

Philmont 2011 - Account of Backcountry Experience
June 17 - July 4
Troop 116 - Philmont Expedition 621-N; Itinerary 18

Introduction

"Nothing worthwhile was ever accomplished without the will to start, the enthusiasm to continue, and, regardless of temporary obstacles, the persistence to complete."

-Waite Phillips

On June 21st, 2011, Troop 116 travelled with two crews of eager Boys Scouts to Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimarron, New Mexico. They experienced a journey that would change their lives such that they would never be the same. They shared the experience that has bound thousands of Scouts together in brotherhood throughout the course of history. They experienced challenge, struggle, bonding, the beauty of nature, the power of teamwork, and the overwhelming feeling of accomplishing something great throughout their Philmont trek. In this account, you will read of their adventures ranging from their travel to New Mexico, to their experience on the trail and the many wonderful moments that they shared along the way.

Pre-Philmont Activities - 6/17/11 to 6/21/11

The Philmont journey began long before we arrived in Camping Headquarters in June. Before departing for New Mexico, Scouts were preparing themselves for the challenge ahead. Riding bikes, playing sports, and preparing for the physical challenge, but also preparing mentally. The adult advisers were constantly reminding the Scouts that Philmont would only be 1% physical and 99% mental. (for the Scouts, at least) Each Scout would have to familiarize themselves with the idea of spending eleven days completely isolated from civilization in the wilderness, carrying all their possessions on their backs.

Then there was the shakedown trip to South Mountains State Park. The Scouts spent a weekend simulating the daily actions that they would perform once they got to

Philmont and became more familiar with the members of their crew. A few weeks later the two crews would embark on their unforgettable journey to Philmont.

On June 17th, Troop 116's two crews met at the Charlotte-Douglas Int. Airport to fly to Colorado Springs. Due to the excellent preparations of the adults and impeccable logistical capabilities of our experienced leader, Mr. Love, all went according to plan in the airport. The two flights were uninterrupted by weather, and we arrived in Colorado Springs without delay. We checked out two small passenger vans and one SUV and headed for Vail, the site of our first residence, the Roost Lodge. Over the next few days, we acclimatized to the high altitude and low humidity of the Rocky Mountains. We went mountain biking at Vail, where the conditions began quite muddy, but they were quite forgiving, and by the end all had enjoyed a good time. That evening, we drove to the nearby town of Minturn where we were joined by former Scouts Michael and Kevin Baker at the Minturn Country Club, where everybody selected and cooked their own steaks with a variety of seasonings until they reached a delicious, juicy perfection. The Scouts' expensive tastes in U.S.D.A. Prime steak and chocolate desserts easily exceeded the budget. The next day we journeyed to Cañon City, where we saw one of the highest suspension bridges in the world, the Royal Gorge Bridge, and then proceeded to white-water raft on the Arkansas River with River Runners Rafting. We saw the beautiful scenery that the West has to offer, as well as some intense action when some Scouts helped aid in re-assembling the crew of an overturned raft. The next day brought us to the Great Sand Dunes National Park, a large deposit of sand in the valley of two large mountains. These massive dunes seem to appear from nowhere as you approach them. Everybody enjoyed the challenge of hiking to the top of the dunes when it seemed as if every step brought you farther backward than forward. After reaching the top, which everyone eventually did, Scouts engaged in a number of activities including photography, acrobatics, urination, and other similar shenanigans. We then ate lunch and re-grouped in the vans to travel to the small town of Red River, where we explored a number of interesting shops and restaurants before returning to our lodge for the night. The next morning we would pack the vans for the final time before our drive by the towns of Eagle Nest and Cimarron to Philmont's Camping Headquarters.

Account of Backcountry Experience

6/21/11 - Base Camp:

