



ACA Board Meeting **[In Person Meeting]**

Wednesday, October 16, 2025
[Approved 11/12/25]

WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Suzanne opened the meeting at 9:10 p.m. ET. The agenda is presented in Appendix A. (**Secretary's Note:** *Due to the Paddfest; the agenda was continually evolving to meet people's changing schedules. Hence, there was considerable deviation from the agenda.*) She announced that Blake Haxton would be stepping off the BOD in January. The AAC will need to elect a paracanoe representative. In addition, the BOD will have a "hard stop" of the meeting at 4:30 pm to attend the PTC reception. A motion was made to approve the July minutes. It was seconded. The motion passed with one change.

Attendance. Attendance was taken from an attendance sheet. **BOD Members Present:** Suzanne Britt, Bill Caruso, Bev Cosslett, Jonas Ecker, Brenda Jin (3:40 video), Robert Kauffman, Zach (Bug) Lokken (1:40 pm), Risa Shimoda, Aaron Small,
BOD Members Not Present: Blake Haxton, David Lumian, Ryan Rushton
Staff Present: Beth Spilman, Krista Lenzmeier, Kelsey Bracewell, Jed Hinkley (1:40 pm), Michelle (1:40 pm)
Other Attendees: Jerry Dunne, Ann Barry
Quorum was obtained.

BOD BUSINESS ITEMS

President's Report (Appendix B). Suzanne gave an overview of the written President's Report. She emphasized the theme of "creating value for the membership." In addition, we need to tell our story better, answer the question who are we, use the strategic plan, and grow membership.

Executive Director Update. Beth introduced Jerry Dunne and Ann Barry and their contribution to the ACA. She indicated that it had been a good year for the ACA. Some of the highlights include:

- Hired Krista as the COO and Shella for the High Performance

- There are over 300 people at Paddlefest.
- We are breaking down our silos and communicating.
- Leadership and pathways have been initiated.
- We are working with other organizations such as NASBLA, USOPC and Outdoor Alliance.
- We have metaphorically smoothed the waters with NASBLA.
- We received a \$125,000 refund from the IRS.
- We need to implement Sport 80.
- The Performance Center has received funding.
- There are fundraising opportunities this year.

Staff Development (Appendix C). Krista, with the aid of Kelsey, presented the staff update. Topics discussed included:

- Operational Highlights and Operational Goals (e.g. prepare for USOPC 2026 recertification, Kayaking 101, onboarding, QuickBooks, Sport 80, etc.)
- Compliance and Governance (e.g. SafeSport and Policy Work, etc.)
- Community Engagement (e.g. newsletters, Paddlefest, membership survey, Kayaking 101, Summer Solstice, Story Project, LEAD Program, etc.)
- Safety, Education & Instruction - Highlights/2026 goals (e.g. Smart Start, Leader Pathways, etc.)
- Competition: 2025 Highlights (e.g. Slalom, Spring, Paracanoe, etc.)
- 2026 Goals & Priorities

Break

Public Policy and Stewardship Update (Appendix D). Based on her report, Beth provided the update. (Secretary's Note: *Beth's report gives an excellent overview of Outdoor Alliance and the ACA's involvement in public policy and stewardship. It is worth reviewing.*)

Properties (Appendix E). Jerry Dunne provided an update on Sebago and Sugar Island. The Sugar Island report from the trustees is provided in Appendix E. Sebago has been rebuilding after the microburst wreaked havoc. Reconstruction and repairing occurred this year. Insurance will reimburse for repairs and reconstruction. They have \$55,000 in their checking account. Regarding Sugar Island, Jerry noted the following points that complement the trustee's report:

- Sugar Island had increased attendance this year.
- Their finances go through the national office, and their finances are different from those for Sebago.
- They are operating at breakeven with \$20,000 of income and expenses.
- After COVID, a lot of cleanup has been required and is being accomplished.
- Their reservation system is being upgraded but still has some bugs in it.
- Outhouses will need to be converted to solar composting units.
- The discussion suggested RAC and Sugar Island trustees will develop a plan to help make Sugar Island a member benefit.

AAC Report. Jonas provided the AAC report to the BOD.

- Blake is leaving the BOD in January, and his election as a Paracanoe representative will need to occur.
- He raised the question regarding what are the standards for funding high performance paddlers?

RAC Report. Bill provided the following verbal report.

- He updated the BOD on Kayaking 101.
- RAC is working with Brett on advocacy.
- They are coordinating with the Competition Council regarding competition events.

Nominating Committee. Bev provided the following report for the Nomination Committee:

- There were three candidates for the two at-large positions. The candidates were Suzanne Britt, Simon Norton, and Robert Garfield. Suzanne and Simon were elected to the BOD.
- The committee needs to work on the nomination process for the AAC.
- They are developing a targeted approach for the candidates next year.
- They are addressing the election process, specifically the voting period.
- They are developing operating procedures for the committee.

Grievance Committee (Appendix F). Robert presented the report from the Grievance Committee. There was a brief discussion.

High Performance Funding. Beth explained the funding process. Topics discussed included NGB Services, international relations, tech and innovation, direct athletic support, and now cash services.

Lunch

Strategic Plan. Suz discussed the strategic plan and our adherence to it. We have three basic foci represented by the Competition Council, SEIC, and RAC. In addition, we have an Olympics in two years in this country, which will give us “leverage” in terms of support and funding.

Competition Highlights (See Appendix C). Jed and Michelle continued with the Staff Update slide presentation. He noted their highlights, including medals won in canoe and paracanoe. He noted the competition goals for 2026 for canoe slalom, canoe sprint, and paracanoe.

Break

Competition Council (Appendix G, H & I). Risa presented the Competition Council highlights for 2025.

- The BOD reviewed and approved the Competition Council’s operating procedures.
- Other disciplines are interested in joining the council. Kayaking surfing has approached the council as a discipline.
- The council has submitted a proposal for additional staff time and for coaching.

Budget. (Appendix J). Beth reviewed the budget requests with the BOD. The items included Election Buddy, Outreach Budget Request, BOD Travel Request, Supplemental Request from the Competition Council, Coaching Education, and Instructor's Contest from RAC. Several of the requests involved staff time rather than an actual monetary request. The requests were tabled.

SEIC. (Appendix K, L & M). Kelsey presented the SEIC report and motions needing approval. There were seven motions needing approval. After a brief discussion, there was a motion to approve all seven motions as a group. It was seconded, and it passed. The motion to approve the seven SEIC motions as a group was seconded. Without further discussion, it passed.

