

# Rabbitstick – Session 35

*Primitive Skills Conference - It's Time To Gather!*

*September 10-16, 2023*

*Please Read This Information*

**Hello Rabbitstickers** - Rabbitstick 35 is just around the corner. We're anticipating a number of old-timers rejoining our camp after many years, and are excited to see everyone in just a few weeks. We hope that includes all of you – ***It's a 35 year Homecoming Celebration.***

**IT'S ROLL CALL TIME** - So, give us a buzz and let us know your plans. We have managed to stay in touch with many of you, but this group is getting larger, so if we've missed you, we hope you have been doing well. **Hit the 2023 Roll Call button** at <https://www.rabbitstick.com/meet-our-staff> or just send us an e-mail response to this letter at ***backtracks905@gmail.com***. Please RSVP as soon as possible and help us out by getting responses and schedules up as soon as possible.

We are sending this information out via *rabbitstick.com* (see the Staff page and the Updates page), Facebook, E-mail and Snail-Mail, so it should reach everyone. Once you get it, please let us know ASAP of your intentions to come or that we won't be seeing you this year. Either way, we're glad you're part of the family.

**Class Scheduling** - If you want your classes to be on the bulletin board or in the printed schedule, please get them on the schedule early. Everything will **go to press on Sept. 6th**, so don't delay. If there is a conflict or you want to make a change, it's very simple to do, so don't dilly-dally and wait until the end. Add your schedule now so we can all make last minute changes. If you did not receive the staff e-mail blast, you'll need to contact us for the scheduling link.

Also, I have noticed that if I teach a few classes on Thursday and Friday I get a great turn-out since everyone is heavily engaged in big-ticket classes earlier in the week. Spread your schedule out a bit and see what happens.

**NOTE:** If you are reading this letter on the website, the scheduling link is not included here for security reasons. You will need to contact the Backtracks office directly for access if you did not receive the link via the summer e-mail.

## **Things That Are New -**

1. **The 10 Item Challenge** – We have had it posted on the website and been announcing it at events all summer, but this was a challenge created by Alice Tulloch for us to put into practice the things we have been taught. Details are available at the link below. A session will be held Friday afternoon for reporting; this might give you a chance to do an overnigher while in camp.

[https://www.rabbitstick.com/files/ugd/a76b2c\\_02988ebb00514731ac2053aa4dfc248e.pdf](https://www.rabbitstick.com/files/ugd/a76b2c_02988ebb00514731ac2053aa4dfc248e.pdf)

2. **Aboriginal Technology 101** – We will be creating an expanded 10 station session as an homage to Steve Watts and his amazing *ABO 101* class. Each station will be led by a different teacher – we may go ½ day or expand it to a full day. We'll do it on Thursday and limit it to 20 people. If you are interested in teaching at a station, let me know and we'll send you a copy of the outline.
3. **Survival Summit** – With the heightened international interest in “survival” and “bushcraft” we see gatherings and “survival schools” popping up all over the country. Having been a part of this field for nearly 50 years, I feel a need to say something about what it takes to be called a “survival instructor” and how one might prepare themselves to qualify. For starters, read Cody's *17 Tips For Choosing a Credible Survival Instructor* (<https://www.codylundin.com/choosing.html>). We have started a process to create a “curriculum” that anyone can access to start the process and get an idea of what areas need

to be addressed in their training, along with suggestions for best practices and resources. It is an expanded outline from Mors Koachanski's *Grand Syllabus* and address concerns for temperate climates of the greater U.S.

We will meet on Wednesday afternoon to open the discussion and start by addressing a specific technical skill – shelter. If you are interested in contributing to this process, let me know and I'll send you a copy of the outline regarding Shelters.

## "ABO TECH 101"

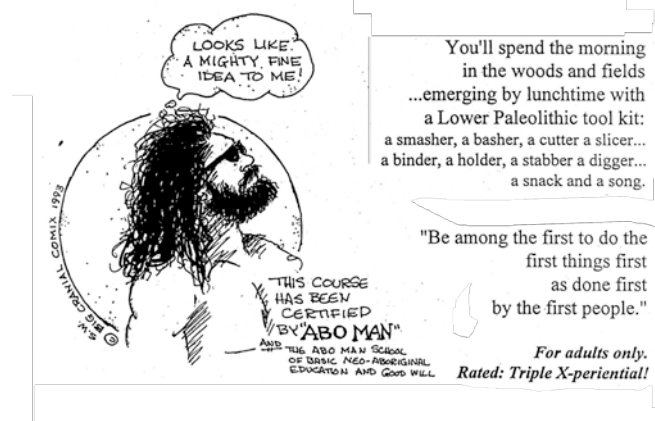
*Instructor: Steve Watts*

It's Early Man's Greatest Hits!  
The Primordial Bottomline Bush Craft.

A hands-on re-creation of the first one million years of  
human technology in four hours!

A once in a Humankind experience. First unveiled at the 1993  
*Rivercane Rendezvous* in Georgia, taken on the road to the *Tribe*  
*Gathering* in Frog Level, North Carolina...  
and offered here at *Rabbitstick '93* for the first time.

A scavenger hunt back through prehistory to discover  
*basic Stone Age basics.*



**4. Year of the Hat – Let's Party.** At first we drummed until the sun came up. As we got older, the duration dwindled and things got "programmed" into one specific night – now called Mask Night. Last year we returned to some of the basics by first creating space for children, then elders and then the whole camp. We want to mark our 35 year celebration by calling it the year of the hat. Why? Because in Steve's last station in ABO 101 he once had us all use our "original digital technology" and "unique opposable thumbs" to create a modest covering so as not to offend others we might encounter with the size of our "amazing cranial capacity." SO create a special headpiece unique to you; wear it all week or save it for that special night, but get creative and celebrate this incredible special time together.

