



ACA Board Meeting **[Video Meeting]**

Tuesday, September 16, 2025
[Approved 10/16/25]

WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Suzanne opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. ET. The agenda is presented in Appendix A. A motion was made to approve the July minutes. It was seconded. The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

Attendance. Attendance was taken from the video logins. **BOD Present:** Suzanne Britt, Bill Caruso, Bev Cosslett, Jonas Ecker, Blake Haxton, Brenda Jin, Robert Kauffman, David Lumian, Ryan Rushton, Risa Shimoda, Aaron Small
BOD Members Not Present: Zach (Bug) Lokken
Staff Present: Beth Spilman, Emma Walther
Other Attendees: na
Quorum was obtained.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE (Appendix B)

Membership Survey. Beth indicated that the response to the survey was skewed toward older members and not toward younger members. However, it did provide some benefit (e.g. marketing campaign about member benefits & social media answers). For this reason, no further action was taken regarding the membership survey.

Stories Project. (Appendix C). Beth indicated it was a huge success. 1) We raised \$25,000. 2) The key was engagement with the membership and beyond. 3) She provided statistics on the number of hits.

Fundraising Plan. Beth indicated that the ACA Member Stories raised considerable funds. She indicated that there would be several fund raising initiatives at the 145 Celebration. Beth noted that the contractual hire was instrumental in implementing the Story Project.

Sport 80 Update. The implementation of Sport 80 is progressing. It was reported that US Cycling was consuming the technical resources of Sport 80. It should be able to launch by November.

Smart Start. (Appendix D). We have sold approximately 661 books. We have not received and large orders, which may be because of the budgeting cycle of larger organizations.

Paddlefest and 145th Anniversary Celebration. Beth indicated that there were 40 SWR updates and about 40 instructor updates. We have sold approximately 160 tickets to the celebration. There is a question of whether we want to hold the annual meeting during the celebration. The schedule is on the website along with the complete schedule.

Safe Sport Complaints. Beth indicated the ACA has received two SafeSport non-Olympic complaints.

Financial Results through Q3 2025 FY. The office has submitted two requests for grants, one to the USOPC and the other to the USCG. [Secretary's Note: There will be no USCG funds available this year.] Krista is requesting budget requests for next year. Beth explained the basics of our profit-and-loss statement along with our projected income and expenses for next year.

BUSINESS OVERVIEWS

SEIC. (Appendix E). Ryan noted that they were rolling out the leader program. It is going according to plan. He explained the election process of their executive board and the chairs of the individual disciplines. There may be massive changes in discipline chairs this coming year.

Competition Council. (Appendix F). Risa is not here because she is on a plane. Please review her report.

Regional Activity Council. (Appendix G). Bill discussed the following initiatives: 1) They were focused on implementing Kayaking 101. 2) RAC is interested in pulling together a committee on insurance. 3) They are developing a checklist or outline to assist state directors in carrying out their duties. 4) Work with Brett to develop SOPs for state directors as advocates. 5) They considered an event at Paddlefest, but then decided against it.

Athletic Advisory Committee. Jonas gave the report. He indicated they had no report at this time. They were busy competing.

Athlete Safety Policy. (Appendix H). There was considerable discussion of the addition to the policy. A motion was made to accept the policy. It was seconded, and it passed.

MOTION: Moved to accept the Athlete Safety Policy. [disposition: 7 yes; 1 no; 1 abstention; 2 not present; motion passed]

Nomination Committee. (Appendix I, J & K). 1) There is an October 29th demonstration of ElectionBuddy. 2) McKenzie was working on installing the program for \$1,800. It was decided to wait until next year to implement ElectionBuddy. 3) Since the original motion specified implementation for 2025, a motion was made to untangle the motion. It was seconded and passed. A motion was made to delete the motion. It was seconded and passed. 4) A slate of three candidates for the two at-large positions was advanced. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

MOTION: Accept the Nomination Committee's three candidates for the two at-large positions. [disposition: passed unanimously]

Executive Director Review. (Appendix L). Robert outlined the process for the annual review of the executive director. 1) Robert would conduct a survey of the BOD. 2) The executive committee will serve as the work group. 3) At the October meeting, Wednesday afternoon will focus on the review process.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 10:04 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, October 15th and 16th.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert B. Kauffman
Secretary

Tentative 2025 BOD Meeting Schedule:	
Tuesday, January 14 th Tuesday, February 11 th Tuesday, March 11 th Tuesday, April 8 th Tuesday, May 6 th June (no meeting) Wednesday, July 9 th	August (no meeting) Tuesday, September 16 th Wednesday & Thursday, October 15 th & 16 th Wednesday, November 12 th Wednesday, December 10 th



Appendix A

**American Canoe Association
Board of Directors Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, September 16, 2025
[Video Meeting]
Agenda**

WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approximate Time

- Role Call
- Approval of July 2025 minutes

8:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

8:05

Continuation of Previous Updates:

- Membership Survey [5/25]
- Fund Raising Plan [7/25]
- Sport 80
- Smart Start
- 145th Celebration and Meeting
- Summer Solstice

New Items:

