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**Scouts and The ACA**

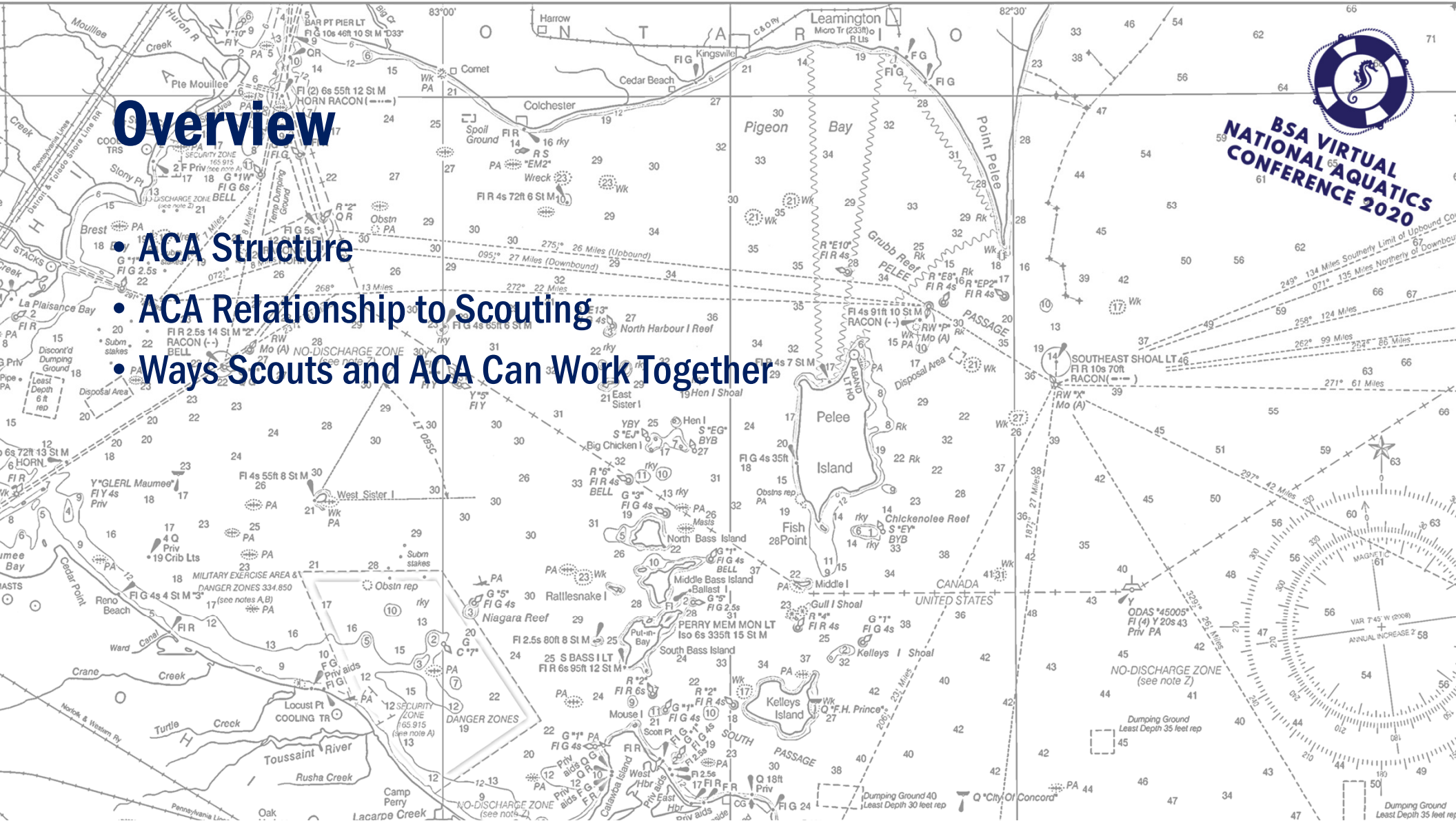
**Robin Pope**  
**Chair, American Canoe Association Board of Directors**  
**Skipper, Sea Scout Ship 957**

# Overview

- ACA Structure
- ACA Relationship to Scouting
- Ways Scouts and ACA Can Work Together



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# Why Bother?

