



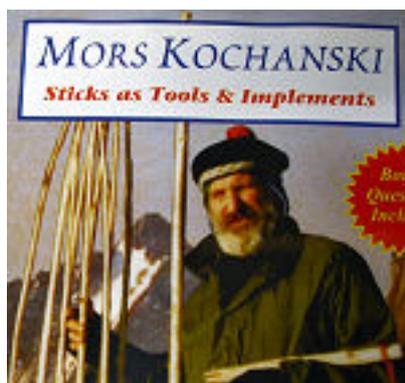
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Mors Kochanski, Sticks as Tools and Implements: a DVD.

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Description :

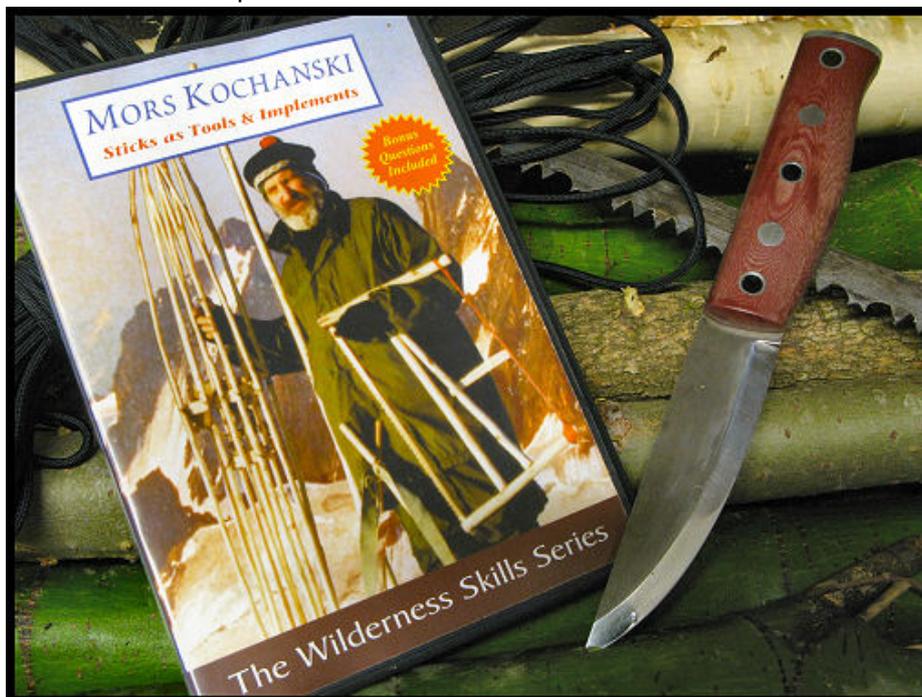
This review takes a look at Kochanski's DVD *Sticks as Tools and Implements*, from his Wilderness Skill Series of Videos.

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First I want to thank Ben Piersma of Ben's Backwoods for the kind loan of this DVD for my review. Ben maintains an excellent website selling many useful products. He lists most of Mors written works and video productions; knife blanks and knifemaking supplies; firesteels; long lengths of lampwick; Woolpower clothing; axes; and an assortment of other unique and useful items on his site .

Recently I reviewed [16 Kochanski pamphlets](#) that augment *Bushcraft*, his main text on the subject. Each of these booklets provided some additional insight on some of the skills Mors teaches. The video series is also designed to focus on specific skills and their development.



Sticks as Tools and Implements

For this DVD review I will list the various wood working projects presented with a short description of them and comments on the clarity of instruction.

So let's launch into this review of:

Sticks as Tools and Implements

This video covers some material that his pamphlets *Basic Wilderness Survival in Deep Snow* and *The Two Kilogram Survival Kit Field Manual* cover, plus some projects not touched upon in either *Bushcraft* or other pamphlets.

This DVD has these 8 scene selections:

1. Intro
2. Snowshoes
3. Pack Frame
4. Loading the Pack
5. Saw Frame
6. Walking Stave
7. Axe Handle

8. Questions

Introduction

Like the first video, [Bush Knots: a DVD](#) Mors once again shoots this one outdoors. A light snow is falling and we find Mors standing in a spruce forest filled with thin standing sticks. The introduction jumps right away into snowshoe making as Mors strips a standing stick of limbs with his hands, bends the pole and cuts it off. He shows the trimming and peeling of this pole as one of the ten+ needed for snowshoes. The video then moves directly into the making of snowshoes.

Snowshoes

He binds the tips of 5 peeled poles with a constrictor knot using gutted paracord, then finds and marks the balance point of the bundle. He then makes a notched toe board and using his jam knot and nails binds this into the correct position, knots the stick tails into position, and then adds a heel board. He then bends the tips back and holds them in position with a pulley (clothes line) hitch, and shows two variants for bindings made from lampwick. One binding requires a rubber inner tube band to hold the toe loop on the foot, the other a heel loop of lampwick. He does not make the second shoe.

