

Joe Speldrich:

Three Forks to St. Louis, 2024 with Dan Faust, each in separate kayaks.

#1: What was the most difficult part about your paddle trip and how did you overcome (if you did overcome) the situation? The wind. Stay on shore.

#2 What do you feel was the most important thing that you planned for on your trip that you actually benefited from? Having resupplies sent to the post offices where there weren't food stores nearby.

#3 Was there anything that you planned for then you felt was unnecessary or overdone? My planning and investigation of paddling the Missouri River was minimal to less than adequate while my partner's (Dan Faust) planning was very detailed. Though both have their benefits and drawbacks, the more one knows the less the adventure. The less one knows, the harder it is.

#4 What were the 5-most important pieces of gear you carried on the trip? Explain.
Other than the obvious things like, boat - paddle - food and water - life jacket - tent - sleeping bag.
A) A GPS, I used a Garmin Mini. People could track where I was at, I could see where I was at and I could send out an SOS. B) An extra paddle. In case you break or lose one. C) An extra blanket. There were a couple nights that got very cold. D) A hammock. There were a couple of times there wasn't enough room for a tent. E) Extra pair of glasses.

#5: Prior to your trip, what was your weakest asset or least skilled or qualified trait for the trip and how would you overcome this if you did? Not getting enough paddling time in to get used to paddling 8 plus hours a day.

#6 What was the least important item(s) that you brought and discovered there was never a need for? A non-stick fry pan for fish.

#7: What was the biggest surprise of the journey? Something you did not anticipate.
The amount of wind and the direction it came from. I was expecting winds out of the west, mainly. Most of the wind came out of the South East.

#8 What kind of boat did you paddle and what were its good qualities and also the things you did not like about it? Current Design, GT Storm, 17 foot. The seat is quite uncomfortable.

#9: How did you plan your meals/food? Did this system work good for you and what would you change regarding this? Nonperishable and freeze-dried meals and snacks. This worked well. I don't know if I would change anything.

#10 What was your system for obtaining drinking water and what were the benefits as well as the disadvantages you had dealing with water. How much water did you carry when you left Ft. Benton, since this section is the greatest distance between fresh water sources?

Wells, from camp grounds or private homeowners. I had a capacity of about 5 gallons.

#11: What was your strategy for getting across the large reservoirs, including dealing with bad weather? Stay close to shore. When crossing large bays, make sure there are no storms approaching. Stay out of low areas in case of flash flooding. Do not camp under large trees in lightning and high wind storms.