

Scott Mestrezat : Scott quit his job in finance to tackle the Missouri on a SUP. Adventure was always something that pulled at him and what better first real adventure than the BigMuddy. Summer of 2013 Scott made the historic first descent of the Missouri on a SUP-Stand Up Paddle board he built himself. He started at Three Forks and paddled 2400+ miles to St. Louis. Scott currently resides in Chicago where he works in videography and real estate.

Here is what Scott had to say:

#1: What was the most difficult part about your paddle trip and how did you overcome (if you did) the situation? “Everyone will tell you that dealing with the wind on the lakes is tough. My hardest few days were without a doubt on Lake Sharpe. It is far from the longest lake but it comes right after Oahe. I pushed really hard through Oahe so I set into Sharpe fatigued. There I was met with unending wind, poor camping options, rain and some sort of week long illness that zapped my energy. I never wanted to quit the trip but there sure were times I just wanted to get out of South Dakota. I'd also like to add, adjusting to "normal" life after the trip of a lifetime.”

#2 What do you feel was the most important thing that you planned for on your trip that you actually benefited from? “Bringing a \$5 epoxy kit and some fiberglass cloth. I had to repair my board 4 times. Without that I would have had to settle with duct tape and stopping to drain the water out of my board every hour or so.”

#3 Was there anything that you planned for that you felt was unnecessary or overdone? Explain. “No, I think I used everything I brought with me at least once. I created a list of what I would bring months in advance which helped eliminate any excess gear.”

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

A tripod and various related camera gear I added at least 25lbs of gear but it was worth it to me. iPhone (verizon) -my main mode of navigation after I hit North Dakota and started having more reliable service. Janet and I were able to let each other know of our locations and meet up a couple times to paddle together as well. Thermarest Neoair - mine actually sprung a leak so I was pretty uncomfortable for a couple weeks before the manufacturer sent me a loaner to finish my trip while they repaired it. However, it is a very light and comfortable pad. Very comfortable. Pocket rocket stove with titanium pot combo - I wanted simplicity. I took one 0.8L pot and that was it. I didn't want a jetboil because I wanted to be able to use the same pot with my canister stove as

well as cooking on an open fire. The pocket rocket is very simple and works very well. The canisters are a bit hard to find so plan accordingly. quickdry pants - I bought these the night before I launched (along with much of my gear from that list I'd compiled). I wore these pants for 90% of the days. They kept the sun and flies off and dried very fast. They were not the kind with the zip off legs which was fine."

#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 didn't know what it would be like to camp for so long. It had been probably 15 years since I camped longer than two nights in a row. I just got out there and took it one day at a time and tried to keep my gear organized."

#6 What was the least important item(s) that you brought and discovered there was never a need for? "I brought a crank radio which I only used twice for a short time."

#7: What was the biggest surprise of the journey? Something you did not anticipate. "I expected to have long stretches of extreme boredom. There were days that dragged on but nothing too bad. It's a simple life out there. The days just melt away but you are connected to the hours in a way that vastly differs from everyday life."

#8 What kind of boat did you paddle and what were its good qualities and also the things you did not like about it? "A 14' wooden stand-up paddleboard built from a kit from CLCboats.com. It could have used another 2 feet and been about 3 inches narrower for a bit more speed but there are only two options for building your own board from a kit so i made due. I loved that it was wood. Before I scratched it too hell, it had a beautiful finish. There was a satisfaction from paddling a craft I build. The scratches tell a story and the board looks like it went 2300 miles which is pretty cool. I'd love to build another boat of some kind."

#9: How did you plan your meals/food? Did this system work good for you and what would you change regarding this? "I got really sick of my food really fast. This is something I did almost no research about. I launched with two weeks of freeze dried food packets and switched to instant noodles after that ran out. There was a lot of peanut butter and protein bars consumed. I never had food mailed to me. I just restocked in towns along the way. If I were to do a trip like this again I would really look into the options and probably arrange food drops along the way. The last week was great because I hit every town along the river for some restaurant food." continued...

#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 capacity to take about six gallons. I relied heavily on Dave Miller's book for where to get water. For the most part it is still accurate. I tried to have enough water to have a gallon a day plus a reserve gallon in case I got delayed or there was no water where there should have been. I only filtered about a liter of water the whole trip. I brought a Lifestraw with me and didn't have a true filter which worked out fine but I was very happy I didn't have to ever rely on the Lifestraw. I talked to other paddlers who filtered their way through Fort Peck which may have been a better idea than setting out into that lake with the weight of seven gallons like I did (my jugs plus a gallon from the grocery store). If the weather had been worse I would have been sucking my water through the Lifestraw which is not fun.”

#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?

“Don't get frustrated if you have a tough time in the three small lakes between Three Forks and Great Falls. I had horrible conditions for all of them. I had to walk and line by board for parts of all three and with hundreds of miles of lakes ahead I was a bit unsettled. Just know that patience is your best asset out there. The wind will die... eventually. The doctrine that I ran on was: when the conditions are good, do not stop paddling. I put many 12-13 hours days in on the lakes when the wind was calm so I could just sit out the days where it was really blowing. Your body will get used to the long days after a couple weeks. Take it easy the first few days, it's a long trip.”

