

Q&A with Joe Forrester regarding his kayak expedition:

1: What was the most difficult part about your paddle trip and how did you overcome (if you did) the situation? *“The solitude was the most difficult part. My mp3 player was crucial.”*

#2 What do you feel was the most important thing that you planned for on your trip that you actually benefitted from? *“Mental training. In the months leading up to the trip, I visualized the days I would want to quit and how I would deal with it. This paid off big time on the really hard days.”*

#3 Was there anything that you planned for then you felt was unnecessary or overdone? Explain. *“I don't think I really needed a sail. It didn't add too much to my descent time, and ended up being more of a pain in the ass than anything.”*

#4 What was the 5-most important pieces of gear you carried on the trip? Explain. *“In no particular order: mp3 player, tent, my sun hat, gatoraide powder, stuffing. mp3 player was key in preventing me from going crazy. I loved my tent. Make sure to have a plush tent because pretty much every night will be spent in it. The sun is ferocious, and a hat goes a long way in keeping things comfortable. I would suggest a white desert hat. Gatoraide powder was crucial on the lower mississippi when things got hot so that I could actually re-hydrate. Finally, stuffing (the thanksgiving kind) which is light and easily bought, brings a little taste of home when things get lonely.”*

#5 Prior to your trip, what was your weakest asset or least skilled or qualified trait for the trip and how do you overcome this? *“I had little whitewater kayak experience, and have a terrible roll. However, if you don't capsize, you don't need to roll. Plus rolling a big boat is hard, and it was a lot more functional for me to just have excellent self rescue skills.”*

#6 What was the least important item(s) that you brought and discovered there was never a need for? *“The sail was not particularly useful.”*

#7: What was the biggest surprise of the journey? Something you did not anticipate. *“I really booked it down the river. In retrospect, I think I would have liked to take more time in certain areas. Getting down the river is great, but make sure to enjoy all the side trips.”*

#8 What kind of boat did you paddle and what were its good qualities and also the things you did not like about it? *“I paddled a Current Designs Storm GT. It is a workhorse “stock” expedition kayak. The kayak was the way to go, very quick, maneuverable, and easily stashed in the bushes. Make sure to get something indestructible, because the miles really add up.”*

#9: How did you plan your meals/food? Did this system work good for you and what would you change regarding this? *“I would stock up every 2-3 weeks on food. I prepared nearly all of my meals, but would snake into town every once in a while. Calories are key, you can never eat too much on the river.”*

#10 What was your system for obtaining drinking water and what were the benefits as well as the disadvantages you had dealing with water? *“I drank out of the river with iodine up until I got to Baton Rouge, then I switched to water I got from town. I carried 10 gallons of water with me leaving BR to the gulf. The rest of the water was fine.”*

#11: *If you were going to give advice for someone planning the same journey what do you feel would be best advice and things to consider that you now know about this journey?* *“Commit. That is the hardest part of any great adventure.”*

