



Troop 93 | Chester County Council | Scouts BSA

# Philmont-Bound

## Backpacking 101 | Personal Gear

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# What is Backpacking?



- **Backpacking is an adventure that blends hiking with camping.**
- Backpacking lets you broaden your horizons far from any parking lot or campground to **challenge and grow your skills** while enjoying a fuller outdoor experience.
- A key distinction from day hiking is the size of your pack—**your backpack (and YOU) must carry all of life's essentials on your back.**
- And you must **choose those essentials with care.**



# What is Philmont?



- Philmont Scout Ranch is the BSA's largest **National High Adventure Base**.
- **Founded in 1938**, Philmont has become a bustling center for high adventure and training. It covers **140,177 acres of rugged mountain wilderness** in the Sangre de Cristo range of the Rocky Mountains in northeastern New Mexico.
- Philmont has a **unique history**, including:
  - **Home of Native Americans** back to ancient times who chipped petroglyphs into canyon walls
  - Site of visits by **Spanish conquistadors**, who explored the Southwest long before the first colonists arrived on the Atlantic coast
  - Crucible of **rugged mountain men** such as Kit Carson, who blazed trails across the land



- Philmont includes **35 staffed camps and 55 trail camps** across rugged terrain that ranges in elevation from **6,500 to 12,500 feet**.
- In addition to **backpacking adventures**, Philmont offers programs that include **horseback riding, gold panning, chuckwagon dinners, and interpretive history**, plus challenges like **rock climbing and sport shooting**.



# Take a Deep Breath



- Troop 93 is going to Philmont in **July 2024**
- Most of you are new to backpacking – RELAX... there is time to prepare

## Preparing for Philmont means developing...

### Your Mind



- Grow your skills and knowledge
- Absorb the wisdom of Mr. LaRocca: Camping, Cooking, Hiking, Orienteering
- Expand your comfort zone (and your discomfort zone)

### Your Body



- Exercise
- Participate in shakedown hikes / weekend treks

### Your Gear



- “Less is more”
- Use stuff you already have, hand-me-downs, etc.
- Don’t be in too big a rush to spend money... you will be learning and experimenting over next several months and may make a better decision about what to invest in later...
- Share the load: Some items may make for great birthday or holiday gifts



## FUN FACT:

Our trek start date is July 21, 2024 – *EXACTLY 500 days from TODAY!*



# Preparing for Philmont

Date	Activity / Event
March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day Hike #1 (5 miles with backpack): Camp Minsi, Pocono Mts., PA</li> <li>• Crew training - hiking, navigation</li> </ul>
September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical fitness - start slow, gradually increase duration / distance / difficulty</li> <li>• Crew training - camping, cooking, hiking, backpacking MBs; discuss 50-miler award</li> <li>• Crew organization</li> </ul>
October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment #2 due</li> <li>• Weekend Trek #1 (10 miles): French Creek State Park, PA</li> <li>• Crew training - camping, cooking, bear bag</li> </ul>
November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gear clinic</li> </ul>
December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philmont trek and program selection discussion</li> </ul>
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Philmont trek and program selection</li> <li>• Medical forms distributed</li> <li>• Day Hike #2 (10 miles with backpack): Appalachian Trail, Pinnacle Peak, Hamburg, PA</li> </ul>
February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment #3 due</li> <li>• Travel plans - flights, ground transportation, hotels, Diversions? Pikes Peak, rafting, Air Force Academy???</li> </ul>
March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult wilderness first aid</li> <li>• Crew supplies - first aid kit, tents, tarp, stoves</li> </ul>
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment #4 due</li> <li>• Weekend Trek #2 (15 miles backpacking): Pine Grove Furnace State Park, PA</li> <li>• Crew training - tarp, water treatment, sanitation</li> </ul>
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekend Trek #3 (15 miles backpacking): Appalachian Trail, Harpers Ferry, MD</li> </ul>
June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment #5 due</li> <li>• Medical forms submitted</li> </ul>
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7/19/24 travel to Philmont</li> <li>• 7/21/24 Philmont trek begins</li> <li>• 7/28/24 Philmont trek ends</li> <li>• Travel home</li> </ul>

*Trust the plan...  
one step at a time*



# Some Good Advice:

"Backpacking is the art of what NOT to bring."

