OFFICIAL EXPEDITION NOTEBOOK

WILEY'S BATSTO RIVER EXPEDITION



Logistics & Scouting Guide - Execute Version
Crew: Scout Wiley · Papa · Jazz (Expedition Dog)
Route: Batsto River, Wharton State Forest, New Jersey Pine Barrens
Friday, September 25 - Sunday, September 27, 2026

Gemini Notebook

THE BRIEFING

This is a 2-night, multi-sport expedition in the New Jersey Pine Barrens combining canoeing, cycling, campcraft, and outdoor survival skills. The crew traverses the tannin-dark cedar waters of the Batsto River, working toward Canoeing, Camping, Cooking, and First Aid merit badge requirements along the way.

Leave a copy of the float plan with family and the Batsto ranger station before departure.

- **SELECTED DATES:** Friday, September 25 – Sunday, September 27, 2026
- **BACKUP WEEKEND:** Friday, October 2 – Sunday, October 4, 2026

THE INNER COMPASS

What am I nervous about on this trip, and how will I handle it if it happens?

Beyond earning badges, what personal goal do I want to achieve on this river?

Gemini Notebook

FLOAT PLAN: FRIDAY

Friday: arrive and set up camp at the bottom, shuttle gear and vehicles, bike to the put-in, shove off, camp midway.

08:00 AM	Arrive at Bottom Take-out. Set up basecamp.
09:30 AM	Drive canoe and river gear to Top Put-in.
10:30 AM	Drive truck back to bottom campsite. Leave truck.
11:00 AM	Ride bikes up to the Top Put-in. Lock bikes.
12:30 PM	Safety briefing, gear stowage, and shove off.
04:00 PM	Arrive at Midway. Establish camp, cook Hobo Meals & Banana Boats.

Gemini Notebook

FLOAT PLAN: SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Saturday: fish downriver to the truck and campsite, camp Night 2.
Sunday: pack up, retrieve bikes, drive home.

08:00 AM	Break camp, load canoe, morning fishing.
12:00 PM	Trail lunch on the river bank.
03:30 PM	Arrive at Bottom Take-out. Retrieve truck, set up for Night 2.
08:30 AM	Break camp. Drive truck to Top to retrieve bikes.
11:00 AM	Drive home. Begin gear-cleaning protocols.
02:00 PM	Journaling session & impromptu awards ceremony.

Gemini Notebook

THE LIVING FOREST



PITCH PINES: The dominant tree. Their pinecones require the extreme heat of forest fires to melt their resin and release seeds.

TEA-COLORED WATER: Tannins leaching from the roots of Atlantic White Cedar dye the Batsto the color of dark tea - it's clean, just stained.

KIRKWOOD-COHANSEY AQUIFER: Beneath the sandy soil is a massive reservoir containing 17 trillion gallons of incredibly pure, fresh water.

Gemini Notebook

GHOSTS OF THE PINES: A FIELD GUIDE



THE JERSEY DEVIL: The most famous resident of the Pine Barrens – said to roam the woods with hooves, bat wings, and a forked tail since 1735.



THE YIM YAMMER: A giant, hairy creature in the Bigfoot mold, said to leave a path of snapped branches through the woods.



FIDDLING SAMMY BUCK: An arrogant fiddler who boasted he could out-play the Devil himself – and won the duel.

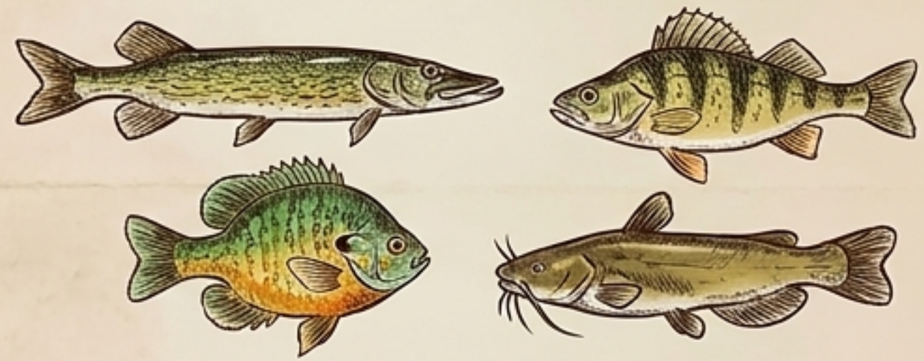


JACK-O'-LANTERNS: Glowing balls of fire that float over the swamps at night. Locals call them trickster spirits.

Gemini Notebook

LATE SEPTEMBER FISHING & CATCH LOG

TARGET SPECIES: Chain Pickerel, Yellow Perch, Pumpkinseed Sunfish, Brown Bullhead Catfish.



BAIT & TACKLE: Bright spinners, live minnows, worms, dough baits.



