



# PHILNEWS

Issue No. 4: Where Trails Converge and Stories Begin

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*Zia Trek participants climbing. Photo by Julia Manipella*



# Where the Campfire Speaks

The Tall Tales of Living History Camps

By Matt Bolden



*Branding station at Clark's Fork. Photo by Muriel Alldredge.*



Firelight glows in oranges and yellows, dancing against the viridian forest. Participants gather, huddled up on logs watching campfire shows in the moonlight. Songs and tall tales of boomtender love stories gone awry and the lives of loggers echo along the valley. The year is 1915 at the Continental Tie and Lumber Company, Pueblano Branch- and the work has only just begun.

Living History Camps, like Pueblano, are the emotional engine of Philmont that drives the backcountry experience. The land that we call Philmont has had so many different groups of people living on it with such a rich and complex history that the opportunities to teach living history vary between hundreds of years of mountain men, loggers, rail workers and indigenous communities. "It's such a concentrated area of the world that we have here and it's so dense with land transfer and with different peoples and different groups that have been living here over the course of the years that we almost have no reason to not talk about the history that's been here," explains BCM Jack

Siebert.

Life at Living History Camps isn't all fun and games as much as the anachronistic (time displaced) staff might make it seem. There are real challenges portraying the individuals and the environment of the time that these camps are set in. For example, The Continental Tie and Lumber Company razed the entire forest and clearcut everything in sight since their aims were profit-centric and not based in healthy ecological practices. And for the staff themselves, difficult parts of the job include "being cognizant of the language that you use and trying not to use too much slang from everyday life," explains Pueblano PC Lisa "Robin" Moore.

Donning the interp clothes and assuming a character isn't just about winging it on the fly and pretending to be an old-timer, it takes time dedication and often your own money. PC RJ "Rooster" Bubnowski elaborates that, "I remember when I was assigned to Pueblano, way back in late February, I started buying books on Amazon and flagging internet pages for research, as well as researching what kind of music we can do in our show. The amount of



Staffer plays piano at Abreu. Photo by Logan Albrinck.

## Where The Campfire Speaks

time put in is also reflective of how much you care about the program. If you're gonna sit down and read books for hours on end, take notes for months leading up to this, it shows and it reflects in the program you deliver."

The Living History program in itself isn't just a 'nice-to-have' program at Philmont, but a core identity of the land and its history. As Pueblano Camp Director Jenna "Ruthy May" Trione says, "I think the living history program is incredibly important at Philmont because it's a land with so much diversity on it. We weren't the first people here and there's so many people here before us and the history of that is incredible and rich and there's a lot we can learn from the history, and I think being able to accurately portray the historical events that went on here, to the best of our ability keeps those memories alive and educates other people and doesn't let us forget what this land was originally used for."

Not only is it important to acknowledge the history of the land, but also the history of the people that lived on it. And sometimes with that comes finding the nuance and in interpreting someone's life who might have had outdated views or shady pasts. In order to strike a balance between practicality and historical accuracy, BCM Jack Siebert highlights that, "Ultimately

we don't want to ignore those difficult histories but how we portray it is super important. I think the main thing is going about it with sensitivity and specificity. So as we're talking about the history of displacements across the ranch, in terms of indigenous peoples, we have to acknowledge that there's still indigenous people that live in the area, but also acknowledge that there's a long history of land transfers, both fair and just and also unfair and unjust." As they pointed out, the line to toe isn't necessarily squirreling away the problematic past that some camps may contain but pointing it out and acknowledging the breadth of an area's history to participants so that the groups that come through can get an accurate depiction of Philmont's history

In the end, Living History programs are about as 'Philmonty' as switchbacks and trail meals. Portraying the history of a camp in the time period it was set in has become ingrained into the Philmont identity and experience. By showing scouts a window into the past, we can inspire them to return home and think critically about the history of their own towns and cities, to acknowledge the good and the bad. Because of living history camps, they can truly be educated and well-rounded members of their community and in their own way, change lives.



# Counselor's Corner

By Dr. Luke Arnold, PhD, LMFT, NCC



At some point this summer, you will hit a moment when you are tired, hungry, dehydrated, or all three. Our physical and mental health are intricately connected. Your ability to make decisions for yourself will be challenged, not to mention your ability to make decisions for the campers in your care. The reality of camp is that it is a 24/7 endeavor. It takes a lot of time and energy to make it all work. This is a marathon, not a sprint. So be sure to fuel up

accordingly so that you are performing at your best. That way, you will be able to provide participants with the positive, safe experience they deserve.

