

# PHILMONT AMBASSADOR UPDATE

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SERVING BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD

July 2022

## Fires, Covid Challenge Philmont Again

Crews know that Philmont Treks are all about overcoming challenges. In 2022, though, Philmont itself had to overcome multiple challenges even before the first crew stepped on the trail.

### Fires Threaten Again

In April, the Cooks Peak, Hermits Peak and Calf Canyon fires threatened to burn through the South country. High winds and heat put New Mexico in an extreme fire danger situation. Type 1 Incident Management Teams (IMT) which manage fires of national importance along with hundreds of firefighting personnel were called in to fight the blazes that engulfed hundreds of thousands of acres and threatened Philmont.

Philmont had upped its efforts to prevent another disaster from shutting down the Ranch after the 2018 Ute Park fire. Crews thinned tree stands and cleared the forest floor of dead wood to make the area more resistant to wildfire. Hundreds of slash piles were burned during the winter months. [See conservation article on page 8.]

While Philmont's preparedness impressed the IMTs, it was the passion of Philmont fire fighters, many of whom were former Rangers and Philmont Staff, that really stood out. Adopting a "Never Again"

**Challenges** (Continued on page 6)

**Ambassador  
Survey Needs  
Your Input**

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Shelley O'Neill, Director of Business Operations, describes the response to the Cooks Peak fire to Ambassador seminar participants. Photo by Tom Baltutis

## Hoyt, O'Neill Explain Importance of Ambassadors In Changing Lives

Roger Hoyt, Philmont's General Manager, along with Shelley O'Neill, Director of Business Operations, addressed a number of questions that Ambassadors had at a session at Rocky Mountain Scout Camp during the June seminars.

**How important is the Ambassador Program?** As Ambassadors, your role is important now more than ever. When I ask a room full of crew advisors how many are here for the first time, three-quarters of them raise their hand. Although there is a high percent of returning advisors, there are always new ones coming. You can't assume everyone knows what's going on. Ambassadors are the living, breathing ex-

amples of how Philmont can change lives at the Training Center, Individual Programs, Off Season Adventures, and certainly at Camping HQ. I don't take your mission lightly.

Keep in mind that people are coming here for the first time every year, and you are an important part of that process.

**Does Philmont pay for itself?** Philmont does pay for itself when we are running; when we are not as in 2018, we lose \$10 million a year. Like most summer camps, we try to break even and have a few dollars extra – in the case of Philmont, that is

**Questions** (Continued on page 2)

## Hoyt, O'Neill Update Ambassadors at Seminars



Roger Hoyt, Philmont's General Manager, talked to Ambassadors about the important role they serve in helping the Ranch bring Scouts into all the programs on both sides of the road.

Photo by Tom Baltutis

### Questions (Continued from page 1)

\$2 to \$3 million for capital improvement. We are very sensitive to raising fees, but it is unfortunate that sometimes you have to have increases.

On the other hand, scholarship money is available, and every year we do not tap into all that is available. We have enough to fund one scout from every crew, but not everyone needs that or is aware it is available. This is something that Ambassadors can help to get the word out about.

We also have scholarships to assist at PTC, Family Camp, Leadership training, and other attendees. However, everyone should be expected to pay something.

If a crew has a real need and does their part in raising funds and getting equipment, we will try our best to get them to Philmont.

**Was Philmont mortgaged as part of the bankruptcy proceedings?** All BSA properties were used as security to obtain a line of credit during the bankruptcy. In normal times, the BSA had an unsecured line of credit of 250 million dollars because we

usually had sufficient cash assets. This time around, our creditors needed to have some security for the funds they made available.

### How can we financially support Philmont?

We welcome your financial support, but during this time of restructuring, Philmont is not permitted to accept donations from some states [Editor's note: These are California, District of Columbia, Illinois, Kansas, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Virgin Islands and Wisconsin]. Residents of other states can contact the Ranch directly about donations.

If you wish to include Philmont in your estate planning, contact me, Roger Hoyt, after September when things on the Ranch quiet down. Gifts should be made to fit in with Philmont's priorities. Large donations are certainly welcome, but need to be discussed with Philmont's Development Department.

