

PHILMONT AMBASSADOR UPDATE

PAGE 1

SERVING BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD

November 2024

Recalling the 1950's for PTC's 75th

Philmont Training Center got its start in 1950, and back then life was quite different than today. Here's a trip down memory lane on the way to Philmont.

Your family may have taken the journey to New Mexico by packing canvas tents and Coleman stoves into your Woody station wagon. It took a long time to get there because the Interstate highway system was years away. You saw the sights from the rear-facing wayback seat you shared with your siblings. Your younger brothers were wearing coonskin caps to emulate their TV hero Davy Crockett.

If you were lucky enough to be riding in the middle front seat, you'd have to duck down to see around the fuzzy dice that were dangling from the rear view mirror to read the Burma Shave signs along the road.

Your older brother would be wearing his high school letterman sweater. Your sister may have been wearing a trendy poodle skirt decorated with images of puffy dogs or hot rods. She had stylish cat-eye glasses and wore complementary-colored saddle shoes to complete her outfit.

Along the way, you stopped for lunch at a drive-in and were served hamburgers, fries and milkshakes by waitresses on roller skates. You also stopped at a drive-in movie to catch the latest hit movie like Walt Disney's "Cinderella" or "Annie Get Your Gun" and sipped on a grape Nehi soda while you munched on popcorn or Turkish Taffy candy.

Some things never change, though, like the timeless Philmont scenery and lasting friendships you made that week at Scouting paradise.

Ambassadors should encourage Scouters to make plans now to attend PTC for its 75th anniversary before it fills up!



THIRTY DAYS

HATH
SEPTEMBER

APRIL, JUNE

AND THE SPEED
OFFENDER

Burma-Shave





Zia participants and advisors celebrate completing their adventures. (Philmont photo.)

Zia Trek Makes Backcountry Accessible

By Ginny Crossland, PhilNews writer

Since 2021, the Philmont Training Center has offered the Zia Experience. This program allows youth participants with special needs and abilities to enjoy the beauty of Philmont and take part in customized programs suited to their situation. In addition, Philmont hosted the first "Zia Trek" in which participants experienced an adapted 7-day trip in Philmont's backcountry.

For this inaugural expedition, a lot of preparation from both the Philmont Training Center and Camping Headquarters went into preparing for the Zia participants' arrival. Staff camp programs and trail meals were adapted to the participants. Philmont leadership kept note of adjustments that could be made to improve future experiences.

Each participant was accompanied by a caretaker. In most cases this was a parent or guardian, but one participant brought along their Scoutmaster from back home.

There was no better group to help work out these small bumps than Crew 630 7A. Six youth participants from all over the United States travelled to Philmont with their caregivers, or "shadows," where they all met for the first time.

Stuart "Zosh" Shearer was perhaps the most spirited and optimistic member of the group. Despite just arriving at their campsite after a long day of hiking on day three, his smile did not leave his face as he helped set up camp and made conversation with everyone. Even when everyone was hot, tired and a little cranky, he never lost his sense of optimism.

His favorite part of the Philmont backcountry? "The hills!" he said. "I've never

been here before, but I already love it." Elizabeth Ferro kept the crew in check on the trail and at camp. She was the dry, honest voice of reason. Even with a sore ankle she was nursing, Elizabeth stayed staunchly determined throughout the group's activities.

James "JR" Watts was always willing to try an activity, whether that was spar pole climbing at Crater Lake or rock climbing at Miners Park. John Hornak and his father David Hornak made an iconic pair, always bantering back and forth, much to the entertainment of the rest of 630 7A.

In addition to the participants' caregivers, two members of the BSA's Special Needs and Disabilities Committee, Alyssa Hightower and Chris Werhane, served as the trek advisors to ensure everything went smoothly. There was a lot of excitement surrounding being a part of the inaugural Zia trek.

"So many people wanted to be in on this," Werhane said. "It's pretty cool."

They were all accompanied by their fearless ranger, Libby High, for the entirety of their trek. Libby got on great with both the advisors and scouts, and by the end of the trek they were thick as thieves. Her upbeat energy was just what crew 630 7A needed to remain motivated through the trek.

