

## Qajaq USA Sanctioned and Affiliated Events

### Traditional Qajaqers of the South

Lake Placid, Florida

[www.traditionalqajaqingfest.org](http://www.traditionalqajaqingfest.org)

### Qajaq Camp—Qajartorluni Tammaarsimaarneq

Lake Pepin, Minnesota

[www.qajaq.mn](http://www.qajaq.mn)

### Traditional Inuit Paddlers of the Southeast

Greenwood, South Carolina

[www.traditionalpaddlersretreat.com](http://www.traditionalpaddlersretreat.com)

### South Sound Traditional Inuit Kayak Symposium

Twanoh State Park, Washington

[www.qajaqpnw.org](http://www.qajaqpnw.org)

### Hudson River Greenland Festival

Croton-on-Hudson, New York

[www.hrgf.org](http://www.hrgf.org)

### Qajaq TC

Frankfort, Michigan

[www.qajaqtc.com](http://www.qajaqtc.com)

### Traditional Paddlers Gathering

Merrifield, Minnesota

[www.qajaqmn.org](http://www.qajaqmn.org)

### Delmarva Paddlers Retreat

Lewes, Delaware

[www.delmarvapaddlersretreat.org](http://www.delmarvapaddlersretreat.org)



## Our Mission

Qajaq USA is a membership organization that is officially recognized by Qaannat Kattuffiat (The Greenland Kayaking Association).

Qajaq USA is committed to supporting Qaannat Kattuffiat and their efforts to preserve, study and promote the traditions and techniques of Greenland kayaking while seeking to further the appreciation and development of Greenland-style kayaking in the United States.

## Join Qajaq USA

Qajaq USA is comprised of volunteers, and your entire contribution helps to fund the resources available to members. Benefits include:

- *Qajaq Journal*, a scholarly publication focused on enlightening and preserving tradition
- *Masik*, a newsletter publication with articles on building, technique, etc.
- Sponsorship of native Greenland kayakers and guests to events held in the United States
- The use of skin-on-frame kayaks, traditional-style paddling gear, harpoons and paddles at Qajaq USA sanctioned and affiliated events
- Translation costs of historical documents
- Online Forum for an exchange of ideas
- Online Store

