

Hit the Trail!

Chester County Council High Adventure Committee
Newsletter #5—January

Trek Planning

Every Crew will choose their favorite five treks from the thirty-five available at the ranch. Trek Planning starts in January & February with the goal of knowing what programs you want to do and where you want to go by the beginning of March. Between March 15th and 20th Philmont will send out the Philmont Treks Itinerary Guide books for the year. The trek books will be on-line at www.philmont ranch.org on March 15th.

The PhilSearch website (www.philsearch.org) is set up to assist your crew through the selection process. The trek information you use for planning purposes will be from the previous year, but that is OK. This is the process to follow:

1. Give each member of your crew a copy of the Philmont Program Summary and the Trek Selection Worksheet. Each scout should fill out the Trek Selection Worksheet, indicating their top ten preferences for programs.
2. The Advisors should collate the program preferences and determine the ten most popular programs the crew would like to do at Philmont.
3. Discuss with the crew whether there are any high-light events (climb Baldy Mountain, climb Mount Phillips, see the airplane wreck on Trail Peak or hike into Base Camp of the Tooth of Time).
4. Use the PhilSeach web engine to select ten treks that best match your crews' program and activity preferences. Print them out the trek descriptions and bring to the crew's trek selection planning meeting.
5. Trek Selection Planning Meeting (1.5-2 hours). Have all participants (youth and adults) attend the meeting. Jim Thompson or Mitch King (contact: philmont@cccbsa.org) are willing to attend this meeting to assist, if you would like.
6. Review each of the ten recommended treks one by one with a map and trek description (available from PhilSearch). Review the length of each day's hike, whether the trek has any layover days or dry camps. Compare the treks, rating your crew's top five preferences.
7. When the current Trek Planning Guides arrive at council compare your previous year's trek selection against the current Guide book and inform Philmont of your trek choices on-line in early April.

Water

Participants at Philmont need to drink six to eight LITERS—not cups—a day. This amount is 25 to 34 cups a day—every day—without fail. Philmont's penalty for persons who don't drink enough is headaches, nausea, dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Do not pay the penalty!

Drink water regularly throughout the day. Do not chug large quantities of water before hiking. Hydration systems such as Camelback or Platypus are excellent ways to keep drinking water as you are hiking. Philmont recommends participants carry a liter for every hour of hiking they do (i.e. roughly 1 liter for every two miles or so). A common way to accomplish this is to have a 2-3 liter hydration system and carry 2-3 one liter Nalgens. You will need more capacity if your trek has any long, dry hikes, such as over Tooth of Time to return to base camp. They recommend you leave Clarks Fork or North Fork Urracca carrying seven liters of water as you hike up and out the ridge.

Pay attention as you are selecting your treks to how many dry camps you have and how close water is to the camps. Where water is available and how you get access to it is a key part of your trek planning.

Assume all water at the ranch must be treated, unless staff tells you otherwise. The ranch will supply you with MicroPur tablets to treat your water. Other systems may be used. They will be discussed in another Hit the Trail!



Health and Safety on the Trail

By Dave Setzer, Patriots Path Council, BSA
(with minor edits by Mitchell King)

Other common issues include:

Chester County Council crews have a very good reputation for being prepared for their Philmont experience. One of the most important obligations you have as a crew advisor is to keep all members of the crew healthy and on the trail, to the best of your ability. So what do you need to know?

The "Big Four" reasons that most often cause crew members, Scouts or Advisors, to be sent back to base camp are:

1. Dehydration - all crew members must be CLEAR and COPIOUS at all times. Hydrate yourself and your crew now.
2. Hypothermia - all crew members must have rain suits. At first sign of rain, get it on and stay dry! When the storm passes, get it off.
3. Falls - no member of the crew climbs on anything without Philmont Staff supervision. PERIOD.
4. Unsanitary Dining - sterilize all crew and personal eating utensils before and after each meal. Cooks MUST be clean. Whole crews have gone down from this one. It should not happen - use hand sanitizer. Philmont will issue a 6-ounce bottle of hand sanitizer and a 4" bottle of Camp Suds to each crew. It is a good idea to bring a small personal bottle of hand sanitizer for each crew member, or maybe a pair of individuals like tentmates). This goes a long way toward avoiding cleanliness problems.

Nose Bleeds are common, especially among the Scouts, less often for advisors. The elevation and the low relative humidity are usually the cause. This will be a minor event in a crew that knows nose bleed first aid. All crew members should know and refresh this important first aid skill. Remember, best policy is to have all crew members certified in first aid, either the required wilderness course or the standard one. Saline solution or KY Jelly (water-based, rather than oil-based Vaseline) are good protections against dryness.

Elevation: Exposure to high elevation can cause problems for crew members. Headaches are common. DRINK WATER at the first sign of a headache - this often takes care of the problem.

Foot Care: Blisters and other foot problems can make for some very bad days. Always wear two pairs of socks; a heavy outer sock, preferably wool, and a polypropylene inner sock to reduce friction and the probability of blisters. At the first sign of a problem, stop and address it immediately. It will save you time in the long run. The moleskin or the old standard, duct tape, often comes to the rescue when friction is causing the problem. After covering the hot-spot or blister with proper medication and medical covering, the moleskin or duct tape over the problem area does an excellent job of reducing friction.

Hyperventilation: It doesn't happen often but when it does it will also be a minor event if you know what to do. Keep a zip lock bag and a calm composure handy for the very few times you might encounter this one. Breathe into the bag. It's easy to beat if you know what to do.

Your Guidebook to Adventure has a good discussion of these and other health and safety topics. Have you re-read it? You will gain additional insights each time that you read it.



Urraca Mesa, Crater Lake Camp, Trail Peak and Grizzly Tooth from the Tooth of Time Ridge

Note: Photo on front of newsletter is taken at Upper Dean Cow Camp.