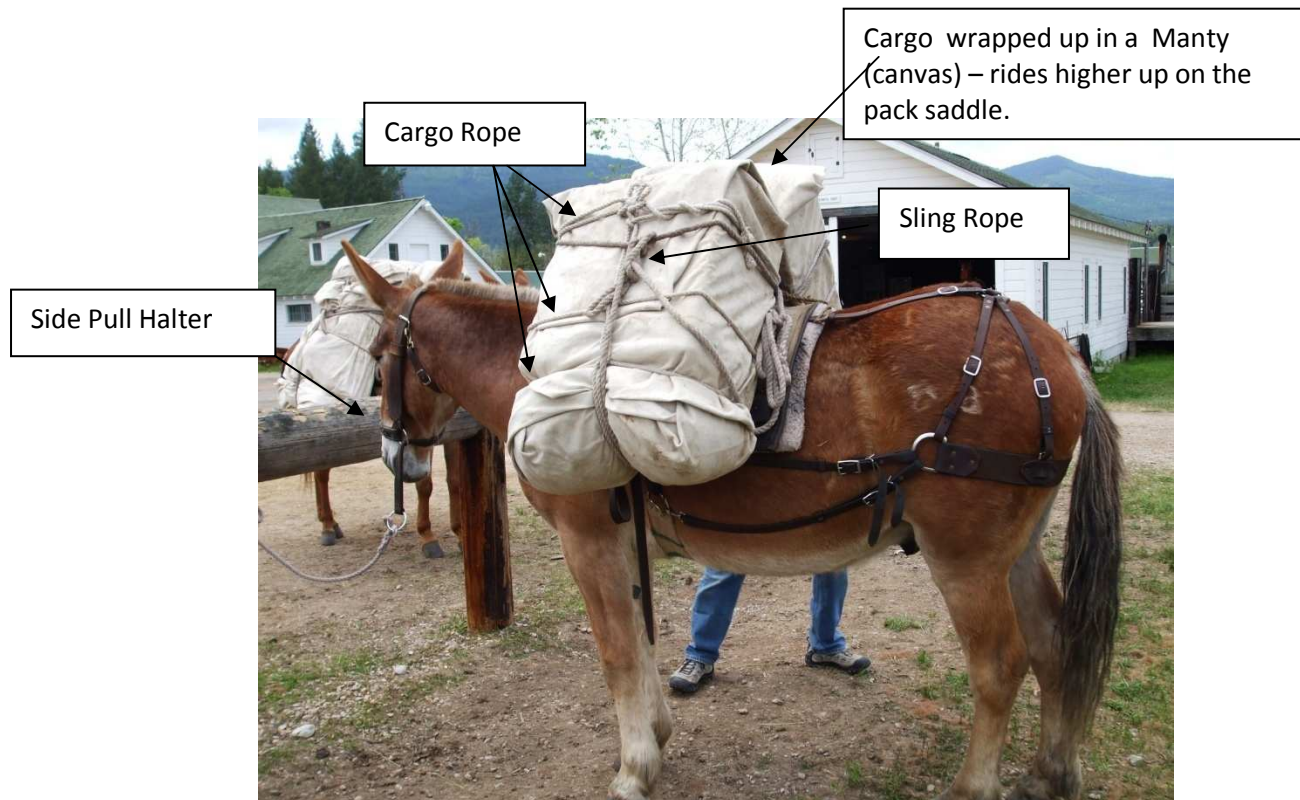


DECKER PACKING

By Carol Lang '09



The Decker pack saddle uses ropes and manties to carry the loads, instead of panniers. The decker saddle has the capacity to carry odd shaped loads. It can be adjusted to fit the conformation of a horse or mule and the tree can be shaved down to better fit the animal. The load also, is allowed to sway with the movement of the animal or if it hits a tree will swing back and then resume it's position. The rule of thumb for weight the pack animal can carry is 20 percent of the animals weight. This means if an animal weighs 1000lbs, it's can carry 200 lbs. This includes the pack saddle and loaded cargo. If a saddle and pad weighs between 35-45 lbs., 15 lbs. for 2 ropes and 2 manties, that leaves 140-150lbs of load that an animal can carry which is 70-75lbs. of the mantied load on each side. As with all packing techniques each side needs to weigh within a pound of each other or the loads will be uneven and tend to shift down the trail.

