

# Hike the Trail!

Chester County Council High Adventure Committee  
Newsletter #7—March

## Crew Equipment

Your crew needs to make some basic decisions now about how you will be equipped. Philmont will supply the following items for your crew:

Two man tents	Dining Fly & Poles
Cook Kit	Spoons
2 Bear Ropes	5-7 Bear Bags

Philmont will **not** supply the following necessary items:

Tent Pegs	Hot Pot Tongs
Water Carriers	or Leatherman
2-3 Stoves	Fuel Bottles
Ground Cloths	

You do not need to accept everything Philmont offers you. Here are a few things to keep as you decide what to bring and what to take from the Ranch.

**Tents**—The Philmont “Explorer” tent is adequate for two adults. It weighs between 3 and 3.5 pounds a person. It will require between 14 and 20 pegs to set up. Many crews bring tents from home when they can do better on weight. Make sure you do not bring general use troop tents that may have gum, candy, soap and many unknowable smellables smeared onto it. My troop takes 3-4 man (3 full sized adults or 4 smaller youth) that weigh in at 2.5 pounds a person. They need 6 pegs to set up. Our 12 person crew saved 14 pounds taking our own tents last summer.

All tents will need a ground cloth. Try using the light weight party table covers instead of heavier plastic or tarps.

**Stoves**—Nearly every leader has different thoughts on what style of stove to use. I will give you my personal thoughts on the matter. I use two Coleman Peak 1 stoves for a crew. The white gas is available at all backcountry commissaries, so you never need to carry more than a four day supply. Whisper Lites are another excellent choice. The backcountry commissaries stock some cartridge style stove fuel, but can not guarantee the cartridges will always be in stock. Know and practice with the stoves you will use as much as possible.

## Water and Hydration III

Gee... Water and Hydration three months in a row. Maybe this is an important topic.

### Purification Methods

**MicroPur**—Philmont supplies as many of these tablets as you will need at no charge. They purify one liter of water in roughly half an hour. They leave no odor or taste. The only disadvantage to using the MicroPur is that you must wait half an hour to drink the water.

**Water Filter/Purifier Pump System**—These systems use micro-filters to pump untreated water to remove micro-organisms down to a certain size. The filter removes most, though not all disease causing agents. The purifiers add another step to kill micro-organisms that pass through the filter. Either type is prone to clogging and not recommended for Philmont.

**SteriPen**—The Steripen uses UV light to purify one liter of water in 90 seconds. This pen kills all micro-organisms. It leaves no taste or odor and provides potable water almost instantly. I do not know of anyone who has taken one to Philmont yet. It is a viable alternative for the ranch. Make sure you test it thoroughly on your crew's training hikes so you know how many batteries you will need.



# Crew Organization

While at the Philmont Ranch, you will see amazing blue skies, climb mountains and enjoy the vistas and participate in fun back country programs. You also have to deal with all the normal, mundane tasks associated with camping. You will have more time for the fun and amazing things if your crew works efficiently and quickly with your normal camp making details each day. You have more time for fun if you have a well organized, well led crew.

The key youth in the crew is the **Crew Leader**. He leads the crew and is **accountable** for all crew activities. He or she makes all job assignments for the crew. He or she monitors performance of these jobs. The Crew Leader oversees navigation so the crew gets to its destinations on time. He or she should make sure the social environment in the crew allows every crew member to have a safe, healthy and fun ten days in the back country.

Note the use of the word **accountable**. The crew leader oversees the crew members **responsible** for each job. If you are the cook today, you are responsible for preparing the evening meal. The crew leader is still **accountable** that everyone gets fed that night, even though he isn't the cook. His job is to see that the cooks do their job, or get them help so they can do their job.

The **Chaplain's Aide** is responsible for the morale of the crew. He leads "Thorns, Roses and Buds" each night. This ritual allows every crew member to voice their feelings and frustrations to the rest of the crew before there is an emotional meltdown. He may lead daily devotionals for the crew.

The **Wilderness Pledge Guide** trains the crew in the seven steps of Leave No Trace camping. He or she leads the crew as they police the campsites in the morning.

The **Navigator** changes daily. He is the day's hike expert. See Hit the Trail! newsletter #6, page 2 for a more detailed description of his job.

The **Pacesetter** establishes a nice steady hiking pace that every crew member can maintain through the course

of the day's hike. The Pacesetter job may change from day to day, or even hour to hour. This assignment is made to one of the slower youth hikers in the group. See "Hiking is a Team Sport" in Hit the Trail #3.

**Cooks** (usually two) serve a critical function to keeping the crew happy and satisfied. The cook assignments typically rotate among crew members so everyone serves in this job one or two days at the ranch. The cooks are responsible for all cooking operations during mealtime. They get the water boiling for the meal, read directions carefully and prep the ingredients while waiting for the boiling water.

The cooks sterilize all dishes in boiling water before rehydrating the dinner. They rehydrate the dinner and set out all other food and drink for the crew while dinner rehydrates. The cooks serve the food, cooks being served last.

I suggest you have the cooks also handle cleanup of dinner, if you are using the Turkey Roaster Bag method of cooking. (See "Dinner in a Bag" in Hit the Trail #3) There is very little cleanup needed.

**Advisors** (two to four adults) - You are **accountable** for crew health and safety. You are responsible for training the crew to operate as a youth led crew. You are expected to sit back, relax and let the youth run the crew! Enjoy your vacation.

## **Other Optional Jobs your crew may use:**

**Cleanup** (usually two) - The cleanup crew rinses each person's dishes after dinner over at the sump. They also clean the spoon and dinner pot (if needed). All dishes stay at the sump until the crew packs up the next morning.

**Fire and Water** (could be two or three) - this group keeps the stoves cleaned and fueled. They also bring water for the cooks at mealtime.

**Quartermaster**—This crew member keeps track of who carries which crew gear. He divides the food each morning and hands it out to crew members to carry during the day.



Touch-Me-Not Mountain and Baldy Mountain along with the North Country canyons of Philmont as seen from Hart Peak