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## **INDUSTRY HONORS EMILY JACKSON AS AN “OUTDOOR IDOL”**

SALT LAKE CITY, UT - Add “Idol” to the rapidly growing list of accolades being heaped on 16-year-old whitewater paddling star Emily Jackson. Today, Jackson and seven other young, inspiring athletes were named Outdoor Industry’s inaugural Outdoor Idols.

The Outdoor Idols concept was created by the Outdoor Industry Foundation to help elevate youth awareness of outdoor recreation by spotlighting the next generation of outdoor heroes. OIF is the non-profit foundation established by the Outdoor Industry Association to encourage active outdoor recreation for all Americans.

“Outdoor Idols meshes the inspiration of the outdoor world with the youth culture’s eagerness for celebrities,” said Frank Hugelmeyer, President of the OIA. “Let’s face it, today’s dreamers are tomorrow’s heroes and with Outdoor Idols, we hope to fuel those dreams by providing role models to foster them.”

The Idols were nominated and voted on by a select panel of outdoor journalists, industry leaders and outdoor athletes. Together, the eight Idols represent the human-powered outdoor sports of bouldering, biking, trail running, adventure racing, mountaineering, fly-fishing, expeditions and outdoor instruction. Outdoor Idol nominees are under 25 and are recognized as trendsetters in their respective sport, “exemplifying the ethos of the outdoor industry and helping to grow participation in active outdoor recreation by motivating others to get active. Outdoor idols are role models for the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.”

Jackson’s father, reigning World Freestyle Kayak Champion Eric “EJ” Jackson was unabashedly proud of his daughter during the induction ceremony that took place during the outdoor industry’s semi-annual trade show in Salt Lake City. “The things that Emily has accomplished as a kayaker and the projects she’s dreamed up all came directly from her. Her willingness to help others is genuine,” Jackson said. “At 16, she’s just starting to scratch the surface of what she’ll accomplish in the future as both on the water and as a caring human being. This honor will only give her more confidence to continue to pursue dreams and goals that just keep getting bigger every day.”

It’s been a big year for Jackson, starting in January when she became the youngest female to kayak Africa’s daunting Nile and Zambezi rivers. In freestyle competitions, the teen has placed no lower than third in major women’s kayaking competitions in the US and Europe. In addition to her win in the pro division of the Teva Mountain Games at Vail, event sponsor Volkswagen awarded Jackson its Full Throttle Award. That award is given to the one athlete among 1,200 – including some icons of adventure sports – who most exemplifies the spirit of the Games. She was also a featured guest and speaker at Telluride Mountainfilm this spring, where she shared her experiences kayaking and raising money to help build and staff a malaria prevention and treatment clinic in Africa. She is a member of the US Freestyle Kayak Team, along with her father and younger brother Dane, 13. For the past two years, Jackson has also helped lead kayaking clinics for all ages.

For more information about the Jackson family, visit [JacksonKayak.com](http://JacksonKayak.com)  
For more information about OIF Outdoor Idols, visit [OutdoorIdols.org](http://OutdoorIdols.org)