Our first day on the ranch, spent at Base Camp, went as expected. The day was filled with many "hurry-up and wait" moments in which we rushed from building to building to stand in line to complete the next procedure. Our crew leaders, Adam Stroud and Landon Holbert, went into Logistics to receive valuable information about our itinerary and receive the Crew Leader Copy, or "Life", that is required to check in to all staff camps and receive credit for our Arrowhead patches. We met our rangers, who would teach us the Philmont way on the first few days of our trek and give us helpful advice on the trail. Everybody went to the health lodge for a quick check-up to ensure everybody was in good enough health for the trail and had all up-to-date, prescribed medications, inhalers, and epi-pens. Once everybody checked out through Health Lodge successfully, we received our massive heap of food and crew gear. Each person had one or two items of crew gear and about nine bags of food to carry. We then talked with our Rangers about first-aid and other skills we needed to be trained on for the trail, received pack checks from our rangers to ensure that we were packing efficiently, and then adjusted our packs to fit our massive loads of food into them. Once everything was adjusted and ready for the trail the next day, we ate dinner and went to the opening campfire, which gave a small understanding of how Philmont was first founded when Waite Phillips donated the land in 1938. Each crew leader received an American Flag to attach to their pack and keep with them until they had finished their trek. After the campfire closed, we returned to our tents to rest for the challenge ahead.

6/22/11 - Trail Day 1:

We awakened from a mattress for what would be the last time for about two weeks. After eating breakfast in base camp, we gathered at the welcoming center and waited for our bus to arrive. At this point, I was no longer a member of Troop 116, but a member of crew 621-N-1. This means that in this article, I will henceforth be recounting the experience of crew 621-N-1. However, because our sister crew, 621-N-2, followed

the same itinerary as we did, the two crews interacted at staff camps and shared most experiences with each other. Once our bus arrived, we were taken to Lover's Leap Turnaround, where we were trained by our ranger for a brief time before taking our first step on the trails of Philmont. The first hike was an easy two mile hike on relatively flat land. On the way to camp, we stopped at Lover's Leap to admire the beautiful scenery, climb on rocks, take pictures, break from the hike, and, of course, take a leak off the side of the cliff. We soon arrived at Lover's Leap camp, where our ranger walked us through the many procedures required once one arrives to a camp at Philmont. We emptied our "smellables" into a pile near the fire pit, hung our extra food in bear bags and left a line for our "Oops bag" of personal smellables for later. We set up the dining fly within the "Bear-muda Triangle" created by the fire-ring, bear cables, and sump. (the sump is a drain of sorts into which all liquids from cleaning are poured to avoid damaging the environment or attracting wildlife to soap and food waste.) After all crew duties were taken care of, we set up our tents far away from the Triangle. We then ate lunch, finished the majority of our ranger training, and had free time to relax. Once the time came, we cooked and ate the first of many de-hydrated dinners. Luckily, our meal consisted of Easy Mac, tuna, and peas, the final ingredient being the only freeze-dried ingredient, giving our stomachs a chance of gradually adjusting to the new diet. During dinner, our Chaplain Aide, Chase McNaughton, led us in a devotion, and our crew leader led us in "Thorns and Roses," an activity in which each crew member discussed what the crew did successfully, what we could work on, and what he is looking forward to later in the trek. After clean-up, everybody enjoyed free time until they went to sleep.

6/23/11 - Trail Day 2:

We woke up in the morning, likely earlier than we had yet the entire summer, but later than we would any other day on the trail. We broke down camp with a moderate pace, still getting into our routine. The day boasted a three mile hike to the staff camp of Crater Lake, where we checked in at the staff cabin around 9:00. We chose to climb sparpoles at 10:00, confident in our abilities to set up camp in less than an hour. We arrived at camp and set up our crew gear and tents with about fifteen minutes to spare. In our rush, we forgot to empty most of our personal smellables when we got to camp. However, we

were lucky to make this mistake early on in our trek, so that we would follow bear procedures more closely in more dangerous areas later on. We walked to the spar-pole yard where we were met by the instructor, Dan. He gave a humorous demonstration of how to climb the poles effectively and how to be a good "donkey," or anchor, for climbers. He said that the climber should thank their donkey by telling them a cheesy pick-up line to boost their confidence. We had several creative lines, the most popular being the following:

"If you were words on a page, you'd be FINE PRINT!"

"Pick-up lines are like belts. If you use them, your pants will never come off."

Everyone climbed the poles with success, and many photographs were taken of climbers performing a victory pose to complement their success. After spar-pole climbing was finished, we relaxed at the campsite until it was time for dinner. We cooked, ate, and cleaned as we had been taught the night before, and then prepared the camp to leave for the night's campfire. This program took place near the staff cabin, where we met with the other crew and discussed how the day went for each other. We then sat down to see the staff members play wonderful music consisting of guitar, mandolin, bass, banjo, and vocals, tell many stories ranging from absurd tales of canoes travelling at Mach 2 to epic accounts of a legendary bacon skillet, and cleverly compose witty jokes that conjured great laughter from the audience. At the campfire's end, the spar-pole instructor, Dan, stood and told a story about his Philmont experience, and the magic of the Ranch that can be found if one allows it to find him. With high spirits, we met with our Ranger to finish our training and then heading back to camp for the night.

