

Photographic equipment:

From the beginning of the project up to July of 2008, I shot on color transparency film using a Pentax 645 system. This is known as medium format, sometimes called "two and a quarter." The actual image size is 6 x 4.5 cm, about the size of a credit card.

From July 2008 to the end, I shot digitally on a Nikon D3 system. This is my current system.

I used a gyrostabilizer with both of these systems; every shot in the book was made handheld, using a gyrostabilizer. This is an electric device that attaches to the camera and helps make sharp photos by reducing the camera shake that inevitably comes from hand-holding.

Aircraft:

From the beginning of the project (winter 2001) up to spring of 2007, I flew my homebuilt airplane, which I had finished building in 1991. The make and model are Kolb TwinStar. It's a two-seat ultralight-like (it's not truly an ultralight because it's too heavy and has more than one seat) open-frame airplane that has the engine in the back ("pusher configuration") so the seats are in the front, unobstructed. I modified it to carry my camera pod in place of the passenger seat, so it was functionally a single-seat plane. It folds quickly and easily, and I transported it to shooting locations in a trailer towed behind my truck.

From Spring 2007 to the present, I use a Light Sport Airplane (make and model: Flight Design CT), which comes from Germany—I didn't build it. The CT stands for Composite Technology; the entire airplane is made of carbon fiber and Kevlar, except for the engine, landing gear, and various hardware (cables, bolts, etc.). This plane was much better suited to shooting the farther reaches of the river because it flies fast and far (135 mph cruise, carries 7 hours of fuel), and makes me totally self-sufficient; I can carry camping gear and the supplies I need along in the plane.

For both airplanes: I fly with my leg strapped to the control stick. Average speed and altitude while shooting are 45 mph and 300-600 feet. A ballistic recovery system is installed and armed for every flight (rocket-deployed emergency parachute for the AIRPLANE, not the pilot).

Good luck!

Adriel