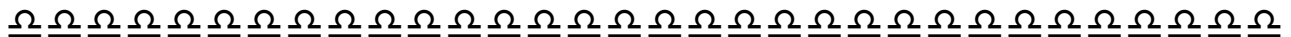




4-H Horse Trail & Packing Manual Flathead

DRAFT – February 2021



Flathead 4-H Horse Program ♦ October 2019 ♦ 5251



MONTANA 4-H IS...



4-H is a part of the Montana State University Extension Service cooperating with the U. S Department of Agriculture and your local county government. 4-H members are those boys and girls who participate in Extension-sponsored educational programs which are open to all youth regardless of race, creed, color, sex handicap or national origin.

The goal of Montana 4-H is to educate youth and adults for living in a global and ever-changing world by using the resources of Land-Grant Universities and the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Montana 4-H uses educational, learning-by-doing projects, club meetings, community service projects, events and activities for young people and adults as they work toward attaining these five LIFE SKILLS:

- Fostering positive self-concept
- Learning decision-making and responsibility for choices
- Developing an inquiring mind
- Relating to self and others
- Acquiring a concern for communities- local and global

The emblem of the 4-H program is a green, four-leaf clover with a white “H” in each leaf. The four “H’s” stand for Head, Heart, Hands and Health and represent ways to develop the five life skills.

HEAD: Learning to think, make decisions, understand the “whys”, gain new and valuable insights and knowledge.

HEART: Being concerned with the welfare of others, accepting the responsibilities of citizenship in our local and global communities, determining values and attitudes by which to live and learning how to work with others.

HANDS: Learning new skills, improving skills already developed, instilling pride in work and respect for work accomplished.

HEALTH: Practicing healthful living, protecting the well-being of self and others and making constructive use of leisure time.

This four-fold development is vital to every individual. All four of the “H’s” should be an important part of the goals youngsters identify as they participate in 4-H sponsored programs and educational activities.

Requirements for participation in 4-H Packing

To participate in Flathead 4-H Packing you either must have completed Horsemanship Level I or you must be able to pass the assessments of Level I Horsemanship at the beginning of the Packing Clinics. If you cannot pass Level I Horsemanship then you must enroll in a 4-H Club that teaches Horsemanship.





4-H Horse and Mule Packing



Horses were used to carry loads long before they were used to carry people. Horse packing as we know it was developed hundreds of years ago. Genghis Khan is believed to have first used horses as pack animals 700 years ago.

Horse packing provides opportunities to enjoy nature in a way that is otherwise difficult to achieve. It requires a great deal of basic skill and knowledge. To achieve these skills and knowledge, it is necessary to study, to pay attention to details and to practice.

Packing has developed to the point where it is a combination of art and science. Packers take pride in their animals and in their ability to pack them in a professional manner.

The art of packing is not learned overnight, but takes many hours of study, practice and actual packing.

Objectives

The goal of this program is to provide an opportunity for 4-Hers to learn:

- The types of equipment available and packing equipment needed
- To handle, care for and pack the mature equine
- What to take on a pack trip, how much and what makes for a successful pack trip
- To prepare stock for use on the trails.
- To accept the results of your work and how to use these in planning goals and future endeavors
- To develop skills and knowledge which can be used for a lifetime as a means of enjoyment and/or a career
- To share knowledge gained with others



Recommended references:

Elser, Smoke & Brown, Bill, *Packin' in on Mules & Horses*, Missoula, MT; Mountain Press Publishing, 1980

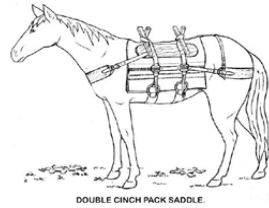
Hoverson, Bob, *The Packer's Field Manual*, Stevensville, MT, Stoneydale Press Publishing Company, 2005

Davis, Francis W., *Horse Packing in Pictures*, Second Edition, NY, Howell Book House, 1991

Hill, Oliver, *Packing and Outfitting Field Manual*, B636R, University of Wyoming, Bulletin Room, P.O. Box 3313, Laramie, WY, 82071

Project Outline:

The following is an outline of basic equipment, knowledge and skills needed for successful packing.