6/24/11 - Trail Day 3:

On the morning of Day Three, we awoke early in the morning to allocate time for the difficult hike ahead, because on the previous night we calculated that it would take us an estimated five to six hours to complete. We had a slow start that morning, taking almost an hour and a half to take down camp. We said our goodbyes to our ranger, James, and he wished us a good trek before we left camp. This seemed to be the day that most were hit by the full mental strain of Philmont. People experienced thoughts that they could not continue for another week in these conditions, or that they were experiencing

distaste for others members of the crew. This attitude, combined with the difficulty of the trail, made this day the most strenuous for most. The trail was a solid seven miles, but featured uneven, rocky footing, forty-seven total stream crossings, and plenty of direct sunlight exposure that tired out many. Nevertheless, the crew pulled through dehydration, nosebleeds, respiratory challenges, and fatigue to arrive at their destination, Black Mountain staff camp, without any major issues that would deeply impact them later on. We checked into the camp just after noon, observing the staff lecture with tired eyes, and we were then led to our campsite, which was greatly spread out and linear in design. We completed our standard procedures slowly, and were thankful to drink high quantities of water and consume our lunches, complete with the even popular snack, "Squeeze Cheese." Then, the day took a turn for the better as we returned to the staff area for blacksmithing and black powder rifling activities. Scouts enjoyed creating souvenirs from metal and shooting rifles at their t-shirts and sunglasses, blowing them into beautiful shreds. We ate a late dinner, but experienced difficulties with clean-up when we realized that we had lost our scrubbies and Campsuds. The difficulties of the day were expressed in Thorns and Roses that night, and everybody decided that now would be the time that they wanted to come together as one and overcome the challenges in their path. Before we went to bed, one of our Scouts was attacked by a moth that flew into his ear. The two crews mobilized in the darkness to help with his treatment, which was finished by a staff medic later in the night, and quickly became known by most staff members at the ranch. After the incident was resolved, we went to our tents to get much needed rest.

6/25/11 - Trail Day 4:

We woke up early this morning once again and swiftly broke down camp, eager to see how the day would go. We hiked about a few miles and then ate breakfast on the trail. For the remainder of the hike, we sang songs and conversed to make the three miles to camp go by quickly. We arrived at Beaubien staff camp early in the morning. We checked in at the staff cabin, as usual, and were given our porch talk, which informed us of the Cowboy theme of the camp, the many Western themed activities including lassoing, horseshoes, and branding, and the details of the conservation project that we would be doing. We were led to camp where we hastily set up our bear bags and dining

fly so that we could arrive at the conservation site on time. We arrived to the site to meet our sister crew, who had chosen the same time as we had. The instructors briefed us on the safety procedures required to work and the equipment we would use. We learned that our project would involve surveying a forest for clusters of trees, and our job was to chop down younger trees that were interfering with the thriving of the older ones. We would then chop these trees into smaller logs to be used later on and pile up the branches to decompose. After the briefing we grabbed safety goggles, gloves, and a saw or clippers. We worked energetically for around three hours, stopping to eat lunch sometime during the process. Everybody seemed to enjoy doing service work with the company of their friends, and many regarded it as their favorite activity in the trek up to that point. With the conservation project complete, we returned to camp to finish setting up crew gear and tents, and then we were free to enjoy free time to take a shower, play cards, to talk with friends. As the night grew closer, we cooked, ate, and cleaned up dinner and hung our "oops" bag before leaving camp for the night's program. We met near the staff cabin, where we witnessed a lassoing competition between crews known as "Rope the Log," which will be described in the account of Day Five. Crew 621-N-2 led the camp in the night's flag ceremony, and were rewarded with doughnuts for their efforts. The entire camp then migrated to the campfire ring, where the staff performed a number of musical pieces and short skits. A notable piece from this campfire was a performance of Dr. Seuss' "The Lorax." The memorization and feeling in the recitation was incredible, and it left everybody with high spirits before the time came for sleep.