### Can Philmont provide frequent updates to Ambassadors on the website changes and treks?

Updates are being made all the time to the website by many people, so it is changing frequently. If we did send notices, you would be constantly inundated. Instead, there is a rhythm to what is published that you need to be aware of. In fall, we try to publish the PTC schedule. In January we come out with the Itinerary Guide and the Guidebook to Adventure comes out in March. Notices do go out on social media.

It takes staff a lot of work just to keep up with everything at the Ranch. During the summer, most of us consider it to be a good day if we can go to bed the same day we wake up in.

### Will Philmont someday allow RV camping on site?

There are long range plans to move the opening campfire bowl to the Camping HQ side to avoid the need for scouts to cross the highway at night. That will free up space that we might be able to use for RVs. There is also a desire on the part of retired summer volunteer staff to be able to use their RVs for living quarters, and we may be able to accommodate five to ten spaces for that as well.

## Ambassador Generosity To Restore Portraits, Aid Friendship Fund

Ambassadors donated over \$1200 to restore the faded portraits of Waite and Genevieve Phillips hanging in the PTC Dining Hall.

During their Seminar week, the Ambassadors teamed up with the Scouters attending the "International Adventures in Scouting" Conference to conduct a silent auction of scouting items and memorabilia. Over \$5000 was collected to help the World Friendship Fund. Thanks everyone!



Portraits of Waite and Genevieve Phillips will be restored thanks to Ambassador's generosity. *Philmont Photos*

**From the PTC Director**

# Take A New Approach to Promoting Philmont

**By Danny Tucker, PTC Director**

Apple is arguably one of the most successful companies in the world. Rarely do they ever promote their products. Their marketing strategy revolves around the customer experience. "You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology – not the other way around," said Steve Jobs, Former Chairman, Co-Founder of Apple.



As an Ambassador, we each know the Philmont Experience because we lived it at some point in our Scouting tenure. How do you promote Philmont? Do we you promote the experience or the product?

**Webinar Dates Set**

September 27, 2022 - 8:00 EDT

April 23, 2023 - 8:00 EDT

I would like to suggest that Ambassadors change their presentations to speak more about the experience (the why) rather than the what (a trek or conference). You can share how the experience impacts lives. Move from promoting the products, 12-day, 9-day, 7-day treks, PTC conferences, individual programs etc., to sharing what the experience is like. Talk about experiences such as why families spending time together is a good thing; how a trek strengthens not only Scouting, but the person. Share the experience beyond the product - the patriotic ceremonies, the traditions, and the evening events. You can talk about the land, the people, the saga. Philmont is so much more than a trek and a conference. It's about the experience!

The last few years has been hard for Scouting and even harder to attract guests to the ranch. We need a fresh approach to promoting the ranch. Why are you an Ambassador? Share that story. Share your passion. Once the hook is placed, guests will find the product that best meets their interests.

Need help getting started? Try sharing the new Vision Statement for the Training

Center:

*The Philmont Training Center provides the premier environment for **learning, playing, relaxing,** and creating lifetime **friendships** and unforgettable **memories**. Because of our world class learning environment, subject matter experts, resources of the Philmont Scout Ranch, and exceptional customer service, guests will return home with improved skills and a sense of adventure that positively impacts the world.*

Notice that we never talk about 'conferences' in the Vision Statement.

See you on the Trail!

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## Ambassador Survey Needs Your Input

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and will provide Philmont with your updated contact information along with information about your experience.

**You must complete the survey by 1/1/23 to continue being an Ambassador.**

[\*\*Click Here\*\*](#)

**Please complete survey today!**



Philmont Photo

## Fall Ambassador Adventures Offer Two Options

Autumn is the ideal time of year to enjoy the quiet and splendor of Philmont's backcountry the same way that Waite Phillips did before it became the world's largest youth camp. One option is a seven day Trek that takes you to Rayado River, Craggs, Fish Camp, Beaubien, Crater Lake and Lover's Leap. Participants will work on a conservation project and earn the coveted Philmont Autumn Adventure Arrowhead Patch.

