs Inc. (the in-house brand of Oregon Paddlesports), Sawyer Paddles & Oars, Rapid Rung, ACE Adventure Gear, Hyside, Aqua Bound, Rocky Mountain Rafts, River & Trail Outfitters, and NRS!

We would also like to give a huge, heartfelt recognition of gratitude to the Rafting Rendezvous presenters and participants who raised money for the French Broad River Academy Hurricane Relief Fund.



Three incredible days of connecting and learning at the first ACA Rafting Rendezvous!

Thank you for reading our monthly newsletter! Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for the latest stories and updates!

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

Sincerely,

Kaycee Maas, Communications Manager

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