

NEWS



Forest Service

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**Inyo
National Forest**

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Inyo National Forest Hosts Pack Stock Center of Excellence

The U.S. Forest Service has a long tradition of using stock to bring supplies to remote locations to support fire response, trail crews, timber, and for patrol in a manner consistent with the Wilderness and Forest management.

Additionally, the Forest Ranger on horseback is one of the enduring traditions that connects visitors to the forests and resources they come to enjoy.

Inyo National Forest Wilderness and Stock Manager Michael Morse and others saw the need and submitted a proposal to create the Pack Stock Centers of Excellence. This program is designed to maintain the stock programs in California forests. Inyo National Forest is one of the Centers of Excellence, the other being the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. These centers provide coordination, support, and training for forests throughout California.

“Although the acres of designated Wilderness have been steadily increasing, the number of pack stock and qualified packers has been steadily declining,” Morse said.

As a Center of Excellence, packers are focused on achieving a variety of goals including:

- **Engaging Youth:** This insures that the skillset and ethic of responsible stock use is maintained. Recruitment of interns and hosting youth programs in the Wilderness are some of the tools used to develop the next generation of stock users.
- **Education** focuses on the proper use of pack stock as a minimum impact tool in the Wilderness.
- **Community Outreach** includes involvement in community events and activities to continue providing the well-recognized and welcome image of federal stewardship.

Safety, Improved Coordination and Ecosystem Management and Restoration are other goals for the Center of Excellence.

“Inyo National Forest is honored to host a Center of Excellence,” said Ed Armenta, Forest Supervisor. “Forest Rangers have long cared for the land and served people with the use of stock. We have incredible packers here who can teach these skills to the next generation of Forest Service staff and ensure that that the stock programs continue throughout forests in California.”

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