



PHILNEWS

Welcome HOmE, May 2026

"Delivering wilderness
and learning adventures
that last a lifetime."

AMERICA





WELCOME BACK!

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Philmont Staff Association

Front Cover by Mya Kacvinsky
Inside Cover by Mya Kacvinsky
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UNIT 1

General Manager

Philmont - A Place Where You Belong

By Andrea Watson

Welcome to Philmont and the start of what's going to be an incredible 2026 season!

Over the next few months, thousands of participants will come here looking for adventure, challenge, friendship, and memories they'll carry for the rest of their lives. What makes that experience special is not just the mountains or the programs. It's the people. Around Philmont, we sometimes say this place is really just a pile of rocks. What truly makes Philmont special is the staff who bring it to life each year.

No matter your role, where you're from, or whether this is your first season or your fifteenth, you belong here! Each person who joins the Philmont staff brings something valuable to the team, and together we

can create the kind of community that makes Philmont special.

One of the best parts of Philmont is the way people from different backgrounds, experiences, and parts of the country come together with a shared purpose. We work hard together, support each other through long days, celebrate successes together, and build friendships that often last long after the summer ends. That sense of belonging does not happen by accident. We create it by the way we welcome, respect, and care for one another every day.

To me, belonging is more than just being part of a staff. It's feeling connected to the people around you and knowing you matter here. It's knowing your work, your effort, and your presence make a difference. It's

feeling welcomed when you arrive, included in the conversation, and supported through both the exciting moments and the hard ones.

Belonging also comes from the little things. Learning someone's name. Inviting someone to sit with you at a meal. Including others, especially people who may be new or unsure

where they fit yet. Some of the strongest friendships and best memories at Philmont start with simple moments like that.

Thank you for being part of the Philmont staff this year! We have an exciting summer ahead, and I'm grateful we get to do it together.



UNIT 2

Director of Camping

Dear Philmont Staff

By Matt Hart

WelcometoPhilmontScoutRanch. Whether this is your first summer or you are a seasoned veteran, I want you to hear something clearly from the very beginning: You belong here.

You were selected for a reason. Each member of the Philmont team brings something unique, such as skills, perspective, energy, or heart, that helps

shape the experience of thousands of Scouts and advisors who pass through this iconic place. Philmont is not built on programs alone; it is built on people. Now, you are part of that tradition.

In the days ahead, things may feel busy, perhaps even overwhelming at times. Arrival, check-in, training, meeting new people, and learning new systems can all come quickly. That's normal.

Unit 2 - Matt Hart

Give yourself permission to take it one step at a time. Ask questions. Lean on one another. Trust the process.

Because here's what I want you to know: it will get easier.

Once the pace of arrivals settles and training becomes routine, you will find your rhythm. The stress gives way to confidence. The unfamiliar becomes second nature. And before long, you'll realize you're not just keeping up, you're thriving. And as that happens, something even more important begins. You start to see the impact!

A Scout who arrives unsure and leaves confident. A crew that learns to work together. A moment on the trail, in a program area, in a dining hall, or behind the scenes that stays with someone for the rest of their life.

That's when it clicks. Every role here matters. Whether you are in the backcountry, the dining hall, logistics, maintenance, administration, or

any other position, you are part of something much bigger than any one job description. It takes every single one of us, working together, to make this place what it is.

We often call Philmont a "pile of rocks." And in some ways, that's true.

But what makes this place extraordinary isn't the rocks, the mountains, or the trails; it's the people who bring it to life. It's you. It's the way you show up each day. It's the care you put into your work. It's the example you set.

It takes all of us to turn this "pile of rocks" into a place that changes lives.

So, as you begin your time here, remember: You belong. You matter. And what you do here will make a difference.

I'm grateful you're here, and I'm proud to have you on this team.

Welcome to Philmont



Logistics 2025, Photo by Muriel Alldredge

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UNIT 3

Director of Business
Operations

Jump In: Welcome Home

By Shelley O'Neill

There is a moment every year when Philmont starts to hum with the energy of summer. Radios crackle to life. Packs hit the ground. Porches are swept. Staff gather in circles with old friends and soon-to-be new friends, tell stories, share jokes, and make memories that last a lifetime. The ranch begins to buzz with anticipation, energy, and just enough chaos to make things interesting.