A Hub-And-Spoke Adventure option will center on Waite's Hunting Lodge with day hikes to scenic vistas, visits with Staff to learn about the inner secrets of Philmont operations, and hanging out to enjoy autumn in God's Country.

Going on either adventure will fulfill an Ambassador's performance goal to participate in a Trek or Conference at least once during a three year period. **Space is limited on each trip, and the deadline to sign up is August 1.** You can register for either adventure via the Philmont Camping Gateway by clicking [here](#).

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## Welcome New Ambassadors

Doug Callgren - Simon Kenton Council  
Rebecca Chambers - Catalina Council  
Michael Griffin - Bay Area Council  
Sherri Moravec - Great Southwest

# Ambassadors Spend Week Having Fun While Learning



Clockwise from top. Several Ambassadors climbed the Tooth of Time during their free day. World famous ventriloquist Ronn Lucas and Buffalo Billy entertained a packed house of PTC attendees on Wednesday evening. Ambassador I team headed out to the backcountry to visit the Abreau Camp. Ambassador II participants met with Wranglers and learned more about Cavalcades while touring Cattle Headquarters. Dustin Taylor explained campsite layout maps during a visit to Hunting Lodge.



Attendees also got special tours of Rayado, Hunting Lodge, Philmont's Demonstration Forest, Camping HQ and Philmont Training Center in addition to learning about Philmont's history, programs and insights into better ways to promote the Ranch.

Photos by Holly Thompson, Tom Baltutis and Scott McAllister

**The 2023 Ambassador Seminars will be June 18 to 24. Save the dates!**

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***Focus on the Backcountry***

# Miners Park Rocks Provide Awesome Climbing Venue

**Elevation: 7960****Water: Purified Well****Campsites: 16**

You should not expect swings, slides, amusement rides or mystery mine roller coasters at Miners Park. In topological terms in the western U.S. mountains, a "park" is a broad, flat mostly open area.

Miners Park is a particular grassy opening and a favorite place for mule deer which can be an attraction for mountain lion known to have been seen in the area. But that's excitement of a different kind.

While the camping area is relatively flat, the fun part of Miners Park is the program venue located about a 30-minute hike away. Miners Park is well noted for its climbing which is located near the rock formation known as "Betty's Bra," one of the

intrusions of dacite porphyry formed during the Paleogene Period of the Cenozoic Era some 22-40 million years ago.

These intrusions, which also formed the Tooth of Time, Baldy and Cathedral Rock, occurred when magma from deep within the Earth rose through older rock layers and slowly cooled. The sedimentary rock, generally shale, acted as a mold for the intrusive magma, causing it to harden and cool where the sedimentary rock was strongest. Over many thousands of years, the older sedimentary rock eroded and left the harder igneous formations. These rocks make Miners Park a great place for a climbing program.

**P2**

Miners Park staff member Andrew Jacob climbs a route as he trains new staff. *Photo by Steele Brooks*

## ***Climbing Staff Help Scouts Succeed by Overcoming Fears***

**By Staff Writer Eleanor Hasenbeck**

Philmont is full of challenges. From climbing the western slope of Phillips to talking yourself through the last mile in the heat of the canyon's afternoon sun, here we tackle tests of mental and physical fortitude. We overcome.

At Miners Park, Scouts quickly learn there is more to rock climbing than scrambling up the cliff. It takes thought as to where to place your fingers and toes and sometimes encouragement from crew members.

"You get a sense of success," said Zac Stall, of Expedition 719-P1 from Coronado, California. "Just knowing that you accomplished something that you were scared of makes you feel a lot better." Stall doesn't like heights, but after about ten minutes of what he described as "sucking it up and climbing," he found himself at the top of the rock wall.

Rock climbing at Miners Park is a challenge by choice activity. Nobody is volunteered by others. Each participant steps up, by their own choice, to climb. Stall said knowing he would only climb if he wanted

took stress away from the activity. His crew also helped him up, updating him on his progress. They told him he looked like a monkey. "It was funny, because I know I didn't," Stall said. "I was slipping."

