

Jared Jellison Q&A: Bio: Author of the book “Fighting the Current: There & Back” Jared and his friend embarked on an adventure of a lifetime. They paddled and portaged across America in canoes. Paddling and portaging for 2 ½ years and 8000 miles later they finished their epic journey. He experienced many extreme mental and physical hardships which were overcome including nearly 1000-miles of portaging! Jared’s journey covered more than the Missouri River, as he paddled and portaged across Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, through Oregon, Idaho and Montana before putting in the Missouri River. Jared is a recent graduate of Environmental Studies and works for the Missouri Dept. of Conservation. His home base is central Missouri near the Lake of the Ozarks. Some of his answers may reflect a portion of those areas beside the Missouri River.

Here is what Jared had to say:

#1: What was the most difficult part about your paddle trip and how did you overcome (if you did) the situation? *“Funding was easily the most difficult challenge. The lack of adequate funding slowed progress and caused unneeded difficulties....Let's just say Ramen noodles were the staple food. There were also no luxuries like cell phones or highend gear. Despite the many efforts, I was never able to overcome that obstacle. If I were to do a similar expedition in the future I would save more money and have a better boat. “ “Another challenge was answering the question, "Why are you doing this trip?". It is easily the number one question asked by the people you meet, and the most difficult to answer. It's like trying to explain color to someone who has never seen. “*

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

“Bug dope! (Go with 100% Deet!)

#3 Was there anything that you planned for then you felt was unnecessary or overdone? Explain. *Carrying a GPS was not really necessary. I think the cost of batteries far exceeded the benefits.”*

#4 What was the 5 most important pieces of gear you carried on the trip? Explain. *“Bible Paddle Ainsworth C100...bombproof and inexpensive(great customer service!) Dry bags Sealine in multiple sizes (still going strong with more than 10 years and 10,000 miles of torture) Bug dope 100% Deet My trusted Boonie Hat Music ;)”* “

#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 certainly underestimated how difficult the journey would be....this was overcome by pure determination.”* “

#6 What was the least important item(s) that you brought and discovered there was never a need for? *“I had no support team, so everything was used.”* “

#7: What was the biggest surprise of the journey? Something you did not anticipate. *“The biggest surprise of the Journey was the generosity of complete strangers. Without them the journey would have never happened.”* “

#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 Dagger Legend 15. The hull design is awesome. It handled every kind of water; everything from whitewater to flat water, but was certainly no racer. The biggest downfall of the boat were the materials that made up its construction. I wholeheartedly feel that Royalex is junk and that Dagger has the worst customer service of any boat company (maybe the reason they are no longer in business). A kayak would have been much faster, but would have been worthless on many of the stretches of river that my travels took me along. My personal choice of boat for expedition will always be a canoe, but if I were only paddling the length of the Missouri River it would be a sea kayak or decked canoe because of the hundreds of miles of lake one must traverse.”* “

#9: How did you plan your meals/food? Did this system work good for you and what would you change regarding this? *“I ate a lot of food that was quick to prepare....PB&J in a tortilla, cereal w/powdered milk, pop tarts, oatmeal, Ramen Noodles, mac&cheese, etc... If money was not an option, I would have had more MRE's and freeze dried foods.”* “

#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 utilized a 5 gallon jug for storing water and a gallon jug for daily drinking. My system allowed for several days of potable water storage and easy monitoring of daily intake of water. When we ran out of water we used bleach @ a rate of 510 drops per gallon....never got sick from drinking river water.”*

#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? *“The first advise I would give to someone planning a long expedition is to read my book! Other than that, choose your route wisely, save WAY more money than you think is needed, and know your limitations. Another tip to remember; when you are at your lowest point, focus on WHY you are out there.”*

