

September 28, 2026 SEIC Meeting Minutes

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/M5wc5FkSFrk>

Please use the time stamps outlined below to navigate the video recording and find the items/discussions you would like to review.

Voting Members in Attendance: Anne Sontheimer, Rachel Nagle, Alan Cammack, Robert Kauffman, Jeff Atkins, Patrick Frehner, John Browning, Mike Aronoff, Raff Kuner, Jim Coffey, Lance Elzie, Susan Eda, Robin Pope, Geoff Luckett, Ryan Rushton, Taylor Carlin for Jess Lewis

Guests in Attendance: Ben Morton & Kelsey Bracewell (ACA Staff), Simon Norton (ACA Board Member), Rieke Shafer, Wayne Douchkoff, Suzanne Britt (ACA Board Chair), Randy Wilson

Video Timestamp: 0:00 - Meeting Called To Order, Establish Quorum

13:47 - SEI Department Report (Kelsey Bracewell)

- [Certification data & trends](#)

29:58 - Committee Reports - Written reports can be found [within the CMS](#)

- 29:58 - Canoe Committee (Susan Eda)
- 31:35 - Coastal Kayaking Committee (John Browning)
- 33:21 - Packrafting Committee (Patrick Frehner)
- 35:04 - Rafting Committee (Taylor Carlin for Jess Lewis)
- 39:05 - River Kayaking Committee (Anne Sontheimer)
- 41:02 - Safety & Rescue Committee (Jim Coffey)
- 44:24 - Stand Up Paddle Board Committee (Rachel Nagle)
- 46:49 - Universal Paddling Committee (Acting Chair, John Browning)
- 50:50 - Paddlecraft Fishing Committee (Geoff Luckett)
- 52:33 - Introduction to Paddling Committee (IPC) (Robin Pope)

55:38 - Motion 2026-09-00: Approval of [previous meeting minutes](#).

Motion passes 16-0-0.

58:22 - Motion 2026-09-01: [Expanding Paddlesports Fishing Credentials to include Leader/Guide Track](#) (Geoff Luckett)

- Question from Mike Aronoff
- Comment from Jeff Atkins: This new process will produce a "Certified Fishing Leader/Guide"
- Ryan Rushton: Endorsements do not apply to the Leader/Guide pathway

- Kelsey: This isn't an expansion of the fishing program, it's effectively a proposed expansion of the Leader/Guide pathway
- Alan: We need to further define how endorsements are applicable to the leader pathway (or not). Is there another way to structure this idea?
- Ryan Rushton: suggests tabling this motion for further discussion, as the idea is great but doesn't yet have the administrative legs
- 01:10:45 - Geoff Luckett agrees to table the motion
- 01:11:50 - Comment from Patrick Frehner about touring packrafting

01:13:30 - Motion 2026-09-02: [A Plan to Keep the ACA Freestyle Program Afloat Within the ACA](#) (Susan Eda)

- Susan Eda introduces the motion and emphasis on the investment by the European canoe community
- Patrick Frehner adds input describing the lack of ITs/ITEs and update / renewal opportunities for freestyle canoe instructors and ITs
- Mike Aronoff asks: have you been in touch with the US Canoe Association? They have a strong program that could perhaps better support this group? Why should this small group stay with ACA?
- Kelsey Bracewell: What does "support" mean, operationally?
- Patrick Frehner: Give extensions and give IT status to some people to carry on the group of freestyle canoe instructors
- Ryan Rushton: the roll out plan is loose, convoluted, and unclear. One-at-a-time policy asks/waivers are more likely to succeed.
- Susan Eda: This issue isn't specific to canoe; other disciplines have this same problem providing updates and cert renewals.
- Ryan Rushton: This should prompt this group (SEIC board) to review the update process across the board. We should create a working group to suggest changes for the update process.
- 1:32:51 - Patrick Frehner and Susan Eda suggest that the motion be tabled until the December meeting, and Ryan Rushton agrees to form a working group to address these issues with a finer tooth comb
- Mike Aronoff - the reason that Freestyle Canoe Committee disappeared because there wasn't enough interest in serving on the committee, thus the River Canoe Committee had to absorb it
- Lance Elzie: those wanting a waiver should submit requests on their own behalf, and we move forward with those

