

PHILMONT AMBASSADOR UPDATE

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Promoting wilderness and learning adventures that last a lifetime

January 2026

PTC set for 2026 Conferences

Philmont Training Center's 2026 schedule is filled with conferences designed to appeal to Scouters wanting to increase their knowledge and awareness of all that Scouting has to offer youth. A new video is available on the PTC page will help you build enthusiasm for Scouters to attend this summer.

Starting off the summer is a full week of Commissioner's Conferences. These are designed to help Commissioners help units provide a great Scouting experience to their members. Here's a few descriptions of the courses:

- **Increase Your Impact: Retain, Grow, Thrive.** We will dive deep into issues facing Scouting America today and work together to discover effective methods to help grow the Scouting movement.
- **Unit Service Today, Navigating Reality.** This session offers practical strategies in addressing real-world issues, shared experiences, and proven approaches to strengthen unit service in today's Scouting environment.
- **Council Commissioner: Leading Strategically.** Participants will be challenged to think differently and develop plans to build an effective Scouting America culture that delivers commissioner priorities.

Commissioner Week spills over to the June 14 to 17 with a bonus session: *It's All About Relationships* led by Rev. David Weyrick.

The week of June 14 to 20 is very special because it features the *Philmont Ambassador Week and Reunion*. You can read more about it in the article on Page 2. The



There is no better place than Philmont Training Center and no better Faculty like John Guethlein, Dave Weyrick and Gary Ohler to be infused with the energy of Scouting. (Tom Baltutis photo.)

week will have much more:

- Philmont Fly Fishing
- Wilderness First Aid Instructor Development Course
- NYLYT Power-UP: Purpose in Service
- Membership: Developing a Culture of Growth

June 14 to 20 also has Scouting U Week whose theme "Trained to Make a Difference" is more than a tagline — it's a commitment to every member of Scouting America to empower adult volunteer trainers and leaders with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead effectively and inclusively. Its goal is to ensure that 100% of our volunteers are fully trained,

prepared, and supported to create a positive, lasting impact on the lives of the youth we serve. A full listing of the 21 courses offered during Scouting U week is available on the PTC Conference page.

During the week of June 21 to 27, the *International Scouting Annual Training* conference has four tracks for participants to choose from:

- Build Your Own Adventure
- International Representatives
- World Events
- International Strategy (by invitation only)

PTC (Continued on page 2)



Scouters from around the country benefit from participating in one of PTC's conferences. Not only do they hear from national experts, but they get to interact with other participants both in and out of the classroom. (Tom Baltutis photo.)

PTC schedule for 2026 is set

PTC (Continued from page 1)

This week also has the *Scouting Relations Advocate Conference* and conferences for *District Key 3* and *Council Key 3*.

The week of June 28 to July 5 centers on the PSA Reunion but has much more. This week has the *Adaptive Special Needs* conference which spends a week teaching best practices on working with Scouts with special needs or disabilities, their families, units, districts, and councils across all programs. Participants will have the opportunity to work with Scouts and their families attending the *Zia Family Experience* which occurs this same week.

If you know anyone whose interests extend to the wider outdoors, then point them to the July 5 to 11 conferences. The *Finding Your Way* course gets outside to learn about orienteering and geocaching. Separate courses for *Certified Angling Instructors* and *Certified Angling Directors* both feature plenty of time to fish on Philmont's lakes and streams.

The following week of July 12 to 18 takes a different turn. *Story Telling: Inspiring Others Through Photography and Stories* will provide participants with top-notch instruction from world-class

storytellers and a photography expert. Time will be spent in the field photographing "decisive moments," posting them to social media, and preparing a story to take home to inspire others. *Scouting in the Catholic Church* will help inspire Scouts on their spiritual journey in the program. The *NYLT Leadership Academy* will help those leading junior leader training courses be outstanding presenters, evaluators and model leaders both in Scouting and beyond.

The spiritual side of Scouting continues during July 19 to 25 with the *Duty to God Pilgrimage*. PTC will be hosting Christian Brothers Scouts from Japan this week. All participants, will have the opportunity to earn International Scouting Awards such as the Philmont Duty to God.

