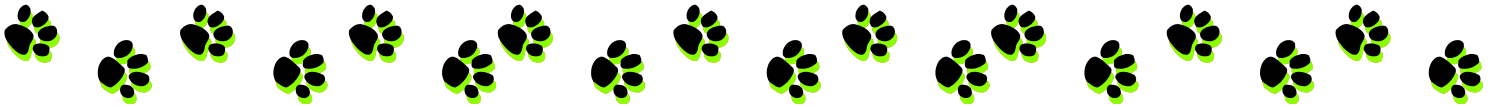




BMDCGTC *Education Series*

Packing with your dog for recreation or competition

A brief overview of equipment, training, and resources for learning more



THE GEAR: Backpacks for dogs come in a variety of styles and the cost will run from approximately \$15 to \$150 depending on the size of your dog and the features provided by the pack.

- Consider how you will use the pack.
 - Single or Multi-Day hiking? Working towards titles?
- What are the features of each pack you are considering?
 - Needs verses Wants? Current use verses Future uses?
- Decide on your budget.

THE TRAINING: You will know your needs, and that of your dog, best but packing can be very strenuous and it is recommended that prior to hitting the trails you train and condition your dog for this activity.

- Check with your Vet before making the choice to begin pack hiking with your dog. Dogs should be healthy and injury free when training and pack hiking.
- Your dog should be done growing before carrying weight. Your Vet can also help you know when this is.
- It is best to start out with a small amount of weight, evenly distributed between the saddle bags, and then work towards adding more weight, also in small amounts, over a period of time. The goal is for your dog to get to the point of being able to carry 20-30% their own weight.
- You can assist your dog in becoming comfortable with wearing the pack by using it in a variety of locations and on non-training days.
- Based on your needs and the amount of weight to be carried, training normally occurs on a daily or weekly basis.
- Training will normally involve a variety of terrains including flat ground, hills, dirt roads, and trails.

For more information, please visit our website at www.twincitiesbmd.org

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THE TITLES: Any breed of dog can work towards and earn these titles but the testing is handled by the Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club groups.

Novice Working Pack Dog Title (NWPD)

Shows the ability and fitness to work as a pack dog.

- ✓ Must be at least 18 months old.
- ✓ Carry a minimum of 20% of the weight of the dog.
- ✓ Needs to earn 4 qualifying legs.

Working Pack Dog Title (WPD)

Shows long term ability and fitness to work as a pack dog.

- ✓ Must be at least 24 months old and has completed the NWPD Title.
- ✓ Option 1 - Carry a minimum of 20% of the weight of the dog and earn 5 qualifying legs.
- ✓ Option 2 - Carry a minimum of 30% of the weight of the dog and earn 4 qualifying legs.

Working Pack Dog Excellent Title (WPDX)

Shows long term ability and fitness to work as a pack dog under the most primitive conditions.

- ✓ Must be at least 36 months old and has completed the NWPD and WPD Titles.
- ✓ Option 1 - Carry a minimum of 20% of the weight of the dog and earn 10 qualifying legs.
- ✓ Option 2 - Carry a minimum of 30% of the weight of the dog and earn 8 qualifying legs.

GREAT RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE:

The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America (click on "Activities"): www.gsmdca.org

Glacial Lakes Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club (MN & WI): www.glgsmdc.org

Dog Hiking General Information: www.k9trailblazers.org/dog_hiking_info.htm

Hiking or Backpacking with your dog: www.rei.com/expertadvice/articles/hiking+dogs.html

PACKING GEAR: (2 of many companies, packs are also available at stores such as REI, Petco, and Petsmart)

www.ruffwear.com

www.wolfpacks.com

