

PHILMONT AMBASSADOR UPDATE

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SERVING BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD

July 2024

Philmont Gets Campwide Improvements

Scouting America's name has changed, but its commitment to Philmont Scout Ranch is as strong as ever. That's the bottom line of Shelley O'Neill's talk at the Ambassadors Seminar in June. After several years of financial uncertainty, money is being allocated again on little seen but necessary infrastructure and equipment that keep the Ranch running smoothly. Altogether, are \$7 million in capital improvements taking place this year.

Health and safety are always at the top of Scouting America's list, and that means communication, water and medical needs.

Though most of Philmont is a wilderness, communication with the outside world and between places on the ranch is essential for modern operations. Philmont is spending \$100,000 on digital communication equipment, necessary for both daily operations and emergency response, over the next three years.

To cut down on the need for paper



At the Baldy Town General Store, trekkers can now charge purchases thanks to better connectivity around the Ranch. (Tom Baltutis photo)

money in the backcountry, new data communications equipment will allow debit and charge cards to be used at remote Trading Posts.

Looking forward to 2025, the PTC campus will have a Wi-Fi system that will keep guests connected to the internet. This will be a big relief to allay concerned Scouters about keeping touch with affairs back home while attending conferences or Family Adventure Camp.

Communication is physical as well as electronic, so five new vehicles were purchased this year. To keep speeds down along the highway, Philmont purchased a radar trailer to place along the road to monitor traffic. "Last week there were 19,157 vehicles passing by and 56 speeders," noted Shelley.

In the dry southwest, water is a vital resource, and the Philmont water supply needs periodic maintenance. Every 5 years, the treatment membranes that keep the water safe to drink at Base Camp need to be replaced at a cost of \$140,000, and this is scheduled for 2024. Philmont also has a leaking water supply pipe that stretches to

Appeal From Management

PTC Needs Recruitment Efforts

Philmont Ambassadors have been doing a great job at promoting "Both Sides of the Road" to Scouts their home councils. However, Danny Tucker, PTC Director, knows that in the future it is going to take more than awareness to make people want to come to Philmont for a trek and especially to come to PTC for a conference.

"People already know the WHAT of Philmont," says Danny. "The WHAT is Treks, Conferences, and Family Adventure Camp. But it's the WHY that will get them here."

Why come to PTC? It is for the Experience with a Capital E that you will not get anywhere else in Scouting – even at the other High Adventure bases, as great as

they are.

The "Philmont Experience" includes all the things that happen before, during, and at the end of the conference day.

It is the pride in the face of a Cub Scout helping to raise the American Flag on a pristine summer day in view of the Tooth of Time. It is the lifelong friendships you form with other Scouters at your conference. It is the joy in a child's face as they complete a project at PTC's amazing Craft Center, and when they meet the challenge of being "tougher than a Ranger" and then they enjoy peach cobbler with ice cream in the

Recruitment (Continued on page 7)

Improvements (Continued on page 8)

From the Camping Director

2025 Trek Numbers Are On An Upward Trend



Matt Hart, Camping Director updated Ambassadors on Trek participation and changes in programs ahead. (Tom Baltutis photo)

Philmont is having a great summer in 2024 says Matt Hart, Camping Director. Camping Headquarters will see 1,370 crews on Treks and Cavalcades for an estimated 14,265 participants. Next year looks even better, with a projected attendance of 18,013. He thanked Philmont Ambassadors for having an impact on generating these numbers.

Importantly, there has been a good increase in the number of council contingents. Roger Hoyt and Danny Tucker made a big effort to pitch Philmont to Council Executives at the last two National Annual Meetings. Incentives for increasing the number of council contingents announced last year are paying off. In 2023, 31 councils sent 67 contingent crews. This year, there are 37 Councils sending 97 crews, and 23 of those are new. Looking to 2025, Philmont already has 32 Councils sending 83 crews as of today. That number is expected to grow.