Topping off the Summer will be the *Rayado 50th Anniversary Reunion*. Participants have the option to do a 5-day Alumni Trek from July 18 to 23 before the main event from the 23rd to 26. The latter has family-friendly activities, hikes, campfires and a lot of unstructured time for catching up with old friends.

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Philmont Resource Toolbox has all the links

One question that Philmont Ambassadors constantly get is "What's the best way to prepare for a Trek?" Those who have been on a Trek recently may have a good idea how to respond, those who were on a crew years ago may have a fuzzy idea, and those who have not been on one may not have a good answer. Fortunately, the new *Philmont Resource Toolbox* on the website has just about all the information anyone needs to prepare well for a mountain journey.

The toolbox brings together links to all the important information such as

- Planning your trip to Philmont
- Backcountry skills and guides
- Health and Safety
- Food and Cooking
- Lists of what to bring
- Itineraries
- Camping HQ and PTC Maps
- Fees and Scholarships
- Crew positions, dynamics and Leadership
- Trek Match System
- Frequently Asked Questions

One of the most important links is the one to the Philmont Preparedness Webinars. These are a series of presentations by Philmont Staff on most of the important information that Adult and Crew leaders need to know for a successful Trek. Watching the series can make the difference between a ill-prepared crew and a well-prepared one.

Other important resources are the Guidebook to Adventure and the companion Philmont Advisors Guidebook. Both are available in the Toolbox and are sent to each crew. Almost every question that a crew has is covered in the guidebooks.

The best way to be prepared for a trek is to make the effort to be prepared by using the Philmont resources available.

P2

Ambassador reunion beckons you to attend

By John and Julia Lesko, Ambassador Task Force Co-Coordinators

Some places don't just exist on a map — they ignite a spark within every soul that walks their trails. Philmont Scout Ranch is one such place. For generations, Philmont has been more than a destination on a map, more than a classroom without walls, and far more than a campfire where stories and friendships are kindled. Philmont is a life-changing experience — a place that calls to those who believe in adventure, growth, and community.

For Philmont Ambassadors, Philmont is a special calling. As a Philmont Ambassador, you don't just carry memories home—you carry the spirit, the stories, and the opportunities that make Philmont unique. You are the bridge connecting councils and communities to the magic of the ranch. Now, your calling shines brighter than ever before as we invite you to the 2026 Philmont Ambassador Week & Reunion—a week dedicated to learning, fellowship, and fun, held June 14–20, 2026

Imagine a week where you'll hear directly from Philmont's leadership team about what's new, what's evolving, and what's on the horizon for the ranch. These conversations will provide you with firsthand insights and direct access to Senior Leadership, empowering you with the

tools and confidence to share the latest Philmont news back home—and to be an even stronger advocate for the ranch's future.

Philmont today is a tapestry of experiences waiting to be explored. Together with fellow ambassadors, you'll discover the full spectrum of Philmont offerings—from Training Center conferences and family programs to classic backcountry treks, individual adventures, and unique programs.

Get ready to sharpen your Ambassador toolkit. Special workshops will help you refine your skills in storytelling, marketing, and overcoming barriers to participation. Learn strategies for connecting Scouts and families with scholarship opportunities and discover best practices from seasoned ambassadors. You'll leave with new ideas, renewed inspiration, and practical resources to support your council and community.

Enjoy evenings filled with reunion celebrations, Western Night, Cobbler Night, Ice Cream Socials, and sing-alongs with the legendary Ambassador Troubadours. These moments of fellowship spark collaboration, strengthen lifelong bonds, and remind us all why Philmont feels like HOmE.

Bring your family and share the adventure. Philmont is a place for everyone, and families are welcome and encouraged to attend. Whether discovering history in



An ice cream social is one of the highlights of the week at Philmont Training Center. *(John Lesko photo)*

Philmont's fascinating museums, enjoying the crisp mountain air, or simply relaxing together, shared experiences become cherished memories for years to come.

