Subject: : Gear Talk
Topic: : Vibram sole wading boot
Re: Vibram sole wading boot
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Date: : 2013/11/23 10:01:08
URL:

I'm at the end of the life of my second pair of vibram soled simms (rivershed boots). My two cents and observations after 5 years are as follows
When changing from felt the difference in grip was a small contributor to the need to adjust. It had more to do with the difference in feeling the substrate under my feet. The contact between your foot and bottom changes (soft to hard).
I've never lost a stud using the hardbite studs (40 in two pairs of boots so far). In fact, I once tried to remove one from the old boots and it was more difficult than I anticipated. However, I believe losing a screw on the star cleats are more likely. The hardbite studs have serrations under the head that dig into the rubber, preventing them from moving (don't screw them in too tight and strip). With the cleats, the screw sets on the metal. The screws can turn more freely. I don't feel I've needed the cleats, so I don't use them.
I would avoid the aluminum cleats. George at TCO SC told me that the aluminum ones were designed for special types of substrates. Rocks that carbide can't cut into like rough granite etc. The idea was that since the metal can't dig into these rocks, the rocks can dig into the soft aluminum. He specifically recommended NOT using them on rounded, smooth surfaces. They will be slippery. If the rocks can't dig into the aluminum, it's sort of like writing with a hard pencil. Aluminum will wear smooth. This makes sense to me.
Riversheds: one size up from street shoe size is a must if you want to wear heavy socks (and we all do).
I bought my third pair of riversheds recently. I almost got the guide boot, but didn't want to make a change since I was happy. I considered changing because I heard good things about the guide. I would appreciate it if anyone who owned both would offer an opinion on the two. pros and cons