Demand for Treks is on an upswing to the point that there is now a wait list for 2025 slots. As of June, there were 47 crews on the 12-day trek wait list, 31 on the 9-day, and 23 on the 7-day trek list, and 82

on Cavalcades. "It's been a while since Philmont's had a wait list, and we're pretty excited about that," said Matt.

Despite being on the wait list, it is well known that a number of crews will change plans for various reasons, so Philmont does expect that most of those wanting to get a trek in 2025 can be accommodated.

Although the Lottery is gone, Philmont does have a registration cut-off date. If a unit does get its application in by that date, they will get a slot. After that, there can be a wait list for popular dates. The new web site expected this fall, will have better instructions and procedures explaining the sign up process for 2026 Treks.

Philmont recognizes that the process of signing up for a Trek can be pretty intimidating, especially to new leaders. Shelly O'Neill announced that the Marketing Department is working on materials and guidance for units that will assist them in recruiting participants, signing up for a trek, figuring logistics, and fundraising. This is all part of a new and improved Philmont web presence that will be rolled out in the fall.

Even picking an itinerary can be an intimidating experience, says Matt. The

current system of route lengths, location, and camps can be confusing and cumbersome. Matt anticipates that in the fall of 2024 a major effort will be made to simplify choices. He envisions it this way: "We will ask, 'Do you want to do North Country or South? Do you want to do heavy program or hiking?' After that, we can work it out."

Philmont continues to see crews that are just not prepared. That is even more evident in 7 day itineraries. "You see folks who think this is just another summer camp. They think that if they can do a week at a camp, they can do anything," notes Matt.

That is painfully true for Treks that include Baldy, and Philmont has the medical evidence to show it. "This morning, we had 56 people in the infirmary," said Matt. "We call that a typical Monday." It is a serious problem. Consequently, starting in 2025, if a crew wants to climb Baldy, it will have to be on a 9 or 12- day Trek.

There are also too many who do not believe that Philmont is strict about its medical requirements. So far this year, there have been 50 advisors who arrived at Base Camp and were told that they cannot do a Trek. This puts an enormous strain on Philmont's staff and facilities to accommodate them and their crews.

Matt said that there is consideration being given to rotating the Individual Program offerings so that some are offered every other year in order to make crew numbers more viable. There will also probably be an expansion of some of the specialty programs like the Zia Trek. Another program which will be piloted this fall is an adult autumn experience hut-to-hut adventure where trekkers will only need to hike between camps while their gear is transported for them.

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Philmont continues to see crews that are just not prepared.

Villa Philmonte History

Home Inspired by Phillips' European Travels

To some, it may seem a bit odd that the world's preeminent high-adventure camp for youth might include a unique Spanish-style mansion at its headquarters. Philmont Scout Ranch proudly features just such a structure: the magnificent Villa Philmonte.

When Waite and Genevieve Phillips made their second, larger gift in 1941, it included almost all of the ranch properties the family had assembled starting about two decades previous. Among those transferred assets were mountain outposts such as the Rayado Lodge (Fish Camp) and Cimarroncito, all the ranching infrastructure and buildings, and the Villa Philmonte.

The opulent residence adds an interesting, if unlikely, dimension to the unparalleled Philmont experience.

Once Waite Phillips made big money in big oil, he was not reluctant to spend it. In 1925, after the multi-million-dollar sale of his self-named oil company, he began planning for the simultaneous construction of not one, but two mansions for the Phillips family. One would become Villa Philbrook, the family's main home about two miles south of downtown Tulsa. The second, the Villa Philmonte, would be the Phillips' cool summer retreat on their scenic New Mexico ranch.

In the oil business, Waite Phillips was notorious for his meticulous planning, hard work, attention to detail, and standards of excellence. He was no different when it came to the building of his two mansions; happenstance was not an option. The first order of home-building business involved the selection of an architect. Through business, Phillips had befriended J. C. Nichols, of Kansas City. In the early 1920's, Nichols had conceived of and built the Country Club Plaza, the first-ever suburban shopping center designed to cater to newly mobile customers arriving in automobiles.

