



Serving paddlers since 1880



As we mark the 145th Anniversary of the American Canoe Association, we're inviting you to be part of something special.

On **July 1**, we're launching the first-annual **ACA Story Project** — a month-long storytelling fundraiser that celebrates the people, places, and moments that make paddling so meaningful. We'll be sharing stories from ACA members, highlighting the joy, connection, and adventure found on the water.

Here's how to join in:

- **Watch your inbox** and follow us on social media [[@acapaddlesports](#) on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)] — we'll be sharing new stories throughout the month.
- **Read, share, and celebrate** the stories that speak to you.
- **Give back** if you're moved — whether through a donation or by volunteering your time to support paddlesports in your community.

The project culminates on **August 3**, the day ACA was founded 145 years ago. Our goal is to honor our past while helping shape a bright, inclusive future for paddlesports.

Thanks for joining us in looking back on what makes our community so special. We can't wait to share these stories with you.

[Learn More About the ACA Story Project](#)



Public Lands Sales

Thanks to overwhelming public pressure, a dangerous proposal to sell off up to 3.3 million acres of public land has been removed from the Senate's budget reconciliation bill.

Senator Mike Lee's original proposal would have put access to trails, climbing areas, and paddling destinations across the West at risk. While the the original proposal was struck down, Senator Mike Lee has already introduced a revised version targeting 1.2 million acres near communities—areas we all love and use.

United opposition of this legislation from the outdoor recreation community has made huge impact. Keep the pressure on—let's keep public lands in public hands.

[Learn More & Take Action](#)



🎉 You're Invited: ACA 145th Anniversary Celebration at PaddleFest! 🎉

Join us for an unforgettable evening with your paddling community as we celebrate 145 years of the American Canoe Association during the first-ever ACA PaddleFest—a new national gathering for paddlers of all backgrounds and disciplines.

📅 Saturday, October 18

🕒 6:00–9:00 PM

📍 U.S. National Whitewater Center 5000 Whitewater Center Parkway, Charlotte, NC 28214

🎫 Tickets: \$28

Your ticket includes:

- Appetizers & non-alcoholic beverages
- Photo booth fun
- Access to the Silent Auction
- ACA Awards Ceremony

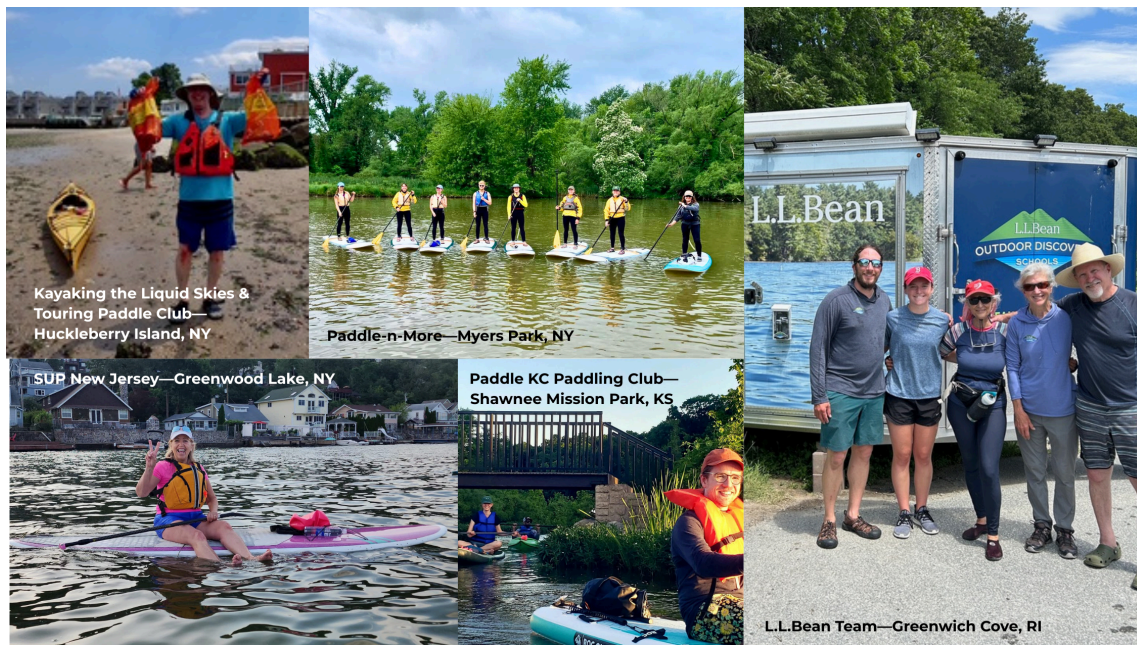
This celebratory evening is part of ACA PaddleFest, a weekend-long national event featuring:

- Swiftwater Rescue Conference
- Instructor & Instructor Trainer Updates
- U.S. Slalom & Kayak Cross National Championships
- PTC Colab 2025
- ACA Annual Meeting

Don't miss this chance to connect, celebrate, and support the future of paddlesports. All proceeds from the silent auction support ACA programs and paddling access initiatives.

[Reserve Your Ticket](#)

Celebrating the Longest Days of the Year on the Water: 2025 Summer Solstice Celebration Recap



The ACA Summer Solstice Celebration, held June 20–22, is all about two things: getting people on the water during the longest days of the year, and highlighting the many ways the ACA supports paddlers across the country and around the world.

This year, we saw more than 30 events light up our calendar—from instructor certifications and skills courses to community paddles, races, club meetups, and waterway cleanups. Events took place in more than 20 states and even extended internationally to Hong Kong, showcasing the broad reach and deep impact of the ACA paddling community.

To amplify our commitment to stewardship, we also sent free waterway cleanup kits to ACA members organizing cleanup events during the Solstice weekend. From the Snoqualmie River Paddle and Cleanup in Washington to the Tri-Cities Community Paddle in Kennewick, paddlers combined celebration with conservation. Whether you joined an instructor update in Chicago, raced down the Gunnison River in Colorado, explored historic waterways in New Jersey, or paddled under a solstice moon in Kansas, you helped us mark this season of sunlight with purpose and unity.

Our most heartfelt thank you to every member, instructor, club, and affiliate who brought this vision to life!

SUP with a Pro Video Contest—Voting Ends June 28!

The ACA Safety Education & Instruction Council's Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Committee is excited to announce that voting is now open for the "Paddle with a SUP Pro" Video Contest!

This grassroots campaign is all about celebrating the value of professional SUP instruction and showcasing how it empowers paddlers to go farther, do more, and paddle smarter. We asked ACA-certified SUP Instructors and Instructor Trainers to submit short videos highlighting why learning from a SUP Pro makes a real difference — and they delivered!

Whether you're new to the sport or a seasoned paddler, these videos offer a glimpse into the fun, growth, and connection that come with expert guidance on the water.

👤 Watch the Finalists:

Check out all five video submissions here:

1. [Video Submission #1 by Ashley Brown](#)

2. [Video Submission #2 by Scott Dahlquist](#)
3. [Video Submission #3 by Heidi Hartston](#)
4. [Video Submission #4 by Christina Montiel](#)
5. [Video Submission #5 by Bob Myron](#)

After watching each video, cast your vote by end of day, June 28!

👉 [Vote here!](#)

Watch the Videos and Cast Your Vote!



Evy Leibfarth Strikes Gold and the U.S. Team Shines in the First Three Canoe Slalom World Cups of 2025



Evy Leibfarth at the 2025 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup - Prague

Photo Credit: [@paddlephotography](#)

June was packed with world-class racing as the ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup circuit kicked off in Europe, with stops in La Seu d'Urgell (ESP), Pau (FRA), and Prague (CZE).

At World Cup 1 in La Seu d'Urgell, Casey Eichfeld advanced to the Men's Canoe Final, finishing 9th overall and continuing his veteran presence on the international stage.