As we near mid-July, remember to...

- Get enough sleep.
- Take 10: Find 10 minutes a day to pray/meditate/read/run — whatever activity feeds your soul.
- Consider journaling or making notes about your day.
- Say something kind to at least three people.

Reach out to different people and make new connections each day.

- Drink water, wear sunscreen, take your meds/vitamins.
- Eat three well-balanced meals a day.
- Choose healthy snacks.
- Return from your time off rested.

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# Accessible Adventures

Making Scouting Possible via Zia

By Riley Brown



*Riding around the corral.  
Photo by Mya Kacvinsky.*



For Scouts with special needs, adventure isn't out of reach, it's right here in the core of Philmont. With growing participation and national recognition, the Zia programs are opening trails and hearts like never before. Since 2022, Philmont has hosted their Zia Experience which is specifically designed for Scouts that have disabilities or special needs. With a new program added in 2024 to include an adaptive 5-day trek Zia participants have the ability to earn an arrowhead patch just like any other crew. Philmont was recognized by the National Special Needs and Disability Committee as a Special Needs Prepared Camp this past year. With a mix of new and returning Zia participants, parents, and adult volunteers learning special needs care, energy was high while visiting Cattle HQ. "Watching their faces light up, it's the most amazing thing." One of the chaperones

expressed as the horses were brought out for everyone to meet. Ranch staff taught Zia kids etiquette to use around horses and showed how to saddle up, ride and dismount. Several horses were also brought out for participants to get familiarized with their hoofed companions. With the group's varying levels of experience towards horses there were understandable feelings of nerves, but also excitement. The instructors were very encouraging, which encouraged each of the Zia participants to ride the horses or at the very least step outside of their comfort zones and get close to petting them. "We've got to this point and it's incredible to be here." Janet Kelly, one of the staff at Philmont Training Center, explained. 2025 is seeing some of the biggest groups compared to years past.

## "This is history."

As the day unfolded, it became clear that strong new bonds were forming



Meeting some of the horses at Cattle HQ. Photo by Mya Kacvinsky.

## Accessible Adventures

between the Zia participants and the wranglers. Through shared experiences and trail conversations, they connected on a deeper level, discovering they had something special in common: a proud legacy as Eagle Scouts. “I’m just trying to do my best for Philmont,” one of the participants, Jake from Troop 89 exclaimed from atop one of the horses.

Once the morning drew to a close, it

was all smiles at Cattle HQ.

Following a group photo, everyone said goodbye to the horses. When asked what their favorite part of the day was the answer from one of the Zia Scouts, Johnney was simple, “All of it.”

If you’re interested in learning more about the Zia Experience or the trek’s background and recruitment process visit [ablescouts.org](http://ablescouts.org) to learn more about accessible Scouting.



Zia Experience Participants riding together in the corral. Photo by Mya Kacvinsky.



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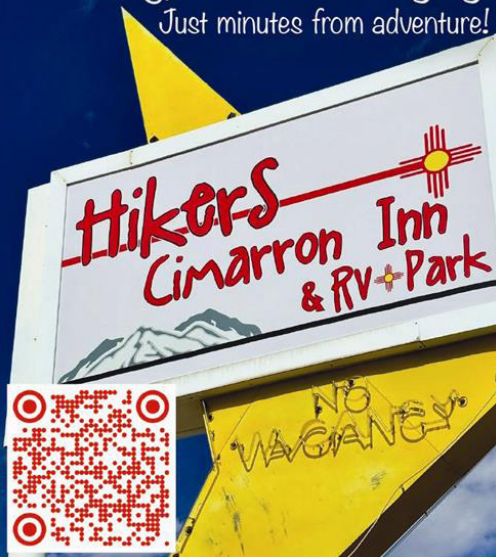
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# Scouting Overseas

