



## ITA – Volunteer Packing

ITA projects often require support from pack stock and rely heavily on volunteer packers. We recognize that trailering stock to a trailhead can be costly in terms of fuel and other expenses and can help offset that cost for volunteer packers through mileage reimbursement.

In 2023, we will offer the IRS-determined mileage rate. In 2022, this was 62.5 cents/mile. For a volunteer to receive reimbursement, ITA asks that:

- The volunteer has prior experience packing, have experienced animals, and is comfortable packing camp gear, food (coolers, etc) and tools. This is for the safety of both the packer and the trail crew volunteers.
- We ask that each pack animal carry a minimum of 55 lbs/side. Most pack animals can carry 60-100 lbs./side depending on the terrain and the animal's size and condition, so this allows flexibility while making sure a meaningful amount of gear is packed in for the crew.
- Each packer brings at least two pack animals. Riders bringing one animal for the learning experience are welcome – ITA supports the development of new packers and passing on this backcountry skill- but is unable to reimburse mileage for packers with fewer than two pack animals. On the same note, young animals carrying less weight are welcome- they all need to start somewhere!- but we ask that the packer only bring youngsters with solid experience packing at home (not spooky or apt to cause a wreck). **\*\*Exception: for those learning to pack who wish to bring one animal, we can reimburse at half the mileage rate to offset some of the fuel costs but also encourage "trailerpooling" with others if possible to save fuel, cost, and trailhead parking.**
- Each packer hauling a trailer fill out the ITA reimbursement request form and send it to Melanie Vining, ITA Executive Director, at [melanie@idahotrailsassociation.org](mailto:melanie@idahotrailsassociation.org). Document exact miles to and from the trailhead.

General guidelines for supported trips:

- A typical supported trip of 8-12 people requires 6-8 head stock, generally (6 is a stretch for a 10-12 person trip). For semi-supported trips, where a crew is self-supported backpacking and the packer is just hauling packs, figure 2 backpacks per animal if full, three if emptier at the end of a trip (one can be packed on top of the animal, in the middle of the other two). So for an 8-person backpacking trip, 3 pack animals should do it.
- Typically, a pack animal can carry 140-180 lbs total. Some of the Backcountry Horsemen have wanted to keep packs to 55-60 lbs.
- Our Yeti food coolers usually weigh 60-65 lbs each, so almost a full animal to carry coolers for a group of 10-12, with a light top pack.
- Multiply crew gear limit of 35 lbs each x number of crew.
- Plan on crew carrying most tools and hard hats (they are terrible to try to pack- too light and bulky) unless the hike in is more than 7-8 miles or you know you won't need tools to clear a bit ahead of the packer. Crosscut usually goes with the crew but can be packed by someone who knows how to pack a saw- we avoid bending them over packs typically, as some are vintage and they have been known to break.

- Non-perishable food usually takes up one pack animal.
- Kitchen box and stove, propane, screen tent and a table usually take up one to one and a half animals.