And before long, these days of training and preparation give way to the rhythm of a Philmont summer. Right now, everything is beginning. New friendships. New routines. New challenges. New adventures. Right now, none of us know exactly what this summer holds. That is the exciting part. Because Philmont summers are impossible to predict.

There will be moments of absolute

exhaustion followed immediately by moments so beautiful they stop you in your tracks. There will be difficult days that somehow become your favorite memories. There will be situations so funny they are nearly impossible to explain to anyone who wasn't there.

The magic of Philmont is easy to see at first glance. It is in the mountains that rise above the tree line, the wide open azure sky, the kind of vistas that take your breath away. But the deeper magic has never lived only in the landscape. It lives in the moments between people, a Scout pushing through something hard with a staff member who refuses to let them quit, a crew standing speechless at a summit they helped each other reach, a participant who arrives uncertain and leaves transformed by an experience we helped create together. And here is the remarkable thing about Philmont:

Unit 3 - Shelley O'Neill

in the very same moments we are shaping those experiences, this place is shaping us right back. Thousands of participants will come through this summer looking for an adventure, and the experience they carry home for the rest of their lives will be shaped by us.

And Philmont will be working on us too. Even if this is your 37th summer, we will leave different than we arrived. We may discover strengths we did not know we had. We may learn that leadership is often quiet, and that showing up fully for someone on a hard day matters more than almost anything else. We may find that saying yes to the harder trail, the longer shift, the unexpected ask, is where the best stories come from. And somewhere along the way, we will probably become worse at sleeping indoors.

There will be afternoon storms and changed plans. Long hours, dusty boots, tired legs, and moments when patience runs thin. But lean into all of it. Help each other through the hard parts. Be the person who makes a difficult day easier for someone else. Look for the quiet victories and celebrate them. And when the laughter and music echo across the ranch and you reach a summit you didn't think you could, take it all in.

So jump in. Every single day, jump in. Say yes to adventures, to challenges, and to the unexpected. Laugh loud. This summer will ask a lot of you. Say

yes anyway.

2026 Philmont Staff, Welcome HOmE.



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UNIT 4

Director of Ranching & Conservation

Take The Time

By Dave Kenneke

“Take the Time” is my free advice, and I truly believe it is worth more than it is costing you! The vast majority of the 2026 Philmont Staff are here today, and about to embark on a brief journey through time. All of us have already spent significant time training and preparing for the summer of 2026, and we are far from finished in that regard. The reality is that the training and preparation will continue every day of the season.

Frequently at this time of the year, I catch myself talking about “how rapidly time slips by”, or “how there just isn’t enough time to do all the things I want to do”, or “how the summer will be over before you know it”. As I reflect on this, I think it stems from the fact that I have accumulated a few summers of tenure, and as I talk to current and former staff, it is one of the most common ties that bind us all together.

I cannot recall any conversations that centered on how anyone enjoyed an “endless summer”! It is usually all about “the best summer ever”, or “wish I could go back in time”, or “I always wanted to do that while I was at the Ranch”!

So now, in addition to mentioning the importance of taking care of our participants, fellow staff, and, of course, yourself, I offer a few thoughts on how you can make every moment count just a little more this Summer.

Take the time to visit another department whenever you can.... learn a little about what they do. If you’re not careful, you might learn something that helps you down the road.

Take the time to sit by someone new in the dining hall.... You never know who you might meet, who

Unit 4 - Dave Kenneke

becomes a contact years down the road, or perhaps a lifelong friend.

Take the time to attend the Opening and Closing campfires at PTC and CHQ... these events change people's lives every day... and they will change yours as well.

Take the time to go to bed early and then start your day with a sunrise... whether in the mountains or the high plains around base.... sunrises are the precursor of beautiful sunsets...and you never can have enough of them.

Take the time to really look at the landscape and learn to identify the plants, animals, and geology of this place we call home.

Take the time to sit in the wilderness at night, pondering the sky, alone, listening to what you hear... reflect about what you don't have to listen to...the experience can be an awakening, and at times the silence could be deafening!

Take the time and find a place where you can turn your cell phone and tablet off, and maybe read that book you were always going to!

Take the time to watch a good black-and-white movie with a friend... it will be etched in your memory forever!