By Owen Traub

From the UK, to Malaysia, to the U.S., Scouters from all over the world needed to see what Philmont was all about. International Council of Scouting America and the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) met at HOmE from June 21st – 28th, attending Q and A's with Scouting Executives, completing their 'Messengers of Peace' requirements, and enjoying the beautiful scenery that the ranch has to offer. To obtain their Messengers of Peace award, members of the International Council participated in a stream restoration project, headed by Seth Mangini, the Stream Restoration Coordinator. Scott Lewis, an International Representative who participated in the stream restoration, put the impact of International Scouting into perspective when he mentioned that, "we are a drop in the bucket in comparison to World Scouting." Lewis states that, of the 55 million Scouts in the world, the United States

only hosts around 1 million, making up less than 2 percent of the Scouting population. Many other International Representatives suggested that Lou Paulson, the International Commissioner of Scouting America, and David Berg, the Secretary General of the WOSM, would be fantastic resources to gain insight into the International Scouting World. On Thursday, June 26th, Berg and Paulson conducted a Q and A of their own to give others the opportunity to ask questions and learn about international Scouting from two of the most qualified Scouters in the world. Here, the two make their goals for the future of Scouting abundantly clear. Paulson states, "We understand that most Scouts don't have the opportunity to travel abroad, so it is our responsibility to bring the world to them." Berg adds, "We want to be the most inspiring movement on the planet." After the conclusion of their 'fireside chat' in the PTC Assembly







*Photos by Mya Kacvinsky.*

Hall, Paulson and Berg agreed to a private interview with PhilNews, describing their experience at Philmont. “It’s been amazing,” said Berg, a Philmont first-timer. “It’s truly a one of a kind set up you have here, both in terms of size but also the impact that you provide.” Visitors have shared similar sentiments in the past, but when Paul and Berg, who have been to many high adventure bases make these claims, it seems even more genuine. Berg realizes that it has taken Philmont many years to perfect the culture and activities he was able to experience during his stay on the ranch, but commends Paulson on his decision to hold this meeting at Philmont. “[. . .] because I see the world around meeting tables and meeting rooms [but it’s also important] to have a connection with what’s happening at campfires across the world. There’s no better place to sense reality than here at Philmont.” Although most participants that hike Philmont may not know what Scouting is like overseas, those who do still call Philmont one of the greatest summer camps in the world. Bar none.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Calendar Events

- 7/21 Gingerbread Competition,  
8:30pm / Craft Fair @ Baldy  
Pavillion 1-7:30 (21st-24th)
- 7/23 Christmas Minute to Win It,  
8:30pm  
Night Before Christmas  
Reading & DIY Stocking, Open  
Mic Night, 8:30pm
- 7/24 Pictures with Santa & Movie  
Night, 8pm
- 7/25 Trivia, 8pm-10pm
- 7/28 Brat Day
- Ice Cream Night Tuesday, 8pm

## Business Hours

- National Scouting Museum:  
8am-5pm
- ToTT: 7am-6:45pm
- Villa: 8:30am-5pm
- Yurt: 8am-12pm & 1pm-5pm
- Cantina: 9am-6:45pm & 8pm-10pm
- Chapel, 7-8pm

## Work at Philmont Full Time

- Electrician
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4:30 PM

6:30 PM

# Green Shirts, Greener Pastures

By Riley Brown



*Recycling coordinators loading recycling into plant. Photo by Isaiah Mitchell.*

From recycling to water management and green infrastructure there's a wide range of initiatives to preserve and protect the natural landscapes around the ranch. Sustainability is a cross-section of various efforts. From volunteers to full-time to seasonal staff; so many people collaborate to aid the environmental efforts that take place around Philmont in Basecamp as well as the Backcountry. With a group of 120 conservation staff tackling Summer 2025 there's multiple projects underway during one of the busiest seasons for the ranch. With the help of Scouts, tackling the 150,000 acres so many call HOMe is important for showing the importance of sustainability to keep Philmont preserved for future generations. Seth Mangini, the Stream Restoration Coordinator commented, "Stream

[restoration] and forest management are two of the biggest things. And we have one of the bigger trail programs in the country at this point, probably bigger than some of the National Parks. Since the 70s we've been doing that kind of thing." A lot of how Philmont operates is from a sustainability perspective, and if managed incorrectly that can have huge impacts on the land. A big part of those various operations stem from water. Whether it's in the Backcountry or within Basecamp itself, water runs a myriad of systems. Philmont has an open-air reservoir which is rare since most water systems utilize groundwater. Emily Gaston, Environmental Compliance Inspector, adds, "You don't want to add equipment or more chemicals to the water that might already be present. There are times when you need to say these trees don't need to



be irrigated or tell people to take a shorter shower.” Water conservation is vital, especially in the summer months. Philmont has 4 reservoirs supplying 36,420,338 gallons of water and 68 individual wells producing 2,672,181 gallons of water annually to 34 state-approved water systems. Someone is always monitoring the levels, especially with each Backcountry camp existing as almost individual small towns. “We operated 31 public water systems at Philmont this year which is like several towns worth.” Gaston informs.