MOTION: 2025-09-01: Lower auxiliary discipline prerequisite to Level 2 from Level 3

MOTION: 2025-09-02: PSF Program Re-Brand & Expansion

MOTION: 2025-09-03: Expand the PSF program with new supporting materials

MOTION: 2025-09-04: Paddlesports Leader - Venue Adjustment

MOTION: 2025-09-05: Level 2: Essentials of Canoeing Documentation & Roll Out Plan

MOTION: 2025-09-06: Level 3-5: Surf Kayak Skills Assessment Documentation

MOTION: 2025-09-07: River Kayaking Skills Assessment and Guide Document

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 4:18 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12th.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert B. Kauffman
Secretary

Tentative 2025 BOD Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday, January 14th
Tuesday, February 11th
Tuesday, March 11th
Tuesday, April 8th
Tuesday, May 6th
June (no meeting)
Wednesday, July 9th

August (no meeting)
Tuesday, September 16th
Wednesday & Thursday, October 15th & 16th
Wednesday, November 12th
Wednesday, December 10th



Appendix A

**American Canoe Association
Board of Directors Meeting Agenda
Wednesday & Thursday, October 15-16, 2025
[In-Person Meeting]
Draft Agenda**

**Wednesday, October 15, 2025
BOD EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Approximate Time

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| • Role Call | 2:00 p.m. |
| • Assessment of performance objectives | 2:05 |
| • Review survey results | 3:45 |
| • Propose preliminary performance objectives | 4:30 |
| • Adjournment | 5:00 |
| • BOD Dinner [TBD] | 5:30 |

Thursday, October 16, 2025

WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approximate Time

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| • Role Call | |
| • Approval of September 2025 minutes | [05 min] 9:00 a.m. |

AGENDA

Theme: Who are we? Where are we going? And, how do we get there?

- | | | |
|---|----------|------------|
| • President’s Report | [15 min] | 9:05 |
| • Executive Director’s Report: Beth | [15 min] | 9:20 |
| • Staff Goals: [Krista] | [45 min] | 10:05 |
| • <i>Break</i> | [10 min] | 10:50 |
| • SEIC: Ryan/Kelsey: | [15 min] | 11:00 |
| [Note: See APP04, APP05 & APP06, SEIC minutes for the exact wording of the motion] | | |
| MOTION: 2025-09-01: Lower auxiliary discipline prerequisite to Level 2 from Level 3 | | |
| MOTION: 2025-09-02: PSF Program Re-Brand & Expansion | | |
| MOTION: 2025-09-03: Expand the PSF program with new supporting materials | | |
| MOTION: 2025-09-04: Paddlesports Leader - Venue Adjustment | | |
| MOTION: 2025-09-05: Level 2: Essentials of Canoeing Documentation & Roll Out Plan | | |
| MOTION: 2025-09-06: Level 3-5: Surf Kayak Skills Assessment Documentation | | |
| MOTION: 2025-09-07: River Kayaking Skills Assessment and Guide Document | | |
| • Public Policy Update – Bret | [10 min] | 11:15 |
| • Property Update – Jerry | [10 min] | 11:20 |
| • Regional Activity Council (RAC) – Bill | [10 min] | 11:30 |
| • Athlete Advisory Council (AAC): TBD | [10 min] | 11:40 |
| • Nomination Committee: Bev | [15 min] | 11:50 |
| • Grievance Committee: rbk [APP07] | [05 min] | 12:05 p.m. |
| • <i>Lunch [provided onsite]</i> | [45 min] | 12:10 |
| • Financial Review: USOPC high performance & USCG grants [45 min] | | 12:55 |
| & High Performance Plan & how it relates to funding: Beth & Jed | | |
| [Note: See APP08] | | |
| • Competition Council - Risa [APP09,10&11] | [10 min] | 1:40 |

- **Strategic Plan Summary:** Suz [60 min] 1:50
- *Break* [30 min] 2:50
- **Budget:** Beth [APP12] [60 min] 3:20
- **January Meeting:** In-person [30 min] 4:20

NEW BUSINESS

- Business from the floor [10 min] 4:50

ADJOURNMENT

5:00

- PTC Reception (5-7 p.m. at Whitewater Center)
- BOD Dinner: The String Bean 7:00 p.m.

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

145 Years ago a group of people who enjoyed paddling together created our first American Canoe Association community. It is very easy to say the word 145 years. To put that length of time in perspective our organization is greater than half the age of the United States (125 years). Older than the creation of the modern Olympics (1896) and older than both the International and US Olympic committees (1894). Early in its lifetime the ACA purchased an island (Sugar Island) in the 1000 island chain which we still own today. It was the community's way of being able to spend time together. Years later we leased a camp in NY to add to the community's desire to spend longer periods of time together in the paddling world. Sebago camp today is still active in the grass roots paddling community.

Over all those years the ACA has grown, expanded across the country, expanded to other countries in the world and adapted to meet our members' needs. Today, all those years later we are an amazing diverse and some would say complex set of communities. But, at our core, we are still a group of people that like to spend time together in the paddling world. When competition returned to the ACA (or as I like to say – returned home) in 2018/2019, it caused the board to recognize the organization needed to adapt again. The result was a very focused strategic analysis that resulted in creating a strategic plan and board of directors that would create an organization that was integrated yet recognized the importance of three main components called councils. Those are Competition, Regional Activity and Safety and Education. These three main voices to the board seem like simple communities but in themselves are amazing diverse. Part of that complexity involves returning to be the national governing body for Olympic and Paralympic paddlesport in the United States and the compliance requirements we must maintain. It also involves the community of our state directors, the recreational community along with stewardship and policy which are represented in the Regional Activity Council. We as an organization very much support and believe in the importance of our paddlers being safe on the water. We advocate for life jacket use – it SAVES LIVES! And in education. The Safety, Education and Instruction Council is a critical component of the ACA and continues certify instructors and offer education from entry level paddling to advance skills. SEIC covers education in all bodies of water – ocean, lakes, and rivers. It is an amazing diverse education community.

The current strategic plan which runs through 2028 is very ambitious and sets a high bar. We are slowly working our way through the tactics. It will most likely never feel fast enough. Even though we define pathways in the strategic plan separately – the concept is many of these items will overlap and interact to create a stronger organization. We will always have our diverse communities but, combined they will create value to our members.

The competition council is up and running and has completed their operating procedures. This was a critical step in order for all 17 of our competition disciplines to find a combined voice. The individual 17 competitive disciplines themselves are becoming more active. There is a written high performance plan focused on increasing sport performance. There has been some movement (really just a start) with working on increasing funding for competition. These are all tactics in the strategic plan. The goals competition council are setting will help to address tactics involving competition opportunities, leveling up coaching and outreach.

The Regional Activity Council has been established and their operating procedures completed. The state directors now have a way of creating a combined voice. Kayak 101 program and possibly expanding involvement in national safe boating week continue to address outreach tactics and grass roots involvement.

Safety, Education and Instruction Council continues to adapt. There is now a guide and leadership pathway. On-line education is in the research stage. Regional instructor updates are occurring and are important for recertifications. The creation of smart start has created a foundational program that has the potential to reach that very entry level human that will go paddle.

The focus for the last year has been very deliberately on creating a strong foundation for the organization. This should position us to be able to focus whether we are creating value to the members and meeting their needs or not. Creating value to our members will translate into a growing membership community.

I feel quite proud to be part of the ACA and feel honored to represent the organization as president. It is an exciting time to be in the ACA community Here is to another 145 years!