At World Cup 2 in Pau, Evy Leibfarth delivered a standout performance, recording the fastest Women's Kayak heat on June 13 and finishing 4th in the final. The next day, she again topped the Women's Canoe heats and placed 6th in the final, demonstrating exceptional consistency. Also in Pau, Zach "Bug" Lokken put down a strong run in Men's Canoe, finishing 15th overall in a deep international field.

Leibfarth carried that momentum into World Cup 3 in Prague, where she earned her first-ever World Cup gold medal, winning the Women's Kayak Final. She also placed 9th in the Women's Canoe, marking top-10 finishes in both events.

Team USA continues to build international experience and showcase world-class talent across the board. More athlete highlights and race recaps coming soon!

2025 Wildwater National Championships Coming to the Potomac River

For the first time ever, the USA Wildwater National Championships will be held on the Potomac River near Great Falls, MD this coming August 30-31. This event will welcome top Wildwater athletes from across the country to race on one of America's most iconic whitewater venues.

Spectators can catch the action from the Billy Goat Trail, Anglers Access Point, and Carderock, with free access to most viewing areas. The event is also designated as an ICF International Level 4 race, the first of its kind in the U.S. since 2019.

"We are really looking forward to hosting this event, with the Canoe Cruisers Association (CCA), our local club in the greater D.C area. It has always been a dream of mine to get a Nationals on the Potomac and bring competitors to this area," shared Bob Bofinger, USA Wildwater Chairman, National Team Member, and many-time USA National Champion.

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Instructor of the Month: Melissa DeMarie



Instructor of the Month, Melissa DeMarie

The ACA is proud to honor Melissa DeMarie as our May 2025 Instructor of the Month! A whitewater kayak instructor and global paddling guide, Melissa has spent the past 20 years

building community on and off the water. She's the founder of California Watersport Collective (Cali Collective), which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, and is launching a new nonprofit, Riverbound, to expand access to paddling for underrepresented communities.

Melissa teaches on the South Fork American River and beyond, with international experience in Chile, Italy, Norway, and more. Join her at the 1st Annual Riverbound Fundraising Celebration—a full day of paddling and community in support of Riverbound's mission.

[Continue Reading](#)

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

ACA Swiftwater Rescue Conference at ACA PaddleFest

The ACA Swiftwater Rescue Conference is back—and it's bigger than ever.

Join us October 17–19, 2025 at the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC, for three days of immersive, skills-based learning with nationally and internationally recognized rescue experts. Whether you're an experienced professional or advancing your swiftwater knowledge, this conference will challenge and inspire you to lead with confidence in dynamic water environments.

Each registration includes:

- 3 on-water sessions
- 3 land-based sessions
- ACA Swiftwater Instructor & IT Updates
- 1 ticket to that ACA 145th Anniversary Celebration (Oct. 18)
- Networking with industry leading swiftwater rescue experts

Cost: \$375 (ACA members only)

Space is limited—lock in your spot and be part of this gathering of swiftwater professionals.

[Register Here](#)

ACA Instructor & IT Updates at ACA PaddleFest

Calling all ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Instructor Trainer Educators—join us at the first-ever ACA PaddleFest, October 17–19, 2025, at the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC, for a powerful weekend of professional development, peer connection, and on-water growth.

These updates will help you:

- Refine your skills and instructional techniques
- Deepen your leadership presence
- Engage in real-world scenarios and peer discussions
- Explore new strategies for decision-making and group management

This is your opportunity to refresh your certification and renew your connection to the ACA instructor community.

Available Instructor & IT Updates:

- **Level 1–2:** Introduction to Canoeing, Canoe Touring, River Canoe, Introduction to Kayaking, Kayak Touring (Coastal), River Kayak, Introduction to SUP, Essentials of SUP
- **Level 3–5:** Whitewater Canoe, Whitewater Kayak, Whitewater SUP, Whitewater Rafting Swiftwater Rescue updates available only through the Swiftwater Rescue Conference.

Note: This is not an upgrade opportunity. Updates must be completed at your current certification level or lower.

Cost: \$150

[Register Here](#)

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](#).

Have a wonderful and safe 4th of July weekend!

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