

Tina Brooke:

“Born and raised in Central Missouri. Grew up on the Missouri River enjoying it with my family when I was a kid. I have done such a wide variety of jobs in my 52 years young life, from School Bus Driver, Hog Farm worker, Bartender, Bouncer, Factory Worker, Security and finally as a Law Enforcement Officer. I have been in Law Enforcement for the last 15 years which led to me taking this trip.

I have raced in a Kayak in the MR340 twice across Missouri and was Support Crew once before that. Both times I was a finisher of the MR340 in the top 10 of the women's division. I have been in numerous other races up and down the Missouri River and one on the Kansas River. I have logged thousands of miles paddling on the Rivers of Missouri. My love for the Missouri River has me spending all the time I could on her by myself or with friends and family. Ideally if I could live, work and play on the Rivers somewhere... That is where I would be in the Outdoors.” Tina

Here is what Tina had to say:

#1: What was the most difficult part about your paddle trip and how did you overcome (if you did) the situation?

“The most difficult part was stopping when I knew I needed to. I was to concerned about what the group of paddlers I respect and call brothers and sisters would think of me. That was when I figured out I had gotten lost from MY trip. I know I will finish and I know I could have finished. But I will finish like I want to. When I was able to put that aside and see what I had accomplished and knowing I did not "fail", "quit because I couldn't do it". Everything I was thinking in my own head. I knew it was okay to pause my trip. Because that is what I was doing. “

#2 What do you feel was the most important thing that you planned for on your trip that you actually benefited from?

“I think working out with the personal trainer my cousin got me for the 4 months prior was huge. I was sadly out of shape and what Jeri Epperson was able to put together for me.. well it helped in so many ways. “

#3 Was there anything that you planned for then you felt was unnecessary or overdone? Explain.

“Cooking. I quickly found out that the whole thought of digging out gear to cook, then having to wash it all, then repacking it was just way to much after paddling for 8-10 hours. When I cooked it was short and sweet and usually did not require much washing of anything. Plus I had taken way to much food that I ended up sending back with my resupply. My visions of great big breakfasts and suppers cooked in skillets and enjoyed while sitting watching the sun go down (or up).. Well it just did not work that way. “

#4 What was the 5-most important pieces of gear you carried on the trip? Explain.

“Wow. Let's see... Tent, Canoe, Paddle of course... Then Solo Stove, Cell Phone and one more the SPOT locator.”



#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?

“Easy... Solo paddling a canoe. I don't think I had ever done that before. Besides the once getting my load figured out at home before I left. “

#6 What was the least important item(s) that you brought and discovered there was never a need for?

“Ha ha ha ha! I filled the back of the Jeep when my resupply came to meet me on the 4th week. Second Solo Stove, Cook Set x2, fishing pole, 2 small battery packs (since I had 4 others) 1 of the 2 collapsible 5 gallon water jugs. “



#7: What was the biggest surprise of the journey? Something you did not anticipate.

“The hospitality of the people who helped me and supported me along the way. Norm, you and Kris showing up at Ft. Union and surprising me was huge. “

#8 What kind of boat did you paddle and what were its good qualities and also the things you did not like about it?

“Wenonah Sundowner 17 1/2 foot. This boat was so good to me. There is nothing I can think of I did not like about it. I was rough on her and she took the abuse and is ready to finish this epic journey. She is sitting in the garage just waiting. “

#9: How did you plan your meals/food? Did this system work good for you and what would you change regarding this?

“I planned my meals by whatever was easy, that is bottom line. I found myself not wanting to take to much time cooking. I found the best treats were the

leftovers of pizza and chicken etc. that I knew would keep in my cooler for a day or so. I did not fight with ice, so fresh stuff I had to eat quickly. I did not figure all of that out until I kept having the same things left over when I met my resupply. “

#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 had 3 Dromedary's that held 10L I also had a 5 gallon collapsible jug. For emergency purposes I had two different Sawyer water filters. One of the lifestraw variety and the other was a sport bottle. I only had a true issue with being low on water once and that was the end of Fort Peck Lake. I had been cooking more and using more water. Finding places to get it were slim, it was early in season and not all places had the water on. I found myself getting panicky if I got down to 15 Liters or so and found myself cutting back on what I drank. This was not the smart thing to do. Especially since I had two other means for filtering water if I had to. I never even brought them out except for the water bottle out of boredom going through stuff when I was wind bound one of the days. “

#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?

“First: Filter your water along the way, clear down to Gavins Point Dam. There really was no sense in carrying water like I did.

Second: Make it YOUR trip. I found myself trying to do what everyone else talked about doing. From where they stopped, to where they got water, to where they camped even. With the exceptions of the River Angels that helped me along the way. Those I would not change for anything.

Third: It is the most unbelievable thing you will ever do. Cherish every single moment and do not push it along. Let the River Time take from start to finish...one paddle stroke at a time. She isn't going anywhere except the same direction you are going. You will know when it is time to start or stop. “ ~ Tina Brooke