Suz

Appendix C



AGENDA

- Operational Updates
- Compliance & Governance
- Community Engagement
- Safety, Education & Instruction: 2025 Highlights/2026 Goals
- Competition: 2025 Highlights/2026 Goals
- 2026 Goals & Priorities



OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Staff Development

- Successfully hired additional office and competition staff
- Updated job descriptions
- Finalized Employee Manual (to be completed by year-end)
- Ensured performance reviews and current goals are up-to-date
- Created templates for job descriptions and contracts

Operational Improvement

- Shopify Store launched (Oct 2024): 215 orders, \$2,000 income
- Removed need for in-house packing, handling, and shipping
- Aside from Adaptive Foam Kits, we no longer need to keep inventory of tangible items for sale

2026 OPERATIONAL GOALS

- Review and prepare for USOPC 2026 recertification
- Finalize revisions for Event Sanctioning process, SafeSport Handbook, and SafeSport Quality Control System documents
- Foster staff-RAC collaboration and communication
 - a. Expanding Kayaking 101 to new states and locations
 - b. Develop communication to increase insurance understanding
 - c. Increase collaboration between State Directors and advocacy work
- Continue to improve onboarding for Board & Committee members

2025 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Streamlined QuickBooks financials to prepare for Sport80
- Streamlined the Accounts Payable and Reimbursement process

2026 FINANCIAL GOALS

- Start a new QuickBooks company file as of January 1, 2026

SPORT80 TRANSITION

- Full migration to Sport 80 in November
- Transition timeline during a decreased income period and post-Paddlefest
- Sport 80 has improved with greater flexibility and options to better fit our organizational needs
- Conducting twice weekly internal and external training and planning calls

COMPLIANCE HIGHLIGHTS

SafeSport & Policy Work

- Prepared and passed SafeSport Audit at Junior Olympics in July
- Board passed new Athlete Safety Policy to meet USOPC requirements
- So far in 2025, almost 150 background checks were performed and over 700 SafeSport trainings passed
- Beginning to review all policies and procedures in preparation for the 2026 USOPC recertification



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Sent Quarterly Volunteer Newsletter to highlight our volunteers with an over 60% open rate
- Staff participation at committee meetings has risen
- Continued supporting committee elections and volunteer onboarding
- PaddleFest is bringing together a diverse group of over 350 ACA members and paddling enthusiasts
- Completed a member survey with over 1,000 respondents
- Oct 2025 Board of Directors Elections received highest number of member votes ever collected



KAYAKING 101: NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK

- 4th year in a row
- 5 states in 2025
- Collaborated with 7 state agencies in 33 locations
- 190 volunteers coordinated and trained 330 students on 1 day



ACA SUMMER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

- 37 events across 20 U.S. states + Hong Kong + China
 - 16 instructional events
 - 12 community paddles
 - 5 waterway cleanups (using ACA cleanup kits)
 - San Marcos River, TX
 - Hudson River, NY
 - Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River, WA
 - Columbia River, WA
 - Sang River, China
 - 4 races/competitions
- 1,355 ACA 145th anniversary stickers distributed



ACA STORY PROJECT

- 29 unique stories published
- Consistent engagement across all platforms (website, email, Facebook, and Instagram)
- \$25,000 raised
- Story Project book to be used for end-of-year giving campaign
- Copies will be available for sale at PaddleFest and in the ACA Paddlesports store on Amazon



SEI: 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Smart Start for Safe Paddling

- Smart Start
 - Published 4/11/2025
 - 515 Sold
- Student Workbook
 - Published 4/11/2025
 - 195 Sold
- Facilitator's Guide
 - Published 5/23/2025
 - 181 Sold
- Total sold: 891
- Two zoom presentations were hosted:
 - May 21st: 210 registrations, 121 attendees (167 Youtube video views)
 - June 18th: 51 registrations, 40 attendees (63 Youtube video views)
- Books presented at NASBLA (KY) in March, North Fork Fest (NC) in April, IBWSS (AZ) in April, Paddling Leaders Forum (NY) in May, NASBLA (IA) in September
- Featured in Paddling Magazine, Paddling Business Magazine, and Kayak Angler
- About 45 state boating contacts, auxiliary leaders, or other org representatives have requested complementary copies of the books to review, all of which have been sent.



SEI: 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Leader Pathway

- 89 ITs and ITEs have completed the requirements to become LTs and LTEs, which is over 50% of the current ITs and ITEs
- Currently 47 Leader Trainer Candidates
- To date, 78 Coastal Leader certifications awarded, 11 River Leader certifications awarded
- 385 course workbooks sold on Amazon (75% paperback, 25% digital/kindle)
- \$1,773.37 royalties received to date



SEI: 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

LEAD Program & LL Bean Pass-through Grants

- 2 LEAD Programs Conducted: PA (9) and CA (12)
- 11 ACA PACs/Affiliates received LL Bean funding; final reports from recipients due 10/31



SEI: 2026 GOALS

- Launch Guide Pathway
- Expand marketing for Leader/Guide Pathway & Smart Start for Safe Paddling
- Sport80 launch
- Seek non-federal grant funding

The addition of Ben Morton as a quarter-time SEI Department staff member will provide the bandwidth for increased outreach, proschool, OLG, PAC, and Affiliate recruitment, marketing of the Leader and Guide Pathways, and overall service for ACA certified instructors and leaders.

USCG GRANT SUMMARY

FY2024–2025 Grant: \$185,000

- 23% Staff salaries & fringe
- 68% Contractual (media buy, data reporting and consulting, creative)
- 10% Indirect expenses

Grant Advertising Reach During NSBW (May 16-22):

- Meta: 1.4M users reached, 1.8K clicks
- YouTube: 71K video views
- TV: 127 airings, 1.6M+ impressions
- Last quarterly report due end of October, Final report due January 2026
 - Total engagement data currently being compiled

FY2025–2026:

- Submitted 5 applications — no awards this cycle

COMPETITION: 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Canoe Slalom

- Junior Camp & Age Group Nationals at NOC
- Evy Leibfarth's first World Cup Win (Prague)
- U23 Worlds: Bronze in Women's Team event



COMPETITION: 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Canoe Sprint

- First USA medal in Women's C2 at World Championships
- Best USA team performance at Junior/U23 Worlds to date (4 medals, 6 A-Finals, 7 B-Finals)
- Secured additional team funding



COMPETITION : 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Paracanoe

- 3 recruitment/training camps
 - 10+ athletes, Shriners collaboration
- Jack Wallace: 3rd in B-Final at Worlds (Milan)
- Secured funding for boats and erg equipment



COMPETITION : 2026 GOALS

Canoe Slalom

- Win 3 medals at 2026 Worlds (OKC)
- Increase junior camp participation by 50%
- Host joint Nationals for Slalom, Freestyle & Wildwater



COMPETITION : 2026 GOALS

Canoe Sprint

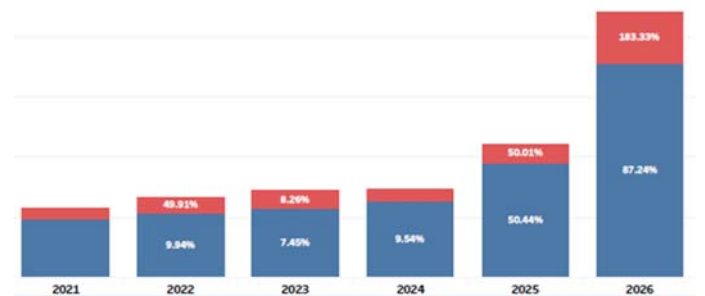
- Win 1 medal and make 3 A-Finals
- Implement coordinated national training camps
 - IMU's & physiology support
- Advance coach development and knowledge sharing



COMPETITION : 2026 GOALS

Paracanoe

- Win 2 medals at 2026 Worlds
- Send athletes who meet time standards in all but L1 classes
- Partner with other NGBs to double number of participating athletes



CLOSING SUMMARY

- 2025 marked major operational and athletic growth
- 2026 will focus on alignment, modernization, and community reach
- ACA staff remain committed to supporting members, volunteers, and the Board in achieving our shared mission

Appendix D

Stewardship and Public Policy Update

Beth Spilman

October 10, 2025

Please note: the fact that this report was written by Beth, rather than Brett Mayer, is explained below.

