

Hit the Trail!

Chester County Council High Adventure Committee
Newsletter #4—December

Crew Organization

Your crew leadership will include:

Crew Leader—This youth is responsible for... everything. He or she sets the daily schedule, prepares the duty roster, oversees the crew's completion of all work required on a Leave No Trace camping trip, and makes sure everyone has fun doing it. You need to select the strongest, most capable and most experienced youth for this critical job.

Chaplain's Aide—This youth is the crew's morale officer. He or she conducts religious services for the crew as determined. He or she leads the crew in the Philmont Grace before meals. He or she leads nightly Roses, Thorns and Buds reflection of the good (roses) and bad (thorns) portions of the day's activities and each participants hopes (buds) for tomorrow.

Wilderness Pledge Guia—This youth trains the crew in the seven principles of Leave No Trace camping. He or she leads the crew each morning as they police the campsite before moving out.

Adult Advisers—The adults in your crew have four jobs:

1. Train your crew in the skills you need to have a successful trek at the Philmont Scout Ranch before you get to the ranch
2. Advise the crew leader as needed
3. Make sure everyone is healthy and safe during the trek.
4. **BE ON VACATION!** Philmont is a youth run activity.

Other rotating jobs can be put on the crew duty roster: Cooks, Clean up crew, Water, and Navigation. Older Philmont literature may suggest you assign fire duties on the duty roster too. You can skip that. It is highly unlikely that the fire ban will be lifted at Philmont and that you would be allowed to build fires.

To right: Climbing final stretch of trail to top of Baldy from the Alpine Meadow.

Baldy Area Programs

Climbing the highest peak in the Philmont Scout Ranch can be a highlight of your trek. At a height of 12,441 feet, Baldy Mountain towers over the surrounding terrain.

Most treks that climb Baldy Mountain are set up for you to spend two nights at one of the camps at the base (Miranda, Ewells Park, Copper Park or Ute Meadows). You get up early on your layover day and hike up (or over) to Baldy Town to begin your ascent of the mountain. You must start extremely early so you can avoid having an afternoon thunderstorm chase you off the mountain before you summit.

Remember the caterpillar climbing technique. Sections of the trail on the way to the summit are quite steep. You will learn this technique at the council shakedown weekend if you do not know it already. The climb can take 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 hours to the summit. Enjoy the view from the top. Depart from the trail on the backside towards the saddle to the west.

Stop by French Henry for program on your way around the mountain to Baldy Town. See the article on page two for French Henry programs. Most treks pick up food at Baldy Town. This can be done on your way back after you summit.



"Cooking" ... Philmont Style

Philmont's trail dinners are prepared by using your crew's one pocket knife to open the plastic bags of food, dumping the food into a large pot and adding boiling water. You wait eight to ten minutes for the freeze dried meal to reconstitute. Stir occasionally to make sure the dry food flavoring gets fully mixed into the meal. You certainly don't want "flavor bursts" in your meal.

Make all the food your crew can eat. Don't make more than you can eat. Any leftovers go in the "yum-yum bag" and get carried through the rest of the trip until you get back to base camp.

You may want to get a small pot scrapper (2" square plastic gizmo available in cooking stores). This will make you life Soooo much easier at clean up time.

For past Philmont participants who heard about the "turkey roaster bag" method of cooking. Sorry, Philmont does not allow it anymore. The bags create too much trash.



Altitude and Physical Preparation

You will be hiking and camping at elevations between 6,500 and 10,500 feet while you are at Philmont. Chester County Council is at an elevation of 300-500 feet. You will be shocked when you step out of the airport and try to carry your pack to the bus. Physical activity is much more challenging in the thinner air in Colorado and New Mexico.

Our trip will include two days of touring in Colorado to begin to acclimate our bodies to the altitude. Treks at Philmont begin in the lower end of the ranch (6,500-7,000 feet) and gradually work you up to higher elevations. This helps you to acclimate.

You will be carrying a 35-50 pound pack for eleven days in the back country. You **MUST** prepare yourself for the physical exertion with a program of strenuous exercise. Do not be the "goat" in your crew who slows everyone down because you are unprepared. Get yourself ready!



Featured Program of the Month Gold Panning, Gold Mine Tour, and Blacksmithing

French Henry—North Country

Cyphers Mine—Central Country

Stop in at French Henry the day you hike Baldy Mountain and check out the program the French Henry staff has for you. Your crew can try your hand at panning for gold, just the way the real miners did... and yes, there is gold to be found. The staff will take you on a tour of the Aztec Mine while you are there. Your crew can stop by the blacksmith's shop and forge a useful tool from a bar of steel.

Cyphers Mine offers similar programs for treks in south and central Philmont. If you stay at Cyphers, make sure you get to the Stomp. They put on some good music and tell good tall tales. Cyphers Mine has one other unique element. Crews are assigned an adirondack to sleep in instead of using their tents. Cyphers is located in a steep valley where there isn't enough room for tenting.