Nichols settled on a Spanish Colonial Revival style for his groundbreaking development, and selected as his architect Edward B. Delk, a Pennsylvania native who had spent considerable time studying in Europe. After Country Club Plaza opened to critical acclaim, Nichols was eager to recommend Delk, along with landscape architect Hare & Hare Company, to his friend



The Villa served as the first National Training Center of the Scouts when it was donated in 1948. (Tom Baltutis photo)

Waite Phillips. (Coincidentally, a later philanthropist for Philmont, Norton Clapp, also gained notoriety by building and early suburban shopping center in Washington State.)

After the Waite Phillips Company was sold on July 25, 1925, the man for which it was named had time and energy to pour into the Villa projects. Ned Delk came to Cimarron that October to survey the grounds of the old Urraca Ranch apple orchard, where the Villa would showcase a majestic view of the mountains to the west. Delk executed an initial architectural sketch. Blueprints were finalized in early

1926, and construction commenced at a fast and furious pace. As building continued by the John Long Company at both the New Mexico and Oklahoma projects, the Phillips family (minus youngster Chope, who stayed at Philmont) boarded an ocean liner in June and sailed for Europe.

The holiday provided inspiration for Waite and Genevieve for style and furnishings for the burgeoning residences back in the states. Designers and builders were required to make changes on the fly, and Waite Phillips was actively involved in all his construction projects.

Villa (continued on page 6)



The work of both the Villa architect and builder are recognized on tiles embellishing the walkways around the grounds. (Tom Baltutis Photos)

Future Programs: Hub-and-Spoke Treks and Merit Badges

Philmont is looking to its future by taking a step back. When Philturn Rocky Mountain Scout Camp first started in what is now the Ponil Camp, some contingent crews did variations of a hub-and-spoke adventure. Taking a cue from this sort of experience will be key to opening up Philmont to more scouts.

The camp already has had experience with managing hub-and-spoke itineraries. In recent years, crews who have had a member come down with Covid were diverted to a trail camp at Herradura. From there, they did day hikes to explore the surrounding area while their affected crew member recovered in the Infirmary. The response was very positive.

This camping arrangement has proven helpful for crews physically unprepared for the high country. Instead of sending them home, their itinerary was changed to a hub-and-spoke out of Herradura.

In the future, Philmont may be offering similar arrangements so that younger scouts can experience some part of the backcountry and whet their appetites for higher adventures in the mountains as they get older and more experienced. "It's well known that Scouts who have been to Philmont stay with the program longer," notes Danny Tucker, PTC Director.

Philmont is now considering offering Merit Badge programs with the same goal. What better place to learn scouting skills than at Philmont? Some merit badges being considered are Search and Rescue and First Aid, which already fit in with programs offered at staffed camps.

Another concept being explored is to develop a program at PTC for 12 to 13 year old Scouts to attend while the senior scouts of their unit are on a trek. These younger scouts could be doing scoutcraft at the Craft Center or earning their Rifle merit badge at the Shooting Center. The American Heritage Merit Badge requires a visit to a national museum, and the National Scouting Museum is just a short walk away from PTC.



Anticipating the path of the target is an essential skill taught by staff at Harlan's reopened shotgun range. (Philmont photo)

Backcountry Programs Adapt and Change for the Times

A Philmont, camp and programs continue to change and evolve. The biggest news is that the shotgun program is back at the reopened Harlan Camp, though not the burros. Nearby trail camps nearby such as Vaca have reopened.

Santa Claus camp, which had hosted the shotgun program, has been converted back to a trail camp. Carson Meadows is getting a needed rest this year.

After the fires of 2018, Philmont was able to work with surrounding property owners to accommodate hikers on their land. Now, Philmont is in the process of returning those programs to Philmont property. For example, Philmont is looking at returning the climbing program that is at Chase Ranch back to Dean Cow. It's not that the program isn't working there. "We just don't want to wear our welcome with our neighbors, and if the need ever comes up again where we need our neighbors, it's important to know that they're supportive of us and we can count on them," said Matt Hart, Camping Director.