Take the time to really visit with our participants. Ask about where they

come from, and what that place is like! I guarantee you will be hard-pressed to meet better people... anywhere... ever!

Take the time to send a handwritten letter to family or friends at least once a week! Take the time to send a handwritten "Thank You" to a fellow staffer or department.

Take the time to write some notes to yourself at least every few days.... Trust me on this one- you need to make it happen!

Take the time to reflect on your past, and think about what you want for your future, and the path to getting there.

I convey sincere wishes for "just a little more time" for all of us this summer. Time to enjoy, reflect, daydream, and recognize the opportunity and to appreciate the life-changing experiences we have ahead of us as individuals and as a part of the bigger team.

Oh yes, definitely take the time to refine your appreciation of the Chile food group red or green...it doesn't matter.



UNIT 5

Director of Facilities

Welcome to Philmont Scout Ranch

By Kevin Stickelman

As we prepare to welcome another summer season to Philmont, I want to extend my sincere gratitude and excitement to each of you joining our staff team this year. Whether this is your first summer at Philmont or you are returning for another season, you are becoming part of something truly special.

Every summer, thousands of Scouts, leaders, and families arrive at Philmont seeking adventure, challenge, growth, and connection. For many participants, this experience will become one of the defining memories of their lives. The way you lead, teach, support, encourage, and serve others will leave a lasting impact long after the trails have emptied and the tents have come down.

What makes Philmont extraordinary is

not only the landscape, the programs, or the traditions. It is the people. It is the staff who choose to dedicate their time, energy, and passion to serving something larger than themselves.

Over the past year, countless year-round staff, seasonal staff, volunteers, and contractors have worked tirelessly behind the scenes preparing the Ranch for your arrival and for another successful summer season. Following the devastating hailstorm in August 2025, much of Base Camp and portions of the backcountry sustained significant damage. Since that time, crews have worked through the fall, winter, and spring to repair buildings, restore infrastructure, and ensure that Philmont continues to deliver the life-changing experiences it is known for.

Many of you arriving this summer

may never fully see the scale of the recovery effort because so much work has already been completed. In many ways, that was the goal. The countless hours spent repairing roofs, utilities, facilities, program spaces, trails, and infrastructure were done so that participants can focus on the adventure before them and so that you, as staff, can continue the mission of Philmont without interruption.

That spirit of service and resilience reflects the very best of Philmont.

As you begin your summer, I encourage you to embrace every opportunity that Philmont offers. Challenge yourself. Build friendships. Learn from one another. Lead with humility and professionalism. Take pride in the work you do, whether it happens on a trail crew, at a backcountry camp, behind a counter, in a commissary, in a shop, or anywhere else across the ranch. Every role matters, and every person contributes to the success of this place.

Most importantly, remember that the example you set matters. Participants will remember how you treated them, how you responded to challenges, and how you made them feel. Your leadership may inspire future Philmont staff members, future Scout leaders, or future leaders in their home councils. Philmont has always been more than a summer camp. It is a place where people grow, where confidence is built,

where lifelong friendships are formed, and where servant leadership comes to life every day.

Thank you for choosing to spend your summer serving at Philmont. We are excited to welcome you to the ranch and look forward to everything we will accomplish together in the months ahead.

The work you do this summer will matter more than you realize, and the memories you help create will last a lifetime. Welcome to summer 2026!

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UNIT 6

Director of Museums

Greetings and Welcome!

By Dave Werhane

Greetings and Welcome! I hope you're as excited as we are for a summer filled with learning adventures, sunshine, and hopefully some refreshing New Mexico rains. While we can't guarantee the rain, we can guarantee that you will find our rich Philmont history everywhere, especially in our backcountry and museums! No matter your role at Philmont, I encourage you to set aside a few moments every day to look around and enjoy what remains of those who came before us. Philmont's an immense place and much of our history lays in those unexplored spots off the beaten trail, such as in the North Ponil Canyon or our Baldy Mining District. Plan to take a stroll during some time off to discover dinosaur tracks, odd geologic formations, breathtaking vistas, and relics left by Native Americans, frontiersmen,

miners, loggers, and thousands of others who lived on this land.