"Hike your own hike."

"Don't pack your fears."

"Pack as much as necessary but as little as possible."

"If in doubt, leave it out."

"A pound on your feet is like five on your back."



- Prioritize items that serve multiple purposes
- Philmont is a team sport – share gear when it won't compromise safety, health, or utility
- You can learn a lot from YouTube – but that kind of advice should be taken with a grain of salt and should be balanced with Scouting wisdom and experience
- Consider the "80/20 Rule" – You can get 80% of the value for 20% of the cost...



# Useful Laws & Axioms

## **LaRocca's Law:**

If you buy very expensive rain gear, it will not rain.

## **Corollary to LaRocca's Law:**

*If you forget your rain gear, it will break all documented records for precipitation.*

## **Pontzer's Law:**

A growth spurt will immediately be triggered by any significant purchase of clothing – especially footwear.

## **Kennedy's First Rule:**

Never put anything except trash in a black trash bag.

## **Kennedy's Second Rule:**

*Always look inside a black trash bag for things that aren't trash before putting it in a dumpster.*

**Most of Mr. Kennedy's  
winter camping gear,  
circa 1987**









# Considerations: Packs

- Select a pack that is properly sized for the hiker's torso
- Philmont requires a lot of capacity:
  - Internal frame: 75L+ (approx. 4,600 cu inches)
  - External frame 65L+ (approx. 4,000 cu inches)
- If your pack is too small, you will end up with a lot of junk hanging off...
- Aim for pack weight < 5 lbs.
- Test in store; adjust properly – a bad fit will be torture
- No need for lots of bells and whistles – weight adds up quickly
- No “frameless” packs for Philmont



**Internal Frame Pack**



**External Frame Pack**



# Considerations: Footwear

- *Sooooo* many passionate opinions...  
*Ankle support... Sweaty feet... Puddles...  
Personal preference (and living with your decision) is key*
- Philmont requires extremely sturdy soles for rough terrain
- Make sure you break in footwear GRADUALLY
- Socks probably matter just as much as boots / trail runners
- You will probably get blisters... learn how to take care of them
- Philmont recommends also bringing a pair of “camp shoes” that can be used for stream crossings
- **TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR FEET!**  
(Or else you will be miserable)

Low-Top /  
“Trail Runner”

High-Top /  
Traditional Boot

Quick-  
Drying



Waterproof



## Official Philmont Guidance:

**Boots** – Mid to high top boots are highly recommended for ankle support on rocky, uneven trails. Boots should be well broken in before a Philmont trek. Waterproof boots are recommended: keeping your feet dry is one of the biggest keys to a successful trek.



# Considerations: Clothing

- **NO COTTON!**

- Always consider weather and environment
- Socks:
  - Two pairs for hiking (minimum)
  - Optional:
    - Liner socks to prevent blisters
    - Heavier, cozier sleep socks
- Basics – follow principles of layering – use multi-purpose gear:
  - Pants / shorts
  - Underwear
  - T-shirts
  - Long underwear
  - Long-sleeve shirt (sun protection!)
  - Sleepwear
  - Fleece / Wool / Down insulation layer(s)
  - Long pants **REQUIRED** for service project – OK if convertible or rain pants
  - Pack warm hat and gloves – **VERY WINDY** and **COLDER** at 12,440 ft.!