COUNCIL & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **SEIC:** Ryan: 8:20
- **Competition Council** - Risa 8:28
- **Regional Activity Council (RAC)** - Bill 8:36
- **Athlete Advisory Council (AAC):** TBD 8:44
- **Athlete Safety Policy** 8:52
 - MOTION: **To Pass the Athlete Safety Policy** [see Google Drive]
- **Nomination Committee:** Bev 9:02
 - MOTION: **The ACA Nominating Committee requests authorization to spend \$2500 to purchase ElectionBuddy services for the 2025 board election.** [Tabled motion]
- **Executive Director Review:** rbk
 - Overview of process and possible survey
- **Finance Committee:** Beth/Brenda 9:12
 - Budget Requests

NEW BUSINESS

- Business from the floor 9:22

ADJOURNMENT

9:30

Tentative 2025 BOD Meeting Schedule:	
Tuesday, January 14 th Tuesday, February 11 th Tuesday, March 11 th Tuesday, April 8 th Tuesday, May 6 th June (skipped) Wednesday, July 9 th	August (skipped) Tuesday, September 16 th Wednesday/Thursday, October 15 th , 16 th & Annual Meeting Wednesday, November 12 th Wednesday, December 10 th

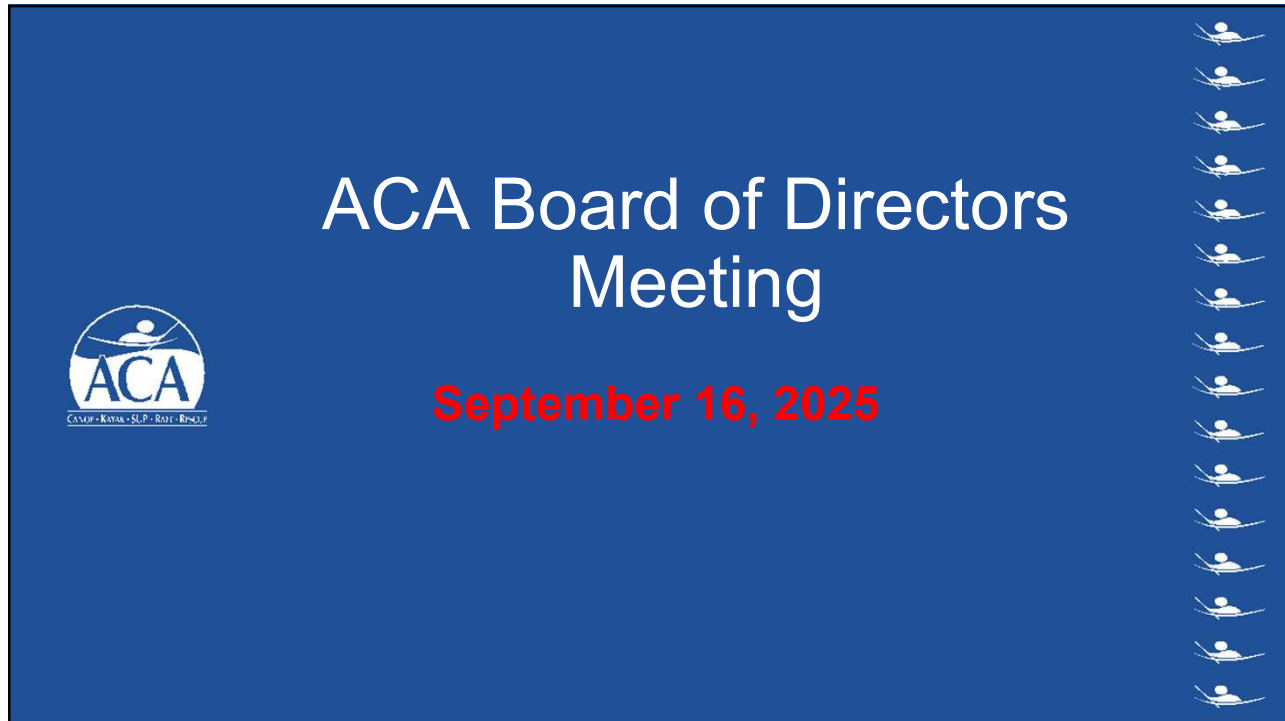
APP07: Nominating Committee Request

MOTION: The ACA Nominating Committee requests authorization to spend \$2500 to purchase ElectionBuddy services for the 2025 board election. ElectionBuddy is a professional online voting solution offering customizable ballots, electronic notices, secure voting encryption, detailed audit trails, support for online voting, reporting, SMS reminders, voting groups, and two-factor authentication.

Supporting information:

- The nominating Committee reviewed 3 providers, including: Survey & Balloting Systems (SBS), Simply Voting, and ElectionBuddy.
- ElectionBuddy is used by USA Weightlifting, USA Climbing, USA Judo
- ElectionBuddy is the most affordable of the 3 reviewed
- ElectionBuddy is highly rated 4.8/5.0 on Capterra & GoodFirms, and highly rated by Reddit users
- Features & proposal from ElectionBuddy: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1umIbaBTI1U-TF7_7JLUm6xEuTsJbp_nM/view?usp=drive_link
- \$ 2,500 will support a single election; if we combine the RAC and Competition Council elections, the price remains the same.

Appendix B

A blue rectangular slide with white text and graphics. On the left is the ACA logo, which includes a circular emblem with a person in a canoe and the text 'ACA' and 'CANOE • KAYAK • SUP • RACE • ROLL'. In the center, the text 'ACA Board of Directors Meeting' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this, the date 'September 16, 2025' is written in a bold, red, sans-serif font. On the right side of the slide, there is a vertical column of 15 small white icons, each depicting a person in a canoe.

