

Blue Mule & Two Saw Carrier

In the past at pack clinics, we have used live stock or a combination of stock and a packing dummy. At this year's clinic in May, we are focusing on 4H horse groups and with a group of kids learning to pack, live stock just adds to the confusion and may result in someone getting hurt. We have a very nice pack dummy, Woody the mule, but for this clinic having a couple more would be better. I had a couple of the blue plastic 55 gallon drums and thought they would make good pack dummies.



I wanted to keep it simple, but to have a very stable system that would not take much time or cost much to build. I also wanted to keep the cost down. The material to make one of these blue mules includes three 3/8 inch x 48 inch threaded rods, with washers and nuts. Six 1/4 x 4 inch carriage bolts with nuts and washers, plus eight screws 1 1/2 inches long. Four 2x4 x 8 foot long, and some scrap plywood, and one plastic barrel.

I cut the four 2x4 to five foot and after determining how wide I wanted the base, I did an angle cut at one end. A simple way to determine this cut is to lay the board on a surface with a straight line you can use as a reference. I used the edge of a plank on my flat bed trailer. I wanted the base to be 36 inches wide, so I set the foot of the 2x4 18 inches from my reference line and leaving an inch on top used the reference line to mark my angle cut. Once I had this leg made, I used it as a template for the other three legs.

I edge drilled the top of the 2x4 and bolted it together with one of the $\frac{1}{4}$ carriage bolts. I then cut a gusset from some scrap plywood and screwed it to the joint.



About one inch below the joint bolt in the center of the triangle, drill a $\frac{7}{16}$ inch hole in both sets of legs. Remove one of the caps from the barrel; you will be looking through it to align your rods with the hole you are going to drill into the barrel. Drill a $\frac{7}{16}$ hole in the center of the other barrel caps. Carefully measure the distance from the hole to the edge of the barrel. The barrels I used had a seam I could use as a reference and it was very easy to locate there the second hole should be drilled.

Looking through the hole where you remove the cap (in the picture it is white) thread one of the rods through the barrel and then through the holes you drilled through the legs. Add washers and nuts and snug it up.

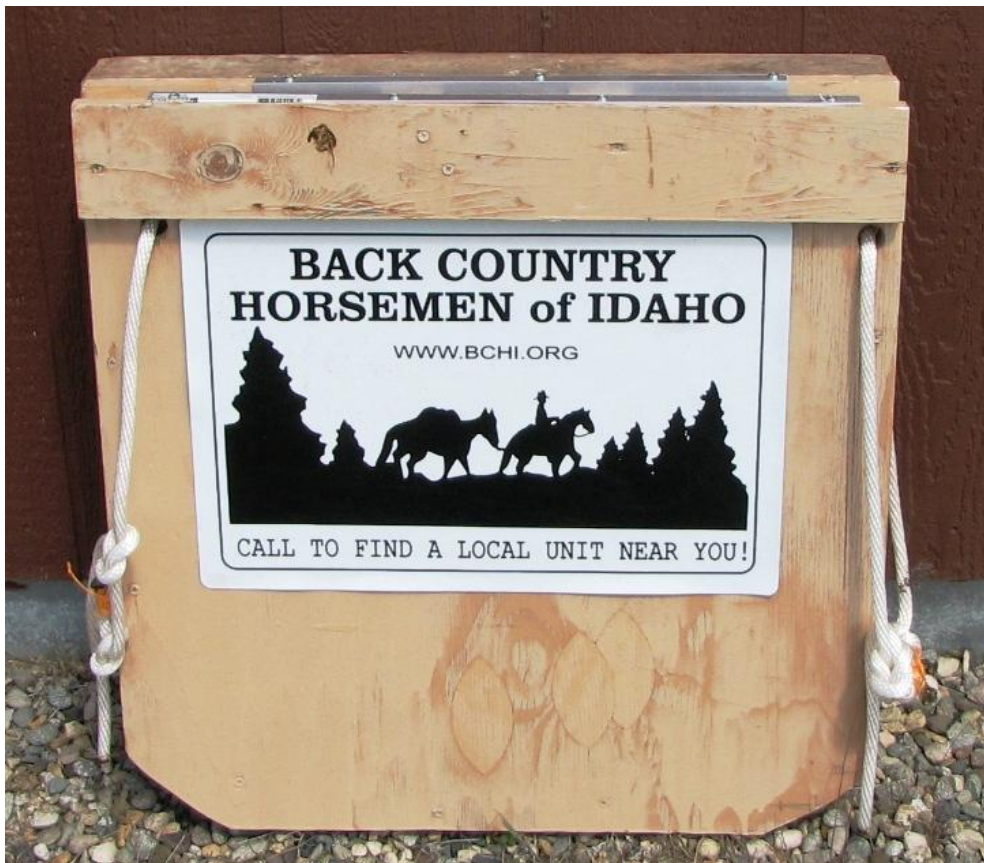
Stand the mule up and the barrel will hang between the legs in the correct position. Drill 7/16 holes near the bottom edge of the barrel in the middle of each leg, and using the cap hole align the rod. Add washers and nuts and snug it up. Do the same with the third rod and then snug up all three rods until firmly seated against the bottom and top of the barrel. Replace the barrel cap. Optional are adding cross members under the barrel and bolting them in place with the 1/4 carriage bolts.



Two Saw carriers.

Material, ½ sheet of ¼ inch plywood. One 1x4 eight foot pine board, Two 1x2 eight foot pine board and a two foot piece of 4x4 cut edge to opposite edge to form a triangle. Some metal angle material is a good option.

All the wood was glued and screwed together.



It is very important that the slots you built for the saw blades are big enough for the bar, chain and plastic bar guard. They can be a bit sloppy and the saws will still ride well. I added some metal angle to protect the wood from the saw dogs.



The saws ride very well like this, the engines cool down after use and they are easy to get on and off your stock horse. I don't have any straps on mine to secure the saws, but they could be easily added.



A standard pack bag can be used on the other side to carry fuel, tool and spare chains and parts. Attaching or painting a sign about who we are is a good idea. It helps get the word out when we meet other trail users.

Rob Adams

Squaw Butte Chapter BCHI