6/26/11 - Trail Day 5:

The fifth day on the trail was our first layover day. It was strange to awaken without having to immediately break down camp. Instead, we used our morning time to cook a "Breakfast Skillet" in a bag, and it was nice to enjoy a warm breakfast. Our main activity for the day was a side hike to Trail Peak, one of the more well-known peaks at Philmont. The hike from Beaubien was a nine mile round trip, and took about half a day to complete. We hiked at a good pace to the top of the peak, where we arrived at the site of a B-24 plane crash. We examined the wreckage of the plane, said a prayer for the crew in the crash, took pictures of the plane and the views, and, of course, peed off the wing.

Not many can state that they have taken a leap from the wing of a bomber at 10,000+ feet. We then continued to eat our lunch on the peak of the mountain before beginning our return to camp. Once we got back to Beaubien, we had time to explore the many activities available. Some challenged one another at horseshoes, some got their boots, apparel, or items branded with the Philmont horse and cattle brands, some enjoyed the showers, and some simply rested for the next day's hike. When dinner time came, we were treated to a "Chuckwagon Dinner," where two cooks from each crew helped the staff cook a delicious dinner for their crews to dine upon. Eating warm, tasty beef stew cooked by somebody else and pound cake topped with peaches tasted divine after being on a diet of freeze-dried food and power bars for five days. Once the dinner ended, we once again gathered by the staff cabin to watch the flag ceremony before campfire. A team consisting of members from our combined crews decided to sign up for the "Rope the Log" competition. In this competition, two teams stood an equal distance from a single, upright log. Each player was armed with a lasso. The objective was to lasso the log and pull it to your team's side, resulting in a point. If both teams happened to rope the log simultaneously, both teams would engage in a tug of war, a battle of brute force to pull the log to their side. Needless to say, with our group of strapping young lads led by "Coach Dave", the 621-N contingent dominated all competition, defeating crew after crew until they came face to face with the staff, dressed in blue jeans and cowboy boots. The staff's experience and skill were too much for our team, unfortunately, and we were not able to defeat the staff and gain our pudding cup reward. Nevertheless, each player and spectator enjoyed the event greatly. Afterwards, we watched the flag ceremony and enjoyed another great campfire, which featured different songs, cowboy poetry, an improv game involving members of the audience, and a massive rain dance that produced a small dust bowl within the area. This day seemed to be the day that our crew finally came together and became comfortable with putting the needs of the group above personal priorities, and henceforth we would strive to make each day more smooth and enjoyable than the last.

6/27/11 - Trail Day 6:

Because we had an easy hike ahead of us, we enjoyed an extra hour of sleep this morning. We broke down camp very quickly and left for Phillip's Junction Commissary to receive our first resupply. We were given just enough food to last us for the hike up and down Mt. Phillips and into Cimarroncito. We also enjoyed fresh pears and oranges, and some Scouts visited the trading post to buy Toblerone bars to enjoy on the trail. As soon as we had arrived, we hiked out two miles to our destination, Porcupine trail camp. We set up camp more quickly than we ever had, and were pleased to have the entire afternoon to play cards, relax by the creek, or gain some extra sleep. The effect of the previous day's rain dance caught up to us as we felt the first rain drop we had on the entire trek. A small group went to a nearby staff camp to scout out their homesteading program. After dinner, most members of the crews went to take part in that camp's evening activities. We observed farm animals including burros and cows, held and chased chickens, played horseshoes, milked cows, and performed animal waste maintenance services. After this waste was collected, our Rope the Log team reassembled to challenge a Texan crew in the art of "Poo' Flinging". This competition involved tossing an amount of waste into a compost pit by means of a shovel with a combination of style and humor. A staff member then graded the performance on both its accuracy and creativity. Both crews began off to a slow start, but by the end, the Poo' Flinging had turned into an epic bout of wits and strength where fully composed skits revolved around the simple task. In the end both crews tied in points. This day generally ended up being another high point in the trek for most, and greatly aided mentally in preparation for our hardest hike ahead of us.