A similar scene played out on the pole yard of Crater Lake. Frank Fugetta, an advisor for Expedition 720-Q, knew his two sons and their friends would be watching. But one thing stood between him and kissing Carl and Cara, the carabiners at the top of the spar pole - he's deathly afraid of heights. Knowing this, the boys took him to practice at an indoor rock climbing gym near their home west of New Orleans. He put on a harness and gaffs, and spike by spike, he made his way up.

"You've gotta set a good example," said Fugetta. "You've got to overcome your fears, so you just push through it."

Miners Park Program Counselor Carolyn Warner was also among the timid. Before working at Miners, she had climbed on real rock once at Cimarroncito, with a lot of encouragement and coaching from her

***Climbing*** (Continued on page 6)**Philmont Ambassador Newsletter**

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# Philmont is Overcoming Season's Challenges

## Challenges *(Continued from page 1)*

attitude, they tirelessly fought the blazes. Crews hustled to build nine miles of fire line to prevent flames from encroaching upon Ranch property.

Though largely successful, their efforts did not prevent the fire from reaching Zastrow where it burned the cabin. Fortunately, Wood Badge memorabilia in the Zastrow cabin was saved.

"Philmont is becoming the epicenter nationally for educating people on how to protect areas from wildfire in the US," said Shelley O'Neill. "Our staff received special recognition from the Type 1 Fire Teams because they could see the passion and love for Philmont within them."

Philmont continues to be in extreme fire danger, and precautions are in place throughout the ranch. All wood fires are banned. There is no smoking allowed in the backcountry. All cooking must be done with backcountry stoves inside fire rings or on bare earth. Only propane-fired blacksmithing forges are being used. Black powder rifle shooting programs have implemented special fire watch procedures to ensure that gun shot residue does not start a ground fire.

Evacuation routes and rally points with alternates have been established for every camp so that in case an event occurs, procedures are in place to get people out safely.

Precipitation had been scarce in the area for the past six months. Everyone is praying that the monsoon season which usually starts in July will bring needed moisture.



Steve Nelson, Camping Director, explains the procedures Philmont has to follow to provide a Trek season while managing Covid on the Ranch. *Photo by Tom Baltutis*

### Covid Sickens Staff and Crews

Covid still poses an ongoing threat to Crews and PTC guests. Everyone is required to be vaccinated or provide proof of a negative Covid test taken not more than five days before arrival at the ranch. Masks are required for everyone both indoor and outdoor except when isolating with their cohort. Only recently have PTC conference participants been allowed to not wear masks within their classroom cohort. Click [here](#) for the latest guidelines.

Nevertheless, Covid cases are occurring at the ranch, both among staff and within crews. Staff illness has sidelined

many personnel, but fortunately the cases among vaccinated individuals have been relatively mild. Still, this has strained the ability of the Ranch to provide services especially in the commissary and Tooth of Time traders. Crew Advisors have been tapped to assist serving food in the Camping HQ cafeteria which has been a great help. Volunteer help is appreciated and opportunities are still available. Contact Philmont for details.

Once a crew hits the trail, they are asked to monitor themselves. If an individual shows signs of illness, they can be tested at a staff camp. If positive for Covid, they are taken off the trail and put in isolation at the Infirmary. The remaining crew members are brought to a backcountry trail camp where they can go on day hikes, fish, and do other activities. Once everyone is healthy, they can proceed on a trek of their own design, hopefully getting as much of a Philmont experience as possible.

### Crew Conditioning

Covid is not the only factor that has been affecting crews on the trail. The lack of conditioning for the exertion of a long backpacking trip is still causing unprepared crews to come off the trail. Sometimes Philmont is able to switch them to a less strenuous itinerary so they can continue their Trek. However, if an adult advisor has to drop out, and there are insufficient numbers to maintain Youth Protection requirements, then the entire crew will have to return to base camp.

"Be Prepared" for the challenges of Philmont is as important now as it has ever been.

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## Climbing Staff Help Crews Reach The Top

### Climbing *(Continued from page 5)*

friends. "Because you are scared of things, a lot of times you have to trust other people besides yourself and realize your own ability is a lot higher than what you usually think it is," Warner said. "A lot of our Scouts say 'I can't do this. I can't do this.' We're like 'Yeah you can.'"