1. **Selection of the Pack Animal**-This is very important, since your pack animal is a critical part of any packing. A good pack animal should be stout, rugged and have sound feet and legs. Your pack animal should also have a gentle disposition and be healthy. Prominent withers are also desirable to keep a saddle and pack from slipping off to the side. Some people use horses, others use mules or burros.
2. **Care of the Pack Animal**-Pack animals should be well cared for and should be groomed, fed, shod and handled properly.
3. **Pack Equipment**-Good and proper equipment is essential. This should include the following:
 - a. Pack saddle-several styles are available (fitted to animal)
 - b. Good, clean saddle pad(s) Saddle pads become dirty and the sweat creates crusty hard patches on the pad, this in turn will rub the stock creating sores under the saddle pad. A clean saddle pad provides protection between the pack saddle and the horse's back.
 - c. A stout halter with a 15 foot long halter rope. When tying a pack "string" a shorter rope should be used after the lead pack animal.
 - d. A Rope halter would be recommended because there are no buckles or metal connectors that can break.
 - e. A lash cinch, with a 45 foot lash rope (half-inch diameter)-Carry a spare.



- f. A pack cover, or manta (manta/mantee-Spanish for horse blanket); This cover of canvas can vary in size from 7 X 8 ft. or 8 X 8 ft., depending on intended uses. If you manta everything, you will need at least two per horse.
 - g. For slinging the manta packs, you will need a pair of sling ropes (half-inch by 25-30 feet each).
 - h. A 35 to 40 foot length of three-eighths inch rope to tie a manta over a bale, bedroll, tent or whatever. Number of manta ropes (eye-spliced on one end and back-spliced on the other) should equal the number of manties you have.
 - i. Panniers (pronounced "panyards"), in good repair (may be soft-sided or solid-sided); Panniers are the pack boxes used on pack saddles. They can be made of canvas, rawhide, wood or other materials. Some people may prefer not to use panniers.
 - j. Hobbles and/or picket ropes and highlines with tree savers-this depends on training of pack and riding stock.
4. **Loading and Packing**-A very important factor is how much weight your pack horse can carry. A horse/mule can carry up to 20 percent of his body weight (excluding the weight of the saddle).
 5. **Balancing the Load**-Weight and balance of the load is very important to avoid sores on your pack animal. It also determines how well your pack rides. You should have a portable scale that can weigh loads up to 100 pounds.
 6. **On the Trail to New Experiences**-Proper handling of horses on the trail is very important. On the trail your horse should receive priority treatment. If you pack with a string of horses, tie them together but never tie a pack horse to

your saddle. Instead, dally the rope around your saddle horn a turn and lead your pack animals. Be alert and cautious since you never know when a “rodeo” may start!

7. **Leading Pack Stock** - When leading a string hook them up and be on the way as soon as possible, as pack mules or horses have devious minds and soon will be in trouble if they are not kept entertained or given a job. Once in the saddle keep the lead rope in one hand and near the leg or waist. Do not wrap the lead rope around your hand; hold it so it can pull out of your hand if needed. Do not put the lead rope over your shoulder because if the string pulls back you may lose your balance and be tipped off backwards. Do not tie your lead rope to the saddle horn, only 1 wrap at most. This could lead to the riding horse being pulled over backwards as well. Do not get the lead rope under the tail of your riding stock. Make sure that you watch your pack stock’s loads, make sure that the rings of the Decker are centered in the back of the mule or horse, make sure that your pack pad is also properly centered under the pack saddle and make sure that your loads are balanced and centered. Make sure that your riding and pack stock can trot with a load, this is important as there might be time that your stock will trot to catch up to the balance of the riders.