**Things That Are The Same** – Due to the fact that there are so many gatherings going on and we have a lot of new instructors applying, we need to reiterate a couple of things.

- 1. No Fire Arms, No Booze, No Drugs, No Nudity, No Excuses** – It's been on the participant forms since day one. This is just a reminder for you. Once again, **No Politics – leave your "isms" at home.** – **The "Safeword" – How about them sticks and rocks.**
- 2. Class should reflect the cost of materials only.** Teaching at Rabbitstick is sort of the entry fee for staff to be a part of this event. We are all proud of our status and teach because we love the skills we share. We have never made any recommendations in the past, but if you do charge for materials, keep it reasonable. If your schedule allows it, make room for a free class on your schedule. Keep in mind Rabbistick is more of a national gathering rather than local...so people travel a long way and at great expense to be here.
- 3. Remember – our focus is primitive technology.** Projects should have historic context.

Of course we have classes on survival, preparedness and even the new boom in "Bushcraft". Topics should reflect material culture with worldwide connections – our shared inheritance.

4. **Pot-Luck Party** – We will hold our annual feed **in camp**. We'll have the staff meeting at 4pm and our pot-luck meal at 6pm on Saturday Sept 9th. It's a pot-luck, so we'll provide the meat and you bring the side dish or dessert that you love.
5. We will continue having one camp-wide meal each day – **dinner at 6 pm**. Plan on bringing a stove or eating a cold breakfast/lunch. Work with other staff to share meal prep/cooking and shopping.

**Things That Are Different** – Over the years things evolve – some for the better, some not. Here are a couple of things to keep in mind.

1. The main campfire rings should be for traditional camps – Please no electric or bright Coleman-style lights or other intrusions that take away from the feel of the camp.
2. Keeping with that theme, we'd like to return our trade blanket back to its roots. We can talk more about it at the staff meeting. This isn't to step on anyone's toes; we just want to get back to where we started.
3. Trailer campers should be self-contained and limit internal generator use to a minimum if needed. We had some loud obnoxious ones in camp last year that were way out of keeping for our camp.
4. Our annual staff meeting will be at 4pm (**new time**) on Saturday Sept. 9th. This is always a great time to get together and share stories, catch up and take a census of what's been going on with the tribe. We have lots of news and too many sad reports to address this year.
5. Along with our regular evening programs, we will continue to formalize our Sunday and Monday night presentations around the main fire for the entire camp. These will be informative and instructional, focusing on the theme of the camp. If you have something that you would like to propose, please contact me. We also want to encourage reintroduction of more home-grown music around the main fire any evening.

#### **Other Concerns –**

**New Concerns** – The following thoughts are based on one idea – *When you are invited to be a part of the Rabbitstick staff, you represent the camp and your hosts. If you're not willing to abide by the standards we set, please don't come. There are plenty of other events for you to attend.* A few things have crept into camp that we want to extinguish. We had more people ignore our nudity policy last year than ever – and most were staff. The beach and sauna are NOT clothing optional. We have families in camp, and you should be respectful of everyone in camp. Also, if you come to our event to "hook up", this is not the place for you. What you do in your tent is up to you, but when it becomes common knowledge in camp, then it becomes everyone's business. We have become aware that such behavior has become common at other events. It's not welcome here.

We have also noticed an increase in feral bands of youth roaming camp and not participating in anything; this can be a great thing for youth, but can also be fertile ground for the cultivation of behaviors that are inappropriate. We encourage all parents to check-in with your kids and make sure they are getting the most out of what this camp has to offer. This is mentioned as a caution for those parents who are concerned, and a warning for those parents who are not.

**Pets In Camp** – Y'all know we have revised the Dog Policy, but please be responsible and respectful. We will still provide a "Dog Pound" camping area, but will allow leashed pets in camp so long as they behave. An animal that can't be left unattended in camp without acting up has no business being at a public event. Animals that bark or are aggressive to others will have to leave camp. No dogs in the kitchen area or at mealtime.

**Building and Neighbors** – We have been raided by out-of-staters and building is insane in our neighborhood. We are working with the local constabulary to make sure we operate within ordinances and respect our new neighbors. Right now, we have quiet hours in camp after 10:30. That means if you want to drum each night, start right after dinner. On Thursday, we'll go a little later.

We also had a very unfortunate episode with people shooting into camp from across the river. We made a report with the sheriff and hope it won't happen again.

**Fire Restrictions** – So far we have had an amazing spring and early summer. Things have been growing like crazy. We are currently not quite as dry as other areas, but as summer progresses, things may change. We are hoping that there will not be a fire ban, and hoping that conditions remain cool as our regular Rabbitstick weather moves in.

**Weather** – We have had a bit of wild weather with amazing electrical and rain/hail events. Be sure to make plans for your own security and safety. Remember, it can snow in September. Every year the *Weather Gods* see you coming and play all kinds of pranks...plan accordingly.

The **Team-up** class schedule is open for you to add your classes. If you need us for anything, we will be around and the office phone is forwarded to my cell (208-351-3799). If you have a question don't hesitate to call.

*Hoping to see you all soon,*

***David and Paula and the Backtracks Team***

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