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## Confluence Watersports To Move Composite Manufacturing

**EASLEY, S.C. (January 28, 2009)** – Confluence Watersports will be manufacturing the entirety of its composite boat program in China, effective June 2009. Composite boats from their Wilderness Systems brand will be manufactured in a family-run factory in Hangzhou, China. While ultimately it is a decision to lower the costs associated with manufacturing composite boats in the Easley, S.C. factory, the move represents the strength of commitment Confluence has to the future of paddlesports and to providing its dealer base with a stronger retail opportunity.

“This is a decision we came to after a thorough examination of its implications;” said Sue Rechner, CEO of Confluence Watersports. “Our initial cost analysis didn’t bode well for the future of composite boats. Now we see that this decision will enhance the quality of our composite program, enable a quicker turnaround and allow for a more competitive pricing schedule - all while bringing the cost structure down to a sustainable level. Through the process it became apparent that we weren’t outsourcing, as much as we were gaining a world-class partner.”

The partnering factory is a family-run business whose passion is boat building. They have been making boats since 1986, including boats for the specialized realm of international, competitive sculling and rowing. With a host of international materials experts and artisans, this company is one of only four builders in the world to be endorsed by the International Federation of Rowing Associations (FISA). The company is an unequivocal leader in the composite market.

What began as a financial decision quickly became an opportunity to strengthen this very important sector. The Chinese company has proven international experience with raw materials and well-established quality control measures. Due to its leading-edge understanding of composite materials, the boats will achieve up to a 10-percent weight reduction, without sacrificing strength or rigidity. Confluence personnel will inspect all boats before they leave China.

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Of premier importance in this decision was the impact to dealer partners. Composite boats are primarily sold by specialty dealers and are an integral offering in the Confluence portfolio. Producing this sector in China allows for the program to continue and to be strengthened, in terms of quality, consistency, pricing and availability. Confluence dealer partners should not expect any interruptions in service or quality through the transition.

A consequential result of the move is the freeing up time and space for the Easley-based, Confluence design and product development and engineering teams. Rechner added, “we have the strongest teams in the industry and this will give them another opportunity to apply their vast experience and creativity in taking the industry to the next level.”

**About Confluence Watersports:**

Located in Easley, S.C., Confluence Watersports is the result of blending the unique watersports brands: Wilderness Systems®, Perception®, Dagger®, and Wave Sport® kayaks, Mad River Canoe®, Adventure Technology® paddles, and Harmony® accessories. With a full representation of canoes, and kayaks ranging from touring and recreational to high-performance whitewater boats, the Confluence brands are well suited to outfit all paddling enthusiasts. People passionate about the outdoors run the company today: advocates who are dedicated to bringing more people to the water. For more information, please visit: <http://www.confluencewatersports.com>.