



PHILMONT SCOUT RANCH WILDERNESS PLEDGE GUÍA (GUIDE)

Philmont Scout Ranch is a magnificent wilderness camping area with an immense network of trails and trail camps. For more than 30 years Philmont has asked each participant to sign the Philmont Wilderness Pledge which declares that they will do everything possible to preserve the beauty and wonder of the Philmont Wilderness and our neighboring properties through good Scout Camping.

Philmont typically serves 18,000 youth and adult participants each year. Consequently, some trails and camps, especially around commissaries, are subject to heavy use. Nevertheless, it is not the wear of many boots that mar Philmont; it is the carelessness and thoughtlessness of inconsiderate scout campers. It is our sincere hope that through the commitment of every participant to the Philmont Wilderness Pledge, Philmont will always remain a beautiful and clean place to enjoy high adventure.

Over the years, the encouragement of sound wilderness ethics has evolved. Most significantly has been the endorsement and incorporation of the principles of Leave No Trace into the Scouting program. Leave No Trace is a cooperative educational program that helps foster stewardship of public and private lands through education and training.

To place added emphasis on the practice of wilderness ethics, Philmont Scout Ranch is incorporating the traditional training of the Philmont Wilderness Pledge and the Leave No Trace Principles for all crews that will utilize the backcountry.

Philmont Scout Ranch would like to thank Alps Mountaineering for sponsoring the Wilderness Pledge Guía Program. Their support has made this program possible.

WILDERNESS PLEDGE GUÍA (GUIDE): Each crew is asked to select a Wilderness Pledge Guía (Spanish word for Guide.) The Guía will help the crew understand the principles of the Philmont Wilderness Pledge and Leave No Trace. This person will help their crew focus on camping practices that will adhere to the wilderness ethics detailed in the two guidelines.

DUTIES OF THE WILDERNESS PLEDGE GUÍA:

1. Work with your crew's ranger to learn the principles of the Philmont Wilderness Pledge and Leave No Trace.
2. Assist your crew to implement these principles throughout their trek.
3. Guide your crew in discussions about wilderness ethics by focusing on one of the seven principles of Leave No Trace during seven days of the trek.
4. Help your crew follow all camping practices as outlined by your ranger and strictly follow Philmont's bear and wildlife procedures.
5. Help the members of your crew earn the Wilderness Pledge Achievement Award.

PHILMONT WILDERNESS PLEDGE:

Through good scout camping, I pledge to preserve the beauty and splendor of the Philmont Wilderness. I commit myself to:

1. An absence of litter and graffiti.
2. Respect for Philmont's wildlife.
3. Conservation and proper use of water.
4. Respect for trails and trail signs.

LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES

1. Proper use of campsites.
2. Plan ahead and prepare.
3. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
4. Dispose of waste properly.
5. Leave what you find.
6. Minimize campfire impacts.
7. Respect wildlife.
8. Be considerate of other visitors.

WILDERNESS PLEDGE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Each participant in the backcountry can earn the Wilderness Pledge Achievement Award. This award will include five requirements. The Wilderness Pledge Guía will help all members of the crew, both youth and adult, to achieve the requirements and earn the award. A documentation form will be provided at the Wilderness Pledge Guía meeting held daily for

trailbound crews. The Wilderness Pledge Achievement Award patches can be purchased by submitting the form at the Tooth of Time Traders. Profits from the purchase of this award will be used to expand the sustainability initiatives of Philmont Scout Ranch.

1. Take part in the Ranger-led training for the Philmont Wilderness Pledge and Leave No Trace.
2. Follow the Ranger-taught Philmont Camping practices throughout the trek.
3. Practice all Philmont bear and wildlife procedures throughout the trek.
4. Take part in seven trail discussions with your crew that will focus on one of the seven principles of Leave No Trace and find examples of the focus principle during that day of the trek.
5. Complete three hours of conservation work under the direction of a member of the Philmont staff. (This requirement is also one of the requirements to earn the Philmont Arrowhead Patch. These hours count for both.)

PHILMONT WILDERNESS PLEDGE

THE MAJOR AREAS OF EMPHASIS IN THE PHILMONT WILDERNESS PLEDGE ARE:

LITTER/GRAFFITI – Each camper should make sure that all trails and campsites are left neat and clean. Camping Headquarters should be left neat and clean, also.

WILDLIFE – Respect wild (and domestic) animals. Do not feed or harass any wild animals.