Mors spends 54 minutes of the video on the snowshoe presentation. He references his knots and shows some detail of them, but assumes the viewer has mastered them. The details of the snowshoe construction are very good. Each step is clear and concise and he adds important notes about necessary components that facilitate the making of these snowshoes. Without about 4 armspans of paracord, or other suitably strong binding cord, a knife, and some webbing for bindings these would be very hard to make. All the construction is done with his Mora knife and a baton only, though he does pound one (optional) nail with a hatchet.

Pack Frame and Loading the Frame

This, he refers to as the Roycroft packframe. It is a triangle of sticks bound together with paracord using constrictor knots with lashing. Once again he states the need for paracord (about 7 armspans worth), to make the frame and lash the goods upon it. He shows several methods for carry ranging from a single pole to a wide webbing band that more approximates a traditional pack harness. He shows packing this frame using a canvas sheet and a couple soft bulky items.

Mors spends considerably less time on this simpler device (about 10 minutes making and 9 packing). Again his instructions are clear and precise for measurements. He assumes the viewer knows their knots. By showing a pole carry of this frame, he addresses something I always have wondered about—that is who carries several feet of suitable webbing for the harness.

Saw Frame

Here Mors cuts 4 suitable peeled sticks using the saw blade itself, flattens and notches them, binds the brace sticks with jam knotted paracord, cuts them to length and tensions it all together with non-elastic cord and a turnbuckle.

Of all the projects on the video I liked this one the best. Mors makes a quite good looking saw frame in rather short order. It looks solid and efficient. In the 15 minutes he spends doing this he shows all the steps except cutting and peeling the sticks. He emphasizes the utility of carrying a saw blade in your kit and having this skill. The necessities

are just the blade, minimal paracord, knife and a good length of non-elastic cord for the turnbuckle.

Walking Stave

This is a very short piece with no making shown (obviously none required it is a peeled stick). Mors is simply standing with a tall spruce staff and in about 2 minutes discusses the utility and efficiency of walking with a staff. The days light is fading.

Axe Handle

Mors splits a birch log using an ax and two wooden wedges. Once he has a slab split off he starts roughing out an ax handle (curved style) using the ax and his knife. He shows it mostly roughed out and ready to be sawn to length, but not scraped or finished.

In this part of the video the light has fallen quite a bit. The carving is clear enough but it is obvious that the day is ending. Mors recommends that students practice making an ax handle before it is needed. He spend just about 4 minutes on this with several cuts during the process to speed up the detail.

The main part of the video ends with Mors walking on his snowshoes, with a stave, pulling a canoe filled with brush over the snow.

Questions

The DVD ends with 6 multi-part questions scrolling on the screen. I think I got most of them right.

Overall

This DVD, like ***Bush Knots*** was quite well done. The production quality is high. The sound levels are good to very good and sound quality high. The video quality is high, the light diminishes throughout the day and turns very blue by the end of the video. However it is in focus throughout, and lit well for all the detail work.

It is all filmed outdoors in Alberta with a few inches of snow on the ground. The video begins during a light snow fall which stops later in the presentation.

The skills are interesting to watch, valuable to know and presented well enough to easily learn. Snowshoes and the saw frame were my favorite presentations on the video. Mors makes it look pretty easy, and his excellent access to suitably sized sticks makes me envious. He does recognize this advantage in the introduction, but states that such good raw material is not required to produce the projects---just makes it much easier.

[Bush Knots](#) the first DVD I reviewed or his pamphlet ***Top Seven Bush Knots and the Use of the Windlass*** are essentially prerequisites to this DVD, at least for those who may not already know the jam or constrictor knots.

Overall I really enjoyed this DVD production. I think it is a superb supplement to his pamphlets which cover some of the projects and it defiantly demonstrates his excellent teaching style and knife handling skills. I highly recommend this DVD.

Other Mors Kochanski reviews:

[*Bush Knots: a DVD*](#)

[*Sticks as Tools and Implements: a DVD*](#)

[*His 16 Pamphlets*](#)

[*Just his knife text used to illustrate the Skookum Bush Tool*](#)

[*Bush Craft: Outdoor Skills and Wilderness Survival*](#) by James

Resources

This DVD is available from [Ben's Backwoods](#) or directly from Karamat Wilderness Ways. It runs about \$29.

Sticks as Tools and Implements by Mors Kochanski, 94 minutes, Karamat Wilderness Ways Filmed in Alberta copyright 2000.

Post-scriptum :

Ver 1.0 03/18/2008 Inception

Ver 1.5 03/20/2008 Images and Fini