Staff at rock and spar pole climbing

camp work to calm participants, build up their confidence and coach them when they can use some help. Warner applied to work at Miners to challenge herself. She knew she wanted to become a better climber, so she decided to make it happen by working at a climbing camp. Today, watching her climb to the top of Betty's Bra, you can't tell that only four months ago the idea of climbing made her feel pet-

rified. She said overcoming her fear makes her feel the same way a Scout does when they reach the crest of the rock.

"That's kind of how I feel about this summer. I was scared, and now I bought all the gear, and I am going to go get a gym membership of my own."

**P2**

*Reprinted from the July 2016 PhilNews*

## Invite Interest In Philmont Through Guerilla Tactics

Backpacking Philmont's trails teaches the necessity of travelling light and carrying the essentials - yet being prepared for unexpected encounters. Likewise, you don't need to be carrying your display around to do an impromptu promotion for Philmont - just a few small items may suffice.

"Guerrilla marketing" is the creative use of novel or unconventional methods in order to attract interest. One approach is "product placement" like putting a box of brand name cereal on the breakfast table in a movie scene. Another approach is steering conversations toward a topic you want to discuss with visual prompts.

One of the perks of attending the Ambassador Seminars is getting an official Philmont Ambassador nametag. Upon seeing your ID with "Philmont Ambassador" on it, people may start asking questions about your involvement with the Ranch thus providing you the perfect opportunity to tell them why they should experience Philmont for themselves.

Similarly, wearing a Trek shirt, carrying a Philmont water bottle or having a PTC coffee cup may be just the thing to kick off an opportunity to talk about HOmE.

These informal encounters are the best time to share your enthusiasm about the Philmont experience as suggested in Danny Tucker's column on Page 3 rather than promote any specific program. Tell about why Philmont is so special to you and why everyone should take the opportunity to hike the trails and to make life-long friends with the people they meet at Philmont. Talk about the togetherness their spouses, sons and daughters will enjoy while climbing, riding and sharing stories. Excite them about the wonders of Philmont first before guiding them to the opportunity that best fits their desires.

While it would be nice to have supply of brochures in your pocket to hand out in such instances, paper leaflets have become a thing of the past. However, you can have a business card with the Philmont Scout Ranch QR code on the back. Most anyone with a cell phone is now used to using QR codes to order from menus and connect to websites. The Philmont Scout Ranch QR code is available to download [here](#).



Name tags, water bottles, crew shirts, business cards and many other items can spark conversations about Philmont wherever you are.

### Who's Who at Philmont

## Ashley Olson - Tooth of Time Traders E-Commerce Manager

#### Duties at

**Philmont:** I am a full time assistant manager at the Tooth of Time Traders. Aside from helping manage our retail store, I also manage our website, social media, customer service and six backcountry satellite operations.

**How did you come to work at Philmont?** My first summer at Philmont was after high school graduation in 2005. My sister worked here due to her major in Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration. I saw the wonderful time she had and decided to give it a go. I ended coming back three more summers seasonally, and during the last summer here I met my husband who lived in Cimarron. We moved to Denver after getting married at Philmont. In early 2021, I accepted a position at ToTT so I came back.

**Number of Years at Philmont:** 6

**Prior Positions at Philmont:**

- 2006 - Activities & Welcome Center
- 2007- Tent City Manager / Activities & Welcome Center



- 2009 - Activities & Welcome Center Assistant Manager
- 2021-2 - Tooth of Time Traders E-Commerce Manager

**Prior Scouting Experience:** I do not have past Scouting experience. My first experience with scouting was my first summer at Philmont in 2005. Starting this year, I am the Cimarron Pack's Cubmaster.

**Most Memorable Experience at Philmont:** My most memorable experience at Philmont would be my wedding day. I had the pleasure of getting married at the Philmont Chapel.

**Most Humorous Experience at Philmont:** One on brat day, we decided to advertise in front of the dining hall. I dressed up as a brat, and we made the table into a "grill". I danced and sizzled on the table!

**What do you like most about working at Philmont:** I love the people I get to work with along with the amazing customers we have. The atmosphere is unbeatable!

**What's your favorite off duty activity?** I love spending time with my husband and two daughters - hiking, going on bike rides, and cuddling!