WATER – Remember, you are in a land where water is scarce and very precious. Conservation and wise use of water has been practiced since the first person entered this land. You should neither bathe, nor do laundry or dishes in or near a spring or stream. Do not throw rocks in springs or touch any solar panel systems. The flow of water can be disrupted, or the panels can be easily damaged.

TRAILS – Pledge yourself to respect all trails. Do not cut green boughs or trees, nor mark them. Do not cut across switchbacks and do not alter or change trail signs.

CAMPSITES – Each crew is responsible for leaving a neat and orderly campsite. Whether it is in Camping Headquarters, staffed camps, or non-staffed camps, your campsite should be left litter-free with its latrine and sump clean. Fires (if permitted) must be left **DEAD OUT**.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LEAVE NOT TRACE

INCLUDING DISCUSSION SCENARIOS



PRINCIPLE 1 PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area. Listen to local authorities such as Rangers and Backcountry Staff.
- Understand and respect the expectations and wishes of the landowner. This may vary while on a Philmont Trek. Know what those differences are.
- Prepare for extreme weather and environmental conditions and for medical emergencies.

DISCUSSION SCENARIOS:

#1 Crew 607-H-01 from Atlanta has taken the advice from the Philmont preparation packet to use the bear ropes that were provided by Outfitting Services. Their sister crew, 607-H-02, decided to use a thinner and lighter bear bag rope. Discuss pros and cons of each crew's decision.

Having less surface area, a thinner rope cuts into a tree's bark more therefore causing more damage to the tree. A thinner rope has a higher chance of fraying or tearing. The thinner rope also has a chance of stretching, which would lower the bear bags.

#2 As of 2010, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish – Elliot Barker Wildlife Management Area changed their policy regarding access times for hikers. To accommodate this, Philmont established hiking times between 8am and 5pm within the wildlife area.

Your crew wants to hike Wilson Mesa as early as possible on their way to Pueblano. After a 4:30am wake-up, your crew is ready to go at 6am. Should you proceed? Why? Discuss why you think the policy is in place.

Leave No Trace asks hikers to understand and follow the policies established by the land manager. The time of day for hiking is in place to prevent a disruption in the wildlife patterns on the management area and to allow access to the water of the Ponil Creek early and late each day.



PRINCIPLE 2 TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses, or snow.
- Understand concentrated vs. low-impact camping and hiking.
- When low-impact camping, set up camp at least 200 feet from lakes or streams.
- Do not alter existing campsites or trails.
- Walk single file through the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy. When hiking on property with no trails, spread out and “meadow walk.”
- Only one crew per campsite. “Fluff your duff” before you leave.

DISCUSSION SCENARIOS:

#1 A crew decides to take a day hike up to Trail Peak during their layover at Beaubien. After an enjoyable time near the summit, the crew is worried they will not get back to their camp before dark. Fearing this, they want to “bushwhack” their way down the many switchbacks. Discuss the drawbacks of this idea.

Drawbacks: Soil erosion, possible injury, affecting the sustainability of the trail, damaging the outside edge of the trail, increased chance of getting lost, damaging plant life, creating new trails. Trails are designed to enhance the user hiking experience in a safe way.

#2 Your crew is camping at Ring Place and has been assigned an area that has many distinct surfaces in which you may set up your tents. Since you are in the Valle Vidal, this choice becomes even more important due to the low-impact requirements of campsite setup. The areas where you can set up tents include short grass, bedrock, and a barren spot that is close to a water source with recognizable game trails through it. Which area is most durable? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each area.

The bedrock area is the most durable, followed by the barren area, then the short grass. One disadvantage to the barren area is that it contains visible game trails to a water source. Leave No Trace considers short grass to be a durable surface, though not as durable as the bedrock or barren area. In this instance the short grass might be the overall best choice for comfort, durability, and respect for wildlife patterns.



PRINCIPLE 3 DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Pack out all garbage, leftover food, and litter. Inspect your campsite or resting area for trash or spilled food.
- Deposit solid human waste in a latrine. If this is not possible, use a cat hole dug 6-8 inches deep and at least 200 feet from water, campsites, and trails. Cover the cat hole well. Find a rock to urinate on, also 200 feet from the water, campsite, and trails.
- Pack out bloody items and feminine hygiene waste as smellable garbage.
- When washing your body, carry water to the sump in a pot or plastic storage bag and use tiny amounts of biodegradable soap.
- Wastewater should be discarded down sumps. Dishwater should be run through a sump strainer. When low-impact camping, follow water disposal methods as taught by your Ranger.