[Time]	[Species]	[Bait Used]	[Length/ Weight]	[Kept/ Released]

Gemini Notebook

SAFETY AFLOAT & HUNTING AWARENESS

- [ ] 1. Qualified adult supervision (21+) on the water at all times.
- [ ] 2. **Life jackets (USCG-approved PFDs) worn at all times - no exceptions.**
- [ ] 3. Strict buddy system; every crew member accounted for at all times.
- [ ] 4. Float plan filed and left with family and the ranger station before departure.
- [ ] 5. Weather checked the morning of departure and re-checked each evening.
- [ ] 6. Dry bags or waterproof boxes for all gear that can't get wet, including phones and the first aid kit.
- [ ] 7. **No sandals on the water or portages - closed-toe water shoes or boots only.**
- [ ] 8. Polarized sunglasses and a wide-brim hat - cuts glare and shows the river bottom.

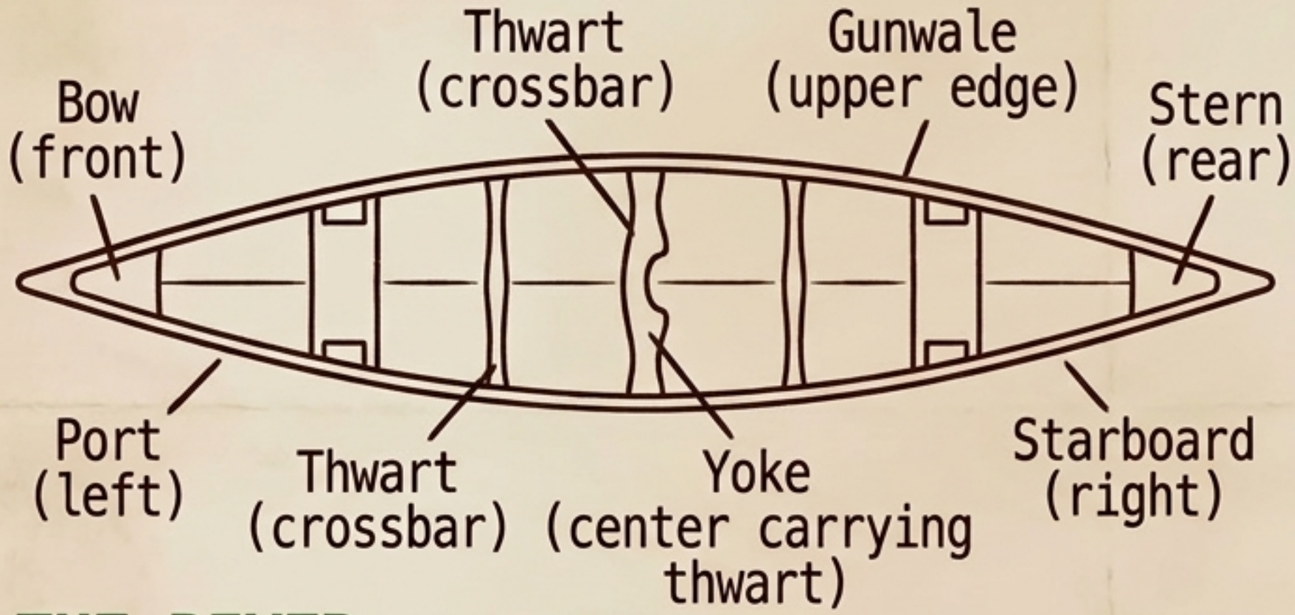
HUNTING SEASON AWARENESS

New Jersey's Fall Bow archery deer season runs September 12 - October 30, 2026, and Wharton State Forest is an actively hunted Pinelands WMA - this applies on the chosen weekend.

Wear blaze orange on the bike shuttle and any land portage, stay on marked trails and sand roads, and make normal conversao- noise while moving. This is a standard precaution, not a sign of unusual risk - the river corridor itself is not a blind or stand.

