

# Rabbitstick 38 – Staff Updates

## Sept 13-19, 2026

*“It’s not what you make, it’s what you learn”*

### Staff Updates

We are sending this information out via *rabbitstick.com* (see the “Meet Our Staff” page and the “2026 Updates” page), Facebook, Email 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.

#### Things That Are New –

1. **Staff In-service** – In case you missed it the last 2 years, we will once again have a noon Saturday training for anyone who would like to join us – 2 years ago was *‘Everything Willow’* and last year was a *‘Return To Basic Fiber Technology’*. If you missed these trainings, you won’t want to skip another one - they were fantastic. Anyone who might have a request or suggestion for this year, let us know ASAP. We want to help expand everyone’s skills and provide a chance for all of us to learn something new together.
2. **Staff Meeting** - Our annual staff meeting will be at 4pm (**new time for some of you**) on Saturday Sept. 12th. 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.
3. **Opening Day Circle** – We have had complaints that classes are full before we even have announcements. Returning students have learned to play the game and get you to sign them up early. If you do this, will you please hold a few of your spots until class announcements are over? This gives newbies a chance to get into a class.
4. **Opening Presentation and Monday Keynote** – Our after dinner camp-wide presentations have been really well received – both *Eavesdropping on Animals* and the *Heartbeat of the Camp* presentations were highlights for many. The Wednesday *Blacksmithing* demo is always popular as well. We will once again schedule time for both, but we’re looking for input for this year if you have any. These programs 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.
5. **Sunday Symposiums** – Last year’s staff training was a perfect example of what a two-hour symposium should look like. Our Sunday afternoon *‘The Basics’* classes started out as symposiums where several instructors would get together and demo skills that students could do later in the week as part of a class. The purpose was to show the breadth and depth of available instruction. This time should be more of a demo and discussion as well as some hands-on practice, but remind them to take a full class to work on mastery. There are 4 sessions offered – *Fire Tech*, *Knife Safety*, *Stone Tool Tech*, and *Fiber Tech*. If you would like to help on a session, or 3 or 4 people would like to get together and prepare a special lesson on any of these subjects, let us know – this would be a unique opportunity to share something special.

As an example, *‘Stone Tools’* may consist of an overview of simple quartzite discoidal blade and core tools to a presentation on the mechanics of pressure vs percussion flaking, or bipolar work. Or even an advanced tutorial on a problem everyone encounters somewhere along their path: a little of everything to illustrate the breadth of what’s possible to learn.

6. **Media Attention** – The past couple of years I have taken some heat over the attention I have paid to our friends who have a media presence. My intention was to honor the skills and dedication of those who represented us so well, and I think we have done that. The problem is that some of that attention has shifted from skills competence to celebration of celebrity – not my intention. As a result, credentials will once again determine whether or not we add

someone to our roster as staff, and if individuals want to conduct small sessions related to their experiences, that would be great. Camp-wide, our focus will be competence rather than notoriety.

7. **Harvesting** – Please ask prior to harvesting local materials for classes; we may have areas set aside for you. Also, be sure to harvest in a way that does not create impact or an unsightly mess. Ethical harvesting should be part of your class. Don't leave a mess for someone else to clean up.

**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. **2026 Theme** – Once again, we want to stress learning over making. Please make sure you include the context for what you teach and take some time to really help your students learn. Allow them room to make mistakes as well.
2. **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" is – How about them sticks and rocks.** Just remember, we are welcoming you to our living room. Please respect the standards we uphold.
3. **Forms** – We need you to download and fill out the staff forms that are attached. The staff form let's us know who is coming with you so we can get an accurate count as well as classes you plan to offer. Please scan or photograph them and send them back to us ASAP. This will help us plan and saves time at staff check-in.
4. **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. Now that there are so many gatherings, there is sort of a "circuit" and people are attending simply for the reason to make money. Please don't approach teaching at Rabbitstick with that mindset. 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 Rabbitstick is more of a national gathering rather than local...so people travel a long way and at great expense to be here.
5. **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. If you haven't already, please read "Why Primitive Technology" at [rabbitstick.com](http://rabbitstick.com).
6. **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 12th. Right now we have about 220 staff and dependents, and another 30-40 work crew – that's 250 to feed at our potluck dinner. We have always had great support and fed everyone, but as these numbers rise, we just need to remind everyone that the success of this traditional meal is dependent on everyone bringing something yummy to the table. We provide the meat and Paula brings her carrot cake as usual, so let's party Saturday night at 6 o'clock.
7. 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 areas 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. These campers seem to be getting larger and more frequently used. Please remember this originated as a primitive skills camp with a flavor of camps that are simple and close to the earth.

### **Other Concerns –**

**Standards** – 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. When you sign-up to attend, you agree to abide by the standards we set – there should be no argument.* We appreciate the fact that last year it appeared that everyone chose to live up to that expectation. If you feel a need to get naked, wasted or hook-up, there are plenty of other places you can do that. 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 while forming "exclusive cliques"; 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. This is a camp for adults that provides space for kids as a service to you.

**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. We had an inordinate amount of unclaimed poop in camp last year so clean up behind your pet.

**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. Our episode of people shooting into camp from across the river was reported to the sheriff in hopes it won't happen again.

**Fire Restrictions** – The entire state of Idaho has been declared a drought area - 45% of normal moisture this winter. Right now we have been weeks with high temps and little moisture. The campsite is drier than we've ever seen it. Unless things change – hopefully – we may be under a countywide fire ban. If so, plan on a stove to cook on and ways to control or mitigate any risks associated with fire use. If we ever had a fire get away from us in these river bottoms, it would be devastating.

**Weather** – We have had a bit of wild weather with amazing wind 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 will be open soon 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**

**Class Scheduling** – Please add your class schedule **as soon as possible**. Request the link if you need it. If you need help with instructions on how to add classes, let us know. This will help us to see if we have any holes in the schedule or are lacking coverage in a specific area. If you don't have internet access, just drop us a note or give us a call and we'll be happy to add your classes to the schedule.

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. 7th**, 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 email blast, you'll need to contact us for the scheduling link.

Also, we have noticed that if we teach a few classes on Thursday and Friday we 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.

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