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The ACA National Office is serving up the latest paddlesports news! To find the content that matters to you most, use the guide below.

- Forward Strokes brings you an update on the Klamath Dam removal project and a job opportunity with ACA partner organization, Outdoor Alliance.
- Making Waves announces that nominations are now open for the 2023 ACA National Awards!
- Bringing Home the Gold is stacked this month with updates from Canoe Sprint, Paracanoe, Wildwater, Canoe Slalom, and SUP!
- Safety Talk shares with you our newest ACA Instructor of the Month and exciting updates about the Paddlesport Angler Instructor Endorsement!



**The first of the four Klamath Dams, Copco 2, has officially been removed!** Learn from Indigenous leaders about why removing these four dams to restore a healthy Klamath River is critical for clean water, food sovereignty, and justice in the short film by American Rivers and Swiftwater Films, [River Guardians](#). It is a very big deal to be witnessing these dams be removed after a 20-year effort led by indigenous communities.

"We are about to witness healing on a major scale. Dam removal is the best way to bring a river back to life. The Klamath is significant not only because it is the biggest dam removal and river restoration effort in history, but because it shows that we can right historic wrongs and make big, bold dreams a reality for our rivers and communities." - Dr. Ann Willis, California Director, American Rivers.

The three remaining dams; Copco 1, JC Boyle, and Iron Gate dams are scheduled for removal beginning in 2024. Visit the [Klamath River Renewal Corporation's website](#) to find out more about the project, and to stay updated as work progresses.



*Thanks to years of hard work, the Klamath River will be free flowing by 2025.*

**ACA partner, [Outdoor Alliance](#), is hiring an Outdoor Advocate Network Director.** The Outdoor Advocate Network Director will lead the execution of the new Outdoor Alliance Outdoor Advocate Network program to unlock the untapped potential of the human-powered outdoor recreation community to protect the human-powered outdoor recreation experience and conserve America's public lands.

The ideal candidate will be enthusiastic about public lands and outdoor recreation advocacy, empowering a new generation of advocates and building community among this group of leaders. If you understand the power of community and collaboration and your best days are when someone you've recruited has their moment in the sun, this position is for you. Read the [Outdoor Alliance Outdoor Advocate Network Director position description](#) for more information.



**We are now accepting nominations for the 2023 National Awards!** Each year, the ACA presents a series of prestigious national awards to individuals and organizations who have illustrated exemplary leadership, service, and dedication to various aspects of paddlesports. [Submit your nominations today!](#)



**The 2023 ACA Sprint Canoe National Championships** took place August 1-4, with paddlers coming from as far as Hawaii to race at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota, Florida. This event was the culmination of these athlete's hard season of training and is one of the largest annual gatherings of sprint canoe and kayak athletes in the United States.

This year's National Championships brought stout competition and inspiring sportsmanship from all athletes in attendance. [Gig Harbor Canoe & Kayak Racing Team](#), a club out of Washington, earned the Yonker's Canoe Club Trophy for most points earned by a club at the National Championships.

Well done to all athletes and thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success! We especially want to thank the staff at Nathan Benderson Park, all the volunteers & officials, and Steve Kelly whose hard work and dedication to this sport was instrumental in the organization of this National Championships!

**The 2023 USA Wildwater National Championships** took place August 11-12 in Salida, CO. The racecourse on the Arkansas River in Salida was fantastic and served as excellent training for the 2024 World Championships in Spain. Wildwater has always been a tight knit group of athletes that help each other out, and this year's National Championships was no exception.

Shout out to local Salida Junior, Finn Blackburn, who is now the 2023 Junior National Champion; Garett Strouse, who became a 4-time national champion as well as the overall champion in 2023; Olivia Spencer who in addition to being Race Chairman, is the 2023 Women's National Champion; and Mike Harvey, the 2023 Masters National Champion.

For more, read the full recap of Highlights from the [2023 USA Wildwater National Championships by John Pinyard](#).





*Photo Credit: [USA Wildwater](#) / Athlete: Finn Blackburn, 2023 U.S. Junior Wildwater National Champion*

**U.S. Canoe Slalom National Team Member, Nathaniel Francis, brings us this update from the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom Junior & U23 World Championships:**

The 2023 Canoe Slalom Junior & U23 World Championships took center stage in Krakow, Poland this month, from August 15th to 20th. Against the stunning backdrop of the Vistula River, 16 U.S. athletes competed across 11 categories. A huge congrats to Evy Leibfarth who earned herself the title of U23 World Champion in Women's K1 and showcased her versatility with a 3rd place in U23 Women's C1. Kyler Long's remarkable performance was equally notable, earning him a well-deserved third place in Junior Men's Kayak Cross.