Base Camp also has great things to offer so PLEASE stop by the National Scouting Museum! We continue to plan, curate, and installing new displays in the Scouting Heritage Gallery, Philmont Gallery, and Marchetti Room. The Scouting Heritage Gallery is known to be the most comprehensive and complete collection of BSA History ever displayed in one location. The Philmont Gallery continues to be updated every winter. If you're into the OA, this will be our last year to host their current exhibit so check it out before it's gone! (don't worry we'll have a completely new one in 2027).

The Villa Philmonté may look like different with its white roofing, but inside it is more beautiful than ever

Unit 6 - Dave Werhane

as we've been preparing for the Villa's 100th anniversary in 2027. The Villa Philmonté is always a treat so please swing by, take a tour, or just hang out during the open hour from 4-5 pm every day once the campers arrive. The rooms are stunning, the Waite Phillip's story inspiring, and the tour guides friendly!

If Rayado and the Santa Fe Trail interest you, we will be open from 8 to 5 every day, but if you like a good

sunset make sure to come on down for a candlelight tour!

I hope that you take in what Philmont, the Philmont Museums, and all that our historic sites have to offer. These places are your resource and hopefully some inspiration to enjoy our mountain air, some fresh spring water, and create some great memories as you hike through history.

Buena Suerte y Buen Yiaje!



UNIT 7

Sr. Associate Director of
Camping - Backcountry
Operations

Explore the History & Natural Wonders of Philmont's Backcountry!

By Phillip Ferrier

Whether you are a first-year staff member or a returning veteran, welcome to Philmont Scout Ranch! We are excited to have you here for another fantastic summer. Every department plays a vital role in

providing world-class experiences for our participants, whether you work out of Camping Headquarters, the Training Center, Cattle Headquarters, or the backcountry. Some of the best parts of a Philmont summer come

Unit 7 - Philip Ferrier

Whether you are a first-year staff member or a returning veteran, welcome to Philmont Scout Ranch! We are excited to have you here for another fantastic summer. Every department plays a vital role in providing world-class experiences for our participants, whether you work out of Camping Headquarters, the Training Center, Cattle Headquarters, or the backcountry. Some of the best parts of a Philmont summer come from exploring areas of the ranch beyond your own assignment and meeting the staff who make those programs possible.

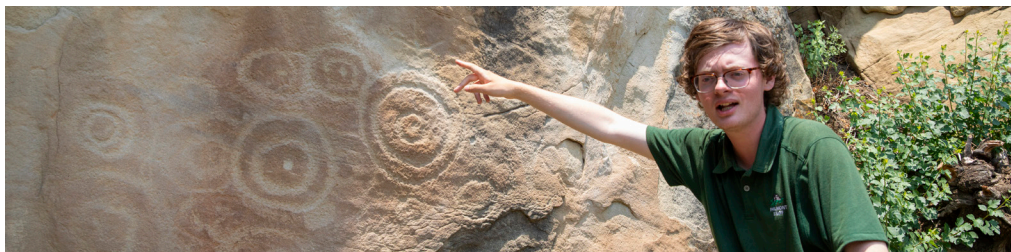
Let me be one of many to invite you to explore the historic beauty of Philmont's backcountry. The backcountry staff are eager to welcome you as you connect with the ranch's remarkable natural landscape and rich history. I encourage each of you to venture into the mountains and discover the connections you can make with the many Indigenous peoples, Spanish colonists, explorers, fur trappers, soldiers, homesteaders, miners, loggers, railroaders, ranchers, philanthropists, and the millions of

Scouts and Scouters who have called this land home.

Philmont offers countless opportunities to experience nature and history that cannot be found anywhere else, so make the most of your time here—it will go faster than you think! Visit as many backcountry camps as you can, climb the mountains, bag the peaks, and discover what makes Philmont such a unique and meaningful place. Take time to watch a sunrise from a peak, swap stories with staff across the ranch, and experience the quiet beauty that makes Philmont unforgettable.

For some of you, this may be the first of many adventures in your lifetime. Embrace the challenges you will face this summer, and when times get tough, remember that you are part of a larger family of staff members all working together to make a difference in the lives of young people. This summer, you will build lifelong friendships, create lasting memories, and develop skills that will serve you for years to come.

I can't wait to see you around Base Camp and across the backcountry!



Petroglyph tour at Indian Writings 2025, Photo by Logan Albrinck



UNIT 7A

Associate Director of
Camping

Change Lives!