A Very Brief History of ACA's Stewardship and Public Policy Efforts

ACA has long been involved in stewardship and public policy efforts, but over time our approach to these efforts has changed. In the 1980's and 1990's, we employed a full-time lobbyist in Washington, DC who worked on issues important to paddlers with a strong focus on clean water. Now most of our public policy efforts are through our relationship with Outdoor Alliance, an organization we helped found in 2014 along with four other small non-profits that are focused on human-powered outdoor recreation. The founding organizations include American Whitewater (Risa Shimoda was the Executive Director!), International Mountain Bicycling Association, The Access Fund (climbing organization) and Winter Wildlands. This collaborative effort to create OA was based on the idea that, together as a coalition, the five member organizations could be more effective and more powerful than five separate organizations. Boy, were they right!! Outdoor Alliance has absolutely "hit the cover off the ball."

Since 2014 four more organizations have joined OA: The Mountaineers, American Alpine Club, Colorado Mountain Club and the Surfrider Foundation. OA now has 10 full-time employees and receives over \$1.3 million in funding from companies like Patagonia and REI and foundations like Wilbur Force, the Rivian Foundation and more. In 2025 alone, their individual giving grew from \$60,000 to \$360,000. Adam Cramer, the CEO, has done a phenomenal job at building OA's reputation as a bipartisan, knowledgeable and data-driven organization.

Read more about the history of OA [on the OA website](#).

Read more about the current OA members orgs [on the OA website](#).

American Canoe Association's Involvement with Outdoor Alliance

ACA supports the work of OA in many ways. Beth has served on the OA Board of Directors since she joined the ACA in 2019. The Board has 5-member org directors and, depending on the year, 8 to 12 independent directors. Beth has been involved in the OA strategic

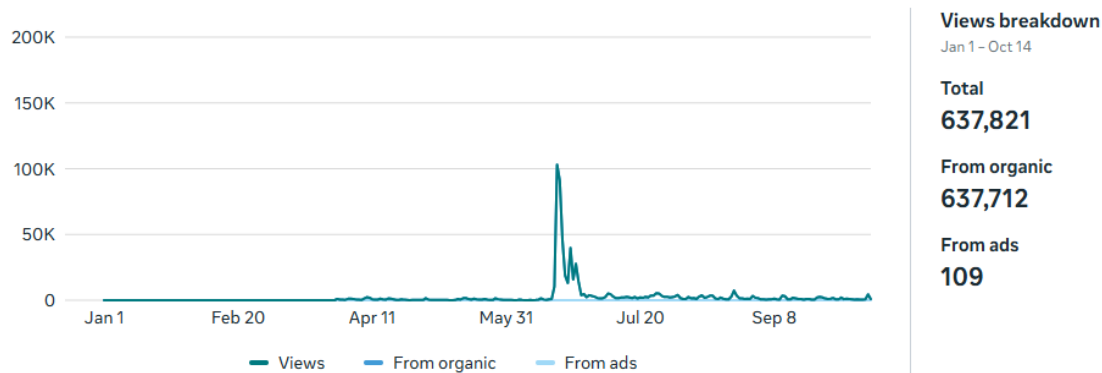
planning process twice and actively participates in OA's quarterly board meetings and monthly member org meetings. She has also served on the Nominating and Governance Committee and has traveled to DC several times for visits to Capitol Hill and meetings with governmental officials, such as the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of the Department of Agriculture.

Most of the other member organizations have full-time Policy Directors and/or multi-person departments. To coordinate and share ideas among the policy people, OA hosts weekly "Joint Policy Shop (JPS)" calls which focus on the collective group's policy priorities. Because these calls occur during the school days, Brett is unable to attend, so Kaycee Maas regularly attends these calls. Krista has also been attending. Attendance of these meetings has opened the door for additional collaboration between the ACA and other OA member organizations whose members have aligned interests. For example:

- Surfrider (coastal environments)
- American Whitewater (river environments)
- American Alpine Club (professional certifications)

OA's Director of Marketing and Communications (who is VERY good at her job) also hosts monthly communications-related calls for all the Comms folks from the member orgs. This provides a forum for the comms folks to share ideas, successes, and experiences. Kaycee regularly participates in these calls as well, and they have been very helpful to her. Since most of the other member orgs are larger and more robustly staffed than ACA, they can spend a lot more money on fundraising, marketing, etc., so it's beneficial for us to learn from them. Kaycee and the ACA have benefited from this shared knowledge in many ways including:

- End of year giving approach
- Partnerships strategy + leveraging brand ambassadors
- Brand messaging
- Email strategies, list growth
- Exposure through social media collaboration. This "[save public lands post](#)" by the ACA and shared collaboratively from OA and AW has had the ACA's largest Instagram reach of the year so far (by far).
 - Views: 329,902 (over half of our total views came from this one post)
 - Accounts reached: 196,967
 - Interactions 5,299 (3.3% ACA followers, 96.7% non-followers)
 - 252 profile visits
 - 46 follows from post



OA's Grass Tops Collective Initiative

After many months of planning and discernment, OA launched their Grasstops Collective program in the spring of 2024. This unique initiative is a leadership and advocacy development program that trains grasstops advocates to build relationships with policymakers and advocate for Outdoor Alliance's conservation priorities from an authentic, local perspective. Grasstops leaders are unique for their meaningful voice in their communities, whether they are in business, nonprofit, or local government. Kaycee Maas was a member of their first cohort and has since began working with American Whitewater and Colorado Whitewater to improve stream access in Colorado. She would love to talk to you more about how Outdoor Alliance and the Grasstops Collective has benefitted her work at the ACA. When you see her, be sure to ask!

Read more about the [Grasstops Collective](#) program on OA's website. For the second cohort, we nominated two amazing ACA Instructors: Jon Stamper and Adrienne Burke. Jon Stamper works at Mountain True where he coordinates river cleanups with Swiftwater Rescue Instructors, raft guides, and other volunteers to restore western NC's rivers in the wake of Hurricane Helene. [Learn more about his work in this ACA article.](#) Jon will also be speaking at PaddleFest at 3PM in the North Conference Center on Saturday afternoon. [Adrienne Burke](#), who was introduced to the ACA via our [LEAD Initiative](#) program. Adrienne has since become an ACA instructor and creates on-water programming for DC parks and rec. They have both been active participants in the program and are very grateful that ACA's relationship with OA enabled their involvement.

Brett's Involvement

Brett has worked for the ACA for 8 years and was originally hired by Chris Stec. He is a full-time middle school environmental sciences teacher who lives in Asheville, NC. Brett's thesis for his master's degree was based on a phenomenological study of paddlers and

why people paddle. He is an avid whitewater paddler and extremely passionate about stewardship and public policy, but he's also very busy.

