



Serving paddlers since 1880



Get Ready for ACA PaddleFest + Our 145th Anniversary Celebration!

We're just weeks away from the very first ACA PaddleFest, October 17–19 at the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC—and we can't wait to gather the paddling community for this historic weekend!

One of the biggest highlights will be the ACA's 145th Anniversary Celebration & Silent Auction on Saturday evening, October 18—a chance to celebrate more than a century of paddling, connect with friends old and new, and support the future of the ACA.

This celebration is almost sold out! Ticket sales close Friday, October 3. If you haven't purchased your ticket yet, don't wait—[get yours today!](#)

Your \$35 ticket includes:

- Appetizers
- Live band
- Silent auction access
- Awards ceremony

[Purchase ACA 145th Anniversary Celebration Ticket](#)



Spotlight on PaddleFest Presentations & Activities

PaddleFest isn't just about getting on the water—it's about learning, connecting, and celebrating the many ways paddling strengthens our communities. This year's lineup of presentations and activities offers something for everyone:

Paddle Tribal Waters Presentation – *Presented by Amada Lang & John Acuna*

- Saturday, October 18 at 1PM on the River Jam Stage & Lawn
- Hear powerful stories from members of the Paddle Tribal Waters Expedition, who paddled the Klamath River to raise awareness for the removal of four dams. Discover how paddling can be a tool for healing, advocacy, and connection to culture.

Adaptive Boat Building Presentation & Demo – *Presented by Marcel Bieg, Nyles Asher, Dave Childers, & John MacDonald*

- Saturday, October 18 at 2PM on the River Jam Stage & Lawn
- See firsthand how adaptive equipment is designed to expand paddling opportunities for everyone in this interactive demo showcasing innovation and inclusivity.

Mountain True Presentation – *Presented by Jon Stamper*

- Saturday, October 18 at 3PM on the River Jam Stage & Lawn
- Learn how paddlers and local organizations are leading restoration efforts in the southern Appalachians following the devastating impacts of Hurricane Helene in 2024.

Skills Progression Presentation – *Presented by Tommy Holden*

- Saturday, October 18 at 4PM on the River Jam Stage & Lawn
- Explore how thoughtful lesson design reduces anxiety and builds confidence, safety, and proficiency—helping paddlers progress with greater enjoyment and success.

Throw Rope Competition

- Saturday, October 18 at 5PM on the River Jam Stage & Lawn
- Put your rescue skills to the test (or cheer on your fellow paddlers!) in this lively competition designed to sharpen technique and celebrate safety.

[View ACA PaddleFest Schedule](#)

ACA Board of Directors Voting Open Until October 14

There are two weeks left to vote for the ACA Board of Directors (2026–2027 term). This year the ACA will be electing two At-Large Directors. Board members serve two-year terms and can be re-elected.

At-Large Candidates:

- Suzanne Britt
- Robert Garfield
- Simon Norton

Voting will close October 14, 2025, and winners will be announced October 18, 2025, at the ACA Paddlefest celebration! An email will follow on October 20, 2025, to announce winners to the membership.

If you have any questions concerning this election, please contact our Community Engagement Manager, MacKenzie Holbrook at mholbrook@americancanoe.org.

[Learn More & Cast Your Vote](#)

BRINGING HOME THE GOLD

Competition Highlights

2025 Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross National Championships

One of the highlights of ACA PaddleFest is the Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross National Championships, taking place October 17–19 at the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC.

Spectators: Admission is free—just bring your enthusiasm and cheer on the nation's best! (Parking is \$12/car/day.) Don't miss the chance to see top U.S. athletes battle it out for the title of National Champion!

Athletes: As a reminder, registration closes this Friday, October 3. We are looking forward to cheering you on!

U.S. Performance Center to Welcome Sprint National Team for Athlete Testing

We're thrilled to share that members of the USA Canoe Sprint National Team will be in Charlotte during PaddleFest! While in town, athletes will take part in performance testing at U.S. Performance Center (USPC)—a proud ACA partner helping our national team prepare for peak performance on the international stage. This is a unique opportunity for the ACA community to celebrate our sprint athletes, connect with the broader paddlesports family, and see how cutting-edge sports science supports success on the water.

2025 Canoe Slalom World Championships



Athlete: Marcella Altman / Photo Credit: Nina Jelenc

The 2025 Canoe Slalom World Championships have kicked off in Sydney, Australia! From September 28 through October 3, the world's top athletes are racing for the title of World Champion.

