

SECTION III

THE PLTA MILEAGE PROGRAM

A. *PURPOSE OF THE MILEAGE PROGRAM*

At its inception, the Mileage Program was envisioned as a means to encourage fitness and participation of pack llamas in the PLTA. It serves two main functions. First, it provides a way to acknowledge the level and extent at which a llama is actually working. This supports the founding concept of the PLTA as an organization to promote the working llama.

Secondly, the Mileage Program is a means of demonstrating the capabilities of an individual llama, and llamas in general. The PLTA is the first organization dedicated to determining a llama's working ability. Many llamas lived out their lives under the constant question, 'so what are they good for?' The Mileage Program provides a clear measure of a llama's worth as a packer and a companion.

Making public the achievement of individual llamas allows not only bragging rights for the owner, but can be used as a marketing tool for breeders and commercial packers. Accumulating mileage shows that a llama is capable and experienced.

B. *MILEAGE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS*

There is no additional fee for participation in the Mileage Program. All PLTA members and their PLTA registered llamas are eligible. **See Section 1 C. pages 5-6.** Mileage is tracked and records compiled for each llama. Mileage may be accrued whenever a llama is working. In the case of strings, mileage may be reported for any llama in the string that is a member of the PLTA.

Miles accrued during any activity apply, including but not limited to, training, conditioning, and commercial work. A walk around the ranch, hike in the wild lands, or a march down the parade route applies equally. Mileage is reported on the honor system.

The llama is not required to use a pack system or carry any weight during Mileage Program activities. In fact, carrying any weight by llamas under two years of age, or more weight than is specified in pack trial regulations is discouraged by the PLTA. This helps protect developing bone structure. Limiting weight carried by the adult llama to 25% or less of the llama's ideal working body weight, is encouraged for the same reason; to protect the llama from injury or abuse.

C. *MILEAGE PROGRAM COORDINATOR*

The MP coordinator is a volunteer who is responsible for receiving reports from participants, reviewing records for accuracy, compiling those records and reporting them to the PLTA membership.

The coordinator is also responsible for managing and monitoring the Mileage Program Yahoo Group. The group will provide an electronic forum for members to compare notes, and to discuss their excitements, tribulations and accomplishments. The MP coordinator will encourage participants to be courteous and supportive with each other, and will have the right, after consultation with the Board of Directors, to exclude a member if their behavior becomes inappropriate.

D. *TRACKING MILEAGE*

1. *Program Initiation*

Mileage Program communications will be conducted electronically unless hard copy communications are specifically requested by a member. Upon receipt of the first mileage report from a new participant, the MP Coordinator will send them a welcoming letter explaining in detail how the Program works, and electronically invite the new participant to join the Mileage Program Yahoo Group.

2. *Reporting Miles*

Mileage reporting forms will be made available via the PLTA website at www.packllama.org or by contacting the MP Coordinator.

Accurate and timely documentation will allow the PLTA to confer the appropriate recognition for mileage accomplishments. The Program operates on the honor system. It is the responsibility of the participant to report the miles for their llama(s).

Records are to be reported to the MP Coordinator on a quarterly basis with a two week grace period, although participants are encouraged to report more frequently. In cases of hardship, a special reporting routine may be negotiated with the coordinator. For inclusion in the database, all records must be reported no later than January 15th of the following year.

It is hoped that eventually these reports can be made directly by the reporter into a database provided on the PLTA website.

3. *Recording Data*

The Mileage Record (report) form may be found on the PLTA website or acquired by contacting the MP coordinator. It is set up to allow easy input by the reporter. Designed in Microsoft Excel, it is provided in both a hardcopy and electronic version. The use of these forms is strongly encouraged, but not required. Use of any other reporting system must be approved by the MP coordinator.

Mileage Program reports consist of two parts; the detailed mileage records and the mileage summary. This information comprises the periodic mileage report supplied to the MP coordinator. A separate report is required for each llama.

The detailed mileage records track the llama's activities. For each outing, a date, location and number of miles hiked must be provided. The function of this information is to encourage honesty in reporting and support the accuracy of the cumulative miles data.

The mileage summary consists of the total miles accumulated for the reporting period. This information is used by the MP coordinator to calculate and report the llama's cumulative mileage.

4. *Data Compilation and Reporting*

The MP Coordinator receives member's periodic mileage reports. The coordinator acknowledges receipt of the reports, inspects them for accuracy and resolves any data discrepancies or issues with the reporter.

Every quarter, the coordinator updates the total cumulative miles for each llama based on the mileage summary in that llama's most recent report.

Except for the mileage totals, records in the reports are not entered in a database. Instead, they are archived for reference. The MP coordinator is responsible for creating and maintaining the archives in both a hardcopy, and if possible, an electronic version.

Data kept in the database will consist of the member's full name, their PLTA number, the llama's registered name, the llama's PLTA number, and the llama's cumulative miles. The cumulative miles datum is the only piece of information that will require a regular update.

The coordinator sends a quarterly report to the webmaster, and reports it on the Mileage Program Yahoo Group site. Until such time that a PLTA self-reporting database is available at the PLTA website, the MP Coordinator will provide reports in a format suitable to the needs of the recipients.

The webmaster is responsible for making updated mileage reports available on the website on at least an annual basis.

5. *Data Management Process Summary*

- 1) During the reporting period, the member keeps a record of each llama's mileage activities.
- 2) Periodically, but at least quarterly, the member reports records and the total mileage they represent to the MP coordinator.
- 3) The Mileage Program coordinator receives these reports, inspects them for accuracy, and archives them. The MP updates the llama's cumulative mileage record.

4) On a quarterly basis, the MP reports the updated cumulative mileage to Mileage Program participants.

5) On at least an annual basis, the webmaster updates the information on the PLTA website.

E. MILEAGE PROGRAM AWARDS

At the end of each year, certificates for each MP llama will be sent to the member showing the actual number of miles their llama(s) traveled during that year. These accomplishments will be reported in The PLTA News and on the website at www.packllama.org.

Certificates of special merit will be presented to llamas accomplishing major landmarks in their hiking/packing efforts. These will include, but are not limited to, the first 500 miles and the first 1000 miles reported for them.

It is expected that friendly competitions and challenges will arise among participants. These and other interactive comments will find a home at the Mileage Program Yahoo Group site.