ACA Board of Directors Meeting

September 16, 2025

ACA
CANOE • KAYAK • SUP • RACE • ROLL

Executive Director Update

- Membership survey
- Fundraising plan
- Sport 80
- Smart Start
- Paddlefest – 145th Anniversary Celebration
- Summer Solstice recap
- Competition

Member Survey

- Received over 1100 responses (slightly more than 2019)
- However, age demographic skewed much older than membership

Ages	Membership	Survey
< 29	25%	6%
> 50	41%	70%

- Interesting insights
 - Members are not aware of many of our member benefits
 - Clear that stewardship and public policy is important to members
 - Survey respondents high likelihood of renewing

Next steps:

Survey lapsed members and experiment with mini surveys (2 or 3 questions)

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Fundraising

- ACA Story Project concluded on August 3. **HUGE SUCCESS!**
- US Olympic & Paralympic Foundation
- Planned Giving Program - finished
- Silent Auction and donors asks at the 145th



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- On track to launch in early November
 - November is lowest revenue month of the year which reduces risk
 - Several process-related challenges have been solved by the team
- Krista will take the lead on developing the implementation plan

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Smart Start

See [Kelsey's Report](#)



Smart Start for Safe Paddling
Book

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Paddlefest and 145th Anniversary Celebration



Registrations to date:

- Swift Water Rescue: 40
- Instructor Updates: 40
- 145th Celebration: 200*

Do we still want to hold the Annual Meeting? If so, when?
What does the Board need for meetings?

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Safe Sport Complaints

- Recently received 2 regarding non Olympic discipline athletes - 1 very serious.
- Recently received 1 regarding an instructor - also very serious.
- Handling per our Response and Resolution Policy and Process which involves the Grievance Committee and, possibly, Hearing Panels.

It's becoming increasingly clear that we need to tighten up enforcement of SafeSport requirements and background checks.

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Financial Results through August 2025

- Membership revenue (dues + insurance income) comparable to 2024 and budget
- Expenses slightly under budget
- “Windfall” of [REDACTED] due to 2023 ERTC filing
- Additional **incremental** revenue:
 - USOPC funding for Nevin
 - USOPC funding for Paracanoe and technology
 - Fundraising revenue from Story Project
 - Shopify/Amazon net income
- **Completed 2026 operating revenue projections:**
Breakeven assuming no change in dues, modest USCG grants, and comparable USOPC funding.

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Third Annual Summer Solstice Celebration

- 37+ events across 20 U.S. states, Hong Kong, and China
 - 16 instructional events
 - 12 community paddles
 - 5 community waterway cleanups supported by ACA-supplied kits
 - 4 competition events/races
- 1,355 stickers promoting ACA's 145th Anniversary
- Event organizers received trifold invitation with details about ACA PaddleFest



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Competition



- Momentum is building with great results in Sprint and Slalom
 - WC-2 made A Finals in first 2 World Cups
 - Evy Leibfarth won WK-1 and placed third in Kayak Cross at World Cup 3
 - U23 Women's Kayak Team won bronze at the Jr/U23 WCH
 - Nevin Harrison is returning to training in prep for LA28
- Michele submitted an interim technology grant request in June
- High Performance Plan and 2026 grant requests submitted July 3:
 - \$1.46 million in Olympic High Performance
 - \$285,000 in Para High Performance
 - \$35,000 for International Relations
 - \$76,000 for Administrative support

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Appendix C

Story Project Engagement Highlights:

- 29 stories published
- 30 emails (average email open rate for all emails (49.06%) - average clicks for all emails (150.6))
- 28 Facebook posts (357,398 campaign views, 189 net follows)
 - Mike Mather's story had over 100K views
- 27 Instagram posts (47,915 campaign views, 13 net follows)
- 1 LinkedIn post

Highlight colors indicate diversity of story content in top posts blue (safety, education instruction), yellow (competition), green (place, stewardship, public policy).

Engagement remained consistent throughout the campaign with no patterns in social or web traffic. The email open rate reduced very slightly over the course of the campaign (no more than 2%) but click rates remained unaffected.

Lessons for 2026:

- Add social media handle and collaborator invitation (yes or no) to story submission form
- Make sure comments are on for GoFundMe
- Consider fewer emails or a separate list to subscribe/unsubscribe from story project emails
- Weekly lapsed story (diverse content)
- Post on LinkedIn as well

Google analytics for ACA homepage. Note: Consistently elevated web traffic for the duration of the Story Project.



Top 10 stories (Google Analytics)

1. "A Whitewater Safety Journey" by Charles Walbridge (688 views) - safety
2. "Paddling: A Life Transformed" by Risa Shimoda (545 views) - women in whitewater, freestyle competition
3. "Paddling's Pivotal Role" by Mike Mather (540 views) - safety
4. "Boy Meets Kayak and Drowns" by Michael Gray (380 views) - safety & education
5. "Hurricane Helene's Silver Lining" by Adam Herzog (357 views) - power of place
6. "Glitter Freckles and Gate Poles: How One Paddler Sparkled Her Way Into Canoe Slalom" by Colleen Crino (321 views) - competition/slalom
7. "Somebody's Gotta Do It" by Charles Albright (251 views) - history, stewardship & public policy
8. "An ACA Life: Teaching Paddling" by Mike Aronoff (230 views) - education & instruction
9. "Speed Demon" by Kianna Morse (230 views) - competition, sprint
10. "The Paddle That Changed My Life's Course" by Loren Edelson (198 views) - education & instruction

Top 10 Facebook posts (views)

1. Mike Mather
2. Charlie Walbridge
3. Michael Gray
4. Dave Mason
5. Risa Shimoda
6. Charles Albright
7. Bob Bofinger
8. Bill Endicott
9. Sam Fowlkes
10. Mike Aronoff

90-day overview compared to previous 90 days. Note: engagement spike over duration of story project.