6/28/11 - Trail Day 7:

We woke before dawn. Our deconstruction of camp was slowed due to the darkness, but we were still able to begin our hike on time. We followed a river for several miles, stopping to eat breakfast on the way. We soon arrived at Clear Creek, the staff camp where we would refill our water supply before tackling the hike up Mt. Phillips. We were given a brief porch talk by the staff to explain the activities we could do before passing through, where to find water, and where we could cook our lunch. We decided to

eat our Spaghetti dinner meal at Clear Creek, so that we would not have to carry extra cooking water to our campsite on Mt. Phillips, which is a dry camp. We also threw tomahawks in Clear Creek for some entertainment and rest before the strenuous hike. With our personal water capacities and water bags filled to the brim, we set out for our trailhead. The hike featured a very harsh incline, where one gained more elevation per step than distance in most cases. With the added stress of the water bags and the sunlight that beat down upon the trail, the 2.5 mile hike was quite difficult. Once we reached the top of this trail, rejoice began to flow through our crew, each member having a great feeling of accomplishment. We rested shortly, then continued to the peak of Phillip's, where we met our sister crew who had already arrived. The weather was wonderful, and fog did not obstruct any of the beautiful view that Mt. Phillips had to offer. After reaching the peak, we went to our campsite and set up the bear bags, dining fly, and tents. One of our advisers rewarded us with delicious Jolly Ranchers for completing perhaps the most difficult hike at Philmont with heavy backpacks. We then returned to the peak of Phillip's to eat our lunch for dinner while watching the sun set behind the mountains and conversing with our friends.

6/29/11 - Trail Day 8:

We woke up early in the morning once again, with high hopes of completing our longest hike and reaching our next camp quickly. After taking down camp, we met with our sister crew to hike down the mountain as a contingent, hoping that sharing thoughts while hiking would make time go by faster. We conquered several sets of switchbacks on our way down the mountain, and after about two hours we arrived at Cypher's Mine staff camp, our first opportunity to refill our water since Clear Creek. We received a porch talk from the staff, and then split up from the other crew because they had to wait at Cypher's Mine for a medical team to arrive and treat a wound. The remainder of the hike had a mostly flat grade and ran along a river. During the hike, we stopped in a clearing to eat lunch and then continued forward. After nine hours on the trail, we finally arrived to our destination, Cimarroncito staff camp. Here, we had our porch talk and were assigned our campsite as usual. After our fastest campsite setup ever, which took only fifteen minutes, everyone rushed to the shower facilities to enjoy bathing in warm water for the first time

in eight days. We then regrouped to eat dinner, and then headed back to the staff area to enjoy evening activities. Our crew activity team re-assembled yet again to challenge other crews in volleyball, and we dominated all competition, as expected. Others enjoyed the rock climbing activities, which included both an indoor climbing wall and a transverse wall.

6/30/11 - Trail Day 9:

We woke up on our ninth day excited for the layover day with hopes that it would be as fun as the last. After eating breakfast, we immediately joined our sister crew to begin our side hike for the day. We each carried a daypack filled with plenty of water, rain gear, first aid supplies, and food for lunch. A few volunteers emptied their backpacks and carried those instead so that they could carry the food that we would receive from the commissary during the hike. We made great time without the weight of a full pack, and after covering twenty miles in two days, the side hike was like a stroll through the park. Before we knew it, we had arrived at our first sight, Cathedral Rock. This rock formation, as one could guess, resembled a cathedral. Scouts climbed the rock in small groups for safety, and enjoyed the wonderful view from its top. We then moved on farther up the mountain to our second destination, Window Rock. This rock formation got its name because it could be clearly viewed from the window of Waitte Phillips' private summer home on the ranch, Villa Philmonte. From this rock, we could see many great views, including a rear view of the Tooth of Time. We also happened to see our ranger James on the rock, and we told him how our trek had been going so far. After we had had enough bouldering and sight-seeing, we continued down the trail. We walked through Hidden Valley, a beautiful, open clearing in the middle of the forest with no association to salad dressing. After exiting the valley, we hiked on to the Ute Gulch Commissary, where we were given our final resupply of food to last us until we reached Base Camp. Those who brought backpacks filled them with food while others helped give it to them. After this, we ate lunch at the commissary and enjoyed fresh fruit and chocolate to complement the meal. We then cleaned up and headed back to Cimarroncito, where people spent the rest of the day either rock climbing (which was cancelled in mid-session due to thunderstorms), taking a hot shower, or using the time to rest. Before the day ended, we

visited the "Swap Box" to exchange our cooked dinners for the next night for other snacks so that we could drink the water we brought instead of cook with it. We ate dinner, enjoyed evening programs, and then went to bed early to ensure we were well rested for the challenging hike the next day.

