



Serving paddlers since 1880



Kicking Off July with Good News

We're starting this month's newsletter on a high note: According to the U.S. Coast Guard's *2024 Recreational Boating Statistics Report*, last year saw the **fewest boating fatalities in over 50 years**—a powerful sign that safety education and awareness efforts are making a real difference. Thank you to all our members, instructors, and partners who continue to champion safe, responsible paddling across the country.

From this encouraging milestone to major competition updates, public lands advocacy, and our 145th anniversary celebration this fall, there's a lot to be excited about across the ACA community.



Your Backcountry Paddling is at Risk—USDA Plans to Rescind the Roadless Rule

The USDA has announced plans to rescind the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, threatening 58 million acres of pristine National Forest lands that have been protected since 2001. These wild landscapes—home to treasured paddling destinations like the South Fork Salmon (ID), Upper Chattooga (GA), and Laurel Fork of the Potomac (VA)—could soon be opened to road building, logging, and resource extraction.

For paddlers, this means more than lost access—it risks the health of headwater streams, threatens water quality, and undermines the unique backcountry experiences we treasure.

Support [American Whitewater's](#) efforts to defend these wild places. Urge Congress to pass the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2025 and make your voice heard before it's too late.

Take Action



🎉 ACA's 145th Anniversary is Coming Up! 🎉

On August 3, 2025, the American Canoe Association turns 145! To honor this incredible milestone, we launched the **ACA Story Project Fundraiser**, sharing powerful stories from our members about how paddling has shaped their lives. These stories highlight the heart of our community—and we invite you to be part of it.

Here's how you can join the celebration:

Read, share, and donate to the Story Project to help support the ACA's mission of promoting paddlesports education, competition, community, stewardship, and access.

Join us in person at the very first **ACA PaddleFest**, October 17–19, at the Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC! This event will include:

- In-person 145th Anniversary Celebration & Silent Auction with live music
- Swiftwater Rescue Conference
- Instructor & Instructor Trainer Updates
- U.S. Slalom & Kayak Cross National Championships
- ACA Annual Meeting
- PTC Colab 2025

Your voice, your presence, and your support help shape the next 145 years of paddlesports. Let's celebrate together!

👉 [\[Donate Now\]](#) | [\[Read the Stories\]](#) | [\[Join us at PaddleFest\]](#)

Reminder of ACA Safesport Policies

Last week we sent out some information about Safesport, specifically the [ACA MAAPP](#) and the [Safesport Code](#). We urge you to stay up to date on both of these documents. The USOPC, all NGBs and all LAOs (e.g., paddling clubs) must comply with the policies and procedures within the Code.



U.S. Slalom Athletes Shine at Junior & U23 World Championships



U.S. U23 Women's K1 Team on the podium after earning Bronze Medals in the U23 WK1 Team event at 2025 ICF Junior & U23 Canoe Slalom World Championships.

Athletes L-R: Marcella Altman, Ria Sribar, Evy Leibfarth

Photo Credit: Eric Francis

The U.S. Canoe Slalom Team made waves at the 2024 ICF Junior and U23 World Championships in Foix, France, bringing home multiple medals, breakthrough performances, and a bold new move that's changing the game.

Hot off her first World Cup gold, Evy Leibfarth earned the U23 World Champion title in Women's C1, took silver in K1, and joined the U23 Women's K1 Team—alongside Ria Sribar and Marcella Altman—to place third in the team event and earn a bronze medal. On the men's side, Kaelin Friedenson stunned the field with a never-before-seen kickflip in Kayak Cross, an innovation drawing international attention. 16-year-old Carden Oetting impressed with a 4th-place finish in Junior C1 and 9th in K1. From rising stars to technical trailblazers, the future of U.S. slalom looks bright.

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U.S. Sprint Athletes Set to Race at 2025 ICF Junior & U23 Canoe Sprint World Championships

The American Canoe Association is thrilled to announce the U.S. paddlers named to the 2025 U.S. Junior & U23 Canoe Sprint World Championships Team, set to race July 23–27 in Montemor-o-Velho, Portugal. Get ready to cheer on our young athletes as they take on the best in the world, racing for speed, precision, and national pride.

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USA Canoe Polo Heads to PanAms



2025 USA Canoe Polo Women's National Team

The U.S. Canoe Polo National Teams are gearing up for the 2025 Pan American Canoe Polo Championships, taking place August 22–24 in Edmonton, Canada. Both the Men's and Women's National Teams will compete for a chance to qualify for the 2026 ICF World Championships in Germany. Meet the athletes, find livestream info, and learn how to support the teams on their journey at the link below.

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Instructor of the Month: Dustin Miller



The ACA is proud to celebrate Dustin Miller as our July Instructor of the Month! Dustin teaches on Georgia's Chattahoochee River, runs overnight guided trips with his dad, and brings a calm, thoughtful presence to every course.

Formerly a civil engineer, Dustin discovered a passion for teaching paddling through the Beaver Crew program and now dedicates his career to helping others find confidence on the water. One student shared, "He's passionate about this field and making himself better constantly—and loves to share his knowledge in however he can."

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

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,

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