Content overview

Breakdown ▼

All Posts Stories Reels Videos Live

Views ⓘ

523.3K ↑ 71.8%

Reach ⓘ

175.3K 0%

3-second views ⓘ

1.2K ↓ 98.8%

1-minute views ⓘ

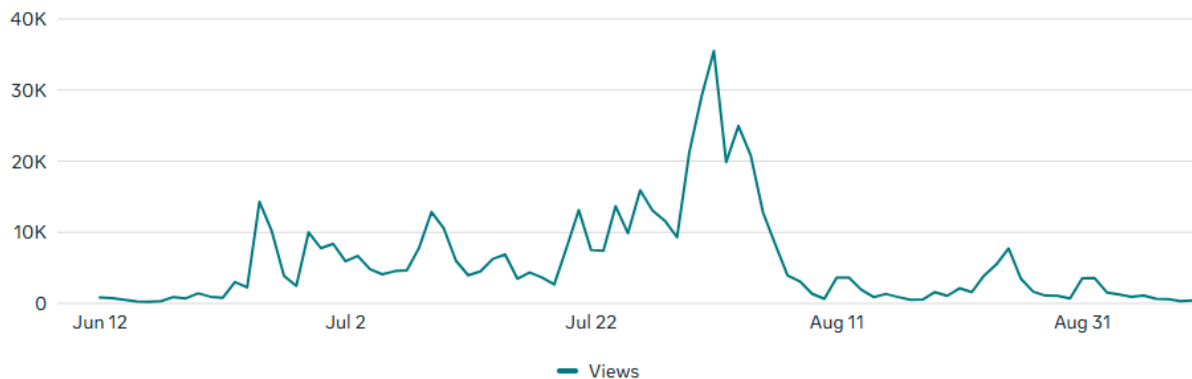
28 ↑ 12%

Content interactions ⓘ

10.1K ↑ 202.4%

Watch time ⓘ

8h 18m



Top content by views

Boost content

See all content

Top 10 Instagram posts (views)

1. Mike Mather
2. Risa Shimoda
3. Kianna Morse
4. Colleen Crino
5. Bill Endicott
6. Dave Mason
7. Bob Bofinger
8. Taylor Stoudnour
9. Adrienne Burke
10. Wayne Douchkoff

90-day overview compared to previous 90 days. Note: Engagement skewed by public lands post (collaborative with OA and AW).

Content overview

Breakdown ▼

All Posts Stories

Views ⓘ

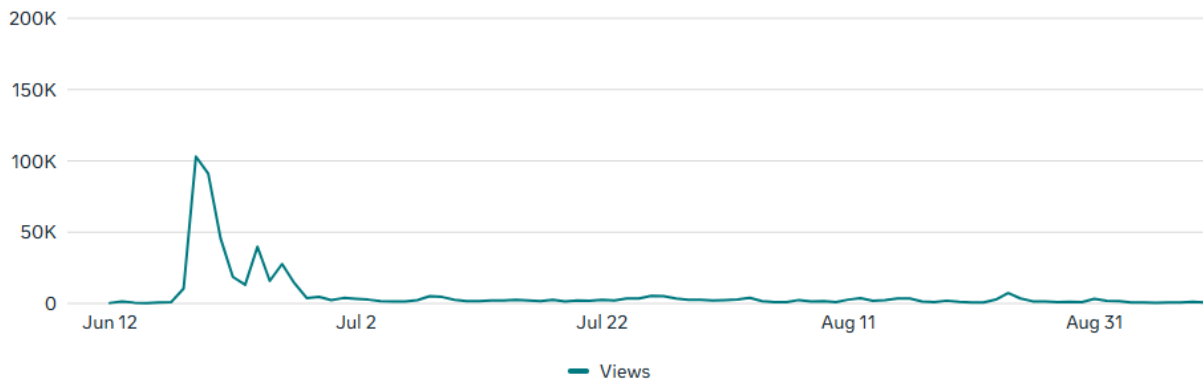
553.1K ↑ 772%

Reach ⓘ

223.4K ↑ 1.1K%

Content interactions ⓘ

11.9K ↑ 442.6%



Top 10 Emails (clicks)

1. Dave Mason
2. Beth Spilman
3. Kelly Rudolph
4. Wayne Douchkoff
5. Kirk Havens
6. Michael Gray
7. Mike Aronoff
8. Adrienne Burke
9. Charles Albright
10. Charles Walbridge

Appendix D

Kelsey Bracewell Report on Smart Start

September 11, 2025

Book Sales:

- Smart Start - 365
- Student Workbook - 155
- Facilitator's Guide - 141
- TOTAL - 661

Additional Information:

- No large orders have been placed yet - my hope is that a concentrated marketing effort, timed properly at the beginning of next paddling season, will produce some good numbers.
- Kelsey is attending the NASBLA Conference this week and will be presenting about Smart Start.
- Work continues on additional complementary resources, including a more in-depth manual to serve groups like the USCG Auxiliary. Robin and I are spearheading that effort.
- Robert K. has asked for a more robust marketing plan for Smart Start as well as ACA's introductory programs, and SEIC has created a working group to address these items. SEIC Secretary Lance Elzie has stepped up to lead the group, and our plan is to really dig into that work in the winter season after Paddlefest has concluded.