7/01/11 - Trail Day 10:

It had finally arrived, our chance to walk the steps of thousands of Scouts, the challenge of conquering the Tooth of Time. We got an early start and swiftly broke down camp. We immediately began hiking and quickly arrived at Clark's Fork, the staff camp where we would fill our water and eat breakfast in preparation for our hike to Tooth Ridge. After leaving Clark's Fork, we continued on our hike, beginning the uphill section to the ridge itself. After a few hours of solid hiking we stopped near Schaefer's Peak to eat lunch. Following this was even more hiking in the heat of the day. Once we reached Tooth Ridge, the heat of the day had reached us, and we slowly made our way across the rocky "trail" that led to our camp. Eventually, after a total of nine miles of difficult hiking, we finally made it to our camp. On our way, we had encountered a few warning signs that warned of a problem bear that had been seen in the Tooth Ridge Camp area. Because of this, we took extra precautions with our bear procedures, and ensured that anything that could be argued as a smellable was hung in a bear bag and all packs were far away from our tents. Once camp was set up, we finally had the opportunity to climb the Tooth of Time. We walked on rocks that had been trampled by a million boots. Once we reached the peak, we finally began to understand the magic of Philmont that had been preached to us so many times, but could not be conceived unless experienced firsthand. The view was breathtaking, and the feeling was amazing. You could see for miles in every direction. The mountains, the plains, the forests, the reservoir, Cimarron, Base Camp, the azure sky and vast horizon; all these sights we witnessed from what seemed to be the top of the world. There are few more rewarding experiences than standing on top of that magical place with friends that you had grown close to, thinking, "I finally made it." When we descended from the Tooth, we spent the rest of the night reflecting on the trip as a whole, from the challenging hikes and difficulties to the spectacular views and

exhilarating experiences. All slept content, eagerly awaiting the return to Base Camp, but partially sad that the experience was almost over.

7/02/11 - Trail Day 11 / Base Camp:

After awakening from a good night of rest, we broke down camp for the last time on our trek. We worked in the moonlight, and were ready to depart just as the sun began to rise. Our outfit for the day was a backpack and boxers. We hiked with a solid pace to base camp, scarcely even stopping because we were ready to return to civilization as soon as possible. We would hike to the end of a switchback, see base camp, then turn around to hike in the other direction, and the process repeated for about five miles. Once we crossed the final switchback, base camp came back in to view, and stayed there. As soon as the gateway came into sight, we picked up speed. At first hiking slightly faster, but soon most were at a full sprint for the gate. On arrival, packs were immediately dropped as we congratulated each other. We were met by Mr. Love, who had brought an ice-cold Coca-Cola for each person to enjoy, and the smooth, delicious taste brought unparalleled satisfaction to all. For the few seconds that the drink lasted, nothing else in the world mattered but the smooth flavor, the sweetness, the carbonation, and the caffeine. We were brought back to reality by the necessity to have a group photo in front of the gate, for which we got dressed in our hiking clothes and put our packs back on. Once we entered Base Camp, we checked in the crew gear that had been issued to us by Philmont, and then returned all Troop crew gear to Mr. Love. The crew leaders and head advisors headed to take care of logistics while the rest of us went to the vans to be reunited with our cell phones and I-pods. As soon as we had left, we returned to civilization, reconnecting with our friends and updating our knowledge of what had happened in the world while we were in the backcountry. Once our crew leader returned with our campsite assignment, we got our duffel bags, went to our tents, and began to separate our backpacking supplies from our touring items. Once this was taken care of, we then dealt with the most important priority, which was, of course, taking a shower and changing into not disgusting clothes. The showers were uncomfortably hot, so as a bonus, you could incinerate your outer layer of flesh to ensure your entire body was fresh and clean. We drove into the nearby town of Cimarron to eat lunch at a local Pizza shop. The warm

pizza tasted completely delicious after eating freeze-dried food and power bars for eleven days. After exploring some of the nearby shops and attractions in Cimarron, we headed back to Base Camp to visit the Tooth of Time traders to buy souvenirs including belts, buckles, t-shirts, hats, coffee mugs, Nalgens, and other miscellaneous trinkets, buy snacks, candy, and soda from the snack bar, and attend the chapel service before dinner. After dinner, we prepared for the closing campfire. The staff congratulated us for making the journey from being "Trail Bound" to being "Home Bound," and put on a number of skits, played music, and showed slideshows and videos relating to the treks that we had recently been on. Then, each crew leader was awarded with the "We All Made It!" award for safely and successfully guiding their crew through the trek. After the campfire, we returned to our tents to prepare for the drive to Colorado Springs and flight home.