After an emotional closing campfire, the advisors and Scouts earned their Arrowhead patch, deeply moving all the adult organizers of the Zia Trek.

The 2025 Zia Trek will take place from July 12 to July 19.

P2

PTC Offers Zia Experience for Special Needs Families

Parents and caregivers of Scouts with special needs should be aware of this opportunity. The Zia Experience is a customized, highly supported, personalized experience for Scouts their families held at Philmont Training Center.

A team of Philmont staff and highly trained volunteers will work with a wide-range of capabilities, from low-functioning to high-functioning. This includes Scouts who have physical, intellectual, emotional, and/or hidden disabilities. Scouts who are verbal and nonverbal, as well as toilet-trained and untrained will be welcomed.

The Philmont team will finalize program registration long before the experience begins so that parents/caregivers and Scouts can meet in-person, via video conference or phone call with our leadership team one or more times before arrival. The goal of these pre-experience conversations will be to understand the type of experience the Scout wants to have as well as their abilities, special needs, special health care challenges, medications, allergies, diet restrictions, housing and personal care needs, transportation and mobility issues, advancement goals, and other associated risk management issues.

PTC aims to design appropriate experiences for Scouts ranging from a backcountry trek to a modified backcountry day adventures or a basic residential camp experience in base camp.

To make sure Philmont is able to give families the best experience possible, they will first fill out an application to participate. Philmont will reach out to them to discuss what their specific needs will be to help create a positive Philmont experience for everyone involved.

The 2025 Zia Experience will take place from June 22 to June 28 at Philmont Training Center. The link to register is [here](#).

P2

Ambassadors Return To North Country on Autumn Trek

By **Daniel Yee**, Philmont Ambassador, Atlanta Area Council

In September, a group of Philmont Ambassadors returned to the north country for what is now for them an annual Autumn Adventure trek, this time with their eyes set on conquering Baldy Mountain.

"I keep coming back to Philmont every year and it never gets boring," said Steve Gold, a troop committee chairman in the Cascade Pacific Council. "It becomes more beautiful as I see more and more."

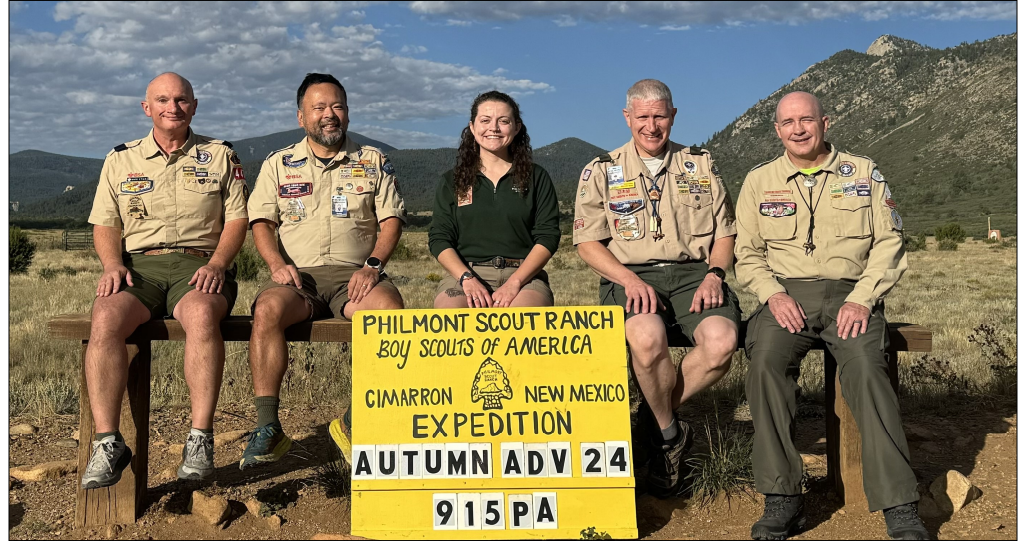
Ambassadors have been participating in Philmont Scout Ranch's Autumn Adventure treks for several years. These are a unique way to see the backcountry in the off season. They last were in the north country in 2021. Last year they tackled Mt. Phillips, the second highest peak on the ranch so this year they had their eyes set on Baldy, the highest peak on the ranch at 12,441 feet.