Additionally, the Backcountry has a lot of solar powered systems so there’s no need for powerlines, because there’s green infrastructure integrated within the buildings. Some pump water into camps, others power radios and lights. With Baldy Town in particular, the whole solar array powers their LED lights and radios. Conservation is looking into other technology to detect leaks across Basecamp, PTC, and Admin to catch leaks faster. “And some of that stuff can happen so gradually, that you don’t notice it from the water plant itself. It’s scary how fast you can lose water.” Gaston states. The maintenance department is an important resource in executing some of these procedures. They help with anything from carpentry to plumbing and electric. Philmont focuses on concentrated impact when approaching a lot of these projects as well. Building trails or cabins aren’t

Leave No Trace, but they’re placed in a spot where their impact can be managed.

Basecamp also does its part in mitigating waste via the Recycling Coordinators. Eliana Richards, Recycling Coordinator, reported, “We divert many tons of material from the landfill every year by utilizing our two-person team, with the help of rangers and various Philmont staff members.” It not only helps the environment, but saves Philmont money on dumping costs. Just this summer alone Philmont has diverted 15.2 tons of material from the landfill. Some possible future plans include launching an on-site composting program to further reduce landfill waste and meal bags are already being sent to Trex which turn the material into decking, benches and chairs. With cleaner recycling practices and proper waste disposal, staff can focus more on these sustainable long-term projects. “I hope that folks who do learn about our water and what we do out here,



Solar panels at Baldy Town.  
Photo by Logan Albrinck

## Green Shirts, Greener Pastures



Webster reservoir. Photo by Julia Manipella.

it makes them wonder. When they go back home, they wonder how [their] water is made and can be advocates for their own water systems,” Gaston confesses. “There are very few folks that work in this industry and more people could.” Scouting as a whole fosters the mentality to leave places better than you found it. Therefore, there's a push to protect the environment and mirrors a lot of Philmont's mission and what they're

trying to accomplish with the surrounding ecosystems. So how do we keep Philmont green years in the future? Seth Mangini puts it simply: “Get people to care about it.” If people do care, he explains, it naturally leads to treating the environment in a friendly, sustainable way—one that ensures Philmont's mission continues to thrive for future generations.

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# Mountain Memoir

By Matt Bolden

I remember when the wind first spoke my name,  
Before the wheel, before the flame.  
Its whisper carved through stone and bone,  
And still, the stars all voice the same.

I've felt the weight of summer's heat,  
The hush of snow in pine tree veins.  
Heard thunder crack, both sharp and sweet,  
Then watched the sun glow gold through rain.

Lights of fire dance and glow,  
Across the verdant forest deep.  
Where mortal songs in twilight flow,  
And anthems rise while shadows sleep.

They come along well-trodden ways,  
With dreams to grasp, with hands that make.  
They build their stories in my cracks,  
Then leave them here for me to take.

I've watched them weep beneath the trees,  
Then laugh with nothing to atone.  
Their breath dissolves upon my breeze  
Their names I memorize alone.

I do not move, yet I remain,  
While rivers flow and songbirds fly.  
A monument of dust and rain  
A witness standing, vast and high.

Be therefore the ones who roam  
I'll simply keep what you forget.  
Each firelight verse becomes my own,  
Each echo, like a soft regret.

So when you pass, speak soft and true,  
Let silence find its sacred place.  
For I remember all of you,  
And time still etches every face.

# Chaplains: The Backbone of Philmont

By Owen Traub



*Chaplain delivering a commissary order. Photo by Gabriel Milby*

To an outsider, ‘Chaplain’ may seem like a simple role. You might see them conducting a service, handing out Eagles Soaring High, or comforting a Scout or two who are missing home, and think that’s it. To that, David Mills says, “If all we did was chapel services we would lose a majority of the good we do.” Despite being an ordained deacon in the catholic church, the workload entrusted to the Philmont chaplaincy department surprised him. “I thought this would be a piece of cake. Most of the chaplains are working 12-14 hours.” As it turns out, chaplaincy is more than preaching and prayer. Much more. In fact, most of the

work done by chaplains is unseen by participants and staff at the ranch. Typically, there are eight chaplains employed at any given time during the summer, all of whom have specific responsibilities on the ranch. Chaplains perform the jobs that no one else has the flexibility for, such as transporting injured participants, garbage, and mail to and from base camp using their famously labeled suburban’s. “Some people might say its demeaning that we have to take out trash and mail, but that’s literally what Jesus would do [. . .] being a shepherd is dirty work.” Mills continues, “The Lords work is done through service to other people.” This concept of servant leadership is one that guides every chaplain on