Be part of the adventure and invest in the future. The 2026 Philmont Ambassador Week & Reunion is more than an event—it's a celebration of those who ensure Philmont continues to change lives. Return home energized, informed, and ready to invite others into the adventure.

Join us June 14–20, 2026, for a week where learning, fellowship, and fun converge. Discover new paths, amplify your voice, and let the spirit of Philmont shine through you. Don't miss this chance to reconnect, refresh, and reignite your passion for Philmont Scout Ranch!

Ready to blaze new trails? Mark your calendar, invite your family, and be part of the experience that transforms lives. Philmont is calling—and your adventure awaits.

P2

**Ambassador
Reunion
Week is
June 14-20**



Ambassador Troubadours (left to right) are Bruce Rueger, Scott McAllister, John Rombach, Becky Chambers, John Richardson, and Barry Bray. *(Julia Lesko photo)*



Silverados enjoy a 1920's tea party on the veranda of the Villa Philmonte. (Philmont Photo)

Silverado program offers wide range of activities for spouses

"While you will be with your Scouting friends in class, am I going to be stuck with the kids all day? What am I going to do?," These are common questions raised by a partner when their other half wants to go to a PTC conference.

These questions can be easily answered in two words: "No" and "Plenty."

PTC offers the *Kids and Kin* program for children of attendees during the morning and afternoon. The Small Fry program takes care of youngsters from 6 months to 5 years. Those from 6 to 17 have age-appropriate programs during the day led by enthusiastic counselors. This provides spouses with a welcome break from childcare, giving them a real holiday to enjoy themselves with activities during their PTC stay.

The Silverado program offers Scouters' partners art classes, hiking adventures, museum tours, challenge activities, and even time to relax while enjoying the beautiful scenery from the front porch of Villa Philmonte. How often to you get a chance to stroll around the grounds of a magnificent 1920's mansion as if it were your own?

The Silverado program includes time at the Craft Center which offers classes in glass art, pottery, mosaics, tie dye, leatherwork, ceramics and more. Participants can

take up a new hobby or learn from PTC staff how to improve their skills. All the materials one needs to take home a self-made artwork are available. Both adults and kids love to be creative with crafts they may not have available at home.

For the adventurous, there are day hikes to scenic overlooks, geological treasures, and challenging peaks. They can also try rock climbing or the high ropes course. Outdoors aficionados can ply their wits against the wily trout in Philmont's lakes and streams or test their eagle eye on the world-class shooting range.

The more gentle minded can enjoy a civilized afternoon at Genevive's Tea at the Villa or decide to just sit back and relax on the Greensward to watch the deer gently browse on the lush greenery. Plus, there are shopping adventures to be had at the Tooth of Time Traders or the stores in nearby Cimarron.

After busy mornings and afternoons, everyone gets together at lunch and dinner to exchange their stories on the fun they had.

There are very few other places like PTC that one's partner can enjoy all this and more. So when they ask "What am I going to do," the answer is a resounding "PLENTY!"

P2

White gas being phased out for 2027

For decades, Philmont Crews have used white gas to fuel their stoves during their adventures. Both white gas and isobutane have maintained prominence in the outdoor industry, making it practical for crews to source stoves and for Philmont to source fuel. In recent years, Philmont has made both fuels available for purchase in Base Camp and at select backcountry camps.

Over time, the industry has begun to move away from white gas as a fuel. Isobutane stoves have improved performance and overall efficiency at higher elevations over time. White gas, on the other hand, has become difficult for Philmont to source in large enough quantities at an affordable price due to its decline in popularity and the complex refining and packaging process required to produce it.

As a result of these shifts, Philmont has decided that beginning in 2027, Philmont will no longer make white gas available for purchase for crews. Isobutane will remain available both in Base Camp and in designated backcountry camps.

White gas will remain available for purchase from Philmont in 2026, with a Gas Pass purchased in Base Camp. This one-time purchase will allow crews to refill white gas as needed in the backcountry without paying for each refill.

