FOR ITS UNIQUE ROLE AS A FOREST SERVICE PACKERS AND PACK ANIMALS FOR FIGHTING REMOUNT DEPOT PROVIDED EXPERIENCED HORSES TO TROOPS, THEN IN MILIE AREAS OF THE NORTHERN ROCKIES.

PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THE VAST ROADLESS NORTHERN ROCKIES. REMOUNT DEPOT AND FOR ITS DISTINCTIVE CAPE COD STYLE ARCHITECTURE.

CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

1905 The Forest Service is created by an Act of Congress to manage the Federal Forest Reserves.

1910 A severe fire burns 3 million acres in northern Idaho and Montana, claiming 82 lives. 1910-1929 To help prevent disasters like the 1910 fire, the Ranger uses horses and mules to develop access trails, fire lookouts and to supply fire fighting efforts in the roadless northern Rockies.

1929 A severe fire season rapidly exhausts the supply of experienced packers and packstock for the fire fighting efforts. Green, unbroken stock, poorly fitted tack and inexperienced packers result in long delays and injuries to stock and people.

1930 Regional Forester Evan Kelley decides to establish a centralized Remount Depot at Ninemile to supply horses and mules necessary for fire fighting.

1930-1953 A run-down ranch evolves into a working arm of the Forest Service, providing well equipped pack stock, experienced packers and transportation for fire fighting efforts and backcountry stock projects.

1932 Breeding of saddle horses for Forest Rangers begins at the Remount Depot.

1933 The Ninemile Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp is established 3 miles north of the Remount Depot. The 600-man camp, one of the largest in the country, constructs many of the Remount Depot roads, fences and buildings.

1934-1935 Present Ranger Station buildings are constructed. The Frenchtown Ranger Station is relocated to Ninemile. The Ranger Station and the Remount Depot operate separately.

1935-1940,000 acres of winter range is leased near Perma, 20 miles northwest of the Depot on the Flathead River, to winter up to 1500 horses and mules, creating the largest mule ranch in the Northwest.

1936 The stallions and brood mares move permanently to the winter range where the breeding program continues.

1941-1943 Aerial firefighting is pioneered; one of the first smokejumper training bases is established at nearby Grand Manard picnic area.

1944-1945 Breeding of packstock that meets the standards of the Forest Service is initiated. The Ninemile Remount Depot and Ranger Station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1949 The Ninemile Remount Depot Visitor Center opens.

1953 Regional Forester decides to close the Remount Depot due to increasing effectiveness of smokejumpers and improved road access.

1954 Remount Depot facilities incorporated into the Ninemile Ranger District.

1962 Winter range at Perma closes, marking the final chapter of “Thirty-two Years in the Male Business” (1900-1962). A publication by this name which provides a detailed account of the Remount Depot history is available at the Visitor Center.

1979 To teach traditional skills with stock to Forest Service employees, a Horsemanship and Packing school is initiated.

1980 The Ninemile Remount Depot and Ranger Station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1989 The Ninemile Remount Depot Visitor Center opens. Today, horses and mules continue to ply the mountain trails transporting the people and equipment necessary for managing our wilderness and backcountry resource. Ninemile helps support this effort by keeping these Remount era traditions alive:

Winter Range – From Moose Creek in Idaho to the Gallatin country near Yellowstone, over 200 Forest Service horses and mules come to winter at Ninemile each year.

Training – Just as activities associated with the Remount Depot served to train packers, today Ninemile sponsors annual horsemanship and packing clinics as well as other Wildlands training courses involving trails, primitive tools and backcountry skills.

Service – The Remount Depot provided packtrains for fire fighting and project work across the Northern Rockies. Today we are home to the Forest Service packtrains of mules which lends a helping hand to other National Forests, and represents the Forest Service at the State Centennial and other events throughout the Nation.

Post World War II Increasing demand for Federal timber for new houses results in an expanding road network, meaning less work for mules.

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THIS BELL MEANT BUSINESS

"During the summer fire season, 35 trouble by staying on the trail. We ask you to do cookhouse on your left, or there was a numbered sign.

Remember, this is a working ranger station— for your safety and comfort: Keep a safe distance from active operations, reporting fires. Can you see the lookout towers? They are a vital link in detecting and reporting fires. Thanks.

The concrete slab to your left is all that remains of a garage and bunkhouse that burned down in 1982. (Remember, that remains of a garage and bunkhouse that burned down in 1982.)

Today, the fire engine, rather than a packtrain of mules, responds to today's fire calls. Engines, capable of carrying up to 750 gallons of water, can reach much of the 400,000-acre Ranger District via roads. Smokejumpers and mules are still used for backcountry fire-fighting efforts. If the engines are gone, look for smoke on the horizon.

We hope you enjoyed your tour of the Remount Depot. Come back again and until, happy trails!