- Canoeing, kayaking, rafting and SUPing all are popular Scout programs
- As Scout leaders, we want to provide, and participate in, the highest quality and safest possible programs
- ACA is widely recognized as setting the standard for paddling education
  - Paddling merit badge and award programs were written by ACA instructors
  - ACA instructors wrote the National On Water Standards for human propelled boating
  - ACA programs are used around the world; instructors currently active in more than 20 countries and have worked on at least 5 continents, including Antarctica



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# American Canoe Association

- Formed in 1880
- 14,000 +/- members in more than 20 countries
- Core principles of education, recreation, stewardship and competition
- More than 4000 licensed instructors and instructor trainers
- Instruction programs in canoe, kayak, raft, SUP, prone paddling, rescue and adaptive paddling
- 300+ affiliated clubs in the US



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# American Canoe Association

- Founding member of the Outdoor Alliance
- Work with other OA members to address stewardship issues
- Focus on Steam to Sea water quality
- National Governing Body for Olympic and Paralympic Paddlesports
- 600+ competitors; 140+/- at national or international level



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# American Canoe Association Structure

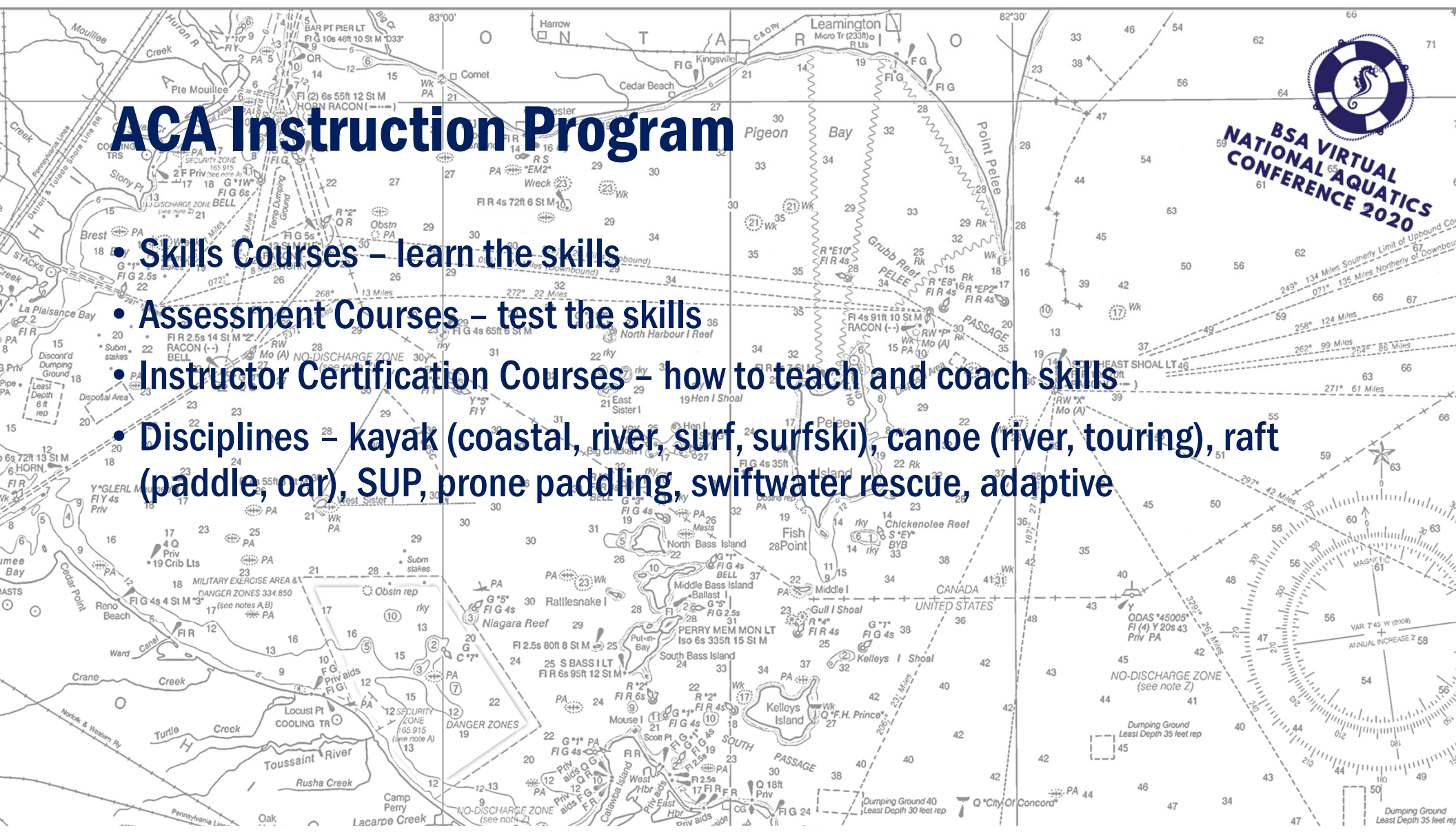
- **Tiny (<8 full time) national staff**
- **Large (100+) volunteer leadership team**
  - **Safety Education and Instruction Council oversees all on-water instruction**
  - **Competition Council oversees competitive events**
  - **State Directors coordinate state-level events**
- **Local members and clubs**