USA is in the mix, with paddlers competing in men's and women's events across canoe, kayak, and kayak cross events. For live results, livestreams, and more daily highlights, head over to the official ICF event site for all the action.

[ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships – Sydney 2025](#)

2025 Wildwater National Championships & 2026 Wildwater Team Trials Race #1



Photo Credit: Dale Lewis

The 2025 USA Wildwater National Championships took place August 30–31 on the Potomac River near Great Falls, Maryland. This year, Nationals also served as Race #1 of the 2026 USA Wildwater Team Trials, the first step in selecting athletes to represent the U.S. at next year's ICF Wildwater World Championships and World Cups.

Following two days of exciting competition, the provisional 2026 USA Wildwater Senior World Championships & World Cups Team and USA Wildwater Masters Team have been announced. Athletes will have another chance to qualify at Race #2 of the Team Trials, March 27–28, 2026, at the Red Moshannon Downriver Race in Pennsylvania.

Congratulations to all athletes and thank you to the incredible volunteers who made this event a success!

[View Wildwater Nationals Results & More Information](#)

2025 USA Canoe Ocean Racing National Championships

History was made on the Columbia River Gorge on July 19, 2025 as sixty-two paddlers from across the country lined up to compete in the first-ever USA Canoe Ocean Racing (COR) National Championships, held in partnership with the 2025 Gorge Downwind Championships. This milestone event marked the debut of a formal national title for surfski paddling under the umbrella of the ACA.

The 2025 championship featured a fast, technical downwind course and a field that included both elite contenders and enthusiastic new racers — reflecting the sport's growing depth and reach in the United States.

[View Ocean Racing Nationals Results & More Information](#)



2025 Swiftwater Rescue Conference

This October, dive deeper into safety, leadership, and rescue at the 2025 Swiftwater Rescue Conference, part of ACA PaddleFest (October 17–19, Charlotte, NC). Whether you're a paddler, instructor, or safety leader, this is your chance to train with nationally and internationally recognized experts—while connecting with peers across the paddling community.

Your registration includes:

- 3 half-day on-water sessions
- 3 on-land sessions
- ACA Swiftwater Instructor & Instructor Trainer Updates
- Hands-on learning with rescue leaders like Tom Burroughs, Stephanie Lareau, Lynsey Nunes, Chris Davis, Josh Nichols, Don Lester, CJ Waasdorp, Glenn Harman, Justin Padgett, Jordan Taylor, Henderson McGinnis, Karl Schmidt, Jim Coffey, Nik White, and Robin Pope

Pricing & Extras:

- ACA Members: \$375
- Non-Members: \$415 (includes one year ACA membership)
- A la carte sessions available (CPR Certification, Cutting Tools & Low Light Operations, Boat-Based Rescues)

[More Information & Registration](#)

Register for Instructor & IT Updates at ACA PaddleFest by October 3

There are only a few days left to claim your spot—registration for ACA Instructor & IT Updates at PaddleFest closes October 3!

These updates are more than a refresher—they're a chance to grow your leadership, sharpen your instructional approach, and connect deeper with the ACA community through scenario work, peer discussion, and fine-tuning your craft.

Whether you teach canoeing, SUP, coastal kayaking, river kayaking, or rafting disciplines, there's a path for you:

- Level 1–2 Updates (Fri, Oct 17 → Sat, Oct 18)
- Level 3–5 Updates (Fri, Oct 17 → Sun, Oct 19)

Cost: \$175

Note: This is not an upgrade option—you must update at the level you currently hold (or below).

[More Information & Registration](#)

Instructor of the Month: Maria Barroso



Please join us in celebrating Maria Barroso, ACA Instructor of the Month for May 2025! Based in Lyons, Colorado, Maria is a Canoe Slalom and Kayak Cross Coach who works primarily with junior and U23 athletes, guiding them toward national and international competition. She also Maria uses her Whitewater Kayaking Instructor Certification to share her passion for paddling with the broader community by teaching recreational kayaking throughout Colorado. A strong advocate for women in paddlesports, Maria creates specialized programs and camps that empower and inspire girls and women to get on the water. Through her coaching, Maria is helping to shape the next generation of athletes while building a more inclusive paddling community.

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Sincerely,

Kaycee Maas, Communications Manager

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