[How to Secure your load to the Decker](#)

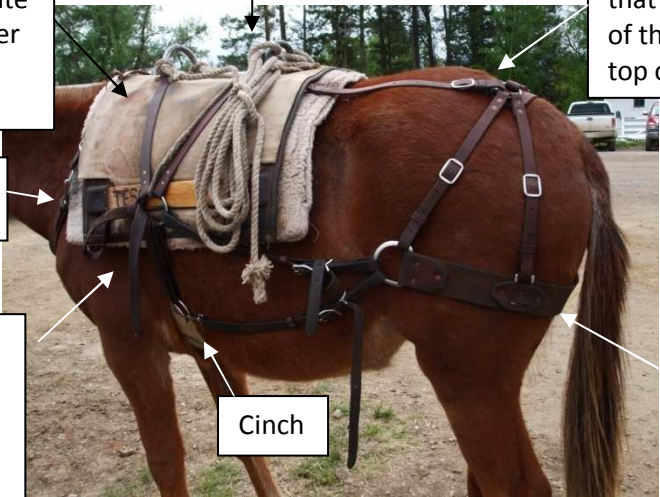
Half Breed-protects the animal from the load. The wood plank helps distribute the weight of the load over the entire rib area of the animal.

Sling Rope-ties load to saddle.

Spider-should be adjusted so that hip pad is in the middle of the animals hip and the top of the tail.

Breast Collar

Rigging- can be adjusted to fit any conformation of a horse or mule.



Cinch

Breeching- should fit about a hands width down from the biggest curve of the rump and at the same angle so it doesn't rub a sore. Proper adjustment is crucial.

DECKER SADDLE PARTS –	
Pad	Breeching
Tree	Spider
Rigging	Breast collar
Half breed	Cinch
Sling rope	

How to Manty up a Load

2 – Manties 2- Cargo Ropes

Decker Packing is a little different than the sawbuck. You can use panniers with a Decker pack saddle, but typically you use 2 - 7 ft. X 8 ft. 14 oz. canvas called a manty. You want to situate your gear or load so that the heaviest object is 1/3 down from the top. This puts the heaviest part of the load more on the tree of the saddle. It is also where you tie the load down with a basket hitch, keeping your heaviest object more secure to the saddle. If you are mantying up long items such as a table you'd use a barrel hitch and mantied differently than shown below. You'll need 2 composite cargo ropes, 3 strand 3/8" and 35 feet long each, one end needs a eye splice and the other end an end splice. I like the 3 strand rope because you can splice it. So if it breaks in the backcountry you can put another eye splice or back splice in it and you are back on the trail again. The optimal size of a mantied load is 36 long x 22 wide x 16 deep, most FS trails are 8 ft. wide, so that leaves you with 2 ft. clearance. Again, For a 1000 lb. animal, each side of the mantied load should weigh no more than 70-75 lbs.



Cargo your Personal Gear – Pack items in duffle bags. It helps keep items in the load manageable. Personal items, tent, pad, chair, sleeping bag.



1. Fold Like a Diaper



3. Fold over Left



2. Fold over Right



4. Make top with fold 1/3 way down – that indicates where the heaviest item is. Rain Flaps overlap load at top.



5. Secure Load with Cargo Rope – Manty's need to be wrapped so that you have a Right Flap and a left Flap. Always load with the flaps in the back so branches won't get caught in the flap of the load. – picture above.

For more information on Decker Packing

Check out our BCHU calendar for Packing Clinics or

Contact Carol Lang webmaster@bchu.com