8. **Safety**- Always keep safety foremost in all situations!

Packing Plus:

Other things you’ll need to know:

In order to achieve the art of packing and have a successful pack trip, you will need to have additional knowledge about: Camping equipment needed

- Type and amount of horse feed
- Other horse equipment and supplies needed
- Cooking equipment

- Food and menus
- First aid supplies for humans and horses
- Personal gear
- Carry a 4” Fixed Blade Knife for emergencies
- Ropes, knots and splices-You will need to know types of ropes, uses and knots for preparing gear.
- Hitches-There are many different hitches that can be used in packing. You need to know several of them, for what type of pack (load) they are used and how they are tied.
- Trip itinerary-Details about the trip: time, route, destination, topography, maps, etc.

This project will assist 4-H members in developing decision-making skills and in developing an inquiring mind. Members will need to seek out references and the assistance of people who have expertise in packing.

Members will have to determine what type of equipment they want to use and how to use it. These are just a few of the many decisions they will need to make in this project.

Equine First Aid

A first aid kit, particularly when you’re in the back country, is essential to attend to any injuries your horse might suffer. A standard first aid kit should include the following:

1. A saline solution for cleaning wounds
2. Nitrofurazone soluble dressing or bag balm
3. Pytenol Lotion or Blue Lotion (mild antiseptics)
4. Scarlet Oil for large wounds (not to be used on joints)
5. Nitrofurazone powder for drying wounds
6. Cotton and 4”x4” gauze bandages or sponges
7. 4” or wider gauze wraps or vet wraps (Ace bandages)
8. Banamine paste for colic (See your Vet)
9. Phenylbutazone for pain and to ease joint problems (See your Vet)

These are just the basics. You may need to add other items, but every kit should at least contain these items.

Possible Fair Exhibits

The following are examples that could be developed for fair exhibit(s):

- Pair of panniers-made by exhibitor
- Pack saddle tree, Decker or Sawbuck-made by exhibitor
- Complete pack saddle, Decker or Sawbuck-made by exhibitor
- Notebook on pack trip-start to finish
- Poster(s) or display of knots, splices, hitches, equipment needs, menus and food needed, trip itinerary
- Poster and/or display about safety

4-H members may develop demonstrations and speeches related to packing. Members may also share knowledge and experiences with others in the area or leadership.

Additional References:

- Back, Joe, *Horses, Hitches and Rocky Trails*, Chicago, The Swallow Press, Inc., 1959
- Davis, Francis W., *Horse Packing in Pictures*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975
- Miller, Robert W., *Guide for Using Horses in Mountain Country*, Bozeman, MT, Montana Wilderness Association, 1974
- Hoverson, Bob, *Mule Packing-Decker Style* [DVD], Inghram, Roger (Videographer), Stoneysdale Press Publishing Co., Stevensville, MT, 2006



Goals for Packing

Please record 3 personal goals you have regarding 4-H Packing

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Trail Training Check list

Horses should be calm with the following.

Horses that are not able to tolerate these things may not be ready for 4-H trail rides or some things that are presented in the arena setting.

1. Your horse should be ok with lead lines and other ropes used in packing around their feet and body.
2. Your horse should be ok with a lead line under its tail and pulled tight.
3. If you are using saddle bags, you will need to demonstrate that your horse is able to walk and trot with them.
4. Your horse should be able to pass other trail users. Hikers, Dogs, Bike Riders, Pack Strings and other horses.
5. Before you pull a pack horse, your lead horse should be able to pony another horse both with a load and without.
6. Your pack horse should be ok with a load on them. You will demonstrate that both your riding horse and your pack horse are able to ride at a trot loaded.
7. You should have completed other trail rides that have included water crossings.
8. You should be able to walk and trot your horse. We do not canter while packing but you may be asked to canter a solo horse in the arena. Some trail horses may not canter.
9. If you have a pack saddle or other packing gear that you plan on bringing on a trip please bring it to class. Both your riding gear and packing gear will be inspected and we will discuss whether it should be used for trail riding or packing. Riding horses will have halters on while riding.
10. Before going on an overnight 4-H trip your horse must have been previously highlined, hobbled or contained in the method you will use for overnight containment.
11. Your horse will need to “Neck Rein” for level 4&5. All other students should work on neck reining if your horse needs to learn it.
12. All students will be respectful of other horses and riders while riding in a group. Be aware that some horses may not have been exposed to what your horses have been.