Yet, beyond the exhilarating rush of competition, the championships exemplified the power of unity and camaraderie. Athletes learned to juggle in the team tent between runs and made friends with people from around the world. The shared passion between the athletes for the water was palpable, and ideas were bounced between coaches and athletes the entire race. As the Championships came to a close, athletes continued on to their next destinations. For some, that means the 3rd World Cup of the season in La Seu d'Urgell that takes place from August 31 to September 3. A huge thanks to the coaches—Lee Liebfarth, Silvan Poheraj, Tren Long, Jakub Brzezinski — and also our team leader, Johnathan Altman— as well as the parents for their invaluable support and the race organizers for their efforts in putting on the race.

Please join us in wishing Nathaniel and the rest of his teammates good luck with the remainder of the 2023 racing season!



*U.S. Junior & U23 Canoe Slalom National Team Members at the opening ceremony in for the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom Junior & U23 World Championships*

*Photo Credit: Nathaniel Francis (NF Films)*

*In addition to being a talented Canoe Slalom athlete, Nathaniel is an exceptional photographer and videographer. Be sure to [follow Nathaniel on Instagram](#) and [check out his website!](#)*

**The 2023 ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships and the 2023 ICF Paracanoe World Championships** were held on August 23-27 in Duisburg, Germany. These events were the first opportunity for athletes to secure quotas for the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics. We are very excited to announce that the United States has now earned one quota for the 2024 Olympic Games and two quotas for the 2024 Paralympic Games.

Nevin Harison, Olympic Champion in the Women's C1 200m event, placed fourth in this event during the Sprint Canoe World Championships, securing an Olympic quota for the United States. Jillian Elwart's fourth-place finish in the Women's VL3 200m event earned a Paralympic quota for the United States! Blake Haxton earned a bronze medal and qualified the United States a Paralympic quota for the Men's VL2 200m event.

The Senior National Sprint Canoe and Paracanoe Team made a very impressive effort at the Canoe Sprint World Championships, with many athletes achieving personal best times and unprecedented results of the United States. The team has now arrived in Paris, France for the third 2023 ICF Canoe Sprint Word Cup which is a test event for the 2024 Paris Olympics. Racing kicks off August 30 and goes through September 1.





*Paracanoe athlete, Blake Haxton, with bronze medal in hand after earning the United States a 2024 Paralympic quota for the Men's VL2 200m event.*

**The 2023 ICF SUP World Cup** will bring Stand Up Paddling athletes from around the world to Sarasota, Florida to race for world titles this October 13-15. This highly anticipated event, to be hosted by Nathan Benderson Park, promises to thrill spectators new to the event and dedicated SUP athletes alike.

Participating athletes have the chance to compete with hard boards or inflatables (up to 14') in the events. As one of the fastest growing sports on the planet, the addition of the recreational race adds a refreshing level of inclusivity to the competitive side of the sport. Paddlers competing in the recreational race can choose to use inflatable boards in contrast to the hard boards that are required by athletes competing in the 10K distance, 200m sprint, and the 800m technical races.

"This event is a unique opportunity for recreational paddlers to compete in an international competition," says Beth Spilman, Executive Director of the American Canoe Association. "We encourage anyone who is curious about SUP racing to come out. Racing or spectating, this is an event that you won't want to miss!"

For more information about the event and to register, please visit the [event website](#).



**Please join us in celebrating JoAndra Proia, this month's recipient of the ACA Instructor of the Month Award!** Jo is a kayak, SUP, and yoga instructor based out of North Carolina, and Owner of the guide company, [Outdoor Women by Jo Proia](#). What makes Jo stand out is her passion for educating, empowering, and exciting women of all ages to pursue adventure through kayaking.

Jo is a fierce believer that no matter how much time or money you have, there are still abundant opportunities to have “micro-adventures” close to home. Over the past 12 years Jo has taught over 3,000 women how to kayak. Congratulations, Jo! This recognition has been well earned!

Keep up the good work and thank you for your commitment to helping women safely rekindle their adventurous spirit through paddlesports! For more, read [Jo's complete IOM Feature](#). If you know a truly awesome ACA instructor, [nominate them as future Instructor of the Month](#)!



*August's Instructor of the Month, Jo Proia of North Carolina, geared up and ready to teach!*

**The new ACA Paddlesports Angler Instructor Endorsement is gaining momentum** within the ranks of ACA Instructor Trainers/Instructor Trainer Educators, among our grassroots instructor candidates, and among leading Kayak Anglers who are getting certified as ACA instructors so they can bring this training to the kayak angling community, reports the ACA Fishing Advisory Board. Read more about recent courses and how to get enforced in the news article, “[ACA Fishing Endorsement Gaining Momentum, Recruiting Kayak Angling Leaders as ACA Instructors](#)” published on the ACA website.





*Photo Credit: Chuck Earls*

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Sincerely,



Kaycee Maas, Communications Coordinator

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