While Philmont will no longer supply white gas starting in 2027, crews may still bring their own. Please consult the Guidebook to Adventure: Advisor's Edition for details on how to ship fuel bottles if your crew is using commercial transportation to Philmont. Be aware that white gas will not be sold at Philmont after 2026.

P2

Your enthusiasm is much needed throughout 2026

By Julia and John Lesko, Co-Coordinator, Philmont Ambassador Program

As we step into a new year, we do so with gratitude for the dedication you bring to Philmont's mission—and with optimism for what lies ahead. The start of a new year invites reflection, renewal, and a renewed commitment to the impact we can make together.

Looking ahead to the summer of 2026, we warmly invite you to join us at the Philmont Training Center for **Philmont Ambassador Week & Reunion**. This gathering is designed to reconnect friends, welcome new Ambassadors, deepen our understanding of today's Philmont experiences, and strengthen our collective ability to share the story of Philmont with councils, units, families, and communities across the country.

We are hopeful that this year will bring record participation, not for the sake of numbers alone, but because each Ambassador represents a spark—one more voice helping Scouts and Scouters imagine what is possible on the trail, in the saddle, and in service to something greater than themselves.

At the same time, we are mindful of the realities facing many Scouting families. With the National Jamboree also on the horizon, families and units may be making difficult choices about how best to invest their limited time and resources. Your role as an Ambassador has never been more important. By clearly and authentically sharing the breadth of Philmont opportunities—beyond a single trek—you help families see that Philmont is not just a destination, but a continuum of experiences that can meet Scouts where they are and stay with them for a lifetime.

As we enter this new year, we invite you to bring your voice, your experience, and your passion to Philmont Training Center. Together, we can ensure that Philmont remains accessible, relevant, and inspiring for generations to come.

P2



Those who are up for the challenge of running the backcountry can sign up for the new Fastpacking Trek in August. The four-day trek will travel over Mt. Phillips and the Tooth of Time. *(Philmont Photo)*

A New Challenge Awaits

Fastpacking trekkers cover backcountry trails at a swift pace

For some avid outdoors enthusiasts who are into ultimate fitness tests, trudging the backcountry trails at Philmont is way too slow. They would rather travel light and move fast, taking in as much scenery as they can in the shortest time.

Philmont offers a new adventure just for these people. The new Fastpacking Trek is a 4-day, 3-night trip that is tailored to those who can travel 10 to 20 miles per day at a faster pace. Participants will be well supported but will be carrying their own ultralight gear, usually on the order of 10 pounds or less. There will be a vehicle that drives from camp to camp, so this can be an introduction to fastpacking or a great opportunity to try out new gear as you could add or drop equipment off each day from your pack.

The Trek starts at Abreau at an elevation of 7,197 feet, climbs over Mt. Phillips at 11,657 and the Tooth of Time at 9,003 feet, and heads back to Base Camp. Participants must be over 18 years old and be in very good shape to travel this route in four

days. Runners need to be well prepared for running the terrain which can be steep and technical.

The Fastpacking Trek will take place from August 15 to August 20. Cost of the Trek is \$750. A \$200 deposit is required to secure a place on the adventure. Check the *Philmont Fastpacking Site* under *Unique Trek* for more details on fees. The balance is due by July 1, 2026.

Fees cover accommodations at Philmont during the trip. Just like regular treks, accommodations and food are provided in the at the beginning and end of the trip, and trail meals will be provided during the Trek. Similarly, transportation, accommodations and meals while travelling to and from Philmont are not included.

If you know of someone who is up for a different kind of challenge, point them to Philmont's Fastpack Trek.

P2

From Waite Phillips' Epigrams



Waite Phillips carried with him a number of epigrams and essays which to him contained good rules for a successful and useful life.

Americanism means courage, honor, justice, truth, sincerity and hardihood—the virtues that made America. The things that will destroy America are prosperity-at-any-price, peace-at-any-price, safety first instead of duty first, the love of soft living and the get-rich-quick theory of life.

