



Serving paddlers since 1880



🎉 Big News from ACA PaddleFest! 🎉

We are thrilled to announce that **registration is now OPEN for the Swiftwater Rescue Conference and Instructor Updates at ACA PaddleFest!** Sharpen your skills, connect with fellow paddlers, and learn from some of the best in the field.

Tickets are also now available for the can't-miss event of the year: the ACA 145th Anniversary Soiree & Silent Auction! Join us for a night of celebration, connection, and fundraising to support paddling safety, education, competition, community, and stewardship.

We're also excited to share that the **Paddlesport Trade Coalition will be joining us at ACA PaddleFest!** The PTC Colab 2025 will offer on-water demos, new product showcases, industry discussions, and informational sessions & roundtables from industry leading brands, manufacturers, retailers/outfitters and sales reps! This is the ultimate paddlesports celebration—don't miss your chance to be part of it.

[ACA PaddleFest Registration, Tickets, and More Information](#)



Outdoor Alliance Rallies the Outdoor Community to Save 500,000 Acres of Public Land

Last week, the outdoor recreation community came together to defeat the sale of 500,000 acres of public land that were part of a massive spending bill in Congress.

[Outdoor Alliance](#) sent over 100,000 letters to lawmakers that said, “public lands should be managed for people and the future.” This was a significant win for bikers, hikers, skiers, paddlers, hunters, climbers, and proof that advocacy from the outdoor recreation community works. Unfortunately, the rest of the bill includes a number of provisions that are BAD for America’s public lands and waters, including giveaways for oil and gas companies, rollbacks on environmental reviews and old growth protections, and it opens up the Boundary Waters for mining.

The bill goes to the Senate next, which means there's time to make your voice heard again—it takes just two minutes!

[Tell Congress: Public Lands Should Be Managed for People and the Future](#)

Only 2 Waterway Clean Up Kits Left!

We are looking forward to the third year of celebrating the summer solstice on the water! Join us June 20-22 by finding an event listed on the [ACA Summer Solstice Celebration webpage](#) or add your own using the [Calendar Event Submission Form](#)!

To make this year special, we will be sending a limited number of waterway cleanup kits to ACA members who are planning a waterway cleanup event over the ACA Summer Solstice Celebration. Please use the [Waterway Cleanup Kit Request Form](#) to apply for your free kit! We have 2 kits left, apply for your kit today!

Just like the past two years, we will also be sending stickers to any ACA member, PAC, or affiliate who is hosting a paddling event during the ACA Summer Solstice Celebration. This includes community paddles, instructional courses, races, and other competitive events! Click the button below to learn more, find an event near you, request stickers, and add your event to the Summer Solstice Celebration Calendar!



National Safe Boating Week



Youth Kayaking 101 course held as part of National Safe Boating week, at Lake Norman YMCA in Cornelius, NC.

For the fourth year in a row, ACA volunteers joined forces with local paddling leaders to deliver beginner-friendly paddling classes to kick off National Safe Boating Week. This initiative, recognized in 2024 with the Community Impact Award from the National Safe Boating Council, brings paddlers, volunteers, and organizations together to help beginners learn safe paddling skills and foster connections within the paddling community.

Each location offered hands-on instruction designed for new paddlers, ensuring that beginners learned essential skills such as basic strokes, safety procedures, and local waterway knowledge. Many locations also featured community-building elements such as group paddles, environmental stewardship discussions, and family-friendly activities to encourage participation.

The partnership highlights diverse aspects of paddlesports, with specialized offerings including kayak fishing courses, adaptive paddling sessions, river kayak day trips, and youth-focused classes led by ACA Instructor Trainer Chris Wing, and assisted by ACA Competition Director Jed Hinkley and U.S. Slalom National Team members, Bug Lokken and Marcella Altman.

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SUP with a Pro Video Contest

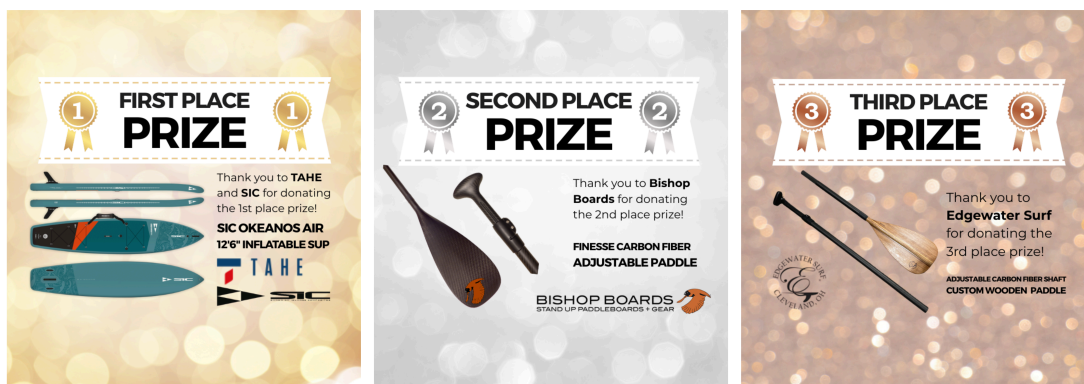
Do you love stand up paddleboarding? Have you benefited from or seen others benefit from SUP instruction and want to share that story with others? Then, use your creative eye to submit a short video highlighting why you should “Paddle with a SUP Pro!”