Prior to working with horses at any of the Clinics, each member must be assessed on the Trail & Packing Horsemanship Skills. Members must be signed off on each of the 20 skills.

Intent: To show that they demonstrate control with their horse in a safe manner under saddle as well as properly halter, bridle, saddle, groom, mount and dismount safely.

For members to complete 4-H Horsemanship Level 1, they will only need to complete skills 21 and 22 from their Horsemanship Book. They will need to show book work and records up to date to a Leader trained for assessments.

Western assessments	Trail & Packing Horsemanship Skills	Date	Leader
1	Catch and properly fit a halter on a horse		
2	Explain and demonstrate how to safely and properly lead a horse		
3	Safely back the horse from the ground		
4	Demonstrate where and how to tie a horse safely. Give some examples of what are unsuitable (unsafe places or objects to tie a horse to).		
5	Demonstrate a pre-riding grooming and explain why it is important to always groom your horse before saddling him/her.		
6	Help safely bridle and unbridle a horse (members may need assistance)		
7	Help safely saddle and unsaddle a horse (members may need assistance)		
8	Show how to check the tack before mounting and explain the reasons for doing so.		
9	Safety mount and dismount from both sides of the horse (some members may need assistance)		
10	Explain and show proper body position when riding.		
11	Show how to correctly hold the reins.		
12	Show turns to the left and to the right while your horse is walking.		
13	Show turns to the left and to the right while your horse is trotting.		
14	Back your horse while mounted, 5 steps.		
15	While guiding your horse around the arena move from a walk to a trot and back to the walk. Demonstrate both direction of the arena.		
16	Stop your horse from a walk.		
17	Stop your horse from a trot.		
18	Ride your horse in a figure 8 pattern at the walk.		
19	Ride your horse in a figure 8 pattern at the trot.		
20	Explain and demonstrate what you would do if your horse were running away with you.		

To Assess out of Level 1 Horsemanship complete the following steps

21	While watching a horse being ridden at the trot, identify whether the rider is posting (rising) the trot or sitting the trot.		
22	While watching a horse at a lope (canter) identify which lead it is in.		
	Completion of bookwork		
	Record book up to date		



