

Rabbitstick Primitive Skills Conference

Session 37

September 14-20, 2025
It's Time To Gather!

What is the difference between a session and conference ?

They are similar, and can mean the same thing - which is a meeting. However, 'conference' is a more formal formatted meeting, like for a business conference. *Whereas a 'session' can be both formal and informal.*

Welcome to Rabbitstick - Session 37

- Top-fuel drag races are conducted in “sessions”.
- Surf and skate competitions are contested in 10-12 wave “sessions”.
- Schools offering a schedule of classes are in “session”.
- Back in the old days when Larry Olsen would host events at his house to eat and barter, he called the gatherings “trade sessions.”

By launching our 38th trip around the sun, we want to restate
what makes Rabbitstick unique.

- #1 – Of all the dozens of gatherings now offered as “primitive skills gatherings,” Rabbitstick is the original – often copied but never duplicated.
- #2 – Since getting permission to reignite the Rabbit Stick fire, we have been true to our legacy – we’ve only missed one year due to Covid – no revisionist history needed to make us appear to be what we’re not.
- #3 – Even with the addition of a variety of topics on the class schedule, primitive technology will always be our core focus – *Our Shared Inheritance.*
- #4 – Rabbitstick started on the banks of the Henry’s Fork of the Snake River. This site has been or home since the beginning – that’s continuity folks.

Our Focus

- **EXPERIMENT** - Here’s a chance to see the pros in action and discover what drives them to challenge their skills at the highest levels; continually testing their own knowledge.
- **EXPERIENCE** - Hands-on instruction in time-tested technologies from teachers who can guide you as you practice.
- **EDUCATE** - Rabbitstick is an educational experience that will encourage you to share what you have learned with others, even if it’s your first step along the trail.

Refer to our webpage and see what we mean by the term – *Primitive Skills.*
<https://www.rabbitstick.com/what-are-primitive-skills>

Every similar event – there are over 50 worldwide now – has it's own personality, focus, vibe or *joie de vivre** if you will. Take a minute to review a few of the suggestions that have been offered (at the end of this letter), and how we plan to respond to concerns about camp as we “Return to The Stone Age”.

**For those without access to Google - joie de vivre - exuberant enjoyment of life.*

- **Rabbitstick is festive, but it's NOT a festival.**
- **Rabbitstick is family friendly, but it is not what we would consider a “Family Camp” - we take teaching and learning seriously.**
- **Rabbitstick is a gathering, but the sum of all of its' parts make it more than that.**
 - **Rabbitstick is....well, it's Rabbitstick.**

That being said, there is plenty of available information about the history of Rabbitstick, it's roots, development and attempt to maintain focus on skills that we all share. We need everyone to help keep Rabbitstick what it has come to represent and maybe cache your expectations for a while in an attempt to protect its unique character. We challenge everyone to join us as we create a camp that recaptures an earlier, simpler time, and revel in this opportunity to experience something new.

Last year showed a few wrinkles that we had not seen before – people bringing with them what they may have experienced somewhere else. We need you to help us return to a camp that reflects what we were originally influenced by - Primitive Technology. Keep that in mind as you plan and prepare your camp for ***Rabbitstick 37***.

NOTICE - New for 2025

- Fortunately, we hope to continue our normal registration patterns, and eliminate that last-minute feeding frenzy to register experienced by other events. **Think before you register.**

We open registration early in the year, and have moved the early registration deadline to August 1. We will also keep our cancellation fee at \$100 – this is due to all events experiencing unprecedented last-minute cancellations. **Plan before you sign-up or it will cost you.** When you register early, you take a valuable spot....when you cancel at the last minute, you've essentially blocked someone else who might have been planning to come for years, but can't make plans to attend at the last minute.

If you are returning to Rabbitstick, we encourage you not to wait to register; there is a possibility that we will close registration early again this year. Our goal is to maintain a healthy balance of returning people with those who are attending for the first time. Returning participants are the way that traditions are passed along and not lost over time, and we count on you.

• Information for our Trailer and Car Campers for 2025

Trailers, motorhomes, etc. need to camp on the north side of the entry road in the back. No noisy external generators in camp please.

Trailer folks need to establish fair rules for when quiet generators can be run and for how long. We are not a KOA campground.

Try to make trailers self-contained with extra batteries and solar charges if possible. No external electric lights or bright Coleman lanterns please. Learn to enjoy the dark.

Monster trailers may not fit through our gate, so think simple accommodations.
Car Campers – Please unload your vehicle and return it to the parking area outside the gate. We had far too many cars in camp last year. Please – no cars in the Primitive area. Take a risk and cut the umbilical.

Suggestions from the Camp

(Go to 2025 Updates page at rabbitstick.com to read some other letters to our camp).

“Hey Dave, I hope all is well with you folks. I wanted to follow up on a suggestion that I had last year - that being; to try and encourage people to create creative, cool, campsites. My first Rabbitstick there were many camps that were amazingly picturesque. I think that was a time of Trench Town with Hawk and Albert and some of those larger than life people. Today [it seems] that pop-up tents are taking over and huge buses are blocking the view. It would be great to encourage and recognize [traditional] camps.”

“Greetings Everyone. As we gather in the spirit of a by gone era of light during the day and dark at night, we have noticed a gradual and steady influx of bright lanterns, head lamps and flashlights. These deprive us of some of the unique qualities that nighttime has to offer us.

In the interest of offering each other the gifts of nighttime, we encourage minimal use of modern lights in general, and non-use in the heart of camp/main fire pit, (between road and pond, tipi, Backtracks office and kitchen). This area is reserved for fire light, candle light and low intensity single flame lanterns only, no porch lights broadcasting light beyond the inside of a shelter.”

“Hello the Camp - What happened to the good old days when people were worried that running a CPAP machine at night would bother other people. Where in the world did those load generators, amplified music and bright lights that have invaded the camp come from? We come to study the old ways and learn skills from our collective past. Shouldn't our camp reflect that sort of feeling as well.”

“Dear Dave- Being a knapper and tanner, I have always been fascinated by process and the skills that have been passed down through time. Rabbitstick has always been the one place I can meet friends with common interests and learn something new every time I come. I have noticed, however, that many people are now choosing classes with quick projects rather than taking deep-dives into the skills that are the reason we all gather. Trends toward ‘prepping’ and ‘SELF-awareness’ have added a new layer to class offerings, but I hope not at a loss of those core skills that have been a part of Rabbitstick from the start.”

Please reflect on why you plan to join us and come with an openness to the total experience. We're getting excited. September 14, 2025 is shaping up to be another....

Four-Rabbit-Day.
David and Paula and the Backtracks Staff

PS – Along with a few new additions, we will once again be offering a few “legacy classes” in honor of *people who have passed*. Keep an eye on the schedule and make time to honor those who established many of our long-standing traditions.

See ya’ll soon enough!

*Primitive Technology is our shared inheritance...
it is a world heritage that knows no race, creed or color.*

It is foreign to no one.

*It is the thread that links us to our prehistory
and binds us together as human beings.*

Steven M. Watts