Footnote:

The SEIC Discipline Committees will re-seat this fall, in accordance with the SEIC Operating Procedures. Of particular interest will be the re-seating of the IPC Committee Chair (Intro to Paddling Committee which has authority over ACA's Level 1 programs). There is discussion about inviting other national org representatives to sit as liaison or affiliate members of this committee to share in the effort in reaching entry level paddlers (to be an affiliate member of an SEIC committee, one must be an ACA member - if those org reps choose not to join the ACA, they will technically be liaison members of said committee).



Fall SEIC Board Meeting

September 29th @ 7-9 PM Eastern

Appendix E

Agenda includes discussion voting on six motions including:

- Updates to Leader Pathway documents
- Rebranding of PSF as Smart Start for Safe Paddling and including Leader / Guide Trainers as approved providers.
- Expand the re-branded PSF program and certification (to be named Smart Start for Safe Paddling) to utilize the collection of Smart Start resources as well as adopt the ANSI compliant instructor's guide and course outlines as approved by the SEIC and ACA board of directors in June of 2023.
- Updates to Canoe Curriculum
- Updates to Surf Kayak Curriculum

Leadership Pathway Rollout Update

Rollout Highlights

- 84 ITs/ITEs became Leader Trainers and Leader Trainer Educators through Waves 1-2 of the onboarding process. More will come onboard through the end of the year as more LTEs have been equipped to deliver onboarding sessions.
- 39 Instructors have registered to become Leader Trainer Candidates and have started the certification process. Virtual Trainings are held monthly.
- Updates to the ACA website and Course Management System (CMS) are live.

Discipline Committee Elections

SEIC Discipline Committees will re-seat this fall, in accordance with the SEIC Operating Procedures. Of particular interest will be the re-seating of the IPC Committee Chair (Intro to Paddling Committee which has authority over ACA's Level 1 programs). There is discussion about inviting other national org representatives to sit as liaison or affiliate members of this committee to share in the effort in reaching entry level paddlers (to be an affiliate member of an SEIC committee, one must be an ACA member - if those org reps choose not to join the ACA, they will technically be liaison members of said committee).

There are currently 196 SEIC discipline committee members officially on our roster, and the nomination and election process for all of those roles will be a big lift. Kelsey has completed that process in the past, and wants to mention that the ACA Board wanting to change the nomination/election cycle times for SEIC will impact the largest organized and well-functioning group of volunteers we have, and I humbly ask that they reconsider - and allow the SEIC to continue operating with the cycles that are in place.

ACA E-Learning Modules - Funding Request

Proposal Included In Google Drive

- **4 Proposed Modules**
- **Rationale for E-Learning Modules**
- **Benefits to the ACA**
- **Vendor: ETrainU / Sport80**
- **Cost dictated by sole vendor and could range between \$50-75k**
- **Implementation Plan**

Appendix F

Competition Council Update - September 2025

Organizational Updates and Operational Procedures

We reviewed aspects of the new [Operational Procedures](#) that have been reviewed and approved by the ACA Board:

- Clarified attendance requirements for discipline chairs
- Established a clear process for maintaining active committee status
- Incorporated Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP)!
- Attendance Policy - To help the CC ensure that we have a voting quorum, disciplines must be represented at meetings. If a discipline is not represented for two consecutive meetings, the committee will move to "advisory" status without voting privileges. They can regain active status by attending subsequent meetings. If a committee chair provides an approved alternative representative, that person can attend when the chair is unable without special notice.

Coaching Committee - Matt/Alyson/Jed will be publishing a coach roster on ACA's coaching portal (<https://americancanoe.org/competition/sport-development/coaches/>)

Paddlefest October 15-19

- Paddlesports Trade Coalition will now host their PTC Colab in Charlotte (moved from OKC)
- Swiftwater Rescue, other certification updates, in addition to the ACA board meeting

Discipline-Specific Developments

Emerging Collaboration and Integration

- WaveSki Unanimous Vote: Approved WaveSki as a provisional competition council discipline committee
 - Rationale: Expand ACA's representation and support for diverse paddling disciplines
 - Next steps: Formal onboarding and integration process
- International Alignment Efforts
 - Discussions on managing multiple international governing bodies to work toward a more unified, collaborative framework
 - Rafting is working towards merging the World Rafting Federation (WRF) and the International Rafting Federation (IRF). Trevor will keep us informed of the process, which is intended to be settled in 2026. An effect may be conducting alternate Worlds on natural, then artificial rivers.
 - Dragon Boat is navigating complex relationships between IDBF and ICF. Preparing for next year's ICF World Championship in Bulgaria and working on naming a coach

Data and Standardization Initiatives

To create a comprehensive data collection strategy, we will develop a system to

- Develop standard data collection forms
- Create consistent age group definitions
- Establish common geographic regions - Consider water types: for example, river-related disciplines would be served by watersheds instead of by their states. Some disciplines' regions may not be represented at this time.