The trek was a wonderful way to revisit the ranch for Mark Ethun, a committee chair in the Atlanta Area Council. "I completed a Philmont trek in 1991 at age 14. Being able to return 33 years later as an adult and complete a second trek has been incredible," said Ethun, who also has memories of experiencing the Philmont Training Center as a youth. "Autumn Adventure allows Scouts and Scouters to come back again to relive their Philmont experience."

Autumn Adventure treks are held from the middle of September through October. To qualify for an arrowhead patch, participants must spend at least five nights in the backcountry, hike at least 25 miles and perform three hours of conservation work.

This year, thanks to Autumn Adventure guide Morgan Deters, the Ambassador crew completed their conservation project just outside Sawmill working with the Philmont Staff Association's Volunteer Vacation crew. There they learned about the proper way to build trail and spent several hours putting in the labor to do so. The ambassadors couldn't have gotten there without their guide, as Deters drove them two-and-a-half hours each way on rocky roads in a Suburban to get to and from Base Camp.

After returning to Base Camp, they were taken to Ponil for their first evening in the backcountry. The next day the crew



This year the Philmont Ambassador crew tackled the north country and Baldy Mountain. From left, Mark Ethun, Daniel Yee, Guide Morgan Deters, Steve Gold and Brian Bishop.

hiked to Pueblano, seeing both deer and horses on the way to the camp. A side hike to Wilson Mesa at 8,600 feet elevation showed the unexpected beauty of nature that can be encountered on the trail.

The ambassadors made their way from Pueblano to French Henry at 9,700' elevation and after touring the cabins there, they tackled the steep and challenging path up to Copper Park trail camp known as "The Wall." At the end of the day they were greeted with the extremely beautiful camp, which has the reputation as "truly one of the best trail camps on Philmont," according to Rock Rohrbacher's Philmanac.

Luckily the next morning turned out to be clear and our crew was given the green light to hike up to Baldy Mountain for the day. We enjoyed clear views off the mountain and it really lifted our spirits.

"From the pinnacle of Baldy Mountain, I really was at the top of the world," Gold said. "I aim to go higher and higher."

After returning to Copper Park for the night, we hiked to Miranda via Baldy Town. There, a PSA crew was restoring the camp's trading post. Our timing was incredibly fortunate as the volunteers had just had breakfast and had plenty of leftover pancakes and sausages for us hungry hikers. We were extremely grateful!

The next morning, which was our last in the backcountry, we were also spoiled by the return of Austin St. George, the Ranch's Associate Director of Camping, who came by to pick our crew up and also made us delicious breakfast burritos. It's become a

little bit of tradition for the Ambassador crew as he did the same thing last year at Beaubien staff camp when our guide's breakfast delivery did not come through.

All these experiences made for a great trek and epic memories.

"It was an epic adventure in God's beautiful backcountry with unforgettable vistas, an outstanding Ranger and Scouters, and a feeling of accomplishment summiting Baldy," said Brian Bishop, the vice president of program and an Assistant Council Commissioner in the Mountain West Council. **P2**



Austin St. George makes breakfast burritos for hungry Autumn Adventure crews at Miranda. (Daniel Yee photo)

Seven Reasons To Attend a PTC Conference or Seminar

By **John and Julia Lesko**, Philmont National Ambassador Coordinators

[Editor's Note: Many Ambassadors may not have attended PTC. This article offers help in explaining to Scouters why they should make the journey to Philmont.]

Imagine spending a week in one of Scouting America's most iconic locations, where the mountains and aspens are as inspiring as the company you'll keep. Some call it Heaven on Earth (HOMe). At the Philmont Training Center, Scouters don't just expand their skills, they do a dive deep and totally emerge themselves in Scouting, strengthening their leadership skills, and join a community of passionate fellow Scouters dedicated to developing and empowering our nation's youth. If you're ready to take your Scouting journey to new heights, here are seven compelling reasons to make the Philmont Training Center your next adventure destination for the summer:

1. **Expert-Led Training:** PTC conferences are facilitated by experienced, knowledgeable Scouters and Scouting America professionals, providing insights and best practices in leadership, program management, advancement, and more. Many of the PTC faculty members have (literally) written the book on their topics. The skills and knowledge gained in these conferences are directly applicable to improving local units, districts, and councils.
2. **Networking Opportunities:** Scouters from across the country attend, allowing participants to build a network of peers who can offer new perspectives, ideas, and support. You are not alone in facing and overcoming any challenge in Scouting.
3. **Customized Learning:** Each conference/seminar focuses on a specific topic or theme within Scouting [e.g., Commissioner Service, becoming a Philmont Ambassador, the new Strengthening Trust and Authenticity

in Relationships (STAR) program, High Adventure and Trek Prep, Fly Fishing, Facilitation, or unit leadership], making it easy to find a program that aligns with your role and interests.

4. **Family-Friendly Environment:** PTC is unique in that it offers programs for families and children, making it easier for Scouters to attend a conference while their loved ones participate in the Silverado (adults) or Kids 'n Kin programs. While Scouters are in their training sessions, family members can enjoy age-appropriate Scouting activities. Alternatively, the entire family might opt to enroll in a Family Adventure Camp experience.
5. **Inspiration from Philmont's Legacy:** Set in the beautiful Philmont Scout Ranch, PTC offers the inspiration of being immersed in the rich traditions of Scouting while surrounded by the rugged beauty of northern New Mexico. This environment provides a unique blend of learning and adventure.
6. **Renewed Enthusiasm:** The PTC experience often rejuvenates Scouters, giving them fresh energy and excitement for their roles. Many return with new ideas and motivation to make a greater impact in their units and communities.
7. **Hands-On Experience and Activities:** Depending on the topic, many conferences include hands-on activities that can be brought back to local units, enhancing Scouters' skills and bringing new program ideas to the youth they serve.

In short, PTC conferences offer a blend of professional development, personal growth, and inspiration within a beautiful and supportive environment, equipping Scouters to make a meaningful difference in the Scouting movement. Oh! — Don't forget Western Night, Cobbler Night, and the Ice Cream Social. So what's keeping you away from this Scouting Paradise?

P2



Philmont Ambassador Newsletter

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Ranch hands of the Maxwell Cattle Company settle in for a meal served from a chuckwagon during a roundup. (Philmont Museum photo.)

Cattle and Horses Dominated Cimarron's Economy in Early Days

The late 1800s and early 1900s were a time of transition on the land that was to become Philmont. After the Colfax County War and before Waite Phillips bought ranch land some twenty-five years later, the acreage that made up the Maxwell Land Grant was chopped up and divided, piece by piece into numerous ranches. Coinciding with these changes to the Cimarron region landscape were booms and busts in two significant industries in early Colfax County—railroads and mining.

The saga of the ranching spreads during this era includes its share of characters, tragedies and events that molded Philmont as we know it today.

Take the Urraca Ranch, for instance. What is most readily identified as Philmont today, the Basecamp headquarters and the Tooth of Time area, developed from the Urraca operation, one of the first acreages to be split off the Maxwell Land Grant. Lucien Maxwell and his father-in-law Charles Beaubien sold the Urraca parcel in 1861 to Peter Joseph, who, like Kit Carson, appeared to be ready to settle down and farm in the Rayado area after years of mountain man life. Joseph, however, died

a year later. Little is known about Joseph's young son who inherited the property, which was little used until 1880 when it was acquired by a back-east stock market player named Frank Sherman.

Sherman had bought large blocks of stock and bonds in the Maxwell Land Grant Company, and after buying the Joseph holding, added to the acreage under his control by leasing a good chunk of company land to the north. However, horses, not cattle, were Sherman's interest. The locals took note as a number of English thoroughbreds arrived at the train station in nearby Springer.

