

Let The Games, Good Times And Family Fun Begin at the 27th Annual Mule Days!

Hells Canyon Mule Days will be celebrating twenty six years of Mules and Muleskinners on the weekend after Labor Day, September 7th-9th. From its humble beginnings in 1981 it has progressed steadily and is the fastest growing Mule Show in the Northwest. This annual event draws mule and donkey owners and spectators intrigued by this long-eared equine, from all over the Northwest.

The first Hells Canyon Mule Days was held in the fall of 1981 as the results of a meeting between local ranchers, packers and guides, and representatives of the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce and USDA Forest Service to explore the idea of putting together a new County event. Wallowa County was rich in the history of the inhospitable terrain of Hells Canyon, and that area owes most of its early settlement and development to the mule, who predominantly served as a major means of transportation during these early times. As a result of this meeting, the mule, tough, intelligent, sure-footed, and often misunderstood, but a mainstay of the many packer and outfitters working in Wallowa County, was elevated to center stage for the first Hells Canyon Mule Days celebration.

This years Mule Show will be expanded to three full days of events that include classes for every age group and skill level. It is a fun family weekend and youngsters enjoy competing and showing their mulemanship abilities as much as the older well honed contestants. The gates open at 9:00 am on Friday with a line up of driving classes including singles and teams followed by fun events for the afternoon. Highlights of the weekend events include the Fifth Annual Classic Jump Off Challenge which is always a crowd pleaser and sponsored by the Enterprise Business Partners. The fast action events include pole bending, barrel racing, mule and donkey races and the fast ass express. Other events not to be missed during the three day show are the packers scramble, wild cow milking, flapjack race, drive and ride, and mystery races. The Trail and Packing classes are sponsored by the Madelyn Bell Memorial Fund. Before the grand entry on Saturday, the popular Kids Stick Mule Races and a Boot Scramble are scheduled. These two events are for kids (ages 5 - 9 years) who are spectators and everyone wins a blue ribbon and special awards to the winner of each heat. During the Saturday afternoon show there will also be a contest for the oldest spectator and the spectator who has traveled the most miles to attend the show.

The weekend is packed full of mule related happenings and there is always something to see and do for the whole family. Visitors can enjoy strolling The Green and visiting with vendors, exhibitors and western artists. Tennessee Mule Artist Bonnie Shields from Sandpoint, Idaho, is the *Featured Artist* at this year show. Shields is well known and her talents include drawing, painting, and sculpture. In 2005 Shields designed the Hells Canyon Mule Days signature logo. Shields is a longstanding member of the Cowboy Cartoonists Association, her "mule art" can be viewed at the show, as well as on her website at www.bonnieshields.com

Old World Oxen Living History Company will set up camp. A rare, 1800's female bullwhacker "Pulls the past into your presence" with gentle 6' oxen, freighter's wagon and artifacts. Bullwhackin Kass AKA Sheryl Curtis, sets a camp that takes school kids 150 years back in time and hands-on experiences are lifted off the pages of an 1853 Journal. Bullwhackin Kass is sponsored by Wallowa County Soroptimist Club.

The 5th annual Hells Canyon Mule Days Quilt Show will be in the Cloverleaf Hall on the fairgrounds. There will be over one hundred quilts displayed for the three day event. Ten vendors will represent quilt shops throughout the region and will be selling quilting related items. This year's raffle quilt tickets may be purchased for \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00 at The Country Quilter on Main Street, Enterprise, or at the quilt show.

The Max Walker Memorial Cowboy Poetry Gathering and Western Entertainment Event will be on Friday evening in the show barn. You can sit and enjoy some cowboy yarns and be entertained by some good ole' country music. Saturday events not to be missed, include the non-motorized parade with this years Grand Marshal Blanche Maxwell leading the precession of riders, teams, pack-strings, local horse clubs, and past Grand Marshals. During the Jim Probert Pit B-B-Q dinner, which always has a sell-out crowd so be sure to come early, there will be western music to entertain the guest. The Mule and Horse Sale will start at 6:00 pm. The sale is managed by Intermountain Livestock, Inc.. For information call 800-824-5298. This is a fun event to attend even if you are not in the market for selling or buying a critter. But, good deals are sure to be made!

Daily show admission: \$8.00 for Adults, \$6.00 for Seniors (60 & older) and Kids 12 years and younger are free when accompanied by an adult. Your \$8.00 HCMD Admission Souvenir Button will get you into the show each day, so buy it on Friday and get in for free on Saturday and Sunday. Three days for the price of one!

Be sure to make HCMD part of your summer plans and come celebrate with us a Wallowa County Tradition of Mules and Muleskinners. For more information call Sondra Lozier, 888-323-3271- cell 541-263-0104. Visit us: www.hellscanyonmuledays.com.

Hells Canyon Mule Days – Always the weekend after Labor Day • Rated E - For Everyone