# ACA Instruction Program

- Skills Courses – learn the skills
- Assessment Courses – test the skills
- Instructor Certification Courses – how to teach and coach skills
- Disciplines – kayak (coastal, river, surf, surfski), canoe (river, touring), raft (paddle, oar), SUP, prone paddling, swiftwater rescue, adaptive



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# ACA Instruction Program

## • Levels

- 1 – calm, still, protected environment (National On-Water Standards)
- 2 – slow moving water, little wind, small waves
- 3 – moving water, larger waves, more wind (class I-II rapids)
- 4 – exposed conditions (class II-III rapids)
- 5 – small craft advisory, class III-IV rapids

## • Instructor types

- Instructor – teach skill and assessment course (3800)
- Instructor Trainer (IT) – certify instructors, teach skill and assessment courses (180)
- Instructor Trainer Educator – ITs allowed to mentor new ITs (35)



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# ACA and Scouting

- Memorandum of Understanding with BSA and Sea Scouting
- ACA instructors wrote Kayaking, Canoeing, and Whitewater Merit Badges, and SUP and Kayaking awards
- ACA instructor wrote paddling information for the Sea Scout Manual
- Many instructors have a history of being Scouts as youth, and serving Scouting as adult leaders



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# ACA and Scouting Working Together

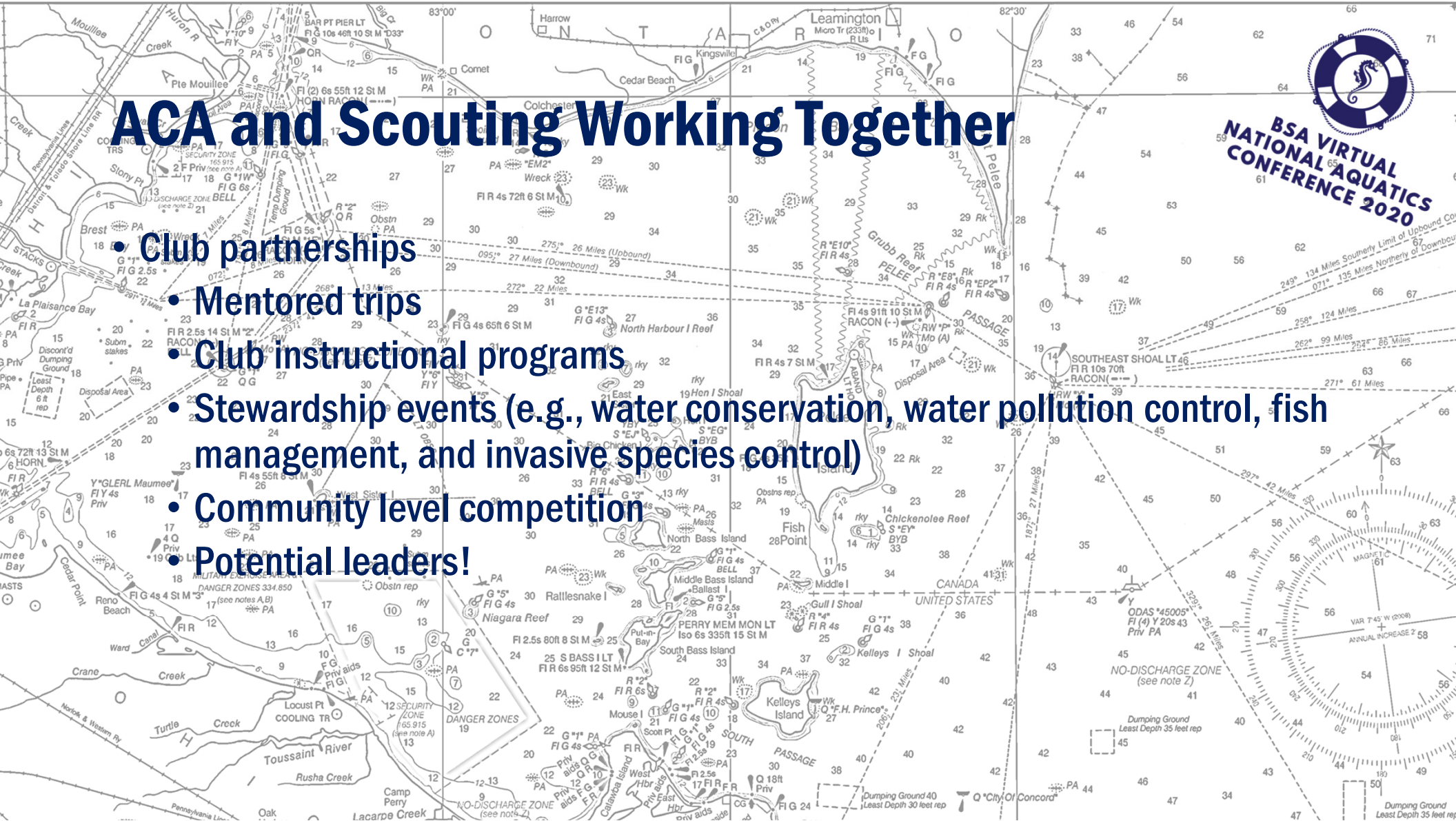
- Instructor partnerships
- Skills training
- Merit badge classes
- Guided trips
- Instructor certification
- Paddlecraft Safety Facilitator
- Introduction to paddling skills
- On land and on water components
- Similar to Paddle Craft Safety, designed to familiarize leaders with basic paddling information

# ACA and Scouting Working Together

- Club partnerships
- Mentored trips
- Club instructional programs
- Stewardship events (e.g., water conservation, water pollution control, fish management, and invasive species control)
- Community level competition
- Potential leaders!



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# ACA and Scouting Working Together

- State Directors
- Stewardship events
- Regional instruction events (e.g., with Team River Runner and other wounded warrior programs)
- Public policy
- National
  - Olympic level competition
  - National and regional leadership
  - Service at ACA's national office (thanks to troops in Fredericksburg, VA, for their help painting ACA's office)