Philmont is also continuing to use other adjoining lands. Although the current land use agreement for Treks on the Valle Vidal will expire in September, talks are

ongoing to reach a long-term agreement on its use. Ring Place is running a popular mountain biking and astronomy program, and Philmont expects those to continue into and well beyond 2025 as arrangements with the U.S. Forest Service get firmed up.

Matt said that there is also consideration being given to rotating the Individual Program offerings so that some are offered every other year in order to make crew numbers more viable. "Sometimes we are in competition with ourselves by offering all of them at the same time," explains Matt.

He added that there will probably be an expansion of some of the specialty programs like the Zia Trek.

Another program which will be piloted this fall is an adult autumn experience hut-to-hut adventure where trekkers will only need to hike between camps while their gear is transported for them. This will come at a premium cost, but for those who might not otherwise be able to hike the mountain trails, it will be a possible alternative.

Ambassador Seminars Show Why Philmont Is Special

During a week of Philmont perfection, Ambassadors attending their seminars enjoyed fun, facts and festivities. The goal of the week, as Danny Tucker, PTC Director, explained, is to enlighten, equip, and empower Ambassadors to be the best they can at promoting Philmont and recruiting attendees.

Upon arriving, each attendee received their coveted official 2024 Philmont Ambassador ID badge. Starting off the week, they got updates on Ranch operations from upper management. Shelley O'Neill, Business Director, went over the \$7 million in capital improvements to the Ranch, Camping Director Matt Hart shared exciting news about Trek participation, and PTC Director Danny Tucker presented ideas about how his area is adapting to the evolving needs of Scouts up and down the Scouting program.

Exploring the Ranch in places and ways that few get to experience is central to the seminar experience. The Ambassador 1 group got a walking tour of PTC as well as Camping HQ, including a fascinating behind-the-scenes visit to the Commissary where most all of Philmont's food and equipment is managed. Little known details about Waite and Genevieve's life at the ranch were shared during their private tour of the Villa. They also got out to Ponil to see a very active staff camp.

The Ambassador 2 group visited backcountry areas where forest management has improved stands of trees. Later they got an extended Suburban tour of Baldy Town, French Henry and Miranda camps. Cattle HQ was on their itinerary where they could see the workings of the ranch life that Waite Phillips loved so much.

Wrapping up the week was an insightful presentation at the Rocky Mountain Scout Camp by Shelley O'Neill and Roger Hoyt, General Manager, about the future of Ranch operations.

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Clockwise from top: Backcountry tours included a trip to Baldy Town to admire the mountain view. The Ambassador 1 group gets a tour of the Commissary which distributes a quarter million food packs a season. Ambassador 2 participants learn about the fur trade at a visit to the Miranda camp. Ambassador 1 class poses below the Tooth of Time as they wrap up the week at Rocky Mountain Scout Camp. (Photos by Tom Baltutis)

Villa Took Shape in 1926 and 1927

Villa (Continued from page 3)

The Long Company completed the Villa Philmonte in the spring of 1927, and the Phillips family took residence that June, shortly after Philbrook had been christened with a house-warming party that was the buzz of Tulsa society. The opening of the Villa Philmonte was much lower key. Waite brought out his four brothers, Frank, L.E., Ed, and Fred, to celebrate the Fourth of July and bask in the cool New Mexican climate.

The Philbrook in Tulsa was considered a masterpiece, though some critics hailed it as grandiose and over the top. It was built at a price tag of \$1.1 million. The one-third smaller Villa Philmonte, built in a Spanish Mediterranean style in contrast to the former's Italian Renaissance design, also earned praise for its architecture, setting, and tasteful furnishings.