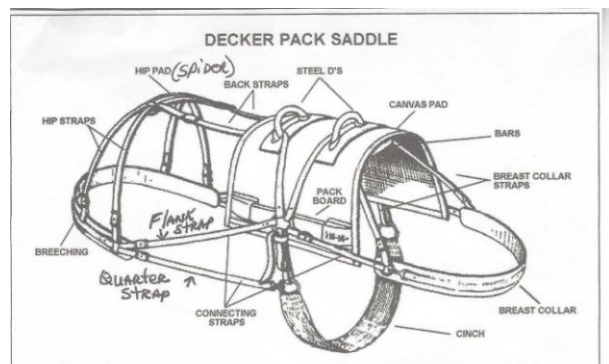
Assessment List for Packing

Level 1

- 1. The member can describe three conformation traits of a good pack horse.
- 2. The member can describe proper care of a pack animal.
- 3. The member can name two styles of pack saddles.
- 4. The member can explain why a clean saddle pad is essential.
- 5. The member can describe proper halter and rope for leading a pack horse.
- 6. The member can demonstrate proper grooming of the animal prior to saddling.
- 7. The member can demonstrate how to properly saddle their riding and pack stock.
- 8. The member can identify the type of pack saddle (Decker or Sawbuck).
- 9. The member can name and identify the parts of a pack saddle.
- 10. The member can safely back the horse from the ground
- 11. The member can safely mount and dismount from both sides of the horse.
- 12. The member can back their horse while mounted, five steps.
- 13. The member can stop their horse from a walk.
- 14. Show how to tie a lead rope to saddle.
- 15. Show how to tie a horse to a tree and explain what kind of tree.
- 16. Explain good traits of a mountain Saddle Horse.

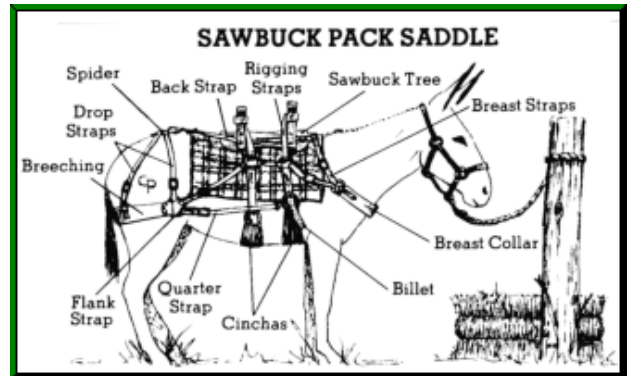
Level 2

- 17. The member can explain the use of the manty.
- 18. The member can identify the size of manty and sling ropes.
- 19. The member can explain the use of manty ropes.
- 20. The member can select and explain the use of sling ropes.
- 21. The member can describe two types of panniers and how they are used.
- 22. The member can explain three important factors in leading pack stock.
- 23. Explain conversation with hikers.
- 24. Demonstrate stock Ok with rope under tail.
- 25. Demonstrate stock OK with rope around hindquarters and legs.
- 26. Demonstrate the ability to pony a horse without pack saddle.
- 27. Demonstrate riding stock OK with loaded pack stock around them.



Level 3

1. The member can explain the importance of weighing the packs.
2. The member can explain the importance of balancing the load.
3. The member can list the most important factors in packing horses.
4. The member can demonstrate how to properly mantle a load. (Suggested demonstration load: straw or hay bale or box.)
5. The member can demonstrate balancing of pack weights.
6. The member can properly sling the mantled loads on the pack horse.
7. The member can properly balance pannier weights.
8. The member can properly load the panniers on a horse.
9. The member can tie the following hitches: Basket hitch and Barrel hitch.
10. The member can demonstrate how to pick up and check each of their horse's hooves.
11. The member can explain the proper way to turn their horse around on the trail.
12. The member can demonstrate proper loading, securing and unloading of their stock into a horse trailer.
13. Demonstrate how to dismount with pack stock and remount – both sides.
14. Demonstrate tying on saddle bags and slicker.



Level 4

1. The member can explain how to tie up their horse in the back country.
2. The member can explain proper highlining equipment and use.
3. The member must demonstrate proper highlining of their horse.
4. The member can explain basic equine first aid. (Ex. Bute, Banamine, Vetrap).
5. The member must plan a pack trip for two people and four horses for four days, including all equipment, feed, menus, food and travel itinerary.
6. The member will give a demonstration about packing.
7. The member will carry out an overnight pack trip.
8. The member must demonstrate the ability to cross running water, ie; streams & rivers, including puddles or standing water with their riding and pack stock.
9. Demonstrate ability to Neck Rein Saddle Stock.
10. Demonstrate the ability for riding and pack stock to trot with loads.

Level 5

- 1. The member will plan a pack trip of over four days including transportation and all costs associated with number 5 in Level 4.
- 2. The member will carry out a pack trip of two to five days.
- 3. The member will teach a club, group or another 4-H member how to pack.

