



A partnership has been formed between the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead (BCHF), East Slope Back Country Horsemen, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, and The Ninemile Wilderness Training Center to establish a packer apprentice program intended to foster the next generation of packers and support wilderness stewardship in The Bob for years to come. The Bob has a uniquely rich heritage of stock use which has helped to shape the character of the Complex and its users, as well as support its conservation and stewardship. Despite this deeply engrained tradition, however, packing is a fading skill.

The BCH and BMWF want to make sure that the tradition of packing lives on in the Bob. Pack support is an integral part of the work and recreation that takes place in The Bob. For example, pack stock haul the tools, food, and gear for 40 BMWF back country trail projects each year. Without this non-motorized support, volunteer based stewardship would not be possible. In addition, packers help educate volunteers about the importance of traditional stock use.

Apprenticeship Description

The BCH Chapters (Flathead and East Slope) and BMWF are requesting funds to support two packing apprentices during the 2016 field season. Each apprentice will gain valuable skills and training in Wilderness packing. Each apprentice will attend the Packing Clinic at the Ninemile Wildlands Training Center taught by legendary packer Smoke Elser. Topics covered in this five day course include: stock anatomy, saddles and tack, feeding and care of stock, safe stock handling techniques, packing the Decker saddle, and minimum impact camping and stock use techniques. Following training, the packer apprentice will be required to participate in a minimum of 6 packing projects supporting BMWF crews with a BMWF/BCH trainer packer. These experienced packers will provide training in stock safety, packing different loads and animals using multiple styles of packing, safety on the trail, wilderness skills and much more.

Apprenticeship Costs, Project Budget

- \$75 travel allowance per pack trip, (Six (6) pack trips for 2 apprentices = \$900.00)
- \$12/day meal allowance while at 9 Mile Training and a \$60 travel allowance (\$120 x 2 = \$240)
- Cost of one tuition to the Ninemile Packing Clinic (\$500 value)
- Total Request = \$1,640.00

In-Kind Contributions to the Packing Apprentice Program

In return for financial support from BCHA the partner groups will donate the following time and materials:

- BCH mentors will donate their time, skills, and stock to train the apprentices.
- Ninemile Wilderness Training Center will donate tuition for one packing clinic.
- BMWF will donate meals while the apprentice is on backcountry trips and the time to coordinate the apprenticeship program, apprentice selection, and scheduling.

We need your support to make this program possible.
Donate today at www.bmwf.org/why_give
to support training the next generation of wilderness packers