Prior to 2023, Brett was able to devote 15 to 20 hours per month to the ACA. In 2023 he further committed to dedicating 4 weeks during the summer to ACA – primarily to work on Smart Start. He fulfilled this commitment in 2023, but since then it's become clear that he is no longer able to spend as much time on ACA or OA business. Therefore, this summer I reworked our financial arrangement with Brett to “right size” it to his current time commitment which is 3 hours per week. His current passion project is a paddling-focused podcast called Following Water which is available on Spotify and Apple podcasts. When he “advertises” ACA on the podcast, we pay him a small stipend which can increase if his listenership increases.

So, the bottom line is that most of our stewardship and public policy work takes place through the Outdoor Alliance, which seems to be a prudent strategy. Our annual OA member dues are only \$6,000 – a very small investment for the gigantic return we receive.

Sugar Island: Current and Future Status Report

Overview

Sugar Island has seen a remarkable resurgence in member engagement and development over the past few years. Following a challenging period brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts by trustees, volunteers, and the American Canoe Association have led to significant improvements across the island. These changes have rekindled interest among long-time members and attracted new visitors, marking a strong step forward in revitalizing the island.

Current Status

Increased Membership and Usage

In the current season, Sugar Island welcomed over 100 members—a substantial increase compared to recent years. The island had seen a decline in usage during and immediately after the pandemic due to restricted access and non usable facilities. Campsites and trails became unusable, with nature quickly reclaiming much of the land. However, determined efforts by the trustees and several dedicated members have reversed this trend. Campsites have been reclaimed, new trails have been cut, and the overall experience on the island has significantly improved.

Youth Paddling Program Growth

One of the most exciting developments this year has been the success of the youth paddling program. With over 20 children participating, this program saw the highest growth in many years. Instruction, safety, and friendly competition filled the waters, and it was heartening to see every boat in use once again. This resurgence has helped reinvigorate the island's community spirit and strengthen its future. Surrounding Islanders saw the activities and paddled over to join in. It was wonderful to see.

Improved Outreach and Education

The addition of new signs and an information board along the river has played a crucial role in raising awareness about Sugar Island. These efforts have successfully attracted new paddlers

and campers, many of whom have chosen to become members after learning more about what the island offers.

Registration System Overhaul

Sugar Island's registration and payment system has undergone a major upgrade. While there are still a few kinks to work out, the new online system has streamlined the process for both members and administrators. This modernization marks a significant step in improving recordkeeping and operational efficiency.

Future Goals and Plans

Island Restoration and Event Hosting

Looking ahead, the goal is to continue grooming and expanding the usable areas of Sugar Island. Special attention is being given to the restoration of camps previously used by IC racers and canoe sailors, known as "sailors bay". The plan is to make them fully accessible by next season. With the trails to these campsites now cleared, the island is preparing to once again host sailing and paddling events.

Facility Improvements

Although many facilities have received temporary updates, they are currently only a part time solution. They are working well for now however future goals include:

- Installation of modern, more permanent washroom facilities (composting units)
- Construction of a screened-in pavilion for community gatherings and shelter
- Installing a new well to improve water access.

These enhancements aim to increase comfort and usability for members and guests alike.

Financial Health and Planning

Currently, Sugar Island maintains a balance of approximately \$20,000 after expenses. This financial position allows for cautious optimism in planning future upgrades. A review of membership rates is underway, as current fees are believed to be low compared to similar areas. Rate adjustments and further improvements to the registration system are scheduled to be completed during the upcoming winter, in preparation for the next season.

Conclusion

Sugar Island is well on its way to a full revival. With growing membership, a successful youth program, modernized systems, and a strong plan for future development, the island is becoming a vibrant hub once again. Continued support from members, volunteers, and the ACA will be essential in maintaining this momentum and achieving the long-term vision for the island.



5 of 2,691

Grievance Committee Inbox x

Appendix F



Robert Kauffman

Thu, Oct 9, 8:55 PM (14 hours ago)

Hunter: I need to give the Grievance Committee to the BOD at the October meeting. Can you give me an update? If you would like to do it on the phone, I need ...



Hunter Branstetter

12:00 AM (11 hours ago)

to me

Thanks, Robert.

Here's the overview:

- As of earlier this week, we have one new pending grievance over which the Committee has jurisdiction; I'm currently working to appoint a hearing panel (Jerry Dunne has agreed; I've got outreach to a few more folks);
- Since the last update, we had one other Grievance come through but we ended up declining jurisdiction and referring the matter to the ACA staff because the facts as alleged suggested a real issue might exist, but it wasn't really a grievance.

[REDACTED] happy to discuss if you'd like but I think that about covers it.

Best,



Hunter

Appendix G

To: Beth Spilman, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
From: Risa Shimoda, Chairperson, ACA Competition Council
Date: October 6, 2025
Subject: 2026 Budget Request – Defining the National Paddlesports Competition System

Dear Beth,

The ACA Competition Council is pleased to submit its 2026 proposal. This is more than a request for funding — it is a call for organizational alignment and collaboration on a generational opportunity: to define the official national paddlesports competition system for the United States.

Our goal is to establish a comprehensive, adaptable framework that spans all ACA disciplines and defines how paddlesports competitions are produced and executed across the country. This framework will serve as the foundation for the USA paddlesports community's continued growth: delivering safe, fair, and inspiring competitive experiences through clear rules, consistent standards, and equitable opportunities for athletes, coaches, officials, organizers, and clubs.

The National Paddlesports Competition System is envisioned to be an integrated ecosystem that empowers each of the following stakeholder groups to engage, grow, perform, and evaluate their progress within a shared structure of excellence.

Athletes

Engagement: Create opportunities for enthusiasts to discover the competitive paddlesports community and participate in ACA-recognized competitions across all disciplines.

Development: Encourage paddlers to set goals and build the physical, mental, emotional, and technical capacities needed to achieve sustained excellence within a coherent season plan.

Performance: Establish a nationwide ecosystem of paddlesports competitions that functions as a living laboratory — a series of checkpoints enabling athletes and coaches to apply training, test readiness, and refine their approach throughout the season. State, regional, and national championships, along with continental and world events, serve as the culminating athletic performances.

Evaluation: Facilitate transparent, objectively-derived athlete rankings and developmental classifications to capture participation and performance data, recognize individual and club achievements, and provide meaningful feedback to inform future training and competition plans.

Coaches

Engagement: Provide accessible entry points for aspiring coaches through education programs, mentorship, and observation opportunities at ACA-recognized events.

Development: Establish progressive education, training, and certification pathways that align with athletes' needs and program maturity in support of building technical, leadership, and pedagogical skills across disciplines.

Performance: Integrate coaching excellence into the national competition ecosystem — enabling and encouraging coaches to apply methods, support athletes in competition, and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.

Evaluation: Implement structured feedback, renewal, and recognition processes tied to athlete outcomes, professional growth, and contributions to the paddlesports community.

Officials

Engagement: Create clear pathways for individuals to enter officiating roles through volunteering, training, and shadowing for introductory assignments at local competitions.

Development: Deliver a standardized education and certification program ensuring that officials possess the technical knowledge, consistency, and integrity required to uphold ACA competition standards across multiple disciplines.

Performance: Provide real-world officiating opportunities across the competition ecosystem, supported by mentorship and peer evaluation, to ensure consistent application of rules and sound judgment under pressure.

Evaluation: Maintain a continuing education and recertification process that is both sufficiently rigorous and practical, supported by performance reviews, peer feedback, and data-driven insights to preserve fairness and excellence across all events.