# Fire Ecology and Forestry at Philmont

*From the Conservation Department*

All the ecosystems in the world evolved with periodic disturbance, such as floods, wind drought, and, of course, fire. Plants and animals well-adapted to local disturbance regimes formed natural communities that could not only withstand the impacts of disturbance, but actually require those disruptions to maintain their advantage over other plants and animals. Here in northeastern New Mexico, fires in the plains and lower elevations would occur every three to fifteen years. These frequent low-intensity fires favored the formation of pinon, juniper, and ponderosa forests. At higher elevations, aspen, fir, and spruce forests experienced higher-intensity but much less frequent fire, on the order of one-to-three hundred years. These fires would take out the conifers, open places for the aspen to grow, before eventually being overtaken by the conifers once again. These fire return intervals helped shaped the natural communities of Philmont and periodically rejuvenated the forests, keeping them healthy.

All of this began to change with the arrival of European settlers. As forests were harvested, settlements were built, livestock consumed grasses and industries relied on natural resources. People regarded fire as a destructive enemy that must be fought. By 1935, federal policy dictated that all fires should be put out by 10AM the day after they were reported; this "10AM Policy" remained in place until the mid-1970's. The legacy of this policy, combined with unsustainable logging, ranching, and develop-



The difference between an treated and an untreated forest is readily seen at Cimarroncito.

*Philmont photos*

ment, was forests that became more crowded with trees, had less grasses and fine fuels on the ground, and changed in species composition to include those trees that could only exist in the absence of periodic fire. These factors, coupled with the drying climate of the Western United States, have led to an increase in the severity and frequency of wildfires.

Since the turn of the century, Philmont has experienced two large-scale catastrophic fires. The exceedingly destructive behavior of these fires was driven by the fuel conditions in forests altered by industrial use and fire suppression. In 2002, the Ponil Complex Fire burned 92,194 acres on Philmont and the surrounding areas. More recently, the 2018 Ute Park Fire burned 36,740 acres, including most of Philmont's central country. The north and south portions of Philmont were separated by more than 27,000 acres of burned central country. In response, Philmont quadrupled the size of its summer forestry program and began operating forestry crews year-round to address those very forest conditions that twice resulted in catastrophic wildfires.

The forestry crews focus on removing understory and selected trees that increase the amount of space between trees, allow for growth of grasses and fine fuels, and provide conditions that will burn with much less intensity. This work not only protects people, watersheds, and infrastructure, but it creates healthier forest habitat. These forest thinning projects follow major backcountry access roads, creating "shaded fuel breaks" along priority road corridors. In the event of a fire, this shaded fuel break will provide a buffer that allows for backcountry staff and participants to escape, and an

access for firefighting personnel to enter and exit the area and undertake safer fire operations. In addition to the dedicated forestry crews, backcountry camp staff implement "defensible space" - thinning around cabins in order to make them easier to protect in the event of the next fire.

Once the trees are cut down, they still need to be removed from the forest. Trunks of large trees are milled into lumber by a specialized staff crew and are used in a variety of projects around the Ranch. Trees that are too small to be milled are cut up into firewood that is given away to the local communities. The smaller branches that cannot be used for either purpose are piled in open areas, left to dry, and then burned during the winter.

After the 2018 Ute Park fire, Philmont received an outpouring of support in the forms of monetary and equipment donations. One of the most notable donations came in the form of a mastication forestry tractor. This machine is used to grind smaller trees into mulch on moderate terrain, specifically in the large pastures that the Ranch uses for grazing.

There will be more wildfires on Philmont's property. Whether the next fires are catastrophic, like the Ponil Complex or Ute Park fires, or rejuvenating, like historic fires, will be determined by the condition of Philmont's forests. Active forest management is a priority for Philmont. It is of the utmost importance, both to the Conservation Department and the Ranch as a whole, to strive for a healthier forest and to ensure the resiliency and longevity of this very special place.

**P2**

**Click [here](#)  
to contribute to the  
BSA Philmont  
Recovery Fund or  
[here](#)  
to contribute to  
the Philmont Staff  
Association Fire  
Recovery Fund.**