The ACA SEIC SUP Committee has launched this initiative designed to grow awareness of the availability and value of SUP training with professional instructors/guides. This is a grassroots video contest, and the ACA SEIC SUP Committee invites each of you to submit a short video about the value of instruction. This is a win-win-win for instructors, guide services/schools, and clients, who will come away with an enhanced skill set and the ability to do more and go farther than they’d ever imagined.

📺 Submit up to 3 short videos by June 7!

🗳️ Voting will take place June 18-28.

🏆 Prizes available to the top 3 videos!



[More Information](#)

Thank You to Our Green-Level Affiliate Organizations!

The American Canoe Association extends heartfelt thanks to our two Green-Level Affiliate Organizations: New Mexico River Adventures and Bayou Liberty Heritage Foundation.

New Mexico River Adventures offers unforgettable outdoor experiences in the Santa Fe/Taos area of northern New Mexico. Whether you're seeking an adrenaline-pumping whitewater run through the world-famous Taos Box, a scenic float along the azure canyon of the Rio Chama, or a quiet day stand-up paddleboarding with the region's only ACA-certified guide, New Mexico River Adventures delivers. Their expert instructors also lead kayaking and wilderness travel adventures for groups and families alike.

Bayou Liberty Heritage Foundation, established in 2025, is dedicated to preserving and promoting the unique natural and cultural heritage of Louisiana's Bayou Liberty region. This year, they are reviving the beloved Bayou Liberty Pirogue Races, a cherished tradition dating back over six decades. The 68th annual event will take place on Sunday, June 1, 2025, featuring races, live music, local crafts, and family-friendly activities.

Thank you, New Mexico River Adventures and Bayou Liberty Heritage Foundation, for your outstanding commitment to paddlesports!



United States Kicks off International Sprint Racing Season in Europe



Coach Joe Harper on the dock with Women's C2 (Andreea Ghizila & Audrey Harper) at the first ICF Canoe Sprint World Cup of the season in Szeged, Hungary.

U.S. Sprint and Paracanoe Teams Members began their international racing season in Europe this May at the first two ICF Sprint World Cups of the new Olympic/Paralympic cycle. The U.S. Team then traveled to Poznan, Poland for windy conditions and more competitive racing. There the team was joined by U.S. Paracanoe National Team member, Michael Ballard who raced in the Men's KL2 200m event in his first major international race of the season.

Stout competition for all athletes and the U.S. Team had a strong start to the season. The next big international race is the Junior and U23 World Championships that will take place in Montermor-o-Velho, July 23-27.

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U.S. Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross National Team Prepares for the International Race Season

As the U.S. Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross National Team sets its sights on the ICF Canoe Slalom World Cups the new Olympic cycle this coming June—La Seu, Spain (June 6-8), Pau, France (June 13-15), and Prague, Czechia (June 27-29)—the team is primed to test itself against the world's best.

The team's preparation has included the comprehensive support from US Performance Center in Charlotte, NC. A hub of elite athletic development, the center brings together state-of-the-art facilities, expert coaching, integrated medical and performance support, and a community of driven athletes. For Men's Kayak athlete Tyler Westfall, who recently participated in athlete testing at the facility said that the impact has been transformative. "Having access to so many different resources under one roof has been a game changer,"

he shares. “It’s so motivating to have a whole team of people with varying skills who are communicating with each other with the common goal of providing us what we need to be the best we can be.”

The three back-to-back World Cups will provide a thrilling glimpse into the U.S. team’s prospects for the season. For the U.S. athletes, this summer is about more than just results. It’s about sharpening their skills, testing new strategies, and leveraging the unique support system that places them among the world’s elite. US Performance Center’s holistic approach to athlete development is giving the team a competitive edge—one they hope to showcase on the global stage.

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Instructor of the Month: John MacDonald



Instructor of the Month, John MacDonald

The American Canoe Association is proud to recognize John MacDonald as our Instructor of the Month for May 2025! A dedicated paddler, instructor, and leader, John’s passion for sharing the joy and accessibility of paddling is evident in every course he leads. John is a River Kayak Instructor Trainer and an Adaptive Paddling Instructor Trainer Educator whose teaching spans the United States and beyond. From his home base in Salt Lake City, Utah, to his earlier years in Ohio, and even internationally in Hong Kong and Sweden, John brings a wealth of experience to every paddling program he leads.

When asked about his most memorable teaching moments, John struggles to pick just one. “The best moments are those when I see a student ‘get it’—whether they’re working with the water instead of against it, solving a rescue challenge, or getting back on the water for

the first time since an injury,” he says. These moments of connection and growth are what drive him forward.

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

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Smart Start for Safe Paddling Informational Session

Back by popular demand, we will be hosting a second informational session about the Smart Start for Safe Paddling resources! The Smart Start for Safe Paddling program features:

- Resource book including glossary of terms
- Student workbook including comprehension questions, answer key, skills checklists, float plan template, and accompanying activities
- Facilitators guide - NEW!
- Infographics for quick reference
- On-water training course outline
- Collection of complementary resources

Learn more about this new suite of resources and how it can benefit you and/or your organization in a webinar taking place on **Wednesday, June 18 at 2:00 PM Eastern Time**. This session will be hosted by all three of the program's authors, Kelsey Bracewell, Robin Pope, and Brett Mayer, along with ACA IT and Recreational Boating Safety Specialist for the Seventh Coast Guard District, Scott Szczepaniak.

[Register for the Smart Start for Safe Paddling Informational Session](#)

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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