**BASE LAYER**

"wicks" perspiration away from skin



**MID LAYERS**

insulation retains body heat



**OUTER LAYER**

protects from wind, rain, and snow



# Considerations: Personal Water Bottles / Bags

- Philmont is in the high-mountain desert spanning elevations from 6,500 to 12,500 ft.
- At times, hikers will need to carry **up to 4 liters of water**, but will normally carry at least 2 liters
- All water will need to be purified
- 1 liter of water weighs 2.2 lbs.
- Pros and Cons:
  - A reservoir is convenient, but can be difficult to monitor reserves/consumption and is difficult to clean
  - Nalgene's are tough but heavy and bulky
  - "Disposable" water bottles are very light – make sure durable enough for the trek
  - Once you put flavor/mix in a bottle, it is forever after a "smellable"



**Reservoir**



**Nalgene  
(Durable)**



**Disposable**



**Collapsible**



**Smellable**



Philmont Packing List:

# Pack & Sleep System

		Item	Count	Wear (w) / Carry (c)	Personal (p) / Shared (s)	System	Description
<b>Personal - Pack / Sleep System</b>							
	Goal: <		10	lbs			
		Pack		c	p	Pack	Internal frame: 75L +/- 4600 cu inches External frame 65L +/- 3966 cu inches
		Pack cover		c	p	Pack	CORRECT SIZE; Waterproof
		Pack liner		c	p	Pack	Clear trash bag or trash compactor bag works well
		Sleeping bag		c	p	Sleep	20 degree F recommended; consider compression, waterproof sack
		Sleeping pad		c	p	Sleep	
		Camp pillow		c	p	Sleep	Optional



Philmont Packing List:

# Personal – Clothing & Footwear

		Item	Count	Wear (w) / Carry (c)	Personal (p) / Shared (s)	System	Description
<b>Personal - Clothing &amp; Footwear</b>							
	Goal: <	5 lbs					
		Boots (pair)	1	w	p	Footwear	
		Socks (pairs)	3	w/c	p	Footwear	
		Liner Socks (pairs)	3	w/c	p	Footwear	
		Hiking Shorts	2	w/c	p	Insulation	
		Shirts - Short Sleeve	2	w/c	p	Insulation	
		Shirts - Long Sleeve	1	c	p	Insulation	Consider hooded shirt for sun protection / warmth
		Camp shoes (e.g., sneakers)	1	c	p	Footwear	
		Hat (w/ brim)	1	w	p	Sun Protection	
		Underwear	3	w/c	p	Insulation	
		Long underwear	1	c	p	Insulation	
		Long pants	1	c	p	Insulation	
		Fleece / Sweater	1	c	p	Insulation	
		Rain jacket	1	c	p	Rain Gear	
		Rain pants	1	c	p	Rain Gear	
		Warm hat	1	c	p	Insulation	Cold nights; high elevations
		Gloves	1	c	p	Insulation	Glove liners or work gloves for warmth



Philmont Packing List:

# Personal – Other Essentials & Miscellaneous

			Wear (w) /	Personal (p) /		
▼	▼	▼ Item	▼ Count	▼ Carry (c)	▼ Shared (s)	▼ System
						▼ Description
<b>Personal - Other Essentials &amp; Miscellaneous</b>						
		Goal: <	5	lbs		
		Water bottles (1 qt)	4	c	p	Water
		Bowl (small, plastic)	1	c	p	Food
		Cup	1	c	p	Food
		Spoon	1	c	p	Food
		Toothbrush / Toothpaste	1	c	p	Hygiene
		Soap	1	c	p	Hygiene
		Sanitizer / Wipes	1	c	p	Hygiene
		Flashlight (w/ spare batteries)	1	c	p	Illumination
		Small pocketknife	1	c	p/s	Fix-it
		Camera	1	c	p	Misc
		Watch	1	w	p	Misc
		Daypack (for side hikes)	1	c	p	Misc
		Sunglasses	1	c	p	Sun Protection
		Sunscreen	1	c	p	Sun Protection
		Insect repellent	1	c	p	Misc
		Bandanas	1	c	p	Fix-it
		Compass	1	c	p	Navigation
		Matches / lighter	1	c	p/s	Fire
		Fire Starters	1	c	p/s	Fire
		Personal First Aid Kit	1	c	p	First Aid
		Personal Fix-it Kit	1	c	p	Fix-it
		LNT / Poop Kit	1	c	p/s	Hygiene
		Stuff Sacks / Plastic bags		c	p	Pack
						Optional - specific to personal gear/needs
						Gear organization; waterproofing; personal smellables