DISCUSSION SCENARIOS:

#1 On day four of their trek, crew 607-B went to go use the sump at Aguila after dinner. Their crew leader noticed that their sister crew had already used the sump and had failed to strain out the large chunks of food from their cooking pot before pouring the water down the sump. Chunks of macaroni and green beans were still sitting on top of the screen and the whole sump smelled like the evening's dinner. Discuss the situation.

The rest of the story: Knowing that the area has heavy bear activity and that Philmont policy is to filter out food particles through the sump strainer, crew 607 -B decides to scrape all the food particles off the sump screen and into their garbage bag. They then sump their own wastewater according to Philmont policy and pour some extra water down the sump to help clean the screen and wash away the smell.

#2 Jason is on his first trek at Philmont. He is an avid baseball player and loves to chew dill pickle-flavored sunflower seeds. On day six, he decides to relax in Copper Park Camp by sitting by the fire-ring and enjoying some seeds. He spits the shells into and around the fire-ring and sees how far he can spit them. Some of the shells fly more than 25 feet. Discuss what Jason is doing.

The rest of the story: You approach Jason and remind him about Philmont bear and wildlife procedures, as well as the principles of Leave No Trace. The two of you decide to pick up as many of the shells as possible and pack them out as garbage.

The next morning you hear from another crew that a bear had been through Copper Park overnight. You are relieved that it never came to your campsite and that you were able to avoid an incident.



PRINCIPLE FOUR LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Philmont considers any item 50 years old or older to be an artifact. Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.
- Avoid altering the natural or man-made landscape in any way. Leaving your mark is overrated. No **GRAFFITI!!**

DISCUSSION SCENARIOS:

#1 You are shoving the last stakes in the ground to secure your tent when your tentmate suggests that you dig a trench around the tent to prevent water runoff from a nearby hill from going under the tent. It appears that a rain shower might occur soon, and you agree that it would aid in preventing your tent from turning into a swamp – but something just doesn't seem right.

After discussing the suggestion with your tentmate, you decide the only reason for digging a trench is because you are camped in a wash. You notice a spot on the other side of your crew's tents that is not as flat but is on higher ground and doesn't appear to be susceptible to flooding. By tenting there you don't have to alter the site in any way. You both agree that this decision preserves the campsite's beauty for future users.

#2 Between the dinosaur track, the petroglyphs, and the pit house remains your crew has enjoyed the rich history of the North Ponil Canyon. As you near Old Camp for the evening, a fellow Scout sees a rusty railroad spike near the trail and picks it up to pack out as trash. You praise him for this just as your Ranger, Alex, walks up with a suggestion.

Alex thanks the Scout for wanting to pick up trash, but reminds everyone what the staff member at Indian Writings said. At Philmont anything 50 years old or older is considered an artifact. The railroad spike is likely a remnant of the old railroad that ran through the canyon between 1905 and 1912. You all agree that it would be best to leave the spike in its place for future campers to enjoy. You also decide to notify the staff at the next camp as to its whereabouts so they can document it.

#3 Your crew is rejoicing in the summit of Mount Baldy after an arduous climb up from Baldy Town. One Scout gets caught up in the excitement and suggests that the crew leave its mark by having each member sign their names on the rocks that make up the wind break on the top of the mountain. At first, several members of the crew decide this is a great idea and begin looking for something to carve their names with. You hesitate...

After stopping to think, you decide that leaving your mark is overrated because your graffiti will forever change the appearance of that beautiful mountain top. You notice a time capsule nearby and suggest to the crew that they all sign the Joker from your deck of playing cards to leave in the capsule. The guys have calmed down a bit and they realize that this is a much better idea. As you leave the card, you notice all the different mementos in the time capsule from previous crews who hiked the mountain before you. You are thankful that they chose not to deface the mountain with graffiti, and you are glad you didn't either.



PRINCIPLE FIVE MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- Cook with a backpacking stove in the fire-ring area of the “Bearmuda Triangle.”
- Where fires are permitted, use only established fire rings. Fires are not permitted by Philmont campers outside Philmont Scout Ranch boundaries.
- Keep fires small and burn nothing larger than forearm-size wood that is found on the ground.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash. Extinguish fires completely (dead-out). Pack out ashes and scatter ashes about one mile outside of camp and 100 feet off the trail.

DISCUSSION SCENARIOS:

#1 You are on itinerary 20 and camping in Iris Park for the evening when an Advisor recommends that the crew builds a fire. Your crew mates recall the training they received from their Ranger on how to properly build a campfire, and no one has heard anything about a fire ban. There's plenty of downed wood in the area and as responsible Scouts you know that you will properly dispose of the ashes tomorrow morning. Should you proceed with a campfire? Why?

