



Nantahala Racing Club Wins American Canoe Association's 2016 Stroke of Achievement Award

Bryson City, N.C. (October, 2017) — Nantahala Racing Club, Western North Carolina's incubator for aspiring paddlesports athletes, earned recognition by the American Canoe Association for "superior performance and program development" among ACA-affiliated clubs nationwide. The award will be presented to NRC's special director Chris Hipgrave at the ACA Annual Banquet & Awards Ceremony on November 12 in Sausalito, CA.

Nantahala Racing Club specializes in the development of slalom, freestyle, and downriver paddlesports athletes. Founded in 1989 to support top-level canoe and kayak athletes training for the Olympics, NRC recently shifted its focus and now develops and supports athletes of all ages and ability levels through a variety of training resources and events. NRC's commitment to competitive paddlesports is also balanced with a mission to engage youth and families in whitewater sport.

The club's new direction has been recognized by The North Face, which awarded NRC a major \$25,000 Explore Fund grant in 2014 for "outdoor education and outing programs for youth from underserved communities that provide exposure to outdoor activities and build skills for life success." And in 2016 alone, NRC won five different grants: a Patagonia Environmental Grant, a Columbia Sportswear/Grassroots Outdoor Alliance Belay Grant, the Great Smokies Health Foundation Grant, a Cherokee Preservation Foundation grant and a Craig H. Nielson Foundation grant. These grants recognize NRC's important work serving kids, minority populations, paddlers with spinal cord injuries and the river environments where club members paddle.

NRC Executive Director Sam Gaughan commented, "2016 has been the best year yet for the club. Our swelling membership and outreach efforts have been matched with strong recognition and support from partners and donors. We're introducing more paddlers to the outdoors and serving more communities than we thought possible even a couple of years ago. The momentum behind the organization is palpable whenever we get together on the water."

Learn more about NRC's programs, including the Nantahala Kids Club, NRC Family Whitewater Weekends, After School Kayaking, Youth Training, Friday Night Adult Slalom and special events and open-to-the-public races at nantahalaracingclub.com

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About Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC)--Nantahala Outdoor Center is the nation's largest outdoor recreation company. Over a million guests visit NOC annually to embark on a diverse collection of more than 120 different river and land-based itineraries, learn to kayak at NOC's world-renowned Paddling School, travel abroad with NOC's Adventure Travel program, test the latest outdoor gear and shop at its LEED-certified flagship retail stores or enjoy NOC's resort amenities such as its three restaurants and multi-tiered lodging. A privately-held company, NOC is one of the largest employers in Western North Carolina and 22 Olympians including two Olympic Gold Medalists have called NOC home. NOC has been recently recognized by The New York Times as the "Nation's Premiere Paddling School," "The Best Place to Learn" by Outside, and as "One of the Best Outfitters on Earth" by National Geographic Adventure.