Theodore Roosevelt

RESOURCE LINKS

- Ambassador Webinars
www.philmontscoutranch.org/resources/promotephilmont/ambassador-resources/webinars/
- 2026 PTC Conferences
www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc/ptc-conferences/
- Kids 'N Kin & Silverados
www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc/bring-your-family/
- Family Adventure Camp
www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc/fac/
- Treks 2026 Availability & 2027 Registration:
www.philmontscoutranch.org/treks/
- Individual Treks
www.philmontscoutranch.org/treks/individualprograms/

Philmont Ambassador Newsletter

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2026 PHILMONT ADVENTURE PATCH



STANDARD EDITION

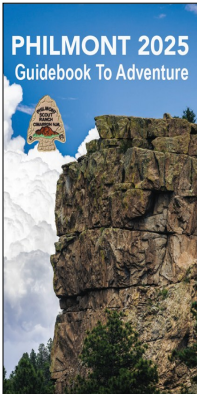


LIMITED EDITION



It's in the Guidebook

Advisors need to know their role on a Trek



Editors note: Leaders frequently call Philmont asking questions about Treks. Most of these are answered in the Guidebook to Adventure and Advisors Guidebook. This series covers important topics from the guides so that Ambassadors can be familiar with them.

Advisors are the adult leaders of the crew. All Advisors must be physically capable of hiking and camping for the entire length of the trek. Each Advisor is expected to reflect high moral standards established by custom, traditional values, religious teaching and follow the Safeguarding Youth guidelines. Philmont recommends that groups identify alternate adult leadership who are available to step in at the last minute in the event an adult Advisor is unable to attend. Philmont CANNOT provide staff to meet Scouting America's two-deep leadership requirement.

An Advisor's main role is to coach, mentor, and support the Crew Leader, Chaplain's Aide, and Wilderness Pledge Guia. By doing this, the youth leaders will gain leadership experience throughout the trek and will be able to help all members of the crew develop into a strong team.

As stated earlier, all advisors should understand they function as advisors for the entire crew, not just their own children! They are responsible for ensuring the crew follows all Scouting America and Philmont rules. The exception to this would be for an adult who is caregiver for a special-needs or disabled Scout; they are expected to work directly with that Scout to ensure their safety and successful trek completion.

Here are some questions to discuss with all the adults in your crew before arriving at Philmont. This will help with decisions that may need to be made while on the trail.

- Do they all understand that Scouting, especially a Philmont trek, is youth-led?
- Are they prepared to let the chosen



Adult advisors need to let the Crew Leader be in charge. They are there to support them and ensure the safety of the participants for a successful Trek. (Philmont Photo)

youth leaders guide the experience and to step in only when there is a health and safety concern?

- Do they understand the Safeguarding Youth guidelines and will assure that all the barriers to abuse are in place? This means they understand that youth and adults sleep separately and they will not be sharing a tent with their child.
- Do they understand that they will be an adult advisor for the entire crew, not just their own child?
- Will they stay on the trail and be an advisor for the entire crew if their child needs to leave the trail for a minor injury or illness like blisters, ingrown toenails, or a sprained ankle? Of course, if it is something serious, the parent can and should come off the

trail with their Scout. Be advised that a parent that comes off the trail with their injured/ill Scout will not be able to stay with their Scout in Infirmary Tent City (ITC). They will have stay in an available tent in trailbound/homebound tent city.

Advisors should ensure the safety and well-being of each crew member through:

- First aid treatments
- Any time a stove is in use
- Administration of required medications
- Support in emergency situations
- Proper water purification

Advisors also help foster positive crew dynamics, help settle disputes between members of the crew, assist with administering proper discipline if required, and ensure that the crew operates following all Youth Protection guidelines.

Adult Advisors must make every effort to help youth leaders succeed. By coaching and mentoring, adults can play a critical behind-the-scenes role. Adults make sure that safety procedures are followed and that Youth Protection policies are practiced.

P2

Adults should "Advise" youth on "how" to make decisions, not "what" decisions to make. We all learn from our mistakes. Let the youth make mistakes as long as safety is not endangered. After they have made a mistake, talk with them about how the mistake could have been avoided and what other things could have been considered in making the decision that led to the mistake, etc.