the ranch, regardless of faith. “We can disagree on the fine points but still work together.” says Chip Turner, who is currently serving his last summer as Chaplain Coordinator. Over the course of nearly 30 years, Turner has learned much from his time as a Philmont chaplain, including the most effective ways to coordinate and enable chaplains to do their work for the good of the ranch. Another way that chaplains do this is through a ministry of presence, which Turner heavily advocates for. The greatest lessons that chaplains pass on to others typically don’t happen during church services, rather, they occur in the back of a suburban or late at night when a staff member or participant needs someone – anyone – who will care about them. Mark Carr explains that “It’s not a pastoral or sacramental

ministry, it’s about being where we’re needed.” Carr’s love for Philmont and its staff is obvious, as he has worked here on staff for 7 summers and embarked on 5 Philmont treks. When asked why he continues to return summer after summer, Carr cites the beautiful scenery, fellowship that he experiences with staff and participants, and the desire to give more back to scouting than it has given to him. A.R.F. (Always Remain Flexible) is the acronym of Philmont chaplains. Whether they are trucking garbage from the backcountry or giving Scouts words of encouragement before their trek, chaplains do their work with a sense of pride and reverence. Chaplains are part of the integral infrastructure of the ranch, utilizing a mixture of servant leadership and a ministry of presence in order to serve Philmont.



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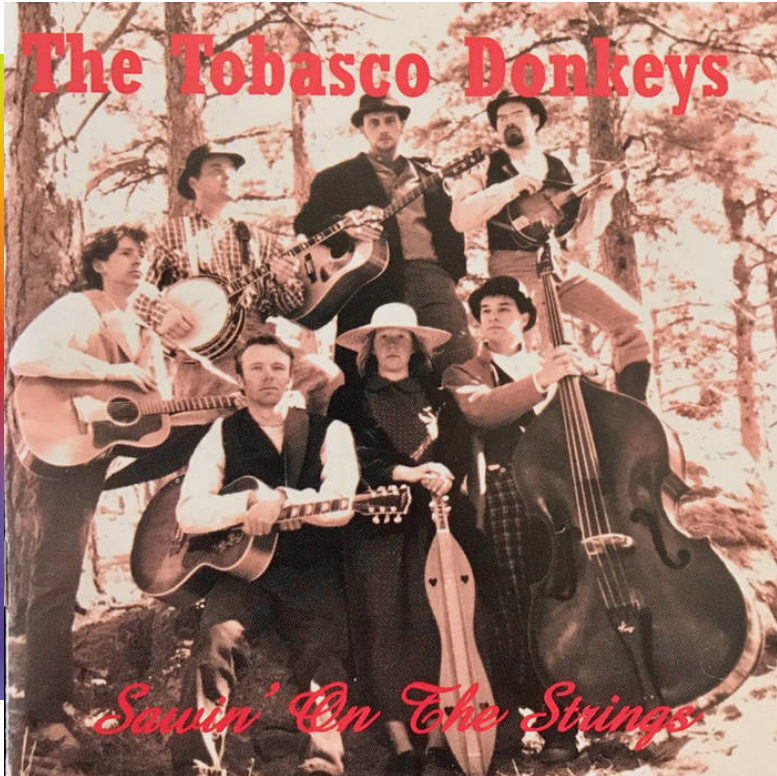
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# Backcountry Wrapped

By Matt Bolden



## Your Top Artists

1. The Tabasco Donkeys
2. Charlie's Revenge
3. Creatures of the Lake
4. Sally No. 1
5. Johnny Cash

## Your Top Songs

1. I Don't Mind
2. Never Leave Cypher's Alive
3. Allegedly [Pueblano's Version]
4. Midnight Train to Memphis
5. Raise a Ruckus (ft. Justin Beaver The Perfect Company Man)

## Minutes Listened

35,520

# Phil-Horoscope

By Matt Bolden

**W**ith a new moon striking the sky in Leo on July 24 you'll begin to feel sparking creativity and encouragement for your inner child, let's see what this renewed lunar cycle means for you:

**Aries:** Making time for creativity can bring your work to the next level, visit the craft center at the PTC for some R&R.