Your Ranger told you to only have a campfire in a fire-ring. Also, because of the land-use agreement Philmont has with the Forest Service, Philmont campers are asked not to build campfires in the Valle Vidal.

#2 Later in the trek you are camping at Elkhorn. The same advisor is sitting by the fire-ring, and he again recommends that the crew build a fire. There is plenty of downed wood, everyone recalls their Ranger training regarding campfires, and the staff at Pueblano just told you there was no fire ban in place. Should you proceed with a campfire? Why?

You have a fire-ring, there's no fire ban in place, and you plan to follow Philmont procedures regarding the wood you use, the size of the fire, and the disposal of ashes. Enjoy the campfire!



PRINCIPLE SIX RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals, especially bears. Feeding them damages their health, alters their natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and yourself by following Philmont bear and wildlife procedures, as well as procedures for storing food and garbage. A FED BEAR IS A DEAD BEAR!

DISCUSSION SCENARIOS:

#1 Zac, a member of crew 820-D-1 was camping with his crew at Ewell's Park. It was a cold and rainy night, so he decided to forgo his final pack check for smellables. The next morning, he was surprised to find that his pack had been torn apart by an animal and the remnants of a bag of granola lay scattered about. After a moment of confusion, he remembered stuffing the granola in his pack after a short break the previous day. What happened? What are the repercussions?

An animal most likely smelled the granola and found the prize inside Zac's pack. If it was a bear, it will probably return to that site in hopes of finding food again. The bear will also be more likely to investigate packs in the future because it found a reward inside Zac's pack. If the bear is a continual problem in that area, it may have to be removed and possibly killed.

#2 You notice the deer that hang around Clark's Fork tend to get very close to the campsites. You and your tentmate wake up early to get some photos. You want to get as close to deer as possible for an optimal picture, but your tentmate urges you to stay back. Discuss the pros and cons of each option.

You might get a close-up photo of the deer if you sneak up on it, but you will more than likely spook it. Leave No Trace asks hikers to respect wildlife by not altering their natural habits and

patterns any more than necessary. The advantage to staying back is that you will probably get to see the deer longer and others will too. Consider using a zoom lens or taking a picture of the deer that includes the surrounding landscape. You might also need to consider whether the deer might be protecting a fawn and become aggressive, possibly injuring you or your tentmate.



PRINCIPLE SEVEN BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Remember BSA Aims and Ideals regarding appearance and language.
- Be courteous. Practice proper trail etiquette when encountering others.
- Understand and practice proper trail etiquette when encountering others including pack animals, cattle, and other wildlife.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

DISCUSSION SCENARIOS:

#1 You and your crew have had a great trek, but a tough one. You've grown as individuals and as a crew from the challenges you have faced in the Philmont backcountry. As a perfect ending to your trek, your crew climbs the Tooth of Time and marvels at how far they have come. As you are standing on the summit looking east across the high plains what might ruin your experience?

Some things that might ruin your experience include someone talking on their cell phone, other campers yelling at the top of their lungs off the Tooth, someone swearing loudly, hearing the music from an iPod or other music device, etc. There are many inconsiderate actions that could ruin your experience. Some of these may not bother you but might bother others. Just remember to be considerate of others.

CONCENTRATED IMPACT: On Philmont Scout Ranch property, we practice *concentrated-impact* camping. This means that we concentrate or isolate the impact of participants to specific areas.

- **Trails:** Participants hike on trails that are specifically built to withstand the wear and tear of hiking traffic.

- **Campsites:** Participants camp in sites built to accommodate bear procedures and sustainable camping.
- **Man-made features (bridges, wells, buildings, etc.):** These features are specifically located to allow participants and staff to concentrate their impact in specific concentrated areas.

LOW IMPACT: When participants' itineraries take them to our neighboring properties, they are asked to practice low-impact camping. The USFS owns the Valle Vidal, the Vermejo Park Ranch owns the Greenwood country and Lower Dean country, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish owns the Elliot Barker Wildlife Management Area, and Kimberlin's Ponil Ranch owns North Ponil Canyon. These properties may differ from Philmont in that they may not have established trails, campsites, or other man-made features that are found on Philmont.

- Bear procedures STILL APPLY.
- Find a durable place for tents.
- NO CAMPFIREs are allowed off Philmont property.
- Designate a sump area to place clean dishes and practice low-impact sumping.
- Set up low-impact bear lines when hanging bear bags.