Philmont Packing List:

# Crew Gear – *Every Hiker will Carry a Share*

		Item	Count	Wear (w) / Personal (p) / Carry (c)	Shared (s)	System	Description	
<b>Crew Gear</b>								
	Goal: <	10 lbs	...for individual share					
		Tent (w/ poles, fly, stakes)	TBD	c	s	Shelter	1 per adult; 1 per 2 Scouts	
		Ground sheet	TBD	c	s	Shelter	1 per adult; 1 per 2 Scouts	
		Stoves	3	c	s	Food		
		Fuel / Fuel bottles	2	c	s	Food		
		Group Water Containers (2.5 Gal.)	2	c	s	Water		
		Group First Aid Kit	1	c	s	First Aid		
		Duct Tape	1	c	s	Fix-it		
		Bear Bag, Rope, Carabiner	TBD	c	s	Misc		
		Spices / Seasonings / Salt & Pepper	1	c	s	Kitchen		
		Cooking Utencils (set)	1	c	s	Kitchen		
		Pots / Pans (set)	1	c	s	Kitchen		
		Dining Fly	1	c	s	Kitchen		
		Dishwashing kit	1	c	s	Kitchen		
		Repair Kit	1	c	s	Fix-it		
		Water purification	2	c	s	Water		
		Food	TBD	c	s	Food		



Putting it All Together...

# Packing Your Pack

- **Bottom**

- Mid-weight items
- Crushable / bulkier items
- Items you don't need while hiking
- *Ideal: Sleeping bag/pad*

- **Middle / Closest to Body**

- Heaviest items
- *Ideal: Tent, water, cookware, stoves, fuel, heavy food*

- **Middle / Further from Body**

- Lightest items
- *Ideal: Light-weight clothes*

- **Top**

- Lighter items
- Items you need while hiking
- *Ideal: Extra layers, rain gear, trail food*

