

Allatoona Lake partnered in the summer of 2024 with the American Canoe Association, Georgia River Network, and others to provide low-cost Kayak 101 training classes for individuals interested learning more about the recreational sport and improving their skills and safety. Allatoona Lake had provided a couple of locations last summer for this training. We were approached this year about providing multiple locations throughout the year and to participate in a training class on May 18, 2024, that would be offered simultaneously with other classes being taught in 7 states (Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Texas, Missouri, and Florida).

The main idea was for the ACA to build partnerships between ACA nationally certified instructors with federal and state agencies, regional paddling clubs, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and others. This was the third year the partners had provided the simultaneous classes and had already received awards in 2023 and 2024 for their efforts. The May 18th date was chosen because it coincided with the start of National Safe Boating Week. Allatoona Lake saw this as a big win situation particularly because of the water safety/boating safety aspect but was also being provided by national partner the ACA. Allatoona Lake is the first USACE Lake to participate in the main event and was the first area in the State of Georgia to commit to the program. There will be a total of 11 classes taught this year on Allatoona Lake.

On May 18, there were three Kayak 101 classes taught in USACE areas at the same time as classes being presented in 6 other states. In all, 43 classes were presented more than doubling what had been accomplished the year before. Initial totals show around 80 participants taking part in the events at Allatoona including both instructors and students. According to all, the event went smoothly with participants not only learning to safely operate their kayaks but also having a great time in the process. For our part, USACE supplied the recreation areas, permits, and staff and volunteers to assist with the program. Volunteers unlocked gates, greeted participants, gave short water safety programs and handed out water safety materials donated from the National Water Safety Program and the Corps Foundation for the event. The event had also been advertised to the public through a joint press release and through the Allatoona Lake Facebook site. Numerous types of media picked up the story both locally and nationally.

In addition to the ACA Georgia, Georgia River Network, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, other organizations that also partnered/participated in the program include: Georgia Power Company, Trust for Public Lands, Georgia Canoeing Association, The Outdoor Foundation, Savannah Coastal Ecotours, Middle Georgia Kayaking, Miller Kayak Trips and Training, REI Co-op and REI Co-op Experiences, Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Half Moon Outfitters, Westbrook Supply Co., and Southern Conservation Trust.

Yahoo Sports: <https://sports.yahoo.com/corps-engineers-coast-guard-help-035900484.html>

Paddling Magazine: <https://paddlingmag.com/stories/2024-national-safe-boating-week/>







