



Serving paddlers since 1880



We are less than two months out from the first [ACA PaddleFest!](#) This event has something for everyone who calls themselves a paddler, which we are pretty sure you do ;)

[Get your ticket today for the ACA 145th Anniversary Celebration before prices increase on September 1!](#) We are so excited for this event and we hope to see you there!



USDA Plans to Rescind the Roadless Rule, Putting Backcountry Recreation at Risk

The USDA has announced plans to rescind the Roadless Rule, which safeguards backcountry forest land from timber harvesting and new road development. Because roadless areas are so important for recreation, including mountain biking, climbing, camping, backcountry skiing, and paddling, rolling back the rule would be bad news for people who love getting outside. It's part of a broader push to weaken protections and treat public lands like a resource to be sold off or developed, instead of a legacy to be shared. Before September 19, when the public comment period closes, please tell the USDA that the Roadless Rule is important for outdoor recreation experiences. This is one of those issues that could make or break the future of the outdoors and our public lands.

Outdoor Alliance has made it simple to [learn more](#) and [leave a comment](#).

Speak Up for 45 Million Acres of National Forests: Protect the Roadless Rule



Submit Nominations for 2025 ACA Annual Awards by September 22

Each year, the ACA presents a series of prestigious international awards to individuals and organizations who have illustrated exemplary leadership, service, and dedication to various aspects of paddlesports.

We are accepting nominations for the following award categories:

- Excellence in Instruction
- Sanctioned Event of the Year
- Green Paddle for Waterway Conservation
- Joe Pina Volunteer of the Year
- The J. Henry Rushton Award (for Organizational Excellence)
- Legends of Paddling Award
- Havens Leadership Award

We will be announcing the award winners at [ACA Paddlefest](#), happening in Charlotte, NC October 17-19!

Nominations for the 2025 ACA Annual Awards are due by **Monday, September 22!**

[Submit a Nomination](#)

ACA LEAD Program Continues to Make Waves in California and Pennsylvania

Earlier this month, ACA's Leadership, Exploration, and Development (LEAD) program made a big impact on both coasts. In California, Sea Trek and Outdoor Afro partnered to deliver a training in Alameda and Sausalito as part of Outdoor Afro's annual Capstone experience for volunteer leaders. The course introduced ACA's new multi-craft Community Paddlesports Leader (CPL) certification, designed to recognize and equip community leaders who facilitate safe, inclusive paddling experiences.

Also hosted this summer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, ACA Instructor Trainer Trey Rouss teamed up with Venture Outdoors and participants from the 2024 Venture Outdoors LEAD Program at North Park Lake to bring the LEAD program to a new cohort of BIPOC paddlers. Participants praised the supportive community and the chance to practice rescues in a safe environment—building confidence and leadership skills that will ripple out into their local waterways.

Both events reflect ACA's commitment to equity, representation, and expanding access in paddlesports. As Instructor & Leader Trainer Laura Zulliger noted, "Representation matters. When participants see leaders who look like them, it sends a message: you belong here, your leadership is valued, and your presence changes the culture of the outdoors."

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Fueling Performance: How USPC Nutrition Coaching Supports USA Canoe Slalom Athlete Marcella Altman



Photo Credit: Eric Francis

USA Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross National Team member Marcella Altman is racing this weekend, August 29–31, at the ICF World Cup 4 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Marcella has been working with nutritionists at the U.S. Performance Center (USPC), an ACA partner supporting athletes with individualized nutrition strategies that optimize performance and recovery.

“Food is fuel,” Marcella says. “Making sure I get everything I need from my diet helps me feel good, perform at my best, and decrease likelihood of injury.” Marcella heads into World Cup 4 after an exciting summer that included a bronze medal in the Women’s K1 Team event with teammates Evy Leibfarth and Ria Sribar at the U23 World Championships in France.

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USA Delivers Strong Performances at the 2025 Canoe Sprint & Paracanoe World Championships



Audrey Harper and Andreea Ghizila on the podium after earning bronze medals in the Women's C2 200m event / Photo Credit: Axel Di Bert

Milan, Italy – August 20–24, 2025 — U.S. athletes wrapped up an exciting week of racing at the 2025 Canoe Sprint & Paracanoe World Championships in Milan, Italy, with standout results, breakthrough performances, and plenty of reason for pride. Against some of the world's fastest paddlers, the U.S. squad proved that every stroke counts—delivering nail-biting finishes, personal bests, and a podium moment to remember. The highlight of the week came from Audrey Harper and Andreea Ghizila, who stormed their way to a bronze medal in the Women's C2 200m A Final. Beyond the medal, the team stacked up strong finishes across the board, with multiple athletes earning personal records and top-tier results in their finals.

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Seattle's Green Lake Welcomes Return of Sprint National Championships

Over 270 athletes from 18 clubs raced for national titles and historic trophies at the 2025 Sprint National Championships, hosted by the Seattle Canoe & Kayak Club at Green Lake. This year marked the first time Nationals returned to Seattle since 2012, with athletes and spectators enjoying the newly completed boathouse. From breakout junior performances to Olympians like Greg Barton, Maggie Hogan, Fernando Jorge, Sandor Tótká, and Dennis Van Valkenburgh inspiring the next generation, the regatta was a true celebration of sprint paddling.

Highlights included Gig Harbor Canoe & Kayak Racing Team capturing the Yonkers Trophy as overall National Champions, Bellingham Canoe Kayak Sprint Team's senior victories, and standout performances across Para, Masters, and Bantam divisions.

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Bug Lokken Coaches the Next Generation as He Trains for LA28



USA Canoe Slalom Olympian Zach “Bug” Lokken is balancing his international racing career and LA28 Olympic goals with a new passion—coaching youth paddlers at Piedmont Paddlesports. From teaching beginners their first strokes to guiding kids through their first river race (and even jumping in to save a young paddler in need), Bug is proving that coaching is as much about mentorship and inspiration as it is about technique.

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Instructor of the Month: Sandra Newbury



Photo Credit: M Baxley at Bear Witness Media

This month, we celebrate Sandra Newbury, founder of [Northwoods Outdoor Center](#) and an ACA Instructor of the Month. Sandra describes a turning point in her career while pursuing her Instructor Trainer certification. The process pushed her to think deeply about education and how to develop independence and confidence in others. “That structure has actually brought more simplicity, allowing me to encourage more independence in my students—whether that’s in boating, safety, or teaching,” she reflects. From her home rivers in Wisconsin to trips on Costa Rica’s Sarapiquí and Idaho’s Main Salmon, Sandra is passionate about teaching paddlers of all levels and building inclusive communities.

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

New Instructor & Trainer Emeritus Program

The ACA is proud to announce the Instructor Emeritus program which recognizes and honors the exceptional contributions of ACA instructors who have dedicated decades to teaching and advancing paddlesports education. Over the ACA Instructor Certification program’s 50-year history, thousands of instructors have been certified, with some serving consistently for 20 years or more.

As these highly skilled and knowledgeable individuals reach a point where they wish to step back—whether due to age, health, or shifting priorities—their expertise remains an invaluable resource for students, Instructors, Instructor Trainers (ITs), and Instructor Trainer Educators (ITEs). The Instructor Emeritus designation provides a way to acknowledge and celebrate their legacy, allowing them to formally retire from active certification while continuing to share their insights, support the instructional community, and remain recognized as pillars of the ACA’s educational program.

[Learn More](#)

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Sincerely,

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