- Potential use of AI and advanced data tools for analysis

An element of standardization will be reasonable standardization efforts

- Age Group Categories - Prospect of Alignment in 2026 (?)
- Geographic Regions - Commonly recognized regions would help with organization and communication, particularly for larger sports. We discussed the option of using watersheds for river sports.
 - Investigate creating standardized regional divisions
 - Leverage existing state director networks
 - Recognize variations in discipline-specific geographical needs
 - Allow flexibility for disciplines with smaller participant pools
 - Aim for consistency while maintaining adaptability
- Uniform and Branding Strategy
 - Explore creating consistent, discipline-wide team uniforms
 - Investigate potential corporate sponsorship for uniform production
 - Understand branding guidelines and usage of "Team USA", "USA", "ACA", "ACA Paddlesports," etc.
 - Goal: Develop a unified USA team look across all disciplines
 - Suggestion: The ACA provides a low-cost branding solution, such as iron-on decals/patches, that can be easily applied to personal clothing/gear, as a first step.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities - - Examples of innovative x-discipline and Comp/Club partnerships!

National Championships Highlights

- Ocean Racing Nationals at Gorge Downwind Championships

Matt shared his experience at the Gorge Downwind Championships, describing it as a week-long paddle sports festival whose conditions were both consistent and ideal for ocean racing. He explained how the ACA collaborated with the event organizers to host the U.S. Canoe Ocean Racing National Championships, which was well-received by participants. The event attracted 652 racers, including 250 surfski paddlers, and featured a variety of age groups and competitive categories. The National Championships field consisted of 62 active ACA members. Matt highlighted the positive atmosphere and successful integration of ACA members into the event, noting that many former ACA members renewed their memberships to participate in the Nationals category.
- US Wildwater Nationals on the Potomac - Labor Day Weekend
 - Collaborating with the local paddling club, Canoe Cruisers Association, registration set up by ACA Staff (thank you!) Bob worked with the local Canoe Cruisers Association. Here is an [album](#) full of great photos!
- USA Rafting - 2025 Nationals on the Trinity River - hosted by local club, Redwood Rafters

ACA Paddlefest (October)

- Multidisciplinary event featuring:
 - Trade coalition
 - Swiftwater rescue conference
 - Instructor continuing education
 - Slalom and kayak cross national championships

Next Steps and Action Items

- Data Collection Working Group
 - Establish a cross-disciplinary team to develop standardized data collection methods
 - Meredith Waters, DC Region RAC Director, offered to help!!
 - Identify a (better) place to show events on the ACA website
 - Identify a place to store event data
 - Deadline: September 25, the next meeting
- Uniform and Branding Strategy
 - Clarify policy from ACA Staff
 - Use team/athlete/uniform branding as an incentive for getting to our 'big' substantiated participation number!
- International Alignment Task Force
 - Monitor and support ongoing efforts to streamline international governing body relationships
- MacKenzie has onboarded Waveski officers (thank you!)
- Meredith - Suggested engaging new State directors in competition-related activities and developing ongoing processes for data collection from State Directors
- Risa - Met with Grant, Matt, and Meredith, and are feeding Grant race data from disciplines besides SUP (Ocean Racing, Wildwater, Freestyle, hopefully others). Still need to create a questionnaire for State Directors to assess existing sports in each state.

Appendix G

RAC Committees Updates

- Kayaking 101 Program -
 - Establish/document the specific outcome for 2026
 - Begin planning for 2026
- Insurance -
 - Goal: Create standard operating procedure documenting how all aspects of insurance impact clubs. This is meant to provide details to be shared from RAC leaders to State Directors and Clubs.
Example: Instructor's insurance when they lead club trips
- Advocacy -
 - Establishing SOP's for state and regional leaders regarding advocacy and engagement
 - Inviting Brett Mayer to our October RAC meeting
- Updates on coordination/collaboration between RAC/Competition Committee

ACA Paddlefest

- Discussion about RAC representatives attendance/participation at ACA paddle fest and PTC Collab.



Appendix H

American Canoe Association Athlete Safety Policy

9/8/2025

American Canoe Association (ACA) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of athletes and Participants, as defined by the U.S. Center for SafeSport's (the "Center") SafeSport Code for the U. S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (the "Code"), involved in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. As part of this commitment, the ACA's policy, prevention, and education efforts aim to create an environment free from emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct and abuse, and to ensure effective and prompt action and resolution upon the occurrence of misconduct and/or abuse.

Federal legislation and the Center both promulgate rules, policies, and procedures to protect and govern the well-being of athletes, and this policy reinforces and builds on those principles by providing more specifics regarding jurisdiction, enforcement and communication among the ACA, the Center and USOPC.

Section 1. Definitions

Capitalized and italicized terms are defined terms for purposes of this Athlete Safety Policy (the "Policy"). This means that they have a specific meaning whenever they are used in this Policy. Section 4 includes all defined terms for purposes of this Policy and their meanings.

Section 2. Authority and Applicable Policies and Procedures

2.1 The U.S. Center for SafeSport

The Center is authorized by federal law to serve as the independent national safe sport organization to develop national policies and procedures to prevent the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of amateur athletes. The ACA complies with all policies, procedures and protocols put forth by the Center to prevent and respond to misconduct and abuse.