Gemini Notebook

ANATOMY OF THE CANOE & EXPEDITION GEAR



THE RIVER

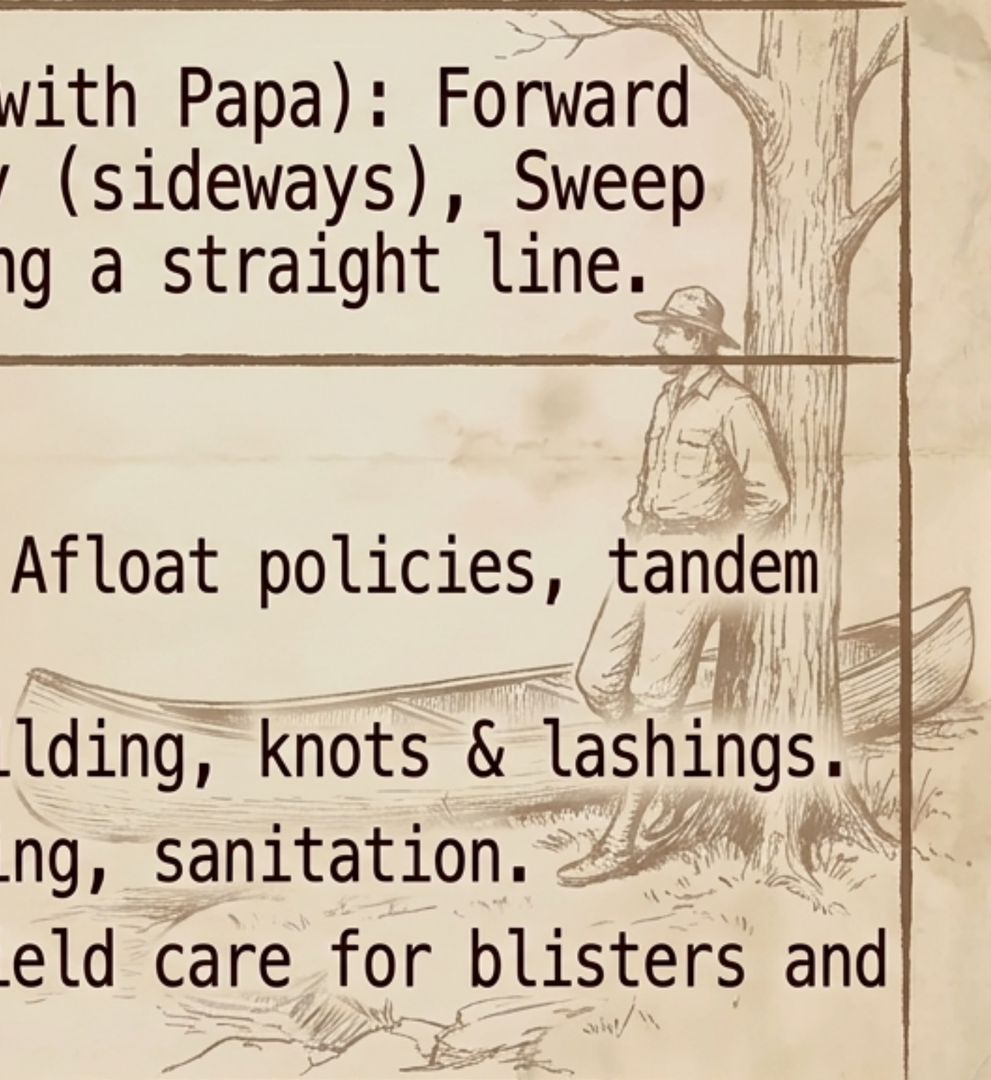
CURRENT (main flow)
BANK (shoreline)
EDDY (calm water beside the current)
BEND (curve in the channel)

- [ ] USCG-approved PFDs / life jackets
- [ ] Dry bags or waterproof boxes
- [ ] Phones protected from water
- [ ] First aid kit protected from water
- [ ] Closed-toe water shoes or boots

Gemini Notebook

TANDEM CANOE MANEUVERS & MERIT BADGES

TANDEM CANOE MANEUVERS (Demonstrate with Papa): Forward stroke, Back stroke, Draw & pushaway (sideways), Sweep stroke (turning), J-stroke for steering a straight line.



MERIT BADGE SKILLS TO DEMONSTRATE:

- **CANOEING:** Hazard mitigation, Safety Afloat policies, tandem maneuvers, swamped-canoe rescue.
- **CAMPING:** Leave No Trace, shelter building, knots & lashings.
- **COOKING:** Fire safety, campfire cooking, sanitation.
- **FIRST AID:** Environmental hazards, field care for blisters and insect stings.

Gemini Notebook

SCOUT LAW POINTS ON THIS TRIP

TRUSTWORTHY

Executing the float plan honestly – reporting position and timing accurately.

HELPFUL

Assisting Papa with lifting the canoe and portaging.

COURTEOUS

Sharing the river respectfully with other paddlers and anglers.

OBEDIENT

Following all Safety Afloat rules, including wearing a PFD at all times.

Gemini Notebook

EXPEDITION JOURNAL: ENTRY 1

LAUNCH DAY ANTICIPATION

What are you feeling as you shove off from the Top Put-in?

Gemini Notebook

EXPEDITION JOURNAL: ENTRIES 2 & 3

ENTRY 2 - THE MIDWAY CAMP

Describe setting up camp on the riverbank on Night 1.

ENTRY 3 - WILDLIFE AND THE CATCH

What did you see, hear, or catch on the water?

Gemini Notebook

EXPEDITION JOURNAL: ENTRIES 4 & 5

ENTRY 4 - OVERCOMING THE HARDEST PART

What was the hardest moment of the trip, and how did you get through it?

ENTRY 5 - FINAL THOUGHTS & LESSONS LEARNED

What will you remember most about this expedition?

Gemini Notebook

THE INNER COMPASS WORKBOOK

SOLVING PROBLEMS: What challenges did I face on my trip and how did I handle it when it happened? _____

_____

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: What personal goals did I achieve beyond earning badges during this trip? _____

_____

MENTAL TOUGHNESS: How did I grow? and what am I going to do next? _____

_____

WILEY'S BATSTO RIVER EXPEDITION September 25–27, 2026