Scouting America has taken care to preserve its unique asset. The Villa Philmonte was used early on for Philmont Training Center functions, and it remains central to modern training activity. Two major resto-

ration and preservation projects have helped keep the Villa Philmonte as it was for the fourteen years that it was occupied by the Phillips family. In 1976, Chope Phillips and his wife Virginia led an effort to restore the Villa to its original appearance, utilizing photographs taken in the 1930's. Then, over a five-year period from 2000 to 2005, the Villa underwent three phases of improvement at a cost of \$2.45 million. First the electrical, plumbing, and heating systems were overhauled. The second phase involved rebuilding walkways and foundations around the Villa, including making the dramatic mountain lion vertical fountain operational again. Lastly, in 2005, the Villa's roof was restored and new copper gutters were installed.

Today, 15,000 to 18,000 people tour the Villa Philmonte each year, gaining a glimpse into the life and times of Waite Phillips.

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Adapted from A Million Miracles, 75 Years at Philmont Scout Ranch by David Mullings



Scenes of Villa Philmonte under construction. (Philmont photos)

Villa Getting Rehab for PTC 75th Anniversary

Philmont Training Center will be marking its 75th anniversary in 2025, and you're all invited to the party. Danny Tucker is excited to announce that there will be a number of special events, programs and happenings for the celebration. Keep an eye on the Philmont website for announcements as arrangements are finalized.

In the meantime, work is beginning this summer on \$2.7 million of projects to renovate the Villa Philmonte. Scaffolding is going up, and tours will have to be accommodated during the work. Soon all the ironwork on the building will be removed, stripped and restored. The Villa's stucco outer coat which has cracked and spalled in places will be repaired.

The inner courtyard's fountains will be restored to provide the relaxing sounds for the garden areas between the main house and the guestrooms. The Villa's original swimming pool has uneven surfaces that need to be upgraded to provide a safer walking area.

There'll be a lot to celebrate next year, and the Villa will be primed for the party.

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Danny Tucker is already talking up next year's 75th Anniversary celebrations for all who attend Philmont. Make your plans now to get to PTC in 2025 and bring a friend. (Tom Baltutis photo.)

Recruiting Is Key To PTC's Future

Recruitment (Continued from page 1)

evening. It is your spouse relaxing on the Greensward in the cool evening breezes. It is waking the next morning to hear the squeals of delight when your child opens up your tent and seeing a baby deer standing right outside.

Scouters and their families will want to come to PTC to have these experiences, but only if they know about them. And it will take more than setting up a display at a University of Scouting to do that. It is going to take active recruiting of Scouters. Why? Because the traditional 'pipeline' of Scouters telling other Scouters about Philmont has suffered significant setbacks because of the fires of 2018 and Covid epidemic of 2020-2021 says Danny. Scouting lost the continuum of leaders coming to Philmont and telling others about their experience that is needed to sustain the momentum needed to keep attendance strong.

Therefore, Philmont Ambassadors are needed now, more than ever, to recruit people to come to PTC. This means more than handing out a list of courses. It means that Ambassadors need to reach out to their Council's Training Chair to get them and their committee to come to Training Week. It means buttonholing district and council leaders to come to the Key 3 Courses. It means calling commissioners about Commissioner Week and church leaders about the Religious Relations Week. And then explain the "why" of Philmont.

"The 'Why Come To Philmont' is all the great things that happen to you here that you have no idea about until you get here," says Danny.

Roger Hoyt, Philmont's General Manager, put it best when he held up a finger and said, "For the very first time in my 5-1/2 years at Philmont and for the first time ever in my life," he beamed, "I had a baby bison suck on this finger. The magic of Philmont is that you do not know what it will be, but it will be something that will happen for the first time ever in your life, and it will be at Philmont. You think about the things that you've experienced here for the first time. The Ambassadors' ability to share that energy and passion is what is going to bring people here in the future."

