



NOC Hosts ICF Junior & U23 Wildwater Canoeing World Championships, August 2-7 *Elite Paddlers from 15 Countries Race Down Nantahala River*

Bryson City, N.C. (July 15, 2015)— Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) will host the 2015 International Canoe Federation’s Junior and U23 Wildwater Canoeing World Championships August 2-7, on the Nantahala River near Bryson City, NC. The event will be the premier competitive paddling event in the United States this summer, featuring 140 athletes ranging in age from 15 to 23 years old. Fifteen countries will be represented, with many paddlers coming from Europe and as far as Australia.

Wildwater is one of the most challenging paddlesports disciplines where athletes race down a whitewater course for 3 to 4 miles in the classic race or for 450 meters in the sprint. The most successful competitors are able to navigate features of the natural whitewater riverbed in extreme speed while executing the course with a calm and calculated demeanor. The fastest times are expected to be approximately 13 minutes in the classic course and 70 seconds in the sprint, with the most difficult rapid occurring at the end of each course, Class III Nantahala Falls.

This competition is one of several recent world-class competitive events hosted by Nantahala Outdoor Center, the nation’s premier paddlesports venue. The 2013 Freestyle Kayak World Championships were held in 2013, bringing 171 international competitors and 30,000 visitors to the region. On the national stage, the US Open is held at NOC each year as well as the Junior Olympics, and local competitive events are hosted throughout the year. All events promote the importance of outdoor recreation and engage future generations in an active and healthy lifestyle. See below for a comprehensive list of national and international events held at NOC.

Spectators will enjoy the World Championship races from the riverbanks parallel to the Nantahala River along highway US 19/74. The finish line is located in the heart of NOC’s beautiful main campus which is surrounded by two riverside restaurants, the NOC Outfitter’s Store, live music and other event festivities to encourage camaraderie among participants, guests and the international community. With races happening in the early morning and late afternoon each day, NOC’s rafting trips and zip lining will be in full operation. There is no parking or entry fee for spectators to witness and be inspired by some of the world’s best paddlers.

Chris Hipgrave, general manager of NOC’s paddlesports and outdoor schools, notes “The Nantahala River has a very long legacy of wildwater sport. Former NOC president Bunny Johns was a gold medalist in the mixed C2 division in 1981 at the World Championships in Bala, Wales. NOC has produced numerous elite athletes, so bringing the world to this beautiful natural setting is an honor. Winning the bid to host the World Championships substantiates NOC as a world-renowned venue for competitive paddlesports in all disciplines of whitewater.”

For the detailed event schedule and more information visit noc.com. For access to high resolution photos, visit <http://www.freestylekayaking2013.com/media.html>.

National and International Events, 2011-2015

2011 USA Canoe/Kayak Slalom Nationals

2012 ACA Open Canoe Slalom Nationals & North American Championships

2012 & 2013 ACA Open Canoe Downriver Nationals

2012 ICF Canoe Freestyle World Cup (Pigeon River)
2012 ICF Canoe Freestyle World Cup (Nantahala River)
2013 ICF Canoe Freestyle World Championships
2013 USA Canoe/Kayak Slalom Nationals & Junior Slalom National Team Trials
2014 USA Canoe/Kayak Junior Slalom National Team Trials
2014 ICF Canoe Freestyle Pan-American Championships
2015 ICF Junior & U23 Wildwater Canoeing World Championships
(Not Official) 2015 USA Canoe/Kayak Slalom Nationals

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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.*

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