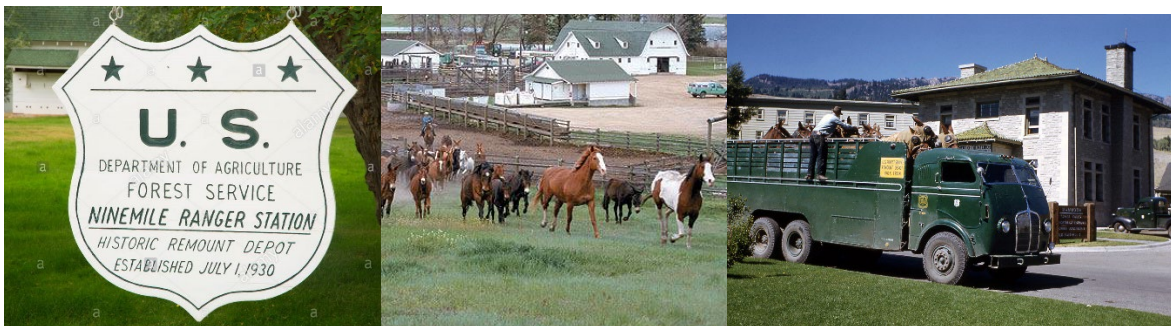


## **Historic Ninemile Remount Depot and Historic Ranger Station**

In the early days of the Forest Service, pack animals carried critical supplies and equipment to crews fighting forest fires. In 1929, a severe fire season exhausted the supply of trained mules and skilled packers. Forced to use unbroken animals, inexperienced packers, and poorly fitted tack, the Forest Service saw serious delays and injuries to animals and humans. Regional Forester Evan Kelley vowed never again. A former World War I cavalry officer, Kelley acquired the Ninemile Ranch to breed and train mules. Between 1933 and 1935, the Civilian Conservation Corps built roads, fences, and Cape Cod style buildings modeled after U.S. Army Cavalry remount depots. The Ninemile Remount Depot became the largest mule ranch in the Northwest with sixty Forest Service staff and some two hundred pack animals prepared for immediate dispatch during fire season. Depot shops provided packsaddles to the entire Northern Region and supplied horse and mule shoes to Forest Service animals across the U.S. The site accommodated both the Ninemile Ranger District and the Remount Depot. Aerial firefighting diminished the need for pack animals and the depot closed in 1954, but mules and horses continue to fulfill a critical need. Still a working ranch and district headquarters, the site is now home to the Northern Region Pack Train and Ninemile Wildlands Training Center, providing training in horsemanship, packing, and traditional skills.

Our excursion provides an interpretive walk around the station, time to visit sites on your own, a demonstration of packing, and BBQ lunch with Dutch oven dessert. You'll also have time to check out the visitor center and gift store. Friends of Ninemile, the non-profit volunteer partner raising funds to maintain the historical structures, will be on hand to explain their efforts, including a most recent effort to restore the only remaining Forest Service mule hauler.



Ninemile is approximately 30 miles northeast of Missoula. This excursion will last approximately 4 hours, and includes transportation (bus) and lunch. Restrooms and water are available.

Cost is estimated at \$40 per person (price includes bus transportation and lunch)

When: date, from 10 am to 2 pm

Bring: Walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, water, and coat

Participant limit: 120 participants; advance signup required