Organizers

Engagement: Offer straightforward pathways for event organizers to host ACA-recognized competitions by establishing clear standards and offering helpful guidance and templates that streamline planning efforts and ensure consistency.

Development: Support organizers in building operational expertise, community partnerships, and event quality through mentorship, shared best practices, and resource networks.

Performance: Facilitate consistent, high-quality event delivery across the nation and throughout the year with competitions that provide meaningful developmental and performance opportunities for athletes while promoting safety, fairness, and enjoyment.

Evaluation: Collect event data, participant feedback, and compliance metrics to encourage and inform future improvements, recognize excellence, and refine national standards for hosting ACA events.

Clubs

Engagement: Strengthen the role of clubs as the foundation of paddlesports participation by promoting affiliation with the ACA and encouraging member engagement in recognized competitions.

Development: Equip clubs with tools, training, and community resources to build coaching capacity, host local events, and cultivate year-round participation within their communities.

Performance: Empower clubs to showcase their athletes and programs, fostering pride and visibility within the broader competition ecosystem — from small local races to national championships.

Evaluation: Recognize and celebrate club contributions to athlete development, community building, and competitive excellence through data-informed awards, rankings, and growth metrics.

The Council is prepared to define these objectives and key results at a strategic level; however, their realization requires the executive capacity and project management of the ACA National Office. We therefore request that this initiative be scoped and resourced as a multi-year program within the Association's development plan — with phased implementation in 2026, 2027, and 2028 (the Los Angeles Olympic year), and sustained growth into 2029 and beyond.

With your leadership, the ACA can establish the standards, pathways, and community connections that will define paddlesports in the United States for the next generation with a clear, accessible, and inspiring system that invites all Americans to pick up a paddle and celebrate the skill, experience and confidence that competition offers.

Respectfully,

Risa Shimoda
Chairperson, ACA Competition Council

Matt Drayer
Vice Chairperson, ACA Competition Council
Chairperson, ACA Ocean Racing Committee

Appendix H

Competition Council Report – October BOD Meeting

The Competition Council met September 25th and enjoyed its highest ever representation, 10 disciplines, including canoe/kayak polo.

Old Business

- Disciplines are beginning to contribute participation data for Nationals events: Sprint, Outrigger, Polo and Wildwater.
- Paddlefest - Risa will convene a meetup at Paddlefest for committee members who indicate they will be attending.
- We discussed elements of our planned development of a framework for standardization for competition disciplines:
 - Age Groups
 - Explore adopting ICF age group definitions and come up with standardized groups
 - Allow flexibility for disciplines with smaller participant pools
 - Aim for consistency while maintaining adaptability
 - DRAFT: [Age Group Categories](#) Recommendation
- Geographic Regions
 - Investigate creating standardized regional divisions
 - Leverage existing state director networks
 - Recognize variations in discipline-specific geographical needs
 - DRAFT: [Geographic Regions](#) Recommendation
- 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: ACA provides a low-cost branding solution, such as iron-on decals/patches, that can be easily applied to peoples’ own clothing/gear, as a first step.

Note: National Office is currently working on an official media kit / guidance

- 2026 Competition Council Goals
 - Goal-setting should coincide with 2026 Budget Request(s) (see New Business, below). Between now and the next / November 20th meeting, Matt and Risa will create a Google doc for asynchronous collaboration.

New Business

- Coaching Committee - A new [Coach Directory](#) is now available @ [AmericanCanoe.org](#). Jed Hinkley asked for disciplines to list their coaches, if missing.
- ACA Board of Directors Election - We encouraged all members to vote and to reach out to MacKenzie with questions.
- 2026 Support Request - We submitted a request for support to develop a framework for Engagement, Development, Performance and Evaluation for athletes, coaches, officials, organizers and clubs. The proposal is included in the October 2025 Board Meeting folder.
- 2026 CC Meeting Dates

We will confirm leads for 2026 and send invitations to them for each meeting. **Members of the 2026 ACA Board who would like to attend, including representatives from the SEIC and RAC: please contact Risa to be included in the calendar invitation: you are always welcome!**

- January 29, 2026
- March 26, 2026

- May 28, 2026
- July 30, 2026
- September 24, 2026
- November 19, 24 or December 3, 2026 (Nov 26th is Thanksgiving)
- Next Meeting: November 20th (the standing '4th Thursday', Nov 27th is Thanksgiving)

Thank you for your support. Go CC!

Thank you,
Risa



Search mail



Appendix I

9 of 2,687



Risa Shimoda [Unsubscribe](#)
to ACA

Oct 6, 2025, 9:06 PM (3 days ago)

Hi everyone,

Well...we met last week, then Matt met with Beth Spilman to discuss a request that shifted away from a dollar amount for a 'project' to what is attached, introduced by this introductory paragraph.

The ACA Competition Council is pleased to submit its 2026 proposal. This is more than a request for funding — it is a call for organizational alignment and collaboration on a generational opportunity: to define the official national paddlesports competition system for the United States. Our goal is to establish a comprehensive, adaptable framework that spans all ACA disciplines and defines how paddlesports competitions are produced and executed across the country. This framework will serve as the foundation for the USA paddlesports community's continued growth: delivering safe, fair, and inspiring competitive experiences through clear rules, consistent standards, and equitable opportunities for athletes, coaches, officials, organizers, and clubs. The National Paddlesports Competition System is envisioned to be an integrated ecosystem that empowers each of the following stakeholder groups to engage, grow, perform, and evaluate their progress within a shared structure of excellence.

If accepted, we'd meet with staff to develop a plan that includes a role for staff, for CC volunteers and capacity for which we might need to spend \$, but it would be \$ the ACA seeking and deploying vs. us, off on our own. Also, it would not halt what we are doing with Grant's expertise to collect and organize event participation or what the coaching committee has planned. Hope this makes sense.

Big thanks go to Matt for lifting mighty heavily on our behalf, and I hope you'll agree that this vision is pretty dang exciting. We'll surely let you know what we hear from Krista and her team.

Thank you all for helping us begin to paddle together toward being recognized as the collectively powerful sport that we know we are!!



... Risa

Appendix J

American Canoe Association Finance Committee Meeting

Meeting Details

- **Date and Time:** October 09 7:00 PM
- **Location:** Zoom
- **Pre-reading:** <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JUKo8yKoZpSVwzLPwLerqQqxeP2se3Si>

Attendees

- Emma Walther
- Brenda Jin
- Steven Haxton
- Beth Spilman
- Riaz Shaikh
- Suz Britt

Invitees

- Jerry Dunne
- Risa Shimoda

Agenda

1. **Call to Order** (3 for quorum)
2. **Executive Director Financial Performance Update**
 - Committee members individually reviewed the [Executive Financial Performance Report](#) as well as other financial statements provided.
3. **Questions From the Committee regarding the past year report**
 - Inquiry on Other Refunds Line was explained as Employee Retention Tax Credits, and \$12k refund from Rapid Media. Expected to be 1-time only event.
 - Competition Training / Travel exceeded budget however these are balanced through USOPC funding and individual athlete contributions. Despite this being a net 0 financial transaction for the ACA, they appear on our balance sheet.
 - USOPC funding is increasing by 500k for 2026 with para funding doubling. Beth outlined plans to negotiate the allocation of this funding across high performance, administration, tech & innovation, among other areas. Brenda suggested highlighting this funding increase at the next board meeting.
 - The committee discussed the Atlantic Division's \$85,000 of cash reserves.
 - **Riaz** to follow up with Jerry about the \$85,000 of Atlantic Division funds, clarify their purpose and determine if they should be moved to a better investment vehicle by February 2026.
 - The committee discussed Camp Sebago, a camp managed by the American Canoe Association's Atlantic Division in Harriman State Park, New York. Suz explained its history as a WPA project from the 1930s, originally for ACA Atlantic Division members, and its

current operation, which generates \$90,000-\$120,000 in revenue annually. Beth clarified that Camp Sebago's expenses and financials are integrated into the ACA's overall budget, with Emma managing payroll and the ACA overseeing financial audits. Brenda raised concerns about the financial risks and operational oversight of Camp Sebago, but Beth assured that it is not a financial risk and is closely monitored. The group also discussed safety measures, including Safe Sport training for the board and compliance with New York State Parks requirements. There was no interest from the committee in divesting this asset.