1:35:45 - Motion 2026-09-03: [SWFR Endorsement and Course Proposal](#) (Jim Coffey)

- Jim Coffey shared his screen to illustrate geographic dispersion of drownings and medical incidents
- Ryan Rushton: Is this a motion for a pilot program? Do you already have an exhaustive list of the requirements to deliver this pilot program? (Jim says yes)

- Robin Pope: the ACA people that are going to be approved to teach this are already professionally qualified (we have a list). Should we expand this to other ACA disciplines outside of Safety & Rescue?
- Jeff Atkins: Is the one-day program better than requiring people to have a more advanced medical qualification such as WFA?
- Jim Coffey: This bridges the gap between medical training and river rescue. Now that you've rescued the injured person, now what?
- Jeff Atkins: Are there endorsement maintenance requirements for this?
- Jim Coffey: Those requirements are administered by other agencies, i.e., Stop the Bleed. ACA will not be certifying anyone medical practice and thus will not need to address maintenance of those other credentials.
- Robin Pope: This addresses how to manage medical incidents and emotional trauma of a rescue in the swiftwater rescue context / environment.
- Lance Elzie: This would require a medical director (compensated) by the ACA to better address the risk that this would bring upon ACA's insurance coverage options.
- John Browning notes via chat: "This is relevant to all of our disciplines."
- Robin Pope via chat: "The biggest concern is that we might be thinking too small. This is relevant to all paddlers, lifeguards, wilderness leaders, commercial mariners, oceanographers. Our hope is to get it started and we'd love to have others join in. Before we do this under the ACA's aegis, the Board needs to answer the insurance question."
- Jim Coffey: ACA's insurance isn't within the scope of this group, but we have outstanding medical control and support for this proposal. We do not have everything finalized in this motion.
- Alan Cammack: I am most concerned about the insurance question, and how that is up to the ACA board or Executive Director (not the SEIC).
- Mike Aronoff questions the major liability ACA incurs when giving medical advice when it's outside their organizational expertise.
- Jim Coffey: We also need to address the psychological aftermath of these situations.
- Ben Morton: I applaud the committee's work on putting this together, this pilot program is a good idea and a worthwhile effort. However, we need more answers from ACA insurance and how it connects to this proposed curriculum.
- Rachel Nagle: After 20 years of being both a paddling instructor and a WFR, this year is the first time I have seen the application of this overlapping curriculum. I think it's a great idea and should be integrated into the low level courses as well.
- Robert Kauffman: Am I understanding that this is an application course, versus a new credential from the ACA?
- Suz Britt: There is a gap in knowledge here (about saving lives) that should be a requirement to address versus an optional add on.

- Lance Elzie: Every certified ACA instructor and leader/guide are required to have current first aid and CPR, which addresses the basic need you mentioned.
- Jim Coffey: Maybe we need a friendly amendment.
- Suzanne Britt requests this motion be tabled until after the October ACA Board of Directors Meeting to further investigate the insurance options.
- Jim Coffey: We want to pilot this at a Latin American conference on December 17th. We don't want to push it off again and again.
- Ryan Rushton: This is a lot for this brief 2 hour call, and we need more time to gather information from the ACA's insurance carrier.
- Jim Coffey: Friendly amendment:
 - If the ACA insurance approval goes through, then we will pilot this program as an ACA program

02:24:20 - Closing Remarks (Ryan Rushton)

02:24 50- Motion to Adjourn (Ryan Rushton, Robert Kauffman second)

Next SEIC Meeting Dates

- Winter 2026 - December 5th from 10AM to 4PM Eastern