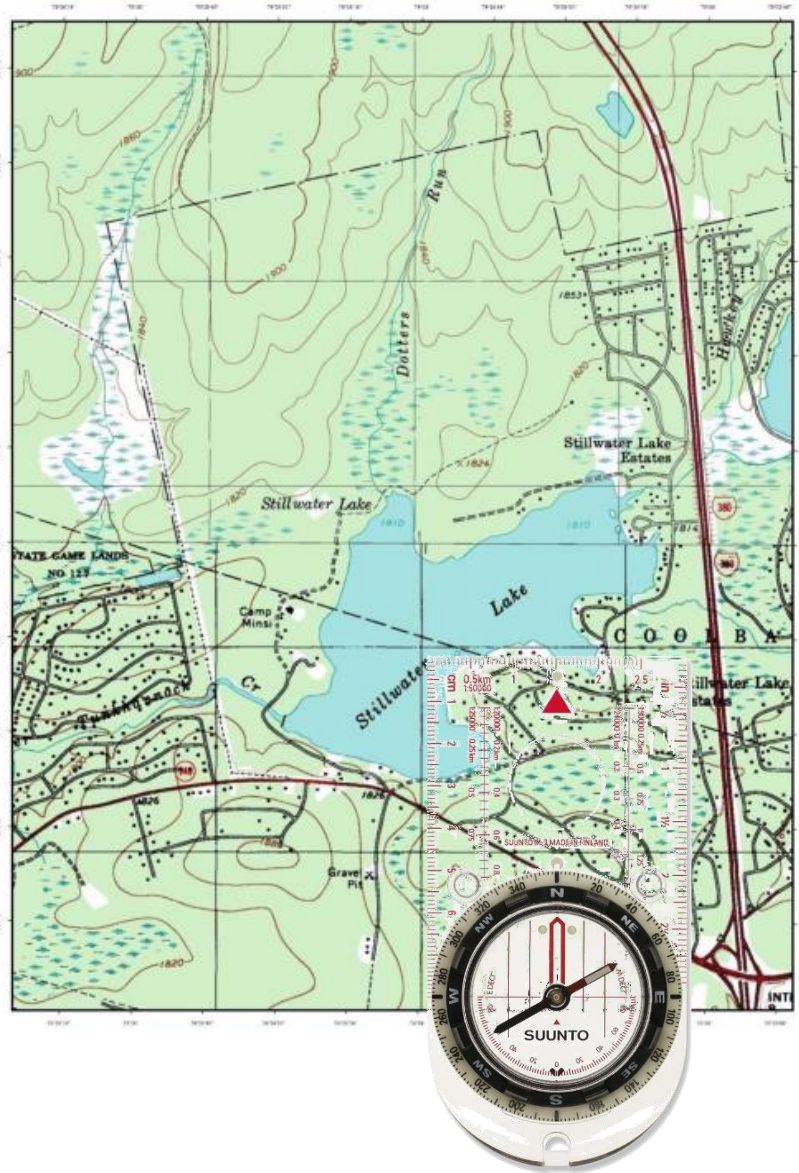


# QUIZ: Properly Packed?



## Day Hike #1 :

# Camp Minsi – Pocono Mts., PA



- On Saturday during Troop campout to Camp Minsi in the Pocono mountains (March 24-26)
- 5-mile hike with packs – target 25 lbs. trail weight
- Hike as crews (3 groups with assigned roles and different routes)
- Must-haves:
  - Adequate pack (use what you have if do-able)
  - Adequate footwear (use what you have if do-able)
  - Sleeping bag (to practice loading / balancing)
  - Ten essentials, especially:
    - Water (2 x 1-liter bottles)
    - Personal first aid kit (moleskin, etc.)
    - Sun protection (hat, etc.)
    - Weather-appropriate clothing / layers
    - Compass
    - Rain gear
- Objectives:
  - Assess gear / perform field-check of packs, contents, and load management
  - Practice crew roles and responsibilities (Leader, Navigator, LNT Guia)
  - Practice navigation skills
  - Focus on pacing, spacing, and optimal timing for rests



# THE FUN SCALE

NOT ALL OUTDOOR FUN IS CREATED EQUAL

## TYPE I FUN

FUN TO DO  
FUN TO REMEMBER



WANT TO KEEP GOING  
BACK FOR MORE

## TYPE II FUN

HURTS A BIT TO DO  
BUT FUN IN RETROSPECT



MOST FULFILLING IN  
THE LONG RUN

## TYPE III FUN

NOT FUN TO DO  
NOT FUN IN RETROSPECT




...BUT MAKES A  
GREAT STORY



# Memories that last a lifetime...



PHILMONT SCOUT RANCH  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

CIMARRON  NEW MEXICO  
EXPEDITION

716 E6 1990

# Online Learning Resources



Philmont Preparation Sessions: Episode 2 - Packing for a Philmont Trek

10K views • 2 years ago



Philmont Preparation Sessions: Episode 3 - Footwear For Philmont Treks

5.6K views • 2 years ago



Hydration Reservoirs vs. Bottles || REI

36K views • 3 years ago



What to Consider When Buying Backpacking Gear! | Miranda in the Wild

56K views • 2 years ago



Philmont Preparation Sessions: Episode 6 - Fitting a Backpack

3.2K views • 2 years ago



Philmont Preparation Sessions: Episode 8 - Layering For Backpacking

3.8K views • 2 years ago



How to Poop in the Woods! \*Update\*

5.2K views • 1 month ago



What I Do With My Backpacking Gear AFTER a Trip!

5.8K views • 1 month ago



# Recommended Retailers





**Lightening on the  
“Tooth of Time”...**



**(Type III fun)**