**Taurus:** Allow yourself to slow down and appreciate the day. Take the day to chill out in the SSSAC.

**Gemini:** Embrace loving connections, easing the heart and mind. Tell your Phil-fling you're thinking about them today.

**Cancer:** Permit yourself to move backward, offering clarity in place of confusion. Altitude offers perspective, visit a climbing camp.

**Leo:** Use the current cosmic energy as motivation to catch up with friends; send a lonely Backcountry staffer an I-Camp.

**Virgo:** Return to structures and routines that have worked for you in the past. Hike a familiar trail.

**Libra:** Explore your community and watch for signs that can guide you toward your aspirations. See if Activies has any clubs you vibe with.

**Scorpio:** Changes in your responsibilities will force you to adjust, discover your sense of empowerment by attending yoga at Hiker's Coffee.

**Sagittarius:** The universe is trying to send messages your way, keep your goals in mind and check with the Mail Room.

**Capricorn:** Retrace your steps and correct them where needed, find empowerment by raiding the snack wall.

**Aquarius:** Accept praise and let others demonstrate their love for you, feel the current energies foster creativity by enjoying a closing campfire show.

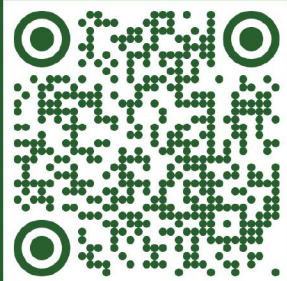
**Pisces:** Try to find a balance between self-care and staying on top of your work. Send those emails from the Hot Springs.





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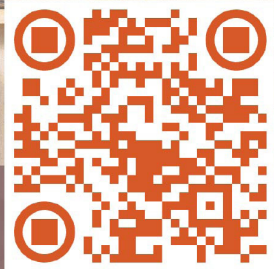
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*Cimarron, New Mexico*

# It's Not About the Hike

**Trail Notes from GM Andrea Watson**

Out here, we measure distance in something more than miles. It's not just about how many steps it takes to reach the top of Baldy or how long it takes to get from Beaubien to Clear Creek. It's not about the hike.

It's about what happens on the way there.

It's about the quiet acts of leadership that don't come with a title. It's about a shared laugh after a tough day on trail. It's the way someone learns to carry more than their pack. For those guiding crews or keeping the ranch running behind the scenes, it's in the moments you help someone push through and then watch them realize they're capable of more than they thought.

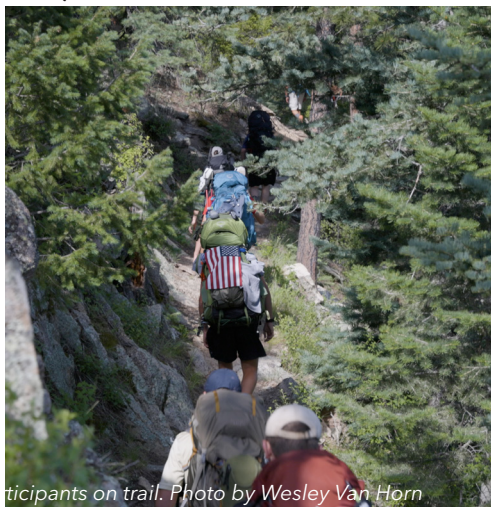
We say Philmont changes lives, and it does, but not through any single peak or program. It happens in the collection of small, steady moments. A crew learning to work together. A tired Scout discovering they have just a little more to give. A staff member recognizing their own strength not just in what they did, but in how they helped someone else feel seen and supported.

And yes, the hike is hard. It's supposed to be. The challenge is part of the growth. But no map can capture the transformation that happens when someone walks into the backcountry unsure and walks

out with a clearer sense of who they are. A deeper sense of self. A new appreciation for the land. The kind of confidence that only comes from doing something you weren't sure you could do.

So when we say it's not just about the hike, we're not dismissing it. We're elevating it. Because here, the hike is more than footsteps. It's the forge.

This summer, as our season begins to wind down, I'm reminded again and again that the most important things we send home aren't found in a pack. They're not the souvenirs or the photos, but the growth that we see in someone we know --or even in ourselves. Someone who has faced the mountain and come out changed. And when we each head home, we may not remember every mile but hopefully we'll remember what it all really meant.



Participants on trail. Photo by Wesley Van Horn



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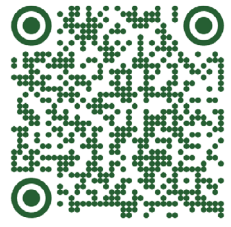
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