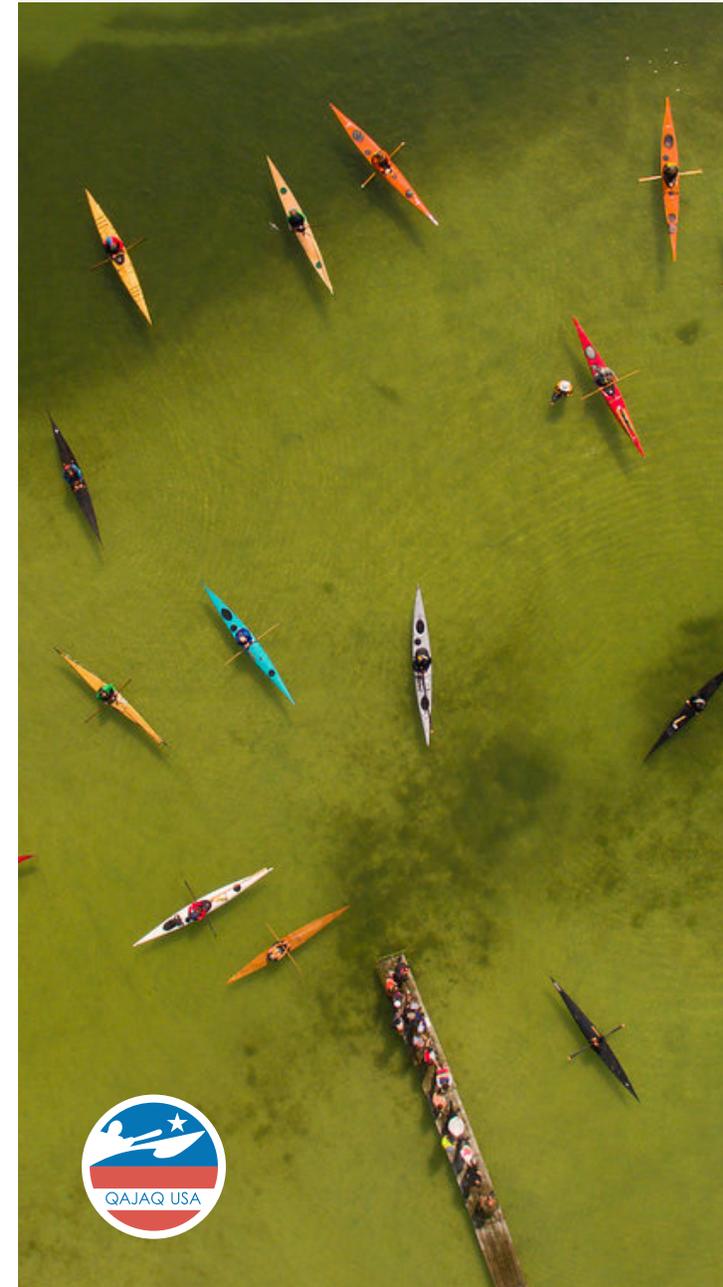
# QAJAQ USA

American Chapter of Qaannat Kattuffiat  
(The Greenland Kayak Association)

[www.qajaqusa.org](http://www.qajaqusa.org)

# QAJAQ USA

American Chapter of the Greenland Kayak Association



## Who We Are

Qajaq USA is the American Chapter of Qaannat Kattuffiat—the Greenland Kayak Association.

We are a small, passionate group of volunteers. Our members come from throughout the United States and Canada, as well as abroad in Europe, Asia, Australia and South America. Qajaq USA is one of only three affiliated “qajaq” clubs outside of Greenland (the others are Qajaq Copenhagen and Qajaq Japan). There are about 25 qajaq clubs scattered amongst the small villages along the coast of West Greenland (and one in East Greenland). These clubs teach kayak building, along with other skills, and are a major impetus in keeping the local kayaking traditions alive.

We are proud to have the late kayak historian John Heath as our first honorary member. John was a mentor and friend to those who founded Qajaq USA.



## Qajaq USA's History

In 1984 a group of young Greenlanders were moved by an exhibit of three Greenland kayaks that were on loan from the Netherlands. Feeling inspired by their cultural ancestry, they went on to create Qaannat Kattuffiat (the Greenland Kayak Association). Its purpose was to preserve and promote Greenland's kayak traditions, and to make sure that this knowledge survived to be passed onto future generations of Greenlanders.

Throughout the late 80s and 90s, kayak clubs sprang up throughout West Greenland, with their goal being to grow the popularity of traditional paddling skills, and to bring these skills to younger generations. In 1984, Qaannat Kattuffiat began hosting a yearly event called the Greenland National Kayaking Championship. This friendly competition would test the skills of paddlers from all over Greenland, with the highest scoring competitors being crowned the Qajaq Man or Qajaq Woman of the year.

A pivotal moment for the development of Greenland kayaking in America occurred in 1999 when Kaleraq Bech, the president of Qaannat Kattuffiat for many years, and his wife, Lone, visited the Delmarva Paddlers Retreat. Kaleraq was moved to see scores of

Greenland paddlers on the water so far from his homeland, and announced that foreigners would, for the first time, be permitted to compete in the annual event.

In August 2000, a small group of American paddlers traveled to Greenland to compete in the newly opened games. During the competition, Kaleraq invited American competitor, Greg Stamer, to speak at a Qaannat Kattuffiat board meeting concerning the state of Greenland-style kayaking in the United States and the possibility of creating an American paddling organization affiliated with Qaannat Kattuffiat. The Qaannat Kattuffiat Board was encouraged to hear news of growing interest outside of Greenland, and a long discussion ensued. Later that summer, Qaannat Kattuffiat approved the creation of an American chapter, thus paving the way to the formation of Qajaq USA.

In 2001 Qajaq USA launched an online Greenland Forum, where enthusiasts could chat about Greenland-style kayaking, and in 2002 Qajaq USA was incorporated as a non-profit organization and began accepting its first members later that spring.