It is difficult to describe the Philmont experience on paper. Something about the ranch can only touch one who has personally experienced its magic and conquered its many trials. Every Scout in our two crews felt the feeling of accomplishment that comes with standing on the Tooth of Time and seeing the endless horizon, walking into base camp and standing in front of the gate, seeing the "Home Bound" sign at the closing campfire, and receiving the prestigious arrowhead that connects you with thousands of Scouts around the world. This experience will earn a special place in the memories of each Scout as one of the most influential moments in their lives. The trail brought out the best and worst parts of each person, and it was not an easy challenge. All said and done, however, it offered an amazing opportunity for each person to grow in their own way. As our ranger told us, "There is no growth in the comfort zone, and there is no comfort in the growth zone." The difficulties of the trail did paint the experience as bleak at times, but in the end, everyone grew tremendously both personally and as a crew, and the final accomplishment of conquering the trail created a permanent spot in our memories, ensuring that our fond memories surrounding Philmont will never be forgotten.

-By Dan McFalls, Troop 116 Historian

2011 PHILMONT ADVENTURE ITINERARY

Itinerary Number 18

Rugged (good mix of program & hiking) - 67 miles

Two sets of layover days allow your crew to participate in lots of program on this 67 mile trek. The Continental Tie & Lumber Company at Crater Lake, where you actually climb tall spar poles with gaffs and a climbing belt, starts off your trek. There are two opportunities to shoot black powder rifles as you visit Black Mountain and Clear Creek camps. Western lore, complete with horse rides, branding, and a chuck wagon dinner, await your crew at Philmont's famous Beaubien. Side hikes to Trail Peak from Beaubien and Hidden Valley from Cimarroncito, as well as rock climbing and an opportunity to visit the Demonstration Forest, make this itinerary one of the most program packed!

Day	Date	Miles	Note	Camp	Elev.	Program Features	Food Pickup
1	Tue 6/21			BASE	6,690	Opening Campfire	
2	Wed 6/22	2.0		Lovers Leap	7,400	Ranger Training	Camping HQ
3	Thu 6/23	3.0		CRATER LAKE	8,400	Continental Tie & Lumber Company, Evening Campfire	
4	Fri 6/24	7.0		BLACK MOUNTAIN	9,040	Post Civil War Settlers, Blacksmithing, Black Powder Rifle	
5	Sat 6/25	3.5	s	BEAUBIEN	9,320	Western Lore, Horse Rides, Branding, Campfire	
6	Sun 6/26	9.0	s	BEAUBIEN	9,320	Side Hike Trail Peak, Chuck Wagon Dinner, Conservation	
7	Mon 6/27	2.5		Porcupine	9,300	Homesteading @ Crooked Creek, Trail Camp	Phillips Junction
8	Tue 6/28	7.5	d	Mt. Phillips	11,650	Rocky Mountain Fur Company, Black Powder Rifle @ Clear Creek; Dry Camp, Water @ Clear Creek	
9	Wed 6/29	10.5	s	CIMARRONCITO		Rock Climbing & Rappelling	
10	Thu 6/30	7.5	s	CIMARRONCITO	8,120	Cabin Tour @ Hunting Lodge, Side Hike Hidden Valley & Window Rock, Demonstration Forest, Conservation	Ute Gulch
11	Fri 7/01	9.5	d	Tooth Ridge	8,240	Dry Camp, Water @ Clarks Fork	
12	Sat 7/02	5.0		BASE	6,690	Hike in via Tooth Ridge Trail, Awards Campfire	

Departs from Camping Headquarters on Day 2 for Lovers Turnaround to go to Lovers Leap Camp
Hike in to Camping HQ via Tooth Ridge Trail.

Campsite Elevations: 7,450' Minimum, 11,650' Maximum
Camps: 4 Staffed, 4 Trail, 2 Layovers, 2 Dry Camps
Sectional Maps: South

NOTE: (d) = Dry Camp
 (s) = Showers may be available

NO CHANGES ARE POSSIBLE FOR CAMPS, FOOD PICKUPS, OR BUS TRANSPORTATION AFTER ITINERARY SELECTION.

Itinerary 18

