



**The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club**  
*of America*

**Regulations Effective  
October 2023**

## **GREATER SWISS MOUNTAIN DOG CLUB OF AMERICA, Inc. Working Pack Dog Titles**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America Inc., **Working Pack Dog Titles** is to encourage Greater Swiss Mountain Dog (GSMD) owners to work their GSMD's in the pursuits for which this breed was originally intended. The overall intent is to demonstrate a GSMD's ability and fitness to work over time and on a variety of terrains. The criteria presented in this document shall apply to all persons and dogs while participating at any GSMDCA Pack Dog hike.

### **Policies**

- All GSMD's over 18 months of age are eligible for Working Pack Dog Titles.
- Non-Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs are eligible to participate in GSMDCA pack dog hikes. Non-Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs will be awarded the title certificate and confirmation letters for submission to their national breed clubs.
- There is no time limit on earning Working Pack Dog Titles.
- The two legs earned at a back-to-back or primitive hike must be applied to only one title. The legs cannot be split between two titles. For instance, one leg may NOT be applied to the last leg of a NWPD title and the second applied to the first leg of the WPD title. In this case, both legs would apply to the NWPD.
- Titles are kept for the GSMDs' lifetime.
- Credit may be awarded for a "non GSMDCA" hike so long as the rules meet the minimum GSMDCA criteria. Prior approval by the Pack Dog Chair is required.
- A veterinarian's certificate of the dog's weight must be provided. The weight may be taken up to 7 days prior to the hike. Weights may be noted on stationery, business cards, invoices, receipts or other documentation that demonstrates the veterinarian's certification via signature.
- Only one dog per handler is allowed.
- Bitches in season shall not be excluded from being allowed to hike
- So as the GSMD is presented to the public as a good canine citizen, all local regulations concerning leads/off leads are to be obeyed.
- First and foremost hikes are to be conducted with the safety and well being of the GSMD's and Handlers in mind. The Hike Coordinator is authorized to make any necessary decisions to protect the safety and well being of the GSMD's and Handlers.
- No dog that is lame, has open sores, an obvious medical condition, including advanced pregnancy (day 40 and beyond), shall be allowed to enter. In addition, the pack hike coordinator may disqualify dogs that they deem are not fit to pack hike.
- The GSMDCA will not be held liable for any injuries occurring to either GSMD's or handlers.
- Limit pack hike entrants to either a single 10 mile hike or a back-to-back 8 mile in any 7 day period for the health and safety of all involved.
- Pack hikes associated with the National Specialty must have a scale onsite to weigh dogs and packs.

## **Criteria for All Titles**

- Pack weights shall not decrease, except by normal consumption of items such as food or water by the individual GSMD and their individual Handler. No discarding of food or water will be allowed. Participants may be disqualified by the Hike Coordinator for deliberate dumping of pack weights.
- Pack trips must be on natural terrain such as hiking trails or cross-country.
- Elevation gain may be substituted for mileage in the following manner: 1,000 feet of elevation is equivalent to 1 mile of flat terrain. Elevation gain will be figured as the distance between the highest and lowest points of the trip. The maximum elevation gain substitution is two miles.
- A “back to back” hike is one which consists of hiking a minimum of 8 miles each day on no more than 2 consecutive days. A back to back hike requires the completion of both days hike. While the sleep location is optional, hike coordinators are encouraged to arrange for hike participants complete the overnight stay as a group. No partial credit will be given for one day’s participation. Two legs will be awarded for the successful completion of a back to back hike and will be applied to only one title.
- A “day” hike is one which consists of completing the entire hike on one calendar day. All “day” hikes must be completed within a maximum of 8 hours. The minimum mileage for each hike shall be 10 miles. One leg will be awarded for the successful completion of a day hike.
- A “primitive” hike is one which consists of hiking a minimum of 5 miles each day on no more than 2 consecutive days. A primitive hike requires a primitive overnight camp without access to modern conveniences such as bathroom facilities, running water, electricity, structures, picnic tables or transportation. The completion of both days’ hike is mandatory. Only trails rated as “moderate to strenuous” by the American Hiking Society or equivalent independent trail association or organization will be approved for primitive hikes. No partial credit will be given for one day’s participation. Two legs will be awarded for the successful completion of a primitive hike and will be applied to only one title.
- Each GSMD handler must carry their own overnight equipment, i.e. sleeping bag and tent. GSMD handler participants may work together by sharing a tent. Hike participants not handling a GSMD for legs are not allowed to carry the overnight equipment, i.e. sleeping bag and tent for GSMD handlers. Hike participants not handling a GSMD for legs may carry equipment or supplies which will be used by all GSMD handlers, i.e. camp stove or extra water.