By Austin St. George

Welcome, it is an exciting time to see all the Philmont Staff check in for the summer, starting to get ready to deliver a stellar program to the thousands of participants that will be coming soon! The participants coming have been planning and preparing for their Philmont experience for the last 2 years. As they prepare, they have been getting the gear set up, went on shakedown hikes, formed their crew, and they have built up the excitement for the one thing that makes this land such a special place for millions – you the Philmont Staff!

Once they get here and are hiking in the backcountry, they will be challenged, I believe that at any given moment over the summer someone is having the most impactful day of their lives here at Philmont, having a moment that changes their life and

helps them grow to be a member of society. It may be the challenge of breaking out of a mental box while hiking up a steep mountain or learning about the importance of conservation and taking care of the world around them, or just a just a simple moment of a crew bonding together and find the joy of the outdoors. Overcoming the challenges and sharing these moments with their crew is all part of the Philmont experience.

We need to spend our time supporting them through those challenging growth moments, and it takes all of the Philmont staff to do so. So, I encourage you to work hard this summer to continue to make those most important days for all our participants, to positively impact the lives of young people and their advisors through inspiration and the effective

Welcome HOmE



JOIN THE PSA
\$20
SEASONAL
MEMBERSHIP

Visit us next to the
National Scouting
Museum



delivery of the finest Scouting possible through backcountry adventure. In doing so I am sure you will find that it will not just change the lives of the participants but also change your own. Change Lives!



Ranger Training, Photo by Isaiah Mitchell

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UNIT 8

Associate Director of
Camping - Seasonal
Personnel and Base
Camp Operations

Make Yourself at HOmE!

By Ryan Jackson

Hi staff! I'm Ryan Jackson, the Associate Director of Camping overseeing both the Seasonal Personnel Office (aka, Human Resources) for the ranch and the Base Camp Operations for our trek programs.

Like many, I came to Philmont having lived much of my life in a very different place. It is tough to adjust to such a new environment, but by leaning into our shared passion for Scouting and outdoor adventures, and by embracing the opportunities available for staff at Philmont, Cimarron quickly feels much closer to HOmE than you may realize.

You are encouraged to take advantage of our programs and facilities here to support you. The Silver Sage Staff Activity Center comes equipped with lounge areas, a computer lab,

a kitchen, two movie rooms, pool, ping pong, board games, and much more. The Activities & Shows team organizes dozens of staff-centric events throughout the summer. Fresh off a generous donation of fitness equipment, the Staff Fitness Center is looking better than ever, and ready to help you keep up with your wellness goals while you're here.

Hiking in the backcountry on your days off is a gift few employers can provide. To recruit hiking buddies, visit the SSSAC and the Activities & Shows Staff can help set you up with other eager adventurers. Don't forget to submit your Backcountry Access Permit to Logistics and make sure to follow all other Backcountry procedures while you're there!

Off ranch, there are countless other

natural areas and attractions to visit. Local businesses in Cimarron, Angel Fire, Springer, Eagle Nest, Raton, and more are Philmont-friendly and are worth visiting. Make sure to swing by our Local Business Fair this afternoon around dinnertime to meet some of them.

Last of all, take care of yourselves and one another! Proper hygiene, planned laundry runs, and adequate sleep are essential survival tools for your summer. Check in on the people around you, and they will check in on you, too. If the world starts to feel too heavy, don't be afraid to swing by the Personnel Office for help.

Plan your day. Use your resources. Enjoy where you are. Embrace community. For the millionth time today, Welcome HOme!



Staff Check-in, Photo by Matt Stepp

Kit Carson Museum
Open 8-5, everyday!
June 5th- August 16

HWY 21, Mile Marker 11
Rayado, NM

Career/Job Uncertainty?
Looking for guidance?
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- Need help with your resume or interviewing skills?
- Want to learn more about a particular career from someone in the field?

Scan to request career assistance





UNIT 9

Director, Philmont
Training Center

Greetings Philmont Staff

By Amy Hutcherson

I am truly honored to serve as the Director of the Philmont Training Center. With just over a year on this incredible staff team, I continue to be inspired and in awe of the grit, determination, and passion each of you brings to sustaining the enduring legacy of Philmont. It is a privilege to stand alongside you.