The U. S. Center for SafeSport has exclusive jurisdiction over the following matters:

1. Sexual misconduct, including without limitation child sexual abuse and any misconduct that is reasonably related to an underlying allegation of sexual misconduct;
2. Criminal charges or dispositions involving child abuse or sexual misconduct;
3. Misconduct related to reporting, where the underlying allegation involves child abuse or sexual misconduct;
4. Aiding and abetting, when it relates to the Center's process;

5. Misconduct related to the Center's process;
6. Other inappropriate conduct, as defined in the SafeSport code.

The Center has discretionary jurisdiction over the following matters:

1. Non-sexual child abuse;
2. Emotional and physical misconduct, including stalking, bullying behaviors, hazing, and harassment;
3. Criminal charges or dispositions not involving Child Abuse or Sexual Misconduct;
4. Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) or other similar proactive policy violations.

2.2 United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee

In addition to complying with the policies and procedures of the Center, the ACA will also abide by all other applicable policies and procedures regarding athlete safety set forth by the USOPC.

The USOPC will assert jurisdiction over any alleged incident of Prohibited Conduct which is reported to have occurred at an OPTC, USOPC Sponsored Event, or a USOPC Delegation Event where the Center has not exercised exclusive or discretionary jurisdiction, and over matters the Center refers to the USOPC. In limited circumstances, the USOPC may elect, in its sole and absolute discretion, to refer the incident and jurisdiction to the ACA.

2.3 American Canoe Association

The ACA will address matters outside of the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport and matters for which the U.S. Center for SafeSport has declined to exercise its discretionary jurisdiction as outlined in the ACA's Response and Resolution Policy and Process.

The ACA has several policies related to Athlete Safety.

ACA SafeSport Handbook

ACA's zero tolerance for all forms of misconduct is outlined in the ACA SafeSport Handbook including, but not limited to sexual, physical and emotional misconduct, bullying and harassment, hazing and willfully tolerating misconduct.

Background Check Policy

Individuals who are coaches, staff, board members, medical staff, adult athletes, or those in authority over or with frequent contact with athletes are required to undergo criminal background screenings as outlined in the ACA Background Check Policy.

Minor Athlete Abuse and Prevention Policy (MAAPP)

Adult Participants, as defined in the ACA SafeSport Handbook, are required to meet all SafeSport education and training requirements and adhere to the MAAPP. Minor Athletes and those athletes who become adult athletes must also adhere to the MAAPP.

Response and Resolution Policy and Process

Suspected violations of the SafeSport Code must be reported following the ACA Response and Resolution Policy and Process. Interfering in, attempting to interfere in, or influencing the outcome of an investigation is prohibited.

Additional Requirements

The ACA is committed to protecting opportunities for athletes participating in paddlesport. The ACA will continue to collaborate with various stakeholders with oversight responsibilities, e.g., IOC, IPC, international federations, to ensure that women have a fair and safe competition environment consistent with Executive Order 14201 and the Ted Stevens Olympic & Amateur Sports Act, 36 U.S.C. § 22501, et. Seq.

Section 3. Enforcement and Retaliation

If an ACA Participant is sanctioned or subject to Temporary Measure(s) from the Center or under the USOPC Athlete Safety Policy, that sanction(s) or Temporary Measure(s) will be reciprocally enforced by the ACA and its Local Affiliated Organizations within the Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

Retaliation or an attempt to do so is prohibited. Retaliation includes threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing or any other conduct that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging or participating in the complaint processes when the action is reasonably related to the report or engagement with the process. Retaliation before, during, or after the process of resolving a report of misconduct is expressly prohibited. Retaliation may be present even where there is a finding that no violation occurred.

Section 4. Definitions

“Center” means the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

“Code” means the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

“OPTC” means an Olympic & Paralympic Training Center.

“USOPC Delegation Event” means events to which the USOPC officially sends an individual or group of individuals on behalf of the USOPC and/or the United States.

“USOPC Sponsored Event” means Olympic and Paralympic Trials, and any other event or competition organized, operated, sanctioned, or formally authorized by the USOPC.

Report on YM Voting Process

The following is a summation of an hour-long meeting that occurred on August 6, 2025. It included Beth Spilman, Kelsy Bracewell, Bev Cosslett and Robert Kauffman. Bev is chair of the nominations committee and Robert is the Secretary, responsible for election oversight.

The purpose of this meeting was:

- to review the ACA election process using the YM system,
- to assess the suitability of the current system,
- to develop a system that protects staff or minimizes its impact.

The following is a brief summation of the presentation/discussion:

- The staff develops the templates for the election.
- Members are contacted to vote by the staff using email.
- Members who opt out or unsubscribe do not receive a ballot.
- Members who unsubscribe do not receive ballots. It is problematic. Suggestions included posting notice of the election on the website and snail mail.
- Completed ballots are entered into the database. To change or modify the data entered would require the ability to write computer code.
- From the data set, staff generate reports from the data set.
 - The staff can review everyone's vote.
 - The reports could be falsified, but a comparison with the original data set would indicate the change.

Issues/Conclusions Identified:

1. **Opportunity Costs**. The opportunity cost of staff time in the process is not considered. The use of ACA staff is a hidden cost in that they could be performing other tasks. The use of an outside vendor reduces staff involvement.
2. **Autonomy**. The voting preferences of members are not autonomous. The staff has the ability to review the raw data.
3. **Staff Involvement in the Process**. One of the concerns was that the staff could determine the outcome of the BOD elections. This could be real or perceived. An outcome of the meeting is that with the appropriate oversight, it is possible but highly unlikely that the staff can determine the outcome of the elections. Regardless, because there is significant staff involvement in the election process, the perception remains. It is structural because the staff is involved.
4. **Voter Turnout**. During the meeting, the staff indicated that 216 votes were cast in last year's election. There are roughly 14,000 members. This is 1.5% of the membership. Normal surveys will yield 10% results regardless of what is done. This issue is somewhat independent of the purpose of this meeting, but it suggests that there may be a need to explore ways to increase membership involvement.