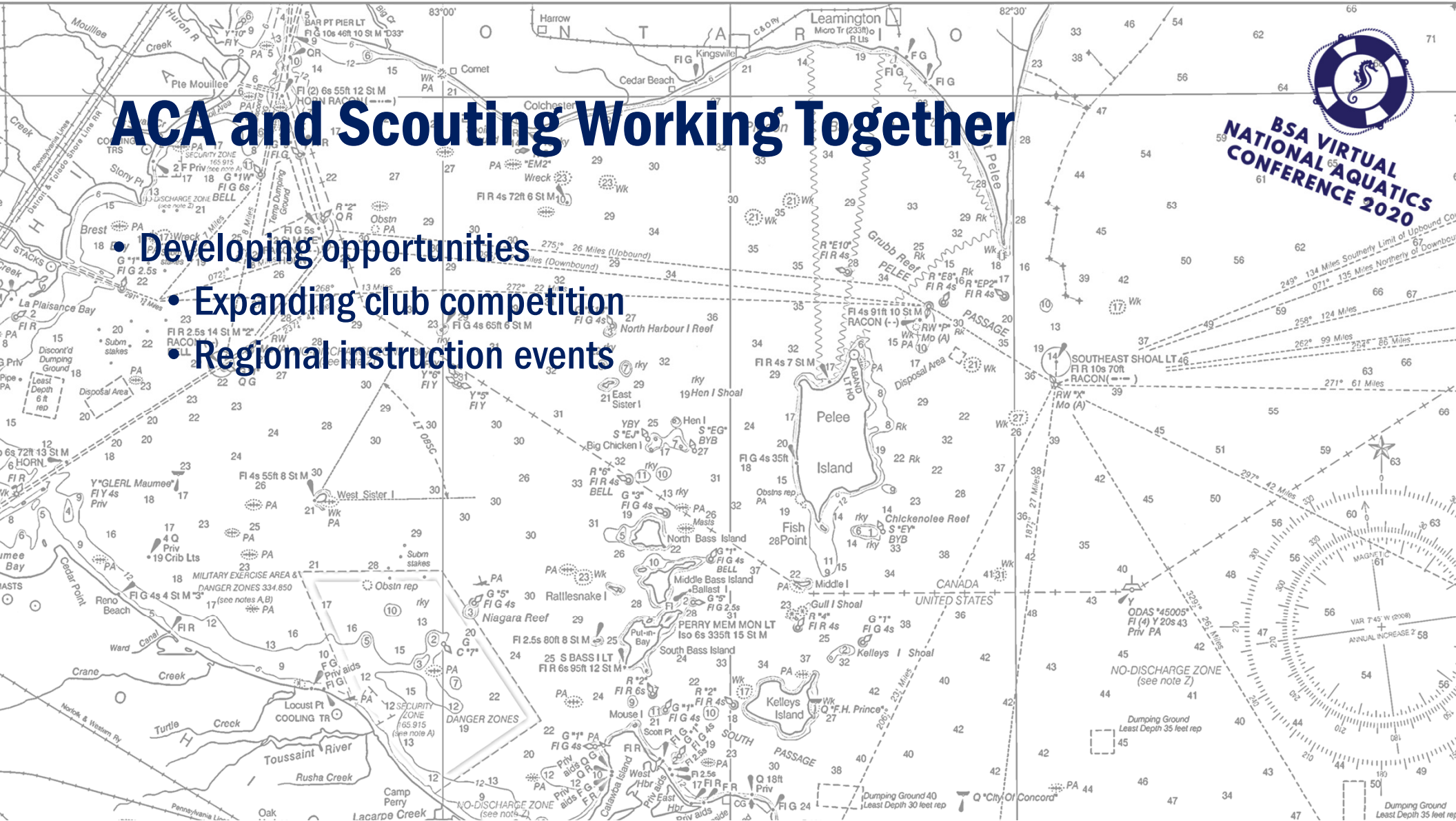
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# ACA and Scouting Working Together

- Developing opportunities
- Expanding club competition
- Regional instruction events



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# ACA and Scouting Working Together

- How to make it happen
- Look for contacts on the ACA website
- Instruction [https://www.americancanoe.org/page/Find\\_Instruction](https://www.americancanoe.org/page/Find_Instruction)
- Clubs <https://www.americancanoe.org/search/custom.asp?id=2124>
- Contact
- Paddling schools
- Paddling stores



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# Take Home Messages

- ACA and Scouting have a long history working together to make paddle sports safer and more fun
- Scouts can reach out to ACA instructors and clubs to:
  - Learn about all aspects of paddling
  - Earn Merit Badge and advancement requirements
  - Participate in guided trips and obtain mentoring for trips
  - Participate in stewardship, leadership, and other service projects
  - Have more fun on the water