

Philmont Lessons learned 2013

Travel

- Confirm arrival time at Philmont, pay close attention to the arrival times
- Get hotel in Colorado Springs (get included breakfast) Hampton Inn Colorado Springs Airport \$80 per room.
- Consider baggage fees, if someone has status with an airline that can offset some fees, bonus
- Meal's while traveling, give each scout cash at the beginning of the trip for them to budget. Makes it much simpler to manage and teaches responsibility.
- Complete tour permit early.
- Consider earlier flight for departure (return trip), 5+ hr at airport, consider traffic
- Paperwork, Lots to read and organize weeks earlier. Get organized and form a binder. Print everything double sided to save space and weight

Selecting Trek's, Methods and what to consider

- When to go
 - Consider when you go, June-July = Dry, August = Wet
 - June/July HOT and August cooler
- Items to consider
 - Activities/programs
 - Miles, overall and per day
 - Elevation gain, consider when to hit the major gains, early or late.
 - Number of Dry Camps
 - Staffed camps>Showers
 - Consider where your conservation program is in your schedule, IE after a 12 mile hike may not be the best.
- Activities consideration
 - Gathered each scout's top 5 activities in priority order
 - Weigh them (first gets 5 pts, second 4 pts etc.)
 - Select all itineraries that contain the top 5, then vote on them, can use weighting method as well. Discuss
- They do offer 7 day treks and split treks

Ranger

- **Dads and ranger are on Vacation**
- Scouts will not wake the adults up until the bear bags were down and dining fly. (30 min after scouts)

- Leaving in August, some rangers are on their last trek and short timers syndrome.

Training

- Have a duplicate set of medical forms/permission forms for training and keep the originals for Philmont
- Keep a log of all the hikes, details of hike (weather, distance, elevation, etc), weight carried, who attended, and time of hike. Training hikes are NOT optional, all needs to attend a minimum number of hikes, plan several overnight hikes and must attend at least one.
- Train with 50 lb packs (expect 45-60 lbs)
- Work as a crew, stick together and practice safe spacing (crew leader responsibility), choose a crew leader after training
- Camp Muir, very difficult and 10k ft elevation (5k gain)
- Tiger Mountain, a good close hike with 2k ft elevation gain, 1 hr 20 min with packs
- Mt Si, 2 hrs with 35 lbs
- 3 mile run in 30 minutes running, no packs, good for a starter.
- Have tough hikes by the time the financial commitment is made.
- Teach the “Rest Step” method and “Catapillar” methods
- Use trekking poles and learn how to use them properly. Safety issue.
- Assemble a plan for what to do if you encounter a bear.

Equipment, what to bring and crew gear

- Rain gear, August, bring good heavy rain gear, June/July lighter gear
- Dining fly, get the dining fly poles or lash two trekking poles together for the height. Seen a crew with a Tyvek fly, theirs leaked.
- Bring a jet boil, Nice to have. Seldom cooked breakfast in the morning, no coffee.
- Bring two shovels (in case one breaks, Mark)
- Toilet paper
 - Put immediately in individual ziplock bags and always accessible. Wet TP is not good.
 - Assign two people to carry, usually one up front and one in back of the crew.
- Bear whistles, one per tent minimum
- New, dry matches or lighter
- One Camelback (2liter) and 2 One liter Nalgens. One liter Nalgene would be a smellable.
- If you use a tent provided by Philmont, they do not offer a footprint or stakes.
- Strongly discourage to use a crazy creek for a sleeping pad, dirty, not a lot of cushion and can get food on it then a smellable w/duct tape wrapped.
- Bring at least 2 stuff sacks/laundry bag
- Pack cover is necessary, make sure it covers EVERYTHING
- Pack sleeping bag in garbage bag or dry bag.
- One bag (ziplock bag) of all smellables, keep it simple.
- Day pack, or some used regular pack

Clothing/Boots

- Pack clothing in ziplocks (waterproof and compressible)
- Use well broken in boots, make sure they fit
 - Make sure you have hiked in them wet.
- Inspect your feet every night for blisters and sores
 - Dry your feet, Gold Bond foot powder when dry
 - Use Mole Skin, Corn Pads, Tegaderm (second skin), Blister pack
- Need dry socks everyday
 - Consider sock liners to prevent blisters
- Suggest ExOficcio boxer-brief underwear (non-cotton)
- Chaffing issues, use body glide
 - If bad, need to aerate and dry, go commando with nylon shorts to dry area.
- Make sure all your clothing fits, belt on pants encouraged.

Washing Clothes on the trail

- Do not wash ALL clothes at once, you may get rain and then clothes may not dry for days (suggest only to wash one pair at a time). Socks can be worn more than once as long as dry, they just smell. Can hang in tent to dry.
- Drying clothes
 - Staffed camps are not fans of clothes lines. Attach to dead trees or maybe able to shim live trees not to harm it
 - Hang off your back pack while hiking to dry clothes
 - Wear them

Food, eating and water

- After every meal, assemble all the undesired food to go to the swap box. Offer to crew first.
- Organize empty bags, garbage bags and extra swap box items. Empty as often as possible to reduce weight and excess.
- Always hike with food in your pocket for energy.
- You may eat food you don't like, very important to eat before the hike. Picky eater will eat food they don't like. Need to eat otherwise they will suffer and run out of energy.
 - Monitor those who may be picky eaters, make sure they eat.
- Good idea to drink up to 1 liter of water before your hike, this will provide the person more energy.
- Take advantage of the swap box

What NOT to bring

- Food
- No water filter needed, water purification tablets provided

- Bear spray not necessary
- Not too much clothing, Long underwear not really necessary (fleece pants good option)

Misc

- Master contact list for home focal, additional email and phone number list.
- Crew leader has a good deal of paperwork and organization
 - Set daily expectations with and communicate to others
- Monitor the wellness of the crew
 - Blisters, Chaffing, Bowel issues (monitor) make sure everyone goes at a minimum every 72 hrs.
- Only expect cell coverage at high clear elevations. Good idea to text key POC at home to provide updates to family. More coverage than expected
- Journals, suggest a water proof pad, strongly encourage, great stories.
- Bring small ziplocks for the field bibles and Passports for staff camp stamps
- Pre plan Merit Badges and maximize hikes. Hiking Merit Badge and Backpacking. Work on these during the training hikes (not on the bus ride down to Philmont).
- Bring compact high quality camera instead of cell phone.
- Read the guides that came from Philmont
- Suggest the REI aluminum chairs, worth the \$ and weight
- Air mattress worth it as well.
- DO NOT get the Burrow, usually slow, stubborn and won't carry a lot of weight
- Bring 2 stoves that use the same fuel
- Buy the sectional maps at basecamp; one adult may consider getting one as well.
- Watch/Alarm clock