Recommendations:

Although the use of ElectionBuddy was not discussed in this meeting, it impacts this discussion since it is being considered as an alternative to the YM staff-driven system. The following are conclusions and recommendations to the BOD.

1. The opportunity cost in terms of staff's time and salary may be offset by the cost of the ElectionBuddy system. This would enable the staff to perform other programmatic functions. The question for the BOD to answer is whether spending \$2,500 for independent elections offsets the current staff costs in terms of time and cost.
2. Except for changing the results and the autonomy issue, the YM system with proper oversight is highly unlikely that the staff can determine the outcome of the elections. Regardless, the perception of staff involvement remains.
3. Until the BOD decides, the YM system is adequate for the short term, including the 2025 BOD elections.

Appendix J

Dear Board Members,

On behalf of the ACA Nominating Committee, I am pleased to present for your consideration the following slate of nominees for Delegate At-Large Board seats:

- Suzanne Britt
- Rob Garfield
- Simon Norton

We are requesting Board approval of this slate so these nominees may advance to the ACA membership vote for two Delegate At-Large Board seats. Each nominee has demonstrated a strong commitment to the mission and values of the American Canoe Association, and we believe they will contribute meaningfully to the leadership and governance of the Association.

Motion: I respectfully move that the Board approve this slate of nominees to be presented to the membership for the 2025 election.

Application Form responses for each candidate are available here: [Candidate Responses Spreadsheet](#).

Sincerely,
Bev Cosslett
Chair, ACA Nominating Committee

Appendix K

Dear ACA Board Members,

I am pleased to announce that we have scheduled a demonstration of **ElectionBuddy**, an online election management platform, for **Monday, October 29, at 6:00 PM ET**. All board members and appropriate staff members are encouraged to attend.

About ElectionBuddy

ElectionBuddy is a secure, web-based voting tool designed to simplify the election process for nonprofit organizations, associations, and member-driven groups. The platform ensures transparency and integrity by providing verifiable results, anonymous balloting, and strong security protocols. It allows organizations to customize ballots, manage voter access, and conduct elections entirely online, making participation easier for members regardless of location.

This demonstration will provide an opportunity to see how ElectionBuddy could support the ACA's election processes and improve efficiency, accessibility, and member engagement.

We look forward to your participation and feedback following the session.

Sincerely,
Bev Cosslett, Nominating Committee Chair



Appendix L

American Canoe Association **Executive Director Review Process** BOD Approved: 7/10/24

Purpose

- Develop a system of communication between the board and executive director that keeps the organization on track with our mission, goals and strategic plan.
- Meet our Board obligation to provide a review of the executive director's performance in meeting the key performance goals and objectives of the organization.
- To gain insight into support that the ED may need from the Board, and ensure successful succession planning.

Schedule

- Annual review once per year beginning in October and ending in December
- Quarterly check-ins (3 per year)

Review Process

During its October meeting, the board will review the previous year's performance goals and metrics, provided by the Executive Director, and make general recommendations for the forthcoming year. The board is responsible for the following:

- Review and make recommendations to the review committee on any of the responsibilities listed under the review committee below.
- Receive a self- assessment from the ED successes and challenges in meeting/not meeting the key performance objectives set out by the Board the previous year.
- Determine if there is a need to survey specific constituents for additional information (e.g. staff, volunteers, other stakeholders, etc.).

Serving as the work group for the board, the Executive Committee or a committee specifically appointed by the board to manage the review process is responsible for the following:

- Meet with the ED and communicate the Board's review from the October meeting, if the ED was not at that meeting.
- Get feedback from the ED on support they need from the Board.
- Review the job description of the executive director and make recommendations, if necessary.

- As directed by the board, complete a survey of specific constituents for additional information (e.g. staff, volunteers, other stakeholders, etc. By January 1, provide a written report to the board of the executive director's review and recommended next steps for both the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.
- As directed by the board, develop measurable and quantifiable performance goals and metrics with realistic deadlines for the forthcoming year. The performance goals and metrics developed are recommendations to the board for approval.

Dissenting Reports

If there is no agreement between the Executive Director and the committee, the Executive Director may submit a dissenting report on one or more of the findings as part of the committee's written report submitted to the board. In addition, one or more committee members may write a dissenting report on one or more of the findings. Approval of the written report by the board is approval that the report was submitted and not with anyone's position presented, unless specifically noted.

Debriefing

The Board Chair will meet with the Executive Director to go over the review completed by the Committee.

Board Approval

During the December meeting and no later than the January meeting, the board will approve the performance goals and metrics for the forthcoming year and the written report of the Executive Director's review. The Board may choose to:

- Approve the report as presented.
- Approve the report with minor or specific recommendations. The report is not returned to the committee for change.
- Defer approval and return the report to the committee for revision.

Quarterly Check Ins

The Executive Director shall prepare a short formal review on the performance objectives to present to the Board before the March and August meetings. At that time, the Board can ask questions and gain insights into the ED's performance, challenges and successes so far. The ED can also request support from the Board.

The Board Chair shall also have shorter and more frequent check-ins with the ED and report to the full Board when support is needed.