

A Guide to Raft Building – Cam B. and Jordan D.

Through building our raft we discovered a few things. The main point we learned is that building a raft is not as idyllic as the book *Huckleberry Finn* makes it out to be. Through this guide we will recap the steps we took to build our 4 foot by 6 foot raft.

1. The first step we had to take was getting logs of the appropriate length. This required some cutting with a reciprocating saw. We first cut all our main logs to six feet. We have 5 main logs and 2 cross braces.
2. Our second step required us to get our cross braces. We, of course, found more logs. These ones were skinnier because they hold the raft together instead of supplying floatation. We quickly found our logs and cut them with the reciprocating saw again.
3. This step was the second-most time consuming. For this part of our project, we stripped the bark off our main logs and cut off all the protruding parts of old branches and knots. It was tedious work, harder than we thought it would be.
4. Our fourth step was one we thought would be easy but turned out to be very time consuming. On this step, we lashed the raft together with rope. This took many attempts at trial and error until we found a system that would hold all our logs in place. This required about 2 to 3 feet of rope per log, and so we needed about 50 feet of rope.
5. Our final step was perhaps the funniest as we took our raft down to the nearest body of water on campus, Lake Omar, and tested it out. It worked well, but it could have been larger. It's fine for travelling across a small body of water such as Lake Omar. If we wanted to take it out on the Mississippi, however, it would have to be at least twice as large.