- **ACA Fredericksburg Property Development Update.** Beth explained the history and current status of ACA's property in Fredericksburg, which is landlocked but has an easement. The property is zoned for multi-family development, and the developer must prepare groundwork for a road to access it. In 2019, the membership approved selling the property, but timing and finding the right buyer have been challenges. Brenda, Blake, and Riaz recommended maintaining an opportunistic stance on liquidating this holding.
- **Sugar Island Property Management Discussion.** Sugar Island in Canada, valued at \$1.3 million and generates \$20,000-30,000 in revenue annually. Beth explained that Sugar Island is a preserved natural treasure with potential for commercial development, and while the Canadian government shows interest in preserving it, there are concerns about potential acquisition by the Canadian government. The committee learned that the trustees of Sugar Island report to the Properties Committee led by Jerry Dunne, which reports to the Finance Committee. To date in 2025, the Finance Committee has not received any reports from either the Trustees nor the Properties Committee. There was a budget request for improvements.
 - **Brenda, Blake, and Riaz** agreed to work with Properties Committee and Sugar Island Trustees to oversee and assess the Sugar Island property in 2026 with minimal staff time dedicated to it.

4. **Budget Planning for Next Fiscal Year**

- The group then discussed budget requests from various councils, with Beth noting that many requests lacked clear cost-benefit analyses. Beth noted that most requests are for support from staff, with the most cross-cutting theme being the need for an LMS. **Brenda** proposed that this was a matter of program prioritization rather than finances and noted that the decision was out of scope for the Finance Committee. **Beth** to review budget requests from councils at the in-person board meeting with her recommendations.
- Beth explained that the current budget projections are similar to this year's, with minimal changes expected for next year, as program revenues are largely dependent on USOPC funding or athlete self-funding. A discussion followed exploring a potential increase in membership revenue which would fund an additional staff member. There were several options mentioned including passing credit card fees onto payers, raising dues, or harnessing alternative revenue opportunities through Sport80. **Beth** to discuss potential membership fee increase options at the Thursday board meeting.

5. **Old Business**

- **Finance Committee** to revisit the investment strategy in February 2026.

6. **New Business**

- No other financial topics

7. **Adjournment**

- 8:10PM EDT

Next steps

- **Riaz** to follow up with Jerry about the \$85,000 of Atlantic Division funds, clarify their purpose and determine if they should be moved to a better investment vehicle by February 2026.
- **Beth** to highlight the \$500,000 increase in USOPC funding at the in-person board meeting.
- **Finance Committee** to work with the Properties **Committee** and **Sugar Island Trustees** to oversee and assess the Sugar Island property in 2026 with minimal staff time dedicated to it.
- **Beth** to review budget requests from councils at the in-person board meeting with her recommendations.
- **Beth** to discuss potential membership fee increase options at the Thursday board meeting.
- **Finance Committee** to revisit the investment strategy in February 2026.



Fall SEIC Board Meeting

September 29th @ 7-9 PM Eastern

Appendix K

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**



Fall SEIC Board Meeting Update & Motions

September 29th Meeting - 7 Motions Passed

Appendix L

- Leader Pathway - Coastal Leader & Coastal Guide Trainer Certifications. Trainers were previously required to have a an L3 Instructor Certification in one craft and an L3 Skills Assessment in a secondary craft. Motion approved to to lower level of secondary craft skills assessment from L3 to L2. Coastal Leader & GuideTrainer Candidates must now have a L3 Instructor Certification and a second skills assessment at L2.
- PSF to Smart Start Rebrand - Motion to rebrand the PSF program as "Smart Start for Safe Paddling," and expand those authorized to offer the program to include Paddlesports Leader Trainers and Educators.
- Expand the re-branded PSF program and certification (to be named Smart Start for Safe Paddling) to utilize the collection of Smart Start resources.
- Remove the word "tidal" from the following venue requirement for the Coastal Leader & Coastal Guide criteria. Venue requirements now are (3 out of 4): Winds 8-12 knots, Waves 1-2 feet, Surf 1-2 Feet, ~~Tidal~~ Current 1-2 Knots.



Fall SEIC Board Meeting Update & Motions

September 29th Meeting - 7 Motions Passed

- New L2 Essentials of Canoe Skills Assessment & Instructor Criteria passed.
- New L3, L4 & L5 Skills Assessment Documents have been passed.
- Motion to approve the attached River Kayaking Skills Assessment and Guide document and replace the legacy documents.



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.

Appendix M

September 29, 2025 SEIC Meeting Minutes

Meeting Recording: https://youtu.be/_VRetsx8Vgo

Please use the time stamps outlined below to navigate the video recording and find the item/discussions you need.

Voting Members in Attendance: Ryan Rushton, Alan Cammack, Anne Sontheimer, David Hughes, Jeff Atkins, Ashley Brown, John Browning, Patrick Higgins, Rachel Nagle, Sam Fowlkes (for Tom Burroughs), RJ Forth, Ge Wu, Stacey Leigh Wildes, Robert Kauffman, Anthea Raymond, Elisha McArthur, Mike Aronoff, Tommy Gram

Guests in Attendance: John MacDonald, Krista Lenzmeier, Robin Pope, Suzanne Britt, Kelsey Bracewell, Ben Morton, Beth Spilman, Trey Moore, Susan Eda

0:00 - Meeting Called To Order

1:15 - Quorum established

1:54 - Two word check in

10:22 - Ground rules of the meeting review

11:51 - Leader Pathway Roll Out Update (Ryan Rushton)

- 86 ITs and ITEs have completed the requirements to become LTs and LTEs, which is 50% of the current ITs and ITEs
 - [List of current LTs and LTEs](#)
- Currently 45 Leader Trainer Candidates
- To date, 72 Coastal Leader certifications awarded, 11 River Leader certifications awarded

16:59 - Motion to approve the [previous meeting minutes](#)

Motion passes 18-0-0

20:13 - Motion 2025-09-01: [Lower auxiliary discipline prerequisite to Level 2 from Level 3](#)

Exact wording of the motion: Lower the auxiliary discipline prerequisite to Level 2 from Level 3, for Coastal and Advanced Coastal Leader Trainers

Need for change: We believe in the spirit of this requirement, but not as written. The original purpose of this requirement is to confirm a broader understanding and competency beyond one's chosen craft. Level 2 introduces core applicable rescue skills and environmental exposure for the coastal leader. The Trainer does not need to operate in the Leader environment in a secondary craft, just needs to be able to teach and facilitate effective rescues. L 2 is sufficient. In addition, there is not an L3 in Touring Canoe and a very limited offering of L3 Coastal SUP. The L3 restricts greatly the number of potential Assessors and is

a barrier to entry into the Leader Program. Comment from Trey Rouss: As the person who initiated this entire project over 4 years ago, I can confidently say that a prereq at Level 2 more than rounds out our Trainer's ability to teach leadership across a variety of craft. The idea is to understand at a foundational level how rescues work across ALL craft. Our workshops will be focused on teaching leadership not paddling skills.

