



## Education report

January 2011

With the beginning of a new year, I would like to provide you with our first education report for 2011 describing what our key initiatives will be for our unit. The 2011 plan is to provide an education report every month, with interesting and informative materials, that you can use on your next camping trip or trail rides to the backcountry. This year, our focus is to organize more day and overnight rides, but it takes planning, especially if you go out in the backcountry.

In planning a ride it's *not* a good idea to start planning the day of the ride. Typically, you need to plan at least 1 to 2 days in advance to make sure you have all of the equipment and supplies needed for overnight camping out in the backcountry. When we take the ride as a group, it's up to someone to organize it. I would encourage our members to be involved and support our rides and overnight camping. It would be a great experience and we can support you with the necessary resources to make it happen. There's a lot of work in organizing a ride, figuring out the dates the times and where to ride. For example, if you are planning on going for an extended ride of more than 6 hours or several days camping, in the backcountry, the first step would to begin conditioning your horses or mules at least 1 month in advance. There have been several instances where the horses or mules could go lame, or colic on a long ride. For an overnight trip, it takes more planning and preparation, for not only the tack for the animal, but also the food, camping equipment, first aid, medications for the horses or mules, in case they colic or have other injuries and other tools, in case you might have to pull a shoe. A checklist is very helpful. In my coming up education report, I will submit a checklist as a guideline to use for day rides and overnight camping in the backcountry.

When getting your horse tack ready, there are several items that you would need for a day ride or overnight camping, that includes for example, a raincoat, saddlebags along with extra tools for emergencies. Several items and recommendations, that I would bring for emergencies, is to carry extra leather strings, in case I need to fix tack while on the trails in the backcountry. It's also good to carry a compass, or a GPS and a map of the area, you will be riding or camping in the wilderness. Compasses always work, but a GPS takes batteries that always seemed to die on you. It's also nice to take a camera along if you're by yourself, you can bring back some nice photographs, if you have others in the group to take pictures, which will bring back great memories and we can post them on our website.

I am proposing to submit several educational reports beginning early next month. Several requests have been made, on how to tie basic knots for packing, how to use a compass in the wilderness if you get lost, how to prepare Dutch oven cooking with a few recipes.

If you have other ideas, suggestions or want more information on a certain topics, let us know so we can get the information to you. We are hoping this year we can get a lot more people involved, and have a lot more people enjoy the backcountry.

This year lets all get involved, ask questions, learn new things and have a lot of fun. I am up for the challenge, and I hope you are too! Remember this is our unit, and we all can make a difference if we all participate in any way we can. We all cannot make it to the meetings, or all of the rides, but we can all share ideas to make this unit even better. If you have a good ides for the educational program on anything to do with this unit please let us know, and as a unit we will try to keep you informed on the things that involve the Santa Ana River unit. We all could contribute and make it a great year. I am looking forward to your participation!

Regards,

Terry Heider

Educational Coordinator