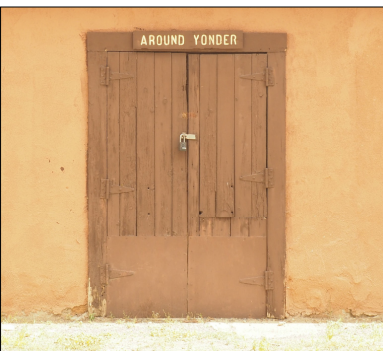
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PTC's famous cobbler night is one of those special events that is part of the whole "Philmont Experience" that Ambassadors need to emphasize to Scouters. (Tom Baltutis photo)

NEW PHILMONT MAP PRODUCTS





You have to be careful about which door you use to "Go Yonder" when you are at the Philmont Commissary. (Tom Baltutis photos)

Ranch Getting Needed Fixes

Improvements (Continued from page 1)

Eagle Nest Lake that supplies other parts of the ranch, so \$175,000 has been allocated to make repairs to it.

In Philmont's backcountry, there are catchment dikes and ditches that direct rainwater to areas where it can be collected and used for various purposes like drinking water and livestock supply. These need periodic maintenance, so this year Philmont is spending \$25,000 on the Deer Lake Catchment and next year, another two will be tackled.

Beside for drinking, water is used for washing in the backcountry, and Philmont is completing work on two new shower houses at Clarks Fork and at Indian Writings. Base camp's wastewater treatment facilities are in for an upgrade, and fortunately the bill for this will be a lot less than what was expected.

Several years ago, it was determined that Webster Dam needed rehabilitation, which will be a major undertaking. Philmont is continuing to work with the New Mexico State Engineer's office regarding the necessary measures to improve the dam's condition. As a first step, the reservoir will be dredged this year in preparation for other needed work.

Another back country safety improvement is the installation of \$50,000 worth of bear boxes to replace bear cables. While cables have traditionally been effective, hanging all smellable items is an arduous task, and mistakes can lead to bear incidents. Bear boxes provide a surer and safer alternative. Work is still in progress to determine an optimum arrangement. "It's hard to get a huge bear box into the backcountry, but we're figuring really incredible ways to get them out there other than conservation staff having to carry them," notes Shelley.

The Infirmary got a new cardiac monitor because the old monitor was having problems.

Building maintenance is constant as well, and several structures will have leaking roofs replaced, stucco repaired, and cracked sidewalks fixed. (See article on Villa Philmonte restoration, page 6)

Other mundane but necessary expend-

itures include \$50,000 in base camp kitchen equipment. Emergency expenses included a walk-in cooler for the Commissary back in March. Washing machines were replaced at PTC, and a compactor to take care of all the waste collected around base camp and the backcountry was put in. Even worn-out furniture at backcountry camps will get replacements.

In wrapping up, Shelley commented, "You've heard the list, and it's a big long list. It has been not in my time here in this position have I been able to read out a list like this for \$7 million in improvements. So we know that Scouting America supports us in what we're doing and on our path forward, and that is just really exciting."

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Philmont Ambassador Newsletter

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2024 Philmont Banners And Maps Order

We are grateful to Stephen Duke for once again organizing the sale of attractive Philmont banners, maps, and table runners to Ambassadors.

The final price of the banners and maps will depend on the order amount received. If we are able to place orders for 10 of each of the banners the price per banner will be \$60. The size of each banner is 32" W x 71" H.

The extra large vinyl Philmont Maps cost \$70 each. The runner is \$55.

The sectional maps are 76" W x 53" H. These maps contain data for the 2023 summer as available in April 2023 when Philmont provided the GIS file for these map production. We are selling the sectional maps only as a pair (North and South Country). The cost will be \$130 for both maps and shipping will be \$20 for a total of \$150. We can get this price if we are able to place an order for 10 sets. If we reach 15 or even 20 orders then we can get the price down even lower. The north sectional map will contain all the northern camps and trails but will not match the North Sectional map sold at Tooth of Time Traders since they use both sides of the map in their design.

We hope to place the orders in late July. Items will be shipped directly to you at cost.