Motion passes 18-0-0

23:57 - Motion 2025-09-02: [PSF Program Re-Brand & Expansion](#)

Exact wording of the motion: Motion to re-brand the PSF program as "Smart Start for Safe Paddling," and expand those authorized to offer the program to include Paddlesports Leader Trainers and Educators.

Need for change: This will broaden the number of people who can deliver the program/certifications, which will help meet the training demands down the road. In the context of the leader pathway, PSF is essentially sub-CPL, and all certified leaders and guides have been assessed in knowledge/conditions higher than those required to deliver PSF.

Motion passes 18-0-0

26:38 - Motion 2025-09-03: [Expand the PSF program with new supporting materials](#)

Exact wording of the motion: Expand the re-branded PSF program and certification (to be named Smart Start for Safe Paddling) to utilize the collection of Smart Start resources.

Need for change: The ACA recently released an entry level program and resource library, Smart Start for Safe Paddling. It offers an extensive entry level introduction to safer and more enjoyable paddling. The program resource collection includes a student handbook, a student workbook with comprehension questions and activities, a facilitators guide for course presenters, a free online course, supporting PowerPoint presentations, along with more in-depth resources for those seeking more advanced content. Smart Start and PSF aim at the same entry level paddling audience. Combining the two programs provides dramatically better support for PSF participants while expanding the reach of Smart Start.

Motion passes 18-0-0

36:32 - Motion 2025-09-04: [Paddlesports Leader - Venue Adjustment](#)

Exact wording of the motion: Remove the word "tidal" from the following venue requirement for the Coastal Leader criteria: Coastal Leader Trainers will choose a location on lakes or coastal waters with some exposure to wind and wave conditions, with regular access to landing areas and within 1.5 nautical miles from shore: Participants must be observed in 3 of 4 of the following conditions during the exam:

- Winds: 8 - 12knots
- Waves: 1 - 2 feet
- Surf: 1 - 2 feet
- Tidal Current: 1 - 2 knots

Need for change: Tidal is not the only applicable type of current that can be used for this course, thus we open the accessibility of this program by being less specific.

Motion passes 17-0-1

39:10 - Motion 2025-09-05: [Level 2: Essentials of Canoeing Documentation & Roll Out Plan](#)

Exact wording of the motion: Add an L2: Essentials of Canoeing Skills Assessment Document, Add an L2: Essentials of Canoeing Instructor Criteria, and Add a Roll-Out Strategy Plan to inform current Canoeing Instructors and Instructor Trainers of the new course documents and to educate/introduce existing Touring Canoe Instructors as to the moving water specifics of the L2: Essentials of Canoeing curriculum

Need for change: The Canoeing Committee recognized a training need for a basic canoeing course that taught more strokes, maneuvers, safety and rescue skills, and paddlesport knowledge for beginning and novice paddlers who want and need to know more than is covered in the existing Level 1 Introduction to Canoeing course, but that also was more flexible in venue than the existing Essentials of Canoe Touring and the Essentials of River Canoeing courses in order to meet the needs of canoeists in different geographic locations.

The Level 2 Essentials of Canoeing course:

- can be taught by both Touring and River Instructors, IT's, and ITE's
- can be taught on flat and/or gently moving rivers with less than Class 1 rapids.
- gives the EC Instructors room to customize the EC course to meet the participants' specific needs and training venues
- is aimed at training recreational paddlers and personnel such as scout leaders, camp counselors, youth group leaders, and other staff who are supervising beginning paddlers in venues that are higher than the L1 venue.
- provides a higher level of training than what the L1 Intro to Canoeing course provides, but not as much detail or difficulty as the level of our two currently existing L2 Canoeing courses – specifically the moving water maneuvers in the L2 ERC curriculum and the more difficult strokes in the current L2ECT curriculum.
- teaches skills, maneuvers, safety, and rescue techniques to canoe safely on flat or gently moving water. The current Essentials of Canoe Touring course requires too many skilled maneuvers that are unnecessary in an introductory course and these maneuvers can be difficult to master in one day or even in one weekend.
- combines flat and gently moving water as possible venues and simplifies the strokes and maneuvers from both the ERC and ECT courses to better meet the needs of beginner and novice paddlers

The Canoeing Committee has already created and received approval for the L2 : Essentials of Canoeing Skills course (EC). What was missing was the Assessment Document and the Instructor Criteria and a Roll-Out Plan to disseminate information about the new courses to those who can teach it - all currently certified Level 2 and higher Canoeing Instructors and Canoeing Instructor Trainers and ITE's.

The Canoe Committee recognizes that the current Essentials of Canoe Touring course curriculum contains far too many strokes, skills, and complex maneuvers for a Level 2 essentials course (an introductory course), but it is perfectly suited for Level 3 criteria.

1:00:00 - Friendly amendment proposed and accepted to remove the L3/L4 Freestyle Touring Canoe components from this motion.

Motion passes 18-0-0

1:05:37 - Motion 2025-09-06: [Level 3-5: Surf Kayak Skills Assessment Documentation](#)

Exact wording of motion: Motion to approve the attached Surf Kayak Skills Assessment curriculum for L3-L5. Level 2 has already been approved.

- [Level 3 Skills Assessment](#)
- [Level 4 Skills Assessment](#)
- [Level 5 Skills Assessment](#)

Need for change: Surf Kayak does not yet have published L3-5 skills assessments.

Motion passes 17-0-1

1:08:33 - Motion 2025-09-07: [River Kayaking Skills Assessment and Guide Document](#)

Exact wording of the motion: Motion to approve the attached River Kayaking Skills Assessment and Guide document and replace the legacy documents. This document will act as a master document for all river kayaking skills assessments.

Need for change: This master document addresses incongruencies with the legacy documents and provides specific direction for completing all skills assessments for River Kayaking.

1:20:25 - Friendly amendment proposed and accepted

Motion passes 14-2-2

1:27:05 - Discussion about SEIC Discipline Committee Elections

Timeline:

- October 1-24, 2025
 - Nominations for available positions accepted
- October 27- November 14, 2025
 - Votes for Discipline Committee, International Representatives, and At-Large members accepted
- November 17, 2025
 - New Discipline Committee Members, International Representatives, and At-Large members are announced
- January 2026
 - Discipline Committees will elect their officers
 - Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary
 - This will be conducted online and facilitated by the ACA National Office

- Discipline Committees will next elect their affiliate members
 - This will be conducted online and facilitated by the ACA National Office
- February 6, 2026
 - SEIC Discipline Committees shall be fully seated
- March 2026
 - Discipline Committee Meetings and SEIC Meeting to be conducted

1:34:56 - Motion to adjourn