Sherman developed his property as a fine horse farm, which was likely the genesis of a long tradition of high-quality thoroughbreds and quarter horses being raised and raced in Colfax County, including the La Mesa Park track that operated in Raton for nearly fifty years. But Sherman's time on the New Mexico ranch wasn't long. After just five years, in 1885, Sherman sold to the English-born Francis Clutton, who had been ranching with much difficulty on the eastern plains of Colfax County. The

Early Days (Continued on page 6)

Philmont's Weather Varies by Season and Terrain

Philmont experiences different weather patterns depending on the time of year and elevation. In June, it normally receives very little precipitation and daytime highs can reach as high as 100° F with single-digit humidity. The monsoon season hits northeast New Mexico between late June and early July and will stay until early August most years. The monsoon season is characterized by large thunderstorms that build throughout the morning and bring rain, hail, and lightning in the afternoon. Usually the storms last anywhere between 45 minutes and two hours then the skies clear up and temperatures rise again. Regardless of the time of year of their trek, it is recommended that crews always bring adequate rain jackets and rain pants, a good fleece jacket, and a stocking cap. Staying well hydrated is another key to having a successful trek, even in colder, rainy weather when hikers often forget to keep drinking water.

High Desert Plains *From Philmont's lowest elevations (6,500 ft.) to approximately 7,500 ft.*

This area is easily recognizable by the abundance of native grasses, scrub oak, sage brush, yucca plants, cottonwood trees and the occasional ponderosa pine. During the summer, daytime highs can get into the upper 90's to low 100's and overnight lows can drop to the mid 50's. Water and shade can be scarce in this region. It is highly recommended that crews wake up early and hike to their destination before the heat of the day sets in.

Foothills *From 7,500 ft. to 8,500 ft. Characterized by large ponderosa pine forests with scrub oak underbrush.*

Here daytime highs in the mid 90's and overnight lows into the high 40's are possible in the summer months. Water becomes easier to find than in the high desert plains, but crews should still fill up all of their water capacity whenever they have the chance.

Weather (Continued on page 6)

Ranching Was Area's Main Livelihood

Early Days (Continued from page 5)

Urraca spread, nestled up to the Sangre de Cristo mountains, lured Clutton to the ideal location as it did ranchers and speculators before and after him.

Clutton's tenure would be both productive, and eventually, tragic. He quickly put the land back in cattle production, irrigated pastures to produce alfalfa as winter feed, and married the daughter of the manager of the Maxwell Land Grant Company. Clutton thrived, then introduced a new means to profit in the cattle business—selling off calves to be shipped to the big cities back east. All was good as long as the cattle market was good. But markets go up, and they go down. Clutton was soon caught up in a major reversal of fortune. He borrowed \$30,000, but with the downturn in the cattle industry, couldn't make his first payment, due in 1894. Clutton ended up working a lease of his entire 80,000 acres to William French, a Civil War veteran who owned a spread near Socorro, and came to own a second between Springer and Cimarron, known to this day as the French Tract.

Clutton's ranching days were over; he lost all his New Mexico holdings to foreclosure and tax sales and moved his family to Denver. The last five years of the nineteenth century provided no improvement to Clutton's hard times. One day in November 1901, Clutton went to a bar, had a beer and a cigar, and then shot himself in the forehead.

The Clutton ranch was leased, then sold, to Stanley McCormick, the son of Cyrus McCormick, the Chicago inventor and manufacturer of the famous McCormick grain reaper. The company later became International Harvester and is now known as Navistar.

Taken from [A Million Miles; 75 Years at Philmont Scout Ranch](#) by David Mullins.



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Weather (Continued from page 5)

Montane (Spruce– Fir Zone) *From approximately 8,500 ft. to 10,000 ft. Recognized by the abundance of wildflowers, streams, Douglas fir, blue spruce, and aspen trees.*

During the summer, daytime highs will approach the upper 80's and overnight lows will drop to the mid 40's. Since most of this region is located on the east side of the Cimarron Range of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and since storms almost always move in from the west, it can be difficult to see weather patterns coming in over the mountains until the system is right above you. Longer periods of rain (up to a week) can engulf this region especially during the monsoon season from late-June/early-July

to early-August. Good rain gear and a fleece jacket will help with staying dry and warm during these weather patterns.

Sub Alpine *Recognized by a decrease in tall vegetation.*

Other than grasses, the only substantial plants that grow in this zone are Bristlecone Pines and Limber Pines. Daytime highs in the low 80's and overnight lows in the upper 30's can be common in the sub-alpine zone. Storm systems form quickly, and water can be scarce because of the elevation. If camping at a trail camp in this zone, most crews cook their dinner meal for lunch at a lower elevation and eat their dry lunch for dinner to save on water.