All banners and maps contain hanging grommets but do not come with a stand/frame. Banner frames are readily available from vendors like Amazon.com. A frame for the maps and banners can be made from PVC piping or improvising from other materials like a photo backdrop stand. Click this link to order:

<https://forms.gle/pfmahF43VyzPLXJ78>

Contact Stephen Duke with questions at stephen_duke@hotmail.com.



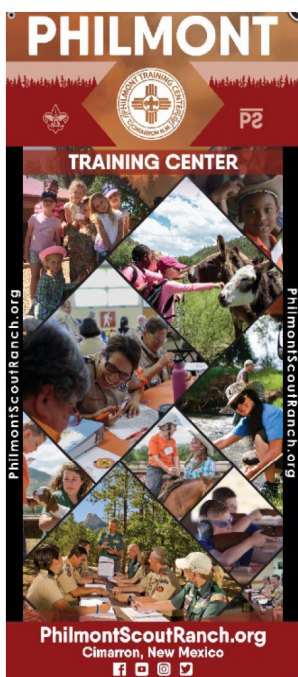
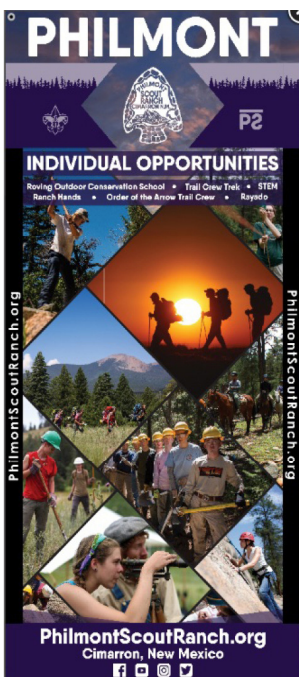
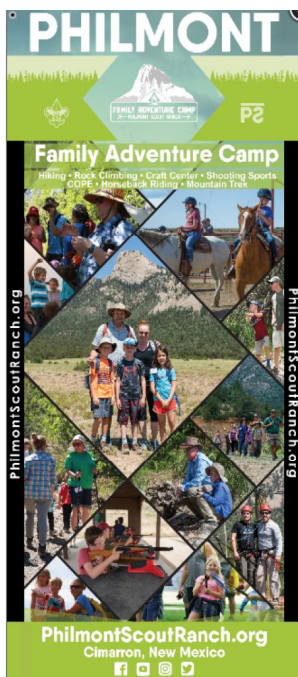
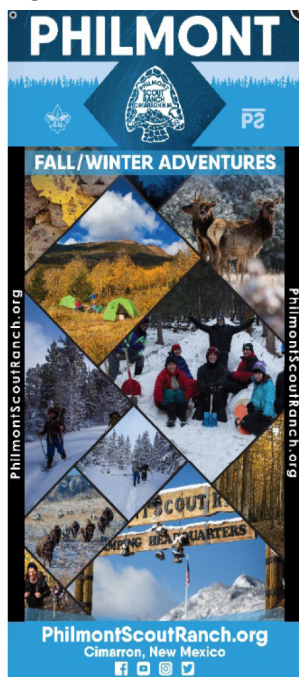
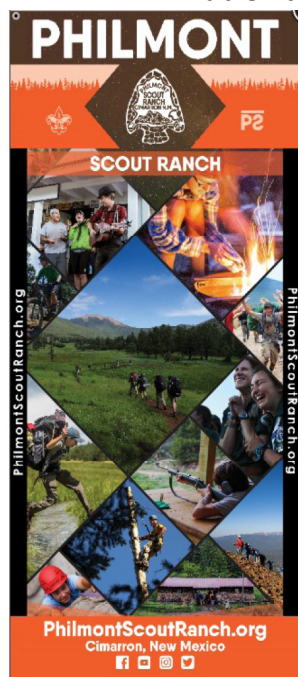
Extra Large Vinyl Philmont Map



Table Runner



North and South Section Pair



Banners are sold individually. Each can be wall mounted or attached to a stand.