Every one of you is an inspiration to me. Your dedication and love for this remarkable place—one so many proudly call HOME—is evident in all that you do. No matter where you come from or your background, you share a deep connection to this place. If it is your first summer here, I am confident you will soon come to love it just as deeply.



All Staff Day 2025, By Mya Kacvinsky

Unit 9 - Amy Hutcherson

There will undoubtedly be challenging days ahead this summer. But those moments will be balanced—many times over—by the unforgettable memories you will create and the lasting friendships you will build.

My one piece of advice is simple: embrace every moment.

Enjoy the good days and the difficult ones.

Savor the times when you're energized and the moments when you feel tired.

Laugh during the lighthearted, goofy moments, and be open to spontaneity

when it presents itself.

At the end of the summer, you will carry with you not only incredible memories, but also the people and experiences that will stay in your heart for a lifetime.

Thank you for all that you do—and for being such an extraordinary team.

“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” -Helen Keller

Swing by, fill your bellies, and lift your spirits!



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UNIT 9A

Philmont Training Center
Assistant Director

Ready For A Great Summer

By Maddy Houk

Summer is almost here, and all of us at the Philmont Training Center are excited to welcome another incredible season at Philmont Scout Ranch! As staff members, you play a huge role in creating the experience our families, Scouts, and crews will remember for years to come. Whether guests are visiting for the first time or returning to a place they love, your enthusiasm and dedication help make Philmont feel like home.

Throughout the summer, PTC will be full of opportunities for staff and guests to connect and enjoy the Philmont experience together. Evening activities include favorites like cobbler nights, ice cream socials, and our Western BBQ complete with line dancing, branding, and games. The Craft Center will also be open daily for anyone looking to relax, make a souvenir, or spend time with friends and family.

Beginning June 5th, guests will start arriving at Philmont, excited to experience everything that makes this place so special. For many of them, meeting staff members like you is a highlight of their summer. Your energy, kindness, and commitment help create the welcoming atmosphere that keeps people coming back year after year.

We also want to remind you that overnight accommodations and daily family camp programs are available for your family and friends who may want to visit this summer. More information about lodging, meals, and self-guided adventures can be found on Philmont's website.

Thank you for everything you do to make Philmont an unforgettable experience. We are excited to share another amazing summer with all of you!

Welcome HOMe

A Message from the Philmont Staff Association

By Bob Mosher, PSA Executive Director

There is a distinct energy that fills the air in Cimarron this time of year as base camp teams begin department training, rangers and conservation crews start hitting the backcountry, and the sound of backcountry camps practicing campfires from Trailbound Tent City begins. It means one thing: another Philmont season is about to begin! Whether you're stepping onto the ranch for the very first time or your 41st, welcome. You are now part of the heartbeat of Philmont, and the summer ahead is entirely yours to shape.

Right now, your focus is exactly where it should be—on training, mastering your role, and preparing to deliver life-changing experiences to the thousands of scouts who will soon look to you for leadership. But as you find your footing, I want to welcome you into an even larger community.

The Philmont Staff Association is a living network of thousands of current

and former staff members spanning generations. We are the trail crews who came before you, the camp directors from decades past, and the lifelong friends who still look over their shoulders towards Arrowhead Rock with nostalgia. Our mission is simple: to support the ranch we love and to take care of the staff who keep it alive. Through scholarships, regional meetups, and service projects like the staff dining hall under construction at Beaubien, the PSA is dedicated to making sure you have what you need to thrive, both during your season and long after it ends.

If I could offer one piece of advice as you start this journey, it's to take a moment every now and then to breathe in the silver sage, to look up at the azure sky, and check in on your





Clarks Fork Staff 2025, Photo by Kate Warrick

teammates. The bonds you forge in the heat of a July afternoon or over a late-night bowl of ice cream in Matt Hart's backyard are not temporary. These are people who you'll stay connected with, who will support you through life's challenges, and who will understand you in a way few others can. You are building friendships for life.

As you navigate the 2026 season, please know that the PSA is here to support you. I invite you to stop by our office next to the National Scouting Museum and learn more about membership benefits, take part in one of our Career

Connections events this summer, and to tap into this lifelong network.

Thank you for your dedication, your passion, and the hard work you are about to put into this summer. I wish each of you a fun, transformative, and deeply rewarding season.

IWGBTP



Rocks Training by Elena Scherry