## **Novice Working Pack Dog Title**

The intent of the Novice Working Pack Dog (NWPD) Title is for the GSMD to demonstrate the ability and fitness to work as a pack dog.

1. Dogs and bitches participating must be 18 months or older on the day of the hike.
2. A GSMD must carry a daily initial weight equal to a minimum of 20% of the dog’s weight.
3. GSMD’s must be awarded 4 qualifying legs.
4. Any combination of back to back and day hikes will be counted for the NWPD title. Only legs from one primitive hike will be counted for the NWPD title.

## **Working Pack Dog Title**

The intent of the Working Pack Dog (WPD) Title is for the GSMD to demonstrate continued long term ability and fitness to work as a pack dog.

1. Dogs and bitches must be 24 months or older on the day of the hike and must have previously completed the Novice Working Pack Dog Title. GSMD's who have completed NRPD eligibility but have not had the title awarded are eligible for participation.
2. Option 1: A GSMD must carry a daily initial weight equal to a minimum of 20% of the dog's weight. GSMD's must be awarded 5 qualifying legs. All legs for the WPD title are in addition to any legs earned for the NRPD title.
3. Option 2: A GSMD must carry a daily initial weight equal to a minimum of 30% of the dog's weight. GSMD's must be awarded 4 qualifying legs. All legs for the WPD title are in addition to any legs earned for the NRPD title.
4. Any combination of back to back and day hikes will be counted for the WPD title. Only legs from one primitive hike will be counted for the WPD title.

## **Working Pack Dog Excellent Title**

The intent of the Working Pack Dog Excellent Title is for the GSMD to demonstrate continued long term ability and fitness to work as a pack dog under the most primitive of conditions.

1. Dogs and bitches must be 36 months or older on the day of the hike and must have previously completed the Novice Working Pack Dog and Working Pack Dog Titles. GSMD's who have completed WPD eligibility but have not had the title awarded are eligible for participation.
2. Option 1: A GSMD must carry a daily initial weight equal to a minimum of 20% of the dog's weight. GSMD's must be awarded 10 qualifying legs. All legs for the WPDX title are in addition to any legs earned for the WPD title.
3. Option 2: A GSMD must carry a daily initial weight equal to a minimum of 30% of the dog's weight. GSMD's must be awarded 8 qualifying legs. All legs for the WPDX title are in addition to any legs earned for the WPD title.
4. Any combination of back to back and day hikes will be counted for the WPDX title. Only legs from two primitive hikes will be counted for the WPDX title.

## **Hike Requirements**

The Hike Coordinator must receive submit the official hike letter of application for approval by the Pack Dog Committee 8 weeks prior to the scheduled date.

1. The Hike Coordinator may advertise the hike as pending approval upon submission of the application.
2. The Hike Coordinator will make all a good faith effort to advise as many GSMDCA members as possible regarding the event. At a minimum the hike must be posted on the GSMDCA's web site.
3. A proposed hike course must be mapped and measured, and this information submitted to the Pack Dog Chair along with the letter of application.
4. A vehicle must be provided within a reasonable distance to provide emergency transportation for any injured GSMD or Handler. Allowable reasonable distance is up to 3 miles. Emergency exit points must be identified on the trail map or in the letter of application.
5. The Hike Coordinator will always keep the safety of the GSMD's and Handlers in mind throughout these events. The Hike Coordinator will disqualify any GSMD or Handler showing an inability to safely complete the hike.

6. The Hike Coordinator must provide a reasonable method of weighing packs.
7. The Hike Coordinator must verify the distances and dogs successfully completing the hike by signing the official form.
8. Hike Participants must acknowledge that hikes are a strenuous physical activity and that they and their GSMD have adequately trained for each hike they entered. For a team's first hike they must have completed the required prerequisite 6 mile training hike with full pack weight. The owner and handler of the registered dog accept full responsibility for the sufficient conditioning of both the GSMD and Handler prior to participating in hikes. The Hike Coordinator must disqualify any GSMD or Handler that does not meet this requirement and if the dog or Handler shows signs (painful walking, resistance to going on) of not having been properly prepared for hike.
9. Hike Participants must abide by any decision made by the Hike Coordinator.
10. Where Hike Coordinators are required to deviate from the approved plan, the spirit and intent of the pack dog event and rules are to be upheld at all times.
11. With prior approval the Pack Dog Committee may authorize a combined "back to back" and "day" pack dog hike. The optional extra miles maybe applied on either or both days for those members to participate on one day or to earn legs from two "day" hikes. Legs earned on two "day" hikes may be used for two titles. The Hike Coordinator must accompany all teams for the extra mileage. This option is entirely at the discretion of the Hike Coordinator.
12. Owners, not Hike Coordinators, are responsible for completing and submitting the Title Confirmation Form. Titles are awarded upon receipt and verification of the Title Confirmation Form.