

THE AFRICAN PADDLING ASSOCIATION

(Formerly SARA)

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ABOUT THE AFRICAN PADDLING ASSOCIATION

APA is a voluntary, not for profit association that was formed to represent the interests of the commercial paddling industry in Southern Africa. Initially, the industry consisted mostly of river operators and so the emphasis was largely on the swiftwater sector at the start. Since then, the commercial paddling industry has grown to include flatwater (trips offered on dams, lakes, estuaries etc.) and sea kayaking (coastal waters). APA has expanded its efforts to include these disciplines as well.

Our main focus has been on developing industry recognised standards regarding safety and best practice with regard to the running of commercial paddling trips. To this end, a system of guide training and qualifications has been developed and accredited training centres have been appointed to offer this training. APA oversees the guide assessments through the national office in Cape Town. Guide qualification systems currently exist for swiftwater (flowing water with rapids in rivers), flatwater (lakes, estuaries with no rapids or tidal currents) and sea kayaking (coastal paddling including river & estuary mouths). In addition, there are APA accredited courses aimed at canoeists and adventure racers. Click [here](#) for more information on training and certification. We have also sought to gain international recognition for our training and qualification where possible and our swiftwater qualifications are internationally recognised through the [International Rafting Federation](#).

In addition, we have developed various safety recommendations and guidelines aimed at operators to advise them on best practice within the industry.

Finally, our other major area of activity is in liaising with and representing the paddling industry to the various government and para-statal bodies which impact on our industry. These include the Department of Water Affairs (DWA), Department of Transport (DOT), the Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education Training Authority (Theta), Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) as well as the provincial tour guide registrars and various national, provincial and local conservation agencies.

MEMBERSHIP

We have two categories of membership, with various benefits;

Individual Members – aimed at guides and other interested individuals

- Laminated membership card
- Cloth badge to attach to PFD
- APA logbook on joining
- Discounts on training, gear & clothing at selected outlets

- One annual printed and periodic electronic newsletters
- Website listing

Operating Membership – aimed at commercial paddling operators or others involved in the industry

- Laminated certificate and copy of the code of conduct for display purposes
- Use of the APA logo on promotional material
- Copy of the APA Operators Handbook – filled with useful and interesting info
- On annual printed and periodic electronic newsletters
- Website listing

Click here for a link to the [APA membership forms](#) or contact us for more information on joining.

All members are signatories to the APA code of conduct and any disciplinary issues are dealt with in relation to these codes. Click here for a link to the [APA code of conduct](#).

Our aim for the next year is to increase the value of an APA membership to both operators and guides. We aim to negotiate further discounts on gear and equipment and to provide promotional opportunities for operators through our revamped website and through our presence at trade shows and expos as well as through direct contact with national, provincial and local tourism authorities.

DAY TO DAY RUNNING OF THE ORGANISATION

An executive committee who each have different portfolios manages the APA. This committee is manned purely by volunteers who give their time to APA at no cost. The members and portfolios follow;

Wynand Uys	Chairman & Environmental Officer
Steve Hardy	Vice Chairman, Sea Kayaking Representative
Waldo van Scalkwyk	Financial & Business Affairs Officer
Andrew Kellett	Safety & Training Officer, IRF (International Rafting Federation) Representative
Hugh du Preez	Development Officer, Swiftwater, Guide & CSA (Canoeing SA) Representative
Chris Legatt	Flatwater Representative
Marie-Louise Kellett	Operator Representative

Elections are held each year and additional committee members are co-opted when necessary.

The association has a constitution and various rules which govern its activities which is available on request from the national office

Administrator, Marie-Louise Kellett, assisted by Sonja Petersen, manages the day to day running of the association. The association is run from an independent office in Claremont, Cape Town. They are responsible for membership processing, running evaluations and dealing with issues related to guide registration etc.

Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 09h00-12h30